

# REGION CREATING WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Continued from page 1

up. Our collective actions are making a difference."

According to the region, approximately 45 per cent of materials in the average Halton garbage bag could've been composted or recycled. To help those who are unsure about what to put in their green carts and blue boxes, Halton has created an online "Put Waste in its Place" tool (<https://bit.ly/3KJCTVH>), where individual items can be searched.

Households that choose not to use their green cart identify odours as the main deterrent, said Rivers — something he feels can be easily overcome.

"Reducing food waste, as well as using newspapers, paper towels or BPI certified compostable bags to line green carts will help reduce odours," he said. "Rinsing the green cart and kitchen catcher with soap and water will also help keep them clean and reduce odours."

Materials composted through the green cart program are turned into fertilizers to improve soil quality, and renewable biogas that's used to generate elec-

**"Recycling and composting are very useful and essential for a sustainable future."**

- Spencer Lippa

tricity and converted to natural gas, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, noted Rivers.

Meanwhile, items recycled through blue boxes are used to produce other materials in an environmentally sustainable manner.

An online survey conducted by Halton Region in 2020 revealed that some residents believe blue box items end up in the landfill, despite their best efforts.

"In fact, approximately 80 to 85 per cent of material collected in Halton through the blue box program is recycled into new material," said Rivers.

In an effort to increase usage of waste diversion programs, extend the life of



Metroland file photo

Halton has among the highest blue box participation rates in Ontario at 95 per cent.

the landfill and address climate change by lowering carbon emissions, Halton is creating a Solid Waste Management Strategy (SWMS).

The plan includes proposed measures like decreasing the garbage bag limit per household from three bags biweekly to two in 2023, then down to one in 2031.

It's initiatives like this that give Georgetown youth and climate action

advocate Spencer Lippa hope for a greener future.

"I think that (reducing garbage bag limits) is a really good idea. It would be effective," he said. "It attacks the root of the problem, which is garbage is cheap and easy to use. But if garbage is filling up your house, it's no longer easy to use, so people will have to choose better options."

The teen was disheartened though to hear that 25

per cent of local residents currently don't use the green cart system.

"Recycling and composting are very useful and essential for a sustainable future," he said.

Lippa said his family chooses to do backyard composting in a sealed container dedicated to the task — a method he highly recommends to everyone.

Halton is considering a variety of other initiatives

in the SWMS, such as:

- Expanding reuse and recycling programs to add more provincially designated materials, like fabrics (textiles)

- Supporting local organizations and innovators that design for the environment and/or reduce, reuse and reclaim waste

- Improving waste diversion in apartment buildings through increased and targeted promotion and education, and limits on the amount of garbage being collected.

Further details on the strategy are expected to come later this year.

In the meantime, information can be found at <https://bit.ly/3JBoKbG>.

**STORY BEHIND THE STORY:** *In recognition of Earth Day, we wanted to take a closer look at how Halton's recycling and composting programs are faring, and what the region has planned to increase waste diversion rates going forward.*



SCAN THIS CODE for more Earth Day coverage.

## CONTACT LENSES RECYCLING DROP-OFF UNDERWAY

Modern Eyes Optometry in Georgetown is now one of many companies across the country helping to divert contact lenses from landfills and natural

habitats.

Through the Bausch + Lomb Every Contact Counts Recycling Program, consumers can bring all brands of dispos-

able contact lenses and their blister pack packaging, to the optometry office, located at 378 Mountainview Rd. S. The items will be recycled free of

charge.

Bausch + Lomb has partnered with TerraCycle Canada, a waste management company that partners with consumer prod-

uct companies, retailers and cities to recycle products and packages, from dirty diapers to cigarette butts that would otherwise end up in landfills or incinerators.

More than 290 million contact lenses end up in Canadian landfills and wa-

terways annually, according to TerraCycle Canada.

To learn more about the program, become a public drop-off location or to search for the nearest participating location, visit [www.terracycle.com/en-CA/brigades/bausch-and-lomb-en-ca](http://www.terracycle.com/en-CA/brigades/bausch-and-lomb-en-ca).

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