

**A**

**Strategic Communication Plan**

**for the**



October 2014

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## 1.0 Define Goals and Objectives

### 1.1 Goal

Improve the quality and presentation of the materials delivered to the Material Recovery Facility.

### 1.2 Objective

Educate Bluewater Recycling Association users in November, 2014 what materials are acceptable and how to prepare them in the recycling stream.

## 2.0 Conduct Research

a) Need to address four audiences:

- Staff – BRA sorters, communications staff, phone personnel
- Haulers/Commercial customers
- Municipal staff
- Residents

b) Asked residents about recycling knowledge, participation issues, how they found out about the recycling program, and introduced them to new information.

## 3.0 Analyze Research

### 3.1 Barriers

Some materials are not easily described.

### 3.2 Motivation

Residents have user pay incentives for garbage collection and want/need to divert to other streams.

### 3.3 Tactics

- Use photographs – rather than usual line drawings.
- Radio ads would be challenging.
- Use different media for different audiences. Use typical email/channels for internal and municipal staff, and haulers/commercial customers. .
- Residents have been trained to learn about changes in the program by referring to Association's newsletter and website.
- Update website, and all relevant publications (e.g., annual collection schedules), as required

## 4.0 Craft the Message

### 4.1 Message Statement

Key messaging for residents will promote that recycling is in their hands, and will provide direction as to how to identify recyclable materials in order to maximize diversion from landfill. There are four main internal and external audiences who need to be informed via different channels. All channels will have visual basis.

### 4.2 Message Concepts

1. For staff: email with new instructions and impact report.
2. For Haulers/Commercial customers: Email with new instructions and impact report.
3. For Municipal Staff: Email with new instructions and impact report.
4. For Residents: Website update; Newspaper ads; Updates in all publications (e.g., handouts, collection schedules).

### 4.3 Creative

#### 4.3.1 Photo

Internal staff to create photos depicting various types of materials.

#### 4.3.2 Newspaper ads

A standard template (with header and footer) is used for newspaper ads. Internal staff use photos and develop wording to fill in the ad.

## 5.0 Determine Media

Multi-media campaign to run primarily in November.

- Ads to run in all local newspapers announcing new information.
- Do not use earned media – do not anticipate that media releases would be effective, given the need for residents to see the item to better understand what is now recyclable.

### 5.1 Budget

Use promotion and education budget – annual line item to be used to address new issues/program changes.

## 6.0 Pre-test

- Email technical committee – distribute pdfs of newspaper ad to get feedback
- Ask for feedback from sample users

## 7.0 Implementation

Tactic	Description	Staff/Resource	Target Date	Cost/Source
<b>E-Mail Notification (Internal staff)</b>	Send internal e-mail with new instructions and impact report.	F. Veilleux/15 minutes	October 20	None
<b>Email with picture (Municipal Staff, Commercial Haulers/Customers)</b>	An email with new instructions and impact report will be sent to Municipal Staff, Haulers, and Commercial Customers	F. Veilleux-compose email-30 minutes	October 19	None
<b>Website Update</b>	Update website.	F. Veilleux/12 hours	October 31	None
<b>Newspaper</b>	Include a description of issues.	F. Veilleux-12 hour	October 16	OCNA Funding
<b>Various Publications</b>	In 2015, when publications are updated (i.e. sorting card, collection schedule, etc.) be sure to include new information.	F. Veilleux-12 hour	November 30	None
<b>Monitoring - calls</b>	Ask staff to provide on a monthly basis # of calls received over the period related to campaign.	B. Stewardson/B. Willard	November 2014–April 2015	None
<b>Monitoring – tonnage</b>	Review audit results on annual basis.	F. Veilleux	October 2014-October 2015	None

## **8.0 Monitor**

### **Key indicators to monitor**

- Residue tonnage from MRF.
- Cross contamination levels in commodities.
- Response from residents – number of calls/emails, type of calls/concerns, track comments/suggestions

## **9.0 Evaluate**

- Evaluate the amount and types of contamination coming into the MRF and overall response from residents to determine if messaging needs changed.
- Conduct informal surveys to determine if residents received messaging – conduct surveys at public events.
- Draft status report – determining if have met goal/objective, to BRA board by April, 2016.
- Review communications plan – noting opportunities for improvement for next material launch.

## 10.0 Appendix

# Recycling

## It's in your hands!

Just taking a few extra minutes to sort and prepare your recyclables properly can make a big difference. It can save you and your recycling program up to \$750,000 annually.

### Here's what you can do:

**Keep your plastic bags together.** If you still bring home plastic grocery and retail bags, empty your plastic bags by turning them inside out. Stuff your empty plastic bags into one bag. Once your collection of bags exceeds what you need around the house, tie the top of the bag of bags and place in your recycling bin. At the recycling facility, it will be much easier for our staff to recover a bag of bags than trying to hand pick millions of bags one at a time.

**Remove and dispose of plastic lids smaller than 3 inches.** Any plastic lids smaller than 3 inches will contaminate our materials. The removal of the lids also helps making sure that all liquids have been emptied from your bottles so they can be sorted properly by our equipment. It also reduces our shipping cost and ultimately yours.

**Do not flatten your containers** such as metal cans, milk containers and aseptic juice boxes. Our equipment separates containers from paper based on their shape. By flattening these containers, they behave like paper. This misdirection makes them extremely difficult to find in a pile of paper and creates a contaminant for paper fibres reducing the value of the commodity and ultimately increasing your cost.

**Place and Pinch** metal cans for everyone's safety. Place the metal lid inside the can and pinch the top to keep it there.

Learn more at [www.bra.org](http://www.bra.org)





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This ad is provided through a partnership between industry and Ontario municipalities to support waste diversion programs. Content is developed by AMO and the Bluewater Recycling Association.

## 10.2 Website Pages

The screenshot displays the website for the Bluewater Recycling Association (bra.org). The browser's address bar shows the URL. The website features a navigation menu with tabs for Recycling, Composting, Waste, Schedule, Help, and About Us. The main header includes the organization's name and tagline, "Your Environmental Alternative".

**Main Theme**  
The Association now recycles over 3 million pounds of material per month.  
This site is designed to give residents in our membership area from the many municipalities located in Huron, Perth, Lambton, and Middlesex Counties in Southwestern Ontario the most up-to-date information to maximize waste diversion. Check out our recycling guide under the recycling tab which explains how to dispose of over 425 different items! Get your local information by navigating to your community under the schedule tab.

**Recycling: IT'S IN YOUR HANDS**  
For more details and information on how you can help, click [HERE](#).  
For information on acceptable materials and how to prepare them, click [WHAT?](#) below.

 <b>WHAT?</b> What Items Are Acceptable?	 <b>WHEN?</b> View Your Area Calendar	 <b>WHERE?</b> View Depot & Landfill Maps	 <b>HOW?</b> Bin Setup Guide
 <b>VIDEO</b> Processing Facility Tour	 <b>PRINT</b> Our Publications	 <b>WASTE</b> Bulky Bin Information	 <b>INFO</b> What's Next After Recycling?

**Current Collection Status:** **NORMAL**  
All collection routes are running on schedule today!

**FISH LOVERS hate waste**  
Whatever food you love, we can help you waste less and save more.  
Send me fish tips and recipes!

**LOVE FOOD hate waste**

 E-Waste Information	 Hazardous Waste Info	 Your Local Information
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## 10.3 New Recycling Handout

# Recycling: It's in your hands!

Properly sorting and preparing your recyclables can make a big difference.



## Printed Paper and Paper Packaging

### Desirable Materials

Consists of a mixture of various qualities of paper not limited as to type of fiber content, normally generated from residential, multi-material collection programs. It may include newspaper and their inserts, flyers, letters and envelopes, books, file folders, note pads, computer paper, magazines, catalogues, telephone directories and other similar printed materials. It includes packaging materials such as corrugated containers, boxboard, linerboard, kraft paper bags, fiber cores (toilet paper and paper towel tubes), paper pulp egg cartons and trays. Cartons such as aseptic containers also known as juice boxes and polycoated containers such as gable top milk containers and paper based ice cream tubs.

### Preparation

Shredded paper must be in a tied clear plastic bag. Plastic wrappers on newspapers and catalogues must be removed. Cartons like juice boxes, milk containers, and ice cream tubs should not be flattened. Corrugated boxes should be flattened. Newspapers should not be overly exposed to sun (yellow and brittle is not acceptable). Paper materials should be kept dry.

### Problematic Materials

Hot beverage cups, non paper bindings (plastic, metal, and glue), hard covers, plastic tabs, metal rods in file folders, plastic sheet protectors, plastic film. Plastic wrappers on newspapers and catalogues. Metal spouts and cutting strips on boxes.

## Rigid Plastic Containers and Plastic Shopping Bags

### Desirable Materials

Consists of mixed, postconsumer food and beverage containers, bottles and jars. Non-bottle containers may consist of items such as trays, clamshells, and tubs. Plastic retail shopping bags are also included. Examples include soft drink, detergent, orange juice, and shampoo bottles, plastic clamshell trays (not Styrofoam™), yogurt and margarine containers.

### Preparation

Containers should be rinsed and closures removed. Plastic containers/materials should be empty and dry, free of any free flowing liquid of any type. Labels are acceptable. Product need not be washed, but preferred. Plastic retail shopping bags should be collected inside out until bag full quantities have been accumulated. Only full bags should be set out for collection.

### Problematic Materials

No foam products of any kind. Any containers used for agricultural chemicals, hazardous materials, flammable liquids and/or their containers, and medical waste. Motor oil and herbicide/insecticide bottles are not allowed. Nursery and garden pots are not acceptable. Black plastic containers are not acceptable.

## Metal Cans

### Desirable Materials

Steel and aluminum food and/or beverage, aerosol and empty paint cans up to 5 gallons.

### Preparation

Metal lids can be placed inside the container and the top pinched to keep it there. Paper labels are acceptable. No container larger than 5 gallons.

### Problematic Materials

The material is to be free of other scrap, laminated foils, iron, bottle caps, plastic cans and other plastic, glass, wood, dirt, grease, trash, and other foreign substances. Any and all aluminum items, other than used beverage cans, are not acceptable. Paint cans must be metal, dry, with lids off. Aerosol containers must be empty with lids disposed.

## Glass Bottles and Jars

### Desirable Materials

Soda-lime-silica beverage or food container glass of any colour.

### Preparation

Containers should be free of any organic residue, empty, and dry. Containers should not be broken. Caps and closures should be removed.

### Problematic Materials

Non-container glass (plate window glass), heat-resistant glass (such as Pyrex), and lead-based glass (such as crystal ware, television tubes, vision ware, light bulbs, crystal, windows, mirrors, drinking glasses, ceramic, milk glass, etc.). metals, ores, minerals, bricks, clay, grinding and refractory materials, rocks, clay and ceramic closures. Ceramics (such as cups, saucers, dinnerware, pottery, etc.)

## When in doubt, leave it out!

For more information, please contact the Bluewater Recycling Association at 1-800-265-9799 or info@bra.org  
You can also visit our website at ww.bra.org

# Recycling: It's in your hands!

Properly sorting and preparing your recyclables can make a big difference.



## Printed Paper and Paper Packaging



## Rigid Plastic Containers and Plastic Shopping Bags



## Metal Cans



## Glass Bottles and Jars



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# Recycling

## It's in your hands!

Just taking a few extra minutes to sort and prepare your recyclables properly can make a big difference. It can save you and your recycling program up to \$750,000 annually.



See Inside What You Can Do to Help



Supplement posted at [www.bra.org](http://www.bra.org)

## Recycling, It's In Your Hands

Just taking a few extra minutes to sort and prepare your recyclables properly can make a big difference. Think of it as an investment in the health of our environment. And the benefits will last generations – because some of the products we use will sit for hundreds of years in a landfill.

The ultimate goal of recycling is minimizing the need for raw resources in the production of products. Reductions in the mining of raw materials and the production of virgin products often result in substantial energy and emissions savings—as well as cost savings from avoided environmental compliance practices.

Global markets readily gobble up recovered commodities for the manufacturing of new products. Often manufacturers look to recovered materials for cost savings, marketability of an eco-product or to meet emissions compliance requirements.

With the growing number of markets for recovered commodities and the development of new technologies, new opportunities to reduce collection costs and everyone's desire to increase recovery efficiencies, has resulted in the adoption of the single-stream collection methodology for recyclables for many jurisdictions. Recyclables are now collected together in one container and sorted later in an advanced processing facility.



While single-stream collection is much more convenient for residents and results in higher recovery of recyclable materials, challenges remain. The challenges relate primarily to:

- 1) A lack of consideration in the design of materials that are destined to be discards, such as packaging materials and containers, and
- 2) The issue of contamination that occurs as a part of recycling collection activities.

## Design is a Producer Responsibility

The design of materials is a challenge that only the manufacturers can address through better producer responsibility. Manufacturers know they can take actions to make their products recyclable but they sometimes chose not to because it does not always meet their economic interests.

For example, in recent years, the wine industry introduced wine boxes instead of the traditional glass bottles. While many factors influenced that decision, one of the reasons was because the LCBO offered more shelf space for those wines than those in glass bottles. Once the wine industry adopted this format to compete at the retailer level the Ontario glass bottle markets disappeared. Now we are left with a multilayer product that is much more difficult to recycle than glass.



Nearly every manufacturer that produces a sustainable environmental report prides themselves of waste reduction through the use of light weighing. This practice involves taking an existing packaging and redesigning it to reduce its weight to claim a successful waste reduction effort. An example of this is the original single serve plastic water bottle introduced in 1978 weighed 28g and felt like a glass bottle. By 2000, it weighed 18.9 g but today it weighs a mere 7.95 g and feels almost like a plastic bag ready to collapse in your hand.

While it is good that we use fewer resources to make the same products, this action has consequences. A flimsier water bottle means it is more likely to get flattened and hide within the paper rather than being recycled with other water bottles, which causes contamination and lost revenue. Furthermore, our processing lines are designed to process a certain volume of materials. In the last five years we saw material density decline by 30% meaning that we can process 30% less materials today than we could five years ago with the same equipment. This costs the local residents about \$628,000 per year.

Product manufacturers need to understand better how the packaging they produce is managed at end-of-life and the supply-and-demand issues with specific recyclables. For example, there is a higher demand for #1 and #2 plastics than for #3, #4, #5, #6 and #7 plastics. There are also regional differences in what can be recycled, and resulting labeling issues. For example, labeling #6 foam plastics with an SPI code enclosed in the universal recycling symbol confuses residents to think it is recyclable when it is not accepted locally.



## Contamination is Your Responsibility

Recycling contaminants are generally defined as unrecyclable materials that must be separated from recyclable materials or an improperly sorted recyclable material that ends up in the wrong commodity (i.e. a can with the newspaper) also known as a cross contaminant.

The contamination issue has been steadily increasing and this contamination is problematic in a number of ways.

First, contamination directly affects costs. The key to maintain a low cost for our residents is based on maintaining low operational costs for collection and processing, while increasing commodity prices. Unfortunately, contaminants increase operational costs for collection and processing because sorting is more difficult and takes longer due to the presence of contaminants. Once sorted, the recyclable material has the potential to be less pristine, lowering its value. And, the non-acceptable materials must be hauled away and disposed of for a fee.

Besides costs, there are numerous operational challenges presented by the contaminants. For example, plastic bags and clothing wrap around sorting equipment and clog up screens. This requires significant downtime for the plant while workers cut away the material. This lowers the overall capacity of the plant.



A third concern is worker safety. In addition to the recyclables front-line workers are exposed to contaminants that can include everything from diapers to propane tanks. One of the fastest-growing hazards is a medical sharp, also known as syringes. With people increasingly utilizing sharps at home to control diabetes and other medical conditions, more and more of these items are threatening the safety of recycling workers each day.

Many people are unaware of the recycling business' intricacies. Most people assume that if an item is accepted at one location then it's accepted at any location. Many people don't understand the differences in resins. Plastic is plastic, people figure, so if a soda bottle is recyclable, then a drinking straw should be recyclable as well. That is simply not the case.

In an effort to control abusers, some municipalities have even coupled enforcement activities with education. They initiated a program of random recycling inspections conducted at curbside. If non-recyclables are found in a recycling bin, an educational notice is attached to the bin detailing items that are acceptable for recycling, and a random follow-up inspection is conducted. If non-recyclables are found again, the recycling bin is removed and the occupant's billing status is changed to garbage-only with a \$10 rate increase per month for six months.



## Problems Are In The Bag

The Association has seen a steady increase in downtime in the Material Recovery Facility. The culprit is a constant stream of loose plastic bags that folks have tossed into their recycling bins.

While residents have embraced recycling as never before with the introduction of the wheelie bins in many of our service areas, some residents appear to have forgotten the importance of keeping all their plastic bags bagged together.

The problem with countless, loose plastic bags in the recycling stream has become so severe that the Association has launched a public awareness campaign to try to change people's recycling habits.

Key to that campaign is to have residents take all their bags and stuff them into one, single bag, tie it and toss it into the recycling bin. That will streamline operations immensely at the material recovery facility.

While magnets can be used to separate steel, and optical scanners can remove plastic bottles, there is no technology other than human fingers to snag the bags from the lines. Picking out all those bags drives up labour costs and eats into workers' ability to sort much more valuable materials helping to offset the cost of operating the curbside pickup program.

The loose bags lead to frequent equipment stoppages and repairs because they get wrapped under conveyor belts, work their way into bearings and shafts and wrap around screens that separate different materials. Loose bags cause sorting lines at the Association to be stopped about 5 hours a week, costing taxpayers more than \$250,000 a year.

While the bags wrap around the shafts of our screens, they reduce their effectiveness in separating other materials affecting quality and revenue. If left untouched, the screens would literally become conveyor instead of screens. For example, where containers are supposed to be separated from paper materials based on size and physical properties like being flat or round, the potential for containers to end up in papers increases considerably resulting in cross-contamination. This requires more effort to clean the papers and can result in substantial loss of revenue.

End markets have strict demands for quality materials with some allowances for minimal contamination, typically 2%. Even though our materials meet end market specifications, even a small loss of 2% can be significant. For example, newspapers currently sell for about \$69 per tonne. If the 2% in contamination is made up of flat pop cans that slipped in between the pages instead of being recycled with the rest of the aluminum cans, we lose the opportunity to get paid \$1831 per tonne for that aluminum. Improper preparation of materials resulting in this type of cross contamination results in over \$457,000 in lost revenue each year.





## What You Can Do To Help

### 1) **Keep your plastic bags together.**

If you still bring home plastic grocery and retail bags, empty your plastic bags by turning them inside out. Stuff your empty plastic bags into one bag. Once your collection of bags exceeds what you need

around the house, tie the top of the bag of bags and place in your recycling bin. At the recycling facility, it will be much easier for our staff to recover a bag of bags than trying to hand pick millions of bags one at a time.



- 2) **Remove and dispose of plastic lids smaller than 3 inches.** Any plastic lids smaller than 3 inches will contaminate our glass or they will be screened out and disposed of instead of being recycled. The removal of the lids also helps making sure that all liquids have been emptied from your bottles so they can be sorted properly by our equipment. It also means we can make denser bales reducing our shipping cost and ultimately yours.



- 3) **Do not flatten your containers** such as metal cans, milk containers and aseptic juice boxes. Our equipment separates containers from paper based on their physical three-dimensional shape. By flattening these containers, they behave like two-dimensional paper and as a result they stay with the paper in our process rather than going into the containers. This misdirection makes them extremely difficult to find in a pile of paper. Unfortunately, those that get missed act as a contaminant to the paper fibre they end up with reducing the value of the commodity and ultimately increasing your cost.



**Place and Pinch** metal cans for everyone's safety. **Place** the metal lid inside the can and **pinch** the top to keep it there.

**4) Only glass bottles and jars are acceptable** in our recycling program. While many items are made of glass like windows, drink ware, mirror, bake ware, etc. they are not made with the same materials and they cannot be mixed in. Similarly, ceramic tiles and mugs are not recyclable. Mixing types of glass together virtually makes it impossible for us to make new glass bottles with the material because the contaminants cause glass defects and safety issues for those handling it.



**5) Rigid plastic containers are acceptable** in the recycling program. Unfortunately we cannot accept everything made of plastic. We accept the vast majority of the bottles and other packaging in the marketplace as long as it is not blown polystyrene commonly known as “Styrofoam”. However, this does not mean we accept everything made of plastic. We can only handle packaging. This means that straws, small swimming pools, lawn chairs, toys, and anything else made of plastic is NOT acceptable. A recycling symbol with a number in it does not mean that the item is recyclable or even made of recyclable materials. It was placed there to help us identify the type of plastic resin used in the manufacturing process.



**6) When in doubt leave it out.** When you are not sure if something is recyclable, do not place in in your recycling bins until you have verified it is in fact acceptable. You can verify this by:

- a) Visiting our website at [www.bra.org/recycleguide.html](http://www.bra.org/recycleguide.html)
- b) Emailing us at [info@bra.org](mailto:info@bra.org)
- c) Calling our toll free line at 1-800-265-9799,
- d) Looking at the lid of your recycling wheelie bin,
- e) Seeing us at 415 Canada Avenue, Huron Park, ON, or
- f) Downloading MyWaste App from [www.bra.org/mobileapp.html](http://www.bra.org/mobileapp.html)

