We’re Rolling out the Carts!

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Guelph is in the process of converting to a cart-based waste collection system for the organics, recyclables and garbage streams, which fulfills the Solid Waste Management Master Plan’s recommendation to increase waste diversion rates and create operational efficiencies. This also complies with the Ministry of the Environment’s conditions for operating the City’s state-of-the-art Organic Waste Processing Facility to process organic waste into clean nutrient rich compost.

Cart-based collection is being phased in over a three year period, starting in 2012. The final phase is taking place this year.

Stakeholder support and adoption was essential to the success of the program. Guelph needed to provide a consistent flow of communications, breathe life into tired messaging, convey the benefits and rationale for the carts, and convey a willingness to help residents through the transition.

To achieve these results, a proactive and strategic Communications Program was developed and successfully executed.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The City of Guelph is applying for the SWANA Communication Excellence Award category to seek recognition and share the success of the Waste Cart Rollout Communications Campaign.

A proactive and strategic Communications Program was developed to ensure that Guelph residents and businesses were aware of, prepared for, and successfully adopted the new cart-based waste collection system.

Stakeholder support and adoption was essential to the success of the program. Guelph had to find new ways to share information and engage the community throughout the process.
2.0 RESEARCH AND PLANNING

2.1 Need for communication activity

In 2009, the City began building a state-of-the-art Organic Waste Processing Facility (OWPF) to process Guelph’s organic waste stream into clean, nutrient-rich compost. To operate the OWPF, the City was required to comply with conditions set by the Ministry of the Environment (MOE). One such condition was that Guelph’s OWPF could not accept organic waste in plastic bags – requiring the City to move away from bag-based collection.

Guelph employees were also researching the benefits of converting to a cart-based waste collection system for all three waste streams—organics, recyclables and garbage—to fulfill a recommendation of the Solid Waste Management Master Plan. It was determined that an automated cart-based waste collection system for all three streams would increase the City’s waste diversion rate and create operational efficiencies in the long-term. Moving to an automated cart program is expected to result in annual operational savings of approximately $460,000. The breakdown for these savings include staffing $342,000; Yard Waste Collection $87,000; and, trucks and fuel $31,000.

In August 2010, City Council approved the transition from a manual bag-based collection system to an automatic cart-based collection system.

A proactive and strategic communications plan was needed to support and enable Guelph’s adoption of the cart-based waste collection system and ultimately increase the City’s waste diversion rate. This need was made clear through a combination of quantitative, qualitative and anecdotal research:

- A City of Guelph citizen satisfaction survey conducted by Ipsos Reid Public Affairs in 2008 identified both the City’s garbage services and communication with residents as areas for improvement. The Ipsos Reid report recommended the City do a better job of communicating changes to waste collection services with residents.
- Through best practices research, the City confirmed municipalities that use waste carts implemented formal communications plans as they transitioned to this collection system.
- A communications plan for the cart program also supports the City of Guelph Communications Plan’s guiding principles—to provide information that is timely, accurate, clear, accessible and responsive; and strive to achieve a culture of two-way communication and communications excellence practices.

2.2 Materials used prior to program implementation

Prior to the launch of the Automated Cart Collection Communications Program, various materials were used to inform and educate residents about special collection programs and services, sorting requirements and curbside collection guidelines. These included:

- **Brochures** which provided information about backyard composting, the ReCycle Bike Reuse Program, Bulky Item Collection Program, Paint + Reuse Program, and Household Hazardous Waste disposal.
- The annual **Conservation Calendar** which included the collection schedule, waste program information and waste tips.
- **Display boards** used at special events and exhibits.
Oops stickers and door knockers were used by waste collection staff and by-law officers at the curb to indicate, and help residents correct improper sorting and waste set out.

**Welcome packages**, containing a copy of all print promotion and education materials, were created and distributed to new residents via mail or the Welcome Wagon program.

The City’s **waste and recycling web pages** were used to distribute waste program and reduction information.

These materials continue to be distributed alongside the materials developed through the Automated Cart Collection Communications Program.

However, as previously described, a citizen satisfaction survey conducted by Ipsos Reid Public Affairs in 2008 identified both the City’s garbage services and communication with residents as areas for improvement. The Ipsos Reid report recommended the City do a better job of communicating changes to waste collection services with residents.

### 2.3 Target audiences

**Primary audiences** included the heads of households (residential, multi-residential and student housing), multi-residential property managers and owner, and the Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (IC&I) sector using the City’s curbside waste collection services.

**Secondary audiences** included City Council, City employees, and local print, broadcast and social media outlets.

To ensure that the approach was appropriate for each audience, the Communications Program used a variety of tactics that were proven to be effective for each group. The approach was developed considering their specific needs, the detail and scope of information that each audience would require, and the end goals to be achieved.

Primary audiences were communicated with through a variety of print and radio advertisements; a brochure with a tear-off cart size selection ballot (delivered door-to-door); a detailed Waste Cart User Guide (inserted in the green cart); email; and web content and messages via Facebook and Twitter. These audiences were invited to participate in City-run information sessions located throughout the City, display booths at Special events (e.g. multicultural festival), mall displays and University of Guelph outreach events. Residents in the first year of the cart roll-out were also given the opportunity to provide feedback on the successes and challenges of the program to improve/validate the communication approach for the final two rollout years.

Secondary audiences were communicated with directly using traditional communication tactics. They were given specific information that would enable them to support the cart rollout. City Council and employees received a pocket-sized card with key messages and contact information for directing cart-related inquiries from friends, family, residents and businesses. **Issue Notes** were developed for members of City Council to communicate relevant background information, key facts and messages, and questions and answers to reference when fielding inquiries from media and constituents. Print articles were also
published regularly in the City's internal newsletter. Media relations included a media release and interviews with both local newspapers.

2.4 Program goals and strategies to meet each goal

The goal of the Communications Program was to support and enable the City's conversion to a new cart-based waste collection system for the organics, recyclables and garbage streams, by ensuring that Guelph residents and businesses were aware of, prepared for, and successfully adopted the City's new system.

Specific objectives of this goal included:

- Increasing the City's waste diversion rate of 49 per cent (in 2011) by at least ten per cent, between September 1, 2011 to December 31, 2014.
- Ensuring 90 per cent of residents in the 2012 cart distribution neighbourhoods were aware of the new waste cart collection system.
- Encouraging at least 60 per cent of households, within the 2012 cart distribution neighbourhoods, to select their preferred sizes of blue and grey carts.
- Ensuring 95 per cent of households in the 2012 cart distribution neighbourhoods placed their blue and green carts at the curb on their first scheduled collection day.

Four strategies were used to meet this program goal and objectives:

1. Generate awareness, enthusiasm, and support for the new curbside cart collection program over three years

A new brand “Give waste a new life” and creative butterfly logo (comprised of organic and recyclable materials) was developed to both inspire residents to sort their waste properly and generate awareness that these materials are given “new life” in the form of other material when diverted from landfill.

To pique community interest, the teaser message “We’re rolling out the carts” with the call to action, visit guelph.ca/waste, wrapped two Guelph Transit buses that drove through the City for the first three months of the cart rollout.
To blanket the entire City, cart distribution maps appeared on Guelph Transit bus shelters in high vehicular/pedestrian traffic locations, plus print advertising in the *Guelph Community Guide* and both local papers. Displays were set up at City facilities including libraries and recreation centres, and at targeted public events and trade shows (e.g. Lion’s Club Home Show, the local shopping mall, the Guelph and District Multicultural Festival).

Each household in cart distribution neighbourhoods received a “We’re rolling out the carts” Cart Size Selection Brochure on their door step (*Appendix A1*). The brochure contained introductory information about the cart program and a cart size selection ballot with tips for selecting cart sizes. Print ads (*Appendix A2*), radio ads and mobile signs promoted the cart rollout and deadline for cart size selection. Cart displays were also set up throughout the City, showcasing the four different cart sizes available. Residents could make their cart size selections online, over the phone, or by submitting their ballot at one of the convenient cart display locations.

A three-minute, entertaining, instructional video was produced and made available on both YouTube and the City’s website guelph.ca/waste. A local senior citizen and members of the Guelph Accessibility Committee participated in the video and demonstrated the manoeuvrability of the carts. This helped address some community concerns over cart mobility. To view the video, visit: [http://guelph.ca/living/garbage-and-recycling/curbside-collection/cart-program/](http://guelph.ca/living/garbage-and-recycling/curbside-collection/cart-program/)

Door hangers were delivered door-to-door to residents letting them know when the carts would be delivered (Cart delivery starts...) and when to start using them (Start using your carts the week of...*) (*Appendix A3*). A comprehensive 19-page Waste Cart User Guide and annual waste collection schedule was included in each delivered green cart. A “Look Inside” sticker on the green cart lids ensured that residents could easily find this information (*Appendix A4*). The “Give Waste a New Life” logo also appeared on all new collection trucks.

Media relations efforts included a media release, issued to coincide with the distribution of the information kits, and media interviews with both local papers. These efforts resulted in accurate and positive or balanced coverage from the majority of local broadcast and print media outlets.
2. Leverage internal resources (i.e. City employees and members of Council) to champion the cart program externally

All City employees received a pocket-sized card with key messages and contact information for directing cart-related inquiries from friends, family, residents and businesses. Quick facts were made available to all front-line employees at all City facilities including libraries and recreation centres.

Over the course of the year, two issue notes (one to introduce the cart program and cart size selection campaign, and the other for cart distribution) were developed for members of City Council, containing relevant background, facts, key messages, and questions and answers to reference when fielding questions from media and constituents. The questions and answers could be copied and pasted onto elected officials’ blogs and within their email responses. Print articles were published regularly in the City’s internal newsletter (i.e. the City “Holler”) to keep employees without email access up-to-date on the status of the project.

3. Create opportunities for two-way communications and face-to-face interactions to engage residents

The City hosted waste cart information sessions (four in the first year, three in the second year), throughout the City, at various times of the day and evening for convenience and greater attendance. The four different cart sizes were showcased at each information session.

Information booths were set up at the local shopping mall, popular festivals and events including a Canada Day event, the Guelph and District Multicultural Festival, and the Lion’s Club Home Show. Presentations were made to various multi-residential property managers, condominium boards, at community town and gown meetings, with the university neighbourhood group associations, the downtown neighbourhood and business associations and at City ward meetings.

The City participated in various University of Guelph on-campus and student outreach events to speak face-to-face with students. Through the City’s Facebook page and Twitter account, project updates, important dates and other key messages were promoted. The City also used these social media properties to respond to questions and address inaccuracies out in the community.
4. Share successes and solutions to challenges along the way

Use of traditional media relations tactics, such as issuing a media release and speaking to local media outlets about program changes and the public opinion survey results garnered additional accurate coverage of the positive efforts the City made. This same information was repackaged into bite-sized promotional messages for Facebook and Twitter.

New print ads were produced and web content on guelph.ca/waste was updated regularly to reflect new information and commonly asked questions (Appendix A5). New truck decals were also produced for the second year of the cart rollout to highlight common collection challenges and their solutions.

2.5 Anticipated obstacles and opportunities for meeting goals

It was anticipated that negative residential attitudes and perceptions about cart-based waste collection (i.e. fear of change) would pose an obstacle for achieving the Communications Program goal. There have been criticisms of the large capital investments for the new composting facility and collection vehicles, as taxes are a number one concern for many Guelph residents. There was a well-organized resistance from neighbours of the Waste Resource Innovation Centre, based on expectations of increased truck traffic, noise and odour from the composting facility. Concerns were also raised about groundwater contamination. These issues have all been addressed in the design of the new facility. Furthermore, negative perceptions of the green bins, due to association with messiness and bad odours, were expressed - but have since been dispelled.

Some residents also felt that they were being asked to do more work to manage their waste (sorting, cleaning and caring for carts) while their collection services were being cut back (collection of recyclables was changing from weekly to every other week). In addition, frustration occurred with several multi-residential properties, where space for carts was very limited (communal or dual-use carts were presented as a solution).

Nevertheless, there were many opportunities for meeting goals as well. The variety of communication tools available, the multiple face-to-face interactions that allowed staff to connect with the community and positive media coverage were all contributing factors in ensuring the success of the new collection system. Communication of the benefits of automated waste collection also assisted in creating support for the new program. The slogan “Using carts will reduce the amount of waste we send to landfill, lower the City’s operating costs and decrease Guelph’s carbon footprint” was present on the website and several key communication pieces. The new program also presents an opportunity to increase the City’s waste diversion rate, positioning Guelph as recycling leader among Canadian municipalities.

As the City of Guelph is not the first municipality to adopt automated cart collection, there was opportunity to learn from the experience of other municipalities. Communication with these municipalities provided the opportunity to learn how best to face resistance and communicate the new program to Guelph residents.
3.0 IMPLEMENTATION/EXECUTION

3.1. Timeline of program implementation

Rolling out the Carts – Timeline of communication tactics

The timeline in Table 1 applies to the first year of the cart rollout (2012), but a similar timeline was followed for the second year (2013) and is currently being carried out in the final year of the rollout (2014).

Table 1 Timeline of Communication Tactics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation Date</th>
<th>Program Aspect</th>
<th>Tasks Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| April 2012                | Advertising for the carts and 2012 distribution | • “We’re Rolling Out the Carts” advertisement in the City of Guelph “Holler” newsletter and in the Guelph Mercury and Tribune newspapers.  
  • Issue Note and hard copies of information packages delivered to Mayor and Council.  
  • Information cards and e-mail sent to City staff.  
  • Program facts distributed to front line staff.  
  • Presentations and meetings with multi-residential property managers and condominium boards begins (continues until end of August). |
| May 2012                  | Cart displays                         | • Displays of the four cart sizes, the kitchen catcher, and informational boards installed and left up at 6 public locations around the City for the month of May. |
|                           | Information sessions                  | • Information sessions held for residents to meet with Waste Resources Staff to ask questions and discuss concerns and comments related to the new program. |
|                           | Select your cart size advertisements  | • Media release distribution on May 1.  
  • Media interviews on May 1.  
  • Information packages with cart size selection cards distributed door-to-door to all residents receiving carts in 2012.  
  • Radio Ad run to remind residents to submit their cart size selections. |
| July, August and September 2012 | Cart rollout promotion and education | • Waste Resources Staff attend Town and Gown (university committee) Meeting in August.  
  • Information booths were set up on a number of Saturdays at the local mall.  
  • Guelph Transit shelter ads and bus wrap ads on two busses installed. |
| September 2012            | Cart rollout promotion and education | • University of Guelph information display booth set up and manned by City Staff for two days.  
  • Staff fact sheet delivered to front line staff and managers.  
  • Issue Note delivered to Mayor and Council.  
  • Educational video made live on Guelph.ca.  
  • Print ads in the Guelph Mercury and Tribune newspapers and in the City Holler newsletter.  
  • Media release regarding the arrival of the carts. |
| September and October 2012 | Cart rollout promotion and education | • Cart information kits distributed to residents receiving carts in 2012 within their green cart.  
  • Mobile signs advertised the cart rollout. |
| October 2012              | Reminder Notices                      | • Door hanger notices distributed to all residents, reminding them when cart delivery begins and when to start using their carts for waste collection. |
| October 2012              | Automated Cart Collection Begins      | • Residents that received carts in the 2012 rollout were asked to use their new carts on the day indicated in their cart information kit as well as on the reminder door hanger notice. |
November 2012  | Waste education  | 2013 Conservation Calendars delivered to residents through the Guelph Tribune newspaper (contained cart education information).
--- | --- | ---
November and December 2012  | Cart usage monitoring and education  | Newsprint advertisements of tips for proper usage were publicized for 6 weeks. Solid Waste staff monitored cart set out by residents and left door hangers with tips for proper cart usage if a mistake was made. Specific issues were highlighted on the door hanger to stress the correction required. Public opinion survey conducted by Metroline Research Group Inc.

Throughout the cart rollout, there were ongoing education and outreach tactics implemented as follows:

- Web postings on the guelph.ca/waste website, Facebook and Twitter page with frequent updates
- Provided ongoing support through our customer service desk staff who responded to questions, comments and concerns via telephone calls and e-mails. The customer service desk was open for extended hours in the evenings and weekends.
- On-site visits to households by By-Law and programs staff to provide support with compliance issues for residents and businesses.

### 3.2 Budget

The City’s communications budget for the cart rollout, across all three years, is shown in Table 2. All of the activities completed to date have been under budget and are projected to be under budget at the completion of the rollout.

**Table 2 Communications budget for all three cart rollout years**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communications tactics and consulting services</th>
<th>2012 Fees and costs</th>
<th>2013 Fees and costs</th>
<th>2014 Fees and costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pier 8 Group – consulting, graphic design, printing</td>
<td>$44,388</td>
<td>$47,984</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Display boards</td>
<td>$2,540</td>
<td>$1,371</td>
<td>$1,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Print advertisements</td>
<td>$34,152</td>
<td>$23,472</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public opinion research</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Radio advertisements</td>
<td>$10,278</td>
<td>$6,706</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit bus wrap and shelter advertisements</td>
<td>$26,244</td>
<td>$2,798</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photo shoot</td>
<td>$563</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional video production</td>
<td>$4,223</td>
<td>$356</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>City vehicle wrap</td>
<td>$4,430</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employee key messages card</td>
<td>$519</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Truck Decals</td>
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<td>$3,325</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>subtotals</strong></td>
<td><strong>$138,505</strong></td>
<td><strong>$86,012</strong></td>
<td><strong>$83,400</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$307,917</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The City received a Continuous Improvement Fund (CIF) grant from Waste Diversion Ontario of $40,065.57 to assist in funding Promotion and Educational materials for the Automated Cart Collection program over the three year rollout.
3.3 Partnerships and collaborations

Pier 8 Group, a full service marketing and communications agency, assisted the City in the development of the Communications Program. They also designed and printed the information packages, public display boards and banners, stickers and door hangers, news ads, and all other print materials for the communications campaign. Pier 8 also planned the placement for print advertising in Guelph’s media outlets.

The media was also a partner throughout the cart rollout by providing coverage in Guelph’s community newspapers and local television station. This helped to further spread the word about the cart rollout. Specific media stakeholders included: Guelph Mercury, Guelph Tribune, Guelph Review, Guelph Politico, Fountain Pen, Magic FM/CJOY Radio, CFRU Radio and CTV Southwestern Ontario.

3.4 Accomplishments of elements described in planning phase

City commissioned public opinion research by Metroline Research Inc., compiled web analytics, and culled data and anecdotal results demonstrates the high number of residents that were reached through elements of the Communications Program:

- Metroline Research Group Inc., administered telephone interviews on behalf of the City to a statistically significant sample of 411 Guelph households between June 5 and 21, 2012. The findings revealed that 98 per cent of residents in neighbourhoods scheduled to receive carts in 2012 were aware of the new waste cart collection program. Of these households, 90 per cent confirmed that they received the waste collection carts information package delivered to their home and 95 per cent of those who received this package read the brochure.
- The dedicated cart-related web pages on the City’s website (guelph.ca/waste) had 46,540 page views and 26,420 unique page views between April 2012 and January 2013.
- The City’s instructional video was viewed 1,865 on the City’s YouTube channel across the same period.
- Approximately 300 residents in total attended the City’s four waste cart program information sessions in May 2012.

These figures demonstrate that the elements of the Communications Plan were effective at informing and educating residents about the new waste cart program, and were therefore well accomplished.

Additional quantitative results, demonstrating the success of the program, are discussed in Section 4.2.
3.5 Creativity/program uniqueness

The Communications Program developed for the cart rollout employed a variety of traditional communication tactics, but also found new and exciting ways to engage the community including:

**New Brand:** The butterfly logo and “Give Waste a New Life” brand provide a unique twist to the more common reduce, reuse and recycle message. This new logo and brand highlight the new life that diversion can give to organic and recyclable materials.

guelph.ca/waste: This easy to remember URL drew residents to the City’s waste web pages, which included information on the cart program, such as:
- An entertaining instructional video on the new cart program.
- An interactive map allowing residents to find out when they would receive their carts.
- A detailed breakdown of what residents needed to know and how to participate in the cart program. Information was separated based on cart type (i.e. green, blue, grey cart).
- An easy to remember slogan to help residents with cart placement at the curb (i.e. Park, Point, Space).
- An extensive Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section.
- Appealing graphics throughout the entire website.

**Information sessions:** These sessions were held throughout the City for residents to meet with Waste Resources Staff to ask questions and discuss concerns related to the new cart program.

**Community outreach:** Outreach events at the local mall, University of Guelph and City festivals were the ideal opportunity to reach out to residents via face-to-face interactions. These events provided the opportunity to engage residents in waste cart sorting challenges using the new waste carts – offering cool prizes!

**“Look Inside” stickers:** These stickers were placed on the lid of every green cart to draw resident’s attention to the information package and kitchen catcher inside.

**On the street team:** During the first few weeks of cart collection, Waste Resources Staff went door-to-door to monitor cart set out, fix cart positioning as necessary and leave door hangers with tips for proper cart usage if a mistake was made. This was well received by residents and resulted in noticeable behaviour improvement.

**Positive Reinforcement stickers:** These stickers were developed for the “on the street team” to distribute to households showing positive efforts in waste sorting and cart placement at the curb.
Transit shelter: “We’re rolling out the carts” ads were installed throughout the City to get residents excited about the cart program and provide a detailed map showing when they would be receiving the carts.

Branded recycling trucks: All new City waste collection trucks were branded with the “Give Waste a New Life Logo”, acting as a moving billboard throughout the City.

Facebook and Twitter promotion: Social media is a unique solution for reaching out to a broader population base, as well as students. Throughout the cart rollout, the City posted frequent updates to its Facebook and Twitter pages – highlighting key dates, program highlights and lessons learned.

4.0 RESULTS/EVALUATION

4.1 Target audience response

Metroline Research Group Inc. conducted telephone surveys in 2013 that collected opinions about the City’s Communications Program from residents that received their carts in the 2012 rollout phase. Some qualitative observations from this survey are listed below:

- The majority (74 per cent) of residents interviewed were “very satisfied” with the communications and information they received from the City of Guelph about the new waste cart collection system. Approximately half of those interviewed were most drawn to the brochure delivered to their door, followed by the Waste Cart User Guide in the cart.
- Most residents stated they were “satisfied” with the amount and type of communications they received. The majority of residents stated that the Waste Collection Schedule was the most utilized and referenced piece of communication material, followed by the waste sorting guide.
- When residents had questions or concerns regarding the cart system, they indicated that they either looked at guelph.ca/waste (the City’s waste website) or called the Solid Waste Resources department. A smaller proportion looked in their Waste Cart User Guide or the Conservation Calendar.
- Survey respondents also indicated that they generally found the new carts easier to use and store than bags. Many liked not having to buy bags anymore and found waste storage less messy. Some respondents found they could fit more waste into the larger carts and appreciated being able to set out their carts less often.
- Concerns with the new carts were also identified. Respondents noted some problems manoeuvring them in snow and ice. Depending on where respondents stored their carts, some complained about odours, while others were concerned with their organics being frozen inside the green bin.
- Residents were also eager to provide advice for those individuals in the 2013 and 2014 cart rollout neighbourhoods. The most common suggestion for residents who might be apprehensive about the new cart system, was that constant usage of the carts is the best way to get comfortable with them. Other residents suggested that the print materials and other information about sorting and cart collection provided by the City were helpful and answered many questions about the program.
- The City also collected qualitative results from the cart rollout program by assessing the quality and tone of media coverage.
Below are some examples of compliments received from residents who are using the cart program.

**Email:**

Subject: feedback on the carts

Hi,

I live on Woodlawn near Golfview, and have been using the new carts now for several months. I wanted to let Solid Waste Resources know that despite being concerned about the move to the carts initially, my wife and I are delighted to have them now. We find that they’re easy to use, and make disposing of solid waste easier than ever – no concerns about pointy items ripping bags, fewer bags wasted in general, and only 2 trips down to the curb on garbage day.

Cheers, Kyle

**Twitter:**

Pretty pleased with the waste cart user guide that came from @cityofguelph with our new bins. Really comprehensive. Nice work!

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### 4.2 Program success measurements

The City commissioned public opinion research, compiled web analytics, and culled data and anecdotal research from the City’s waste services department to measure the success of this program’s communications efforts against its goal and objectives.

**Table 3 Program Success Measurements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Objective</th>
<th>How Success Was Measured</th>
<th>Proof of Success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing the City’s waste diversion rate of 49 per cent (in 2011) by at least ten per cent between September 1, 2011 to December 31, 2014.</td>
<td>Determined from: 1) a preliminary waste audit conducted by the City of Guelph via the annual tonnage of material diverted from landfill through recycling, composting and other diversion and reuse programs, and</td>
<td>Data confirmed an increase in sorting compliance since September 1, 2011. Pre and post campaign blue bag recycling audits showed a notable decrease of contamination from 13.7 per cent to 5.49 percent. This increase in sorting compliance is indicative of an increase in waste diversion, since sorting compliance results in more waste diverted from landfill.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2) A re-assessment of the City’s diversion rate conducted as part of the 2012 WDO annual Municipal Datacall.

2) More significantly, the City achieved a 68% waste diversion rate in 2012. (the highest municipal waste diversion rate in the Province of Ontario in 2012). The City was also awarded the first annual Ron Lance Award from Waste Diversion Ontario for having the highest waste diversion rate in the Province. The opening of the new Organics Waste Processing Facility has played a key role in achieving this diversion rate.

Ensuring 90 per cent of residents in the 2012 cart distribution neighbourhoods were aware of the new waste cart collection system.

Through telephone interviews administered to a statistically significant sample of 411 Guelph households between June 5 and 21, 2012 by Metroline Research Group Inc. The findings revealed that 98 per cent of residents in neighbourhoods scheduled to receive carts in 2012 were aware of the new waste cart collection program.

Encouraging at least 60 per cent of households, within the 2012 cart distribution neighbourhoods, to select their preferred sizes of blue and grey carts.

Through the number of households that submitted their cart size selections, and through telephone surveys administered to a statistically significant sample of 409 Guelph households between February 21 and March 5, 2013 by Metroline Research Group Inc. The City received cart size selections from 68 per cent of the 15,000 households scheduled to receive carts in 2012. The survey results revealed that 75 per cent of respondents completed and returned their cart size selection form while 45 per cent of those that did not complete the form stated they were satisfied with the default size.

Ensuring 95 per cent of households in the 2012 cart distribution neighbourhoods place their blue and green carts at the curb on their first scheduled collection day.

Through anecdotal feedback from collection staff. The City’s waste collection division estimates 99 per cent of households placed their carts at the curb on their first collection day.

These quantitative results show that Guelph residents using carts were well informed of the new program before it rolled out and quickly made the transition from bags to carts.

4.3 Program improvements

Opportunities to improve the Waste Cart Rollout Communications Program have been identified through anecdotal feedback from Solid Waste staff and residents, as well as feedback from Guelph residents through a statistically significant survey. Feedback from all sources led to improvements in the subsequent rollout years (2013 and 2014):

- Wording has been updated throughout the Cart Size Selection Brochure and Waste Cart User Guide to refine and clarify the information to make it as straightforward as possible for residents. The Cart Size Selection Brochure was also updated to stress the new collection frequency for recyclables; changing from weekly to every other week. Understanding this new collection frequency is critical for helping residents to select the correct size of blue cart.
Following the second year’s (2013) rollout, the Online Cart Size Selection form was updated with an improved layout and new content, including mandatory acknowledgement statements to assist residents with appropriate cart size selection:

- ✓ I understand that all waste material must fit completely inside the carts, so the lids can close. Material left beside or on top of carts (including cardboard) will not be collected.
- ✓ I understand that the collection of recyclables is changing from once weekly (blue bags) to every other week (blue cart).

Information boards used at cart displays and at special events in 2012 were converted into free-standing banners for 2013 and 2014 (Appendix 5). In addition to offering a more professional appearance, these new banners made the display carts more accessible for residents to view and test. This is because the original boards sat on top of the carts at the display and had to be lifted off the carts when residents wanted to look inside or try rolling them.

Following the first year’s (2012) rollout, the number of radio and transit ads has been decreased. This is due to a smaller target audience which is already aware of the program.

Resident concerns over maneuvering their carts in snow and ice were addressed through new messaging recommending that residents pull rather than push their carts for easier maneuvering. Their concern over organic waste freezing to the green bins was addressed by recommending that residents use certified compostable plastic bags in the winter, instead of paper liners.

The City is also currently developing an Online Cart Request Tool (to go live this coming winter, 2014) to allow residents to request cart exchanges, cart repairs and cart additions through their computer or mobile devices to improve the efficiency and accuracy of the transaction process.

### 4.4 Transferability to other communities

The City’s communications efforts to-date successfully achieved the Communication Program’s goal and objectives and have been well-received by residents. Once the three year cart rollout is complete, the City will continue to use the “Give waste a new life” brand and messaging for future waste diversion programs and initiatives.

This successful Communications Program, with its multiple communication tactics and unique branding, is one that could be applied to other municipal program changes and waste cart rollouts. Many of the creative program aspects, including a new unique brand, a website with interactive features, stickers, an “On the street team”, social media, transit shelter and bus ads, along with branded recycling trucks are all unique and attention-drawing tactics to engage residents and complement the more traditional communication tactics (e.g. mail outs, magnets, print and radio ads).

The online cart request tool (for cart exchanges, repairs and additions) is another program feature with potential for replication in other municipalities. This tool, currently being developed by the City and modeled after the City of Toronto’s online tool, will greatly improve the efficiency and accuracy of the cart transaction process. Being able to conduct all transactions online (versus over the phone) is a preference for many people and a direction in which many municipalities are heading towards.
APPENDIX A1: “We’re Rolling Out the Carts” Cart Size Selection Brochure
APPENDIX A2: Newspaper Ads 1 & 2
APPENDIX A3: Sample Door Hangers
APPENDIX A4: Guelph Waste Cart Delivery Kit - A ‘Look Inside” Sticker was placed lid of each Green Cart. The envelope containing a 19-page Waste Carts User Guide and Collection Schedules (Week A and Week B) was placed inside the Green Cart.
APPENDIX A5: Sample newspaper ads that were developed to address commonly asked questions