

# **Strathcona County's Green Routine**

## **Textile Reuse Strategy**

October 30, 2018 Council Meeting

LLS.12450134

# Exploring our waste



## REGULAR WASTE AUDITS

As a best practice approach, Utilities has incorporated waste audits as a regular program component. Audits were completed in 2013 & 2017.



## SORT THROUGH SAMPLES

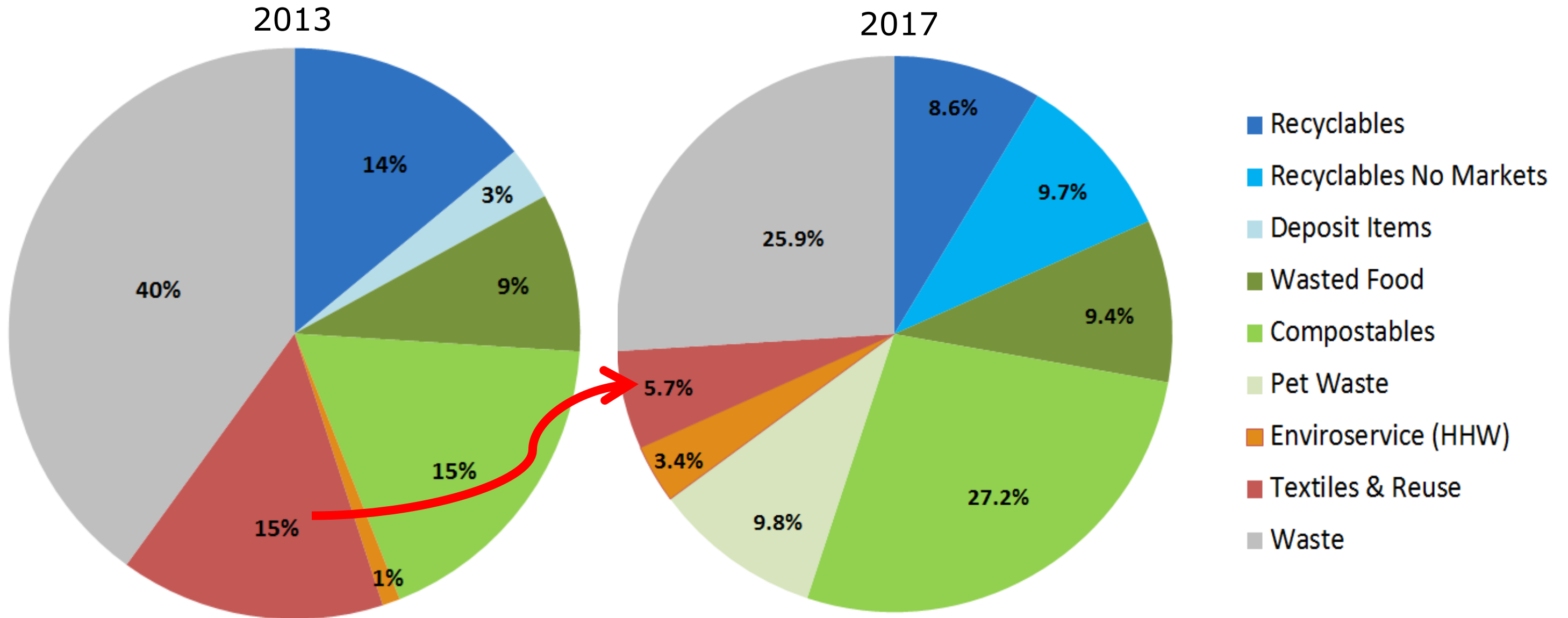
Random samples of waste, organics and recycling are sorted and characterized into a number of different categories. This provides information for programming.



## WE FOUND TEXTILES

Residents of Strathcona County are throwing away textiles and household goods that could be donated for reuse. The amount fluctuates between household types.

# Auditing results



Textiles and reuse items found in the waste cart declined from 15% to just under 6% from 2013 to 2017. In 2017, the disposal rate varied from 5.5% in the urban area to 5.0% in the rural area and 7.9% from multi-family households.

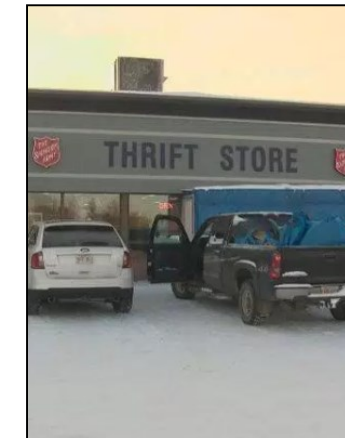
# Improving diversion

- Utilities uses data to explore new opportunities to improve diversion from the black cart
- Through an annual program update, Utilities identified some materials to target. This coupled with increased awareness about the textile industry led Council to initiate action
- In 2017, through a Notice of Motion, Council approved Administration to explore how the County could reduce the amount of textile waste disposed of by residents, and to return with information regarding options for a standardized textile bin collection program



# Stakeholder engagement

- Environmental Advisory Committee
- Local non-profit thrift stores
  - Had initial discussions and tours with organization
  - Focus group discussion with the three local retail organizations
- Bin providers and property managers
  - Initiated some conversations with those that could be reached
  - Need to engage further on path forward
- Internal Stakeholders – Family & Community Services, Facility Services, Emergency Services, Recreation, Parks & Culture and Planning & Development Services



# Stakeholder feedback

- There is support for the 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 educational campaigns, collection events and bin collections
- General consensus is that the 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



# Program initiatives

## Education Campaign

**Objective:** Increase the diversion of textiles to organizations that successfully handle these materials, thus diverting from the black cart and assisting the local textile community

- Emphasize general outcomes:
  - Explain why it's important to donate instead of discard
    - Persuade that recycling textiles is good for landfill life and has other environmental benefits
    - There is social advantages to recycling locally
  - What can be donated? What's problematic?
  - Educate on the afterlife of household textiles
- Potentially create a joint campaign with local non-profit retailers
  - Showcase their local story
  - Encourage the importance of donating, as well as buying reuse
- Utilize existing program communication resources

# Program initiatives

## Events & school programs

- Incorporate reuse opportunities into our special events; launch an upcycling and reuse event
- Provide opportunity to local organizations to showcase their 'wears'
- Target junior and senior high school programs for making reuse cool again

## Explore an annual donation drive

- Collaborate on a curbside collection event that would distribute materials locally

REUSE  IS THE  
NEW  BLACK

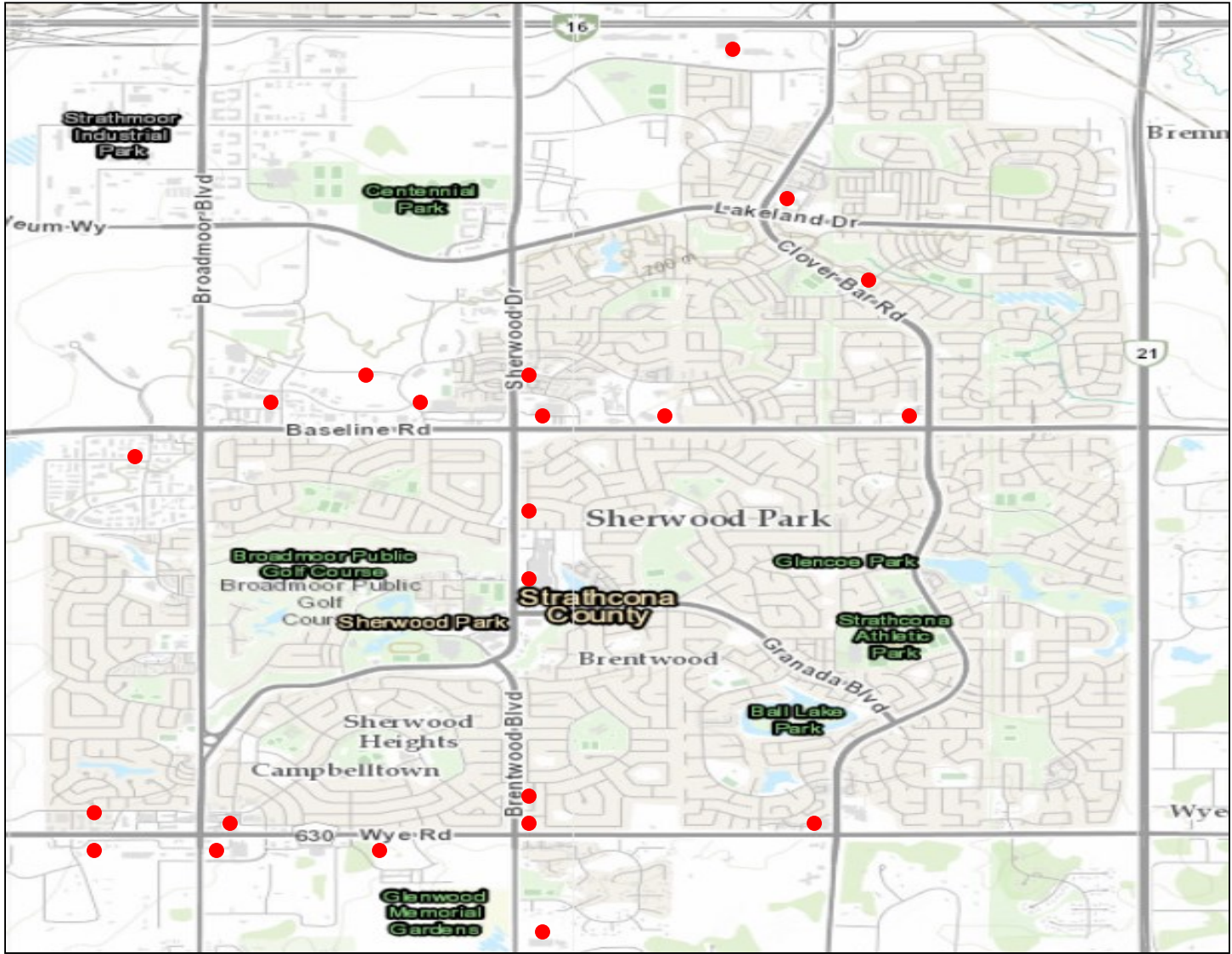


# Textile bins

## Current situation

- There are approximately 46 bins located at 22 locations throughout the community, noting seven different charitable organizations
  - In comparison to the information collected in the fall of 2017, there were approximately 26 bins located at 14 locations
- Bins typically indicate support for a charity, with no confirmation completed
- Bins are either owner operated, or privately operated with a portion of the funds distributed to a charity organization in name
- Bins do encourage dumping or overflow of materials, however generally the companies servicing the bins respond quickly
- Most bin providers do ensure consent from hosting sites; some have formal agreements in place

# Textile bins





# Textile bins

## What's happening elsewhere?

- Municipal registration process
  - Typically administered through business licensing and bylaws
  - Track locations and numbers
  - Accountability for maintenance and collection
  - Require insurance
  - Letter of permission from property owner
  - Recognition of charity organization and what happens to the materials
- Standardized bin program branded by municipality
  - Partnership or selection process with charitable organizations
  - Located at municipal buildings, recreation facilities and safe spaces (ie. RCMP, fire halls)



# Textile bins

## Program Principles

- Maximize diversion from landfill
- Ensure convenience, user safety and accessibility throughout the community
- Ensure bins are not oversupplied and are well maintained and serviced
- Maximize social impact with donations benefiting the community
- Ensure stakeholders and users understand program principles



# Textile bins

## Program possibilities

### **Municipal bin program**

Strathcona County to take lead on a municipally branded program that partners with charitable organizations, and places textile collection bins at municipal buildings

### **Registration process**

Strathcona County to introduce a formal process that requires local textile bin organizations to register; the process would outline certain requirements for operations within the community

### **Status quo**

Textile bin operations in Strathcona County remain status quo. Strathcona County refrains from operating or regulating in this space

# Textile bins

Program principle	Registration/ permitting	Municipal bin program	Status quo
Diversion	Vetted program would confirm authenticity of charitable organization, which could encourage an increase in diversion	Research has indicated that diversion doubles when a program is led by municipalities and partnered with charities	Materials are diverted from landfill as bins are located in high visited areas within the community
Site access & safety	Could require a certain criteria for site safety and accessibility by residents, as well as insurance requirements	Located at approved municipal buildings and monitored by staff. These buildings would be those that are safe and frequently visited by residents	Often tucked in corners, behind buildings and not monitored
Community aesthetics	Require bins to be maintained and serviced frequently. Could set standard for number of bins per location and in the community	Branded under one program with one look. Partnerships would require regular maintenance and servicing of bins	Multiple bins, locations and looks. Some agreements in place requiring servicing
Social impact	Registration could require only charitable organizations to operate, and require information regarding donations and reporting	Potential to create the greatest local impact. Thrift stores located in the County have indicated an interest in partnering	No requirement to indicate charitable organization. Many bins in name only



# Textile bins

## Summary

- Municipal bin program realizes all of the best practice program principles
- Introducing some sort of control around community bins should be considered, as these bins are increasing throughout the community
- Further engagement required with internal and external stakeholders, including the public, as administration works through the recommendations

# Textile bins

<b>Option 1</b>	Strathcona County to take lead on a municipally branded program that partners with local charitable organizations and places textile collection bins at municipal buildings
<b>Option 2</b>	Strathcona County to introduce a formal process that requires textile bin organizations to register; the process would outline certain requirements (ie. charitable, insurance, servicing) for operations within the community
<b>Option 3</b>	Strathcona County to take a hybrid approach in the community by implementing both Option 1 and 2
<b>Option 4</b>	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
<b>Option 5</b>	Textile bin operations in Strathcona County remain status quo. Strathcona County refrains from operating or regulating in this space

# 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.