



**City of Kingston
Report to Council
Report Number 24-185**

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Brad Joyce, Commissioner, Infrastructure, Transportation & Emergency Services
Resource Staff: Karen Santucci, Director, Public Works & Solid Waste
Date of Meeting: July 9, 2024
Subject: Textile Recycling Pilot Program

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: 2. Lead Environmental Stewardship and Climate Action

Goal: 2.2 Support climate action and sustainability for residents, businesses and partners.

Executive Summary:

On September 19, 2023, Council passed the following motion:

That Council authorize the Mayor and Clerk to enter into an agreement, in a form satisfactory to the Director of Legal Services, with Renewal Squared Inc. to permit clothing/textile recycling collection bins to be placed at exterior locations on City properties for a nine-month term.

Subsequently, following agreement completion, Renewal Squared placed 19 bins throughout the city on public property in January 2024 and added another one in May 2024. At the end of May 2024, the amount of textiles collected (primarily diverted from landfill) was in excess of 52,000 kilograms. In addition, many non-textile hard items such as housewares, toys, etc., found in or beside bins were sent to local thrift stores. There have been very few complaints from residents and Renewal Squared had implemented an inspection program to ensure bins were kept clean and emptied often. This has ensured that garbage was not left beside the bins for long periods and what minimal garbage has been dropped by the bins was cleaned up quickly by the operator.

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This successful pilot project was established for just a nine-month term, ending August 22, 2024, but may be extended through agreement with Renewal Squared. This has been a relatively short period, and it would be advantageous for the City to seek a two-year extension to the agreement with Renewal Squared to allow the operator and the City to monitor and gauge results. Prior to the end of that term, the City would issue an Expression of Interest for the provision of the service at the same levels but for a longer five-year plus two-year extension option contract.

Recommendation:

That Council direct staff to seek a two-year extension of the Recycling Bin License Agreement with Renewal Squared Inc.; and

That Council direct staff to issue an Expression of Interest for the provision of textile recycling for a five-year term with two-year extension option based on the current program elements and service levels prior to the end of the aforementioned two-year term.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

**Brad Joyce, Commissioner,
Infrastructure, Transportation &
Emergency Services**

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**Lanie Hurdle, Chief
Administrative Officer**

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Growth & Development Services Not required

Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services Not required

Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate Services

David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston Not required

Peter Huigenbos, Commissioner, Major Projects & Strategic Initiatives Not required

Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer

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Options/Discussion:**Background**

On July 11, 2023, [Report Number 23-191 Textile Recycling Pilot Program](#) included the following recommendation:

That Council authorize the Mayor and Clerk to enter into an agreement, in a form satisfactory to the Director of Legal Services, with Renewal Squared Inc. to permit clothing/textile recycling collection bins to be placed at exterior locations on City properties for a nine-month term.

Council deferred this until September 19, 2023, to allow staff time to conduct additional engagement on potential impacts of the pilot project with local charitable organizations in the textile collection/recycling industry. On September 19, 2023, the results of the community engagement were presented through [Report Number 23-223 Textile Recycling](#). At this same meeting, Council passed the following motion:

That Council authorize the Mayor and Clerk to enter into an agreement, in a form satisfactory to the Director of Legal Services, with Renewal Squared Inc. to permit clothing/textile recycling collection bins to be placed at exterior locations on City properties for a nine-month term.

An agreement with Renewal Squared for a nine-month pilot was executed with placement of bins at the following sites:

1. INVISTA Center
2. Cataragui Arena
3. Kingston Frontenac Public Library (Gardiners Road)
4. Centre 70 Arena
5. Woodbine Park
6. Kingston Frontenac Public Library (Gore Road)
7. Belle Park
8. Portsmouth Olympic Harbor
9. School Road (Kingston East)
10. 1642 County Road 15
11. Shannon's Corners Baseball Field
12. Leon's Centre Parking Lot
13. K&P Trail (Sydenham Road Parking Lot)
14. Rideau Heights Community Center
15. Jim Beattie Park
16. William R. Hackett Park
17. Kingston Memorial Centre
18. Lake Ontario Park
19. Pierson Park Parking Lot
20. Bayridge Park

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Analysis

Over the past six months through this pilot project, Renewal Squared has collected a total of 52,000 kilograms of clothing and textiles. The volume collected has been increasing by about 10% per month since January, with an average collection of approximately 540 kilograms of clothing per bin per month. This progress is exceeding Renewal Squared's goal of collecting 450 kilograms per bin per month.

Concerns regarding garbage being left beside the bins has largely been unwarranted as Renewal Squared have been quick to resolve those issues and have communicated effectively with residents. The City has received less than one complaint a week since initiation of the program, and the operator has always reacted quickly to resolve. In addition to the electronic monitoring that alerts Renewal Squared when bins are full, the operator also regularly check the bins with high-use locations receiving more frequent inspections. No safety concerns have been raised related to the bin operations.

Renewal Squared was committed to ensuring the support of not-for-profit thrift stores within Kingston. Renewal Squared met with the not-for-profit thrift stores prior to starting the pilot to determine how to best support them. Some thrift stores indicated that they would prefer to get donated clothing, while others indicated that monetary donations would be better. In the first five months, Renewal Squared has donated over 1,000 kilograms of clothing and \$1,500 in donations.

A textile recycling collection program, set up with the elements and service levels similar to this pilot project, is beneficial to the community and aids to reduce waste going to landfill. With the pilot project coming to successful completion, there is benefit to seeking a two year extension to this project with Renewal Squared to better gauge, understand and adjust the operation, including opportunities for further expansion. Renewal Squared has expressed interest in this and staff are aware that there are other organizations in the textile recycling collection industry with interest in the Kingston market but it is unclear whether those other organizations could provide the service to the level that the current provider does. Prior to the end of the two-year contract extension, the City would issue a formal expression of interest to provide the service at the same levels and extent but for a proposed five-year term with a two-year extension option.

Public Engagement

Between July and September of 2023, staff sent a survey to all not-for-profit textile recycling providers and thrift shops in Kingston. From this survey it was determined that there was limited concern with this program proceeding. Subsequently, in spring of 2024, the same not-for-profit textile recycling providers and thrift shops were surveyed again to determine the impact the program has had on them. Of the seven thrift stores surveyed, five responded with the following results:

- Three indicated that they had not seen any change in business
- One indicated that business had increased

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- One indicated that there had been a slight decrease in business which was similar to other years based on the season

When questioned about the changes in foot traffic and donations, of the five that responded:

- Two indicated that there had not been any change
- One indicated that there had been a decrease in donation and foot traffic
- One indicated that they were not getting unusable textiles like they were getting before the bins
- One indicated that they were still receiving unusable textiles but that was normal for their consignment store

Climate Risk Considerations

This initiative will have a positive effect on Climate Risk as it reduces the amount of waste being transported and disposed of in landfills. The majority of this material will go for resale thus being reused by others. Some material will be reused in a different format and some will be recycled. Approximately 5% of the materials will end up in landfill – minimal when considered in context if the program was not in operation.

Existing Policy/By-Law

City of Kingston By-Law Number 2022-154, A By-Law to Establish a Procurement Policy for the City of Kingston.

Financial Considerations

This program should not result in any negative financial considerations to the City. Based on the current levels of textile collection, the City would realize an annual savings of approximately \$15,000 in reduced landfill disposal costs.

Contacts:

Karen Santucci, Director Public Works & Solid Waste, 613-546-4291 ext. 1856

Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted:

Adam Mueller, Acting Manager Solid Waste, Public Works and Solid Waste

Brent Funnel, Manager Procurement, Financial Services

Kelsey Pye, Communications Officer, Communications and Customer Experience

Exhibits Attached:

None