

# Councillor Request Inquiry #119

2017

Utilities provides the following in response to Councillor Beland-Quest's February 14, 2017 Priorities Committee Information Request regarding fabric recycling.

Traditional 'recycling' does not typically occur in the textiles industry at this time as fabrics are made from a number of different materials (ie. cotton, wool, polyester, etc.) and cannot be easily turned into another product. Often when programs state 'fabric or textile recycling' they are more about 'reuse' of textiles through local or international charities. Utilities is unaware at this time of any true recycling efforts being made in Western Canada for fabrics.

In 2013, Utilities conducted a waste audit of the residential stream to characterize the materials that were still being disposed of by residents in the black cart. Through that audit, Utilities determined that 15% of the waste stream was textiles, mostly in good reusable condition. Translating this into tonnes, it means that there is a potential to divert 1,500 tonnes of textiles from the landfill.

Given this information, Utilities has taken some initial steps to bring more awareness to textile reuse:

- Partnered with two not-for-profits at the Broadview Enviroservice Station and the Ardrossan Recycle Station to have bins on site to collect textiles.
- In addition, when items are dropped off at the Broadview Enviroservice building and still have 'life' left in them, staff will place them in a 'donate/reuse' bin. These items are then collected weekly by County Clothesline to redistribute in their store.
- For Waste Reduction Week 2016, Strathcona County partnered with Progressive Waste Solutions to challenge all of the local schools to a shoe drive. The shoes are then given to local charities to distribute to those who need them most. If the shoes cannot be reused locally, they are sent to Soles4Souls, a global non-profit organization, for reuse and refurbishing by small businesses in developing economies. Over 12,000 pairs of shoes were collected.  
<http://www.strathcona.ca/departments/communications/news/2016/11/29/students-reduce-waste/>
- Permanent shoe collection stations have been set up at Millennium Place, Ardrossan Recreation Complex, Glen Allan Recreation Complex and the Broadview Enviroservice Station.

In addition to these initiatives, Utilities will be doing more comprehensive strategy work on how to recover more textiles from the community. Utilities is currently updating the residential waste characterization information, and will be engaging with local charity organizations to determine how we can lend our support to ensure that residents are donating their textiles for reuse and diverting more from the landfill. Utilities hopes to develop a more comprehensive approach around textiles for 2017 and 2018.

For additional information or clarification, please contact Leah Seabrook, Manager, Waste Management & Community Energy Services, at 780-416-6797 or via email to [Leah.Seabrook@Strathcona.ca](mailto:Leah.Seabrook@Strathcona.ca).