



P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

**Information Item No. 2**  
**Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee**  
**July 7, 2021**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee

**SUBMITTED BY:** Original Signed  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Brad Anguish, Executive Director, Transportation & Public Works

Original Signed  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jerry Blackwood, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** June 17, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Opportunities to Promote Marker Recycling

**INFORMATION REPORT**

**ORIGIN**

March 4, 2021 Environment and Sustainability Committee (Item 10.3.2)

MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Cleary

THAT Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee request a staff report on presentation topic for item 10.3.2 about marker recycling.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

The Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Part XIII Solid Waste Management, Section 335 (a - j) provides Halifax Regional Council with the authority to make by-laws respecting Solid Waste Resource Management.

## **BACKGROUND**

At the March 4, 2021 Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee meeting, information was presented on the benefits of marker recycling by Grade 9 student Alex Xie.

**Crayola** offers a marker recycling program ‘ColourCycle’<sup>1</sup> where those wishing to host a collection site can register as a collection site to ship markers and crayons back to Crayola free of charge. According to Crayola these items are converted into energy and wax compounds for roofing shingles. At the time of this report, Crayola had suspended new registrations and shipments from existing collection sites citing precautions associated with the Coronavirus pandemic. Further details on how to participate in the program were unavailable.

**Staples Canada** funds an in-store recycling drop-off program<sup>2</sup> for in writing instruments (markers, highlighters, mechanical pencils, and pens) in partnership with TerraCycle<sup>3</sup>. There are seven Staples locations in HRM who offer this service. According to the Terracycle website, “the writing instruments are separated by material composition. The separated items are then cleaned, shredded, and made into new recycled products”. In 2020 Staples diverted over 1.17 million writing instruments<sup>4</sup>.

Interested organizations also have the option of purchasing TerraCycle collection boxes through Staples at a cost of \$110 (capacity 780 items / \$0.14 per item) or \$190 (capacity 2,100 items / \$0.09 per item). Return shipping is included in this cost.

## **DISCUSSION**

Diversion opportunities for products like markers are highly dependant on the efforts of manufacturers and retailers to create an end market-use. Programs are developed to attract consumers to the products or retail location, and to raise awareness of the environmental initiatives of the company. As these programs are a form of voluntary stewardship, there is no guarantee in their long-term sustainability or if the materials accepted will change.

Given the availability of the free retail sponsored collection at Staples, HRM can promote the diversion of markers and other writing utensils through that program using the Halifax Recycles app and social media posts. Once the ColourCycle program has been reinstated, it can be added as an additional resource.

Solid Waste Education staff visit dozens of schools, libraries and community centres each year. Information on how to become a collection site can be provided to these sites and they can make the decision to participate. Often when collection boxes are ‘assigned’ to a site (i.e. battery recycling boxes), they are misplaced or not visible. Having each site initiate this program gives more oversight and commitment to making the program work and promoting it with customer and staff.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Crayola ColourCycle website](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Staples Canada Writing Instrument Recycling Program website](#)

<sup>3</sup> TerraCycle is an international company that provides recycling solutions for waste products and packaging that are difficult to recycle. Some of their programs are supported by industry, and provided at no cost to the consumer.

<sup>4</sup> [Staples Canada News Release. April 2021](#)

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Solid Waste Education staff will continue to engage with the public to promote diversion opportunities for a range of products.

**ATTACHMENTS**

N/A

---

A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Shannon Betts, Diversion Policy Coordinator, 902.476.2470

---