

Sample Strategic Communication Plan City of Stratford

This Communication Plan draws on the main findings of Effectiveness & Efficiency Fund Project 76 - Optimizing the City of Stratford's Blue Box Program. The project was carried out by the City of Stratford in collaboration with 2cg. The full project report is available on Stewardship Ontario website, at www.stewardshipontario.ca/eefund/projects/innovative.htm#76.

STEP ONE: Define Goals and Objectives

Context: The City of Stratford's (City) "Pay as You Waste Program" was initiated in 1997 and has contributed to a reduction of the amount of materials going into the waste stream as well as increasing the capture rate of Blue Box recyclables. The City of Stratford diverts approximately 30% more Blue Box material per year than the provincial average, and its capture rate for recyclables is around 70%, compared to a provincial average of 55%.

Goal: To revise the City of Stratford's current Communication & Education (C&E) Strategy to acknowledge the City's waste diversion achievements and to build on them to facilitate the capture of additional tonnes of Blue Box recyclables.

Objective:

- To achieve a 60% recovery rate for all materials currently not achieving this rate, with a particular emphasis on those materials below 30% capture rate.

STEP TWO: Conducting Research

The following research was carried out.

Baseline waste audit: A waste audit was carried out in September 2005 to obtain baseline waste and recyclables data and to estimate recyclable capture rates. A follow-up waste audit was undertaken in September 2006 to identify changes in capture rates and consider potential impacts of the City's revised Communications and Education materials.

Review of City's Communication & Education (C&E) materials: Printed and Web-based materials were examined to assess the following elements: general standards of consistent presentation including colour, fonts, use of graphics and photos, contact information, clearly defined audience, overall impression, key messages and the inclusion of a call to action.

Resident survey into preferred communications methods: A short survey was prepared and disseminated to residents to identify current preferred communications methods and possible new communications methods that could be integrated with existing ones. The primary method of survey dissemination was through "at the location"

surveying. A representative cross section of locations were selected to disseminate the survey. They are depicted below.

Group	Target population
Local Golf and Country Club	Men and Women, 25-75
Zehr's (grocery store)	Mothers and children, retired people, shift workers (factory next door) both men and women
Downtown core	Business owners and employees in downtown core, people on lunch breaks and factory people, possibly some lower income people
Beer Store	Many factory workers, younger people (ages 19-28) and some retired
Men's basketball league	Men ages 21-45 (teachers, office workers, labourers, factory workers)
Stratford Festival staff	Employees (ushers, bartenders, office staff) male, female ages 19-70
Hair Salon	Women ages 25-55
Environmental Group meeting (CARE)	2 males, remainder females - Males ages 25-32, females ages 16 - 70. Males, engineer, teacher. Females, student, librarian, Health and Safety coordinator for factory, retail worker, high school librarian
Giant Tiger (retail store)	Young - middle aged mothers with small children (under the ages of 4), grandmothers with children, retired people (ages 55-70). Some factory type or shift workers (male and female ages 26-45).
Dentist	Males and females (ages 30-50). Construction type worker, secretary, mother with small child, dentist aged 50-57, hygienist (aged 40-50), teacher (29)

A display was also set up at City Hall for residents to fill out the survey.
A total of 219 surveys were completed. A copy of the survey is available in Appendix A.

STEP THREE: Research Analysis

Baseline waste audit: The waste audit results revealed that the following Blue Box materials were not being captured at an average recovery rate of 60%.

- Mixed fine paper
- Books
- Other paper
- Kraft paper
- Molded pulp
- PET other packaging
- HDPE Other Bottles & Jugs
- Other Bottles, Jugs and Jars (plastic)
- Wide Mouth Tubs and Lids (plastic)
- Other Rigid Plastic Packaging

- Aluminum Foil and Trays

Particularly low (i.e. less than 30%) recovery rates were noted for Other paper, Kraft paper, Laminated/Other plastic packaging and Aluminum Foil and Foil trays.

Review of City's communication & education (C&E) program: An external review of C&E materials was conducted by the project consultant. The assessment of the printed materials ranged from Poor to Good. In general, the materials were copy heavy and did not reflect a consistent or recognizable style. Identification markings such as the community logo or crest or a waste/recycling symbol were used sporadically and appeared interchangeable but with no identifiable pattern.

The ratings for the web-based C&E materials were higher than for the printed materials. The material was nonetheless copy heavy and seldom used bulleting or short statements to convey key messages. The material seemed to be produced with the mind set that each document/page will be read in its entirety, which is rarely the case.

Resident survey into preferred communications methods: The survey result indicated that nearly 60% of respondents identified the Waste Reduction Program Calendar (Calendar) as a primary source for recycling information, reinforcing this high level of public awareness and profile attached to this communications tactic. *Decision: Maintain an annual calendar as a key element of the C&E strategy.*

Over 80% of respondents have access to the internet and e-mail although only 20% of respondents indicated they would like to receive information about the City's Blue Box recycling program by e-mail. Part of the investigation identified barriers to expanding the use of electronic messaging and the suitability of creating a marketing plan with a more distinct focus on web-based tactics. *Decision: develop options for those residents who are now ready to accept city information electronically, and foster this behaviour amongst those that were not already doing so.*

Close to 50% of respondents indicated that they read the weekly community newspaper. *Decision: privilege weekly publications over daily newspapers.*

Just fewer than 80% of survey respondents reported they use a personal vehicle as their primary method of transportation to work. *Decision: investigate the use of communications methods including signage (e.g. billboards, in-transit advertisements) and radio.*

STEP FOUR: Crafting Your Message

Development of general C&E message: The development of a priority message was based on the review of the current C&E materials, the survey results, and municipal waste management goals. A new theme – one that was judged to be congratulatory, positive and acknowledged room to achieve even greater success – was developed to help re-brand the City's waste diversion programs. The theme "*Blue Today for a Green Tomorrow*" was selected and a simple logo was designed around this theme.

Development of specific C&E messages: Specific messages were developed on the basis of the September 2005 waste audit analysis. These encouraged residents to recycle those materials that presented capture rates lower than 60%.

Development of new C&E pieces: New and revised C&E materials were developed that included general and specific C&E messages. The following five core pieces form the base for all recycling program information delivery, and will be subject to a yearly review for information updating. The review will also serve to determine whether the materials are still considered valuable, year over year.

- Detailed Recycling Instructions
- The Recycling Calendar
- Recycling Newsletter
- The Recycling Poster
- Frequently Asked Questions

Revised C&E piece samples are available in Appendix B.

STEP FIVE: Determining Media

C&E dissemination methods were selected on the basis of the results of the resident survey into preferred communications methods. Research was undertaken to identify additional dissemination methods that could be used such as community resources. The following list outlines the preferred methods of information distribution for the City of Stratford waste management C&E pieces:

1. Information published in the local telephone directory

The City of Stratford's Waste Reduction Program Calendar is traditionally published in the local telephone book. The survey into preferred methods of communications indicated residents are well aware of the publication and where to find it.

2. Web site

The numbers of residents with access to the internet and/or email accounts is substantial and these numbers will continue to increase. Delivering the message via the internet is a fast and cost effective means of information dissemination.

3. City Message Boards in Public Areas

The City of Stratford has access to display areas in community facilities. Research indicated these locations represented an opportunity as they were not being used on a regular basis as message centres for the Waste Management Program.

4. Community Weekly Print Publications

In many cases small and medium sized urban centres have the benefit of a weekly print publication that is distributed across the community. The City of Stratford uses the "Town Crier" section of the local papers to place information on recycling, waste collection, hazardous waste days, ect. The shelf life of the publication is attractive as it serves as reference material and removal from the home is often on a weekly

basis. Moreover, the broad based community weekly offers a solid repetitive audience.

5. Direct Mail

Survey results indicated a majority of respondents preferred not to receive direct mail messaging and a review of the City's standard delivery methods revealed that Stratford does not generally rely on this delivery mechanism for any of its messaging. However, on occasion it may be necessary to ensure a message is sent to every resident or address and to document its delivery. In these cases, the city will consider mechanisms to ensure the cost-effectiveness of direct mail distribution, by sharing messaging and postage costs with other related municipal departments (e.g. by sending a water bill with a special reminder for recycling services or notice).

STEP SIX: Pre-testing

Pre-testing was carried out internally with the project team. Staff indicated that in hindsight, it would have been beneficial to carry out external pre-testing of the calendar through either expert reviewers or intercept interviews – or any other of the methods described in Step 6 of the P&E module on the Knowledge Network – as some residents found it difficult to interpret the leaf and yard waste collection weeks.

STEP SEVEN: Implementation

The implementation timetable below was developed to help the City continue the refinement of revised C&E pieces, selecting the message dissemination venues, creating communication and education materials and determining a dissemination schedule.

	Detailed Recycling Instructions (residential)	Release Date	Review Date	Action Item/ Co-ordinator	Costs
Local Telephone Directory (calendar distribution)	Annual calendar distribution	Month 1	Month 10	Copy review, update & production	\$2444.06
Web Site	Maintain calendar and recycling instructions	Month 1	Month 12	Copy review and update	Internal costs
Direct Mail	Disseminate messages as required	As required	As required	Develop Copy and Distribute	N/A
City Message Boards	Support Poster Message	Month 3 and 9	Month 10	Copy review, update & production	Ads were conceived so as to be easily printable from

					an office colour printer as needed.
Community Weekly Publications	1. Reminder placement in City Notices 2. Printed Copy for Tear Out	1. Month 1-12 Bi-monthly 2. Months 3 & 9	Month 12 Month 10	Copy review, update & production	OCNA space was utilized
Additional Methods	Have recycling instructions at places frequented by public	Month 1	Month 10	Copy review, update & production Review and update site locations	

A Media Release was produced for local distribution to all media and community outlets to launch the revised C&E pieces. This media release coincided with the release of a revised recycling calendar. The calendar was distributed to all households. There was minimal media interest in the revised C&E program, although the calendar was well received by the public. In hindsight, more frequent calls could have been placed and possibly from a higher level of management.

There were some further refinements made to the C&E program over the summer of 2006. It was decided to re-launch the revised C&E program, a second time, in conjunction with Waste Reduction week. There was modest media interest. In hindsight, more frequent calls could have been placed and possibly from a higher level of management.

STEPS EIGHT AND NINE: Monitoring and Evaluation

A second waste audit was undertaken in mid-September 2006. The same methodology was employed as was for the waste audits conducted in September 2005.

There was not much change from 2005 to 2006 although 2 plastic categories that had a capture rate of less than 60% exceeded this rate in 2006. Particularly low (i.e. less than 30%) recovery rates were noted for Other paper, Kraft paper, aseptic packaging, and other bottles, jars and jugs and Aluminum Foil and Foil trays. Improvement was noted for some of these items.

Overall the 2006 results were quite similar to 2005 results. There appeared to be some modest improvements in the capture of some materials. Overall waste generation increased and recycling rate decreased marginally although this is likely due to natural variability.

In general, the revised C&E pieces did not appear to have a measurable impact on capture rates in the Blue Box although it should be noted that the new measures will take some time to have an impact.

As additional follow up, the City of Stratford will be utilizing the OCNA space to promote its tetra pack and foil ads, due to the feedback received from residents regarding these two materials.

Appendix A: Survey

The **City of Stratford** wants to make certain you're getting our **RECYCLING** messages. And so we've got a few questions. Just check off the answers and drop the questionnaire in the box marked "Completed Recycling Questions". **Thanks for your help!**

Please check one.	Always	Often	Occasionally	Never
Do you read the community weekly paper?				
Do you watch Community Cable?				
Do you have access to the internet?				
Do you have an email account?				
Would you like to receive City of Stratford information by email?				
Do you recycle?				
Do you use public transportation?				
Do you live in a single family house?				
Do you live in multi-residential housing? (town homes/apartments)				
Do you receive unsolicited flyers?				
Would you like to receive City of Stratford information by Canada Post?				
Do you drive to work?				
Do you listen to the local radio station?				

Recycling Message Delivery Survey
October 2005

Do not complete - administration information

Location _____

DSC _____



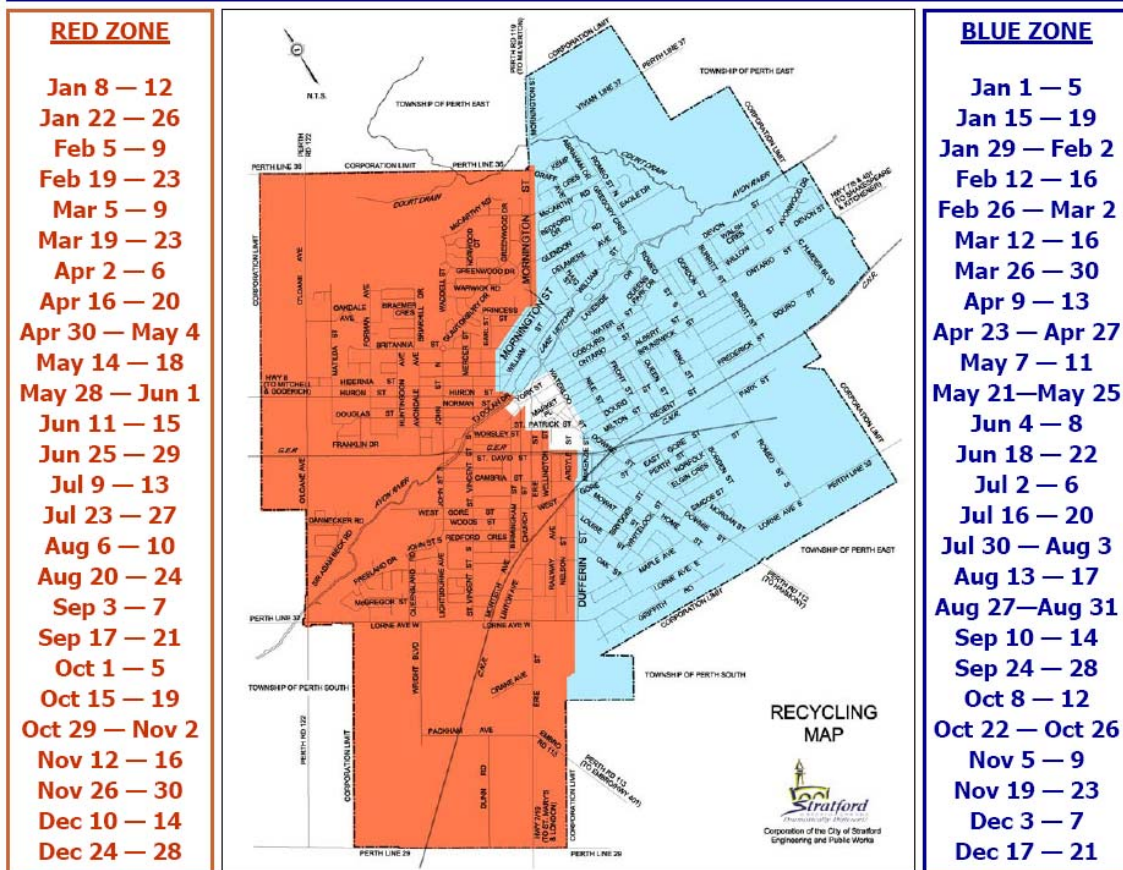
Note:

An additional question asking respondents what information they presently used was asked. Choices were: Waste Calendar, Internet, See what Neighbours do, Other. Not all respondents were asked this question.

Appendix B: Revised Communications and Education Pieces

2007 Collection Dates Stratford Waste Reduction Program

Blue Box Collected **Every Two Weeks** on Regular Garbage Days
Check the Map for your Colour Zone & Dates



Yard Waste is picked up **CITY WIDE** on weeks indicated below.

For more information call us or visit the website.

Jan 8 – 12	Jul 9 – 13	Oct 1 – 5
Apr 23 – 27	Aug 13 – 17	Oct 22 – 26
May 28 – Jun 1	Aug 27 – 31	Oct 29 – Nov 2
Jun 11 – 15	Sep 17 – 21	Nov 5 – 9

Household Hazardous Waste should be taken to the land-fill May 5 & Sept. 29 – for example – paint, pesticide, oil & solvents.

Questions?

Call: 519-271-0250 ext. 279

Visit: www.city.stratford.on.ca



Detailed Recycling Instructions

Stratford's *Residential Recycling Program*

blue today for a **green** tomorrow

What goes: IN the Blue Box

BOTTLES

Soft drink, detergent, juice, water, bleach.

TUBS

Yogurt, margarine, ice cream & lids.

TRAYS

Bakery, fruit, take out containers with a recycle symbol and a number in the middle.

Please do not include plastic cutlery, straws or styrofoam.

FOOD & BEVERAGE CANS

Place lids & tops in cans — pinch tops.

ALUMINUM PLATES & FOIL

Please rinse.

GLASS BOTTLES & JARS

Discard lids & rinse.

AEROSOL CANS

Must be empty.



What goes: IN or BESIDE the Blue Box

Sort your Paper **3 WAYS** then place **IN** or **BESIDE** your Blue Box in separate plastic grocery bags.

BOXBOARD

Flatten cereal, detergent, shoe boxes, paper rolls, egg cartons, and rinse milk cartons. Remove plastic spouts and necks from cartons.



MIXED PAPER

Writing paper, photocopy paper, envelopes and non glossy flyers.



NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES

Put newspapers, magazines, glossy paper, phone books, greeting cards, non foil gift paper and catalogues in a plastic grocery bag.



TETRA PAKS—starting January

Includes juice boxes, milk, soup broth, soy beverages, wine & cream containers.

Remove the hard plastic spouts & straws, fold down & place with boxboard & gable top cartons.



What goes: BESIDE the Blue Box

CORRUGATED CARDBOARD

Flatten and tie with strings into bundles no larger than 30" x 30" x 8".

Place beside the Blue Box.



Make it flat!

Not flat — not collected

Flatten all corrugated cardboard & boxes.

Flatten all boxboard — cereal boxes, paper rolls, egg cartons, milk containers & tetra paks.

Recycle Depot

Recyclables are accepted at the City Landfill.

777 Romeo Street South

Monday — Friday 8:00 am — 5:00 pm

Saturdays & Holidays 8:00 am — 1:00 pm

Collection Times and Dates

Place your Blue Box at the curb before 8:00 am.

Recycling materials are collected every **TWO** weeks.

You **MUST** use a Blue Box to recycle.

Boxes \$5.00 each at City Hall or City Annex — 3rd floor.

DO NOT Recycle These Materials

- ◆ motor oil containers
- ◆ ceramics and other plastics
- ◆ shredded paper — take to Recycle Depot
- ◆ grocery bags
- ◆ Styrofoam

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Recycling Posters

blue today for a **green** tomorrow

**Congratulations Stratford
Great Recycling!**

**New to
the Blue Box.
Tetra Paks!**



We CAN Recycle More.

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Space provided through the Canadian Newspaper Association and Ontario Community Newspaper Association and their members as part of the Stewardship Ontario's Blue Box Program in co-operation with Waste Diversion Ontario.

blue today for a **green** tomorrow

**Congratulations Stratford
Great Recycling!**

**Shiny & Clean
Don't put Foil in
the Waste Stream**



We CAN Recycle More.

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Space provided through the Canadian Newspaper Association and Ontario Community Newspaper Association and their members as part of the Stewardship Ontario's Blue Box Program in co-operation with Waste Diversion Ontario.

blue today for a
green tomorrow

Find it and RECYCLE!

A Recycling Reminder Program is asking Stratford residents to find all the cans, plastic bottles and paper being discarded and to make certain these materials get placed in the Blue Box. Posters and flyers can be found at the library, community bulletin boards and generally around town.

Questions?

Call: 519-271-0250
ext. 279

Visit: www.stratford.on.ca

Insert a story based on the copy from the media release.

Not too detailed but outlining the Stewardship Ontario support and a picture of someone looking at a poster at the library.



FACT: ***insert Stratford Recycling Fact.***

What's Coming Up...

Stratford residents can join the 2007 Clean and Green Committee. Organizers are looking to better the record breaking 2006 event, which collected xxxxx of tonnes of waste from City parks, ravines and playgrounds. Stratford's beauty is known world wide and a walk by the Avon River is a memory shared by millions of people. ***Call Katie Alward xxxxxxxxx for information on how you can help with Clean and Green 2007.***

Faq:

Q. What can I recycle?

The complete list of materials accepted for recycling is printed on Stratford's Waste Reduction Calendar. You can pick up a copy at City Hall or the City Annex (locations). Detailed recycling information is also listed on the City website, look under Our City - City Services-Garbage & Recycle. www.stratford.on.ca

FAQ Format

blue today for a **green** tomorrow

Frequently Asked Questions About STRATFORD'S Recycling Program

Q. What can I recycle?

A. A complete list of materials that is accepted for recycling is provided on Stratford's Waste Reduction Calendar. You can pick up a copy at City Hall or the City Annex (locations). Detailed recycling information is also listed on the City website, look under Our City - City Services-Garbage & Recycle.

Q. Does recycling really help the environment?

A. Yes. Recycling saves space in the landfill and saves tax dollars. It also saves energy and reduces the production of greenhouse gases because on average the process for returning a material to the marketplace is significantly less than starting from a raw material.

Q. How is Stratford doing?

A. Stratford residents do an excellent job in recycling at the curb. In fact, the City ranks as one of the top municipalities in the province for Blue Box collection rates. However, there are materials still heading to the landfill that could be recycled.

Q. What materials are being missed?

A. Paper, of all kinds - fine papers, Kraft paper, books - it can all be recycled but recent waste audits have shown us that a lot of paper is still getting into our garbage bags and ultimately the landfill. And we're looking for more plastic jugs and bottles to make it to the Blue Box and wide mouth tubs and lids, similar to those that hold cottage cheese or sour cream. And FOIL...please remember to recycle your pie plates and trays.



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