



Town of Newmarket
395 Mulock Drive P.O. Box 328,
Newmarket, Ontario, L3Y 4X7

Email: info@newmarket.ca | Website: newmarket.ca | Phone: 905-895-5193

2023 Solid Waste Management Annual Report Information Report

Report Number: INFO-2024-03

Department(s): Public Works Services

Author(s): Amanda Romano, Waste Program Coordinator

Date: March 4, 2024

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 2023. The following information is highlighted in this report:

- 2023 curbside diversion rate of 70% (curbside collected tonnes only), a 2% increase compared to 2022, representing the highest curbside diversion rate the Town has achieved in the past decade.
- 25% of curbside collected material consisted of blue box recyclables (6,144.65 MT); 30% was green bin organics (7,287.82 MT); 15% was leaf and yard waste (3,689.58 MT); 30% was garbage (7,412.86 MT); and less than one per cent was metal appliances (15.32 MT).
- 8,193 kg of electronic items, 376 kg of batteries, and 920 kg of paint and light bulbs were collected at the Town's electronics recycling events.
- 696 kg of batteries were collected and recycled separately through the Town's battery collection program.
- 235 rain barrels were purchased through the annual Rain Barrel Sale.
- 3,670 waste related service requests were fielded by Newmarket's Customer Service department, a decrease of 27% compared to 2022.

- GFL's Customer Call Centre received 4,931 calls from Newmarket residents, a 24% per cent decrease from 2022.
- 595 waste related service requests were handled by PWS staff, a 12% decrease from 2022.
- PWS staff visited 1,039 addresses where pro-active education and outreach on the Town's waste collection programs and by-law were provided, a 45% increase from 2022.
- There were 1,565,031 resident interactions through the Recycle Coach app, representing a 14% increase from 2022.
- Seven new language options were added to the Recycle Coach app for Newmarket residents.
- 30,845 kg of textiles were collected through the Town's textile collection program, a 6% increase from 2022.

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. 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 appliances, 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. Waste diversion is achieved through reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting. In 2023, the Town of Newmarket achieved a curbside diversion rate of 70%, a 2% increase compared to 2022 (based on curbside collected tonnages only), representing the highest curbside diversion rate achieved by the Town in the past decade. Figures 1, 2 and 3 focus on waste material collected at the curb only; waste material collected through York Region's waste management facilities is not included.

A breakdown of total waste material collected through curbside collection is illustrated in Figure 1 below. As the tonnage of metal appliances is significantly lower compared to all other collected waste streams, representing less than one per cent overall, it does not visibly appear in Figure 1 and therefore has been excluded.

Curbside Collected Waste by Material Stream (2023)

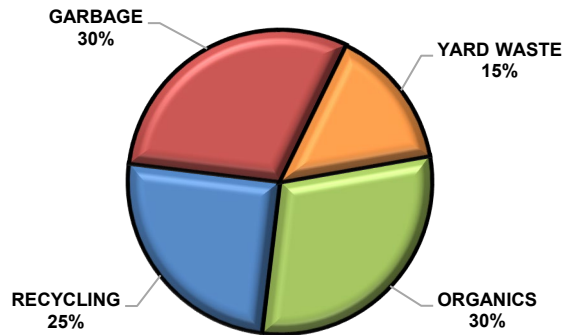


Figure 1 - Percentage breakdown of curbside collected waste material based on 2023 tonnages.

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 over the past five years as well as collected tonnages by waste stream. Due to the low tonnage of metal appliances collected through the curbside program, it is not visible in Figure 2 and has therefore been excluded.

Annual Diversion Rate & Tonnages by Waste Stream (2019-2023)

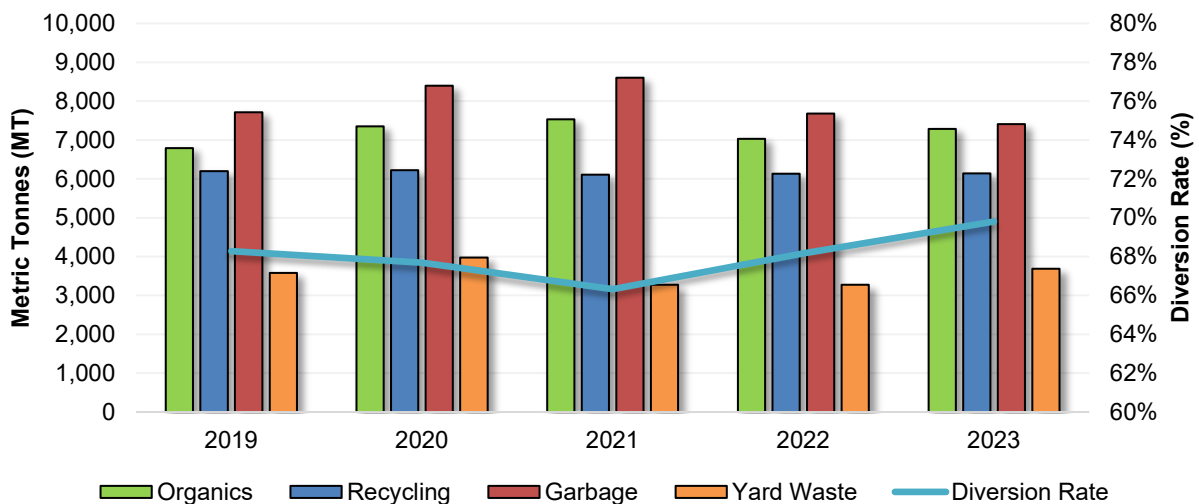


Figure 2 - Curbside diversion rates and collected tonnes by waste stream from 2019 to 2023.

Garbage and organic waste generation over the past five years has been relatively consistent except for 2020 and 2021, when increases in waste generation 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 many COVID-19 restrictions were lifted in 2022, people began to return to workplaces and classrooms, returning waste generation levels to a more “normalized” state (Figure 3).

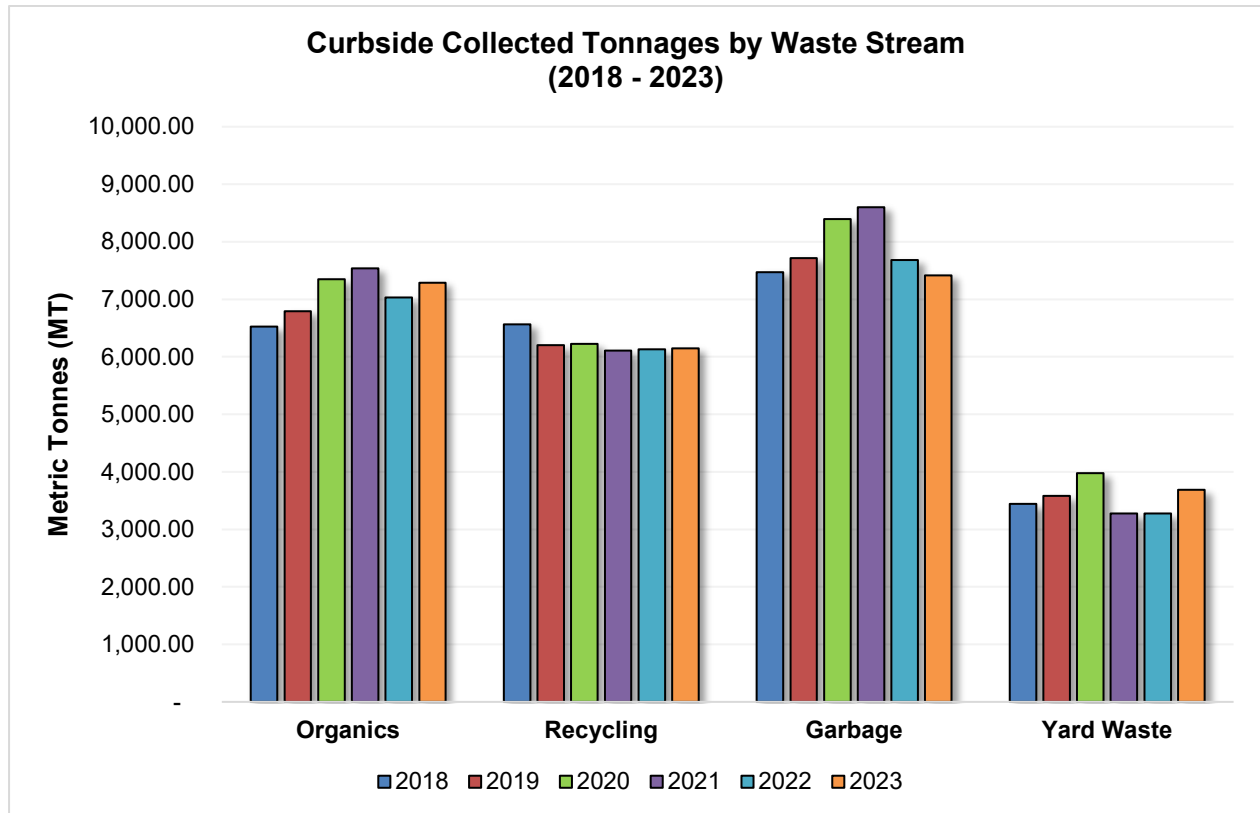


Figure 3 – Curbside collected tonnes by waste stream from 2018 to 2023.

Staff continue to explore initiatives to enhance waste diversion, reduction, and reuse opportunities within the Town. With the upcoming transition of the blue box program, staff will continue to provide education on proper recycling practices through community outreach initiatives such as the Blue Box Campaign up until 2025. Following transition, staff will pivot education and outreach efforts to also include and target other material streams remaining with municipal collection such as food waste and textile recycling.

Customer Service Requests

The Town of Newmarket’s Customer Service department receives thousands of service requests annually. In 2023, Newmarket’s Customer Service department fielded 3,670 waste related service requests, a decrease of 27% compared to 2022. The most common service requests were large item removal (24%), waste collection question (12%), and waste depot information (11%).

Out of 3,670 service requests fielded by the Town’s Customer Service department, 348 were assigned to staff for further investigation and resolution. 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, PWS staff also receive service requests directly from residents through e-mail and over the phone, bypassing the CRM system. The number of waste related service requests received by PWS staff in 2023 totaled 595, a 12% decrease from 2022. The main categories of waste related service requests that PWS staff received in 2023 is illustrated in Figure 4.

2023 Waste Related Service Requests by Category

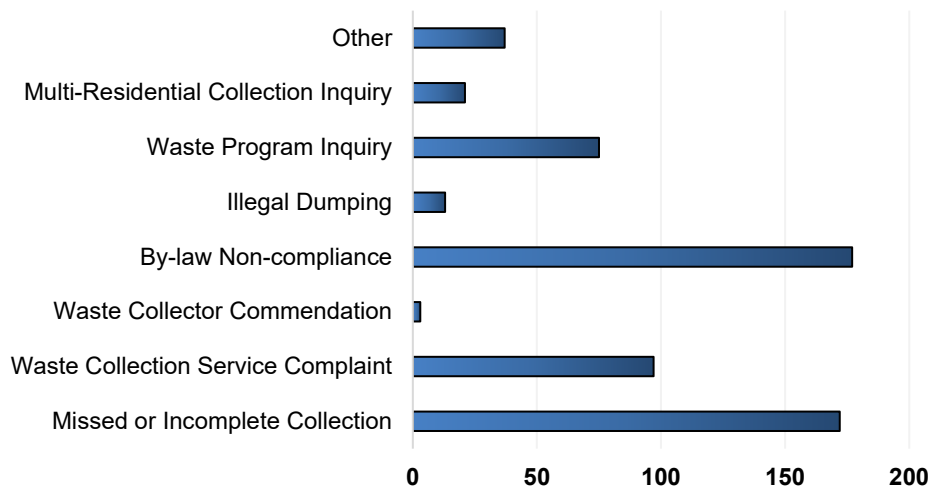


Figure 4 – 2023 waste related service requests by category.

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), 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 2023 was 1,039, a 45% increase from 2022.

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 2023 from Newmarket residents is illustrated in Figure 5.

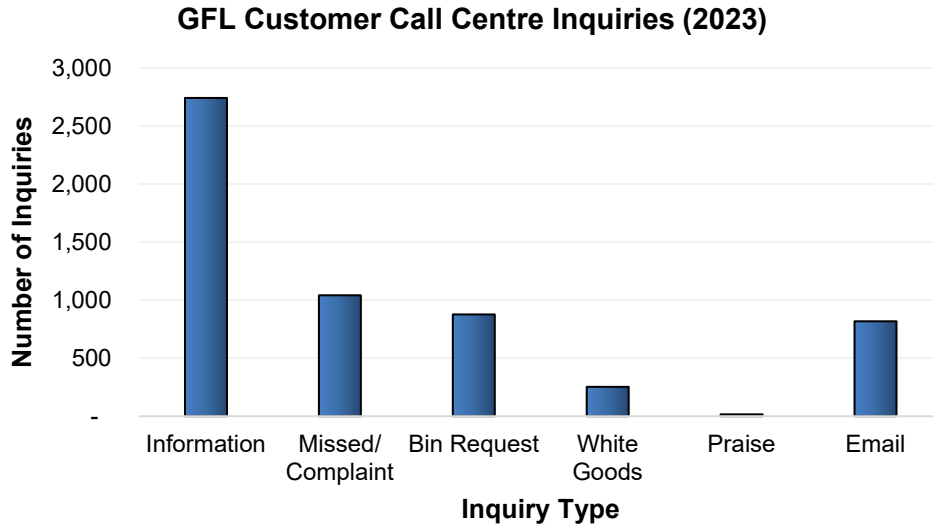


Figure 5 – GFL Customer Call Centre inquiries received in 2023.

The number of inquiries (excluding email) received through GFL’s Customer Call Centre from Newmarket residents in 2023 was 4,931, a 24% per cent decrease from 2022 (please see Figure 6). The number of emails GFL’s Customer Call Centre received in 2023 totaled 818, a 26% increase from 2022).

Please note that in 2023, the Town’s Customer Service Centre transferred a total of 206 calls to GFL’s Customer Call Centre. These numbers are captured within GFL’s total inquiries within the various categories.

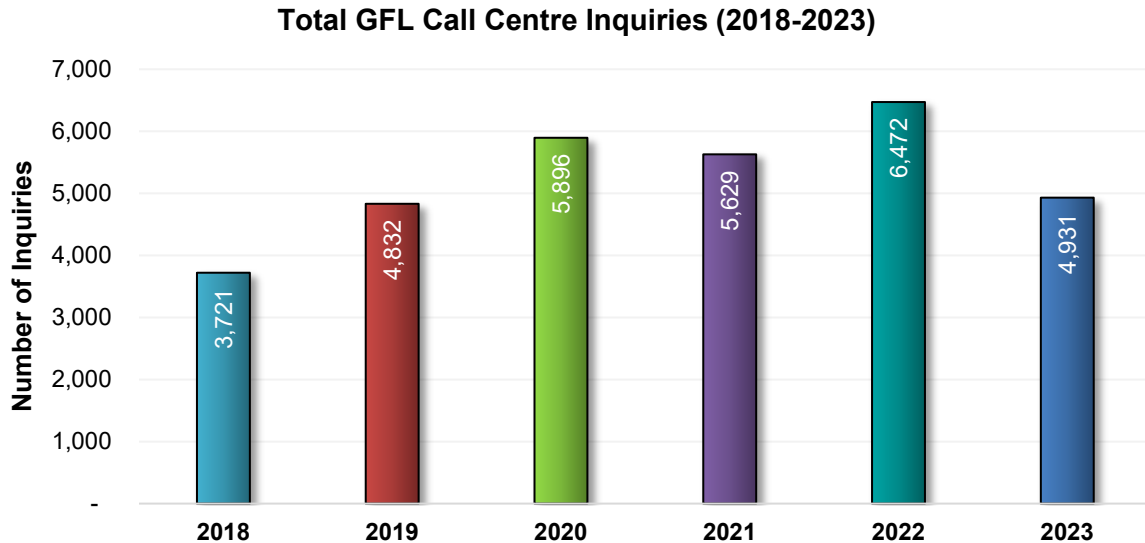


Figure 6 - Total GFL Customer Call Centre inquiries from 2018 to 2023.

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, X, and Instagram.

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.

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 2023:

2023 Highlights	Total	Increase/ Decrease Compared to 2022 (%)
Published Posts	190	-14%
Impressions	134,914	91%
Total Engagement*	2,433	-41%
Engagement Rate**	1.80%	-33%

Table 1 - Total social media data for waste-related messaging in 2023.

*The number of times a user engaged with the Town's content.

** Engagement rate determines the level of interest an audience has given to the posts overall. An engagement rate over 3% is considered 'very good'.

Despite a decrease in total engagement in 2023 compared to 2022, there has been a substantial increase in the number of impressions, indicating a rise in users viewing 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 2023, the total number of Recycle Coach App users

(i.e., mobile, web app, calendar, and communication) was 21,957, a 2% decrease from 2022 (please see Figure 7).

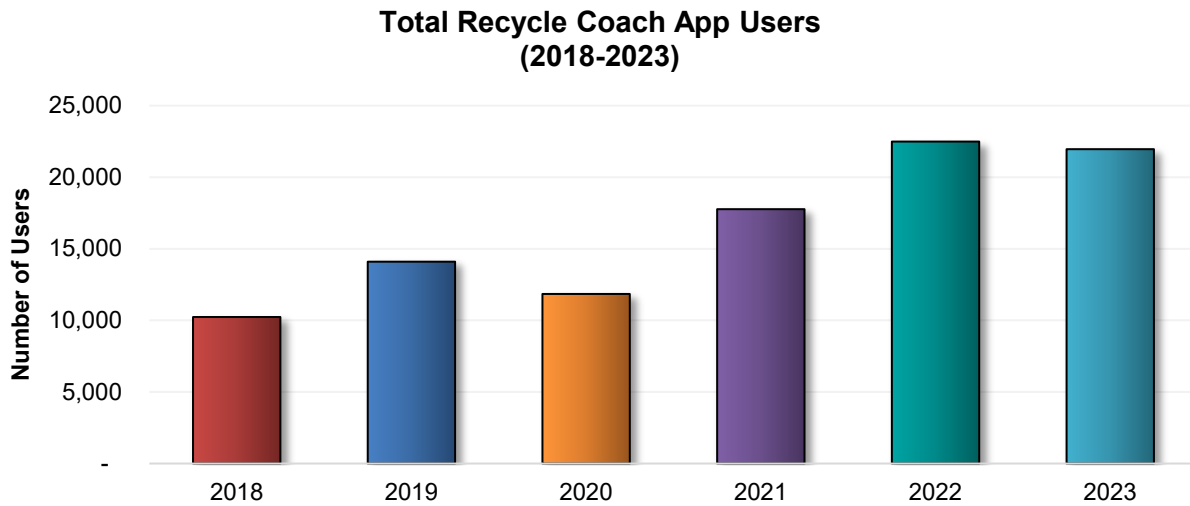


Figure 7 – Total Recycle Coach App users from 2018 to 2023.

In 2023, there were 1,565,031 interactions (i.e., material searches, pick-up reminders, page views, calendar views and notifications), representing a 14% increase from 2022 (please see Figure 8).

Also new this year was the addition of seven language options for Newmarket residents. Added languages include French, Russian, Traditional and Simplified Chinese, Spanish, Italian, and Persian.

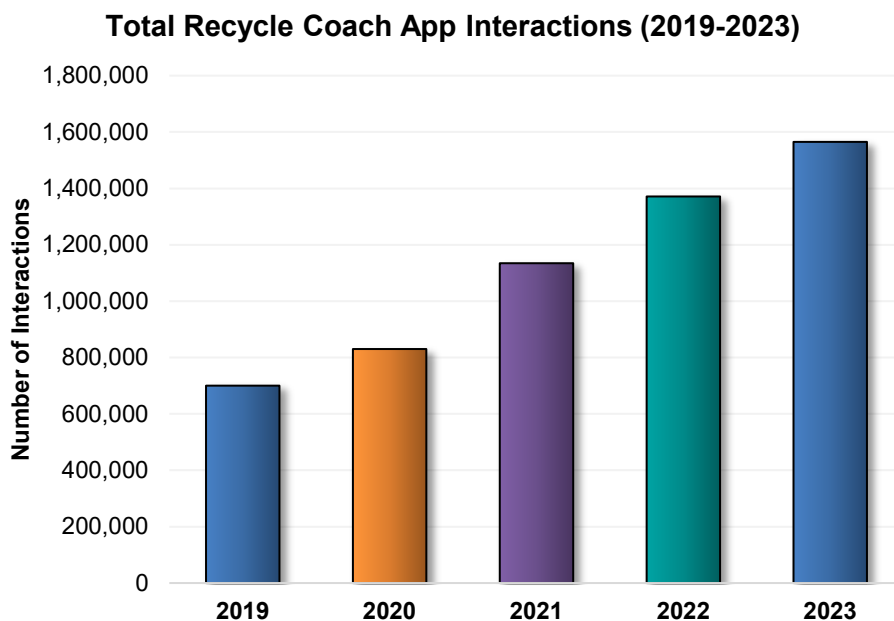


Figure 8 - Total Recycle Coach App interactions from 2019 to 2023.

The top five waste categories most searched for in 2023 were gift bags and wrap, greasy and soiled paper, electric wiring and string lights, plastic plates and bowls, and plastic bottles, jugs, and jars.

Waste Program Highlights

The Town of Newmarket's waste programs aim to improve waste diversion efforts that support the recovery of valuable materials and promote sustainability. In 2023:

- The Town of Newmarket hosted an online pre-order rain barrel sale with pick up at the Operations Centre. 235 rain barrels were purchased, an increase from the 2022 sale where 34 rain barrels were purchased online and home delivered.
- 30,845 kg of textiles were collected through the Town's textile collection program, a 6% increase from 2022. Since the program's inception, a total of 136,938 kg of textiles have been collected and diverted from the garbage stream.
- 43 backyard composters were sold to residents, a decrease from 2022 where 69 backyard composters were sold.
- During the Town's annual Blue Box Campaign, staff visited 1,772 addresses. Overall, 46% of addresses received a 'good job' door hanger while 54% received a 'recycling reminder' door hanger.

Battery Collection Program at Town Facilities

The total weight for batteries collected and recycled in 2023 was 696 kg, a 57% increase from 2022. Since the program's implementation, 2,683 kg of household batteries have been collected and recycled through this program (please see Figure 9).

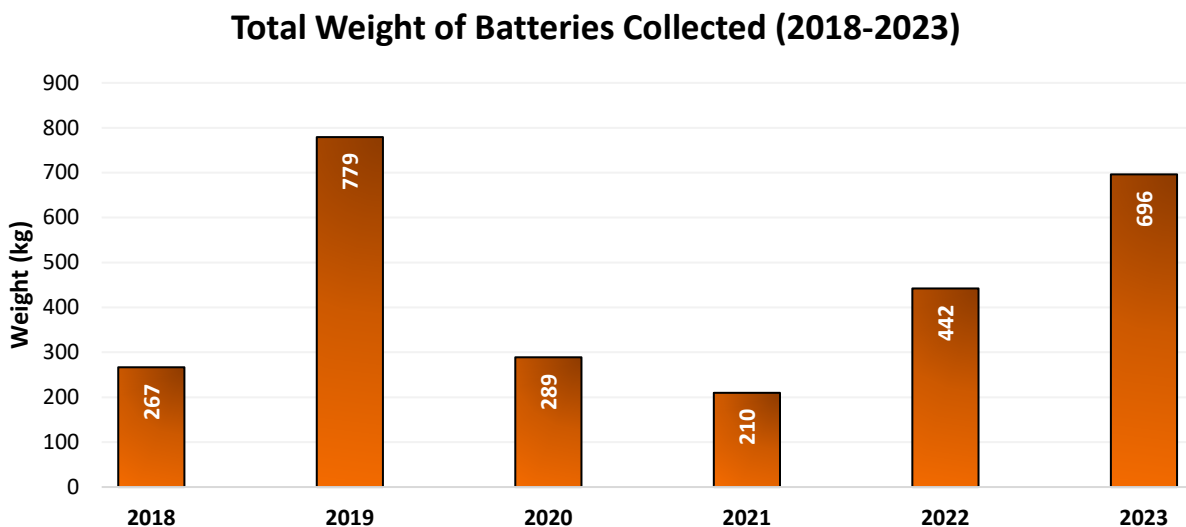


Figure 9 - Total batteries collected for recycling from 2018 to 2023.

Due to province-wide lockdowns, Town facilities were not consistently accessible for residents to drop off their used household batteries for recycling which is why there is a data variance in 2020 and 2021. Since Town facilities have fully re-opened, use of the battery drop-off program has 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 2023. The first event was held on April 22, 2023, in alignment with Earth Day/Week, a national campaign that advocates environmental awareness, education, and action.

The second event was held on October 21, 2023, in alignment with Waste Reduction Week, a national campaign that advocates waste reduction, resource efficiency, and advancing a circular economy. A new feature of this event included the collection and proper disposal of household paint and light bulbs.

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 batteries collected at both events as well as the total weight of paint and light bulbs collected from the October event:

	Event #1: April 22, 2023	Event #2: October 21, 2023	Total
Electronic Items	4,195 kg	3,998 kg	8,193 kg
Batteries	172 kg	203 kg	376 kg
Paint & Light Bulbs	N/A	920 kg	920 kg

Table 2 - Total weight of material collected at the Town's e-waste events in 2023.

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

Conclusion

Public Works Services staff continue to explore and implement innovative waste reduction and diversion programs as well as deliver promotion and education surrounding the '4R's' (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover) in support of improving waste diversion and reduction in the Town of Newmarket.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

This report aligns with Council's Strategic Priority regarding environmental sustainability. Proper waste management helps conserve resources, reduce pollution, and fosters circular economy initiatives that supports the responsible use of resources and a more sustainable environment for current and future generations.

Consultation

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

- Customer Service
- Corporate Communications

Human Resource Considerations

Not applicable to this report.

Budget Impact

There are no immediate financial implications resulting from this report.

Attachments

None.

Approval

Mark Agnoletto, Director, Public Works Services

Peter Noehammer, Commissioner, Development & Infrastructure Services

Contact

Amanda Romano, Waste Program Coordinator