

E&E Project Evaluation Form

****Please be advised that completed evaluations are made available publicly and are posted on Stewardship Ontario's E&E Fund web site****

Project Name/Number/Priority area: Enhancing Recycling in Multi-Residential Buildings / PN 186 / MF Recycling

Lead Sponsor/completed by/date: Municipal Partners: Town of Markham, Town of Richmond Hill, City of Vaughan; Consultant: Informa Market Research/ Completed by Peter Veiga (Town of Markham); Jeff Meggitt (City of Richmond Hills); Caroline Kirkpatrick (City of Vaughan) / Oct. 26 2006

Project Duration: May-October 2006

Total project value: \$24,800

E&E funding amount: 16,242

Section 1 –To be completed by Project Applicant

1) What were the Project Goals and Objectives (as per the E&E Application and/or Contract)?

The project goals and objectives included probing high-rise residents (tenants and condo owners), and superintendents/property managers on opportunities to increase recycling in high-rise residential buildings. The focus group discussions were to probe primarily on the following factors;

1. Residents Recycling Behaviour
2. Resident's Role and Responsibility
3. Community Recycling Trends
4. Recycling Opportunities and Barriers
5. Awareness Of Recyclables
6. Convenience & Efficacy
7. Role Of Building Management And Superintendents
8. Recycling/Garbage System
9. Tenant Communication & Feedback
10. Three Stream – Organic Recycling
11. Communication and Education
12. Communication Channels

2) Were the goals and objectives met? (and if not why not?)

YES

3) Summary of Project Accomplishments (i.e. what did the project do/achieve?):

The project provided great insight into opportunities and limitations to expanding and improving recycling programs in residential high-rise buildings.

Lessons learned have already been incorporated in Markham's roll-out of its expanded and commingled residential high-rise recycling program.

4) Summary of Project Limitations (e.g. is there anything that should have been done differently?)

None

5) What do you consider to have been the key “lessons learned” from this project? Does your project/activity represent a “best practice”?

The key lesson learned is that in order to ensure program success garbage/recycling rooms must be properly outfitted and superintendents/property managers must be given the proper tools and support so that they could be ready to receive and manage the increased recycling once residents receive their education and other recycling tools. In other words, start from the back end of the operation first and end with the residents. In hind sight, this seems obvious but is not common in most residential high-rise recycling programs. Superintendents are often left out of the equation.

All three municipalities involved in this project stress the importance of providing multi-family residents with equal access to recycling and waste disposal. This goes along with providing residents with education and additional incentives such as smaller in-unit containers and reminders to motivate them to take the extra step to recycle their waste materials.

Based on the results of this project, the municipalities involved feel that the following two elements can be considered best practices in multi-family recycling:

- ❖ equal access to both recycling and waste disposal; and
- ❖ proper tools for superintendents and property managers

6) What specifically are municipal staff doing with the experiences and data from this project? Do you have plans to apply these lessons in your program? Please explain how.

Markham: Markham has used all of the lessons learned to implement its expanded and commingled residential high-rise recycling program. The program was completely rolled out by the second week of October 2006. We knew we wanted to increase the list of acceptable materials and to convert to fully commingled recycling. The findings of the project helped us do so in a way that was most convenient and effective to all stakeholders (residents, superintendents, collection contractor, Town, Region of York) i.e. moving to front-end collection, providing front-end bins and training to superintendents before educating residents, and supplying recycling bags to residents. Markham staff is currently monitoring initial program performance and working with superintendents/property managers to make minor adjustments, where necessary. At this stage, it is too early to tell if there have been increases in the amount of recyclables collected.

Vaughan: Following the completion of this project, the city of Vaughan has decided to change its approach to waste and recycling in multi-family buildings. Although the City currently provides municipal collection services to approximately 60 multi-unit residential dwelling establishments, the City is not intending on providing municipal collection services to *new* privately owned multi-unit residential establishments. The rationale is that they are privately owned businesses and the waste diversion initiatives for these types of establishments are governed by the MOE via regulation 103/94.

Although it does not intend to service *new* multi family buildings, the city is nonetheless taking steps to ensure that diversion is maximized in these establishments. A document entitled "Waste Collection Design Standards Manual" is currently being developed. This will require all *new* residential developments and redevelopments to have certain provisions as it pertains to much increased recycling opportunities (i.e. making recycling as easy as waste disposal by installing bi-sorters or providing floor by floor recycling collection). The city's intent is to monitor building's compliance via development review. The City is also committed to developing a comprehensive P & E campaign for multi-unit residential establishments that will continue to receive municipal curbside collection services. The focus of this campaign will be to increase awareness about recycling programs.

Richmond Hill: Richmond Hill has hired a curbside advisor who will oversee the multi-residential program. He is meeting with superintendents and property managers to develop new educational materials and to work with them toward a fully commingled program. Plans are underway to move to front end collection wherever possible and to institute a volume based waste collection limit for each building.

7) Has your municipal council been informed about the project and its results?

This project is part of Markham's Mission Green which was adopted by Markham Council in 2004. Council has received various updates and approved all steps in the program as they came due.

Richmond Hill Council approved the project and has been informed of progress with the project. The report and recommendations from E&E #186 will form part of a more comprehensive report to Council in the New Year which will outline the new directions for the multi-residential waste collection program.

8) Do you think there are opportunities to share/replicate the successful elements of this project with other Ontario programs? If yes, how and where?

Absolutely. Other programs may not accept the same recyclables or have a single stream collection system but, many of the physical limitations in buildings, and resident/superintendent attitudes toward recycling are common throughout Ontario.

The consultants for this project, Informa Market Research, have been given permission to share the results and findings of this project with AMRC's Multi-Family Working Group.

9) Did this project result in either reduced costs per tonne of Blue Box waste recycled and/or increased Blue Box tonnes diverted? (Please explain)

Markham: We anticipate the expansion of the residential high-rise recycling program to double the amount of recyclables collected from this residential sector and contribute an additional 2% to Markham's overall waste diversion rate. Markham currently services 51 buildings and in 2005 collected 626.16 tonnes of recyclables from these.

Richmond Hill: we have baseline information on quantities collected in the multi-residential program. Volumes at each building are recorded on a weekly basis. The target will be to increase the capture rate in the multi residential sector by 50%.

Section 2 –To be completed by Stewardship Ontario (and reviewed by applicant)

9) Did this project do what it set out to do? If not, what were the reasons/ barriers?

As per the original agreement, the overall goal of this project was to identify the many barriers that exist in developing effective diversion initiatives in multi-residential Condo and apartment buildings.

The objectives of the research were to help develop an understanding of attitudes, behaviour and awareness among residents in the rental and condo multi-res sector as well as those of property managers and superintendents; and to highlight opportunities to increasing multi-residential recycling rates toward those being attained in single family homes.

Although this project did not generate any new findings on barriers to, and attitudes regarding, recycling in multi family buildings, overall the project achieved what it set out to do.

10) What are the key learnings from this project? Are there any next steps? What is being done to share the results?

While much research has been focused on identifying the barriers to recycling in multi-family buildings, considerably less has been dedicated at formulating, implementing, and testing the performance of different strategies to overcome these barriers.

As part of the focus groups conducted for this project, MF residents were asked for their opinion on different types of recycling containers. Unsurprisingly, the consultant found that available space (in kitchen, storage room, and cupboard) was the primary factor in determining the suitability of container options (mini blue box, blue bag, blue basket and blue bin on wheels (similar to organic bin). While no one option suited all equally, the blue bag appeared to be the best compromise solution.

The report further provides eleven recommendations targeting residents on how to increase recovery of Blue Box waste, as well as offering suggested strategies aimed at building superintendents and building managers.

It will be useful to compare these recommended strategies with the findings from E&E Fund project 199 - Multi-Residential Recycling System Improvements Through Focus Groups and Interviews – that AMRC is currently wrapping up.

11) Was the project good value for the money (e.g. were there measureable program or system cost reduction benefits, cost effective tonnage increases, etc?)

This project was not intended to lead to program system cost reductions. It did nonetheless lay the ground work for increasing blue box tonnage from MF buildings in Markham, Vaughan, and Richmond Hill.

12) Does this project represent “best practices”? If yes, explain.

Multi-family recycling has been and continues to be a priority for the E&E Fund. As has been stated previously, while the Fund has provided financial support to a number of project aimed at uncovering barriers to recycling faced by specific actors (tenants, superintendents, property managers), less efforts have been aimed at moving towards the next logical step – putting in place strategies (infrastructure, communications, ect.) to overcome these barriers and to increase recycling tonnage. It is hoped that the findings coming out of this project and other recent ones (PN 199 - Multi-Residential Recycling System Improvements Through Focus Groups and Interviews) will help move this along.