

Improving Textile Reuse in Strathcona County**Report Purpose**

To provide Council with a report on strategies to improve textile reuse in Strathcona County.

Recommendations

1. THAT the development of a textiles diversion communication and education campaign, which includes partnering on curbside collection events, be approved.
2. THAT Option 3, as set out in the October 30, 2018 Utilities report *Improving Textile Reuse in Strathcona County* be included in the 2019 budget.

Our Prioritized Strategic Goals

Goal 4 - Ensure effective stewardship of water, land, air and energy resources

Goal 6 - Provide facilities and services that are available and accessible to residents

Report

Through the Green Routine program, Strathcona County residents are currently diverting 61% of waste from landfill. The program has been targeting a diversion rate of 70% to be achieved by 2018. Audits are conducted every few years to determine what is still being thrown out and where we can encourage improvement.

In 2013, Utilities conducted a waste audit of the residential stream to characterize the materials residents were disposing of in the black cart. Through that audit, Utilities determined that 15% of the waste stream was textiles mostly in good, reusable condition.

In 2017, two audits were conducted of the waste streams. Overall 5.7% of the waste stream audited was textiles and reuse items. This varied from urban households at 5.5% to 5.0% in the rural area and 7.9% in multi-family households.

As a result, Utilities was tasked with looking for opportunities to increase diversion of textiles within Strathcona County. Through stakeholder engagement, Utilities determined the following:

- There is support from the textile community for Strathcona County to take a leadership role in generating awareness about textiles recycling and reuse opportunities, with an outcome of diverting materials from the black carts and supporting the local textile community.
- Local non-profit organizations are interested in exploring potential partnerships for an educational campaign, collection events and bin collections.
- General consensus is that Strathcona County should better understand the current situation of textile bins in the community, including exploring regulatory or program approaches that ensure accountability, community aesthetics and social benefit.

Consequently, Utilities recommends that steps be taken to increase awareness about textile donation and reuse options locally, as well as encourage greater collections events through special events and partnerships. A communication and education campaign could be conducted within existing program resources.

Related to the research completed and the stakeholder feedback provided regarding the exploration of a textile bin strategy for the community, Utilities determined that there are the following options:

- Option 1 Strathcona County to take lead on a municipally branded program that partners with local charitable organizations, and places textile collection bins at municipal buildings.
- Option 2 Strathcona County to introduce a formal process that requires textile bin organizations to register; the process would outline certain requirements (i.e. charitable, insurance, servicing) for operations within the community.
- Option 3 Strathcona County to take a hybrid approach in the community by implementing both Option 1 and 2.
- Option 4 Strathcona County to take lead on a municipally branded program, as outlined in Option 1. In addition, Strathcona County would introduce a regulation that would restrict the operation of other textile bins within the community that are not included in the County led program.
- Option 5 Textile bin operations in Strathcona County remain status quo. Strathcona County refrains from operating or regulating in this space.

Given stakeholder feedback, there are advantages to both Option 1 and 2, which is why Utilities is proposing a hybrid solution for Strathcona County.

Council and Committee History

- June 5, 2018 Council approved that the recommendation to improve reduction of textile waste in Strathcona County report be brought back to Council on the revised date of October 30, 2018.
- September 5, 2017 Council approved that administration return in second quarter of 2018 with a recommendation for Council's consideration regarding a standardized textile bin collection program for Strathcona County, along with further exploration of other programs including public engagement and education opportunities.
- April 25, 2017 Council approved that administration work with the Environmental Advisory Committee to prepare recommendations for Council's consideration on how the County could reduce the amount of textile waste disposed of by residents; and that the recommendations be presented to Council by the September 5, 2017 Council Meeting.

Other Impacts

Policy: n/a

Legislative/Legal: n/a

Interdepartmental: Developing a textile bin strategy will include consulting with a number of County departments, including Planning & Development Services, Recreation, Parks & Culture, Family & Community Services, Facility Services and Emergency Services.

Master Plan/Framework: n/a

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Lead Department: Utilities

Communication Plan

Administration will continue engaging stakeholders through the development process of both the education and communication campaigns, as well as the strategy for textile bins in the community.

Enclosure

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Strathcona County's Green Routine: Textile Reuse Strategy
Presentation