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2024 Solid Waste Management Annual Report Information Report

Report Number: INFO-2025-06

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Distribution Date: March 7, 2025

In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any member of Council may make a request to the Town Clerk that this Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

Executive Summary

This report provides a review of solid waste management programs and services carried out in the Town of Newmarket in 2024. The following information is highlighted in this report:

- 2024 curbside diversion rate of 69% (curbside collected tonnes only), a 1% decrease compared to 2023.
- 25% of curbside collected material consisted of blue box recyclables (5,943.76 MT); 30% was green bin organics (7,157.65 MT); 15% was leaf and yard waste (3,522.54 MT); 31% was garbage (7,405.08 MT); and less than one per cent was metal goods (14.27 MT).
- 8,684 kg of electronic items and 279 kg of household batteries were collected at the Town's electronics recycling events.
- 1,171 kg of household batteries were collected and recycled separately through the Town's battery collection program.
- 185 rain barrels were purchased through the annual Rain Barrel Sale.
- GFL's Customer Call Centre received 5,267 calls from Newmarket residents, a 7% per cent increase from 2023.
- 669 waste related service requests were handled by PWS staff, a 12% increase from 2023.

- There were 1,878,607 resident interactions through the Recycle Coach app, representing a 20% increase from 2023.
- 41,298 kg of textiles were collected through the Town’s textile collection program, a 34% increase from 2023.

Purpose

This report is intended to provide Council with an update on the performance of the Town’s solid waste programs and services over the past year. Public Works Services (PWS) staff plan to provide a report to Council annually.

Background

Waste management services within York Region are delivered to residents through a two-tier structure whereby local cities and towns manage curbside waste collection, and York Region processes and disposes of waste material.

The Town of Newmarket provides curbside collection of residential blue box recycling, green bin organics, leaf and yard waste, metal goods, and garbage and oversized items (e.g., furniture and mattresses) to just over 28,000 households.

Discussion

Curbside Diversion Rate & Collected Tonnages

Waste diversion rates are used to calculate the amount of waste material diverted from landfill. Diversion is achieved through reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting. In 2024, the Town of Newmarket achieved a curbside diversion rate of 69%, a 1% decrease compared to 2023 (based on curbside collected tonnages only).

Figures 1, 2, and 3 focus exclusively on waste material collected at the curb; waste collected through York Region’s waste management facilities is not included. Figure 1 provides a breakdown of the total waste material collected via curbside collection. Due to the significantly lower tonnage of metal goods (representing less than 1% of the total) it is not visibly represented in Figure 1 and has therefore been excluded.

2024 COLLECTED TONNAGES BY WASTE STREAM

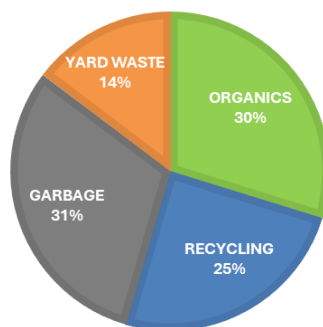


Figure 1 - Percentage breakdown of curbside collected waste material based on 2024 tonnages.

Over the past five years, the Town’s curbside diversion rate has remained consistent with minimal deviation. Figure 2 illustrates the Town’s curbside diversion rates and collected tonnages by waste stream during this period. Due to the low tonnage of metal goods collected through the curbside program, this category is not visible in Figure 2 and has therefore been excluded.

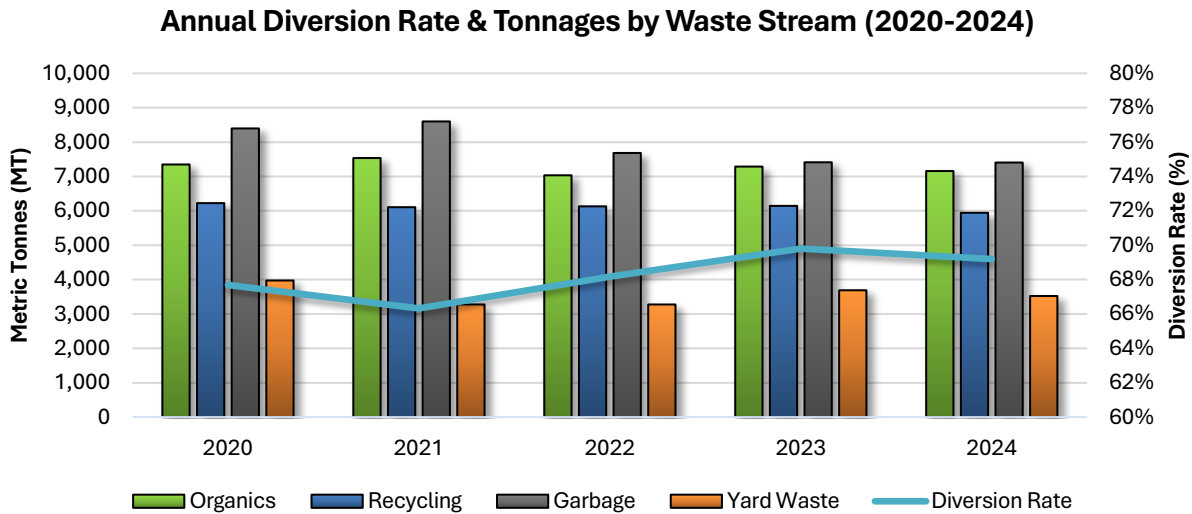


Figure 2 - Curbside diversion rates and collected tonnes by waste stream from 2020 to 2024.

Except for 2020 and 2021, garbage and organic waste generation has remained relatively consistent, as shown in Figure 3. The increases during 2020 and 2021 can be attributed to the impacts of COVID-19 (e.g., people working from and generating more waste at home rather than at work and school, and a temporary increase to garbage bag collection limits). After COVID-19 restrictions were lifted in 2022, people began to return to workplaces and classrooms, returning waste generation levels to a more “normalized” state.

In 2024, there was a slight decrease in waste collected across all waste streams compared to 2023: garbage tonnage decreased by 0.1%, recycling by 3%, organic waste by 2%, yard waste by 5%, and metal goods by 7%.

Curbside Collected Tonnages by Waste Stream (2020-2024)

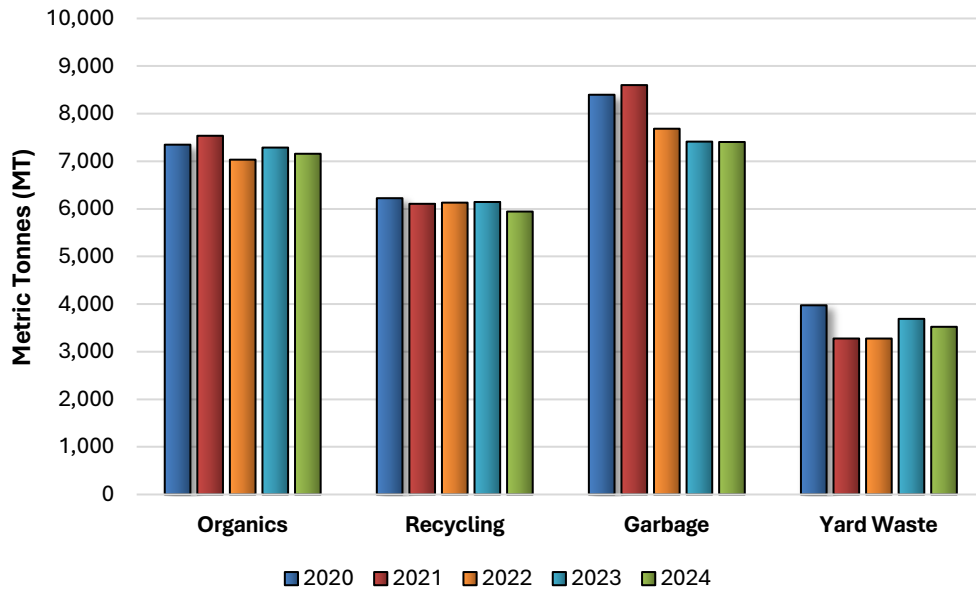


Figure 3 - Curbside collected tonnes by waste stream from 2020 to 2024.

Staff continue to explore initiatives to enhance waste diversion, reduction, and reuse opportunities within the Town. Since the Town of Newmarket’s blue box program is set to transition to Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) on December 31, 2025, staff will be pivoting education and outreach efforts to target other material streams remaining with municipal collection such as food waste.

Service Requests

The Town of Newmarket’s Customer Service department receives thousands of service requests annually. When a service request requires further investigation, the issue is entered into the Town’s Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and a ‘ticket’ is assigned to the appropriate department. The progress of the ticket from acknowledgement to resolution is tracked and reported on within the system.

In addition to CRM tickets, Public Works Services (PWS) staff also receive service requests directly from residents through e-mail and over the phone. The total number of waste related service requests received by PWS staff in 2024 totaled 669, a 12% increase from 2023. The main categories of waste related service requests that PWS staff received in 2024 is illustrated in Figure 4.

2024 Waste Program Service Requests by Category

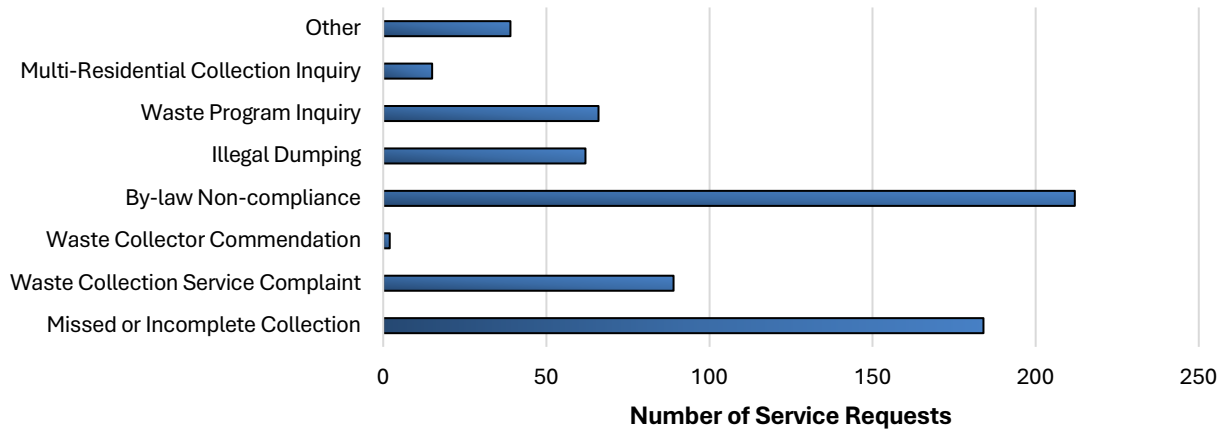


Figure 4 - 2024 waste related service requests by category.

PWS staff also conduct proactive outreach and education regarding non-reported by-law infractions. When staff identify a non-compliance issue (e.g., waste material left at the curb on a non-designated collection day), staff pro-actively reach out and provide education on the Town’s waste collection programs and by-law, advising residents and/or businesses on proper disposal procedures. The total number of addresses visited in 2024 was 406.

Green for Life Environmental Inc. (GFL) Customer Call Centre

In accordance with the waste collection contract, GFL is required to provide a full-service customer call centre for the duration of the contract. The quantity and type of inquiries GFL’s Customer Call Centre received in 2024 from Newmarket residents is illustrated in Figure 5.

GFL Call Centre Inquiries (2024)

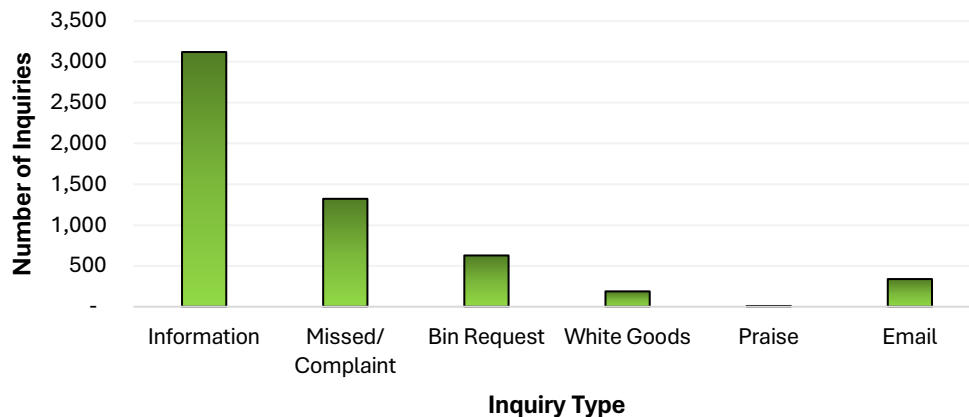


Figure 5 - GFL Customer Call Centre inquiries received in 2024.

The number of inquiries (excluding email) received through GFL’s Customer Call Centre from Newmarket residents in 2024 was 5,267, a 7% per cent increase from 2023 (see Figure 6). The number of emails GFL’s Customer Call Centre received in 2024 totaled 339, a 59% decrease from 2023.

Please note that in 2024, the Town’s Customer Service Centre transferred a total of 245 calls to GFL’s Customer Call Centre. These numbers are captured within GFL’s total inquiries within the various categories.

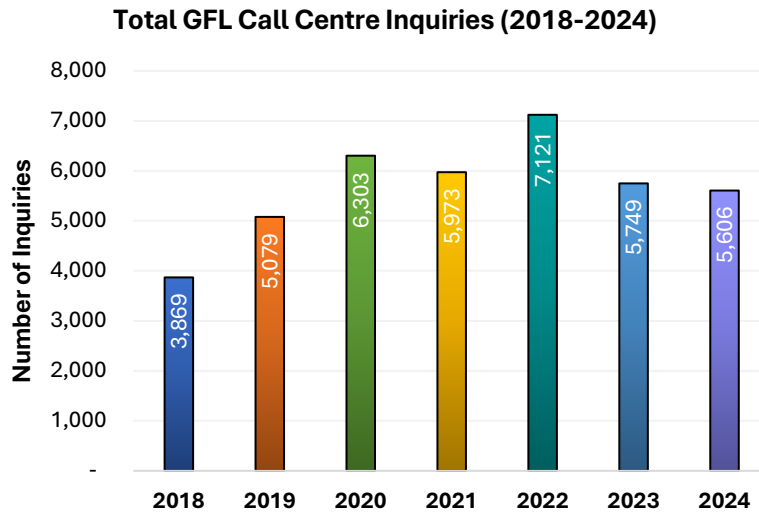


Figure 6 - Total GFL Customer Call Centre inquiries (phone calls and email) from 2018 to 2024.

On average, GFL collects from approximately 7,000 homes per collection day within the Town of Newmarket, or approximately 1,456,000 home collection visits annually.

Communications

Throughout the year, the Town’s Corporate Communications Department communicates waste program information, updates, and reminders to Newmarket residents through Facebook and X.

With more people accessing information online, social media platforms have become a prime method of conveying important updates and information from the Town. Table 1 highlights waste related communications data for 2024:

2024 Highlights	Total	Increase/ Decrease Compared to 2023 (%)
Published Posts	174	-8%
Impressions	122,868	-9%
Total Engagement*	3,378	39%
Engagement Rate**	2.7%	50%

Table 1 - Total social media data for waste-related messaging in 2024.

For clarity, 'Impressions' refers to the total number of times a post appears on a user's screen, encompassing every viewing instance regardless of user interaction. A high number of impressions suggests that content is being seen by many users, which is beneficial for overall awareness.

'Total Engagement' quantifies the extent of user interaction with a post, including actions such as likes, comments, shares, or clicks, indicating the level of audience involvement with the posted content.

While engagement metrics (likes, comments, shares, and clicks) are often seen as indicators of active audience participation and interest, simply viewing a post (impressions) can still contribute to overall awareness and message exposure. Users may not always engage with content directly, but their passive intake can still influence their perceptions and contribute to the overall impact and reach of a post or campaign.

Despite a decrease in total published posts in 2024 compared to 2023, there has been a substantial increase in total engagement, indicating a rise in users interacting with waste-related social media posts by the Town.

Recycle Coach App

The Recycle Coach App continues to be a great resource for Newmarket residents, providing waste collection reminders, schedules, and disposal information that is convenient and easy to access.

In 2024, the total number of Recycle Coach App users (combining mobile, web app, calendar, and communication) reached 26,914, marking a 23% increase from 2023 (see Figure 7). This data reflects how users are accessing information from the app. Notably, there is a strong preference for using the app through the Town's website, with 15,864 users accessing it online, compared to 8,961 users on the mobile app. Overall, app usage has increased as residents continue to engage with its many features and benefit from the valuable information it offers.

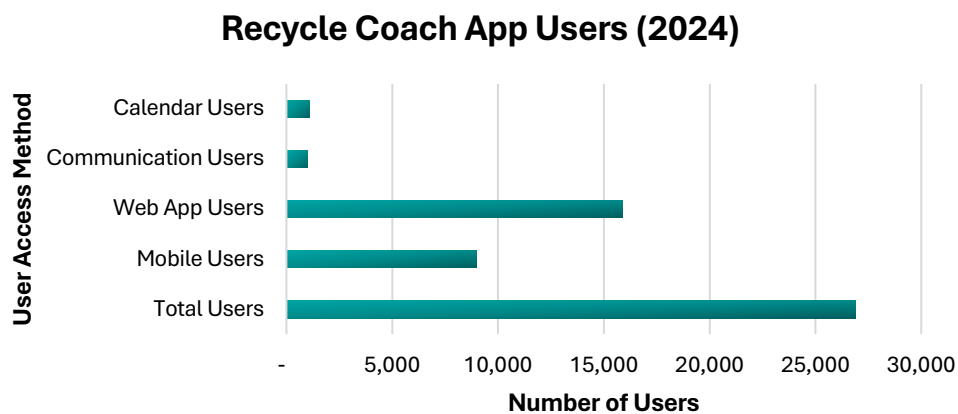


Figure 7 - Total Recycle Coach App users by user access method for 2024.

Through the Recycle Coach app, there were 1,878,607 interactions (i.e., material searches, pick-up reminders, page views, calendar views and notifications), representing a 20% increase from 2023 (see Figure 8).

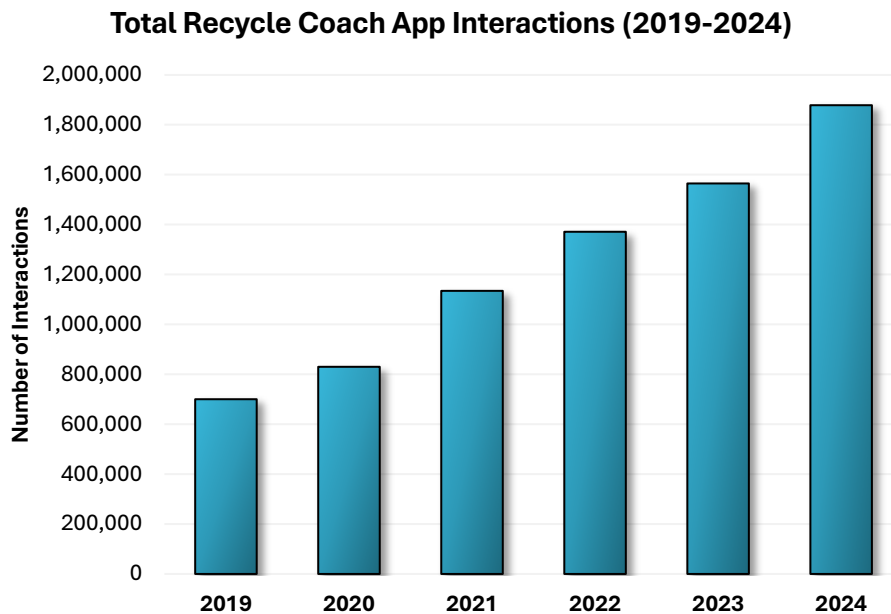


Figure 8 - Total Recycle Coach App interactions from 2019 to 2024.

The top five waste categories searched for most often in 2024 were furniture items, Styrofoam packaging inserts, mattresses, construction and remodeling materials, and Styrofoam containers.

Waste Program Highlights

The Town of Newmarket’s waste programs aim to improve waste diversion efforts, support the recovery of valuable material, and promote sustainability. In 2024:

- The Town of Newmarket hosted an online rain barrel sale with orders delivered directly to residents’ homes. A total of 185 rain barrels were purchased, a decrease from the 235 sold and delivered during the 2023 sale.
- 41,298 kg of textiles were collected through the Town’s textile collection program, a 34% increase from 2023. Since the program’s inception, a total of 178,235 kg of textiles have been collected and diverted from the garbage stream.
- 12 backyard composters were sold to residents, a decrease from 2022 where 24 backyard composters were sold.
- During the Town’s annual Blue Box Campaign, staff visited 1,719 addresses. Overall, 30% of addresses received a ‘good job’ door hanger while 70% received a ‘recycling reminder’ door hanger.

Battery Collection Program at Town Facilities

The total weight for household batteries collected and recycled in 2024 was 1,171 kg, a 68% increase from 2023. Since the program's implementation, 3,854 kg of batteries have been collected and recycled through this program (see Figure 9).

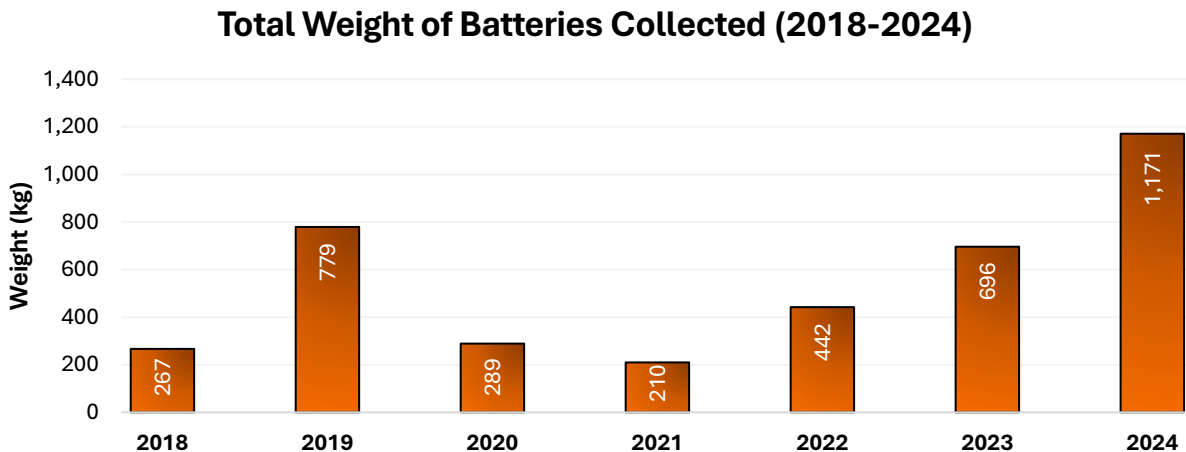


Figure 9 - Total batteries collected for recycling from 2018 to 2024.

Due to province-wide lockdowns, Town facilities were not consistently accessible for residents to drop off their used household batteries for recycling in 2020 and 2021, which is why there is a significant decrease during those years. Since Town facilities fully re-opened in 2022, use of the battery drop-off program increased, resulting in higher battery collection volumes.

Additionally, because batteries are collected in 45-gallon containers, collection only occurs as needed when the container is full. This may also cause a data variance, as collection does not occur on a regular basis year-over-year.

Electronics Recycling Events

Public Works Services (PWS) staff hosted two electronic waste (e-waste) and battery recycling events in 2024. The first event was held on April 20, 2024, in alignment with Earth Day/Week, a national campaign that advocates environmental awareness, education, and action.

The second event was held on October 26, 2024, in alignment with Waste Reduction Week, a national campaign that advocates waste reduction, resource efficiency, and advancing a circular economy.

Both events were held from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the R.N. Shelton Operations Centre parking lot as a drive-thru and drop-off style event. Overall, both events were well received by residents. Table 2 summarizes the total weight of electronic items and household batteries collected at both events:

	Event #1: April 20, 2024	Event #2: October 26, 2024	Total
Electronic Items	3,728 kg	4,956 kg	8,684 kg
Batteries	142 kg	137 kg	279 kg

Since Public Works Services began hosting e-waste events in 2021, a total of 24,883 kg of electronic waste and 873 kg of batteries have been collected and recycled.

Consultation

The following departments that contributed to the contents of this report include:

- Customer Service
- Corporate Communications

Conclusion

Public Works Services staff continue to explore and implement innovative waste reduction and diversion programs as well as deliver promotion and education in support of improving waste diversion, reduction, and recovery in the Town of Newmarket.

Council Priority Association

This report aligns with Council's 2022-2026 Strategic Priorities.

Human Resource Considerations

Not applicable to this report.

Budget Impact

There are no immediate financial implications resulting from this report.

Attachments

None.

Approval for Distribution

Mark Agnoletto, Director, Public Works Services

Peter Noehammer, Commissioner, Development & Infrastructure Services

Report Contact

For more information on this report, please contact info@newmarket.ca.