

E&E Project Summary Report

Project Name: Development and Review of Baseline Information of Multi-residential Recycling Programs in Ontario

Project Number: 18

Lead Sponsor: Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority

Total project cost: \$45,350

Priority Area: Multi-family recycling

Completed By: February 2006

E&E fund contribution: \$28,550

Project Overview:

I. Goals

1. To define the current state of multi-residential (MR) recycling in the larger MR programs in Ontario
2. To use this information as a basis to identify and support the implementation of effective, economical, and sustainable multi-family recycling tools/approaches

II. Accomplishments

- Administered a detailed survey and compiled information for 19 of the province's largest MR programs
- Compiled information on MR recycling, including: residential units/buildings served per municipality, eligibility criteria and statistics, operating procedures (collection, containers, vehicles, processing), costs, use of disincentives and incentives, tracking mechanisms, promotion and education, waste audit history, demographic information, and by-laws
- Identified the major issues and constraints faced by municipalities that operate Ontario MR programs
- Identified potential areas for further baseline study and possible next steps.

III. Lessons Learned/Best Practice implications

With Regards to MF recycling:

- The MR sector represent an important opportunity to increase tonnage;
- Most programs define MR consistently with Regulation 103/94; although it is not enforced, it is used by a number of programs as a "backdrop" or tool when dealing with some buildings;
- Resources to adequately staff, monitor and promote MR programs are uniformly insufficient;
- Contamination is a consistent and persistent problem;
- Communications is always an issue – no MR program deals directly with tenants;
- Superintendents and/or building managers are critical elements of a "successful" recycling program;
- Unlike curbside recycling for single family dwellings, there is a lack of ownership/responsibility on the part of some MR residents; there is no direct accountability for not participating;
- Efforts and resources dedicated to MR recycling appear to have declined in a number of MR programs since they were first launched.

With regards to the survey process itself:

- Future surveys of this scope should be developed following a process which ensures that numerous draft versions are reviewed and tested by municipalities.
- In those cases where a survey is to be filled out by a relatively small number of respondents, these respondents should be individually contacted at the front end to request their participation, and determine appropriate contact information.
- July and August are not ideal times for administering a survey to municipalities

IV. Limitations

The project was not able to identify the necessary next steps to produce a comprehensive multi-residential recycling plan however. This is due to the lack of reporting mechanisms on MF recycling (e.g. audits, participation studies), which in turn, make it difficult to attribute specific program factors to increased participation, capture or efficiency.

Impacts (including tonnes diverted and cost impacts):

This project was intended as a baseline study of MF recycling programs in Ontario and as such, was not expected to result in either program or system cost reduction benefits or cost effective tonnage increases. Nonetheless, the limited information that is available indicates that a significant amount of "cheap tonnes" are still available in MF residences. This project represents a first step in accessing these tonnes.

