



# City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

**To:** Public Works and Transportation Committee

**Date:** September 12, 2023

**From:** Suzanne Bycraft  
Director, Public Works Operations

**File:** 10-6370-01/2023-Vol  
01




**Re:** Commercial Recycling Services Review

### Staff Recommendations

1. That Option 2, as outlined in the staff report titled “Commercial Recycling Services Review” dated September 12, 2023 be endorsed.
2. That staff prepare amendments to the *Solid Waste and Recycling Regulation Bylaw No. 6803* to remove commercial service options.

Suzanne Bycraft  
Director, Public Works Operations  
(604-233-3338)

Att. 1

<b>REPORT CONCURRENCE</b>	
<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b> 	
<b>SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW</b>	<b>INITIALS:</b> 
<b>APPROVED BY CAO</b> 	

## Staff Report

### Origin

This report provides information on the Commercial Recycling Services Review, approved by Council on February 25, 2019 as part of the 2020 Utility Budget and Rates Report.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #5 A Leader in Environmental Sustainability:

*Leadership in environmental sustainability through innovative, sustainable and proactive solutions that mitigate climate change and other environmental impacts.*

*5.1 Continue to demonstrate leadership in proactive climate action and environmental sustainability.*

### Analysis

#### Background

The Commercial Recycling Services Review was undertaken during 2022 and 2023, delayed from 2020 due to COVID-19 impacts to business. The purpose of this review is to identify a strategy for options to increase recycling performance of commercial businesses. This sector is challenging due to considerable variations in the types of waste generated by business as well as cost factors associated with recycling.

The City of Richmond is a leader in diverting waste from landfill, achieving a 79% diversion rate from single-family homes in 2022. This is in large part due to the many City initiatives which Council has endorsed over the years to support sustainable waste management and recycling in the community. However, according to data provided by the 2021 Metro Vancouver Recycling and Solid Waste Management Summary, the regional commercial recycling rate of 46% is behind the overall regional recycling rate of 65%. To better understand this gap, the City undertook a Commercial Recycling Services Review to look at the current state of commercial recycling in Richmond and how the City can best support increased recycling in the commercial sector.

There are several City programs and initiatives already in place that affect commercial garbage and recycling, examples are highlighted below:

- **City Pilot for Commercial Garbage and Recycling Services:** Under the *Solid Waste and Recycling Regulation Bylaw No. 6803*, the City launched a Commercial Garbage and Recycling Collection Pilot in 2015. Though not currently accepting new businesses, 54 commercial customers subscribe to on-site collection services.
- ***Solid Waste and Recycling Regulation Bylaw No. 6803*:** Requires non-residential and commercial businesses to remove all garbage generated from such property as often as necessary.
- **Richmond Recycling Depot:** The Recycling Depot (Depot) accepts a number of recyclable items from businesses. Businesses are permitted to drop-off up to one cubic

yard of acceptable material for free, excluding yard trimmings and upholstered furniture which require fees for business.

- **Commercial and Multi-Family Waste Management Guidelines:** The City of Richmond recommends that all commercial, multi-family and mixed-used developments have adequate storage for garbage and recycling receptacles. At the building planning stage, City staff review plans to ensure the allocation of space for garbage and recycling rooms/receptacles is sufficient to meet the capacity of the building.
- **Demolition Waste and Recyclable Materials Bylaw No. 9516:** Requires demolition materials to be taken to a licensed recycling facility or reuse site. A building permit must be obtained by the agent of a one or two-family dwelling for any work planning to be completed. Part of the permit includes a completed waste disposal and recycling services plan related to the disposal and reuse of recyclable materials.

### Regulatory and Service Review

In order to gain greater perspective on the current state of commercial garbage and recycling in Richmond, staff first conducted a jurisdictional scan and review of federal, provincial, regional and other municipal regulations that may impact business. It is important to note that Richmond businesses are required to ensure proper disposal of garbage generated on their property, but are not required by any level of government to have recycling collection. The Business Engagement Summary Report presented as Attachment 1 provides a summary of each level of government's authority to regulate commercial garbage and recycling in the Jurisdictional Review section.

In addition to the jurisdictional review, staff conducted a service review comparing waste removal models, regulatory structures and service payment models currently being utilized in select cities throughout North America. Staff have found that there are generally four service models offered: an opt-in City service, franchised with a single hauler, franchised with dedicated haulers for multiple zones, and required waste management diversion plans. The opt-in City service is the most similar to the City's Pilot Commercial Garbage and Recycling service. Details of each model are provided in Attachment 1 in the Service Model Review section.

Currently, as per Bylaw 6803, Richmond commercial businesses and property managers must source and contract garbage collection services through private waste haulers. Businesses may then determine which recycling services are required based on the materials generated by each business.

### Consultation: What We Heard

The engagement strategy was developed according to stakeholder type as outlined below:

- Richmond Businesses
- Business Associations and Professional Associations
- Property Managers
- Waste Haulers

Details of each stakeholder consultation can be found in Attachment 1 in the Stakeholder Key Themes section. Key findings are summarized below.

*Consultation with Businesses:*

Staff began surveying businesses to review current waste management and recycling practices, and identify any challenges commercial businesses may encounter regarding sound waste management practices. The reception to the survey was positive and businesses appreciated the City's attention to supporting increased recycling.

Staff approached a total of 345 businesses throughout Richmond to participate in in-person, phone and online surveys with 113 responding to the survey.

The majority of businesses indicated they:

- were very satisfied with their recycling and garbage services;
- encountered frequent challenges with illegal dumping;
- are deterred by the cost of garbage and recycling collection;
- have limited space for additional bins; and
- were aware of Metro Vancouver disposal bans and the City's *Single-Use Plastic and Other Items Bylaw No. 10000*.

Feedback included:

- ideas on how the City could support increased recycling by educating businesses and building management on how to recycle correctly;
- requiring businesses to recycle; and
- increasing outreach for school-aged children and the public.

*Consultation with Business Associations and Professional Associations:*

Staff invited Richmond business associations and representatives to participate in a facilitated workshop and targeted one-on-one meetings to expand on the themes identified through consultation with businesses.

While there are common challenges and opportunities, there are also specific concerns that affect different commercial sectors as there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Top concerns identified are:

- illegal dumping;
- the cost and space required for additional bins; and
- the inconsistency of recycling programs between residential and businesses.

Opportunities identified were:

- a need to address language barriers; and
- an interest in increased education and awareness that could provide training and onboarding resources.

*Consultation with Property Managers:*

Staff reached out to eight commercial property managers of mini-mall complexes in Richmond and spoke to three, who represented five mini-mall complexes. Common feedback received included:

- property managers provide garbage, cardboard and some organics recycling to tenants;
- additional services have to be arranged by the business or they must dispose of items themselves;

- reducing contamination is dependent on employees recycling correctly, thus education around proper recycling practices is needed; and
- the most prominent challenge is the issue of household garbage and large items being illegally dumped in their bins.

#### *Consultation with Waste Haulers:*

Staff reached out to eight individual waste haulers operating in Richmond and throughout the Lower Mainland as well as the Waste Management Association of BC (WMABC) to gain perspective on commercial recycling. Of the eight approached, staff conducted one-on-one interviews with three haulers and the WMABC. Haulers were initially hesitant to provide feedback, unsure of the type of insight they may be able to provide, however as conversations progressed, helpful information was shared.

Most waste haulers aim to drive sales and offer a complete package of garbage, recycling and organics services to any prospective business regardless of business size or waste generated.

#### Waste haulers and the WMABC support:

- increased education for businesses about recycling services available, ways to reduce contamination;
- how improved waste diversion practices can positively impact businesses bottom line and;
- all waste haulers recommended that the City of Richmond not get involved in the commercial waste hauling business.

#### Options

There are a number of avenues the City could use to further support the garbage and recycling efforts of commercial businesses in Richmond. Options for Council consideration are summarized below:

*Option 1: Regulate commercial recycling under Solid Waste and Recycling Regulation Bylaw No. 6803 (not recommended):* Under this option, the *Solid Waste and Recycling Regulation Bylaw No. 6803* would be amended to require businesses to submit a 'waste disposal and diversion plan' when applying for or renewing business licences with the City. This option could be modeled after the City of Vancouver's process, wherein City staff would require that a 'waste disposal and diversion plan' be submitted to the City by all commercial businesses at the time of business license application or renewal for review and approval.

Option 1 is not recommended as this requirement would slow down the business license approval process, and put additional burden on smaller businesses who may not have the resources to develop a 'waste disposal and diversion plan.'

*Option 2: Pilot a Business Education and Advisory Program; Discontinue Commercial Garbage and Recycling Services (recommended):* Under this option, rather than provide collection services to business, the City would instead develop and pilot a Business Education and Advisory Program (the Program). The Program would operate at no cost to business and include Phases 1 and 2 as outlined below.

The existing City Commercial Garbage and Recycling Pilot program would be discontinued for the 54 commercial contracts under this option, and staff would bring forward appropriate amendments to Solid Waste and Recycling Regulation Bylaw 6803. This recommendation is based on feedback received from the consultation process. Further, if this program were to be formalized, it would require negotiation with pre-existing collection contracts to include and allow for the collection of commercial garbage and recycling materials.

**Phase 1: Develop and Implement the Business Education and Advisory Pilot Program**

This phase will include the development and implementation of the Business Education Toolkit, Business Advisory Program and a specific communications campaign. Details of each section are outlined below.

- 1) Develop Business Education Toolkit to include:
  - a. Information on services available on the market for waste collection
  - b. Information on how to develop a waste disposal and diversion plan
  - c. Best practices for sustainable operations and how to reduce contamination
  - d. Provide resources for alternatives to single-use items
  - e. Build interest in circular economy innovation including sharing, refill and reusable options available in the marketplace
  
- 2) Develop and implement a Business Advisory Program to include:
  - a. Onsite waste assessments provided by City staff to review the type of waste being generated and current garbage and recycling systems in place
  - b. Hands-on coaching on how to create specific waste disposal and diversion plans, set up garbage and recycling rooms, and contract a hauler to meet their specific business needs
  - c. Onsite/virtual tutorials and workshops to train employees in commercial businesses
  - d. Ongoing point of contact for education and resources
  - e. Encouraging businesses and non-profits to incorporate sharing and reuse opportunities such as refill and reusable container programs.
  
- 3) Communication campaign for Business Education and Advisory Program:
  - a. News Release
  - b. City e-newsletters
  - c. Bill insert in business license renewals letter
  - d. City website
  - e. Direct communication through professional associations
  - f. Communications through the business licensing process

**Phase 2: Evaluation of the Business Education and Advisory Pilot Program**

This phase will include further engagement with the business community to review and determine Program uptake, effectiveness, and overall feedback from the business community. This phase will be conducted upon completion of a full year of Program implementation to determine overall effectiveness and feasibility of continuing this service model.

Upon review and evaluation, staff will report back to Council with recommendations on formalization of the Program.

**Financial Impact**

The cost of the recommended approach can be accommodated within the current funding allocation of \$360,000. As this amount is offset from provision, it does not impact the rates charged to residents. This funding level is recommended to be maintained as a part of the 2024 Utility Budget and Rates.

**Conclusion**

This report presents a review of the current state of commercial garbage and recycling in Richmond, and proposes the development and implementation of the Business Education and Advisory Program, on a pilot basis. The Program will provide hands-on support for businesses to navigate commercial waste management and empower businesses to implement sustainable recycling solutions.



Kristina Nishi  
Manager Recycling and Waste Recovery  
(604-244-1280)

KN:

Att. 1: Engagement Summary Report



City of Richmond  
Commercial Recycling Services Review

# Business Engagement Summary Report



## SITUATION ANALYSIS

Studies show that commercial recycling rates (44%) are consistently lower than the overall regional recycling rate (64%). The City of Richmond (the City) would like to gain a better understanding of current challenges and how it can support improved recycling across the various commercial sectors as an integral part of supporting a circular economy. This would help to achieve both the *Richmond Circular City Strategy* and its *Community Energy Emissions Plan* objectives to reduce GHGs and support a circular economy. The need for improved commercial recycling was also identified by residents as part community engagement for the ban on single-use plastic and through the Rethink Waste Think Tank.

The review included several phases to gain insight into current service levels (types of services, collection frequency, what is working well), the challenges or barriers that prevent different business sectors from improving and expanding their recycling and opportunities to improve recycling quantity and quality.

The outreach targeted a cross-section of commercial businesses including restaurants, retail stores, entertainment businesses, grocery stores, medical offices, the hospitality sector, the health sector and education facilities. The project also included a review of how commercial recycling is managed in other jurisdictions, and an analysis of the legislation and regulations currently in place at federal, provincial, regional and local levels.

The overall outcomes for the review are to identify potential options to support increased commercial recycling in Richmond. This may include exploring options for how the City can help foster better recycling in the commercial sector.

This business engagement summary report includes the recycling site review summary and research on jurisdictions and regulations provided by Dillon Consulting as well as the key themes and information shared through workshops and targeted outreach coordinated by the City.

## TARGETED AUDIENCES

The following are the primary audiences for the commercial recycling services review as they are directly involved either in providing or using recycling services. The percentages are approximate to show the relative mix of businesses in the community that generate commercial waste and recycling (as opposed to industrial waste). The outreach to businesses aligned with the representation of the various business operations in the community, with a greater proportion of outreach to the retail, restaurant and hospitality sectors as the largest representative groups.

- Commercial business operators – with focus on primary waste producers:
  - Restaurants
  - Hospitality/entertainment sector
  - Retail operations
  - Grocery
  - Medical offices
  - Industrial/office sector

- Business organizations
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Hotel Association
  - Tourism Richmond
  - Steveston Merchants' Association
  - Asian Restaurant Association
- Commercial recycling haulers
- Waste Management Association of BC
- Commercial recycling associations/companies
  - Green Circle Salons
  - Target Zero Waste
- Health Care Sector
  - Vancouver Coastal Health (includes hospitals and care homes)
  - BC Dental Association
  - BC Chiropractic Association
  - BC Naturopathic Association
  - ACTMA – BC Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture Practitioners
  - BC Pharmacy Association
  - BC Association of Laboratory Physicians

## **OBJECTIVES**

The following are the primary objectives for the community engagement process related to commercial garbage and recycling services:

- Gain insight into current commercial recycling services in terms of how well they are working (e.g., quality and amount of recycling, actually recycling materials through processing facilities, safe handling), who is providing the services, current practices, capacity and challenges/limitations in the waste hauling industry
- Identify business concerns related recycling/sustainable waste management – barriers, challenges, issues related to how recycling is handled worldwide, environmental impacts
- Identify potential options for service solutions that support improved quality (correctly sorted, signage) and consistency of commercial recycling, including potential for City to foster increased recycling, including City's role as a regulator
- Identify concerns related to service options in terms of impacts on hauling industry and commercial business
- Increase understanding of current sustainable waste management that support a circular economy.
- Establish positive working relationships with affected audiences to support continued improvement in commercial recycling.

## **CHALLENGES**

The following are some of the challenges that affected the engagement process and could impact recommendations for next steps.

- Commercial haulers may view this as City interfering in their business/taking business away from them.
- Commercial hauling is highly competitive, which means they were hesitant to discuss any specifics related to recycling operations.

- Business community may view this as the City imposing new requirements that cost them money/affect their ability to compete.
- Health care sector is largely under provincial authority and has unique requirements.
- It is recognized that space limitations are a significant challenge for commercial sector that could affect service options.

## **BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW**

### **Phase 1: Initial Outreach to Richmond Businesses**

Notification for this phase included emails to business organizations, including the Richmond Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Richmond, the Hotel Association and Steveston Merchants' Association in advance of the outreach to Richmond businesses to advise them that the review was being done and to ask them to share information with their members.

Dillon Consulting led the direct notification and engagement with affected businesses through door-to-door visits in the Richmond Centre, Lansdowne, Aberdeen, Parker Place and Steveston Village areas, and via phone calls.

The in-person surveys were available in English, Cantonese and Mandarin and businesses were offered an extended and short-form version. The City also developed a handout which was provided to businesses to highlight the purpose of the commercial recycling service review and to highlight the opportunity for businesses to share their input online, which was offered in English, Simplified Chinese and traditional Chinese through the Let's Talk Richmond platform.

### **Survey Focus Areas:**

- Current recycling and garbage service, including bin types, space and shared services
- Satisfaction with current services
- Estimated amount of waste being recycled
- Awareness of Metro Vancouver's disposal ban
- Awareness of Richmond's single-use plastic ban
- Barriers, challenges and limitations that affect recycling service
- Barriers, challenges and limitations that affect garbage service

### **Mix of Businesses:**

- Retail 41.6%
- Food Service 23.4%
- Hotel/Hospitality 9.1%
- Office/Administration 7.8%
- Medical 6.5%
- Grocery 5.2%
- Industrial 2.6%
- Fitness Centre 2.6%
- School/University 1.3%

Consultation with the commercial sector took place the week of May 16, 2022. Dillon staff approached a total of 302 businesses, 231 in person and 71 by phone. Of the total 302 businesses, 77 responded to the survey (63 in person and 14 by phone). Overall, the retail sector completed the most surveys (42%), followed by the food service sector (23%).

## Key Themes:

The following are the general key themes of the input shared by businesses in this phase:

- 66% of businesses indicated they have enough space for garbage and recycling containers
- Over 63% of businesses indicated they were very satisfied with both their recycling and garbage services
- 33% of respondents estimate that 26 to 50% of total waste generated is recycled
- 29 % of respondents estimated that 51 to 75% of total waste generated is recycled
- 58% of businesses share their waste containers with one or more other businesses
- Approximately 30% of businesses indicated they use the Richmond Recycling Depot
- 58% of businesses are aware of Metro Vancouver’s disposal bans

The key themes shared about barriers, challenges and limitations for recycling services are highlighted below:

- 16% of businesses indicated that there was limited space for additional bins
- 8% indicated recycling was too expensive
- 6% indicated it is within their landlord’s control
- 49% indicated a variety of “other” responses that included themes such as:
  - Bins are not secure
  - Inconsistent collection frequency
  - Illegal dumping
  - Issues with recycling hauler

The key themes shared about barriers, challenges and limitations for garbage services are highlighted below:

- 42% of businesses indicated that illegal dumping by third parties is an ongoing issue;
- 7% indicated cost was an issue;
- 7% indicated cleanliness was an issue; and
- 45% indicated a variety of “other” responses that included:
  - Overflow issues;
  - Garbage bin lids are too heavy;
  - Inconsistent collection frequency; and
  - Issues with security of bins.
- Ideas for how the City can support improved recycling/increased waste diversion:
  - Request that haulers provide pick up of recycling twice a week.
  - Educate businesses, building management and public with visual formats to explain bans, how to recycle.
  - Supplement or offer free recycling collection and provide recycling bags.
  - City implement green program service with private company pricing.
  - Better options for bottle recycling.
  - Audit business.
  - Increase amount of materials accepted in recycling.
  - Provide additional drop off stations in shopping plazas e.g., batteries.
  - Enforce bylaws.
  - More collection areas.
  - Pick up service for food/green waste, paper and bottles.

## **Phase 1: Jurisdictional and Regulatory Review**

Dillon Consulting completed a jurisdictional review of the following North American municipalities:

- City of Toronto
- City of San Francisco
- City of New York

The topics reviewed as a part of the jurisdictional review included:

- Jurisdiction overview (population, area, country);
- Relevant legislation, bylaws, policy drivers and contractual requirements;
- Overview of existing waste management and recycling services provided (if any) to the commercial services sector;
- Existing partnerships (if any);
- Staffing and budget allocated to commercial services sector garbage and recycling;
- Frequency of service and/or service restrictions;
- Communications and marketing approaches;
- Educational materials utilized;
- Innovative strategy and/or program development and implementation;
- Enforcement activities;
- Program successes and challenges/opportunities for improvement; and
- Lessons learned and next steps.

The regulatory review assessed recycling and other waste management requirements at a federal, provincial, regional and municipal level, including environmental protection, regulations managing the movement of hazardous waste and recyclable materials, bans on specific products such as single-use plastic, zero waste and circular economy initiatives, producer responsibilities and disposal bans. The review also looked at commercial levies and hauler licensing. City staff also conducted a regulatory scan and the content below contains findings from both reviews.

### ***Jurisdictional Review***

#### ***Government of Canada***

Commercial regulatory requirements at a federal level include the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) which regulates the interprovincial and international movement of hazardous waste and recyclables, the Single-Use Plastics Prohibition Regulations and the Ocean Plastics Charter.

#### ***Province of BC***

The provincial Environmental Management Act (EMA) grants local governments and regional districts the authority to regulate waste disposal in relation to liquid waste, municipal solid waste and recyclable materials. Additionally, under the Community Charter, municipalities are to provide services, laws and other matters for community benefit, and are granted the fundamental power to, by bylaw, regulate, prohibit and impose requirements in relation to municipal services.

The EMA includes regulations and policies specific to individual industries. The provincial government has also implemented the *Single-Use and Plastic Waste Prevention Regulation* as

part of the CleanBC Plastics Action Plan and has set provincial waste disposal targets as part of its zero waste and circular economy initiatives.

The Recycling Regulation, under the authority of the EMA, sets out the requirements for BC's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). EPR requires producers, such as manufacturers, distributors, and retailers to take responsibility for the life cycle of the products they sell. Producers often come together to form agencies that operate recycling programs on their behalf. Commercial businesses in Richmond are able to participate, operate and utilize EPR programs.

#### *City of Richmond*

The City's Solid Waste and Recycling Regulation Bylaw No. 6803 places the accountability for managing commercial waste on the occupier of the non-residential property to provide and keep on the property, an adequate number of commercial garbage containers for all garbage generated onsite. Additionally, every occupier of a residential property or non-residential property must remove all garbage generated as often as necessary, to prevent garbage from becoming unsightly or from causing a health concern.

#### *Metro Vancouver*

Metro Vancouver places restrictions and conditions on the materials accepted at regional disposal facilities and transfer stations. The Greater Vancouver Sewerage and Drainage District Tipping Fee and Solid Waste Disposal Regulation Bylaw No. 330, 2019 does not regulate business activity, however, under the Disposal Ban Program certain recyclable materials are banned from the landfill. If loads of garbage delivered to regional disposal facilities or transfer stations, contain banned recyclable materials (see Table 1) in excess of established limits, surcharges are applied. The surcharges are designed to inflate disposal costs and incentivize businesses to recycle the materials properly.

Metro Vancouver is also responsible for regulation of waste haulers including collecting and remitting of the Generator Levy and maintaining records. At this time there is no licensing process required.

Metro Vancouver's *Bylaw 181: Private Solid Waste Facility Licensing* regulates all privately operated municipal solid waste and recyclable material operation facilities. Licenses are required for all privately operated landfills, transfer stations, material recovery facilities, storage facilities and brokers of municipal solid waste and recyclable materials.

**Service Model Review**

**Commercial Garbage and Recycling Service Model Comparison**

<b>Service Models</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Applicable Businesses</b>	<b>Payment Structure</b>	<b>Regulatory Landscape</b>
Opt-in City Service	Toronto, ON, Canada	Small commercial	Variable rate, paid by utility	City initiated service
	Burnaby, BC, Canada	Small commercial	Variable rate, paid quarterly	City initiated service - <i>City of Burnaby Bylaw 14046</i>
	Guelph, BC, Canada	Small mixed-use, institutional	Municipal property taxes	<i>City of Guelph Waste Management By-law (2019)-20392</i>
Franchise – single hauler	San Francisco, CA, USA	All commercial	Variable rate discounted in proportion to the volume diverted from the landfill.	<i>California Assembly Bill (AB) 341</i>  <i>The San Francisco Mandatory Recycling and Composting Ordinance</i>
Franchise – multiple haulers zoned	New York, NY, USA	All commercial	Base and Variable Rates, paid by business	<i>The State of New York (16 RCNY§ 1 10(a))</i>  <i>Local Law 199 Commercial Waste Zone Law (CWZ)</i>
Required – Recyclables & Organics Diversion Plans	Vancouver, BC, Canada	All non-residential	N/A	<i>City of Vancouver Solid Waste By-law 8417</i>

*City of Toronto*

The City of Toronto is not mandated to provide waste management services to the industrial, commercial and institutional services (IC&I) sector. Eligible “small commercial” customers pay for garbage collection and Yellow Bag program, and receive Green Bin organics and Blue Bin recycling collection at no additional cost. City of Toronto currently services approximately 14,500 small commercial establishments.

Garbage and yellow bag collection is financed through a subscription service (variable rate system) and charged through the utility. To be eligible the commercial businesses’ ground floor area must be less than 500 square metres and less than four stories, or at least a third of the building space is residential (no size restriction) and less than four stories. Of the 14,500 commercial business, 7,560 are not designated for the new provincial Blue Box Regulation, the City is considering operational and financial impacts.

The current commercial collection program has resulted in increased diversion as participation has been higher than if these businesses relied on private haulers. In their 2016 Long Term

Waste Management Strategy the City of Toronto is looking to identify a mechanism to allow the City to influence greater waste diversion in the IC&I sector.

The City of Toronto anticipates that IC&I will be addressed as part of an Ontario provincial strategy under the Waste-Free Ontario Act.

#### *City of Burnaby*

City of Burnaby provides garbage, green waste and recycling collection services for over 500 commercial customers. These include businesses, religious buildings and educational establishments and as an extension of the multi-family garbage and recycling collection.

Commercial rates are made available through the City of Burnaby website, payments are billed quarterly and can be paid through Burnaby Commercial Refuse, by mail or in person through the Burnaby Tax Office.

#### *City of Guelph*

City of Guelph provides garbage, recycling and organics collection to downtown IC&I properties and eligible small mixed-use and institutional properties on existing residential routes outside the downtown collection area. Collection services are funded by municipal property taxes.

Starting in January of 2025 Guelph will no longer be collecting blue box materials under the Government of Ontario's new Blue Box Regulation, blue box collection for schools (public, separate, and private that teach Kindergarten to Grade 12), non-profit retirement and long-term care homes, and multi-residential buildings (e.g., apartments and condos) will be provided by Ontario Producer Responsibility Organizations (PRO). Guelph's commercial recycling collection program will end, and IC&I properties will make alternate arrangements to have their recycling collected.

#### *City of San Francisco*

The San Francisco Mandatory Recycling and Composting Ordinance requires all commercial businesses to source separate their waste into recyclables, compostable and landfill trash.

San Francisco's waste management company, Recology, holds a no-bid contract with the City of San Francisco and provides garbage, recycling and compost collection. The City of San Francisco offers a variety of free services and assistance for waste management, including, consultations, bin labels, signs, commercial building toolkits, educational materials and multilingual training.

San Francisco's recycling and compost collection program is available to all business types at a reduced rate. Rates are based on service type, collection frequency, and site-specific diversion rates. Rates are designed to offer discounts to businesses based on their diversion rate. Rates are calculated using both a base and variable amount, depending on the businesses diversion success. The variable rate is discounted in proportion to the percent of service volume that is diverted from the landfill (up to 75% discount).

Regulations such as waste separation, mandatory recycling and composting as well as providing adequate space for all waste streams in addition to incentivizing waste diversion through a reduction of fees has helped to improve waste diversion.

#### *New York City*

The State of New York (16 RCNY§ 1 10(a)) requires commercial businesses and commercial tenants to recycle. Currently all garbage and recycling is collected by private haulers. In 2019 New York City established Local Law 199 Commercial Waste Zone Law (CWZ). Businesses in the City will be divided into 20 separate zones. Each zone will be serviced by up to three haulers.



In advance of the CWZ program implementation the DSNY aims to reach more than 100,000 business owners through in-person canvassing, phone calls and direct mail. The New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) expects to begin implementation of the first CWZ pilot zone in the second or third quarter of 2024.

Initial challenges with the program include revisions to the RFP process to gather more detailed information around pricing, technical plans and financial and compliance data as well as a lengthy evaluation process requiring a committee to score proposals, negotiate contracts, select awardees and approve contracts.

#### *City of Vancouver*

The City of Vancouver By-Law 8417 requires the owners and occupiers of non-residential properties to provide a Recyclable Materials Diversion Plan and an Organic Waste Diversion Plan. Non-residential properties are asked when obtaining a business license or renewing a license to detail the methods being used to divert food waste and recyclables for disposal at the landfill or incinerator site.

### **Phase 2: Workshops and Targeted Outreach**

This phase of community engagement expanded on the Phase 1 input and research, and involved more in-depth discussion with businesses and local organizations who represent a variety of business sectors. This engagement included a business workshop and targeted outreach that involved one-on-one meetings and additional door-to-door site visits.

The notification for this phase included:

- Emails to businesses involved in Phase 1 who indicated an interest in further discussion on recycling services;
- Emails and phone calls to Richmond organizations that represent the various commercial sectors in the community, including Tourism Richmond, Richmond Chamber of Commerce, Asian Restaurant Association, School District No. 38;
- Emails to businesses currently receiving services through the City Pilot for Commercial Garbage and Recycling Services;
- Richmond Sustainability e-newsletter;
- Emails and phone calls to affected business sectors including area shopping centres, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority;
- Emails and phone calls to eight recycling and garbage hauler companies (three participated in meetings); and
- Door-to-door outreach to businesses in three mini-malls (Blundell, Ironwood and Terra Nova).

The engagement discussions focused on:

- Challenges related to garbage and recycling collection and ideas for how to address challenges;
- Opportunities to leverage what is working well, including sharing best practices and suggestions to promote commercial recycling and waste reduction; and
- The City's role in terms of encouraging and supporting increased commercial recycling, including requirements, what the City should do and should not do.

## STAKEHOLDER KEY THEMES

The following is a summary of the key themes of the input shared by participants in this phase of the community engagement. This is not an itemized list of comments, and the input represents opinions and ideas shared by participants, which may differ from other data collected as part of this commercial recycling services review.

### Business Workshop

The business workshop involved six participants, with representatives from Tourism Richmond, Lansdown Centre, Aberdeen Centre, School District No. 38 and Pro Claim Group. The facilitated workshop included a presentation highlighting some of the key outcomes from the Phase 1 survey input, followed by discussion on the challenges and opportunities that affect commercial recycling and waste management as well as discussion on the City's role.

In general, while there are some common challenges and opportunities, there are also specific concerns that affect different commercial sectors; there is no one size fits all solution.

Challenges – issues, gaps and processes that are not working:

- Illegal dumping is a top concern as, even when there are security cameras, there are no consequences. The RCMP does not enforce illegal dumping and the City's bylaw does not apply to dumping on private property so there is no means of addressing the issue. It's unclear whether the dumping is done by citizens or people operating a collection service who then dump the waste rather than paying tipping fees or sorting it into recycling.
- Visitors in the community are not familiar with recycling programs and are not accountable/do not care, so do not sort or recycling consistently.
- While some hotels have recycling bins in rooms, it is not required so it is not done consistently and there are no consistent types of bins/lid shapes and labels.
- Even though most families with students in School District No. 38 live in Richmond, the recycling programs are not consistent and the diversion rates at schools are significantly lower than at home. It's not clear why there is a difference; however, it could be due to the different types of recycling at school (only paper recycling and garbage cans in the classroom, but diverse recyclable materials in other areas, such as paper towels, food waste, automotive, take-out containers, cardboard, plastic and Styrofoam and e-waste), or it could be lack of accountability ("not mine"), or lack of clear, meaningful and consistent signage, or a combination.
- Need waste diversion to be part of the curriculum but there is no time.
- Anchor tenants in shopping centres are more on board with recycling services, but smaller tenants are less so, and many are hard to reach due to language barriers, so they don't read the onboarding materials.
- Cost is a factor as, other than cardboard, most recycling is no longer seen as a commodity. The cost involved to add services that is higher than what business gets for selling recyclables.
- High staff turnover in hospitality and retail sectors requires constant education.
- Construction/demolition waste makes up about 50% of landfill, yet there is limited waste diversion in this sector.
- When it is easier to just collect all waste in one bin (more convenient), there is no education about why it is important to recycle/divert waste and there are no consequences, there is no incentive to change behaviour.

- While retail tenants are recycling as part of business practices, it's more difficult to get customers to recycle, they put everything in the garbage and/or they don't sort items correctly even when the bins are available.
- Some businesses are impeded by "analysis paralysis" that results in no action to improve recycling as they cannot determine what will work best or how to address challenges.
- Language barriers in the community make it challenging to communicate how to recycle correctly.
- Currently there are no incentives from haulers to reduce waste, and customers who want to maximize waste are dealing with costs as a factor as half their cost is lease/rent and the other half is operational cost for collection.

Opportunities – what is working well or could be leveraged to improve recycling:

- Schools: "Zero Waste Day" where students take all lunch waste home, end of school locker clean out, working with parents, e.g., make sure kids will eat what you send for lunch.
- All waste streams should have EPR/Stewardship.
- Specialized waste from schools could go to the Recycling Depot, but would need a program in place.
- Use of cameras helps with identifying illegal dumping (but no enforcement) as well as identifying tenants who are not recycling properly. Generally, direct follow up with tenants and the use of fines will result in improved recycling and sorting.
- Organics are collected behind the food court and staff help with sorting in the food court.
- Quarterly diversion reports to gain insight into types of materials and bins required, sorting issues, cost benefits of recycling, annual rebates for recycling based on audits, etc.
- There are positive examples of demolition/construction waste diversion initiatives and benefits that could be highlighted to build on each success, e.g., LEED and GO Green buildings, adding extra bins at the work site and at transfer stations (can be as many as 26 diversion streams such as drywall, wood), and it costs less to recycle.
- Raise awareness about benefits of recycling, such as beverage containers value, post-COVID changes such as fewer cleaning days with cost-saving incentives.
- The City of Guelph in Ontario collects waste from small mixed-used buildings and institutional properties outside of the downtown area that meet certain criteria to establish equitable service levels in the IC&I sector. (For more details visit <https://guelph.ca/living/environment/garbage-and-recycling/waste-collection-for-businesses/>)
- Small businesses need education, resources such as training kits for onboarding new employees to make it as easy as possible to recycle correctly.
- Larger businesses and tourism sector can tap into the corporate responsibility priorities, but there needs to be a way to help apply it locally. They are also more likely to be responsive to customer priorities and consequences for not recycling. For example, tender processes could include waste diversion requirements to balance diversion costs with corporate responsibility.
- Hauler contract considerations: haulers charge per bin and weight, so could look at incentives to keep costs down as part of contracts, and waste audits are useful to better understand issues and could be something that is incorporated into contracts with haulers.

- Richmond could have a waste diversion audit and incentives program similar to BC Hydro Energy Audits with incentives through the permit process so there is a cost benefit rather than consequences.
- Create a culture of conservation in commercial sector, tracking diversion percentages and reporting out, perhaps by sector.
- Need to have the processors/systems in place for the range of recyclable materials being collected, e.g., demolition materials.
- The City needs to ensure the commercial sector allows for adequate space set up at the planning stage of new buildings, and once it is built, it is up to the building management to set up the services.

#### The City's Role in Supporting Commercial Recycling:

- Implement education and awareness communication, such as the single-use plastic ban communication and engagement with business and the community, including targeted information to business license holders.
- Avoid use of bylaws as they can be seen as a negative, resulting in a competitive disadvantage unless all municipalities in the Metro Vancouver must meet the same requirements.
- Consider incentives for doing the right thing, an opt-in approach, using waste audits, data showing progress.
- Treat everyone the same way, whether incentives or penalties, and have clear steps before any penalties, such as the way single-use plastic ban enforcement is managed.
- Provide bin signage so it is consistent and clear, looking at what others are doing to apply best practices.
- Consider operational shadowing/reviews, such as a day in the life of a tenant, hotel, restaurant, demolition company to understand needs and ways to improve recycling/waste diversion.

#### Suggestions:

- Reach out to local organizations with clear messaging about why the City is working to improve commercial recycling, the benefit to members, what organizations/businesses need to do and any incentives if applicable.
- Providing recycling tips handout and advice for waste management efficiency.
- Work through permitting and business licensing to reach businesses and understand their pain points.
- Connect with schools to leverage programs like Green Teams, waste audit information and Green Ambassadors, and to provide staff with information on local recycling programs (particularly for staff who don't live in Richmond).
- Help address illegal dumping.
- Support environmental champions in commercial sector – support staff by equipping them with tips, set them up for success and build their skills.

#### **Individual Meetings**

Following the business workshop, the City held one-on-one meetings with representatives from three hauling companies, Vancouver Coast Health, the Asian Restaurant Association and three property management companies. The discussions focused on the specific considerations for each sector.

## ***Garbage and Recycling Haulers***

The City reached out to eight different waste haulers operating in Richmond and throughout the Lower Mainland to gain insight into their perspectives on commercial recycling. Three companies agreed to meet with City based on the understanding that the hauler's input would remain anonymous for competitive reasons. The City met with each hauler representative individually, and the discussion focused on exploring why commercial recycling is lagging, what business sectors perform better, processes for handling contamination and what the City should or should not do to help support increased commercial recycling.

In general, most haulers said they aim to sell as many services as possible and offer a complete package of garbage, recycling and organics services. They all supported increased education for businesses about recycling services available and ways to reduce contamination, and enforcing how better waste diversion can impact their bottom line. All three waste haulers also indicated that the City of Richmond should not get involved in the hauling business.

The following are the key themes of the hauler's responses to each discussion topic.

Factors affecting commercial recycling/why it is lagging behind residential:

- Cost is the primary factor as recycling is not cost effective. It doesn't save money, and while it is a cost of doing business, the more services, the higher the cost so it is too expensive for some businesses. As well, single-stream recycling may be more convenient for customers, but it also costs more than garbage collection.
- Labour and time requirements are another major factor as staff capacity/resources are limited and sorting can be labour intensive. It's easier to throw everything in the garbage. There is also lack of training and employees are not motivated to recycle.
- There is often limited space for bins.
- The volume of specific items beyond garbage/cardboard are not worth the effort or cost to sort and recycle.
- Shift in priorities since the pandemic as many businesses are still recovering and just trying to keep their business open.

Sectors doing a better job with waste diversion/recycling:

- When it costs less to recycle than throw it in the garbage, businesses will recycle. For example, where it's more cost effective for food processors to have organics recycling or when they have compactors, or companies that generate a lot of cardboard, which often still has a commodity value. Organics recycling is easier to sell because it's mandated by Metro Vancouver and there was a lot of communication about the ban – much more than communication about other banned items.
- For some sectors, recycling is a priority because "it's the right thing to do" or expected from customers/the public even though there is a cost involved, e.g., schools, government, health sector and some hospitality, such as restaurants that are doing a lot of organics recycling.

Sectors doing less recycling/waste diversion:

- Newer businesses are less likely to have recycling, possibly because they are not aware of requirements, or they may not know what to recycle.
- Small businesses (without the space, time, labour).
- Businesses that don't feel they generate enough to warrant it (organics in offices).
- Collection and contamination at the end of the school year is particularly bad.

Resources haulers provide to customers:

- Posters with pictures/graphics.
- Dos and don'ts decals using graphics to show what can and can't go in bins.
- Website resources, such as links to Metro Vancouver information about bans.

Measures to address contamination:

- If contamination is visible in the bins, haulers do not pick it up. They also tag the bin to note the contamination.
- Contamination will contaminate the entire load.
- Some trucks have cameras in the hopper.
- Sometimes photos come at the processor.
- Follow up includes a phone call or email to outline the issue.
- Fines and other fees are charged to the customer for contamination or when banned items are in the bin.
- They have minimal issues with repeat offenders.

Information haulers would like commercial sector to understand:

- It's not up to the hauler to educate their employees and customers.
- Haulers don't make the rules about what goes in recycling and what is banned.
- Haulers are bound by rules and regulations and operate a business to provide a service and want to keep customers happy.
- Businesses need to take responsibility for their waste inside their operation (e.g., the right types of bins and recycling services, sorting materials correctly to avoid contamination).
- Businesses need to find the right resources for information.
- Layout and access are a business responsibility, including allocating space for recycling and where haulers will collect bins.
- You don't call a hauler just for recycling, you call for complete service and the haulers need to densify their run (have enough collection volume to justify cost for sending out trucks). Most contracts are for garbage and then the recycling are add-ons to get the garbage contract, such as a package deal that includes cardboard, paper and maybe organics.

Single-stream recycling versus source separation recycling:

- Single-stream recycling is convenient for users and requires less space, but it is generally the worst way to recycle as it is very contaminated so that most of the items are no longer recyclable, and it is also the most expensive service option.
- Multi-stream, source separation is the best way to get quality recycling.
- Only a couple processors will accept single-stream recycling in the Lower Mainland, and they have rules for the contamination levels, which means that if the load is contaminated, they charge even more.

Opportunities to increase commercial recycling:

- Some has to start at manufacturing: reduce the amount and type of packaging and don't use products that can't be recycled.
- Businesses need to take responsibility for their recycling programs, including who puts what into the bins, and for having the right receptacles, posters and decals in place.

- Promote and use websites like Recycle BC to learn more about all the materials that can be recycled.
- Educate staff and keep the information topical – why recycling is important, how to recycle correctly.
- Municipalities may have to push for more commercial recycling, such as through regulations or other requirements, but cost is going to be a factor.

What the City should do:

- Increase education and promote recycling through communication and marketing.
- Show ways recycling helps their bottom line and provide examples of what others are doing to promote increased recycling, e.g., good examples of front-end recycling programs and signage.
- Enforce current regulations/bans or businesses will do the bare minimum.
- Identify the real problem makers.
- Request waste audit information from companies that are already doing them to gain a better understanding of their waste and recycling needs.
- Offer audits, and possibly target certain areas with follow-up education.
- Allow commercial sector to use the Richmond Recycling Depot.
- Highlight what businesses are doing correctly and why it's important.
- Ask business what it's going to take to get them to recycle more.
- Provide information about commercial recycling – haulers that offer different services
- Develop a marketing/information sheet to send out with business licenses.
- Help with finding processors, particularly for recycling such as flexible plastic, glass, mixed containers that are not totally clean.

What the City should *not* do:

- Don't try to get involved providing commercial recycling as a service – it's too complex and creates a big mess when trying to manage it fairly.
- Don't be heavy handed with enforcement.
- Don't implement a commercial recycling bylaw.

Illegal dumping observations:

- The illegal dumping they see in Richmond is about the same as other cities.
- There can be safety concerns when people who are homeless light fires in bins or stockpile dumped materials.
- Encourage customers to lock their bins.
- It may be cheaper for the City to just collect it in the first place – offer Large Item Pick Up to all residents.
- Raise awareness about options like the Recycling Depot, Landfill Voucher and Large Item Pick Up Program.

***Vancouver Coastal Health***

There are four health authorities in the region and the waste contract is managed regionally, and waste includes both non-hazardous and hazardous materials. For this study, only non-hazardous materials are being reviewed as hazardous medical waste is federally regulated and managed by a separate vendor. There is a Waste Contract Manager for each health authority, and a standardized recycling program (same bins, accepted items, signage, decals) for all of the

health authority facilities in the region. The standard streams are mixed containers (including refundable bottles and cans), mixed paper and organics. If sites want to collect beverage containers separately on their own to keep the refund, they have that option.

The waste diversion goal for all health authorities is 50% by 2030. They have different goals for 2025 depending on their current diversion rates. The 50% target is a stretch goal for hospitals, in large part due to the limited access to available processing facilities for many of their non-hazardous recyclable waste. Smaller, long-term care facilities have already hit the first goal as they are currently recycling 25% to 30% of their waste, which is about the average (25%) for the health care sector in North America. Long-term care facilities are more like residential, where hygiene items are the biggest component of their waste.

#### Challenges affecting recycling in the health service sector:

- Many of the products used in health care are not recyclable in this market. For example, PVC products like oxygen masks, empty IV bags and other soft plastics. A business case was done to see if these items could be recycled as they are doing this in Ontario, but recycling processors in BC did not want to accept specialized products.
- There can be a perception that everything coming from a hospital or health care facility is hazardous waste, and recycling processors would take the materials for waste-to-energy, but that is not recycling.
- Patient care priorities can affect whether staff can sort waste into recycling. As an example, in the ICU, nurses don't leave bedside so when they generate waste, they can't leave the room to go sort it – everything goes into garbage.
- Isolation precautions in some health situations mean that none of the waste can leave the patient's room – everything goes into the garbage.
- The Polypropylene in personal protection equipment (PPE) can't be recycled.
- When COVID hit, all recycling went to waste-to-energy facilities, so now the health authorities are struggling to get some items back into recycling programs.
- The different recycling rules in different communities can cause confusion, and there are inconsistencies in what haulers will offer for service levels e.g., coffee cups are not accepted in recycling by their hauler even though these cups are accepted in most residential recycling programs. Recycling at work is not treated the same as recycling at home.

#### Opportunities and positive actions that improve waste diversion:

- Shifting products away from disposable to reusable might be the best way health care facilities can reduce waste most. A garbage composition study in six clinical units that generate a lot of waste found that around a quarter of garbage waste was technically compostable (paper towels) and there was a small amount of food scraps, but not much else could have been diverted. Food services is using reusable service ware in public cafeterias and for patients. Clinical products – a lot of them surgical – had shifted to disposable during the pandemic, and now they are trying to shift back to reusable. Also switching to reusable gowns instead of disposable.
- The provincial Ministry of Health is putting together a PPE recycling program for the whole province. PPE is very light, and waste is measured by weight, so it may not have a lot of impact on numbers, but still helps with waste diversion.
- Relationships can make a big difference, so work needs to be done to build relationships with haulers and processing facilities to educate them about what can and cannot be accepted, what is and isn't dangerous.



- Staff are passionate about recycling. They are very supportive of anything related to environmental sustainability and will request recycling bins for their units. They also come up with ideas, e.g., medical glove recycling.
- Education about managing hazardous medical waste is embedded in health care staff education, so they naturally have the same attention to detail when it comes to recycling non-hazardous materials.
- While staff are experts in how to recycle weird medical products, there's always a place for ongoing education. The health authority has online modules and opportunities for in-person training. They also have a whole course on waste management that covers hazardous and biomedical waste as well as other recycling streams. It's a required course when staff are on boarded.
- Bins are everywhere – in all of the clinical units, in hallways, by doors – and are easily accessible to public and staff. The bins are paired and with garbage close by. Also, having the same labels and bins across all facilities means that staff are familiar with how to recycle even when they move to other sites.
- There is a staff volunteer program for general sustainability and a staff position to manage the recycling program. There is support from managers to put in time towards sustainability projects and funding available to explore better waste management opportunities.

Information that is important for haulers and processors to understand:

- Most health authority waste is not dirty or gross. Only 6-7% of the waste is biomedical or hazardous. The vast majority has not been close to anything medical. It's just normal waste.
- It's difficult to understand why the recycling markets in B.C. cannot support health authority waste streams. For example, polypropylene fabric wrap is not accepted even though it's 100% recyclable and it's never even been in a patient room. It's in a sterile environment and then thrown away. Health authorities generate tonnes of this material, which feels like textile but made of polypropylene. It's referred to as 'blue wrap' and it's literally sterilized – the cleanest possible waste – but it is not accepted for recycling. The same goes for vinyl PVC products like oxygen masks, oxygen tubing and IV bags that are empty and would just hold fluid/water. They are clean, consistent waste streams. Ontario's program is PVC123.

Options to address challenges and leverage opportunities:

- Consistency in labelling, messaging and accepted items is needed to reduce confusion. There's also lack of clarity around biodegradable and compostable plastic.
- Waste processors and haulers would ideally accept the same products from businesses and health care that they do from residential recycling, e.g., coffee cups.
- Processing facilities are needed for items like flexible/soft plastic and other clean waste generated by hospitals.
- Be upfront about what is being sent to waste-to-energy facilities.
- Education needs to be consistent so people understand what to do and what the current state of recycling is in the community.
- Despite all the challenges in the health care sector, there is a shared goal to do better. They want to push themselves to do new things, and they don't see health care as requiring an automatic exemption - just an acknowledgement of their unique challenges and requirements.

- Their wish list is:
  - New waste streams for key categories where they can't find a recycling processor.
  - While they have data for standardized streams, they would like data for other streams like construction waste diversion.

What the City can do:

- Do a scan of current recycling processors, what they offer, where they are going in terms of technology/innovation and share their research and other data.

### ***Property Managers***

To gain a better understanding of the service levels, challenges and opportunities that affect garbage and recycling programs run by property management companies, City staff reached out to six property management companies and met with three property management companies representing six complexes in Richmond.

Types of services:

- Services vary depending on the tenant (e.g., offices vs food service/grocery), but generally they provide cardboard and organics recycling in addition to garbage collection.
- If a business requires services beyond garbage, organics and cardboard collection, they generally have to arrange their own collection service or dispose of it themselves, unless the majority of the tenants want the additional service.
- A large part of recycling is dependent on employees separating items correctly, so it might be wanted by tenants, but employees would need to follow the requirements.

Limitations, challenges and barriers:

- Have had to reduce services because they were not being used, was not seeing compliance. If requirements are not being followed, they can't force it on the tenant – will remove the service instead.
- If it's required, will provide the service.
- Depending on the situation, may increase or decrease service level, such as frequency.
- For monitoring, contamination is sometimes reported by the waste disposal hauler and there can be fees attached, which is passed on to the business if contamination from their business is happening repeatedly.
- Noticing a lot of household garbage in commercial garbage bins. Even when the bins are locked, people throw their garbage on the ground.
- Illegal dumping remains a challenge.
- Bins are removed from public areas on their properties as people were vandalizing bins and rummaging through recycling.

Opportunities and what is working well:

- Services are easy to source.
- There's an app to show the level of waste in the bins and how full the last service was to track usage and service level requirements.

What the City can do:

- Education and community awareness so people fully understand what is required and how to sort correctly.

- Educating business owners about banned materials, what is and isn't allowed in the garbage.

### ***Asian Restaurant Association***

The BC Asian Restaurant Cafe Owners Association is a non-profit organization of restaurant owners and related businesses that was created to strengthen and promote the Asian restaurant industry. Members offer mutual help to improve business and an environment to enhance the public image of the Asian restaurant industry.

City staff met with a representative of the Association to discuss the challenges and opportunities that relate to garbage and recycling services for their members.

#### Primary challenges:

- In general, restaurants have organics recycling, but other streams such as paper and containers is challenging due to space limitations.
- Waste is usually not sorted – everything goes in the garbage.
- Staff do not have the time to recycle, and most do not consider recycling a priority.
- Restaurants need to have the right containers for use inside the kitchen where there is never enough room.
- Recycling containers in the restaurant areas do not look good.
- Restaurant customers generally do not care about what happens after their meal, such as whether the leftover food is recycled.

#### Primary opportunities:

- Recycling is getting better as people are getting used to it and more people are continuing to improve their recycling, but it takes times time.
- It needs to start with rules (the City needs to make it a rule or most of these businesses will not do it), then training the staff and then the cost implications.

#### What haulers need to know about restaurant recycling:

- Most haulers understand the needs of restaurants.
- Haulers should take direction from the City and other authorities.
- Restaurants should be able to separate their recyclables properly, but if the hauler does not say no to certain items in the garbage, the restaurant operators will not change. If they are allowed to mix everything together, they will continue to do so. Organics is the only item they separate as they will get in trouble if organics are found in the garbage.
- Cost is another critical factor. Costs like fines will make people change, but they will annoy people as well. Know where to draw the line between the incentives and penalties.

### ***Mini-Mall Surveys***

As a follow up to the initial survey, staff conducted door-to-door surveys at three mini-malls in Richmond (Blundell Centre, Terra Nova Village and Ironwood Plaza). Staff approached 38 businesses and 31 responded to the survey. Businesses were asked about the garbage and recycling services provided at their complex, limitations to increased recycling and what they felt the City should do or not do to support increased commercial recycling.

Types of businesses reached with survey:

- Food Service/Restaurant 27%
- Retail 24%
- Service/Administration 14%
- Medical 13%
- Grocery 11%
- Financial Institution 8%
- Fitness 3%

Feedback from businesses about current services:

- For most businesses, recycling services are provided by and at the discretion of the property managers.
- All three mini-malls visited had access to garbage and cardboard services.
- 27% of the businesses had organics recycling as it was primarily limited to food establishments (restaurants, food service, and grocery stores).
- Restaurants and food retailers who had access to organics recycling used a cart that had been provided to that specific business. In some instances, the cart size and frequency of pick-up was not sufficient to handle the waste being created.
- Large corporate entities (multi-national banks, grocery chains, retailers) have an internal culture of waste reduction, including programs and training as well as janitorial staff to follow the organization's recycling requirements.
- 91% of businesses who completed the survey were aware that certain items are banned from the garbage including organics, Styrofoam and cardboard.
- In addition to the standardized services provided by property managers, some businesses also independently recycle items such as flexible plastics, Styrofoam, glass containers, return-it beverage containers, ink cartridges, batteries and lightbulbs.

Limitations or barriers that affect recycling:

- Capacity (bins are full) and access to bins can be limited.
- Recycling is inconsistent – some businesses doing more than others.
- They need to arrange their own recycling service for items beyond garbage and cardboard.
- Not everyone supports recycling and/or they do not know how to recycle correctly.

What the City can do to support increased recycling:

- Do nothing.
- Increase awareness on how to recycle correctly.
- Require more of businesses or create a bylaw.
- Increase education for school-aged children as well as for businesses and landlords.

***Mini-Mall Site Audits***

The mini-mall door-to-door visits included checking out bins to learn more about the types, location and general use.

- Large businesses with corporate sustainability practices (TD Bank and RBC primarily) have more comprehensive recycling programs in place.
- Most businesses appear to abide by the services offered by the property manager.

- A surprising number of businesses take the extra steps to properly dispose of recyclable materials (flex plastic, deposit bottles/cans, Styrofoam).
- The amount of contamination in the garbage bins shows that a lot of recyclable and banned materials are still just throw away (organics, Styrofoam, paper).

**Phase 3: Business Survey (consultant recommended next phase)**

As the final step in community engagement for this commercial recycling services review, a survey of local businesses is recommended. This would provide an opportunity to present affected businesses with an overview of the options for supporting increased commercial recycling that are being considered and provide an opportunity for them to share feedback on the recommendations before final review and consideration by Council.