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### **PROMOTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**The Solid Waste Management Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, May 25, 2004, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works:**

#### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

1. The Promotion and Education Program, as detailed in this report, be approved by Committee and Council.
2. Regional staff work in conjunction with the local municipalities to maximize resources and ensure that a consistent waste reduction message is delivered.

#### **2. PURPOSE**

This report summarizes the Region's Promotion and Education (P&E) Program for the Solid Waste Management Branch. The proposed P&E Program provides a strategic approach for waste education activities in York Region, covering a three-year period from April 2004 to December 2007. The design, implementation and evaluation/feedback stages of the P&E Program will be outlined.

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

In May 2003, (Clause 4 of Report No. 2 of the Solid Waste Management Committee) Regional Council approved a recommendation to increase the staffing complement in the Solid Waste Management Branch by three full time equivalents. The Promotion and Education Coordinator position is one of the full time equivalents.

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2004, the Solid Waste Management Committee requested that staff prepare recommendations to work with the local municipalities to educate and consult with the public on pending program changes. While the purpose of the Public Communications Strategy is to consult with the public on current issues facing the Region, the intention of the P&E Program is to provide vision for the future, and to motivate the public to participate in new and existing programs.

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2004, the Solid Waste Management Committee approved the Public Communication Strategy. The total projected cost of implementing the Public Communication Strategy is \$150,000.

## **4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS**

The Promotion and Education Coordinator position was filled in March 2004. With the addition of this new Coordinator, York Region can now begin to develop and implement an ongoing integrated P&E Program. Such a program will assist the Region with achieving its goal of 50% diversion from landfill.

Busy and changing lifestyles, consumption patterns, economic pressures, policies, and regulations, values and attitudes all contribute to the patterns of waste generation and disposal. Therefore, education programs for waste reduction need to facilitate behavioural and social change as well as communicate the right information. Through its P&E Program, the Region will:

- Create awareness of waste issues in York Region.
- Enhance the community's knowledge and understanding.
- Influence the community's values and attitudes.
- Encourage more responsible behaviour by the community.

The proposed P&E Program is based on the philosophy that people learn and are motivated in different ways and that messages to minimize waste are most effective if they are reinforced through a variety of mutually supporting avenues (i.e. at home, work or school). Waste education in the Region therefore, will embrace a 'Whole Community' approach to involve business groups, residents, schools, the media and community organizations. The concept that waste minimization is more than simply recycling and includes reduction of waste through avoiding its creation in the first place will be promoted to the community.

It is anticipated that with effective communication and education, the community will be motivated to take responsible action to reduce, reuse and recycle their waste in a sustainable manner.

### **4.1 Study**

A fundamental step toward selecting strategic actions and implementing effective education programs is to identify the specific behavioural changes needed. All too often, education programs are planned on the basis of a very broad or vague notion of the behavioural outcomes required. In order to effectively deal with waste management issues in the Region, people's behaviour needs to be examined, influenced and changed. This requires a good understanding of the issues, target audiences, their motivation and the behaviour that is to change. To determine this information, it is proposed that the Region commission a consultant(s) to conduct a series of surveys and focus groups/workshops.

### **4.2 Messages**

Through the surveys and focus groups/workshops, community attitudes and cultural behaviours will be determined. This information will enable staff to develop key messages which will be delivered to the community. It is important to ensure that the key messages are such that the community can relate and respond to them, and that the

messages motivate people to take action and participate in the Region's new and existing programs.

Conducting surveys and focus groups/workshops will involve a financial commitment by the Region. Please refer to Table 1.

#### **4.3 Activities**

In order to deliver the key messages to the community, a range of activities will be developed and implemented over a three-year period. These activities are grouped into five primary program areas as follows:

- Study
- Community Outreach
- Advertising
- School Outreach
- Business Outreach

Additional details on these program areas are provided in Attachment 1.

#### **4.4 Program Review and Feedback**

The proposed P&E Program will be reviewed on a yearly basis to allow for public feedback and change in focus. This will ensure maximum opportunity for community input so that the long-term goals associated with waste reduction and diversion are constantly identified and included. It is also important to provide regular feedback to the community so that they know their efforts are making a difference.

### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The proposed P&E Program for 2004 is expected to cost approximately \$350,000 as outlined in Table 1. These costs have been included in the 2004 operating budget. Funding for future years will be subject to budget approvals.

The Public Communication Strategy has been the subject of a previous report. To implement the Public Communication Strategy, the Region will hire consultants. It is proposed that consultants will also be hired to assist with carrying out the activities outlined in the Community Outreach, School Outreach, and Business Outreach program areas. Advertisements will be designed in-house and published in the local newspapers.

**Table 1**  
2004 Promotion and Education Budget

| <b>Activity</b>               | <b>Projected Cost</b> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Public Communication Strategy | \$150,000             |
| Study                         | 20,000                |
| Community Outreach            | 50,000                |
| Advertising                   | 70,000                |
| School Outreach               | 30,000                |
| Business Outreach             | 30,000                |
| <b>Total Projected Cost</b>   | <b>\$350,000</b>      |

## 6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

To ensure that a consistent waste reduction message is delivered across the Region, Regional staff and local municipal staff will need to work in conjunction when preparing promotional and educational material. The Region is responsible for providing overall waste reduction messages, (e.g. Michigan landfill crisis, 60% diversion rate set by the Ontario Government) and motivating people to take action. The local municipalities are responsible for providing specific information on collection services and programs available in their municipality.

## 7. CONCLUSION

To increase the current diversion rate and to decrease the amount of waste sent to landfill, York Region requires an ongoing integrated P&E Program. With the appointment of a Promotion and Education Coordinator, this can now be achieved. To begin, it is important to determine the current behaviours and attitudes of the community surrounding waste management issues. This will be accomplished by conducting surveys and focus groups/workshops. Key messages will then be developed and delivered to the community via the actions outlined in Attachment 1. The Region must coordinate its efforts with the local municipalities in order to maximize resources and time, and to deliver a consistent waste reduction message to the community.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

*(A copy of the attachment referred to in the foregoing is included with this report and is also on file in the Regional Clerk's Office.)*