

York Region Circular Economy Working Group

Terms of Reference

1. Context

- 1.1 The visionary goal of the SM4RT Living Plan, York Region's Integrated Waste Management Master Plan is "a world in which nothing goes to waste". Objective three of the SM4RT Living Plan is to "Inspire people across the Region to embrace SM4RT Living and advance the circular economy"; this objective highlights the importance of partnerships in the journey to zero waste. The Circular Economy Working Group (Group) is one of the ways that the Region will support community partners, businesses and other stakeholders in building circular economy capacity across the Region. Through this Group, the Region aims to raise awareness levels, educate residents and promote behaviour change within organizations and communities.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Circular Economy Working Group is:

- 2.1 To create a forum for members to network, build partnerships, share their experiences and learn more about circularity
- 2.2 To provide expert advice and feedback on the Region's circular economy programs, policies, and planning
- 2.3 To work with Regional staff and other relevant partners to support the implementation of a circular economy in York Region, including implementation of the SM4RT Living Plan and the Region's Circular Economy Roadmap

3. Scope of Activities

The scope of activities that members of the Circular Economy Working Group may undertake include, but are not limited to:

- 3.1 Provide advice, feedback and recommendations to Regional staff on the implementation of York Region's waste reduction and circular economy initiatives, including those outlined in the SM4RT Living Plan and the Circular Economy Roadmap
- 3.2 Act as a circular economy ambassador by promoting and sharing information about York Region's circular economy programs and by promoting the adoption of circular practices within their organizations and communities
- 3.3 Share with the Group experiences, lessons learned and best practices for achieving circularity in their own organizations and sectors
- 3.4 Help the Region identify future strategic priorities, data needs, potential programming and research opportunities that support/advance a circular economy
- 3.5 Represent the perspective of their sector or organization as the Region implements its Circular Economy Roadmap and plans future circular economy initiatives
- 3.6 Identify barriers and opportunities to advancing the circular economy in the Region

- 3.7 Advise on the dissemination of education and information about the circular economy to the local business community, partners and residents
- 3.8 Volunteer to participate in specific sub-committees as needed

4. Composition and Membership Selection

- 4.1 The Circular Economy Working Group will be composed of 10 – 15 members, representing a diverse group of stakeholders, including:
 - businesses
 - professional and industry associations
 - academia (colleges, universities and/or local school boards)
 - non-profits and/or charities
 - Minimum of two youth representatives (between the ages of 18 and 30)
- 4.2 Group members will need to be a part of a business or organization located or providing services in York Region
- 4.3 Group members will be expected to be knowledgeable about or have experience with the circular economy
- 4.4 Applications for membership will be solicited through the Region's website, social media, and other communication channels. Interested individuals will be required to submit a fully completed application form along with a brief resumé. Regional staff will determine successful applicants
- 4.5 Shortlisted applicants will be asked to provide one reference from their current organization and may also be invited to participate in a brief online interview at the discretion of York Region
- 4.6 In selecting members, staff will aim to achieve diversity in age, gender, ethnicity, and representation of under-served and equity seeking groups
- 4.7 Membership is voluntary and a public service. Members will not be remunerated or receive an honorarium

5. Term

- 5.1 The term of the Group membership shall be a maximum of two (2) years. Members may have the option to re-apply for additional terms at the end of the initial term
- 5.2 If a member misses three (3) consecutive meetings, their membership will be evaluated by Regional staff and may be revoked
- 5.3 A member who is no longer able to serve on the Working Group is required to submit a written resignation to Regional staff. The resignation becomes effective at the time the written resignation is received by Regional staff or at a later date specified in the resignation
- 5.4 If a member chooses to resign before the end of the term, the member can recommend a suitable replacement from their organization. If a suitable replacement cannot be identified, the Region will seek a replacement in accordance with the approach described in Section 4.3

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Group members will:

- 6.1 Agree to the terms outlined in these Terms of Reference (TOR)
- 6.2 Elect a Chair for the Working Group to execute duties as detailed in 7.1
- 6.3 Help plan meeting agendas by suggesting discussion topics and presenters, volunteering to share experiences/lessons learned, etc.
- 6.4 Review meeting materials in advance of the meetings and be prepared to provide their perspective on the issues being discussed
- 6.5 Review and provide written comments on draft documents as required
- 6.6 Attend Group meetings and inform the Region when unable to attend such meetings. In cases where members are unable to attend a meeting, members are encouraged to assign a designate to attend in their place
- 6.7 Commit to continuous learning and openly share lessons learned
- 6.8 Communicate activities of the Group to the organization they represent or other relevant organizations and offer information back to the Group as needed
- 6.9 Participate fully in activities of the Group
- 6.10 Work cooperatively with Regional staff and other members of the Group
- 6.11 Participate in subcommittees or other activities as required

Note: Members are strictly prohibited from using the Group as a forum to promote a product or service from which they might receive financial benefits. If a member engages in these activities, the Region may revoke the member's membership in the Working Group.

- 6.12 Each member must declare any conflict of interest or any interest or circumstance that may be reasonably perceived as a conflict of interest that exists now or may exist in the future. The Region may, in its sole discretion, waive any and all actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest on such terms and conditions as the Region in its sole discretion considers to be required to satisfy itself that any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest has been appropriately managed, mitigated, and minimized. In this regard, the Region may require the member to take appropriate steps to manage, mitigate, or minimize the impact of any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest.

For the purposes of these terms of reference, a "conflict of interest" means any situation or circumstance where, in relation to the performance of the member's work on the Working Group, the member's other commitments, relationships, or financial interests (i) could or could be seen to exercise an improper influence over the objective, unbiased, and impartial exercise of the member's independent judgment on the Working Group; or (ii) could or could be seen to compromise, impair, or be incompatible with the member's effective performance of its work on the Working Group.

If a member fails to comply with the requirements of this Section 6.12, the Region may revoke the member's membership in the Working Group.

Regional staff will:

- 6.13 Prepare meeting agendas with input from Group members
- 6.14 Coordinate and facilitate all meetings

- 6.15 Circulate information to members in advance of meetings
- 6.16 Respond to Group members' questions and comments in a timely manner
- 6.17 Record meeting minutes and share drafts for review
- 6.18 Listen and consider feedback from the Group to help set meeting agendas and programming
- 6.19 Consider all feedback received and report back to members on action items

7. Working Group Chair

- 7.1 A chair will be elected by the Group from the membership of the Group at the beginning of each term and will work with Regional staff to plan each meeting.

8. Meetings and Schedules

- 8.1 The initial frequency of Group meetings will be monthly. Meeting frequency may decrease once the priorities and activities of the Group are well established
- 8.2 Meetings will be held on a weekday, during regular work hours (between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.) and each meeting is expected to last approximately two (2) hours
- 8.3 The specific meeting dates will vary to accommodate Group members
- 8.4 Group meetings shall be held virtually while COVID-19 restrictions continue to be in place. In-person meetings shall be considered at a later date, in accordance with all Regional, Provincial and Federal regulations and reopening plans
- 8.5 Special meetings may be held if a majority of Group members agree and are able to attend
- 8.6 In-line with the Group's emphasis on learning, individuals with specialized expertise may be invited to attend meetings to provide presentations or participate in discussions on an as needed basis
- 8.7 Meetings shall be closed to the public
- 8.8 The approximate time commitment for involvement in this Group (including preparation for meetings, attendance at Group meetings, participation in other activities such as subcommittees, research, liaising with other stakeholders etc.,) is up to eight (8) hours per month

9. Decision Making

- 9.1 Regional staff commits to listening to the variety of feedback and perspectives that Group members will bring to discussions. Regional staff will work with the Group to try to establish common ground where possible. Final decisions will be made by Regional staff.