



Report to: General Committee

Date Report Authored: November 07, 2016

SUBJECT: Textile Recycling Program Strategy - Next Steps
PREPARED BY: Claudia Marsales, Senior Manager, Waste & Environmental Management
Department x3560

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the report entitled “Textile Recycling Program Strategy – Next Steps” be received;
2. AND THAT Council endorse the Textile Recycling strategy and supporting initiatives outlined in this report;
3. AND THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to York Region and the local municipalities for their information;
4. AND FURTHER THAT Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

This report is to update Council on the strategy to increase textile recycling in Markham.

BACKGROUND:

Background and Previous Council Direction

In 2011, Council approved the formation of a Diversion Sub-Committee as part of the Environmental Issues Committee, to develop a package of program changes designed to provide a roadmap to 80% curbside diversion and bring Markham closer to being a Sustainable Community as recommended in the Council approved Green Print.

The Diversion Sub-Committee is chaired by Deputy Mayor Jack Heath and has representation from Council and Markham staff. Representatives from York Region and MEAC (Markham Environmental Advisory Committee) are invited on an issue by issue basis.

In 2012, Council approved 10 initiatives including clear garbage bags, electronics (e-waste) curbside collection ban, and expanding diversion opportunities for household textiles.

E-waste ban and clear bags for garbage resulted in decreased tonnage at the curb, lower collection costs, and increased diversion.

In January 2013, Markham banned the curbside collection of e-waste such as computers, televisions, and DVDs, as there is a robust recycling market for these materials.

Residents can recycle e-waste at York Region’s E-waste Recycling Depot on Rodick Rd in Markham. In addition, waste management partnered with the Lions Club to offer E-waste weekend drop off events at City facilities. Since 2013 the Lions have hosted close to 50 weekend community E-waste collection events across Markham.

Donated e-waste is sent to OES (Ontario Electronic Stewardship) approved Global Electric Electronic Processing (GEEP) in Barrie for recycling. This initiative has helped both increase diversion and support local employment and charities.

Clear Bag Program

In April 2013, Markham became the largest urban city to implement a clear garbage bag program for garbage collection. In the 3 years since the switch to clear bags, several trends have emerged. Waste tonnage has fallen significantly and continues to decline, resulting in reduced collection costs and increased diversion. According to data compiled by York Region, Markham has achieved the highest diversion and lowest waste generation rate amongst the nine local municipalities, with the largest difference in the residential garbage stream.

Waste generation rates provide a better indication of resident actions that contribute toward reducing waste at the curb. Measuring waste generation considers reduction and reuse efforts that ultimately decrease the amount of waste entering the system and requiring processing and disposal. In addition, reduction and reuse minimize reliance on raw materials and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

2015 Waste Generation Rate by Municipality (kg/capita)					
Prepared by York Region					
Municipality	Waste Generation Rate	Garbage	Municipality	Waste Generation Rate	Garbage
Markham	266	66	Georgina	334	139
Vaughan	292	102	East Gwillimbury	343	114
Richmond Hill	311	113	King	349	111
Whitchurch-Stouffville	324	114	Aurora	349	123
Newmarket	325	110			

Markham's curbside collection contract is based on a per tonne rate for 3-stream material collected at the curb. Any material residents do not place at the curb for collection and instead recycle at depots or drop off locations reduces the cost of curbside collection. The e-waste ban and clear bag requirement has resulted in reduced collection costs since 2013 as demonstrated in budget reductions totaling \$761,000 (\$286,000 in 2013, \$280,000 in 2014 and \$195,000 in 2016) with an additional \$400,000 reduction proposed for 2017, of which \$86,000 is due to implementation of the new textile recycling initiative.

Textiles now account for between 5-7% of waste destined for landfill

Worldwide it is estimated that approximately 80 billion new items of clothing are produced every year, and national data indicates that textiles are among the least commonly recycled household material. Waste composition audits conducted by York Region in cooperation with the local municipalities in 2012 found that textiles now account for up to 5 to 7 percent of waste destined for disposal.

In 2015, Council approved a Markham Textile Recycling Program as part of the 2016 Capital Budget process. Staff applied for and received a matching grant of \$67,000 from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to support the project. FCM commented positively on Markham's application, noting the initiative was not only unique but it also addressed increased diversion, consumer education, and green house gas reduction.

Focus groups conducted with Markham residents indicated strong support for a made in Markham textile recycling program

Markham conducted focus groups to determine residents' level of interest in textile recycling. The results provided insight to how little residents knew about textile recycling. Key findings from the focus groups provided valuable information for designing Markham's textile diversion program:

1. Residents put most of their household textiles in the garbage.
2. When they had donations, they often used 24/7 donation boxes for their convenience.
3. They had no allegiance to charitable causes, and were skeptical that donations actually benefited charity
4. They wanted more education and information about textile recycling
5. Strong support for a Markham managed program

Markham now has 53 donation containers currently available and a projected 77 containers by April 2017

This year, Markham entered into partnership agreements with the Salvation Army and Canadian Diabetes Association (CDA) and they began placing new Markham branded containers for textile donations at City locations. They also service the donation containers at no cost to Markham.

Current Donation Containers - 53 total drop-off locations

- (2) Recycling Depots (Markham, Thornhill)
- (1) Community Center (Milliken Mills CC – SMART Bin)
- (9) Fire Stations (91 – 99, Salvation Army bins with sensor technology)
- (40) Multi-res sites (CDA containers collected on custom schedules)
- (1) Civic Center (CDA container)

Projected for end 2017 -77 total drop off locations

- (3) Recycling Depots (Markham, Thornhill, Unionville – SMART Bin)
- (5) Community Centers (Milliken Mills, Angus Glen, Armadale, Centennial, Rouge River – SMART Bin)
- (9) Fire Stations (91 – 99, Salvation Army with sensor technology)
- (60) Multi-res sites (20 additional - CDA)

Next steps – Action Plan 2017-2018

In October 2016, the Waste Diversion Committee endorsed the following strategy action plan for the next phase of the textile recycling program.

Address unregulated donation containers

Unsanitary textile donation containers placed throughout the City owned by private companies or individuals have been the cause of numerous complaints from residents. Placed on vacant property or tucked into small retail locations, these containers advertise for clothing donations and indicate support for various charities. These containers are often underserved and are a magnet for illegal dumping.

While Markham currently has one of the toughest bylaws in Ontario regulating these containers, staff is proposing to work with Markham's Legal and Bylaw departments to potentially confiscate fugitive textile donation containers placed on both public and private property.

Expand Markham Textile Donation Container locations

As indicated above, there will be 77 Markham donation containers in place by early 2017. Staff will work with our charity partners to place and facilitate additional Markham textile donation containers at appropriate public and private locations. Markham will continue to promote other legitimate charities, churches and home pick-up services for textiles and household goods. Some charities, such as the Kidney Foundation, offer free home pick up on an appointment basis.

Implementing a ban for textiles in the clear bag

In 2013, Markham successfully banned electronic materials from curbside collection. The ban resulted in increased diversion and collection cost savings. A ban of household textiles from the garbage stream will help divert more clothing for re-wear, re-use and recycling, and will support local charities.

If approved, staff recommends the textile ban become effective during Earth Week starting April 25, 2017. An extensive education and promotion program will be launched over the winter of 2017 to educate residents on all available opportunities to donate their household textiles and that all textiles are acceptable. In addition to Markham donation containers, there are free home collection services, and retail stores such as H&M that take back used textiles at their retail locations, including Markville Mall.

This is a bold step to ban textile waste from the garbage stream, and Markham can be the first municipality to implement this ban. Both the Province of Nova Scotia and Metro Vancouver are looking to implement textile bans in the near future.

Building education and awareness about textile waste

A major communications campaign will be developed to educate and promote the benefits of textile recycling. This program will bring much needed awareness of the textile waste challenge, and help create a new consciousness around sustainable consumption. The Markham Environmental Advisory

Committee will continue to be engaged in the development and execution as 'ambassadors' of the diversion roadmap.

The promotion campaign will be the same as the successful Clear Bag and Mission Green campaigns, and will include mobile signs, newsletters, and in store campaigns using citizen 'ambassadors'. All new collection boxes will carry the branding for Markham and the messaging to promote the textile collection initiative. Residents will be able to utilize the City web site to find donation bin locations.

Textiles are potential stewardship material

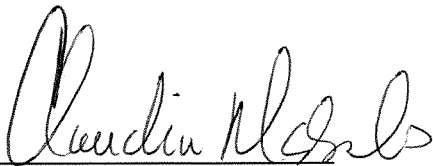
As a result of the current high profile of textile waste, the Province of Ontario is reviewing textiles as a stewardship material like computers, tires and blue box materials. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) describes the comprehensive responsibility that Ontario producers, importers and brand owners must do to reduce the environmental impact of their products and packaging. Under the EPR model, this responsibility, or Product Stewardship, extends across the entire product management lifecycle, encompassing waste reduction, recovery, recycling and reuse. EPR is also called cradle-to-grave product management. Staff support an EPR standard for textiles

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

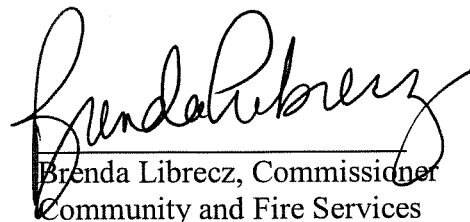
Aligns with Environmental Strategic priorities and Green Print principals. By moving forward with this textile initiative, Markham will maintain its leadership role and demonstrate commitment to sustainability.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Finance Department

RECOMMENDED BY:

Claudia Marsales, Sr. Manager
Waste & Environmental Management



Brenda Librecz, Commissioner
Community and Fire Services