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WASTE DIVERSION STRATEGY

(Regional Council at its meeting on January 26, 2006 requested that the following Clause be forwarded to the local municipalities for information.)

The Solid Waste Management Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, January 13, 2006, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council request the nine local municipalities in the Region to participate in the development of a joint waste diversion strategy.
2. Staff report back to Committee and Council in May, 2006.

2. PURPOSE

This report discusses the need and justification for developing an updated Regional waste diversion strategy jointly with the local municipalities.

3. BACKGROUND

In September of 1997, Regional Council approved a Solid Waste Management Disposal/Diversion Strategy (Clause 7 of Report No. 17 of the Transportation and Works Committee). The Strategy outlined a number of possible courses of action the Region could undertake to achieve a goal of 50% diversion by the year 2000 and manage the remaining waste. Regional staff was also directed at that time to “continue meeting with area municipal staff on a regular basis to work towards more consistent recyclable collection programs across the Region”. This potentially included “joint development of guidelines (but not mandated standards) for different levels of service, determination of costs through inclusion of options in new collection tenders, and a phase-in strategy”.

Regional staff has reported back regularly to Committee and Council on progress made to date (Clauses 1 and 2 of Report No. 1 of the Solid Waste Management Committee, March 19th, 2003, a Council workshop on the development of a master plan on April 24th, 2003, Clause 2 of Report No. 4 of the Solid Waste Management Committee, April 14,

2004 and the November 25th, 2005 Regional Council Workshop on current waste management issues).

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The Region's original waste management strategy is over eight years old and in many ways no longer reflective of the current waste management issues facing the Region and the Province of Ontario. Our diversion rate in 2005 was 34%, significantly lower than the 50% target previously adopted. Solid Waste Management Committee (Committee) requested, during the 2006 budget process, that staff prepare a revised strategy and finalize it by the summer of 2006.

The development of a new strategy needs to take into account the potential changes in provincial regulations, new technologies, community interests, infrastructure and economics. Waste management service delivery is also a two tier function in York Region with the local municipalities providing collection and the Region providing processing, transfer and disposal. As such, the development of a revised strategy requires the participation and agreement of both levels of government.

This report outlines some of the initial issues that need to be considered in the revision of the strategy as well as a timetable for completion of the project.

4.1 Linkage to the York/Durham Environmental Assessment

In April of 2005, the Region initiated a joint Environmental Assessment (EA) in partnership with Durham Region to determine a long-term solution for the management of waste that is not recycled or diverted through our waste reduction programs. The Terms of Reference (ToR) have been submitted to the Province of Ontario and we are awaiting its approval before commencing the study. One of the underlying assumptions upon which the study is based is the expectation that both Regions will achieve a diversion rate of at least 60% and possibly 75% over the next thirty years. The resulting project (or undertaking) would be sized to manage the remaining residual waste.

Concern was raised at the October meeting of Committee that the proposed goal of 60% diversion was too conservative and would potentially limit the Region's flexibility in defining the outcome of the EA process. Development of a municipally supported waste diversion strategy would help to determine what diversion level the Region could potentially achieve during the timeframe contemplated by the EA.

4.2 Previous Discussions on Waste Diversion

In November of 2004, Council held a special workshop to discuss waste management issues facing the Region. Among the issues discussed were the Region's current waste diversion efforts, possible paths to move forward to increase the Region's diversion rate, cost implications and role of the Region and local municipalities in implementing the various available options. Table 1 below summarizes the options presented.

Table 1
Waste Diversion Options Identified at the November 2004 Regional Workshop.

Option	Diversion Potential	Cost	Action Taken
Source Separated Organics	High	High	Yes
Construction & Demolition Waste	High	Low	–
Bag Limits and User Pay	High	Low	Yes
Dongara Proposal (pelletizing project)	High	Moderate	Yes
Increased Yard Waste Collection	Moderate	Low	–
Enhanced Promotion & Education	Moderate	Low	Yes
Diversion/Disposal Bans	Moderate	Low	–
Expanded Electronics Recycling	Low	High	Yes
Textiles Recycling	Low	Moderate	–
Expanded Blue Box	Low	Moderate	Yes
Community Environmental Centres	Low	High	Yes

Implementation of these options has the potential to achieve a diversion level exceeding 70% and the Region and local municipalities are progressing on a number of the issues discussed at the workshop. There are, however, significant cost implications associated with the implementation of these options and some of them are solely within the purview of the local municipalities to implement. Development of a strategy to identify and prioritize these and other options, with appropriate implementation dates, and the endorsement of the Region and local municipalities is therefore recommended.

4.3 Scope and Timeline of the Proposed Strategy

At the October 2005 Committee meeting, it was proposed that a waste diversion strategy be developed in consultation with local municipal staff at a cost of between \$25,000 and \$35,000.

Staff has had preliminary discussions with several consulting firms regarding the strategy. It is expected that existing studies, research and current practices in York Region and other municipalities can be used to develop a strategy(ies) for moving to a higher level of diversion. Preliminary cost and diversion information would also be included as part of the study. In depth analysis of the various options and their ultimate cost implications to the Region and local municipalities would, however, be outside the scope and timeline of this project. It is proposed that this detailed analysis would occur subsequent to endorsement of the strategy by the local municipal and Regional councils.

Regional staff has retained Lura Consulting to facilitate the strategy update as they have extensive experience in the field of waste management planning and consultation. Lura will work with the local municipalities and the Region to develop a joint strategy that will be able to meet both levels of government's objectives.

It is proposed that a draft report be completed by May of 2006 and that Regional staff report back to Committee and Council on the final outcome of the joint effort in the fall of this year. This timeframe would provide local municipal and Regional staff with time to discuss the draft strategy with local residents and other stakeholders in June. Feedback received from these stakeholders would be reported to Committee and Council in the fall along with any necessary amendments to the strategy.

The proposed timeline for the strategy is identified in Table 2.

Table 2
Proposed Strategy Timeline

Date	Activity
January 2006	Project initiation
February 2006	Local Municipal Councils agreement to participate in study
February 2006	Discussions with local municipalities
March 2006	Joint strategy development
April 2006	Draft report
May 2006	Endorsement of the draft strategy by Regional & local councils
Summer 2006	Public Consultation
Fall 2006	Report to Committee and Council on Public Feedback
Fall 2006	Endorsement of final strategy by Regional and local municipal councils

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Lura Consulting has been retained for \$35,000 assist staff in the facilitation and development of the proposed waste diversion strategy. Public consultation and/or surveys may cost up to an additional \$30,000. There are sufficient funds in the 2006 Solid Waste Management Operating budget for this work.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

It is proposed that the strategy be developed in consultation with the local municipalities. Several of the waste diversion options that might be developed require the support of the local municipalities to implement and could have significant financial impacts at both the local and Regional level. Therefore support for the strategy and endorsement of the final product is required at both a Regional and local level. It is therefore proposed that the formal participation of the local municipalities be sought in the development of the proposed strategy.

7. CONCLUSION

Development of a waste diversion strategy in cooperation with the local municipalities at a cost of approximately \$65,000 is proposed. A renewed strategy would help to prioritize the work of the Waste Management Branch and local municipalities, and provide focus to the development of the joint York/Durham Environmental Assessment process for managing residual waste.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.