

# **Strathcona County Reduction of Abandoned Products (SCRAP Program)**



**Submitted to: Strathcona County Council**

**Submitted by: Environmental Advisory Committee**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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The majority of the residents of Strathcona County are genuinely concerned with the environment and the effects of unnatural material on the landscape.

A significant concern that has been raised relating to this issue is the increasing amount of vegetated land in the County that is covered by abandoned or accumulated metal materials both in the urban and rural areas of the County. To that end, most citizens want to do what's right for the environment, but have found it too costly to remove or simply don't know where this material can be properly recycled.

Items such as abandoned vehicles, farm and industrial equipment, household appliances, yard equipment, pipe, oil drums and scrap metal have been seen all over the County. Many of these items contain petroleum based products such as oil, gasoline, diesel, grease, antifreeze, hydraulic fluid, brake fluid and battery acid that will eventually leak from their respective reservoirs and containers.

These contaminants, have the potential to leech into the soil, and in many circumstances could find their way into the surrounding wetlands, watercourses, lakes and groundwater. This has direct impacts on water treatment costs, biological function of species in the County, and overall public health.

The Municipal Development Plan devotes a section to Environmental Management where the County states that they support cooperative efforts to ensure the quality of water, land, air and other natural resources found within the region. It would be beneficial to the County and the landowner if a cost effective program was in place to aid in the removal of these abandoned products.

The SCRAP Program, the first of its kind in Canada, is designed to be cost effective by creating partnerships with industry donations in conjunction with government grants to fully implement the program with little or no cost to Strathcona County taxpayers. The primary aspects of the SCRAP program are as follows:

- 1) Creating a robust communications strategy to inform and educate residents of the problem
- 2) Creating a program to remove these abandoned products from private properties within the County for disposal or recycling
- 3) Formalizing partnerships with industry, NGO's, provincial governments, and the County residents to sustain the education and advertising program
- 4) Reviewing and revising existing bylaws to focus on the environmental impacts of abandoned products on the landscape
- 5) Providing a flexible program that allows residents to organize the removal on their own, or provide County resources to facilitate removal.

## BACKGROUND

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The majority of the residents of Strathcona County are genuinely concerned with the environment and the effects of unnatural material on the landscape. A concern that has been raised relating to this issue is the increasing amount of vegetated land that is being covered by abandoned or accumulated metal-based products both in the urban and rural areas of the County. This includes items such as abandoned vehicles, farm and industrial equipment, household appliances, yard equipment, pipe, oil drums and scrap metal. Many of these items contain petroleum based products such as oil, gasoline, diesel, grease, antifreeze, hydraulic fluid, brake fluid and battery acid that will eventually leak from their respective reservoirs and containers. These contaminants, along with the metal rust, have the potential to leech into the soil, and in many circumstances could find their way into the surrounding wetlands, watercourses, lakes and groundwater. Over an extended period of time, these rusting metals and fluids could adversely impact the present state of the land, vegetation and water quality in Strathcona County.

The Municipal Development Plan devotes a section to Environmental Management where the County states that they support cooperative efforts to ensure the quality of water, land, air and other natural resources found within the region. It would be beneficial to the County and the landowner if a cost effective program was in place to aid in the removal of these abandoned products.



**A common sight in rural Strathcona County when conducting an aerial survey.**



## PROPOSAL

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The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) of Strathcona County is proposing a new long-term initiative that will help with this increasing problem of abandoned products adversely impacting our environment.

The initiative includes:

- 1) Creating a robust communications strategy to inform and educate residents of the problem
- 2) Creating a program to remove these abandoned products from private properties within the County for disposal or recycling
- 3) Formalizing partnerships with industry, NGO's, provincial governments, and the County residents to sustain the education and advertising program
- 4) Reviewing and revising existing bylaws to focus on the environmental impacts of abandoned products on the landscape
- 5) Providing a flexible program that allows residents to organize the removal on their own, or provide County resources to facilitate removal



**Unlabelled drums stored inappropriately within Sherwood Park.**

## **DIRECTION**

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Awareness: Many residents of Strathcona County need to be educated on the ecological impacts that arise from having these large items abandoned on their property and the magnitude of the problem within the County. This can be accomplished through the use of newspaper ads, brochures, utility bill inserts, the Strathcona Living newsletter, Councillor newsletters, meetings, County website, or private consultation avenues.

Action #1: Residents take the initiative to remove the abandoned products on their own through direct contact with a waste removal company.

Action #2: Residents contact Strathcona County who will act as a central point of contact to direct residents to a variety of waste removal companies that specialize in recycling or disposing of abandoned products.

The EAC wanted to create and maintain the SCRAP Program by formalizing partnerships with industry, and accessing both federal and provincial grants. Funding will be required for public education and advertisement of the SCRAP Program. The EAC created the SCRAP Program so that it has little or no economic impact to County residents. The SCRAP Program could complement the existing Green Routine.

## **EFFECTS**

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Once the residents of Strathcona County are made aware of the problems associated with abandoned products and take the initiative to remove them from their properties, the soil productivity, watershed integrity, and possible impacts to adjacent wetlands will be in a safer state immediately and in the future for Strathcona County residents. The EAC believes that it will act as a pragmatic and feasible template for other jurisdictions as this is the first program of its kind in Canada.

## **LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

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An EAC Committee member examined the kinds of permits needed through the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act (TDG) if vehicles and larger items are transported.

According to contacts with Alberta Transportation and Infrastructure, there are exemptions based on the type of substances being transported.

If the program deals with items that do not fall under these exemptions, the shipper and generator will be required to fill out their portion of the required Shipping Document. The EAC foresees this as somewhat of a challenge because it will require information from both the landowner and the scrap company. This is to ensure the legislation is complied with. Most vendors however are already compliant with the legislation, so this would have to be examined further on an ad-hoc basis.

**Bonnie to insert info on the VIN # reporting protocol**

## **EXISTING PROGRAMS**

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The EAC researched existing programs in North America concerning pick-up of abandoned vehicles, hazardous waste and large items from urban and rural residences. This was accomplished by searching the internet; contacting organizations such as the Alberta Association of Municipalities and Counties, Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities; and conversations with automotive recyclers.

The EAC is not aware of any program that targets pick-up of abandoned products directly from interested urban and rural residences in Canada. In Fauquier County, Virginia, county officials pick up abandoned and derelict vehicles for free. This State initiated program was designed to encourage citizens to remove unwanted vehicles from their property, and to remove vehicle ID numbers from the computer system (refer to Appendix A).

In Canada, the removal of unwanted abandoned products from personal property appears to be initiated by residents contacting private contractors. The Car Heaven and/or Kidney Car programs targets the removal of pre-1995 vehicles that are still on the road generating smog-forming emissions and carbon monoxide. Unfortunately, this program is not feasible in Strathcona County, due to its distance from the City of Edmonton.

The EAC is also not aware of any programs in North America that pick-up abandoned products directly from urban and rural residences. There are numerous established programs in Canada, initiated by municipalities, where residents bring their household hazardous waste, household appliances and electronics to a depot. There are also established programs for curbside large item pick-up such as household appliances.

## **STRATHCONA COUNTY BYLAWS**

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### Land Use Bylaw 8-2001

The overarching Land Use Bylaw (8-2001) contains a section (Section 8) on Parking and Loading. It states, in very specific terms, the amount of vehicles allowed per resident and related residential uses. For example, single dwelling, semi-detached housing, manufactured home or secondary dwellings are allowed two parking spaces per dwelling unit.

An agricultural dwelling allows one parking space per sleeping unit. Apartments, fourplexes and town houses are given one parking space per studio dwelling unit. There are also on-site restrictions in regards to location of such parking spaces for residential owners including parking and loading development standards. A more specific regulating bylaw (Bylaw 55-2001, Parking of Vehicles Within Strathcona County) is also on the books. Section 5 deals with parking on private property, while Sections 6 and 7 outline the regulations pertaining to the parking of trailers and trucks (those exceeding 10 metres in length). For example, an owner/operator of a vehicle and trailer or recreational vehicle may not park the unit on a roadway for more than 36 consecutive hours. Any vehicle cannot be parked in such a manner that it constitutes an obstruction or safety hazard. A Bylaw Officer is authorized to remove and impound any vehicle parked in such a manner as to contravene any provision of this particular bylaw.

### Regulating, Controlling, and Abating Nuisances and Remedying Dangerous and Unsightly Premises Bylaw 20-2007

The bylaw that deals directly with abandoned vehicles, machinery, farm implements and hazardous waste is Bylaw 80-2007 (Regulating, Controlling, and Abating Nuisances and Remedying Dangerous and Unsightly Premises) most often referred to as the Nuisance Bylaw. This bylaw defines what constitutes a nuisance, which mainly relies on the fact that the item or items are stored in plain view of others and interferes with the use and enjoyment of other adjacent property owners. The bylaw allows for the storage of rusted, wrecked, dismantled or vehicles no longer in operative condition, in either a building on the property or out in the open as long as it is concealed from view.

An unsightly premise is defined to mean a piece of land that, in the opinion of the Bylaw Officer, is unsightly to such an extent as to detrimentally affect the repose, amenities, use, value or enjoyment of the surrounding lands in reasonable proximity to the unsightly premise. Although the first part of the bylaw states how an inoperative vehicle must be stored on a property,

Section 3.3 states: “No person shall cause, permit or allow Refuse, Abandoned Equipment or Abandoned Vehicles to collect, accumulate or be stored upon a property owned or occupied by him, unless such a site is designated by the County as a sanitary land fill site”.

It appears that the enforcement of the provisions of this bylaw would be complaint driven. That is, a neighbor or someone else within the vicinity of the property, would have to file a complaint with the County and be able to justify how the perceived nuisance was interfering with their use and enjoyment of their property.

More significantly, nowhere in the bylaw does it address the environmental concerns on the land or bodies of water from leaching metals and hazardous waste other than the presence of materials which might pose a danger to public safety (example: noxious fumes). The Violation and Offenses and Penalties section states that the County may require the owner to remove or demolish the nuisance or the County may take action for these measures at the expense of the owner.



**Unightly due to aesthetics or due to negative environmental impact?**

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

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The Committee explored forming partnerships with industry to help pay for the ongoing costs of the SCRAP Program. The following companies have requested to see the economic breakdown for this program:

<b>Shell</b>	<b>Randy Provencal</b>	<b>(780) 992-3027</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>Erica Thomas</b>	<b>(780) 410-7708</b>
<b>Petro-Canada</b>	<b>Kelly Stevens</b>	<b>(403) 471-4030</b>
<b>Imperial Oil</b>	<b>Karen Reiter-Stecyk</b>	<b>(780) 449-8571</b>
<b>Pembina Pipelines</b>	<b>Jason Fydirchuk</b>	<b>(403) 231-7500</b>
<b>KinderMorgan</b>	<b>Phillipe Reicher</b>	<b>(403) 514-6400</b>



As part of these potential formalized partnerships, the proponents would receive public recognition for their company for their support of the SCRAP Program. A document is being drafted for these potential partners outlining the tangible deliverable targets and overall objectives. At this time, these companies are reviewing the SCRAP Program.

## **GRANT FUNDING**

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There are several grants that can be applied for by the EAC to also access certain funding to increase the scope and size of the program:

Alberta, Tourism, Parks and Recreation – Community Initiatives Grant

<http://www.culture.alberta.ca/cip/default.aspx>

Alberta Environment – Ecotrust Community Grant

[http://www.albertaecotrust.com/grants/grants\\_community.html](http://www.albertaecotrust.com/grants/grants_community.html)

## **MEASURES & TARGETS**

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The EAC has compiled a matrix of possible vendors who could transport and handle a variety of abandoned products (derelict vehicles, old appliances, farm machinery, etc) as well as costs (refer to Appendix B).

At this time, the target for the first year implementation (2009) is the removal and recycling of 200 abandoned products from the County landscape.

## **COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

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The EAC recommends that a very robust advertising campaign (paid for by partnership and grant revenues) will be proactive in engaging both private landowners and the general citizens of Strathcona County.

Public education and advertising is the priority of the SCRAP Program. Increasing awareness of the issue and the environmental impacts is a focus. The education and awareness process will be supplemented by providing accurate information on how to remove abandoned products from private property.

## **SCRAP PROGRAM PILOT**

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To date the SCRAP Program has already experienced success, EAC member Bonnie Riddell had several vehicles and a large amount of scrap metal taken off her private property free of charge. The contractor waived a pick-up fee in lieu of the amount of money he would receive from the scrap metal contractor.





**Variety of scrap metal removed from private property for no charge.**



**Abandoned vehicle removed from private property for no charge.**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL**

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- 1) Create a robust and proactive advertising campaign that educates the residents of Strathcona County on why the SCRAP Program is necessary and that it will be delivered with little or no tax increases by formalizing partnerships with industry, and accessing grants. Residents need to know that this issue goes beyond the adverse visual impact, and that there are potential effects to soil and water quality.
- 2) Create an abandoned product removal program that targets both urban and rural residents and provides information so residents can make the arrangement themselves to remove abandoned products.
- 3) Review and revise Bylaw No. 80-2007 (Regulating, Controlling, And Abating Nuisances And Remedying Dangerous And Unsightly Premises) to address environmental impacts and concerns on the land or bodies of water from these items leaching metals and hazardous waste and the effect they have not only on the environment, but on public health.
- 4) Share all relevant recommendations with the Environmental Sustainability Framework Steering Committee to be reviewed and possibly incorporated into their body of work.
- 5) Incorporate the SCRAP Program within the existing Green Routine, using similar public education materials (newsletters, website information, telephone contact information, etc.). An internal resource for receiving calls and directing inquiries to the appropriate waste removal contractor.





**Vehicle storage is often the precursor to extensive storage of abandoned products**



**Abandoned products include anything that could potential break down or leach pollutants into our environment.**



**Labelled containers of petroleum products stored inappropriately.**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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The EAC would like to acknowledge Tiara Malina for her efforts in researching the abandoned product removal contractors. This contribution assisted in the successful development of the SCRAP Program.



## **APPENDIX A: Abandoned Vehicle and Hazardous Waste Pick-Up Programs**

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1. **Alberta Association of Municipalities and Counties** – spoke to Kate Hovland a Policy Analyst on July 2, 2008. She asked me to send her an e-mail request and then she would look into it. She responded by e-mail on July 3, 2008 ... “As I suspected, no one here is aware of any rural abandoned and junk vehicle program being operated by a municipality in Alberta. The only things we’re aware of are the Kidney Car program and the “car heaven” programs offered by some car dealerships. Sorry I couldn’t be of more help, but good luck with your work on this issue.”

2. **Fauquier County, Virginia** – spoke to Trish Ethier, Education Co-ordinator on July 10, 2008 about their Abandoned Vehicle Program described at <http://www.fauquiercounty.gov/Government/Departments/Environmental/index.cfm?action=cleanup>.

The State of Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles has had Abandoned Vehicle Guidelines for about 10 years. It is a State initiated program. The State wanted to clean out vehicle ID numbers (VIN #) out of their computer system. Essentially somebody calls Fauquier County and indicates that they have an abandoned and inoperable vehicle on their property they just bought (example). Fauquier County would have to determine if it was really abandoned (i.e. don’t know who it belongs to). Trish indicated that they stretched the rules somewhat at the start to determine “abandoned” – i.e. if somebody says they have 3 vehicles on their property and their Grandfather’s cousin disposed of them there 20 years ago. They would fill out a State form with information such as VIN #, make and model etc. Fauquier County would fax the form to their contractor salvage yard. Their scrap metal company has contracts with tow truck companies. Fauquier County would pay the contractor salvage yard to get the abandoned vehicle from someone’s property. The tow truck driver would sign-off on form indicating the location and vehicle type, the salvage company would sign-off as receiving the vehicle and the County would sign-off saying that the State protocol was followed. Fauquier County would submit the form to Virginia State Motor Vehicle Department and be reimbursed. If Fauquier County determines that the Vehicle is not abandoned during a phone call then they would explain to them their alternatives for disposal.

3. **AUMA** – spoke to Rachel Bocock on July 7, 2008. She said that she wasn’t aware of any programs that their membership has concerning abandoned and junk vehicle programs. She also mentioned the Car Heaven program ([www.carheaven.ca](http://www.carheaven.ca)) and climate change central ([www.climatechangecentral.com](http://www.climatechangecentral.com)). Membership that participates in the climate change central initiative are Bonneville, Vegreville, Vermillion, St. Paul, Cold Lake, Coronation, Stettler, Lethbridge, Calgary and Edmonton. She said that I might want to check out the websites of these municipalities.

4. **Federation of Canadian Municipalities** – spoke to Susan Irwin on July 2, 2008 who asked me to send in an e-mail request that she could forward to her membership. I sent one concerning abandoned vehicles and one for hazardous waste pick-up programs. She sent a summary e-mail from the FCM membership that responded to her request. I received some e-mails directly from FCM membership ...

♦ **Municipal District of Big Lakes** – “With the high price of scrap metal we have a local, private contractor that often deals directly with landowners to haul away and recycle the metal bodies.”

♦ **City of Moncton** – “Further to Susan’s e-mail, I have checked with our environmental staff liaison and it appears there is no current program in our province to address your concerns. Sorry I couldn’t be more help. “

♦ **City of Regina** – “Many years ago (mid 60's?) IPSCO in Regina began gathering scrap vehicles from mun's across Sask. They soon moved to include gathering from the prairie prov's plus northern States. Is that not still going on? They rely on scrap metal in their Regina operation (which I believe is the largest, by tonnage, recycler in North America!).

As for household hazardous waste, the Sask. Min of Environment is sponsoring several HHW collection days across Sask. this summer. Product Care (from BC) is the operational player. (They run Sask's paint program as well.) SUMA's hope is that these HHW days will morph into a longstanding program, sponsored by the province. To some extent, Sask's actions are modelled on Product Care's activities in BC. There, the paint program has included HHW.

You might want to contact Joanne Fedyk at the Sask. Waste Reduction Council for more info. (See email above.)”

♦ **City of Welland** – “You may want to take a look at our site for related bylaws. [www.welland.ca](http://www.welland.ca) We just passed an abandoned/operable vehicle component to our clean yards by-law. There are certain conditions and allows enforcement either based on complaints or observation. You also may want to talk to the Chief Building Official - Mike Mantesso - for any other paper in the file, forms, research, etc. -- plus get the staff report that council approved. Our staff is pretty thorough when it comes to this.

Also, with our Rotary here we are contemplating a scrap metal day. There are other Rotary clubs on line who are doing this. It is a great fundraiser and is more of a carrot than a stick. With steel at \$50/ton and up, it is a good idea to partner positively with your service and auto clubs.”

♦ **City of Coquitlam** – “We do not have a municipal program that addresses abandoned vehicles on private property. This type of situation is managed through the enforcement of the City's Unsightly Property Bylaw No. 3213, 1998, a copy of which is attached. It defines an "unsightly" situation to include "one or more motor vehicles stored on private property that are not capable of normal vehicular operation" (section 5.2). Accordingly, if the City should receive a complaint about an inoperable motor vehicle(s) being stored on a property, or if a property that has such vehicles on it is subject to inspection by the City, the City could enforce the provisions of the Bylaw and require the property owner to bring the property into compliance - which would in most cases mean the disposal of the motor vehicles. This is usually done by the property owner, but may be done by the City in the unusual case that he or she refuses to comply.

In addition, on occasion, property owners will offer their non-operational vehicles for use by the City's Fire/Rescue Department as part of their training exercises, but this is a rather infrequent occurrence. “

♦ **City of Laval** – “As requested by Mr. Basile Angelopoulos, here are the answers to your questions. In Laval, we presently do not have a program for the pick-up of rural abandoned and junk vehicles. We treat these nuisances as case by case and the government of Quebec has programs for these types of materials, mostly for abandoned tires. At the city of Laval, we have a drop in service twice a year (spring ad fall) for all domestic toxic wastes (including electronics). Last spring, a record of 2319 households participated (87 tons gathered), a record year.

To ensure and encourage the proper treatment of potentially toxic waste, several local stores (listed below) ensure a year round service.

*RONA, Home Depot, Canadian Tire, Supérieur Propane and Gaz propane Morin, La source, Circuit City, Future Shop Jean Coutu and Uniprix pharmacies and Bureau en Gros.*

♦ **City of Swift Current** – “I am responding to the request passed through to me from FCM regarding Household hazardous waste programs etc. Here in Swift Current we conduct a one-

day event each year to collect HHW we hire a licensed HW company to be present at the event to package and manifest the materials that citizens drop off at our event site (parking lot behind City Hall). For the past two years the province has funded the event as well as similar events around the province. The City of Swift Current does not pick up junk vehicles, except when we have had a complaint and then we charge the property owner or put on the taxes.”

## **APPENDIX B: Vendors who Transport and Handle a Variety of Abandoned Products**

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**Deborah to insert info from the Excel matrix created by Tiara & Jason**