



E&E FUND PROJECT #186:

ENHANCING RECYCLING IN MULTI-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS—

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW	1
■ Multi-family Building Residents	1
■ Building Superintendents	5
■ Building Managers	8
PROJECT BACKGROUND	11
■ Project Aims	11
■ Project Methods	13
■ Study Participants - Residents	14
■ Project Method – Interviews with Building Management	15
■ Project Method – Focus Group with Building Superintendents	15
DETAILED FINDINGS	16
TENANTS	16
■ Background – Buildings: the Recycling Context	16
■ Participation	16
■ Recycling Programs - Building Systems	18
■ Recyclers - Attitudes, Perceptions and Behaviour	20
■ Rating their Recycling Program	21
■ Tools for Recycling	22
■ Lists/Information	23
■ Collection Bags or Bins	28
■ Diversion Rates for Multi-family Buildings	30
■ Increasing Diversion – Tenant Suggestions	30
■ More Resident Suggestions to Increase Diversion	33
■ Increasing Diversion – Reaction to List of Options	35
■ Reaching MF Residents with Messages	37

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SUPERINTENDENTS	38
■ Recycling Task	38
■ Reaction to the MF Study	39
■ Building Program	39
■ Collection Services	39
■ Bin Storage, Capacity and Design	40
■ Resident Participation	42
■ Efficiency Assessment – rating their building’s performance	43
■ Role of Municipality	43
■ Strategies to Increase Recycling	44
 BUILDING MANAGERS	 47
■ Building Profile	47
■ Recycling Report Card and Attitudes towards Recycling	47
■ Resident Participation and Feedback	48
■ Recycling Strengths and Weakness	49
■ Tenant Education	50
■ Awareness of Diversion Target	51
■ Linking Finances with Recycling	52
■ The Ideal System	52
■ Reaction to Organic Collection	53
 APPENDICES	 54
■ Discussion Guide - Resident Focus Groups	54
■ Interviews with Building Management - Interview Guide	58
■ York Region Multi-Residential Recycling Feedback Tally For May 8 & 9	60

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Introduction

The following is based on five focus groups - four with residents (condominiums and apartment buildings) and one session with six building superintendents. In addition six onsite, face-to-face interviews were conducted with building managers located in Markham, Richmond Hill or Vaughan. The focus groups and interviews were conducted in May 2006.

MULTI-FAMILY BUILDING RESIDENTS

No STANDARD BUILDING OR RECYCLING PROGRAM

Many different building sizes and heights were represented - 43, 16, 8 down to five storeys or less. As would be expected, many different recycling options were described including floor-by-floor daily collection, recycling and garbage rooms at the ground level, outdoor bins for garbage and recyclables, garbage chutes and one condominium with two chutes - one for garbage and one for recyclables.

WHAT RECYCLING MEANS

On an abstract level, many people link recycling with the environment, yet find it has low visibility in their building. Discussion prompted many participants to focus on recycling for the first time; they also were introduced to essential program basics.

CONVENIENCE IS PRIMARY

Respondents agreed that convenient access to recycling was critical; the easier it was to recycle, potentially the more likely they were to make the effort. And conversely, harder to access recycling facilities often lost out to garbage chutes, if this option was available - "The garbage chute is centralized in each floor, so it's just easier to dump it (recyclables) in." A good option was to place bins for recycling in the garbage chute rooms; staff would be expected to haul materials to the central recycling facilities.

WHO IS RECYCLING

A gender divide characterizes both curbside and multi-family residential recycling; women are most likely to separate as part of their housekeeping and food related chores. Female respondents claimed that men were not recyclers and most men concurred: "We're very good at recycling our beer bottles." Seniors are seen to be excellent recyclers if they have the proper instruction, while kids and teens are thought to be disinterested.

Apartment tenants were seen, by some, to be indifferent to recycling. They have no sense of ownership and are not responsible, unlike homeowners who are accountable and must manage their own waste. However, it is not a given that condominium residents are good recyclers; it is a function of the building system and their own convictions.

Low-level recyclers complained that recycling took extra time for sorting; the contaminated state of the recycling bins confirmed that other building residents also did not pay close attention to doing the job correctly.

BUILDING SYSTEMS – CHUTES & BINS

Garbage chutes give garbage disposal an unfair advantage over recycling - "because it's so easy to be anonymous and put your recyclables down the garbage chute. You can cheat." Also, some buildings place garbage cans in several spots (in front of the building, in the garage, in the mail room) to ease disposal and minimize littering, while locating recycling bins in only one area.

The distance and ease of access to the recycling facilities was a major factor on recycling frequency and volume. On a practical level, people who live in point towers (20 or more storeys) have farther to travel to the bins than those in lower-rise buildings. Because multi-storey residents do not have large garbage cans to store their waste, many respondents were in the habit of disposing of it daily or several times a week. They complained that sorting recyclables into separate bags not only takes more time, but also requires more storage area in units where space is at a premium. Hence, recyclers in multi-family buildings have many more challenges than those who live in houses, a point that was made continually throughout the session.

A variety of recycling programs were described, including bins located outside, in parking garages, and in separate rooms at ground level. The number, labelling and condition of the bins also varied; some programs were well organized and maintained while others were less hospitable.

There was low awareness that commingling of recyclables was now in place in York Region - "There was a rumour going around not long ago that you could actually mix all your stuff, you don't have to separate it. And it's still a rumour. Nobody's confirmed it. Which would actually make it a lot easier for us." This was a welcome step forward for many respondents.

AWARENESS OF RECYCLABLES

It was clear that many respondents were not fully informed on the wide range of materials that can be recycled in their building program. However, possibly some buildings are limiting the range of items or simply do not have up-to-date signs on their recycling bins. "I went to York Region's website and looked it up (plastic types eligible for recycling) and, sure enough, you can, but down in our recycling room it just says 1 and 2. So it's like now we're throwing all this plastic away that we should be recycling, but nobody's told us."

In addition to confusion concerning types of plastics that could be recycled, respondents were surprised to see that aerosol and empty paint containers and aluminium wrap and containers also were eligible. Several people inquired about what to do with shredded paper; concerns about identity theft appeared to run high.

RECYCLING TOOLS

Some tenants had been given bags or bins (green for paper and blue for containers) to help them manage recyclables. This approach was seen to be practical and possibly easier than storing the materials in plastic grocery bags. Some people preferred to sort it according to material, requiring two recycling containers; others thought that commingling was preferable because it saved sorting time.




Residents believed that they should have access to free recycling bins or bags - "the curbside people, they get theirs given to them." - and that a more focused, multi-family building approach was needed - "If they want everyone to do this kind of thing, they should start really going forward with it instead of just a half-assed..."

The level and type of tenant education varied considerably; this included the availability of posters in common areas and recycling rooms, labels on recycling bins, lists for individual apartments, recycling information and tips in building newsletters. It appeared that the majority of tenants lacked sufficient information or prompting to recycle - "We're just not educated enough," was a common complaint. "I figure they just think people live in a building, they're not going to bother, so what's the point in wasting..."

Motivation and prompting were seen as essential components in a well-rounded, effective program. Environmental (negative and positive) and economic messages had some impact; others responded to reminders that it was their duty to recycle as responsible adults.





RATING THEIR RECYCLING PROGRAM

Rating the building's recycling program out of 10 - one is the lowest and 10 are the highest:

-  "I'd say 5 because my building handed out brochures but they did not hand out the recycling bins and you only have access to the room one day a week."
-  "Six, because there is a lot of work to be done, more recycling to be centralized."
-  "Six, it could be improved. I think all buildings could be improved. It's not monitored as much as it should be."

LOW DIVERSION

Most respondents were shocked to learn that on average only 12% to 14% of the total waste generated by multi-family buildings is recycled; the remainder goes to landfill. Several reasons for this poor performance were mentioned:

-  Men don't recycle; women are better organized.
-  Inconvenient central recycling competing with very convenient floor-by-floor garbage chutes.
-  Curbside recyclers are "exposed" while people who use central recycling systems are not - "nobody would know."
-  Lack of education aimed at multi-family residents; the focus has been on curbside collection. "We've never received any pamphlets or information about how to - literally, how to recycle."

GROUP INFLUENCES

Evidence that other tenants are recycling gives a positive signal, but it can mean that some recyclables end up in the garbage due to lack of capacity in buildings that have insufficient number of recycling carts.

PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITY

Everyone has a role to play in making recycling effective - residents, supers, management and the City/government. "It's everybody's responsibility. I think some people just need more encouragement to do it. We're all responsible."

In many cases, residents did not expect building management and superintendents to come up with educational material, but to be a conduit for it. The argument was that the government provides information to curbside recyclers and should do the same for people living in multi-unit buildings. "You can't leave it on the onus of the building management."

ACCOUNTABILITY AND ECONOMIC SIGNALS

Respondents agreed that residents were not informed about the poor recycling performance (12 - 14%) and the 60% waste diversion goal set by the province and need efficient programs and tools to achieve targets. Some residents also advocated charging buildings that did not reach the goals - "If they start charging, it rings a light." "You have to push them harder."

Others did not agree with surcharges for poor performance; it would result in more littering and was "another form of taxation."











REACTION TO TEST RECYCLING CONTAINERS








The available space (in kitchen, storage room, and cupboard) dictated reactions to the individual 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. Respondents agreed that all residents, regardless of whether they lived in a house or a multi-family building, should be treated equally and provided with the means to recycle.

HOW TO BOOST RECYCLING

1. "Education" of residents, using a variety of channels and content. Participants described a "constant flow" of messages that trained and motivated them to get busy and recycle. Newspapers, radio, direct mail/flyers, internet, condominium fee receipts, elevators, building newsletters, resident meetings, etc. Many residents recognized that they are still in the early stages and need lots of prompting and tips in order to make it normative - "...make it a habit." Provide educational materials in English and other languages (Italian, Chinese).
2. Motivate people to sort their waste - arm them with the facts and consequences of not recycling.
3. Train children and teens to recycle at school and they in turn will influence and educate their parents to recycle.
4. Provide visually stimulating, simple, illustrated instructions. Also include tips on material preparation and what not to recycle in the education mix.
5. Commingling reduces the work and makes recycling more attractive for many.
6. Free bins or bags, providing options for different household sizes and preferences.
7. Clean, well-lit, organized, conveniently located recycling areas with adequate and up-to-date instructions.
8. Onsite staffed display, promoting recycling and providing essential tools (bins/bags and print material). Provide chance for residents to learn from the experts.
9. Use chutes for recycling only or divide usage for both streams, i.e., garbage on certain days and recycling on other days. Opinion was divided on this suggestion.
10. Make recycling mandatory and enforce it; be prepared to charge fines to non-compliers.
11. Tenant volunteer program to help organize the program and assist seniors and others who require assistance. Provide feedback to the board of the condominium association.

BUILDING SUPERINTENDENTS

-  Convenience is understood to be central in designing an efficient recycling program - "putting these bins in a very easy location really encourages the home owners (condominium residents) to do recycling." This observation was made by a superintendent of a 260-unit condominium building who has expanded the recycling program to include 22 carts for recyclables. Carts are filled to capacity on a weekly basis.
-  Residents who own their unit are seen by some superintendents as more likely to cooperate with recycling programs than renters who may be seen as having a lower commitment to the overall wellbeing of the property. "I'm paying rent. Why should I do this (recycle)?"
-  No two buildings are the same; each one presents challenges for siting additional bins and carts if the goal is to make it easy for residents to recycle. Some locations have recycling rooms indoors or in parking garages while others are forced to place the carts outside, which makes it harder to get tenants to participate. This is particularly problematic for seniors during the winter months.
-  The cost of acquiring recycling bins and carts can be a barrier to expanding recycling, forcing some residents and superintendents to dispose of extra recyclables in the garbage. The City should provide bins at no charge. Also, rough handling of collection bins/carts by haulers adds to the financial load.
-  Condominium owners pay property taxes; hence, they expect to receive local government services - "they're paying government taxes, so they demand services from the government."
-  Superintendents are never consulted on recycling/waste handling systems and have no help in finding solutions to problems; they work in isolation and under pressure from building managers and residents.
-  Management companies are focused on profit maximization, possibly to the exclusion of expanding building recycling systems - "My management doesn't seem to be interested in recycling." It would appear that management companies are not thinking through the implications required in implementing an efficient recycling program. They do not provide essential information and possibly the right type or number of carts. Recycling represents more work for the superintendent, which may be resented.
-  Management pays attention to the bottom line cost of disposing of extra garbage if they are charged for this service. However, they may not be calculating the cumulative impacts over a period of time to the point that they are prepared to seek cost reduction solutions.
-  Condominium boards vary considerably; some are reactive and exhibit no interest in recycling.
-  Sorting waste poses a problem, yet some superintendents are not supportive of commingling because they fear that it will result in plastic bag contamination and inefficient use of limited recycling capacity.










-  Abitibi is compensating buildings for fibre, including corrugated. All they require is that the corrugated is flattened, which was reported to be easier than City requirements. The chance to benefit economically had great appeal to some superintendents.
-  Overly optimistic assessment of diversion rate was noted among those superintendents who believed that they had a relatively efficient program that was supported by residents. At best, superintendents have an approximate understanding of how much is being diverted and what proportion is going to landfill.
-  Unlike curbside recyclers, there are no enforcement opportunities for multi-storey residents - "You can really do nothing except try to put things in to make it easy for people." Convenience and education were seen to be key to engender higher diversion.
-  Corrugated cardboard recycling takes up limited space and requires lots of preparation - "the biggest pain in the ass." "It's a huge problem."
-  HHW Collection and Disposal - Some conscientious superintendents offer a bin to collect household batteries as a service to residents; however, HHW depot operators may question the volume. An allowance is needed to permit acceptance of large volumes of HHW. This could lead to expanding the range of items collected to include paint cans and solvents in addition to batteries.
-  Bulky Items and White Goods - Issue of how to dispose of old furniture, mattresses, stoves, old sinks, used carpet, etc. poses a problem for some buildings. There is some belief that the City should haul these items away promptly without a charge, given that this service if provided for households using curbside collection. A small charge is acceptable in some situations.
-  Participants were pleased to have the opportunity to describe their programs, discuss the problems and share solutions. "I feel the group you had here tonight was really worthwhile - you need to be thanked for the selection you made, because superintendent is an all-seeing kind of person who does so many assignments besides recycling."





STRATEGIES TO INCREASE RECYCLING

1. Tenant education is critical - "the media is not covering it (recycling) and people are not aware of the importance of it, and that's what needs to be done." Materials need to be translated and/or should employ graphics and illustrations that can be widely understood. Languages mentioned included Italian, Cantonese and German.
2. Well designed, attractive posters of different dimensions with recycling instructions for posting in common areas, elevators, recycling/garbage rooms, laundries, etc.
3. A variety of different tenant education and recycling tool options should be provided including the option to use door hangers, lists, bags, baskets or mini blue boxes.

4. Periodic tenant meetings to discuss recycling and waste handling; identify problems and look for reasonable solutions. Presentations from the City on recycling at condominium board meetings and AGM's are essential.
5. Close the chutes; otherwise it is too easy for residents to "dump everything down there." Some buildings have already taken that step and are happy with the results once they withstood residents' anger.
6. Technical assistance is required (municipal expertise) to assess the building and recommend the most efficient, convenient system possible, given the design and spatial constraints. "We need somebody with a technical capability."
7. Replace carts with larger bins; it is unreasonable to expect staff to wheel large numbers of carts out for collection. Also, carts are not designed to hold heavy loads of paper. More capacity for storing corrugated cardboard is needed in some buildings.
8. Some superintendents were interested in the notion of setting up diversion goals for each property and competing for recognition for efficient programs.

BUILDING MANAGERS



-  The level of awareness and involvement with recycling programs varied considerably; some managers were quite informed while others were more distant from the actual operation and awareness of the tenant profile.
-  Managers who have a close view of what happens in their buildings note that recycling reduces garbage volumes. One condominium building with 268 suites had gone from 12 garbage bins per week down to five. The frequency of private collection for garbage and recycling had increased to four times per week. Concerns with health/hygiene issues and capacity limitations have prompted the increased collection frequency.
-  Staff/superintendents may be required to sort through recyclables to remove plastic bags and non-recyclables. Managers view recycling as labour intensive and costly because more bins have to be purchased.
-  Commingling of recyclables was seen as having a positive impact on recycling volumes
-  Several managers noted that superintendents are usually better able to provide details about residents, their recycling behaviour and the building program than they are. For an in-depth discussion of recycling, it was critical to talk with superintendents.
-  Managers noted that superintendents can make a big difference. If they live in the building and really care enough "to run it like I do my home," then the system can be supervised and maintained. However, some buildings operate with part-time staff that have little time or interest beyond maintaining minimal levels of service.
-  Space constraints were a recurring complaint. Several managers noted that due to capacity limitations their buildings could not accommodate more recycling carts. Excess recyclables are thrown into waste bins "to even them out."
-  The economic impacts of diversion are complex. One manager who contracted all garbage and recycling collection to a private hauler (Miller) indicated that the total costs did not vary if recycling was increased.
-  Some managers noted service complaints. They claimed that City-contracted collectors damaged recycling carts but were not required to repair or replace them.
-  There are no financial incentives for individual residents/condominium owners to increase recycling - "It's not something that comes out of their pockets. It's what's in the budget. But with the homeowner it's coming out of your pocket." Tenants in rental apartments have no connection whatsoever to the monetary impacts of waste handling.


-  Condominium boards may not be paying attention to recycling and waste issues, other than trying to address litter problems when they arise.
-  There appears to be limited tenant education other than sporadic references in residents' newsletters (condominiums) and distribution of City provided materials, when they are available. Most residents did not have recycling bags or boxes.
-  All but one manager was surprised to learn that the province had set a 60% diversion goal. Most thought it could not be achieved, particularly with their current recycling system, unless tenants were educated and given the tools, and recycling capacity was greatly expanded.
-  The local government/City has not indicated that recycling is a priority and that waste volumes must be reduced substantially. According to managers, there had been no direct communication from the City on this matter, although a few were aware of Toronto's waste crisis and the impact that it is having on multi-family building operations.


STRATEGIES TO INCREASE RECYCLING

1. Provide floor-by-floor collection. Some building managers believe that this is the best way to substantially increase recycling' however, the cost and spatial limitations are barriers to delivering this high level of service.
2. Education - "The education of the people. I think it's the understanding. If they don't have the understanding they're never going to do it."
3. Provide recycling bags or bins to residents at no charge, akin to tools provided to curbside recyclers.
4. Expand recycling to several zones in the building - "more drop-off points."
5. City should provide technical expertise in designing an efficient recycling system.
6. Some managers of condominium complexes with compliant residents considered that organic collection could be viable, providing that the system was carefully implemented. Sanitary impacts and the fear of infestations were the key concerns.

RECOMMENDATIONS

-  Tenants require ongoing education, adequate recycling tools (bins/bags and recycling information and lists) and efficient systems in order to become habitual recyclers. The City is expected to play a role in providing at no charge recycling tools and public education and messaging campaigns. Building management and superintendents are conduits for conveying City-provided materials.
-  Managers and superintendents require assistance from City technical experts to create recycling systems that address residents' needs in terms of capacity, signage and convenient location. The latter element will present considerable challenges given that many buildings have not been designed to accommodate recycling; they are geared to waste collection only.

-  The City could find merit in creating separate advisory panels of residents, superintendents and managers in order to develop workable, practical solutions to the many barriers that are obstructing recycling in multi-family buildings. It must be understood that no one system can be applied to the vast array of structures and tenant profiles.

-  This overview should be considered a work in progress and a starting point only in developing an understanding of how to increase diversion in multi-family buildings in Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan. The learning from the York Region project has been expanded by further indepth research conducted by AMRC, funded by Stewardship Ontario. The AMRC study included focus groups with residents in multi-family buildings and superintendents and individual interviews with property managers in seven Ontario cities. It provides extensive guidance for strategies to address this issue.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Town of Markham, Town of Richmond Hill and City of Vaughan have been working on public education programs that are aimed at increasing recycling and reducing the amount of residential solid waste that must be landfilled. This has been successful to some extent. To illustrate, currently 65% of Town of Markham's total residential waste is being recycled through the blue box, yard waste and organic collection programs. This excellent rate is a function of adopting the best new operational methods and paying close attention to the information needs of program users.

The one weak spot that Town of Markham, Town of Richmond Hill and City of Vaughan have identified is multi-residential buildings. This problem is endemic to apartment recycling programs across Ontario. The big challenge that waste management departments are experiencing is increasing multi-residential diversion rates to match those of single-family households. Recycling in multi-residential buildings is totally different from participating in curbside recycling; in the former setting, residents must share huge bins which means that residents cannot claim ownership or be responsible for their individual diversion efforts. This is particularly challenging given the lack of community spirit in many multi-residential buildings. A new social marketing plan is needed to educate residents and to inspire participation despite real impediments to convenience that many residents face.

PROJECT AIMS

Town of Markham, Town of Richmond Hill and City of Vaughan are embarking on a plan to increase diversion in multi-residential buildings. At least 10% of the residents in the three York Region municipalities live in either high-density condominium or apartment buildings.

Initially, focus groups and individual, onsite interviews were conducted to get at the heart of the issue - what can be done to boost participation and separation? Probes included:

1. Residents' Recycling Behaviour - most and least likely items. Focus on similarities and differences between condominium dwellers, mainly owners, and renters in high-density buildings. Do condominium owners have a greater sense of ownership of the program and does this translate to higher commitment to recycle?
2. Residents' Role and Responsibility - Do residents feel that they should be recycling? Is this job seen as part of their responsibility or do they think that it is something that building management should handle? Residents will be probed regarding what could be done to make them recycle more.
3. Community Recycling Trends - Do they care about the recycling performance of their buildings? Do other residents recycle or does it appear that recycling is not popular in their building? Is there a sense of community in their building or on their floor? Could instilling community pride have a positive impact on participation? What levers can be used to help build a recycling ethos?
4. Recycling Opportunities and Barriers - What works best? What else is needed to prompt responsible behaviour? What gets in the way - how significant is the issue of limited storage space and lack of a blue box or other recycling container? Are there tools, such as blue bags or small apartment blue boxes, that can help residents separate more recyclables? Do they separate on a room-by-room basis and miss recyclables - impact on diversion by adding more small waste bins? Is this a practical solution?

5. Awareness Of Recyclables - Do residents know what can be recycled and what items belong in the garbage? Do they have a list on hand? Have they recently received preparatory information? What is the best way to deliver this information so that it is retained in the long term?
6. Convenience & Efficacy - Can recycling be made more convenient? Or is the sheer distance from the recycling bins the main deterrent? What can be done that could make it easier? For instance, is it feasible to add small collection carts to each floor that would be then emptied by a service provider? Who would pay for this service and would residents use it? Residents will be probed for suggestions on making recycling more convenient.
7. Role Of Building Management And Superintendents - Roles played in encouraging or depressing the amount of materials that are put in the recycling bins. Overt and implicit signals that the recycling program is an integral part of the building. Who is responsible for setting policy re waste matters, training, waste collection systems, bin maintenance, etc?
8. Recycling/Garbage System - Location and upkeep of the recycling and garbage bin collection area. Are the recycling bins located in a safe, convenient spot? Are they properly serviced? Is the signage and lighting adequate? (Any link between levels of diversion and key variables - location, lighting, number of bins, signage, etc.?)
9. Tenant Communication & Feedback - Does the building hold meetings or have a newsletter? How does management communicate with tenants - signs in elevators, door-to-door drops, mailbox drops? Residents will be probed for suggestions on improving communication within buildings.
10. Three Stream - Organic Recycling - Are residents interested in participating in organic recycling? Are they aware of the program in single-family households? What do they like and dislike about three stream? What items are they prepared to segregate and which ones could pose a problem? What is the ideal way of doing this, given their situation? What tools would they need to make the job clean and convenient?
11. Communication and Education - What messages and educational materials could be helpful in increasing interest in recycling and activating behaviour? Would they respond to messages directed to all recyclers (curbside and multi-residential)? And, what messages are unique to their experience as multi-residential recyclers? What information have they received to date about recycling in their building - what did they learn and did they retain the information material? What suggestions could they make to improve communication and educational materials?
12. Communication Channels - What is the best way to reach them with information about recycling? Role of television, newspapers (dailies and community), onsite signs posted in public spaces? Door-to-door flyers, magnets, other? Types of information expected in each medium.

The learning will assist in developing the framework for a social marketing program. However, it is a starting point only. Further research will be required that could include meetings on site and door-to-door surveys with residents and interviews with building management and owners.

PROJECT METHODS

RECYCLERS - APARTMENT BUILDINGS & CONDOMINIUMS

As a starting point in the development of a social marketing program targeting multi-residential building residents, four focus groups were conducted. These in-depth research tools were useful in developing an understanding of attitudes, behaviour and awareness among a cross section of this recycling segment.

RECRUITING

Research House, a national supplier, recruited the focus groups using a screening questionnaire developed by the consultant. In return for their participation, respondents received refreshments and a \$65 honorarium.

Informa Market Research is a member of the Market Research and Intelligence Association, Canada's market research organization, and as such adheres to standards set by the organization. This includes engaging only recruiting companies that belong to the Central Files system, as detailed below. This ensures that focus groups conducted by Informa include only people who qualify and avoids the inclusion of the 'professional respondent.'

WHAT IS CENTRAL FILES?

Central Files is a system of monitoring and tracking the participation of respondents in qualitative interviews and focus groups. It can also include any undesirable respondents that moderators report as being uncooperative, over-bearing.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Every month recruiting firms submit the names and phone numbers of all respondents who attended a group or interview during the past month.

While one recruiting firm can easily monitor the participation of respondents in their own database, it is impossible to ascertain whether a respondent has attended for another firm in the past month or the past 6 months. When each recruiting firm submits their attendees to Central Files they can be cross-referenced and abusers are highlighted. Central Files checks by telephone number and first and last names. If a match is found in any of the three categories, the name goes on the "Do not recruit again" list. This list is sent monthly to all recruiting firms who regularly submit to Central Files.

FACILITATION, FACILITIES AND RECORDING











All sessions were facilitated by the consultant according to a Discussion Guide (see Appendices) developed by the consultant in conjunction with the client project team. The venue for the sessions was local community centres located in Town of Markham and Town of Richmond Hill. The proceedings were audio-taped and digital video recorded; clients viewed the sessions via closed-circuit television.

ANALYSES AND REPORT PREPARATION

Complete transcripts were made of the focus group proceedings and input from the questionnaires was tallied. The consultant then carefully reviewed transcripts and tallies, viewed the videotapes and incorporated impressions that were gathered during the course of conducting the focus groups. All of this material was then analyzed and carefully distilled into this detailed report.

STUDY PARTICIPANTS - RESIDENTS

Focus group recruiting criteria:













-  Recruit 10 for eight to participate.
-  Access to recycling using recycling bins.
-  Half of respondents live in households with one or two occupants and half have three or more occupants.
-  Half of respondents live in households with at least one child.
-  Half of respondents have attended college or university.
-  Home language to include non-English - mainly Chinese, South Asian and Italian - among one-third of participants.
-  Heads of household.
-  Age range - 25 and over (including retirees).
-  Have lived in the community for at least one year.
-  Apartment and condominium residents were in separate groups - building locations included Town of Markham, Town of Richmond Hill and City of Vaughan.

PROFILE OF 4 GROUPS

Group No.	Profile – Apartment building dwellers
1	Women 25 to 50 yrs. Half families with one or more children and half adult-only households (no more than two single dwellers)
2	Men 25 to 65+ yrs. Adult-only households
Group No.	Profile –Condominium dwellers
3	Women 25 to 50 yrs. Families with one or more children.
4	Women 25 to 65+ yrs. Adult-only households

PROJECT METHOD – INTERVIEWS WITH BUILDING MANAGEMENT

Individual interviews were conducted with building management in rental properties and condominium buildings. A total of six were conducted to provide initial insights. They took place onsite and included a tour of the recycling and waste collection locations. Participants were invited to describe their recycling and waste collection programs in detail. Probes included -

-  observation of the profile of building residents
-  building residents' interest in recycling
-  attitude towards recycling on part of building manager. Do they think it is worthwhile? Is it seen as part of their job? Signals given by property owners/senior management?
-  problems occurring with recycling bins
-  complaints and comments about recycling from tenants
-  role of chutes and perceived impact of retrofitting the building
-  maintenance issues - i.e., are the bins clearly regularly? Overflowing? Labelling issues?
-  any efforts that have been made to improve the programs
-  any educational materials circulated in building. Posted in common areas?
-  Do residents have mini blue boxes and blue bags?
-  What could/would they do to improve the capture rate if they were redesigning their building's recycling centre?
-  Reaction to organic collection service - What are the drivers and barriers to success? What is their personal feeling about this additional element? Do they understand the significance of adding organic to the waste diversion program?

PROJECT METHOD – FOCUS GROUP WITH BUILDING SUPERINTENDENTS




One focus group was conducted with apartment building superintendents who manage large apartment buildings in the three participating York Region municipalities. The list of issues that were included in the interviews with building management company representatives was also covered in the focus group with building superintendents, as listed above.

A discussion guide (see Appendices) was used which had been prepared in conjunction with the client team. The facilitator who conducted the groups with residents also conducted this session in order to maximize learning. Insights gleaned from residents were included as probes to help stimulate discussion with building superintendents.

The session was conducted in a community recreation centre. In return for their assistance, they received an honorarium of \$75 and light refreshments. The session was audio and videotaped; a transcript was made of the proceedings. This input was analyzed and included in this report.

DETAILED FINDINGS

Three segments are represented and reported separately:

-  Tenants
-  Superintendents
-  Property Managers

TENANTS

BACKGROUND – BUILDINGS: THE RECYCLING CONTEXT

Tenants resided in a variety of types of buildings; the preponderance of respondents lived in condominiums (20); participants living in 12 apartment buildings represented the minority. And, as the table below indicates, two-thirds of the structures were five or more storeys; most condominiums were of the taller variety.

Building	Less than 5 storeys (> 5)	5 or more storeys (≤ 5)	Total
Apartment	4	7	11
Condo	4	15	19

As we learned in the course of discussion, each building structure and management style presents challenges to multi-residential recycling. There are also disparities among those who live in apartment buildings and condominiums, with the latter residents having more of a sense of control. The concept of ownership and the resources available to maintain the recycling area varied considerably, making a 'one size fits all' approach impractical.

PARTICIPATION

A distinct gender divide was observed, with more women participating in the recycling than men, which is consistent with recycling in general. Most men concurred that they were less involved.

He hates that I make him take it all down. (married woman)

We're very good at recycling our beer bottles. We're very good at that. (married man)

However, some of the non-recycling male participants appeared to be positively influenced by the discussion, promising to mend their ways. This shift was particularly evident with a few men when they considered the impact that waste could have on future generations. This was cause for reflection.

Yes, unfortunately. I'd like to be more on top of it, because I'm seeing what's going on out there. This might educate me a little bit more by coming here today. I guess hearing on the news what's happening to the earth and stuff. It's not very good, so it's kind of alarming us. So we'll do what we've got to do to make things better, I guess.

When I was a kid, you just put the garbage out however you put it out and nobody ever

thought of this. That's sort of again what comes in my mind a lot of times. When we were young, I think we were very naïve, and I think we ruined - I think we were probably the generation that ruined the earth, at least started ruining the earth anyway. We weren't even aware of it, digging all these different holes and cutting trees and all these other things and not even being aware of how it was going to affect the earth.

On the other hand, some women admitted that their recycling habits were spotty at best given the inconvenience of the program and their lack of awareness of what they should do. It seemed to be particularly onerous for women with young children, both in terms of the extra time and having to leave young ones unattended while they went to the recycling bins.

You've got to bring it downstairs, and then you get tired and you just end up putting it in the garbage.

Several respondents claimed that sorting recyclables into the correct bin was a big challenge given their lack of awareness of what went where.

We try. We really do, but we don't have all the information. Sometimes I get confused as to where to put what. I use my imagination to try to do it. It's not always right, and she has less patience than I do, so if she does it, she dumps it in anywhere to try to get rid of it. (male referring to partner/spouse)

Some respondents, potentially less enthusiastic about recycling, reported that the program had few participants. Recycling was more likely to be viewed as primarily aimed at curbside service users - it is easy for them.

Nobody recycles in apartment buildings. When you're living in a home, they're collecting it individually. They don't do it in apartments. You just put it down the chute. People just mix it up because it's time consuming.

Anecdotally, seniors were believed to be committed recyclers while youth were linked with waste creation and litter. The former population segment has ample spare time and the former segment is indifferent to the recycling imperative.

I think there's more elderly people there and they have maybe a little more time. They usually put their recycling in the boxes and so on. I think they're pretty good. Some people are more conscious of it.

Our streets and everything were cleaner than they are now, and I think a lot of the kids today, I just see them, they buy pop bottles or they buy pop and candy bars and just strew them, just throw the wrapper down and walk away without even thinking.

Some respondents were particularly keen to see recycling habits instilled in children starting at a very young age. Schools were viewed as a natural setting for teaching children how and what to recycle. Parents then would be the beneficiaries of this training; it pleased them to think that children could lead household diversionary habits.

It's just become habit. Even my two-year-old now, she knows when these are done, she'll grab that off the table and say, "I go put it in blue. I go to blue."

It appears that some residents have made recycling the norm - they sort the materials and then try to get them to the building blue carts regularly. The goal was to minimize the clutter in their limited space, given an acute lack of storage area. Real estate is at a premium. They contrasted this circumstance with curbside recyclers who had garages, basements and backyards to store recycling containers. The challenge for multi-family building homemakers is to maintain a neat, orderly home environment.

I just don't like to see it, so I just take it. Like I don't want to see 24 cans sitting in there in the bucket. I open that door and I see that or whatever, I'd rather not. So, like she said, it becomes a habit and you just do it. It's like brushing your teeth: you take your stuff with you when you go. It's also enforced at your work place.

Apartment Buildings vs. Condos

There's a greater sense of ownership with some condominium owners compared to those renting apartments. While the result might possibly be a greater interest in recycling, this is not a given.

Life in multi-family buildings can have a communal aspect, although this seems to be more the exception than the rule. People who live in smaller buildings and housing co-ops appear to be much more aware of their neighbours and given to noting their behaviour, whereas larger structures seem to breed anonymity.

Condominiums do differ from apartment buildings in that they usually have annual general meetings, possibly task-oriented committees and newsletters that are seen to be vehicles for tackling resident education and troubleshooting.

Why does it have to be up to the building management, though? Why can't there be like a green team within the building? If you've got questions, you go to these people and say, "Is this recyclable?"

Yeah. There should be a recycling committee, like a committee maybe.

RECYCLING PROGRAMS - BUILDING SYSTEMS

The quality of the building's recycling facilities varies considerably: some are user friendly, but many seem to be less inviting. Here are three condominium owners describing their systems:

We have a recycling room which has multi-bins. So it doesn't just have one for glass; it's got two for glass, so there's lots of room. They're always full and they're very good about cleaning them.

The facilities - the recycling room is used a fair amount. It's a small room. It's very disorganized, though. I find it very disorganized and not well noted. The recycling bins are not clearly specified for what, for papers, and we have a lot of people in the building unfortunately who do not speak English

I live in a condo with my husband. It's an 11-storey building...They have no recycling room. It's like a recycling bin close to the garage...There's a bin at the back and I put mine there, but again, we're just throwing anything and everything because they don't have separate bins and they don't have it organized.

A few fortunate respondents live in buildings that either have recycling chutes on each floor or provide floor-by-floor collection. However, those men who could access recycling in this convenient fashion admitted that they usually did not bother to do so.

I got a green one and I got a blue one. They're just trying the program out because what's happening is that downstairs in the basement is just causing a ruckus, and because it's a 43-floor building, there's just way too many people not really doing what they're supposed to be doing, so they figure what if you just do it in your home? Plus the garbage chute is centralized in each floor, so it's just easier to dump it in.

Access to the recycling bins is just one of the variables mentioned by tenants. Some talked about having 24-hour, seven-day-a-week entrance to their recycling room while others were restricted to certain days and times of the week. Those with restricted access expressed their frustration at having to wait for the specific time intervals when they could recycle.

Location of the bins also varies among the respondents. Some have a dedicated recycling room that is located inside the building while others have to go outside to use the recycling bins. Convenience came up frequently as a key factor to multi-residential recycling. In an impromptu fashion, many commented that the ideal system would be floor-by-floor collection. It made great sense to have three chutes in new buildings that would accommodate recyclables, organics and waste - but what could be done with existing structures? Participants imagined that it would be far too costly to retrofit them to make recycling as convenient as garbage disposal, so they have to contend with systems designed to place emphasis on garbage disposal; recycling is disadvantaged in this context.

Recycling can be particularly challenging for those who live in highrise buildings with units many floors away from the actual facilities. It means a special trip down to the bins or training themselves to leave their home with bags of recyclables.

Also, bins placed outside present a challenge during inclement weather. This placement was seen to be particularly dangerous for older residents and possibly youngsters. Ideally, parents hoped their children would help carry items to the bins, but practically it was not wise.

The state of the bins and available capacity can present concrete barriers to recycling. Dedication wanes when residents are repeatedly confronted with full recycling bins. The lesson is why bother separating and carrying all the materials to the recycling area if it means dumping them in the garbage. Many residents and superintendents admitted that the lack of adequate capacity results in placing recyclables in the garbage.

But when you do put it downstairs, sometimes they're actually full, so you're like, okay, what to do next? So you end up putting it in the garbage. It happens sometimes.

Some respondents were aware that York Region curbside recyclers have, as they view it, the perceived advantage of commingling, whereas multi-family building recyclers have to sort their recyclables. They questioned why there are two different approaches, and a few wondered if it mattered at all - were the materials really being recycled anyway?

Because they don't have to do it in homes, right? They just have to put it in blue bins and that's it. They (the program operators) sort it out. They (curbside recyclers) put all the plastics and papers in one. In apartments, you actually have to do it individually. People don't have the time to do that. Or they feel it's not their job or whatever. (male condominium

resident)

The worst part of this is the smell. Everybody wants to get rid of garbage faster, and with the apartment buildings, you just take the little bag and go over and dump it into the chute and that's it.

On the other hand, those respondents who are not so keen on recycling know that they have no pressure to recycle given the anonymity of their building's system. Curbside recyclers have to comply with the program because neighbours monitor each other, whereas multi-family residents have the freedom of doing what suits them best







I think it's harder to get caught. You can just dump it and turn your back, whereas in your home you have to sort it out and put it in front of your house.

I actually just moved into a condo just a month ago. Right now I'm very fresh. I've never lived in a condo before. I came from a home, and as we were talking about earlier, people do watch more: this guy recycles, this guy doesn't, because you see it when you're driving down your street... people do pay attention to that when they're driving.


RECYCLERS - ATTITUDES, PERCEPTIONS AND BEHAVIOUR


This feedback was gathered using a list of 10 statements and gauging the level of agreement (strongly or somewhat) or disagreement (strongly or somewhat) with each item.

A strong majority agreed that -

-  Assurance that recyclables were being used to make new items/packages would motivate recyclers. (Some residents are not convinced that recyclables are being properly handled and processed.)
-  A concern about identity theft is depressing recycling of fibre. (Respondents are reluctant to put shredded items in the bin for fear they can be easily reconstructed. A few people suggested that the building could offer a secure shredding service.)
-  Lack of convenience is a barrier to recycling. (The garbage chute has the advantage.)
-  People feel guilty when they don't recycle to the maximum.
-  Two-thirds admit that they can be confused by apparently frequent program changes. (This is understandable given that most had not seen a recent list and rely on the recycling bin labels for correct information. Superintendents admitted that the bin signage could be improved. Not only do they need to be up-to-date, but they should employ high-impact visuals rather than being reliant on text.)
-  More than half of residents believe that their building superintendent supports recycling; however, one-third do not think this is the case. (This may be a function of building management and inadequate recycling facilities, which are usually beyond the control of the superintendents.)

About half of residents indicated -

 Accessing recycling is a challenge given the distance between their unit and the bins.

 Limited time is a barrier to recycling.

One in three indicated that other members of the household impede recycling. (Other adult members or teens may refuse to carry down the recyclables or cannot be trusted to do it properly. If they don't dump them down the chutes, they might fail to separate the items; it's easiest simply to drop the grocery bags in the bins.)

	Agree Somewhat or Strongly	Disagree Somewhat or Strongly
If I knew that recyclables were being made into new products & packages I would make more of an effort to recycle them.	26	5
I don't recycle my bills or personal letters because I am concerned about identity theft.	24	6
I would recycle more things if it was easier.	24	6
When I don't recycle as much as possible, I feel guilty about it.	23	7
I notice that the more we recycle the less litter there is in my community.	21	10
Sometimes I am confused by my city's recycling program because it seems to change often.	19	11
Our building superintendent is really supportive of the recycling program.	17	12
The distance between my apartment/condo and the recycling bins is too far.	16	15
Sometimes I don't recycle because I don't have time.	14	17
I would like to recycle more but other members of our household do not want to recycle.	9	20

RATING THEIR RECYCLING PROGRAM

Participants rated their building's recycling program in terms of its effectiveness in reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfill; a scale of one in ten was used, where one is the lowest score and ten is the highest score. The ratings skewed low, with more than half giving their program a failing grade (six or below).

Apartment average = 5.41

Condo average =5.66

Total building average = 5.56

Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Apartment										
>5	-	2	-	2	2	2	1	3	-	-
≤5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Condo										
>5	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-
≤5	-	3	-	1	-	1	5	2	-	1

The reasons provided for the ratings are insights into the program weaknesses and the barriers that residents face, including -

They don't provide everyone with blue bins. There are no signs showing how to recycle materials.

More could be done, at this point a room for "garbage" is provided.

I think that there are a lot of people that do not recycle in my building.

Some effort made by builders to consider environment of recycling, but not enough. Need more space, more bins, more education to tenants.

Currently recycling bins are overflowing, which means people are aware and participating.

Recycling isn't stressed - if you want to do it you can. There should be more info about it.

Not enough education/signs. No blue boxes in garbage shute (sic) room.

Recycling is not convenient, is insufficient - information has not been forthcoming from the municipality.

Only two positive comments were provided:

I feel that the recycling is reducing the waste because I see many people using the system in place.

They have bins for different types of recycling. (cans) (bottles) (papper (sic)) always have access.

TOOLS FOR RECYCLING

We have learned over the years of working on recycling, and it was confirmed in this study, that two tools are essential for residents to be efficient source separators: a well laid out, visually enhanced list of recyclables, and a receptacle for fibre and containers. The tally below reveals the deficient status of recycling essentials in multi-family buildings. Most do not have the basic list of what can and cannot be recycled. Also, there is a paucity of notices in the public areas to provide direction. Very few had an

in-unit bag or mini blue box for storage and transport to the building recycling carts; hence, the prevalence of plastic grocery bags often contaminating the recycling load.

	Apartment	Condo	Total
Information sheet on preparing items for recycling	10	1	11
List of recyclables/what can be recycled	-	9	9
Recycling notices or posters in common area	4	3	7
Recycling bins in the laundry room	2	4	6
Blue bag	1	1	2

LISTS/INFORMATION

Most respondents have not seen a list of what can be recycled. The majority of tenants rely on what information is provided directly on the recycling bins which may or may not be up-to-date, conveniently positioned or easy to scan quickly, according to respondents. While posting this information on the bins is a good reminder, tenants concurred that it would be more effective if they had their own list to refer to while gathering their recyclables in their homes. Also, the absence of a list or other educational materials is a negative signal: if recycling was important, they would be given the facts.

We've never received any pamphlets or information about how to - literally, how to recycle. I know that in some communities, in the houses and so forth, they actually have memos or they have things. My sister has things posted on her fridge, what's recyclable and how to sort it and that type of thing, but we don't. (condominium resident)

During the course of the sessions, copies of lists of recyclables were circulated for comment. Many residents indicated they were not aware of the wide variety of materials that can now be recycled, for instance -

The one that always confused me was the cereal boxes, and I've never dumped them in because to me they're waxed, right?

We (husband and wife) fight about this every time there's an empty container. I keep taking it out and throwing it in the garbage, and he keeps taking it and putting it back in the recycling, and we fight.

Magazines and catalogues, I never knew about that either... they have a glossy finish to them.

In addition to being unclear about the core items (magazines, newspapers, bottles and cans), some residents are not aware of the many new items that have been added to the program in the last few years.

What about the aerosol? Sometimes you think it's empty, but there still might be a little bit, and if it ignites, it can explode perhaps. I mean, I'm not a chemist or anything like that, but -

Several sample lists were provided. Generally, respondents opted for clarity, lists with heavy reliance on visuals (pictures or diagrams) rather than words, colour for impact and complete in one page.

I like this one, because this one's everything all on one page. You don't have to flip through it or turn. It's right there.

Pictures or illustrations make for quick comprehension and communicate across all language barriers; even youngsters can understand what is recyclable.

Paper Cart

Newspapers/Magazines



Including inserts and catalogues.

Books



Including pamphlets, folders, booklets, telephone directories, soft- and hard-cover books.

Household Paper



Including writing paper, computer paper, white envelopes, junkmail and flyers. Brown paper bags, brown envelopes and greeting cards. Please remember to recycle paper from your home office.

Please do not bundle any of the Stream A items. Place them loosely in the designated cart.



Boxboard Cart

Boxboard



Boxes from household products like cereal, detergent, shoes and crackers. Please remove plastic film, foil, liner bags and food. Do not include coated boxes used to contain frozen foods.

Milk and Juice Cartons



Please rinse milk and juice containers.

Paper Rolls



From toilet tissue and paper towels.

Paper Egg Cartons

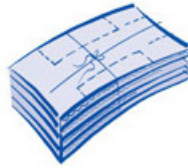


Brown Wrapping Paper



Brown paper bags, brown envelopes and greeting cards.

Corrugated Cardboard



Identified by two outer, thin-walled liner boards, having a corrugated waffle in the middle.

All cardboard must be flattened and tied or placed loose beside the designated cart. Do not include any waxed, oily, heavily-soiled, or coated corrugated cardboard.



Metal Cans & Plastics Cart

Aluminum and Steel Cans



Please rinse containers and place lids inside.

Plastic Bottles



Small-mouth bottles made on the bottom with a recycling symbol containing the numbers 1 or 2 only. Includes plastic bottles and jugs that held juice, water, household detergent, cleaning and laundry products, windshield washer fluid, vinegar, shampoo, and soft drinks.



Clear Glass Cart

Glass Bottles and Jars



Remove the lids and rinse. No lightbulbs, window glass, mirrors or dishes.



Coloured Glass Cart

Glass Bottles and Jars



Remove the lids and rinse. No lightbulbs, window glass, mirrors or dishes.



Put all of these materials TOGETHER in your building's recycling containers. Sorting is not required



❖ Thanks For Doing Your Part

Can ~~NOT~~ Be Recycled:

 NO Coat Hangers, Pots & Pans	 NO Hazardous Materials
 NO Plastic Toys	 NO Plastic Wrap
 NO Plastic Bags	 NO Styrofoam
 NO Dishware, Light Bulbs Or Mirrors	 NO Diapers, String Or Wax Paper

Attention

Apartment Residents



You Can Now Recycle More!







Combine All Recyclable Materials In One Bin!


❖ Keep This Resource For Future Reference

You Can Now Recycle:


 
Empty Aerosol & Paint Cans
(With the paint can lid removed)


 
Plastic Bottles & Jugs


 
Metal Food Containers
(Includes aluminum plates & foil)



Plastic Food Containers
(Includes ice cream & yogurt tubs, lids, clamshell packaging, plastic egg cartons, & microwavable food trays)

You Can Now Recycle:


Glass Bottles and Jars



Metal Food Containers


Beverage Cartons & Boxes



Newspaper & Box Board
(Includes paper, magazines, books & flyers)

❖ Don't Let Any Get Away

Cardboard and Plastic Bags:



- Cardboard is still recycled separately from the other materials.
- Each building handles cardboard differently.
- Contact your superintendent to check where to recycle your corrugated cardboard.
- Please DO NOT leave recyclable materials in plastic grocery bags in the bins, put them in the bins loose.



For More Information Contact
The Operations Centre at:
905-884-8013

COLLECTION BAGS OR BINS

Some residents have taken the initiative, purchasing mini blue boxes to store their recyclables. The prevailing sentiment seems to be that they should be provided with something to store their materials, so rather than spend their own money on a bin, most people use what is at hand. Plastic grocery bags and cardboard boxes are popular.

As the quote below indicates, distribution of bins is limited; most participants have not been given a bag or bin for recyclables. However, it appears that those who have something to store these items separate them at source and are, probably recycling more efficiently than others who improvise. Usually the others stuff them into plastic grocery bags which are plentiful, portable and easy to dispose. Yet several superintendents made the point that it was a challenge to educate residents to remove their recyclables from the bag prior to dropping them in the recycling carts.

I have like little plastic bins that I label, and then I just throw them in there. It's a lot easier that way...My building already gave some to some people on our floors.

I find that at home I've made a spot in sort of the pantry that I can separate and take out, and I do have the bins that I purchased. So I keep my bottles in there, and that way my son or my daughter or I or my husband will just take it out and bring it back in. It is a hassle. I find it a hassle. It's on the main floor as well, but still it's on your way out, but you still have to take your bucket back upstairs. I just find it easier to carry that way.

Five recycling containers were introduced for comment: a mini blue box, a standard size blue box, a reusable blue bag with handles, a blue plastic basket with handles and a small blue bin with a lid and wheels (akin to the green organic bin). Reactions to the options were as varied as the range of respondents. However, the best overall compromise was the bag. The size/footprint, capacity, portability, and design of each item were considered. Some frequent, daily recyclers with smaller households tended to opt for the blue bag or basket - both items were the right capacity, highly portable and multi-purpose. They solved the storage problem - they imagined taking them on their errands. It was interesting to hear from women that the blue basket would not be appealing to men, as perhaps it was too much like a handbag.

The mini blue box appealed to some people; they had just the spot to store it. But the small capacity did not suit everyone; larger households or people who were in the habit of stockpiling their recyclables needed more capacity. Either the big blue box or the blue bin on wheels made sense. Those who liked the blue cart on wheels imagined that it could be stored on their balcony given the raccoon-proof lock and weatherproof lid. It would be so easy to transport loads of recyclables to the recycling bins.



DIVERSION RATES FOR MULTI-FAMILY BUILDINGS

Respondents were not surprised to learn from the facilitator that curbside programs were diverting substantially more materials than apartment or condominium programs - at least 35% versus about 14% in York Region. Several participants observed that their recycling programs were operating at a minimal level and were not designed to address the provincial target of 60%.

The blame for deficient recycling programs was attributed to property management primarily.

I think it's the condo owners, the property management. Yeah, but no one has educated me really on the recycling. I mean, off the top of my head, I know what I should do, but I doubt if I'm correct all the time or even 80% of the time.

This information provided a lead-in to the next point - what could be done about this gap? Most respondents seemed to believe that low recycling rates were shameful; it clearly was a problem that needed to be addressed. In the course of discussion some people referred to the current transborder garbage shipment and dispute. Something has to be done about it as long as it's not a solution that will affect their community. The closure of Keele landfill was fresh in their minds.

From their experience, it makes sense that recycling is well behind in multi-family buildings, given lack of education and what they observe in their building.

That's low. It's not enough. But the chutes are so easy, instead of doing all that work, just get it and throw it out. Laziness.

And some people don't understand, I don't think. Some people don't care. "I don't want to do that. It takes too much time." In conversation, you hear people say, "It's too much trouble," whatever.

Misunderstanding. People don't maybe really understand what kind of box, no plastic bags. It's almost like you have to go to school to learn how to recycle, so some of these old people, these foreign people, too, they don't understand. We understand we try to instil it in our kids, so that I would hope is a help already.

INCREASING DIVERSION – TENANT SUGGESTIONS

Participants were invited to create their ideal program aimed at stepping up recycling in their building. What needs to be done to make their programs work better? Listed in the left-hand column are the results of three small working groups; on the right is the diversion component linked with each suggestion.

Four key Diversion Components

1. P = Program
2. T = Tools
3. E = Education
4. F = Feedback

	Diversion Component
1. Incentives – whoever gathers the most recycle gets reward	F
2. Educating – brochures	E
3. Increase bin supplied on each floor	P
4. Distribute blue bins to each apt.	T
5. Advertisement - newspaper, radio, flyers, etc.	E
6. Assistance with elderly & seniors in apt dwelling	P
1. Reward competition	F
2. Interactive ad	E
3. Cash reward for returns	F
4. More information on recycling	T
5. Make recycling easier	P
6. Scheduled recycling – door-by-door collection	P
1. Better distributed literature	E
2. Tenants given green & blue bins	T
3. Make recycling location accessible	P
4. Restricting the amount of garbage	F+P
5. Option for a centralized paper shredder, to be picked up on a monthly basis.	P
6. Bins being placed in convenient locations, e.g., garage underground, front & back of building	P
7. Throwing events to educate people about the recycling program	E+F

1. Program - this is the starting point -

Has it been designed to accommodate recyclers and to maximize diversion, or is it a cobbled-together add-on system? Recyclers insist that they must have access to a program that is easy and convenient to use. Many recycling services are deficient and clearly second rate compared to the inbuilt chute system designed for efficient garbage disposal.

2. Tools -

Recyclers must have two items: an up-to-date list of what can and cannot be recycled, plus preparation tips and a collection bin or bag for easy source separation and a visual reminder to recycle. Homes are set up for garbage collection and need to be adapted to two-stream separation - garbage and recyclables. Most respondents appear to be quite willing to recycle provided that they are given the necessary tools. Both the building management and the municipality are seen to be responsible for ensuring that tenants/residents have these items.

3. Education -

Recyclers need to be taught and reminded to recycle. There were repeated references to the need for informative fridge magnets and lists of recyclables. In addition to an ongoing flow of reminders and updates, the act of sorting through all the increasing amount of 'garbage' is prompting many questions about the role that they are playing and the outcomes of their efforts. Some people, indeed, see themselves as program partners with a willingness to do their share and possibly more in order to boost the sorry rate of recycling in their building.

If you pass a leaflet around, they're going to look at it and toss it out. A constant flow, it will get you reading. Curiosity kills the cat, and you'll want to know why it's that constant barrage, you'll read it. You'll take time to read it. Yeah, brochures or bulletin boards or little newsletters or something - something that the tenants do look at, or even on your rental receipts or whatever receipts you get, cable bill or something, some news of it.

I think the best thing, in condos or apartment buildings, is to have something in the elevators so people who are waiting for the elevator or something like that, they'll read it.

It would help, if they're doing newsletters and stuff, that it's done in multi-languages rather than just English.

Mass media advertising - using broadcast primarily, supported by print messages - is seen as an effective way of reaching a wide audience.

That would be expensive. Yeah, it would be, but it'd be good. And it'd be effective. It would be the most effective way - or radio.

4. Feedback and incentives -

Recyclers, justifiably, want to know how they are doing, either on an individual or a cumulative (building) basis. As it is now, they can only gauge how well, or poorly, their program is doing by what they see - the number of bins, bin locations, state of bins, volume and quality of recyclables and the frequency with which they meet other residents at the recycling area.

I think within your own family, you do what you can, and I think maybe some of the problem is I personally don't know what happens after. Like once I do my part, what's happening after? What's the bottom line? Where's the garbage going? Like you said, you've got percentages like that, that's pretty sad.

Touring a recycling plant or something would be interesting. You get to see what's happening and where it goes.

Behaviour of other tenants can have a significant spillover impact - it can either stimulate or depress involvement. Living in a building that appears to be indifferent to recycling is particularly demoralizing for those who really care about doing their best. Hence, the desire for feedback and the possibility, for some, of a reward. Men appeared to be particularly drawn to a reward system, indicating that a monetary incentive would prompt them to recycle, whereas women seemed to be more oriented to education and program design. Incentives and penalties were discussed. Some participants speculated on the merit of introducing a deposit-return system for beverage containers, but could also see that this wouldn't be practical for all recyclable materials. However, they were interested in a perceived reward, possibly the positive publicity that would accrue to the building that had the most efficient recycling system or, better yet, for some, provide a monetary incentive to maximize recycling. In sum, linking behaviour with a monetary penalty or reward is seen to have merit; the starting point for this was the concept of pay-per-bag which applied to some curbside programs.

Let's say you recycle 10 lbs., this guy recycles 20 lbs., he gets more money than you do. You're going to try to recycle more.

The notion of competing to be the best recycling building clearly appealed to some respondents, regardless of whether they lived in a condominium or apartment dwelling.




Or maybe they should have like a competition between apartment buildings, and I would think this apartment building does 20%, so their rents are cheaper than the one down the street that does 40% and it's publicly known.

Make recycling more easier to do. Make it more enjoyable. I think a lot of people don't want to recycle because sometimes it's a pain in the butt. I don't know. Make it more enjoyable.

Yeah. Like you put it out like a house or something like that. They put it out on their yard, their front yard, and the guy comes around and recycles, right? Even in a condo or an apartment building, it's the same thing.

MORE RESIDENT SUGGESTIONS TO INCREASE DIVERSION

Just prior to concluding the session, participants were asked to summarize their suggestions for increasing the amount of materials that are being recycled. At this point, they had been exposed to many new ideas provided both by members of the group and the facilitator. As noted previously, there was considerable emphasis placed on -

-  education, reaching residents through a wide variety of means and materials (lists, reminders, etc.)
-  tools and distribution of blue boxes/bags and lists,
-  expanding access to the building's program by distributing recycling containers beyond the usual spot.

Here are their written comments:

Apartments

>5	≤5
Provide blue bins for everyone / have recycling be mandatory / posted signs for clarity	Interactive advertisement. -rebate programs
Provide bins in (sic) each floor - Reach - posters - email, media	have the recycling bins on each floor educate residents about recycling have events to get interest
Educate, discuss & take responsibility, magnets, advertisements on doors, anything & everything	- bins on each floor - recycle everything including plastic wrap & bags - more advertising, posters, flyers & info sessions
competitions between buildings, - more literature handed out to educate	-
Put bin on every floor. Hand out bin. Leave recycling room open	-
\$ would help recycling the effort like beer bottles (sic)	-
Provide blue bins to tenants more awareness - elevators, building surroundings fridge magnets	-


Condominiums


>5	≤5
Provide bins for each unit	No comment (2)
Education	More info on what is recyclable
More awareness of recycling	Education, incentives, more accessibility to Haz. Waste & items taken
Blue boxes in mail room - garbage room. More signs, individual boxes in each unit.	More education + bins in unit
More convenient, more info and notices - like the newsletter seen for R. Hill	Educate people more and make it more mandatory (sic) by enforcing it
Recycling flyers in kitchens	Education - a barrage of leaflets or pamphlets, educating us on the dangers of non- recycling methods.
TV - all over your community	-
More bins, more signage, recycle bins at mail room, more advertising	-
Having small containers for today's smaller condo/units - having town feedback	-
Green bin program	-
-multi languages	-
- the best way to reach us is through the internet -mail, commercials, communicating top people public ex. Malls. Grocery. Drug stores etc.	-
more education about recycling - best way to reach me - door hangers; pamphlets; anything that is more direct and personal	-

INCREASING DIVERSION – REACTION TO LIST OF OPTIONS

Residents' opinions were sought concerning a list of six different factors that could lead to higher diversion rates. Did they support or oppose sealing chutes, for instance? Was an educational approach welcomed? Was a monetary penalty for inefficient programs acceptable? Should recycling be obligatory?

 Education and recycling tools received universal support.

 Sealing garbage chutes made good sense to the majority, as did making recycling mandatory. However, opponents - including many superintendents - expressed grave concern about the practicality of this approach. They suspected that lazy people would simply dump the garbage, adding to the litter.

 Over two-thirds supported the suggestion that buildings should be charged for operating inefficient recycling programs, but this was the lowest endorsement.

SUPPORT	Apartment	Condo	Total
Provide more education about what can and cannot be recycled.	12	19	31
Provide feedback about what is happening to your recyclables.	11	19	30
Give residents a blue bag or box to carry recyclables to the recycling area.	10	19	29
Seal garbage chutes so that people would recycle more things instead of treating them like garbage.	12	17	29
Make recycling compulsory/mandatory.	10	17	27
Charge apartment/condo buildings for their garbage if they don't operate a good recycling program.	8	15	23

OPPOSE	Apartment	Condo	Total
Charge apartment/condo buildings for their garbage if they don't operate a good recycling program.	4	4	8
Seal garbage chutes so that people would recycle more things instead of treating them like garbage.	-	2	2
Make recycling compulsory/mandatory.	1	-	1
Give residents a blue bag or box to carry recyclables to the recycling area.	1	-	1
Provide feedback about what is happening to your recyclables.	-	-	-
Provide more education about what can and cannot be recycled.	-	-	-

REACHING MF RESIDENTS WITH MESSAGES

Participants listed a variety of means to reach them; these were the channels that they indicated as most effective:



Email



Signs/posters, brightly coloured notices placed in the recycling room or public areas.








Direct to their home - mail, door hangers, flyers, notices, letters, telephone



Mass media - television or the local newspaper (weekly)

SUPERINTENDENTS

The five superintendents that took part in the session represented a variety of multi-family residential situations. The buildings included -

-  a long-term care building operated by the Catholic Church, populated primarily by seniors, with a small number of people with severe handicaps. The five-storey structure has 56 apartments, housing lower income residents, mainly Italian heritage, and rents are subsidized. The Arch Diocese has several seniors' homes in the GTA. Residents have small units or single rooms which are serviced by staff, and food is provided through a central kitchen-dining area. (City of Vaughan)
-  A seniors' residence that belongs to Central Park Lodge, one of 220 such facilities CPL operates across Canada. The 200-room facility was described as high-end retirement, providing residents with small apartments and a central dining room. (town of Richmond Hill)
-  Twin condominium towers, total 260 luxury suites, catering primarily to relatively affluent retirees, formerly teachers, government administrators, lawyers, police officers. Half of owners engaged housecleaning services. (Town of Richmond Hill)
-  A seven-storey apartment building, 52 units in Markham, catering to a diverse market (Town of Markham). Approximately one-third are seniors and the remainder are small family units or single people, given that the building has only one- and two-bedroom apartments.
-  Markham Village apartment, 156 units, seven storeys, mainly retired persons or small families with one- or two-bedroom apartments. (Town of Markham).

RECYCLING TASK

Superintendents get their recycling cues from building management and, to a lesser extent, from residents. Generally, it would appear that most management has a hands-off approach - "my management company doesn't seem to be interested in recycling," - leaving superintendents to create and manage the program.

See, this is the point I'm making. My management only have one interest, and that's to collect condo fees and manage the place. Anyway, we get rid of them now. They're leaving and a new one is coming in. But these kinds of suggestions are very, very important. The board of directors, if I put it to them, like how we get this thing, they will really want to take action, but then again the manager is not interested. The management company is not interested.

In this example, the superintendent was caught between indifferent management and an uninformed condominium board of directors.

Recycling is just one of their many tasks which can consume considerable time depending on the system, resident profile and level of interest in recycling and the building layout and collection requirements. The goal was to create a recycling system that works well for residents in terms of access and ease and minimizes the superintendent's job.

Recycling in both seniors' long-term residential settings was primarily the responsibility of housekeeping staff and kitchen workers. Residents played a minor role. Paper and corrugated accounted for most of the recyclables. Active residents could recycle by placing materials out for cleaners or had the option of carrying them to bins located on their floor. Placing garbage with recyclables was common; for safety's sake cleaners did not pick recyclables out of small grocery bags. Hygiene was a major concern at both seniors' facilities which translated into frequent cleaning of recycling bins and carts

REACTION TO THE MF STUDY

Initially, some superintendents were wary about the intended purpose of the study, yet had joined because this was an unusual opportunity to air problems and seek solutions. The interaction between participants was at times intense, yet seemed to be productive, with superintendents sharing problems and concerns. Some of the participants clearly welcomed this opportunity to express both their frustration and support for recycling.

I think that I will compliment this kind of exercise, because I've been in the business the last 10 years as a superintendent, and no questions were asked of me of what I think. I just got handed down flyers, and you never know where it's coming from, "Do this and do this," and I instruct the residents to do the same thing. That's how it's working for them.

BUILDING PROGRAM

Given the differences in building design, the age and income of residents, and ownership issues, programs vary considerably. As noted, recycling was primarily handled by staff cleaners and kitchen help in the seniors' homes, with residents doing a minor role. Both staff and tenants needed to be educated about recycling.

Conversely, the condominium owners treat recycling with apparent seriousness and have a major role in designing the system through the condominium board. However, it appears that the board is poorly informed and passive: they pay attention to recycling when there's a problem. Some condominium dwellers concurred with this assessment.

Recycling in the apartment buildings appears to be less productive overall given residents' lack of control and inability to make changes. Also, some superintendents and residents alike seemed to have a low regard for the ability of lower income people to focus on recycling.

The superintendents' recycling job focuses primarily on servicing the bins - keeping them organized, sorting through them to ensure that there's no excessive contamination and ensuring that they are in the designated spot for collection. Garbage and recycling areas have to be kept clean; hygiene is a significant issue. It can't be allowed to get out of hand, which is a challenge if tenants are lazy and uncooperative. Also, they are mindful that litter and debris bring down the perceived tone of the building, something that provokes the wrath of both tenants and property managers.

COLLECTION SERVICES

Superintendents made frequent references to their reliance on efficient and punctual collection. Some of them deal with Miller or Canada Waste, which were presented as private-sector collectors, although Miller is possibly working under contract for the City of Markham. Others indicated that their recyclables were collected by the city and knew this to be the case.

A debate ensued about the merits of Miller's collection service. One superintendent was very supportive of Miller, indicating that their service was trouble free. The company quickly addresses problems that arise:

I cannot sit here and agree Miller is not doing a good job, because every situation, as you see, is different. My situation is an example to what some of these - Miller gave me four bins free to put cardboard.

However, a few others had contrary experiences with Miller. For example,

Miller gets paid by weight, the guys picking it up, so they're in a hurry (which leads to damaged bins).

I have found that since we've switched from Waste Management to Miller, Miller's tough with my bins. The lids always closed nice and neat. Now that Miller's come on board, the lids are banging, they're hitting, they're not sitting flush.

One superintendent has developed a rapport with a City staff member who they could call in an emergency. Others were not certain who they should call when they have a problem.

I know the guy. He comes and looks for me, too, because we are in constant contact, because Miller does give some trouble - not all the time, but sometimes the truck breaks down or sometimes they couldn't make a pick-up, and we have to get in touch because once you place those bins outside, those bins cannot stay there more than one day, because downstairs will be one mess if those bins are not put back in time. So we do step on Miller, follow them up. If they're supposed to be there at 2:00 and by 4:00 they don't show up, it's time to put a call to make sure that they're coming. But it has been all right. We had Canada Waste, but the city changed that.

In addition to being behind schedule, sometimes the bins are damaged in the emptying process. As noted, some collectors seem to handle the bins with less care, slamming them down on the pavement and causing damage. Damaged lids and wheels mean that the bins needed to be repaired. Superintendents are really frustrated when they have to then get them fixed. Also, one participant reported that the collector had dropped a bin into the truck and had failed to replace it - he was now one bin short and was already struggling with insufficient recycling capacity.

BIN STORAGE, CAPACITY AND DESIGN

There was considerable time spent describing bin storage and capacity issues, given that recycling was an add-on. In most cases space is at a premium, so the challenge is to find a suitable spot for the bins. This becomes even more complicated as the volume of recyclables increases. Building management is diligent about maximizing the value of the available real estate, hence they don't want to encroach on either external or internal parking space.

Fibre overall appears to be the most challenging category of recyclables. Corrugated and paper are major categories for both seniors' centres. One of these superintendents is recycling all paper using a large bin provided by Abitibi; it's particularly appealing to the superintendent at the church-run seniors home because of the revenue generating potential.

I made a good deal. The town (Richmond Hill) wanted to charge us for the pick-up, and I said, "No, I'm not paying for it. Nobody else is," so I ended up with the cardboard for free, which you might be paying for, but it's Abitibi Recycling. I don't have the number offhand, but I'll find out, no problem. Call them up and they'll pay you for your paper and your cardboard, too.

Also, it seems like a good solution for his ongoing storage and capacity problems, particularly with corrugated boxes. Abitibi provides at no charge a large 4-yard container for corrugated cardboard which is emptied weekly.

I mean, even if they weren't paying me, if they were doing it for free, it's still a great deal, because it's so easy for us. I have carts in like the housekeeping room that they bring down with all the paper in, and all the staff just take it out and just throw it in this big bin. It really helps us a lot that way.

Corrugated cardboard also challenges other superintendents, given its volume and the failure of tenants to breakdown boxes. This material can quickly fill up a blue recycling cart. It's particularly onerous in institutional settings given that supplies are shipped in these containers, but also is a problem when new tenants move into the apartment buildings and condominiums.

I've got the town pick-up. I already had town pick-up for cardboard, which used to be a real pain in the butt, because they wanted us to cut it up two by two and bundle it. Then they used to send over a cube van and pick it up and throw it in the back of the van and take it away. I said for a long time, "Can't you drop a bin off or something? Because it would make like easier for us." I used to have to have one of the staff cut cardboard up like four hours a day and tie it up.

The placement and number of recycling carts are major issues. The superintendent of the 260-unit condominium towers locate recycling carts on the two levels of each of the underground parking areas; this makes access easy for tenants. However, it means that a total of 20 recycling carts have to be moved outside each week for collection.

Those bins are filled to capacity every week...a little extra (recyclables) will dump it somewhere in the garbage because the bins are full.

Accessing new blue recycling carts was also mentioned; Miller referred the condominium superintendent to an American supplier for the \$100 a unit bins. Some superintendents had discretionary power to order equipment while others did not.

The shape, capacity and mobility of recycling containers are of great interest. The general lack of options is frustrating, given that there are few options. Some settings can easily accommodate four or five yard bins; they have the equipment to move them out for collection and space to store them indoors. Others seem to be reliant on 95-gallon recycling carts given the limited storage space. But as indicated previously, this particular collection unit is not suitable for a large multi-unit building with an aggressive recycling program. Some superintendents wondered whether there were other more suitable options for their growing recycling needs. It seemed to them that multi-family buildings were not being considered in the design of this essential equipment.

My view is I would like to sit down with somebody would could design a nice bin, just for the truck to lift and put, but it has to be designed with a rubber cover or something where nobody could get hurt. You go and you lift the lid, just like the blue bins we have, just lift two feet square and you put whatever you want to put there.

If I need more bigger bins, I don't have any different sizes. There's only one, 150 litre or something like that...But in other countries there is. You could order double or triple specialties for newspaper with a slot. It's only a slot like a mailbox to put the newspaper. You cannot put anything else inside. For the cardboard, it's the same. Bottles are separate. It's a big tank. Outside in Germany...

Some superintendents indicated that they needed expert advice in matching equipment with their recycling needs, but questioned whether this type of service was available from the local government. Nevertheless, they know they lack the expertise and that their opinion doesn't carry weight with building management and the condominium board, especially if it required an investment in new collection containers.

...somebody in authority has to tell the building (management) or come and inspect the building from the top and say, "Listen, you all should try to get these bins, whether they have to be purchased." I can't convince my building, but if the city comes tomorrow and tells us we should be using bigger bins...people come and help, but I really would like to see bigger bins for recycling, because it's something that grew over the years to be a big thing. In these kind of condominiums, everybody is recycling.

Also, there was some debate about the durability of the 95-gallon bin as a receptacle for heavy paper.

Those newspapers in those plastic bins are too heavy. They think when they stack the papers so closely together, you're talking about one bin is about 250 lbs. or more. When that truck lifts that in the air and it tilts, it's over. So then when he brings it back, it falls on the ground. One crack in it, the truck man will not pick it up again because it's broken.

Institutional settings with housekeeping staff have special collection requirements given the volume that they remove from residents' apartments. A lightweight cart was seen as ideal (Busch multi-bin trolley). Others had an interest in the small, lightweight blue bin on wheels, if it could have three compartments.

First of all, most of the staff, "I'm not pushing that around. That's too heavy for me," because a lot of housekeeping are female...Second of all, I have nowhere to store it on the floors or anything, and a lot of these people wouldn't want to see it on a very elegant-looking building. It's something I'm looking for, though. I mean, I want some sort of cart so they can go down, they've got these carts with like a garbage lid on the back with a garbage bag underneath but nowhere really to store recycling. So they come down with newspapers piled up, stuff falling all over the place.

RESIDENT PARTICIPATION

The profile of tenants varies considerably. To illustrate, the higher-end condominium building is populated by well-educated supporters of recycling. The superintendent is convinced that they are diverting up to 80% of waste through recycling.

Everybody is recycling, because they're coming downstairs with the toilet paper, the cardboard inside. You wouldn't find that in the garbage in my building.

However, some demanding residents in an up-market facility have to be treated with kid gloves and no unsightly carts or bins are permitted in public areas.

I guess more the rich people or whatever you want to call them. It's like, "Oh, no. We don't have garbage," type thing. They've got to hide it as they take it out. So it's a problem. And also with recycling certain things, like if they're bleeding and there's a bandage and they stuff it all in the garbage, I won't let the staff -

The population in the two seniors' residences have limited mobility and materials for disposal. Also, one building is primarily populated by Italian speaking seniors, hence the challenge in finding notices that they can comprehend. While they might be keen to recycle, they often contaminate the load, requiring the staff to be particularly diligent.

It takes like hours to get to the garbage for some of these people. I'm getting the slippers and the household garbage, and everything that shouldn't be in there is in there. So I sort it, chute it, bag it.

The garbage chutes are seen to be competitive with recycling and a source of potential problems. Tenants seek the easy route and stuff large items in the chutes despite repeated notices not to do so. The solution for one building was to lock the chutes.

We closed all the garbage rooms and closed the chutes. Well, it's a lot cleaner now and stuff isn't getting stuck in the chute, because people - especially pizza boxes, they won't break them down, they'll just try to force them in, and then the tenants' above get stuck and it just starts piling up. They have to come down to the first floor, to the garbage room, and we have all the bins set up. We have one for batteries, we have one for can tabs that we give for wheelchairs.

This superintendent is proactive and complemented diversion by adding a blue box to collect used household batteries, one for pop can tabs for charity, and an area for a book exchange.

EFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT – RATING THEIR BUILDING'S PERFORMANCE

Most of the superintendents indicated that they needed assistance to increase the efficiency of their recycling programs but aren't certain who they can consult for expert advice.

It's interesting that the recycling is such a big business and a big concern everywhere, but guys like us, especially this gentleman, don't get any help from the recycling people. Who do you use? Miller? Is it Miller you use? To me, that's a travesty why this guy has to go with 20 bins. That's bullshit. You don't have to do that.

ROLE OF MUNICIPALITY

The local government's role varies depending on collection. Those who use private collection services turn to these companies for guidance whereas those who rely on the City collection understand that these are the experts. However, in the latter case, some superintendents have limited contact with the City. They were not aware that they could access expert advice, but were pleased to be informed that it was available.

Superintendents are more likely to see the local government's role as primarily setting rules and, to a lesser extent, providing tenant educational materials. However, most superintendents appear to be struggling within their own context and may treat program announcements as optional. For instance, one superintendent of an apartment building did not want tenants to commingle recyclables so he did not circulate Markham's flyers.

That notice came from the town of Markham and I didn't send it out to my tenants, because the system we have now works. Now, if the tenants know they can mix everything, a garbage bag from No Frills is filled with recyclables and it's dumped and you don't know what's in there.

Another superintendent knew he had to comply because the condominium owners were well informed, and so, although he was wary about commingling he had no choice but to comply.

See, that's what I say. Each situation is different. If I got that notice and I don't put that to the residents, they will find out in the Liberal newspaper and then I will be in big trouble: "Didn't you get this?" I can't hide nothing, because the city's putting the same advertisement they give me.

STRATEGIES TO INCREASE RECYCLING

Bins & Program Expertise

The provision of suitable bins at no cost is particularly important for not-for-profit and apartment buildings.

Now, if this recycling is important enough to bring you here for us tonight, maybe companies, cities, corporations, whoever, whatnot, bins are free.

Other options besides a large blue box are needed to collect recyclables in the public areas; some buildings have high standards and won't use this container. In addition, it must satisfy the fire marshal's regulations.

It'd be nice to have some sort of designer decorative - a nice one you could stick (in the lobby).

Putting these bins in a very easy location really encourages the homeowners to do recycling.

Recycling Tools for Tenants

Superintendents believe that high participation in recycling required knowledgeable participants - a list of recyclables should be in every home according to some. They responded to some of the different samples of recycling lists that were circulated: Where could they get a supply for their building?

I'd like something like that. For me in my building, that would work, because I'm looking after [inaudible]. To me, that's perfect.

Others however thought that simply posting a list in the laundry room in tandem with labels on bins was sufficient. Clearly, they had not considered the merit of a well-designed list because this item has not been made available to them or to tenants.

The blue bins I have, the lids are open, and on the back of the lid I have a diagram of what goes in it and I have a write-up, a little write-up of it. But I was wondering if there's anything I can get that's more professional that I can put on there or something like that.

In addition to inviting superintendents' suggestions, some ideas were introduced for discussion. For instance, would it help if residents had a recycling box or bag?

Giving a homeowner something like that to put in their house, and when they come downstairs now, normally they will come down with that bag, a plastic bag, and they will have all the newspapers and all the plastic. So when they're finished and then they drop it in a bin, I have a small bin there and they go to their car. That's the only thing I'm thinking. This is a nice basket to carry around, but most of them who are recycling, after they're finished, they go to their car. They don't go back upstairs. But I like this idea (recycling bag)

To get this going in my building, it needs something like the city to put a small advertisement in the Liberal newspaper or send a flyer home to each owner to tell them how this is available, if they have to pay for it or get it free. Then you can get participation. But I like this for giving each homeowner one so that they can leave it in their kitchen.

Planning & the Role of Experts

All but one of the superintendents is operating in an information vacuum; the sole exception is with a provincial government long-care provider. The agency's residences were linked, sharing information and putting best practices into action.

I guess I have an advantage over the rest of you, because we get together with a lot of the other sites and talk about what's going on, better waste. Somebody else said, "Hey, we've got these things at our place." Well, share with the rest of us. We get to learn all these things. It's a different thing.

Superintendents' standard practice is to contact the City solid waste department and/or the collection company on an emergency basis only. As far as they know, these waste experts provide collection service only. They are not in the business of providing an evaluation of their waste diversion program, isolating weaknesses and identifying opportunities. Generally, superintendents have no formal training, other than what they learn on the job. In many cases, management offices are located offsite, so they may operate with little supervision.

I think we need a system with some technical experts and handing out this thing. You see, over the years in multi-level residences, people have grown to be so laid back that you have garbage in your kitchen, you just walk two doors down the aisle and you drop everything in the chute. We need to think of how it can change without really affecting people. These new buildings, under the code, hey, they put in two garbage chutes on so many floors now, because this person doesn't want to walk down.

The ratio of bins to number of units varies widely - from one for every ten units to much fewer. They could only guess at their bin requirements, and they do what they can with the few tools and limited knowledge they have. Recycling is relatively new to some superintendents and/or properties.

The key to an effective, high diversion program is to provide a convenient system for users. The way it is now, most buildings are designed to divert garbage, not recyclables. Correct measures are

needed, including enforcement of actual targets aimed at increasing recycling. There's some support for charging collection for poorly performing buildings, which might prod owners and management to pay attention.

It's called recycling. It's more than the garbage. What do you do with it? You just walk through. So we need some people to sit down who can make the laws, change a lot of things to get garbage. That 12% (current diversion rate for multi-family buildings) is really - it's a good figure you give me, because I can see how there's no enforcement. You can't see. You can really do nothing except try to put things to make it easy for people.

Incentives for Superintendents

Some superintendents suggested that they should be given incentives to operate an efficient program; the added load represented by recycling should be acknowledged.

They are really recycling, and this is why my job is getting a little tough for me, because I need some help with the recycling. ..who's benefiting from this recycling financially? Not the superintendents. We are fighting it day and night, and the people who are recycling, we can only recycle [inaudible], we have nothing. As a public, you are not getting any kind of compensation to make sure that you return a bottle that is not...

BUILDING MANAGERS

BUILDING PROFILE

A total of six property managers were interviewed from York Region, representing two interviews from the three participating municipalities: Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Markham. The building profiles vary, but the residential make up is skewed towards seniors. There were three condominiums, two not-for-profit seniors' homes, and one rental apartment that has a mix of market and subsidized units. All managers mentioned that their buildings have a low turnover rate.

The seniors stay until they require nursing homes, retirement homes.

We average about 8 to 10 apartments a year turnover.

Turnover's small.

When asked if they thought recycling is worthwhile, all building managers said it was. One manager claimed recycling is a way to cut waste collection cost. In general, recycling appeared to be accepted as part of the whole waste collection package.

Oh, yeah, I do, because the more you recycle, the less garbage you have to take, the less charges for drop-off and dumping.

The tenant profile is also diverse, with managers mentioning that a number of languages other than English are spoken in their buildings. Some examples include Cantonese, Mandarin, Italian, Russian and Korean. Managers at times have to rely on others to translate to aid communication with tenants. Some managers mentioned that family members will help out, such as seniors who rely on their children to translate.

It must be really hard, because I know most of the Chinese, Koreans, etc. that come, lovely people. You couldn't beat them. But they have to have an interpreter. If I have something that I have to tell them, it has to go - everything has to go through this interpreter. Sometimes they can understand enough; they just can't speak it back. But most times the interpreter has to come along.

It's just a mixture. I mean, I've only run into a few in this building where there English is not very good. They're older, so their children have to interpret, but [building] 35, I've never run into anybody that cannot communicate in English.

RECYCLING REPORT CARD AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS RECYCLING

Overall the managers reported that the recycling programs are going well in their buildings and have consequently noticed a reduction in the amount of weekly garbage. Some are paying for extra pick-ups for both recycling and garbage and many mentioned either needing more bins or having just acquired extra bins to deal with the increased volume of recyclables.

Well, I think we've gone from like 12 [garbage] bins to four. We have about four, plus one inside, five, and the recycling, every day it's filled, so I know at least every day I have bins outside for pick-up the following day. But if there was something available - and obviously for the older buildings it won't be possible - but to have it accessible to people in the high rises, right on the floors would help.

They do pretty well here, to the point where sometimes we need extra bins. Now that the town sent that notice around that you can throw whatever in any bin, it made it so much easier for them.

The private pick-up, privatization works really well.

I think more people are aware. I have a good response with the recycling, and I guess more people are just aware, and we don't like, for health issues, to have the garbage can sitting there for the entire week in the back.

When we started with the recycling program and we had to buy the bins ourselves (the town did not provide it), it decreased the garbage. It went from 12 to about 9. And with the increase in cardboard, because we have a couple of cardboard bins, too, it decreased it quite a bit.

The frequency of pickups for both recyclables and garbage varies from building to building. It ranges from once a week for both streams to as often as three times a week for recycling and four times a week for garbage.

The recycling is about three times a week, plus one cardboard bin once per week. Actually, it depends on how often we need it, but minimum three times a week.

Private pick-up, four times a week. (for garbage)

No. Still just once a week...On Mondays, and garbage pick-up on Wednesday.

One weak point mentioned in the report card is the issue of broken bins. Some managers have noticed damage to their bins as a result of careless treatment from waste collectors. As a result, managers have had to incur additional costs to replace recycling bins.

Would I rate it like 98%, because 2% - every so often we have to replace a bin due to the carelessness of the pick-up....I have called about it, but I still end up buying new bins (\$125.00/bin)

Managers were aware of the general aspects of the program such as frequency of pick up, but when it came to more detailed information such as tenant participation and history of use, some had to first consult their superintendents for the information.

I'm not quite sure. Again, I'd have to call the superintendent and the cleaner over there and find out.

RESIDENT PARTICIPATION AND FEEDBACK

Each apartment has its own particular system created for their circumstances. Most said either they have a dedicated recycling room or the bins are placed just outside the building. One seniors' residence has floor-by-floor recycling pick up, but their system was the exception. Managers reported that overall seniors are the most active recyclers. One manager reported that recycling is a very social activity, with many residents interacting while recycling; this is especially common with seniors.

They're just involved because they have bins on each floor, which you'll see when we do the tour. We have two of the small blue bins, just like you have in your home, and plastics and paper, they're separated. They do that. They've always done that. Sometimes they get a little confused and maybe put paper in when they're not supposed to, but that's an easy thing because it's all dry. And then their kitchen garbage is tied up and put down the garbage chute.

Most claim that young families are the worst recyclers and are least likely to properly sort their recyclables. It's interesting to note that none of the managers have received any feedback from tenants about having to recycle. Most comments are directed towards other tenants who do not properly recycle.

No, there's been no complaints.

No. The only complaints I do get is from the cleaners sometimes, not so much now, because now you can put everything in every bin.

Some get pretty involved, because they'll notice some people who will throw out their cans in the regular garbage bins, and they'll complain. So it's mostly because of the seniors that are so active into it. The younger ones could care less really, but mostly because I have seniors, you hear a lot of complaints of people throwing out things that should be recycled in garbage bins or they're throwing them in the wrong bins. So they're pretty active.

In some cases, despite the bins being labelled, tenants mix up the recyclables, forcing the building staff to re-sort the bins. The introduction of commingling in some buildings has made it much easier for tenants who were confused as to what items go in which bin.

We have it labelled to be separated, but it doesn't always go that way. We usually do it ourselves. The staff separates it.

I've noticed them using it more, because they don't have to sit there and sort, and then they were getting all confused, and if their newspapers were piled up, they'd start throwing newspapers in with the cans. So everything started getting all mixed up to that point. And now, with everything being thrown wherever they want, it's so much easier, and our bins are pretty much full to the top. So it looks like they're using it more to their advantage than they used to.

They are and they aren't. Like sometimes we'll see them throwing them down the chutes, and some of them will come down and see them sorting, but the majority of them that you see actually down there putting in the effort are the older people, coming down with carts, their bags.

RECYCLING STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESS

Managers mentioned a range of positive attributes of their current recycling system. They view being able to commingle the recycling as a time saver. Management observed that it is easier for tenants to recycle, and the maintenance staff no longer needs to re-sort the items into appropriate bins. One building manager in Markham has floor-by-floor collection at a seniors' residence and claims that it makes recycling much easier for everyone to participate, especially disabled tenants. Another seniors' building has a central recycling room; this spot has become a social hub for the tenants.

Because now you can put everything in every bin.... Before, he'd have to sit and sort through them, make sure the bottles - people would just put the wrong stuff in the wrong bin.

Yeah. Each garbage room has the two bins. We have from the 9th to the 1st floor. We're nine storeys high. So on a daily basis, the superintendents go to each floor and bring down the recycle and put it in the appropriate large blue containers that go out to the curbside, and the bins are washed and returned to the floors for more.

Many reported that they don't have enough bins for recycling, and at the same time have very limited space to store the recycle bins. This presents a barrier. As tenants are encouraged to recycle more, managers claim they have don't have enough bins to deal with the increased volume or the space to accommodate the additional bins. A lot of buildings can only place their bins in parking garages or outside in the parking lots. The loss of parking spaces brings a decline in revenue which may or may not be offset by the increased cost of garbage pick up. Another negative aspect mentioned was collectors' rough handling of the bins which causes damage and additional expenses.

We don't have enough bins. They pile up pretty good. I think we have six bins each building, and the supers sometimes just throw some stuff in another one just to even them out. We need more. We have to find room, but...

A lot of people wait. They'll pile everything up, then they'll go last minute and our floors are covered with stuff while our bins are sitting outside. So there is excess. So we need more bins, we need more room, and if we had that floor by floor, that would probably ease everything, or help keep the basement clean anyway, because the supers' have got to throw everything in when they're done.

I don't, but that's by the pick-up people, Markham or Miller. Some of those guys - if the price of the things came out of their pockets, the replacements, maybe they'd use a little bit more caution.

TENANT EDUCATION

Each apartment manager approaches tenant education in a variety of ways. Some provide a welcome package for new tenants that includes reminders about where they can dispose of garbage and recycling. Other managers interviewed are not proactive in providing their tenants with individual information and education. These buildings are therefore reliant on the city to provide and distribute a recycling list to the tenants. Only a few mentioned putting information directly in the apartment/condo newsletter. Depending on the municipality, some managers mentioned that the local newspaper provided information about recycling. They presume that most tenants receive and read them. The most constant source of information throughout York Region is the pictures and words printed directly on the bins.

Yeah, all the information they require, location, everything.

Yeah. It tells them when it's picked up and where the bins are located. Pretty much when you go to the bins, we have it pretty much advertised how to sort everything.

Only one building manager talked about a floor representative providing a voice for each floor and information regarding the building rules and regulation including recycling information.

It's called a tenant information manual that each new tenant receives, and that or, if they don't receive it from me, then the floor rep will take it (if they speak English, that is), and they take it around and they introduce themselves and also go over some of the things in the book....if they've come from a building where they're not used to recycling, it's a new process for them, but we have floor reps, so if they're in doubt, they can go knock on their door and say, "I'm doing my recycling. I'm reading the signs and it indicates where each thing goes." They pretty well stick to it.

AWARENESS OF DIVERSION TARGET

Only one manager was fully aware of the diversion goal set by the Ontario Government for 2008. The remainder were unaware of the proposed diversion goal; one thought it was only directed towards Toronto's waste. Not everyone thought that all buildings could meet this target. When probed about their buildings, most were certain that a 40% diversion goal would be achievable. Indeed, some managers believed they were already achieving 40% diversion.

I wasn't aware of a target, no, but because ours is so efficient that I guess I've never even thought about it.

I think if they put the plan in place now for the buildings that are going up, yes, it is. For the older buildings, I don't think so. I don't think you'll get half to the buildings, but you never know.

I think it really depends on the building and the make-up of the tenants in the building. I think it's possible, but I think - do you want me just to talk to you about these buildings?

I really care. I like to run this like I do my home, and as long as people keep that in their mind, you have go - you can go into some places - I used to be with Metro Housing. You could go into some of those places. I don't know whether they even took garbage away. They probably did, but there's some places you can't compare. If they don't have on-site staff, I think that's a big, big difference.

Many of the managers did not have an exact measurement of their diversion rate, yet they thought they had already reached 40%. No one mentioned receiving feedback from their municipality about their diversion rate, nor were they specific about how they calculated diversion.

At the moment the ratio is 4 units of garbage to every 2 units of recycling.

Oh, I don't know how to do it as a percentage, but we've got six large recycle bins that go out weekly, and we have the big blue garbage bins. We usually have two of those a week. So I would imagine they're pretty well matched.

We don't get any feedback.

No, no. We just put the garbage out, they pick it up, and we call them if they don't pick it up on time. That's it.

The need to increase tenant education was seen as the key component to meeting the Ontario target. Nearly all mentioned the necessity in providing tenants with tools to assist them in the recycling process.

Encourage people to recycle? There's only so much you can do. I think it really comes down to the people. No matter how easy you make it for people, it really is up to them. I know with the homes and my home, they've been very proactive. They've been sending out information and things like that, but I don't know if they've done it in the highrises. I've had no comments about it.

I think it's just education and trying to, like I said, give them the tools to make it easier.

LINKING FINANCES WITH RECYCLING

Other jurisdictions have to pay fines for putting out too much garbage, or pay for all of their garbage pick up and have only recycling provided by the municipality, and managers were asked for their feedback on this. Many were unaware of the differences throughout the province and retorted that it's simply not the situation in York Region. The financial aspect plays a complex role in motivating managers to pay attention to recycling. Some are already paying for private pick-up and feel that the cost distributed among so many tenants has a less significant impact than that of a homeowner. Alternatively, one building is at capacity in terms of the number of bins they have space for and can't process more. If a fine were to motivate change, it would have to be significant enough to tip the scales in favour of investing in alternatives such as giving up parking revenues for a recycling area.

Because with rentals, it all goes into one rental income. With condos - it's part of one fee that everybody pays every month. It's not something that comes out of their pockets. It's what's in the budget. But with a homeowner, it's coming out of your pocket. And there's more. There's 268 suites to divvy up a bill.

But as far as money and stuff goes, I really don't know. I've never spent a lot of time thinking about it.

Yeah, it depends. York Region here, our garbage guy, if we were to put in - just to give you an example, when we do like our garage watch and we clean up all the sand inside, if we throw that in our bins and they're too heavy for the guys to pick up and it's excess over what should be in there, they'll charge us \$200 for that pick-up. They haven't, but they've just told us. But things like that. But recycling, I never heard anything, but there are charges.

THE IDEAL SYSTEM

When managers were asked to imagine the ideal recycling system, convenience played a vital role. Hence, the conclusion by all participants that floor-by-floor pick-up would optimize diversion. A few managers commented that being able to commingle recyclables has made it much easier to place items in the bin.

All managers liked the blue recycling bags which were introduced during the interviews, and mentioned that many of their tenants would actively use the bags to transport their recyclables. After discussing the physical aspect of recycling, managers switched over to discussing the need to have continual education provided by the municipalities. They insisted that increasing tenant education is fundamental

to increasing recycling. Most participants were not certain if the municipalities are providing tenants with current lists of recyclables as well as feedback on the impact of each system.

I don't think so, because we're a nine-storey. Some people have compactors, and they're operated a little bit different. Here we just have the bins of loose garbage (let's call it that), and they dump it. Maybe a compactor would be the ideal thing if money was no object, but there'd be no place for it in a building this size.

I know there have been suggestions about putting a recycle bin on each floor, but we cannot accommodate that.

Probably make it easier for them to create different spots for them to dispose of their recycling instead of having to go down to the lobby.

That's a good question. I should leave that for my supers. They want better bins, because when the trucks drop them back down, they break. We need more room down there, though. Like I said, we need more room, we need more bins. I don't know what else we could go, because there's such limited space here.

REACTION TO ORGANIC COLLECTION

The majority of managers were uncertain about introducing a third waste stream into their building. Many were concerned about hygiene. Other impediments mentioned were space constraints for the organic containers as well as implementation and education. Some commented that since recycling is already a complicated issue for their tenants, organic collection would certainly overwhelm their system. Despite these difficulties, a few managers indicated that they would consider the possibility of organic collection on a trial basis. However, the key stipulation was that it would have to be introduced with sufficient support and education.

Right. Well, the type of people that we have here are seniors and the disabled, and if you start to load a lot of things on them, maybe something else is going to go amiss. Maybe, with one more thing to think about between bottles and all the rest of it and garbage down the chute, now we've got something else to think about. Maybe in the home it would be better than in a building this size. How would they pick that up?

but we could try it. I'm always open for suggestions and trial and error, as the case may be, and see how it works.

Unh-unh.

I'm not sure. I mean, I suppose it could work. It would be an education, but I'd be more concerned of where you're going to store it, how tight are the containers, what happens if people miss the container and you've got all this wet stuff which will create bugs and roaches and smells? It's not as clean, if you know what I mean.

Hygiene, education. It's a whole new round for tenants, so education.

I have a hard time trying to put battery waste somewhere else, so I don't know how that would work. I don't know.

APPENDICES

E&E FUND PROJECT #186: ENHANCING RECYCLING IN MULTI-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS – MARKHAM, RICHMOND HILL & VAUGHAN

DISCUSSION GUIDE - RESIDENT FOCUS GROUPS

May 8, 2005

FACILITATOR'S INTRODUCTION

Three York Region municipalities, Town of Markham, Town of Richmond Hill and the City of Vaughan have received funding from Ontario municipalities and stewards of the blue box recycling program to help increase recycling. This project is aimed solely at recycling in multi-residential buildings and their occupants.

All comments are confidential. Participants are urged to share their experiences and opinions with others. All responses are valued; no attempt will be made to seek consensus.

1. Warm-Up Discussion

Household composition - how many adults and children?

2. Residential Recycling

Recycling - initial thoughts on recycling. What are your thoughts about it? What is its purpose - why bother to recycle household waste? Any feedback on their municipalities recycling program? Is this a topic that people discuss in their building?

3. Recycling Program & Facilities

Brief description of your building and its recycling program. Where are the bins located (in relation to their apartment)? What bins are available and state of the recycling area - hospitable or not? Conveniently located or not? Sufficient number of bins? Clearly labelled?

RATE THE QUALITY OF BUILDING RECYCLING FACILITY OUT OF 10, WHEN 1 IS THE LOWEST AND 10 IS THE HIGHEST.

4. Residents Recycling Awareness

What are the items they recycle/that get recycled in their home - most and least likely items. How familiar are you with what can and cannot be recycled? Are they confident with their knowledge or do they feel that they have a weak grasp of the list? How did you/do you learn what belongs in the recycling bins? Do you have a list on hand? Have they recently received preparatory information? Any signs or posters in the building common areas, including the laundry room, the main lobby, etc?

5. Resident's Roles and Behaviour Responsibility -

how do you feel about recycling? (Is it linked with ecological behaviour, akin to say energy conservation?) Is the task shared or is it one that is avoided by other household occupants? Who separates the items - refer to recycling in kitchen and the other rooms. And, who actually takes the materials to the recycling bins? Do they make a special trip to the recycling bins or is this usually done when they are leaving the building?

6. Recycling Storage & Frequency

Where do they store their recyclables? Do they have a special container or cupboard? Do they have/would they want a blue box or bag? Do they put all the different items together or do they keep them separate?

How often do they recycle? More or less frequently than putting out the garbage? Is it different for garbage - different separation patterns and locations? Same frequency or more likely to go to the garbage chute on a higher frequency basis? Ever tempted to simply toss all items down the chute? What materials?

Organic separation has started in Markham for curbside recyclers. Is this something they could do? Immediate reactions and concerns.

7. Recycling Strengths and Barriers

Now thinking about what are the things that are working for you and the problems that you run into as a recycler - organize discussion into two areas:

- In-home issues - i.e. storage limitations, mess, smell, lazy household members, no blue box etc.
- building system - i.e. location of bins, number of bins, bin signage, etc.

MAKE TWO LISTS - PROBLEMS FOR EACH AREA - ASK RESPONDENTS TO THINK ABOUT POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS, WHICH WILL BE DISCUSSED SHORTLY

8. Residents' Roles -

Is this job just part of your responsibility as a resident in the building or do you think that it is something that building superintendents should handle? Is the current management and operations staff interested in recycling? Do they feel that they pay sufficient rent that they shouldn't have to make the effort to recycle? Is recycling any different in this regard, than curbside recycler's experience? Are apartment dwellers required to do less separation?

9. Status of Recycling & Waste in York Region

Aware that waste is shipped to Michigan for landfill disposal? York Region is recycling overall X% of total household solid waste and disposing of X%.

Are they surprised? Is it better, the same or worse than they thought?

In York Region, overall, Curbside recycling rate is 40% & multi-Res recycling rate is 12%. Rates vary considerably throughout the Region.

Is this a surprise? Why the disparity between curbside and multi-res. Rates? How do they feel about this situation?

The province goal is to recycle 60% of the total by 2008.






Is this a do-able for York Region? Should it be a goal their building endorses and strives to achieve?

TEAM TASK - IMAGINE THE FUTURE

The task will be to come up with ideas to reach 60% as quickly as possible. Longer term solutions can also be included. All options should be considered, no ideas are too small or too far fetched. What can be done immediately? 10 minutes and then report to group.

Divide group into two teams. Provide materials - pads, colour pens, tape & scissors

Immediate Solutions

-  In-home:
-  On their Floor
-  Recycling area
-  Common Areas
-  Municipal government - note that it is this level of government's mandate to find solutions.

Teams report, share ideas and remark on their work and conclusions.

10. Communication Channels - Tenant Communication & Feedback

Does the building hold meetings or have a newsletter? Review recycling info received to date. What information have they received to date about recycling in their building - what did they learn and did they retain the information material? How does management communicate with tenants - signs in elevators, door to door drops, mailbox drops? Include mass media messages, websites, and community groups.




Residents will be probed for suggestions on improving communication within buildings. Where could signage be placed to reach them? What kinds of reminders would help? Fridge magnets? Lists posted in recycling areas?

CIRCULATE SAMPLE EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS - LISTS, POSTERS, ETC.

11. Communication and Education -

What messages and educational materials could be helpful in increasing interest in recycling and activating behaviour? What message would you use to get people in your building to recycle? What would motivate you to recycle more items?

Possible Messages:

-  what can be recycled? Recycling 101
-  What is happening to their recyclables? Status Report & Closing the Loop
-  Report card - how the community is doing? How their building is doing versus another multi-res building in their area?

Would they respond to messages directed to all recyclers (curbside and multi-residential)? And, what messages are unique to their experience as multi-residential recyclers?

What suggestions could they make to improve communication and educational materials?

12. Building Recycling Trends

Do other residents recycle or does it appear that recycling is not popular in your building? Is there a sense of community in your building or on their floor or do most tenants come and go anonymously? Could instilling community pride have a positive impact on participation? What levers can be used to help build a recycling ethos?

What further is needed to prompt responsible behaviour? What gets in the way - how significant is the issue of limited storage space and lack of a blue box or other recycling container? Are there tools, such as blue bags or small apartment blue boxes that can help residents separate more recyclables? Do they separate on a room-by-room basis and miss recyclables - impact on diversion by adding more small waste bins? Is this a practical solution?

Summary Discussion

what did they learn tonight, if anything? Have their thoughts in any way changed as a result of what they heard tonight? If they are going to tell somebody about this discussion, what would they say? Invite final suggestions.

Distribute Feedback Forms (to follow)

Distribute giveaways - recycling lists, fridge magnets, etc.

E&E FUND PROJECT #186: ENHANCING RECYCLING IN MULTI-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS – MARKHAM, RICHMOND HILL & VAUGHAN

INTERVIEWS WITH BUILDING MANAGEMENT - INTERVIEW GUIDE

April 27, 2006

BACKGROUND

Individual interviews are being conducted with 8 building management company representatives responsible for either rental properties and/or condominium buildings. A total of eight are recommended to provide initial insights. They would be conducted onsite and would include a tour of the recycling and waste collection locations (photographs would be taken). Approval will be required with building owners or management companies that are located offsite.

INTRODUCTION

Brief description of goal and scope of project and project funders.

Probes will include:

1. The Context - Description of building & profile of building residents
2. Report Card - recycling bins and waste. History and evolution. Who is in charge and who is doing the work? Frequency of collection.
3. Resident Participation - level of interest in recycling
4. Attitude towards recycling on part of building manager. Do they think it is worthwhile? Is it seen as part of their job? Signals given by property owners/senior management?
5. Resident Feedback -tenant reactions, complaints and comments about recycling received from tenants
6. Recycling System Strengths & Weaknesses - what works well and what is not meeting expectation?
7. Recycling System Maintenance Issues - are the bins clearly regularly? Overflowing? Labeling issues? Posting of notices, distribution of recycling lists and instructions, etc.
8. Recycling & Waste System Improvements - Any being considered? How are new options evaluated? Influential factors? How interested is management in cost containment, introducing "greening" measures (waste diversion, energy, etc.)? Have they considered: more bins, expanding recycling (laundry rooms and common areas), chutes, floor-by-floor collection,
9. Tenant Education - any recycling lists and instruction materials circulated in building? Posted in common areas?
10. Recycling Tools - any mini blue boxes and blue bags? Do new occupants automatically receive information?

11. Awareness of Diversion Targets - know 60% Ontario government diversion goal? Gap between multi-res and curbside diversion rates (12% versus 35 to 65% in York Region) - role and responsibilities in reaching this goal? Role of municipality in reducing waste? What is their role/responsibility? What is a realistic target for multi-res. buildings/their properties? Is 40% - 50% achievable and what would it take?
12. Monetary factor - are they aware that some municipalities now charge low recycling multi-res. buildings for collection service? Reaction and possible other solutions to reducing waste.
13. The Ideal System - If money weren't an issue and they had no barriers, what would they do to improve the capture rate? What would a redesigned system include? Would distributing blue bags and recycling lists and posting signs in public areas help? What about the potential benefits of co-mingling? Have they considered this approach?
14. Reaction to organic collection serve - what are the drivers and barriers to success? What is their personal feeling about this additional element? Do they understand the significance of adding organic to the waste diversion program?
15. Closing Remarks - interest in having an electronic copy of the report?

YORK REGION MULTI-RESIDENTIAL RECYCLING FEEDBACK TALLY FOR MAY 8&9

1. Is your building an: Apartment ☐ Condominium ☐ Other ☐ (Please specify)

Apartment (May 9)	Condominium (May 9)
12	20

2. If it is in a building, how many storeys does it have?

5 or more storeys ☐

less than 5 storeys ☐

Building	Less than 5 storeys (> 5)	5 or more storeys (≤ 5)	Total
Apartment	4	7	11
Condo	4	15	19

3. Which of the following do you have?

	Apartment		Condo	
	>5	≤5	>5	≤5
Blue box	10	-	12	4
Blue bag	-	1	-	1
List of recyclables/what can be recycled	-	-	7	2
Information sheet on preparing items for recycling	7	3	-	1
Recycling notices or posters in common area	-	4	-	3
Recycling bins in the laundry room	-	2	-	4

	Apartment	Condo	Total
Blue box	10	16	26
Blue bag	1	1	2
List of recyclables/what can be recycled	-	9	9
Information sheet on preparing items for recycling	10	1	11
Recycling notices or posters in common area	4	3	7
Recycling bins in the laundry room	2	4	6

4. Please rate the effectiveness of your building's recycling program in reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfill. Please rate it on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is the highest score and 1 is the lowest score.

Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Apartment										
>5	-	2	-	2	2	2	1	3	-	-
≤5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Condo										
>5	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-
≤5	-	3	-	1	-	1	5	2	-	1

Average Ratings

Please explain:

Apartments

> 5	≤ 5
	They don't provide everyone with blue bins. There are no signs showing how to recycle materials.

Condos (number in brackets indicates the rating)

> 5	≤ 5
Depends on people, because I am curbside	No comment (2)
More could be done, at this point a room for "garbage" is provided	Not enough education/signs. No blue boxes in garbage shute(sic) room.
I feel that the recycling is reducing the waste because I see many people using the system in place.	Recycling is not convenient, is insufficient - information has not been forthcoming from the municipality
They have bins for different types of recycling. (cans) (bottles) (papper(sic)) always have access	N/A Curbside pickup
I think that there are a lot of people that do not recycle in my building	-
Some effort made by builders to consider environment of recycling, but not enough. Need more space, more bins, more education to tenants.	-

> 5	≤ 5
Currently recycling bins are overflowing which means people are aware and participating	-
curbside	-
Not enough people recycle in building	-
Recycling isn't stressed if you want to do it you can. There should be more info about it.	-

5. There are a number of ways of increasing the amount that people recycle. For each item listed below would you please tell me if you SUPPORT (+) it or are OPPOSED (-) to it.

Location	Apartment				Condo			
Building type	> 5		≤ 5		> 5		≤ 5	
Support +/- Oppose -	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
Make recycling compulsory/mandatory.	10	-	-	1	15	-	4	-
Charge apartment/condo buildings for their garbage if they don't operate a good recycling program.	8	1	-	3	12	-	3	4
Give residents a blue bag or box to carry recyclables to the recycling area.	10	-	-	1	15	-	4	-
Seal garbage chutes so that people would recycle more things instead of treating them like garbage.	5	-	7	-	9	-	8	2
Provide feedback about what is happening to your recyclables.	11	-	-	-	15	-	4	-
Provide more education about what can and cannot be recycled.	12	-	-	-	15	-	4	-

SUPPORT	Apartment	Condo	Total
Provide more education about what can and cannot be recycled.	12	19	31
Provide feedback about what is happening to your recyclables.	11	19	30
Give residents a blue bag or box to carry recyclables to the recycling area.	10	19	29
Seal garbage chutes so that people would recycle more things instead of treating them like garbage.	12	17	29
Make recycling compulsory/mandatory.	10	17	27
Charge apartment/condo buildings for their garbage if they don't operate a good recycling program.	8	15	23
OPPOSE	Apartment	Condo	Total
Charge apartment/condo buildings for their garbage if they don't operate a good recycling program.	4	4	8
Seal garbage chutes so that people would recycle more things instead of treating them like garbage.	-	2	2
Make recycling compulsory/mandatory.	1	-	1
Give residents a blue bag or box to carry recyclables to the recycling area.	1	-	1
Provide feedback about what is happening to your recyclables.	-	-	-
Provide more education about what can and cannot be recycled.	-	-	-

6. Here is a list of statements about recycling. Would you please tell me whether you Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, Disagree Somewhat or Strongly Disagree with each of the following.

Apartment	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree
Sometimes I don't recycle because I don't have time.	1	6	2	3
If I knew that recyclables were being made into new products & packages I would make more of an effort to recycle them.	9	1	1	1
Sometimes I am confused by my city's recycling program because it seems to change often.	4	2	3	3
I would like to recycle more but other members of our household do not want to recycle.	1	1	4	5
I notice that the more we recycle the less litter there is in my community.	7	1	2	2
When I don't recycle as much as possible, I feel guilty about it.	4	6	1	1
I don't recycle my bills or personal letters because I am concerned about identity theft.	9	2	-	1
I would recycle more things if it was easier.	7	2	2	-
The distance between my apartment/condo and the recycling bins is too far.	5	-		3
Our building superintendent is really supportive of the recycling program.	5	2	2	3

Condo	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree
Sometimes I don't recycle because I don't have time.	3	4	4	8
If I knew that recyclables were being made into new products & packages I would make more of an effort to recycle them.	16		3	-
Sometimes I am confused by my city's recycling program because it seems to change often.	4	9	5	-
I would like to recycle more but other members of our household do not want to recycle.	1	6	5	6
I notice that the more we recycle the less litter there is in my community.	7	6	4	2
When I don't recycle as much as possible, I feel guilty about it.	9	4	4	1
I don't recycle my bills or personal letters because I am concerned about identity theft.	11	2	2	3
I would recycle more things if it was easier.	13	2		4
The distance between my apartment/condo and the recycling bins is too far.	6	5	3	5
Our building superintendent is really supportive of the recycling program.	5	5	6	1

7. What is the best way to reach you with messages about recycling?

Apartments (May 9)

>5	≤5
Newsletters or descriptions on paper that we can post near our bins at home. Advertisements/education	-
reach - posters - email, media	-

Condos (May 9) – both columns used to transcribe comments (3 email, 3 mail, 2 advert)

>5	≤5
Email: zahida86@hotmail.com	TV Liberal/Star advertising
More signs - flyers	Education
Mail	By phone & mail
Advertising on local TV stations and papers	No comment
Newsletters in recycling room	-
Posting in the garbage room.	-
Email	-
Through the property manager. Or direct mailing.	-
Door hangers	-
Emails, flyers, notices	-
More bright signs	-
Best way to reach me - door hangers; pamphlets; anything that is more direct and personal	-
The best way to reach us is through the internet	-

8. Please provide suggestions that would improve recycling in your home and building.

Apartment (May 9)

>5	≤5
Provide blue bins for everyone / have recycling be mandatory / posted signs for clarity	Interactive advertisement. -rebate programs
Provide bins in (sic) each floor - Reach - posters - email, media	- have the recycling bins on each floor - educate residents about recycling - have events to get interest
Educate, discuss & take responsibility, magnets, advertisements on doors, anything & everything	- bins on each floor - recycle everything including plastic wrap & bags -more advertising, posters, flyers & info sessions
competitions between buildings, - more literature handed out to educate	-
Put bin on every floor. Hand out bin. Leave recycling room open	-
\$ would help recycling the effort like beer bottles (sic)	-
Provide blue bins to tenants more awareness - elevators, building surroundings fridge magnets	-

Condos (May 9 - both columns used for comments)

>5	≤5
Provide bins for each unit	No comment (2)
Education	More info on what is recyclable
More awareness of recycling	Education, incentives, more accessibility to Haz. Waste & items taken
Blue boxes in mail room - garbage room. More signs, individual boxes in each unit.	More education + bins in unit
More convenient, more info and notices - like the newsletter seen for R. Hill	Educate people more and make it more mandatory (sic) by enforcing it
Recycling flyers in kitchens	Education - a barrage of leaflets or pamphlets, educating us on the dangers of non- recycling methods.
TV - all over your community	-
More bins, more signage, recycle bins at mail room, more advertising	-
Having small containers for today's smaller condo/units - having town feedback	-
Green bin program	-
-multi languages	-
- the best way to reach us is through the internet -mail, commercials, communicating top people public ex. Malls. Grocery. Drug stores etc.	-
more education about recycling - best way to reach me - door hangers; pamphlets; anything that is more direct and personal	-