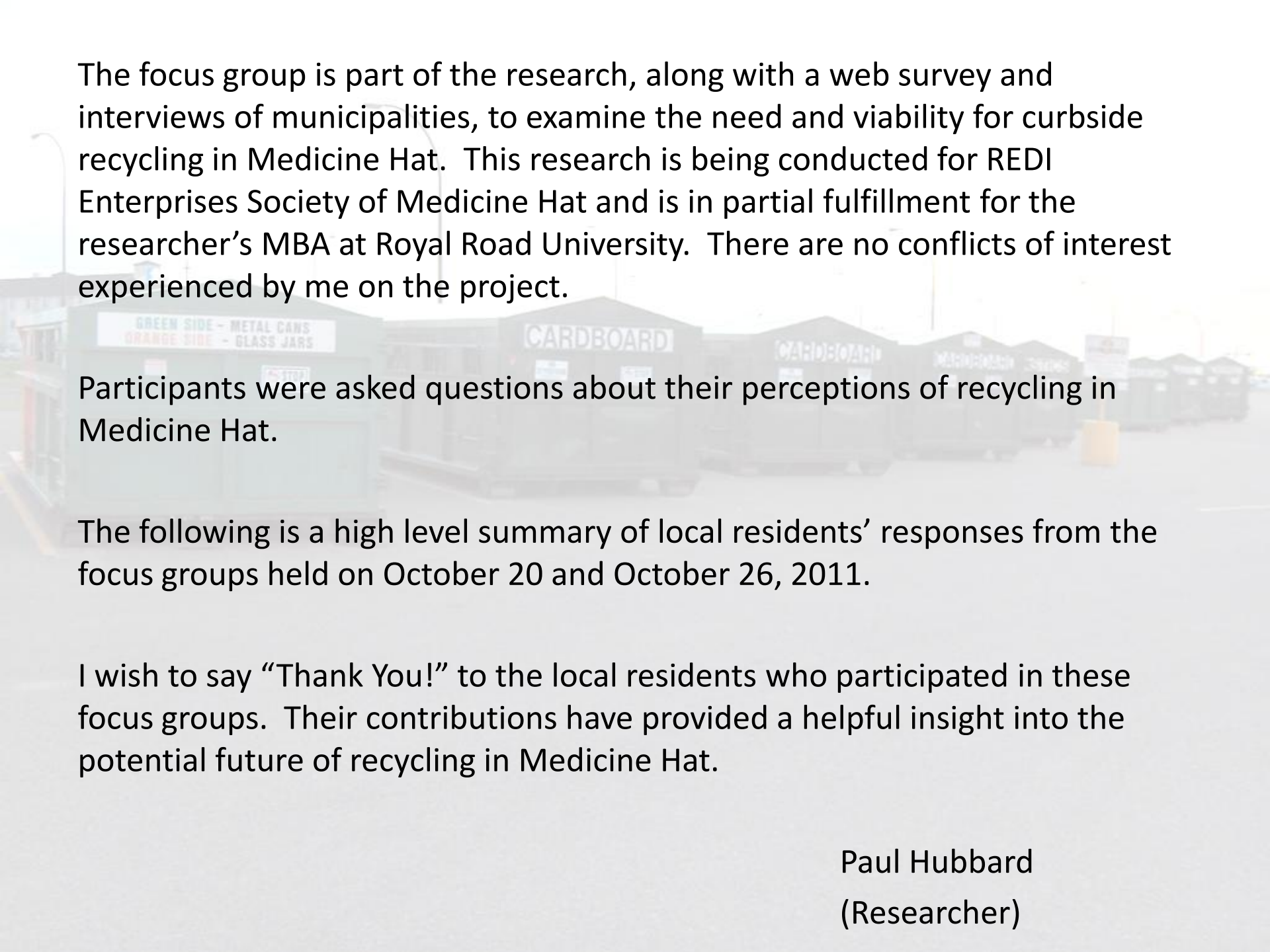




Research Study Curbside Recycling in Medicine Hat

**Summary Report on
Focus Groups
October 20 & 26, 2011**

The background of the slide is a photograph of a recycling center. It shows a long row of dark-colored recycling bins. The bins are labeled with their respective materials. From left to right, the visible labels are: 'GREEN SIDE - METAL CANS' and 'ORANGE SIDE - GLASS JARS' on the first bin; 'CARDBOARD' on the second bin; and 'PLASTIC' on the third bin. The rest of the bins are partially obscured or out of focus. The overall scene is an outdoor recycling facility.

The focus group is part of the research, along with a web survey and interviews of municipalities, to examine the need and viability for curbside recycling in Medicine Hat. This research is being conducted for REDI Enterprises Society of Medicine Hat and is in partial fulfillment for the researcher's MBA at Royal Road University. There are no conflicts of interest experienced by me on the project.

Participants were asked questions about their perceptions of recycling in Medicine Hat.

The following is a high level summary of local residents' responses from the focus groups held on October 20 and October 26, 2011.

I wish to say "Thank You!" to the local residents who participated in these focus groups. Their contributions have provided a helpful insight into the potential future of recycling in Medicine Hat.

Paul Hubbard
(Researcher)

Motivations for Recycling

- **We explored people's motivation to recycle and found the impact on the environment is most important.**
- **Participants' comments included:**
 - We hope our children continue recycling when they grow up
 - We gain a sense of satisfaction from recycling and feel guilty if we do not recycle
 - Fewer people would recycle if the option was not available
 - We would recycle more if we knew what materials can and cannot be recycled
 - Recycling is almost a moral issue - "if we don't recycle, we have done a bad thing" and "it's the right thing to do"

Encouragement to Recycle More

- We explored on how recycling could be encouraged in our community.
- Participants' commented on community need for better recycling education and awareness including:
 - Provides employment and extends the life of the landfill
 - More signs on bins with pictures of acceptable materials
 - More accepted materials like paint and batteries at depots
 - A Medicine Hat Recycle Report to see how we are doing
 - Curbside recycling is convenient and encourages recycling
 - A community with "curbside" recycling reduces the amount of waste going into the garbage bin

Recycling versus the Solid Waste Fee and Size of Garbage Cart

- We explored whether a change in the solid waste fee or in the size of the garbage cart would influence the amount people recycled.
- Participants' comments included:
 - A smaller garbage cart may increase the amount recycled
 - We were recently given new 70 gallon carts; switching to smaller carts would be expensive and wasteful
 - If you generate a small amount of waste you should have the option of a smaller cart at a lower fee
 - The solid waste fee has little incentive on the amount recycled
 - Where will we store all of carts? (garbage, compost and recycling)

Curbside Recycling Fee

- **We explored participants willingness to pay for a curbside recycling. Participants willingness to pay varied from \$0 to as much as \$20.**
- **Participants' comments included:**
 - We will continue recycling but we are not interested in curbside; do not change fee
 - The curbside recycling fee should be similar to that of other communities
 - The curbside recycle fee depends on the pickup schedule (weekly or bi-weekly) or if the service were optional
 - The personal “cost” of recycling at depots (time taken to recycle, cost of drive to depot and cost of a recycle bin) may equal the fee and convenience of curbside recycling

Other Comments

- **We completed the focus group questions and participants were encouraged to share any further comments.**
- **Participants' comments included:**
 - Medicine Hat needs to catch up to other Alberta communities with curbside recycling
 - We should not wait until 2015 for curbside recycling
 - If curbside recycling is implemented the private firms currently providing the service should be offered employment or serve small businesses
 - We need to encourage all generations to recycle
 - Recycling should be an issue for the next municipal election
 - We have lived in Europe; recycling is a part of life and there are fines for not recycling

What do you think?

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