

## 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:** Multi-residential project #199: Determination of multi-residential recycling system improvements through focus groups for tenants, building superintendents and property manager interviews

**Lead Sponsor/competed by/date:** Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority/ December, 2006

**Project Duration:** 8 months

**Total project value:** \$143,409.42 (incl. GST and in-kind value)

**E&E funding amount:** \$128,409.42 (incl. GST)

### 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)?**

MR Project 199 was designed to lead to improved multi-residential blue box material recycling by working directly with tenants, superintendents and property managers to identify and better understand practical solutions to the commonly cited barriers to increased capture and reduced contamination in the multi-residential sector.

**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?):**

- Completed focus groups and interviews (MR tenants, building superintendents and property managers) in seven Ontario municipalities;
- Compiled findings into exhaustive report documenting system improvements focused on 1) recyclers – i.e., tenants; 2) system facilitators – i.e., supers; and 3) system managers – i.e., building owners/management.
- Segments of the focus groups were also used to test and develop concepts and messages that were used as part of the television, print and website (blueboxmore.ca) pilot campaign (E&E project #105)

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

No limitations specific to the project itself. However, it may have been useful to compare the 'qualitative' results from the focus groups and interviews with quantitative data generated by a questionnaire administered to a random sample of tenants, superintendents and property managers across the province. In effect, this would have included a measurement component which would generate a benchmark.

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

Improving MR recycling capture and reducing contamination must be approached from a total systems perspective. Tenant and superintendent education and motivation needs to be combined with more convenient access to recycling.

System improvements need to address more efficient consolidation and collection of materials. For example, in some cases, a move to front end bin collection from cart collection (similar to what the City of Ottawa is currently doing) would make practical sense. The project also identified instances where superintendants have to move over 20 full carts from the collection area to the curb. Larger front end bins would relieve this inefficiency.

For these system improvements to occur, all stakeholders (municipalities, stewards, building owners, design personnel, etc.) need to understand the current limitations and work collaboratively on solutions, rather than segregating a particular program component and trying to fix it in isolation.

**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.**

The project findings/learnings will be used to inform and direct pilots and MR system improvements in a number of Ontario MR programs.

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

Councils have been informed about the project, but have not yet received the results.

**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?**

Yes:

- The results have been shared and discussed amongst the AMRC Multi Family Working Group
- Posting report, Executive Overview, and Power Point presentation on the E&E Fund portion of the Stewardship Ontario web site
- Presentations (already completed) at Waste Expo, AMRC annual workshop, others
- Using the project results to more effectively plan MR pilots and system improvements

**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)**

Not directly, but it will contribute to same in the future.

## **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 application, this project aimed to build system capacity and performance by working directly with tenants, superintendents and managers to identify practical solutions to the commonly cited barriers to increased capture in the multi-residential sector.

Overall, the project achieved its goal.

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

The key learnings from this project are:

- the feedback obtained from participants on ways to increase recycling in terms of their level of support/opposition for proposed solutions (e.g. making recycling compulsory/mandatory, charging apartment/condo buildings for their garbage if they don't operate a good recycling program, ect)
- the proposed corrective steps for each of the target groups (tenants, supers, and building managers, but also municipalities, provincial and federal government).

As stated above, the AMRC MR working group has met to discuss and review the results. A subsequent meeting was held on March 6<sup>th</sup>. In addition to the WG members, the meeting was attended by RW Beck consultants, who talked about lessons from MF projects in the US, and a municipal secondee from the Recycling Program Enhancement & Best Practices Project, who presented MF related findings to date. The main thrust of the meeting was to seek input regarding research needs and implementation gaps that could be addressed by future projects, including ideas for upcoming E&E multi-family project proposals.

### **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?)**

Although this project was well managed and came under budget, it was a fairly costly endeavour, due mainly to the fact that it involved carrying out focus groups in seven municipalities spread out across the province. The original project proposal explained that such geographic coverage would determine whether/how to address the regional issue, however the report is silent on this point. Part of the overall value of the project was its contribution to the Project #105 pilot advertising campaign.

This project has laid the ground work for the targeted municipalities (and hopefully others) to undertake MF projects that are expected to result in cost effective tonnage increases from this sector.

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

MR recycling has been and continues to be an E&E Fund priority. In addition to project 199, the Recycling Program Enhancement & Best Practices Project is expected to provide further insights into what constitutes Best Practices in MF recycling.

*Total project cost – \$128,409.42 (incl. GST)*

*E&E contribution – \$128,409.42 (incl. GST)*

*Other Cash/in-kind contributions – 15 days of municipal in-kind contribution (valued at \$1000/day)*

**13) Other Comments?**

The final report, including the Executive Overview, could have been presented in a more concise and user friendly fashion.

As it stands, the first eight pages of the Executive Overview are focused on general findings concerning MF recycling which, to a large extent, have already been covered under other E&E funded projects (PN 105 and 186). It is questionable whether background information (in particular, section 1.8 – Comparing Curbside & MR Communities & Recycling Dynamics information) is useful in the Overview. It would have been useful to present the key learnings from this project, such as the feedback obtained from participants on ways to increase recycling, and the proposed corrective steps, at the forefront of both the report and of the Executive Overview.