

E&E Project Summary Report

Project Name: Determination of multi-residential recycling system improvements through focus groups for tenants, building superintendents and property manager interviews

Project Number: 199

Priority Area: Multi-family

Lead Sponsor: Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority and AMRC

Completed By: AMRC

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

E&E fund contribution: \$128,409.42 (incl. GST)

Project Overview:

I. Goals

This project 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.

II. Accomplishments

- 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)

III. Lessons Learned/Best Practice implications

- 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.

IV. Limitations

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

Impacts (including tonnes diverted and cost impacts)

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. The next step is to establish research needs and implementation gaps that could be addressed by future projects, including ideas for upcoming E&E multi-family project proposals.

