

## Communities

### Markham, Ontario – Textiles Program

Aided by a grant from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Markham, a city of roughly 350,000 north of Toronto, is rolling out a pilot program with a different approach.

Working with the Salvation Army, the city is pushing residents to recycle textiles while, at the same time, trying to make that easy.

Donation bins are being set up around the city, some as big as large garden sheds. They will have sensors to signal when the boxes are getting full. All are marked with the city logo, although the Salvation Army will be the one to process everything collected, just as it does with items donated through its own boxes.

The difference is that Markham hopes to bring in absolutely every last piece of clothing any resident discards.

Since October 2016, the city has collected 1.4 million kilograms of textiles. Almost anything can be donated, including shoes, curtains, stuffed animals and jewellery. Items that cannot be reused or sold are turned into new products, such as rags, paper, insulation or shredded down for stuffing.

Not only have the green initiatives been good for the environment, they have been good for the city's budget too. Since the city implemented its clear bag rule and ban on e-waste at the curb, they have seen \$761,000 in reduced costs for curbside collection. The textile recycling initiative is expected to save the city \$86,000.



Sources:

1. Markham's unique recycling program diverts textile waste from landfill
2. Textiles are the next frontier in recycling for cities looking to cut waste