

E&E Project Summary Report

Project Name: Optimizing the City of Stratford's Blue Box Program

Project Number: 76

Priority Area: Innovative Financing & Program Compliance Projects

Lead Sponsor: City of Stratford with 2cg

Completed By: City of Stratford

Total project cost: \$78,820 + GST

E&E fund contribution: \$59,000 + GST

Project Overview:

I. Goals

- Assess the User Pay program by determining waste composition via waste auditing and identifying additional Blue Box recyclables that could be captured
- Develop and implement a revised communications and education program to facilitate the improved capture of Blue Box recyclables.

II. Accomplishments

- Two waste audits (pre and post) were completed
- A new face on the recycling information was adopted. The work included the development of a new recycling theme and the production of new communications and education materials (Content and style manual; Theme created; Posters; Calendar; Newsletter; Instructions; FAQ), as well as templates that can be carried forward for future work.

III. Lessons Learned/Best Practice implications

Although the original project proposal indicated the possibility of a decrease in system cost at the time of negotiating Stratford's contract in 2006, this did not materialize. This is due to the fact that a Regional MRF initiative was not anticipated when this project was initiated. Rather than attempt to negotiate significant changes to the new contract, it was decided that a better strategy would be to opt for a shorter length contract that maintained the status quo in anticipation of the developments surrounding the regional MRF.

The nearly completed report for the Blue Box Program Enhancement and Best Practices Assessment Project, a \$2.5 million E&E Fund initiative awarded to KPMG, establishes "Appropriately planned, designed, and funded Promotion and Education program" as a Fundamental Best Practice. It will be important for the City to allocate adequate funds to its revised P&E strategy – the report found that municipalities achieving 60% recovery levels, on average, tended to spend approximately \$1 on Promotion and Education – as well as to continue monitoring its impact through on-going waste audits and other means, and to adjust if need be.

IV. Limitations

There was not as much response by the media to help promote the new program as was expected even though the project was launched to the media on two occasions. Media response was a function of relatively small number of outlets. More frequent calls could have been placed and possibly from a higher level of management.

Impacts (including tonnes diverted and cost impacts)

Although there were no significant increases in tonnage, it is expected that the revised C&E materials will lead to such increases in the medium terms, especially for those low-recovery materials.

Resources & Tools

As a next step, the essential points of the project report are being assembled into a document, which will be showcased as an example of a Strategic Communication for a mid-sized community. The document will be made available on the P&E module of Stewardship Ontario's Knowledge Network.

