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THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK – ANTI-LITTER CAMPAIGN

(Regional Council at its meeting on January 22, 2004, amended the foregoing Clause as follows:

to include the words “the school boards” in recommendation 2, as amended by the Committee, so that recommendation 2 would now read as follows:

- 2. Regional staff work with the Local Municipalities, the City of Toronto, the other Greater Toronto Area Regions, and the school boards, to develop an anti-litter campaign, and encourage the Local Municipalities to review and enhance their anti-litter by-laws.)***

The Solid Waste Management Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, December 17, 2003, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works, subject to adding the following words to recommendation 2:

“and encourage the Local Municipalities to review and enhance their anti-litter by-laws”.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The following report be received for information by Committee and Council.
2. Regional staff work with the Local Municipalities, the City of Toronto and the other Greater Toronto Area regions to develop an anti-litter campaign.
3. Regional staff be directed to present a subsequent report that details the anti-litter campaign, along with its associated costs.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide the results of the Regional Municipality of York Litter Survey that was conducted in the summer of 2003.
- Recommend that the Region undertake an anti-litter campaign to alleviate the problem that is outlined in the report.

3. BACKGROUND

Litter has been recognized as a significant problem in our society for many years. In an effort to alleviate the problem, anti-litter programs have been designed and implemented in many jurisdictions throughout the world.

The City of Toronto staff recognized that there is a litter problem in its jurisdiction, and consequently undertook a Litter Survey in July, 2002 to determine the scope of the problem. As result of the survey, the City launched a five-year Litter Prevention and Reduction Strategy to alleviate the problem.

Following the Toronto survey, Regional staff in Durham, Peel and York decided that similar surveys should be conducted to determine the nature of the litter problem in their jurisdictions. The surveys were conducted earlier this year. The results from The Regional Municipality of York's survey are described below.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 General Information on Litter

Litter is defined as any product or material that should be recycled or placed in a garbage receptacle but instead is found in places such as sidewalks, streets, parking lots, roads, and highways. Some of the major types of items which are found as litter include coffee cups, gum and candy wrappers, cigarette butts and packaging, and pop cans. Research done by Keep America Beautiful, Inc., a non-profit public education organization in the United States, has indicated that people litter for the following reasons:

- They feel no sense of ownership, even though areas such as parks and beaches are public property.
- They believe someone else – a park maintenance or highway worker – will pick up after them.
- Litter already has accumulated in an area; therefore, it is acceptable to increase the amount.

Research in the United States has shown that people of all ages and social backgrounds have been observed littering, and men and women are equally likely to litter. It has been found that there are seven primary sources of litter, which are as follows:

- Pedestrians who do not use receptacles.
- Motorists who do not use car ashtrays or litter bags.
- Garbage containers used by businesses which are improperly covered.
- Loading docks which have inadequate waste receptacles.
- Construction and demolition sites without adequate receptacles to contain debris and waste.
- Trucks with uncovered loads.
- Household garbage scattered prior to or during collection.

There are many impacts produced from litter, which include:

- Impact on tourism industry when areas are littered.
- Ingesting litter causes injury or death to pets, wild and farm animals.
- High levels of litter serve as a breeding ground for rats and disease-causing bacteria.

Littering is an individual and corporate behavioural problem which has become a societal norm. Each person must accept responsibility for their actions and influence the actions of others in their home, school, community and business in order to change the societal norm. This action would require the implementation of a long-term anti-litter campaign likely requiring substantial financial resources in order to be successful.

4.2 Anti-Litter Programs in York Region's Local Municipalities

York Region's local municipalities have programs to collect litter across departments, including roads, parks and solid waste management. While some municipalities have specific budgets for collecting litter, others simply collect it on an as-needed basis.

All of the local municipalities support "Don't Be a LitterBug!" campaign, the details of which is outlined in section 4.3.3. Some of the local municipalities are currently working on implementing anti-litter campaigns. Table 1 represents a summary of activities to date.

Table 1
Summary of Anti-Litter Activities in the Local Municipalities

Local Municipality	Activities
Town of Aurora	• Parks department organized two cleanup days. • Reports to Council in March and September, 2003 to develop anti-litter campaign. • Campaign will include advertizing targeted at different age groups using various media e.g. newspaper, radio, TV, electronic messaging.
Town of East Gwillimbury	• Environmental Services Committee conducts Holland River cleanup in spring, other local groups such as scouts do litter pickups.
Town of Georgina	• Parks and Roads Departments do litter cleanup. • Organize activities during Pitch-In Week. • Currently have Adopt-a-Road and Adopt-a- Park Programs. • Currently respond to litter complaints by adding garbage bins and pick-ups. • Plan to embark on anti-litter campaign, report to Council in February, 2003.
Township of King	• Volunteer groups, scout groups and school do litter pick-up. • Organize litter pickups during Pitch-In Week. • Have anti-litter by-law.
Town of Markham	• Report to Council in December, 2003 recommending establishment of Markham Litter Prevention Strategy.

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| Town of Newmarket | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participation in litter clean-up during Pitch-in Week in April.• Have “Adopt-A-Park” program, residents and businesses clean up parks and trails.• Conduct Holland River Cleanup in spring.• Litter collection done by Parks and Properties. |
| Town of Richmond Hill | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implemented litter by-law.• Participate in litter clean-up during Pitch-In Week.• Established “Adopt-a-Spot” program in 2000, scouts and resident groups pick litter. |

City of Vaughan	• Parks and Public Works do litter cleanup. • Report to Council in June, 2003 approving the adoption of an anti-littering advertizing campaign.
Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville	• Support Pitch-In Week, collect areas cleaned by residents. • Litter pickup in parks, BIA areas.

4.3 Anti-Litter Programs in Other Greater Toronto Area Regions and the City of Toronto

Anti-litter programs have been launched in some jurisdictions, and other programs are currently under consideration. Since the problem of litter affects all of the regions, it would be beneficial to build on work already done and that which is under consideration by attempting to develop partnerships between the Regions and the City of Toronto to develop a consistent litter message.

4.3.1 The Regional Municipality of Durham

The Region has reviewed the litter survey done by MGM Management and have identified the most common items found in litter.

The Region is currently working toward the launch of an anti-litter campaign in 2004 that will target the most commonly found litter items. The campaign will involve television advertisements, radio commercials, signs and billboards and newspaper advertisements. Regional staff has proposed to spend about \$30,000 on its campaign in 2004, which will include roadside litter collection. The budget has been approved by the Commissioner of Works and will be forwarded to Works Committee in December, 2003 and to Council in January, 2004. While some of the eight local municipalities have implemented anti-litter by-laws, the Region would like to implement a standard anti-litter by-law that applies across the Region.

4.3.2 The Regional Municipality of Halton

The Region has not developed an anti-litter campaign. Litter has traditionally been an issue that has been dealt with by the Local Municipalities. The Region does cooperate with the Local Municipalities to provide additional litter receptacles on Regional roads in targeted areas such as fast food outlets, and provide increased collection frequency as required.

4.3.3 The Regional Municipality of Peel

The Region has reviewed the litter survey done by MGM Management earlier this year. Staff will address the issue of litter in 2004. There is no specific Regional litter by-law in place. Litter pickup is currently undertaken by operations and maintenance staff.

The City of Mississauga has launched a “Don’t be a LitterBug!” Campaign in June, 2002, which has its origins in the 1960’s. An Environics survey was conducted with residents, which showed that 83 percent of residents were either somewhat or very concerned about litter in the city. The initial campaign consisted of the following advertizing vehicles:

- Newsletters distributed to residents, highlighting the litter problem.

- Televised introduction of LitterBug at June 12, 2002 Council meeting.
- News releases sent to local media.
- “Don’t be a LitterBug!” logo inserted in The Mississauga News.
- LitterBug litter bags distributed at special events e.g. Earth Day.
- Newspaper advertisements in The Mississauga News.
- “Don’t be a LitterBug!” posters in community and recreation centres, libraries and City offices.
- “Don’t be a LitterBug!” stickers on food packaging and garbage bins.

The cost for the public awareness campaign in 2003 was \$30,000. In March, 2003, the City reviewed its litter and debris by-law and increased the set fine to \$305 per offence, which is consistent with fines in Brampton and Caledon.

The public can report littering violations using the City’s Anti-Litter website. Witnesses who can properly identify violators can complete a form on the City’s website and submit it directly to the Enforcement Division for follow-up. The City has placed anti-litter stickers on garbage receptacles and new road signs to remind the public that littering is an offence.

4.3.4 The City of Toronto

A litter survey was also completed for the City of Toronto in 2002 by MGM Management. The results of the survey were summarized in a report that was approved by Council on November 26, 27 and 28, 2002. Council approved numerous recommendations by The Clean Streets Working Group surrounding the adoption of a five-year Litter Prevention and Reduction Strategy. Some of the components of the Strategy are:

- Perform litter audit regularly to measure impact of litter prevention programs.
- Establish litter reduction goal of 50 percent from June 1, 2002 to June 1, 2007.
- Provide education including research surveys, advertizing and marketing plan e.g. “Don’t Trash Toronto” ads released in July.
- Enforcement component where by-law officers issue fines of \$130 per offence (to date, two such fines have been levied).
- Efficient litter collection e.g. increase number of bins, collection frequency.
- Examine funding opportunities and in-kind support partnership opportunities e.g. private firms.
- “Adopt-a-Bin” program adopted, where retailers report full garbage and recycling containers located close to their property.

The City also implemented a litter hotline (39-CLEAN) in May, 2003 for the public to report litter, overflowing receptacles and illegal dumping. The number of calls received to date has peaked when it has been promoted by the media in the spring and summer. The advertising budget allotted for 2003 and 2004 is \$186,000, which accounts only for the “Don’t Trash Toronto” Campaign.

4.4 Anti-Litter Programs in Other Jurisdictions

4.4.1 Canada

The City of Windsor's Clean City Committee is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving Windsor's environment and economy through public education, community beautification, graffiti abatement and litter awareness programs. The Committee organizes a 24-hour Litter Hotline Program which allows the public to report offenders by providing detailed information about the offence. Police can also charge offenders if they are caught littering or dumping garbage illegally. The Committee also organizes spring and fall Clean Sweeps, which encourages residents to select and clean up areas of the City.

4.4.2 United States

There have been a variety of anti-litter programs developed by states. One of the well established programs is in the State of Texas. A campaign has been developed with the slogan "Don't Mess With Texas". The program includes a Road Tour, where events e.g. games and trivia are held throughout the year in various locations. The program is sponsored by companies such as Dairy Queen which donates prizes for winning contestants. Advertising campaigns have included celebrities such as Willie Nelson to get the anti-litter message across to the public. The state has also developed a "Gotcha!" program, which allows the public to report any litterers observed tossing items out of vehicles and items blowing off of trucks. The current fine for littering in Texas is \$500. As a result of implementing its campaign, Texas has experienced a 52 percent decrease in roadside litter and a 70 percent decrease in cigarette butt litter since 1995.

4.5 The Regional Municipality of York Litter Survey, 2003

4.5.1 Survey Methodology

The Region's Litter Survey was conducted in July, 2003 by MGM Management. The methodology used for the survey was the same as that which was developed and used in surveys done in the State of Florida between 1994 and 2001. The Survey used GIS software to obtain coordinates of all potential road sections within the Region. Litter was divided into two categories; large, over four square inches in size, and small, less than four square inches in size. In total, 84 categories of large litter were examined and 15 categories of small litter were counted.

4.5.2 Survey Findings

The survey team counted a total of 8,678 pieces of large litter, which represents an average of 42.3 pieces of large litter per site. There are 84 categories of large litter in the survey methodology. Table 2 represents the large litter categories by percentage.

Table 2
Large Litter Categories

Category	Number of Items	Percent of Total
Fibre products (e.g. paper, paperboard, cardboard, towels, napkins, newspapers)	4,270	49
Take-out packaging (e.g. hot and cold cups, lids, wrap, bags, trays, containers)	1,301	15
Plastic materials	1,058	12
Beverage packaging	649	7
Tobacco packaging	374	4
Vehicle and metal road debris	296	3
Home articles	277	3
Construction debris	256	3
Miscellaneous items e.g. tire debris	197	2
Total	8,678	100

The survey team also counted a total of 3,066 pieces of small litter, which was an average of 15.4 pieces of small litter per site. It is important to mention that while the surveyors counted the large litter over the entire site (3,600 square feet), the surveyors counted small litter from only 15 square feet of each site. The surveyors acknowledged that small litter is a difficult component to count, since it is restricted to a very small percentage of an overall site, is badly weathered and difficult to identify. Table 3 represents the small litter categories by percentage.

Table 3
Small Litter Categories

Category	Number of Items	Percent of Total
Small paper	1,008	33
Cigarette butts	720	23
Hard plastic	246	8
Small aluminum pieces	220	7
Small glass	180	6
Other materials	179	6
Small plastic film	177	6
Other polystyrene pieces	123	4
Other tobacco small	48	2
Metal (not aluminum)	41	1
Candy packaging less than 4 sq. in.	37	1
Rubber	36	1
Polyfoam peanuts	27	1
Straws and bottle caps	24	1
Total	3,066	100

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report. The costs of an anti-litter campaign will be outlined in a subsequent report to Council.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The area of anti-litter programming is new to the Region. The local municipalities have been and will be implementing anti-litter campaigns in the future. Consequently, it would be beneficial for the Region to build on current activities by developing a consistent Region-wide advertising message. Such a coordinated effort will require meetings with the local municipalities to discuss options and reach consensus on a Region-wide campaign accompanied by consistent local municipal campaigns.

7. CONCLUSION

The results from the Region's Litter Survey have illustrated that there are significant amounts of litter found in various locations throughout the Region. In order to reduce the litter problem, the Region should undertake a long-term campaign in conjunction with the local municipalities. In light of examples provided in other jurisdictions, the Region should embark on a long-term Region-wide campaign that will require substantial financial resources to effect behavioural change. Staff will present a subsequent report to Council, which outlines the campaign and its associated costs.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.