

Green Routine Survey

What We Heard Report
April 2019



In February 2019, Strathcona County conducted a satisfaction survey of its residents in order to obtain perceptions on changes that were recently implemented with the Green Routine waste and recycling collection program.

Survey Results

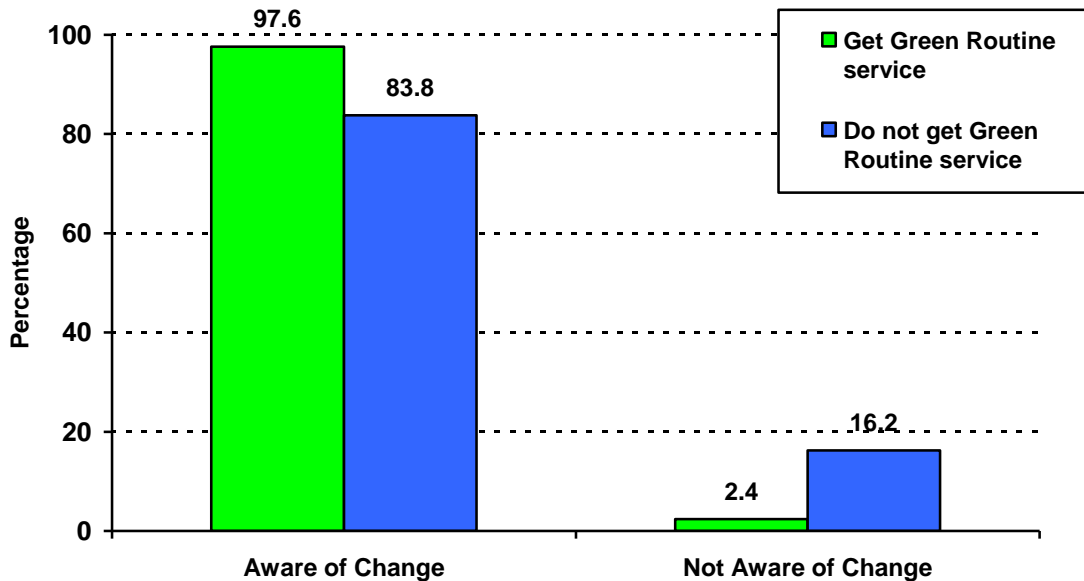
The Green Routine program was originally launched in June 2008. While there have been constant research measurements of the Green Routine over the years, this was the first extensive survey done since 2013 where the county asked residents an extensive evaluation on aspects of the program and the changes that were put into place during Fall 2018.

The online survey was available for the residents of Strathcona County to complete from February 11 to 24, 2019. This survey was made available through the County's website via SCOOP and Survey Gizmo. A total of 2,189 online surveys were completed by residents of Strathcona County.

AWARENESS OF CHANGES

All respondents (whether they used the Strathcona County Green Routine or not), were asked to indicate whether they were aware of the changes to the recycling program that came into effect on September 10, 2018. The majority of respondents were aware of the changes to the Green Routine program, regardless of whether they were getting the service.

Awareness of changes to the Green Routine Program

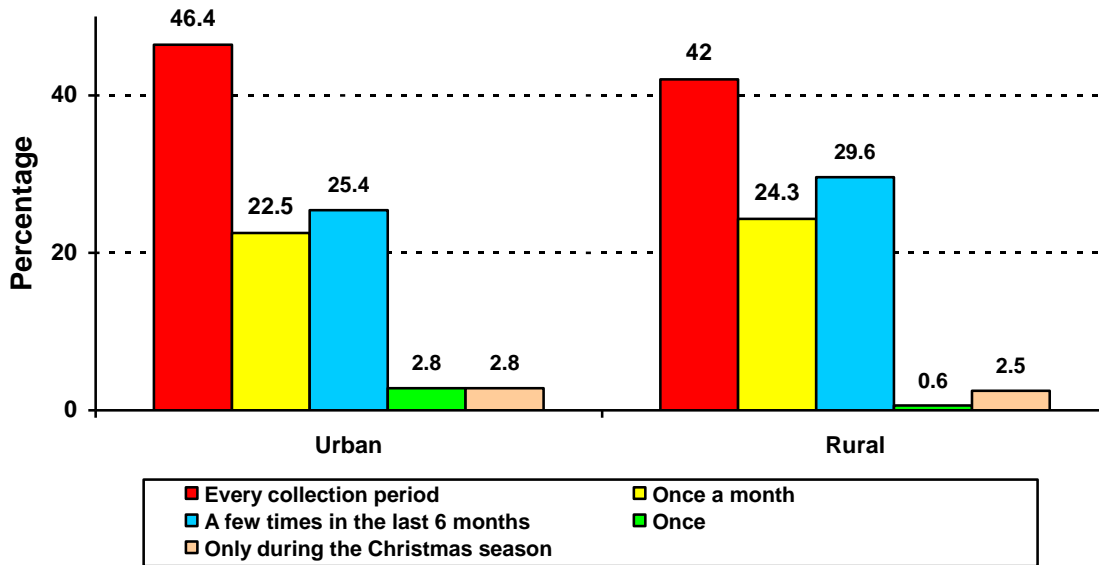


USE OF THE GREEN ROUTINE

The respondents who received curbside/roadside waste collection services (Green Routine) from Strathcona County were asked a series of questions about their use of the service. Residents who received Green Routine services were the majority (96.6%) of respondents.

Users of the Green Routine were asked whether there were times when they did not have enough space in the back cart because of the extra space taken by plastic film and plastic flexible packaging. It can be seen from this figure that the frequency by which residents ran out of space was a similar pattern for both urban and rural Green Routine users.

How often was there a lack of space in the black cart



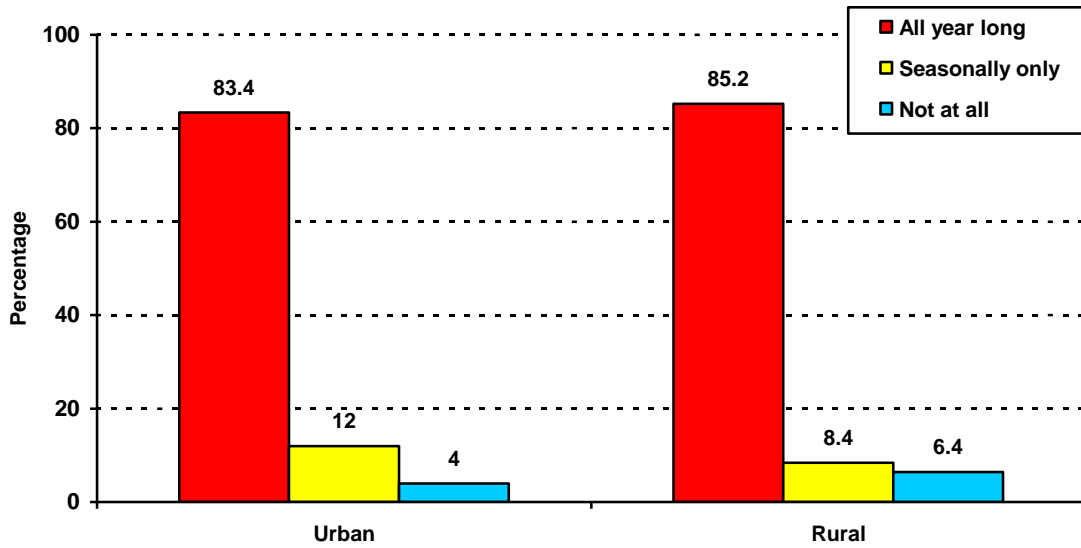
“I'd like to see legislation against plastic packaging, and incentives for biodegradable/paper packaging. Especially for salad greens, chip bags, frozen foods, for example.”

“It's very disheartening to throw away so much plastic.”

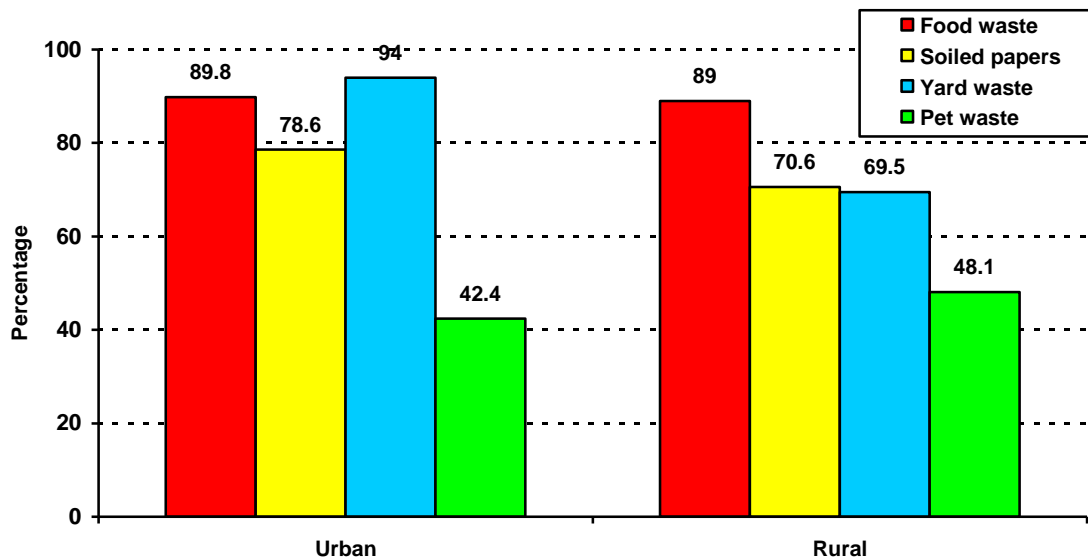
Anonymous Resident Quotes

Respondents were also asked whether they participate in the organics (green cart) program. The majority of residents make use of their green cart all year long, regardless of whether they live in Sherwood Park or the rural part of Strathcona County. The type of materials put in the organics cart, by location of residence, is shown in the second graph.

Use of the organics cart by location of residence



Types of materials placed in the organics cart



Respondents were also asked to indicate what stops them from sorting any or certain items into the green cart/blue recycling bag. The major complaints noted by both urban and rural residents are that they are not sure if an item belongs in the green cart/blue recycling bag, or that it's inconvenient to do the sorting.

Things that stop residents from sorting certain things into the green cart

	Urban Residents	Rural Residents
Not sure if it belongs in the green cart	17.9%	14.8%
Inconvenient	17.2%	12.2%
Lack of space for storage of bags/containers	13.5%	15.3%
It's gross	12.0%	9.9%
Lack of time	10.8%	9.6%
Not convinced it really benefits the environment	4.5%	4.2%

 **96.7%** OF RESPONDENTS PARTICIPATE IN THE BLUE BAG RECYCLING PROGRAM

Things that stop residents from sorting certain things for recycling

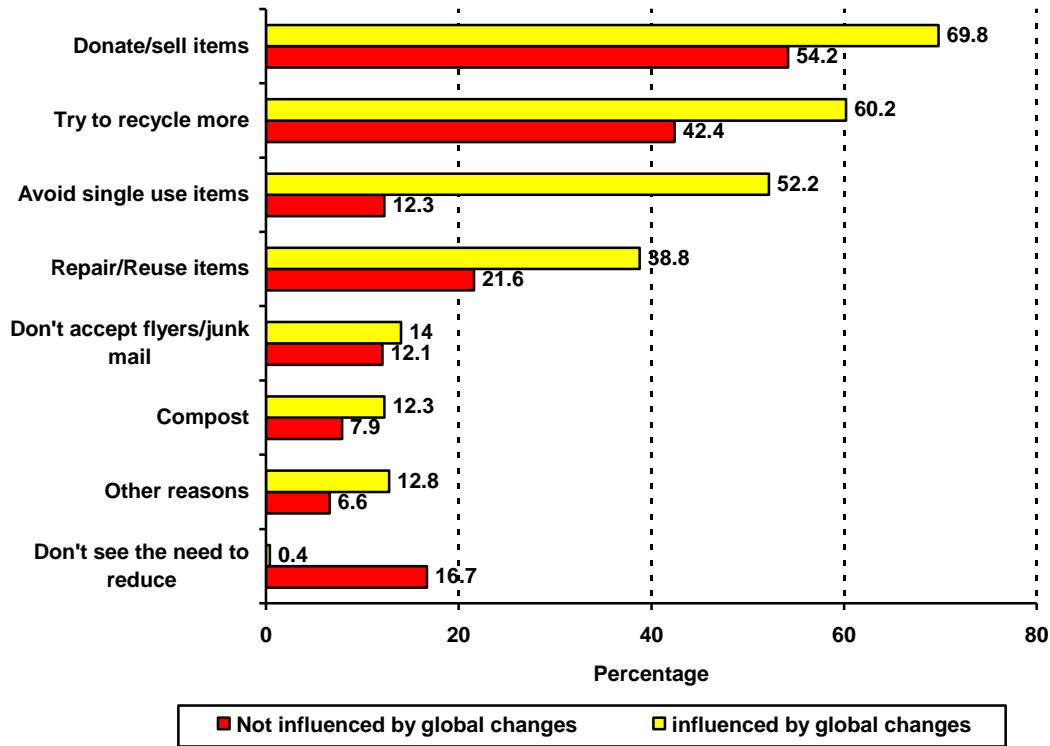
	Urban Residents	Rural Residents
Confusing (not sure it's recyclable)	28.7%	30.8%
Inconvenient	13.2%	12.5%
Lack of space for storage of bags/containers	11.6%	10.3%
Lack of time	5.6%	6.9%
Not convinced it really benefits the environment	3.2%	3.9%
Nothing stops me	29.2%	29.7%

REDUCTION OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE

When asked whether global changes to recycling and plastics have made respondents look for ways to reduce their household waste, 52.5% of respondents said that it did.

Those who were influenced by global changes tended to adhere more to methods of reducing household waste compared to those who stated that they were not influenced by global changes. This was particularly seen among those who avoided single use items, tried to repair and/or reuse items or donate/sell items they did not want to keep.

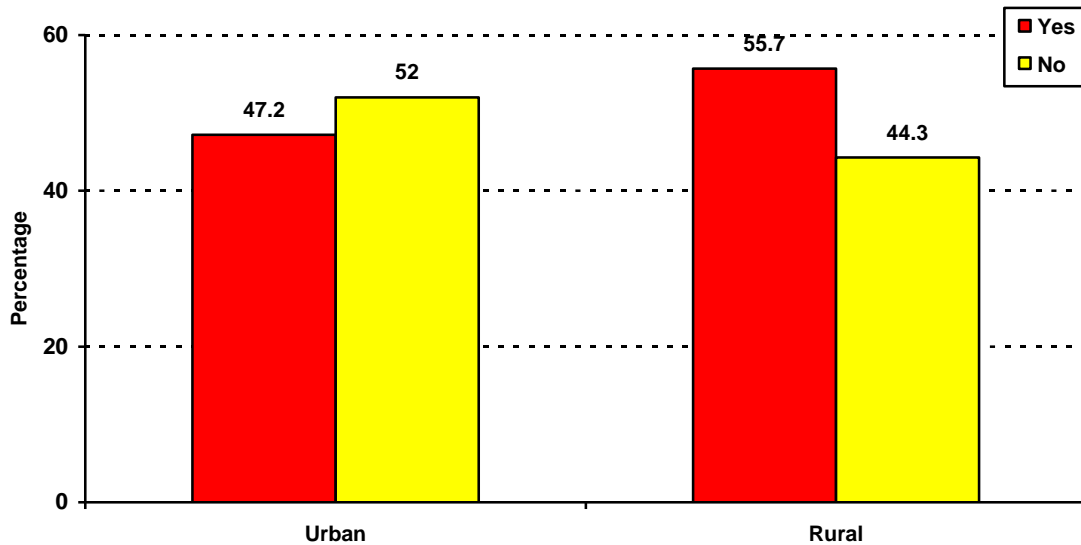
Ways of reducing household waste



PAY AS YOU THROW

Residents in selected areas participated in a 2017 pilot project where they could switch to smaller waste and/or organics carts, for a \$1 per cart / per month cost savings. This type of program, where users are charged different amounts based on how much waste they put out for collection, is known as pay as you throw. Respondents are divided as to whether to support the notion that those who create more waste should pay more.

Should household that create more waste pay more for Green Routine services?



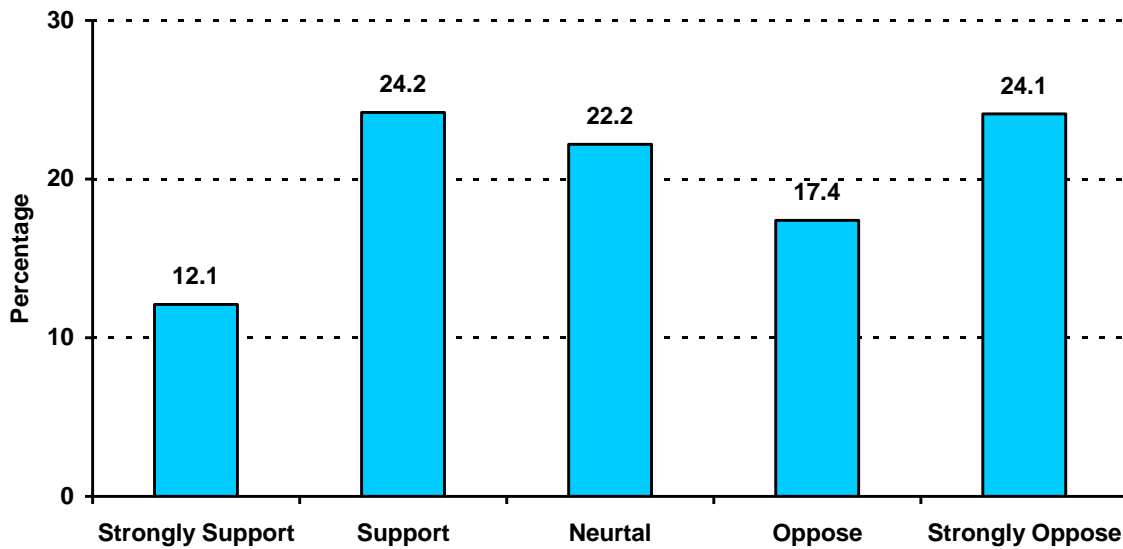
“There are too many factors to consider. The size of the household etc. I believe everyone should be treated equally by government and the same rules should apply to all.”

“Those that do their part to reduce reuse and recycle should not have to pay the same amount. Just like our use of gas, water etc.”

Anonymous Resident Quotes

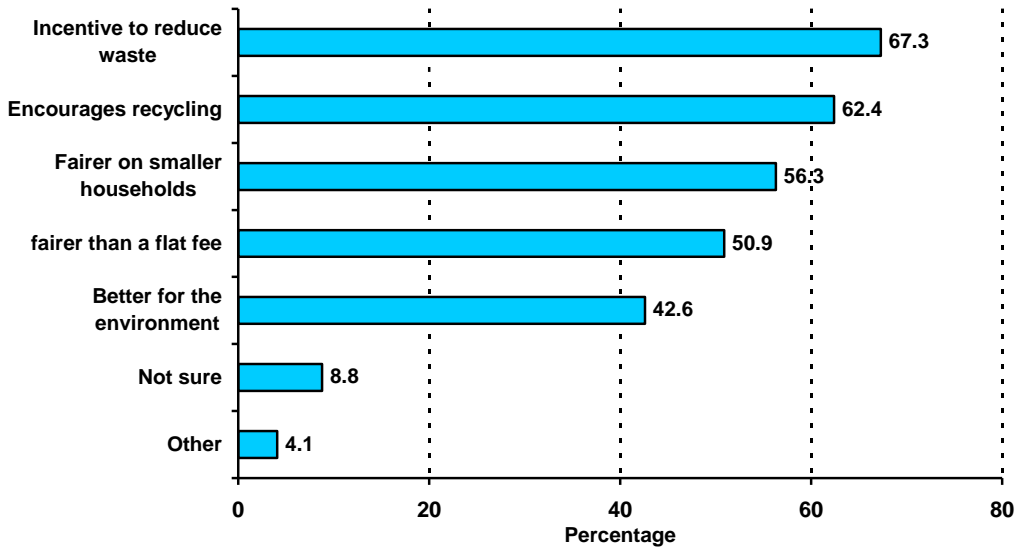
Respondents were also asked to indicate the degree that they would support or oppose a “pay as you throw” program in Strathcona County.

Initial Perceptions to the “pay as you throw” option for Green Routine services



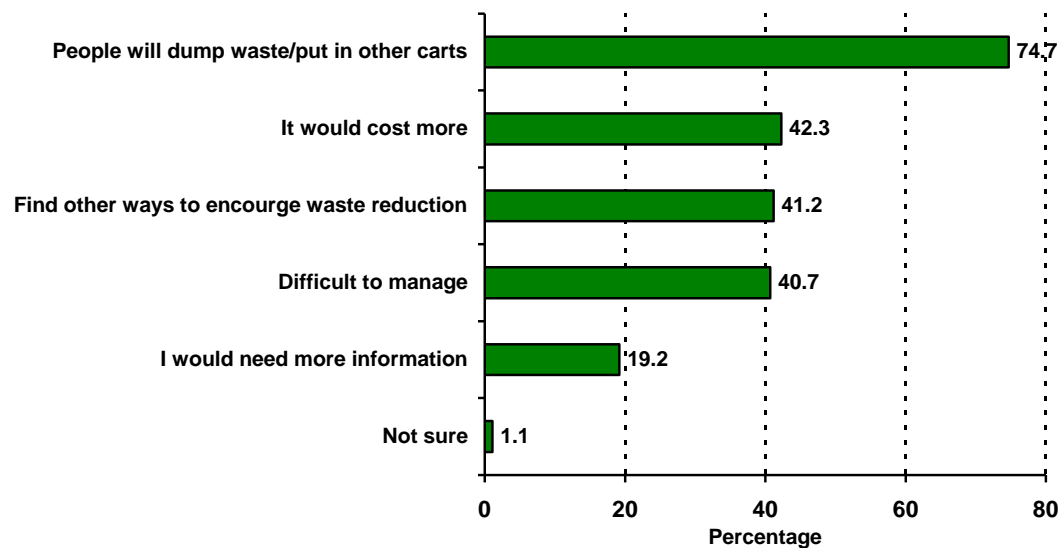
Those respondents who supported a “pay as you throw” program in Strathcona County (or were in a neutral position) were asked to indicate the reasons for feeling this way. The most popular options being that the pay as you throw option would provide an incentive for residents to reduce waste or that it would encourage more recycling.

Reasons for supporting the “pay as you throw” option for Green Routine services



Those respondents who opposed a “pay as you throw” program in Strathcona County were also asked to indicate the reasons for feeling this way. The main reason for opposing the program was that respondents thought that people will dump their waste elsewhere or resort to putting their waste in other people’s carts rather than paying more for the service.

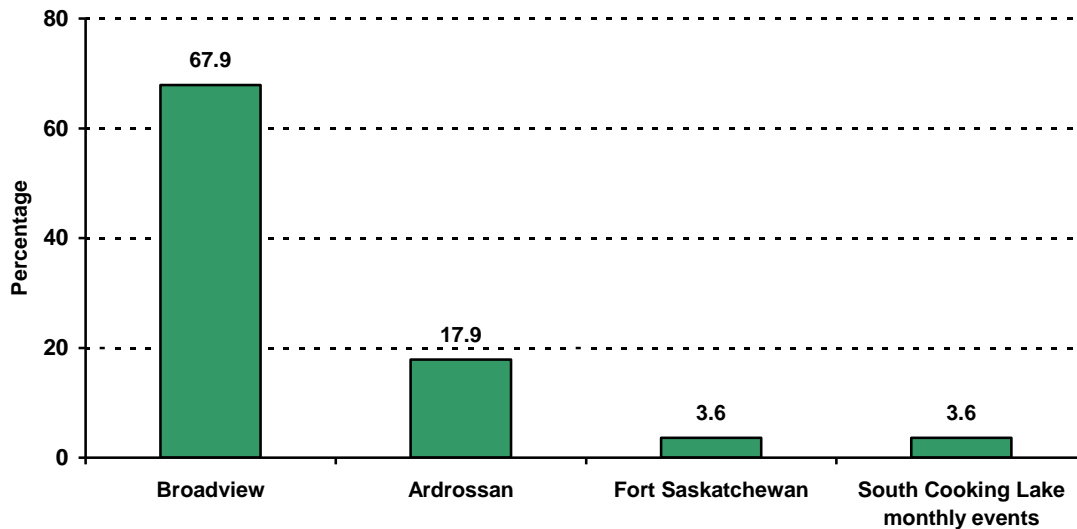
Reasons for opposing the “pay as you throw” option for Green Routine services



NON-USERS OF THE GREEN ROUTINE

The majority of these residents (75.7%) took their waste, recycling and/or organics materials to one or more of Strathcona County's recycle stations. Broadview was the primary choice to do this.

Recycle stations used by non-users of the Green Routine services



Non-users of the green routine were also asked whether global changes to recycling and plastics have made them look for ways to reduce their household waste. Overall, 24.3% of respondents said that it did, 10.8% said it did not.

FINAL QUESTION

The final question in the survey asked all respondents, regardless of whether they subscribed to the Green Routine or not, to indicate any other ideas, comments or suggestions that they had on waste programs in Strathcona County. There were a wide variety of comments put forward, which could be grouped into broad categories, including:

- General positive comments
- Issues and concerns with plastic products
- Additional suggestions for improvement of the present program
- More frequent pick up of materials
- Confusion about the current Green Routine program

- Critiques about the Green Routine and other comments

What's Next?

The feedback summarized in this report, along with the results of waste audits performed in spring 2019 will provide Utilities' Waste Management Services with information that will enable officials to make decisions about the future direction of the waste services in Strathcona County.



DID YOU KNOW: FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WASTE AND RECYCLING AT STRATHCONA.CA/GREENROUTINE

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