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2022 Solid Waste Management Annual Report Information Report to Council

Report Number: INFO-2023-09

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Distribution Date: April 5, 2023

In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any member of Council may make a request to the Town Clerk that this Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

Executive Summary

This report provides a review of solid waste management programs and services carried out in the Town of Newmarket in 2022. The following information is highlighted in this report:

- 2022 curbside diversion rate of 68% (curbside collected tonnes only)
- 25% of curbside collected material consisted of blue box recyclables (6,130.92 MT); 29% was green bin organics (7,033.53 MT); 14% was leaf and yard waste (3,276.23 MT); 32% was garbage (7,683.89 MT); and less than one per cent was metal appliances (16.63 MT)
- 23,607 lbs of electronic items were collected at the Town's Electronics Recycling events
- 63,985 lbs of textiles were collected through the Town's textile diversion program
- 975 lbs of batteries were collected and recycled through the Town's battery collection program
- 34 rain barrels were purchased through the annual Rain Barrel Sale
- Total resident inquiries received by the Town's Customer Service Department and GFL
- Total communications sent through social media and Recycle Coach
- Update on the Downtown Waste Management Strategy. A report will be presented to Council in Q2 2023
- Update on blue box transition. A report will be presented to Council in Q2 2023
- Update on the Federal Government's single-use plastics regulation and prohibition timeline

Purpose

This report is a new Public Works Services (PWS) initiative intended to provide Council with an update on the performance of the Town's solid waste programs and services. Going forward, PWS staff plan to provide a report to Council annually.

Background

Waste management services within York Region are delivered to residents through a two-tier structure whereby local cities and towns manage curbside waste collection, and York Region processes and disposes of waste material.

The Town of Newmarket provides curbside collection of residential blue box recycling, green bin organics, leaf and yard waste, metal appliances, and garbage and oversized items (furniture and other large items).

Throughout 2020 and 2021, curbside collection services for all waste streams were maintained with no reduction in service levels due to COVID-19. Due to Town facilities closing in response to COVID-19 safety protocols, in-person programs and services were modified. Garbage and large item tags, bins and backyard composters became available to purchase over the phone; drive-thru e-waste events were implemented; and education and engagement was increased through the Town's website, social media, and waste application (Recycle Coach).

In 2022, as COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, Town facilities were able to re-open to the public, resuming many in-person services.

Discussion

Curbside Diversion Rate & Collected Tonnages

Waste diversion rates are used to calculate the amount of waste material diverted from landfill. Waste diversion is achieved through reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting. In 2022, the Town of Newmarket achieved a curbside diversion rate of 68% (based on curbside collected tonnages only). Figures 1, 2 and 3 focus on waste material collected at the curb only; waste material collected through York Region's waste management facilities is not included.

A breakdown of total waste material collected through curbside collection is illustrated in Figure 1. As the tonnage of metal appliances is significantly lower compared to all other collected waste streams, representing less than one per cent overall, it does not visibly appear in Figure 1 and therefore has been excluded.

Curbside Collected Waste by Material Stream (2022)

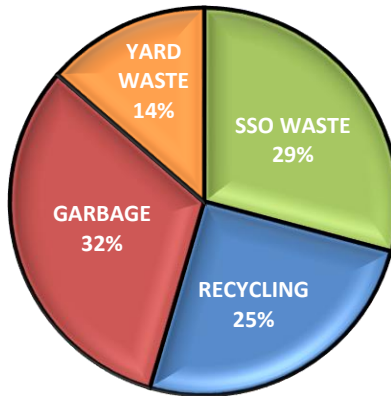


Figure 1 – Percentage breakdown of curbside collected waste material based on 2022 tonnages

Over the past five years, the Town’s curbside diversion rate has remained consistent with little deviation. Figure 2 illustrates the Town’s curbside diversion rates over the past five years as well as collected tonnages by waste stream. Due to the low tonnage of metal appliances collected through the curbside program, it is not visible in Figure 2 and has therefore been excluded.

Annual Diversion Rate & Tonnages by Waste Stream (2018-2022)

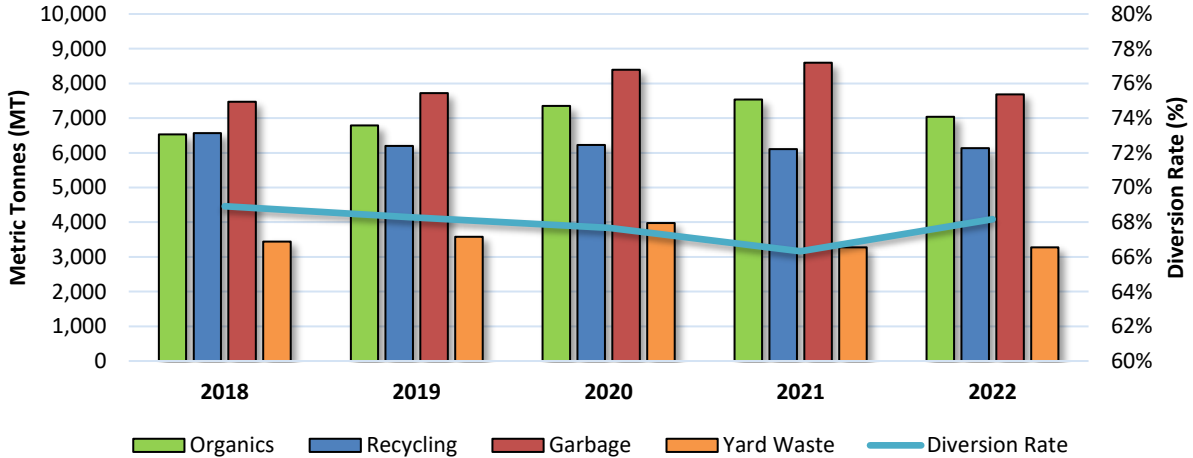


Figure 2 - Curbside diversion rates and collected tonnes by waste stream (2018-2022)

Note that between 2020 and 2021, waste tonnages reflect the impact of COVID-19 (e.g., people working from and generating more waste at home rather than at work and school). With many COVID-19 restrictions lifted in 2022 and with more people returning to workplaces and classrooms, waste generation levels have decreased and align more closely with pre-pandemic levels (please see Figure 3).

Curbside Collected Tonnages by Waste Stream (2018 - 2022)

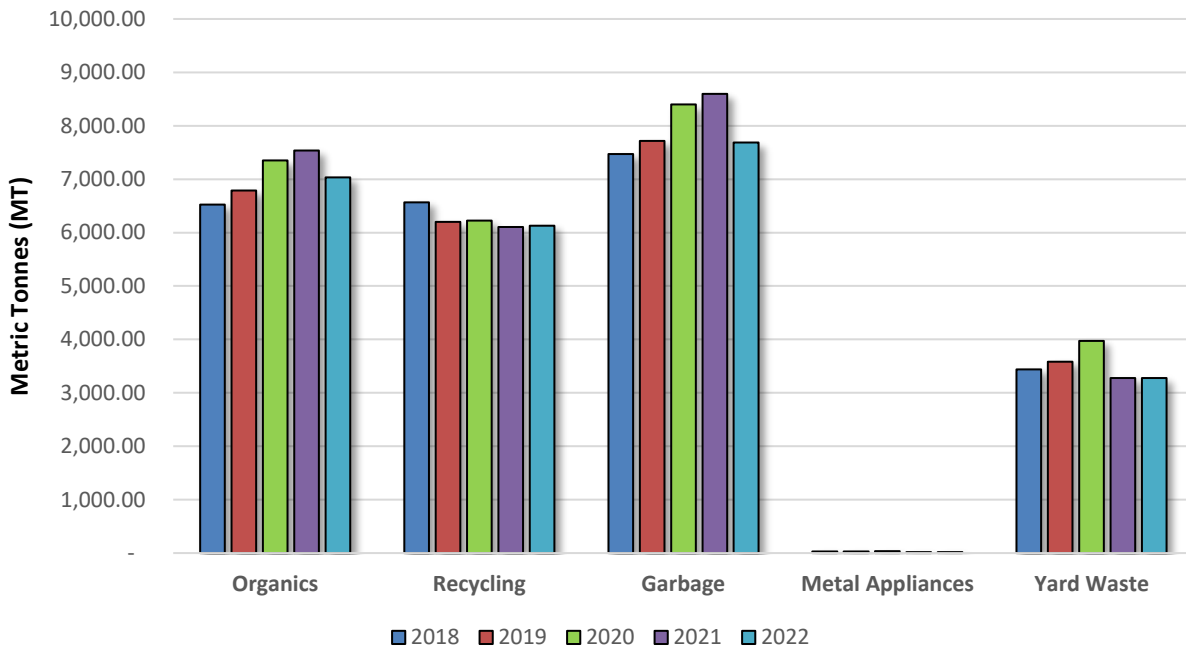


Figure 3 - Curbside collected tonnages by waste stream (2018-2022)

Staff continue to explore initiatives to improve the Town’s waste diversion as well as waste reduction and reuse. With the upcoming transition of the blue box program, no new programs are being implemented. However, staff will continue to provide education on proper recycling practices through community outreach initiatives such as the Blue Box Campaign.

Customer Service Requests

The Town of Newmarket’s Customer Service department receives thousands of service requests annually. In 2022, Newmarket’s Customer Service department fielded 5,038 waste related service requests, a decrease of 19% compared to 2021. The most common service requests were: large item removal (25%); waste collection question (11%); and waste bin purchase (11%).

Out of 5,038 service requests fielded by the Town’s Customer Service department, 415 were assigned to staff for further investigation and resolution. When a matter requires further investigation, the issue is entered into the Town’s Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and a ‘ticket’ is assigned to the appropriate department. The progress of the ticket from acknowledgement to resolution is tracked and reported on within the system.

In addition to CRM tickets, PWS staff also receive service requests directly from residents through e-mail and over the phone, bypassing the CRM system. The total number of waste related service requests received by PWS staff in 2022 totaled 677, a 24% increase from 2021.

The main categories of waste related service requests that PWS staff received in 2022 is illustrated in Figure 4.

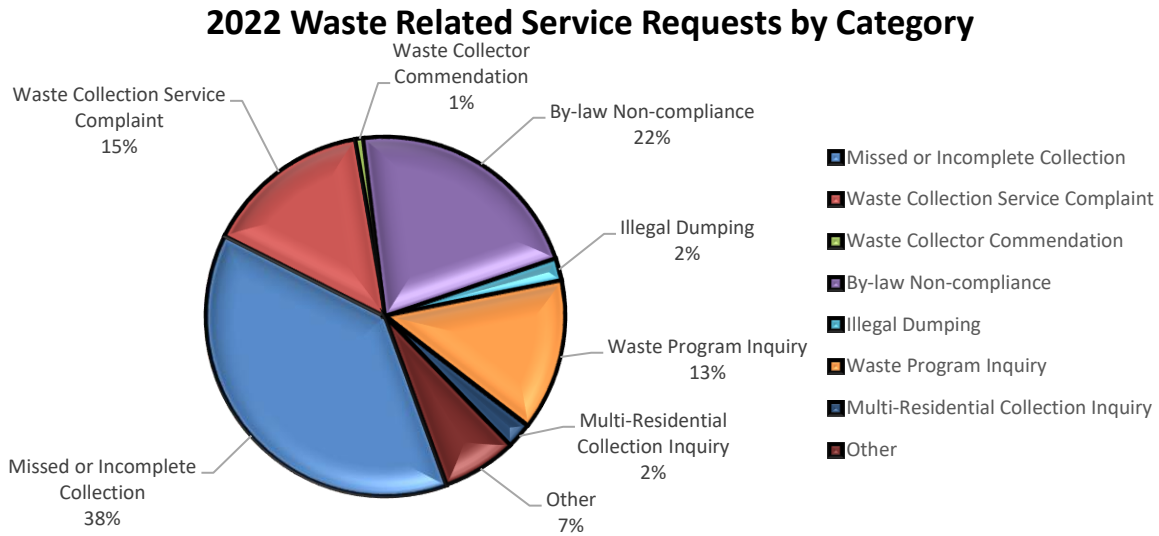


Figure 4 - Waste related service requests by category (2022)

PWS staff also conduct pro-active outreach and education regarding non-reported by-law infractions. When staff identify a non-compliance issue (e.g., waste material left at the curb), staff pro-actively reach out and provide education on the Town’s waste collection programs and by-law, advising residents and/or businesses on proper disposal procedures. The total number of addresses visited in 2022 was 718, a 77% increase from 2021.

Green for Life Environmental Inc. (GFL) Customer Call Centre

Per the waste collection contract, GFL is required to provide a full-service customer call centre for the duration of the contract. The quantity and type of inquiries GFL’s Customer Call Centre received in 2022 from Newmarket residents is illustrated in Figure 5.

GFL Call Centre Inquiries (2018-2022)

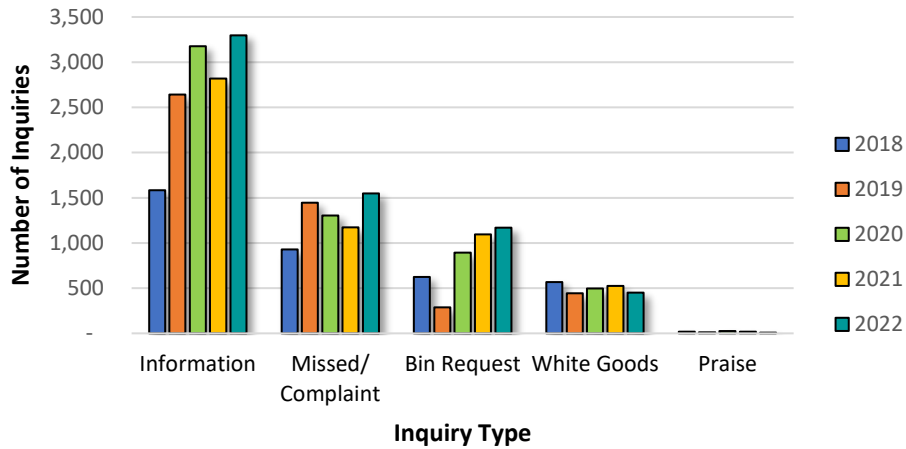


Figure 5 - GFL Call Centre inquiries (2018 – 2022)

The number of inquiries received at GFL’s Call Centre from Newmarket residents was 6,472, a 15% per cent increase from 2021 (please see Figure 6). Please note that in 2022, the Town’s Customer Service Centre transferred a total of 309 calls to GFL’s Customer Service Centre. These numbers are captured within GFL’s total inquiries within the various categories.

Total GFL Call Centre Inquiries (2018-2022)

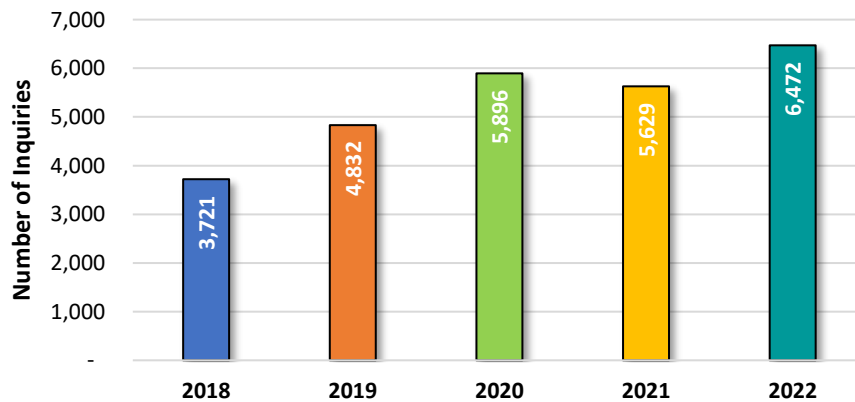


Figure 6 - Total GFL Call Centre inquiries (2018-2022)

On average, GFL collects from approximately 6,900 homes per collection day within the Town of Newmarket.

Communications

Throughout the year, the Town’s Corporate Communications Department communicates waste program information, updates, and reminders to Newmarket residents through various platforms. With more people accessing information online, social media platforms have become a prime

method of conveying important updates and information from the Town. Table 1 highlights waste related communications data for 2022:

2022 Highlights	Total	Increase/ Decrease Compared to 2021 (%)
Published Posts	221	-1.3%
Impressions	70,792	-67%
Total Messages Received Related to Waste	390	40.3%
Total Engagement*	4,101	-41%
Engagement Rate**	2.7%	24.2%

Table 1 - 2022 Social Media Data for Waste-related Messaging

*The number of times a user engaged with the Town’s content.

** Engagement rate determines the level of interest an audience has given to the posts overall. An engagement rate over 3% is considered ‘very good’.

It is important to note that when comparing year-over-year results, 2021 did not reflect typical levels of waste-related messaging. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, waste-related messaging was increased in response to issues regarding PPE (masks) and littering.

Recycle Coach App

The Recycle Coach App has been a great success for the Town of Newmarket. In 2022, the total number of Recycle Coach App users (i.e., mobile, web app, communication, and calendar) was 22,489, a 27% increase from 2021 (please see Figure 7).

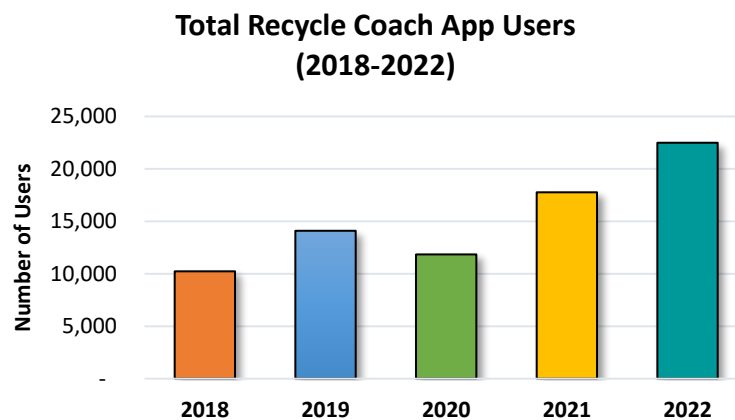


Figure 7 - Recycle Coach App Users (2018 – 2022)

In 2022, there were 1,371,395 interactions (i.e., material searches, pick-up reminders, page views, calendar views and notifications), representing a 21% increase from 2021 (please see Figure 8). Please note that data on total interactions prior to 2019 is not available.

Total Recycle Coach App Interactions (2019-2022)

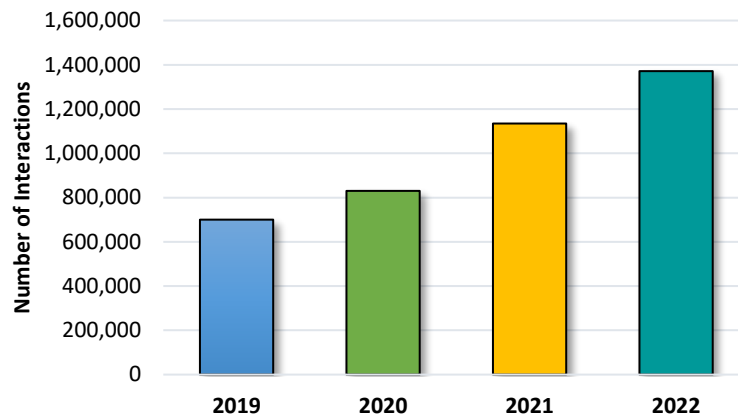


Figure 8 - Total Recycle Coach App interactions (2019 – 2022)

The top five waste items most searched for in 2022 were Styrofoam packing inserts, furniture items, Styrofoam containers, construction and remodeling materials, and household batteries.

Waste Program Highlights

The Town of Newmarket's waste programs aim to improve waste diversion efforts that support recovery of valuable materials and promote sustainability. In 2022:

- The Town of Newmarket collaborated with RainBarrelSale.ca to host an online rain barrel sale. Thirty-four rain barrels were purchased, a decrease from the 2021 sale where 108 rain barrels were purchased.
- 63,985 lbs of textiles were collected through the Town's textile collection program, a 6% decrease from 2021. Since the program's inception, a total of 233,895 lbs of textiles have been collected and diverted from the garbage stream.
- Sixty-nine backyard composters were sold to residents, a decrease from 2021 where 82 backyard composters were sold.
- During the Town's annual Blue Box Campaign, staff visited 1,461 addresses. Overall, 58% of addresses received a 'good job' door hanger while 42% received a 'recycling reminder' door hanger.

Battery Collection Program at Town Facilities

Due to province-wide lockdowns, Town facilities were not consistently accessible for residents to drop off their used household batteries for recycling (residents were still able to drop off used batteries at York Region Household Hazardous Waste Depots). As a result, there is a data variance in 2020 and 2021. Furthermore, because batteries are collected in 45-gallon containers, collection only occurs as needed when the container is full. This may also cause a data variance, as collection does not occur on a regular basis.

The total weight for batteries collected and recycled in 2022 was 975 lbs, a 111% increase from 2021. Since the program's implementation, 4,381 lbs of household batteries have been collected and recycled through this program (please see Figure 9).

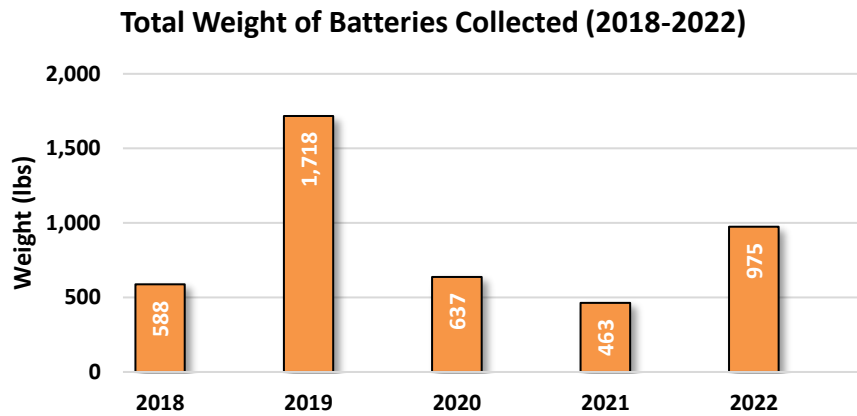


Figure 9 - Total batteries collected for recycling from Town facilities between 2018 and 2022

Batteries collected at Town facilities are recycled by Raw Materials Company Inc. (RMC).

Electronic Waste (E-waste) & Battery Recycling Events

Public Works Services (PWS) staff hosted two electronic waste (e-waste) and battery recycling events in 2022. The first event was held on April 23, 2022, in alignment with Earth Day/Week, a national campaign that advocates environmental awareness, education and action.

The second event was held on October 22, 2022, in alignment with Waste Reduction Week, a national campaign that advocates waste reduction, resource efficiency, and advancing a circular economy.

Both events were held between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the R.N. Shelton Operations Centre parking lot as a drive-thru and drop-off style event. Overall, both events were well received by residents. Table 2 summarizes the total weight of electronic items and batteries collected at both events:

	Event #1: April 23, 2022	Event #2: October 22, 2022	Total
Electronic Items	15,050 lbs	8,557 lbs	23,607 lbs
Batteries	640 lbs	363 lbs	1,003 lbs

Table 2 - Total weight of electronic items and batteries collected at the Town's e-waste events in 2022

Electronic items collected at the events were recycled by Quantum Lifecycle Partners (Quantum). Quantum is a registered hauler, processor, refurbisher, and Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) in accordance with the Electrical and Electronic Equipment (EEE) Regulation under the *Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016*.

Collected batteries were recycled through Raw Materials Company Inc. (RMC). RMC is a registered processor and hauler in accordance with the Batteries Regulation under the *Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016*.

Business Engagement Program: Single-use Items

In July 2021, York Region engaged the public through an online survey and ‘waste quiz’ and consulted with the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee to inform the development of a strategy to reduce single-use items with businesses. The results from these engagements can be found in York Region’s [“What You Said” report](#).

In November 2022, York Region launched its Single-Use Innovation Challenge. The challenge offers up to \$20,000 in funding to non-profit organizations and social enterprises with a community-driven approach to help York Region businesses reduce their use of single-use items. The deadline for applications was January 8, 2023. At the time of this report, a successful applicant(s) had not yet been selected. Staff have been actively involved in supporting this initiative as a member of the York Region-led working group.

Project Updates

Downtown Waste Management Strategy

In 2019, RFP-2019-098, was awarded to Dillon Consulting Limited (Dillon) to develop a Downtown Waste Management Strategy (DWMS) for the Town of Newmarket. Not long after the project began in Q1 2020, the project was placed on hold in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting lockdowns.

The purpose of the DWMS will be to provide guidance on the overall management of waste along Main Street and the BIA area as well as direction for effective and efficient waste management solutions that will meet current and future needs of a downtown area experiencing growth and change. An important component of this strategy includes improving waste management, increasing waste diversion, and enhancing participation from local businesses and residents in the Main Street/BIA area.

As part of the development of the Town’s Downtown Waste Management Strategy (Strategy), a Background Study Report was completed by Dillon and includes the following:

- Assessment of the Town’s current waste management situation for the downtown residential and business sector and public waste containers.
- Waste diversion performance review.
- Feedback obtained through stakeholder engagement and consultation activities.
- Assessment of legislative and population growth impacts to the Town.
- Best practice review.
- Development of potential options.

Stakeholder engagement and feedback was conducted through virtual engagement events, web-based tools, and surveys. The Town’s social media accounts (Twitter and Facebook) and

email were used to notify stakeholders of engagement events. Web-based tools were maintained regularly throughout the background study to inform the community of updates and opportunities to get involved.

Town staff were also engaged to provide feedback and a survey was held from October 20, 2021, until November 4, 2021, and a virtual meeting was held on October 26, 2021.

A component of the Strategy included a series of assessments to assist in determining immediate and long-term concerns for improving waste management in the Town's downtown core. These assessments included:

1. Public space waste container usage
2. Visual waste audits
3. Manual waste audits

Data from these assessments will be used to provide deeper insight into disposal practices by users as well as waste composition.

Based on the Town's current waste management system, Dillon developed potential waste management options, noting that these will be further refined and evaluated following the financial analysis. The next step in the development of the Strategy is for the Town to review the options proposed by Dillon and determine which ones to pursue further. A report will be presented to Council in Q2 2023.

Regulation Updates

Blue Box Transition

On June 3, 2021, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation & Parks (MECP) released the finalized Blue Box Regulation (O. Reg. 391/21: Blue Box), under the RRCEA (*Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016*), requiring producers to establish and operate systems for the collection, recycling and reuse of blue box materials. A more detailed report on blue box transition will be presented to Council in Q2 2023.

The purpose of the regulation is to make producers fully responsible for end-of-life management of their designated products and packaging. The current blue box program, administered by Stewardship Ontario on behalf of stewards and operated by municipalities, will transition to the new framework between July 1, 2023, and December 31, 2025. As of January 1, 2026, producers are required to implement a standardized blue box program (common collection system) across the province of Ontario in accordance with O. Reg. 391/21.

The regulation includes all single-family residences and multi-residential buildings, schools, not-for-profit long-term care and retirement homes and municipal public spaces/parks currently receiving municipal garbage collection as part of the initial transition. Post-transition (2026 and beyond), non-serviced eligible sources (i.e., multi-residential buildings, schools, not-for-profit long-term care and retirement homes) can request to receive collection services. Non-residential sources such as industrial, commercial and institutional establishments, municipal facilities and businesses located in Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) are not considered eligible sources. Producers are not responsible for the management of recyclables from ineligible sources.

There is uncertainty regarding future involvement the Town may have post-transition (i.e., enforcement, promotion and education, call centres, etc.). It is unknown how the PROs will collect blue box material (i.e., single stream or dual stream), the type of containers that may be used (i.e., blue boxes, totes, plastic bags, etc.), how recyclable materials will be processed, or who will be responsible for collection and what that looks like. It is possible that the Town could maintain a role for providing specific services (e.g., use of Town-owned bins in public spaces/parks, use of the Town’s customer service call centre to manage related service requests, etc.) if there is interest from both the PRO or its contractor and the Town, and a contractual agreement can be reached between both parties. It is also possible that the Town may have no operational role in delivering services on behalf of producers.

Staff will continue to participate in municipal working groups and consultation opportunities in preparation of the blue box program’s transition to Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). As more information becomes available, staff will provide updates to Council and seek Council’s direction for key decisions as required. Currently, staff are in the process of coordinating an approach with the Northern Six municipalities and are preparing a report to present to Council in Q2 2023.

Single-use Plastics

On June 22, 2022, the Government of Canada published the *Single-Use Plastics Prohibition Regulations* which officially prohibits the manufacture, import, and sale of six categories of single-use plastic items:

- Checkout bags
- Cutlery
- Foodservice ware (made from or containing problematic plastics that are hard to recycle)
- Ring carriers
- Stir sticks
- Straws (some exceptions)

To provide businesses with enough time to transition from and deplete existing stocks, the Regulations are being implemented in a phased approach with a staggered timeline as illustrated in Table 3¹:

Item	Manufacture and import for sale in Canada	Sale	Manufacture, import and sale for export
Checkout bags, cutlery, foodservice ware, stir sticks, straws*	December 20, 2022	December 20, 2023	December 20, 2025
Ring carriers	June 20, 2023	June 20, 2024	December 20, 2025

¹ Government of Canada, “Single-use Plastics Prohibition Regulations – Overview”, 2022, <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/managing-reducing-waste/reduce-plastic-waste/single-use-plastic-overview.html>

Flexible straws packaged with beverage containers	Not applicable	June 20, 2024	December 20, 2025
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Table 3 - Single-use Plastics Prohibition Timelines (source: Government of Canada website)

*Single-use plastic flexible straws that are not packaged with beverage containers are excluded from the prohibitions under certain conditions.

The Regulations also provide exemptions to allow the purchase of single-use flexible straws for personal use, as well as access to them in hospitals and other medical settings.

Conclusion

Public Works Services staff continue to explore and implement innovative waste reduction and diversion programs as well as deliver promotion and education surrounding the ‘4R’s’ (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover) in support of improving waste diversion and reduction in the Town of Newmarket.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

This report aligns with Council’s Strategic Priority regarding environmental stewardship through leading proactive planning and action related to climate change and other environmental initiatives.

Consultation

The following departments that contributed to the contents of this report include:

- Customer Service
- Corporate Communications

Human Resource Considerations

Not applicable to this report.

Budget Impact

There are no immediate financial implications resulting from this report.

Attachments

None.

Contact

Amanda Romano, Waste Program Coordinator

Approval

Mark Agnoletto, Director, Public Works Services

Peter Noehammer, Commissioner, Development & Infrastructure Services