



Goodwill

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Deputation from Goodwill Industries of Toronto, Eastern, Central and Northern Ontario

November 5, 2013

ATTN: Kelly McCarthy
City Clerk's Office
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West, 10th Floor, West Tower
Toronto, ON
M5H 2N2

Re: Budget Committee – Item BU46.2 “2014 Rate Supported Budgets - Solid Waste Management Services and Recommended 2014 Solid Waste Rates”

Dear Members of the Budget Committee,

At Goodwill, our mission is to enable work opportunities and provide skills development for people who experience barriers to employment (i.e., people with disabilities, the chronically unemployed, youth, and newcomers to Canada). We operate a social enterprise model where the proceeds from the sale of donations are reinvested into jobs and training. Last year we received 50 million pounds of donations enabling us to employ over 650 people at Goodwill, offer employment and training services to 3,750 individuals, and employ 750 individuals in the community. We are 90% self-sufficient thanks to the generosity of our donors.

The proposed fees of the Recommended 2014 Solid Waste Rates will have a significant impact on our ability to create and sustain jobs in the community. The full impact of the fees outlined in the City budget will be an additional cost of approximately \$600,000 annually to Goodwill after full implementation in 2017. This annual fee cannot be easily absorbed and would result in the closing of multiple community stores, further restricting our ability to deliver on our mission and get people back to work.

In 2012 and 2013, we appreciated the ability to work with the City of Toronto staff to help implement the Special Category Reduced Rate Program. Goodwill is pleased to have been deemed eligible for this program and will continue to work with City staff to ensure it reflects the needs of charitable organizations, such as ours, that receive a high volume of donated goods in support of community activities. We hope that the program continues to exist going forward, as our business model of accepting donations necessitates the disposal of unsalable donations, effectively, on behalf of our donors. The volume of waste Goodwill generates directly from our operations is negligible compared to the volume of “donated waste” by the public. Charging for the disposal of



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these items means that Goodwill would be paying fees on goods that would otherwise be disposed of for free through City curbside pick-up programs or paid for by those responsible for waste exceeding volumes allowable for free collection.

In 2012, we heard the challenges the City faced and appreciated that City Council waived the waste disposal fees for 2013, in addition to creating the Special Category. Despite this reprieve, Goodwill continued to operate a socially responsible business and aggressively pursue further reuse and recycling options. Since last year, we have significantly reduced our waste output, diverting another 25% from landfill. We worked throughout the year revisiting our sorting procedures and establishing additional partnerships in order to capture more items to be sold in our tertiary markets, as opposed to landfill.

We currently reuse and recycle into 12 categories. To assist with waste diversion, we added more categories for niche buyers in tertiary markets, such as glassware and single shoes. From 2012 to 2013, we saw an increase of 166% of glassware and 140% of single shoes, all of which were diverted from the waste stream.

We have also since streamlined our e-waste sorting program. When comparing diversion pounds from 2012 to 2013, we saw an increase of 190% being diverted from landfill.

To date, we have also coordinated 87 donation and environmental drives in our communities, further helping to significantly reduce waste in landfills. Without these donation and environmental drives organized by Goodwill, it is inevitable that items will end up in landfill – we are proud to be a part of the cycle of re-use and recycling, and enabling the greening of our communities. We have actively supported the City with its community environment days.

We will continue to find new markets and available opportunities to reduce the amount of unusable goods that are sent to landfill. We have implemented plans for continued and additional recycling programs. In 2014, given the fees, we will have to discontinue the collection of furniture, which represents 40% of the total weight of our overall waste (i.e., donations that we are unable to sell). We are one of the few thrift stores that still accept furniture. No doubt, furniture disposal from households will now increase and illegal dumping will likely rise.

As a charitable organization, we manage the fiscal challenges that are faced daily and we know that the City is not immune to this. Goodwill continues to seek out solutions to ensure that we maximize the value of each charitable donation. Rather than introducing fees, efforts should be spent on getting results – avoiding the need to dispose. Goodwill partners with other cities and municipalities to deliver joint programs and services to divert more from city landfills, thereby generating new revenue to create and sustain



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jobs, at the same time benefiting the City's financial position. Goodwill has a number of city partnerships for Community Recycling Centres and this could be replicated in Toronto.

In summary we are asking that:

- The Special Category Reduced Rate Program continue indefinitely including annual waste audits;
- charities be eligible for waste fee exemptions after providing a waste diversion plan and annual results to City staff; and
- City staff and Goodwill explore additional waste diversion programming and services to collectively pursue further reuse and recycling in the City of Toronto.

At Goodwill, we believe in environmental stewardship and understand that we have our part to play in being a leader in environmental sustainability. We continue to maximize the value of every donation, while sustaining our local community.

Thank you for considering this item.

Respectfully submitted by:

Keiko Nakamura
Chief Executive Officer
Goodwill Industries of Toronto, Eastern, Central and Northern Ontario