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SCHOOL BOARD RECYCLING - PROGRESS REPORT

The Solid Waste Management Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, August 17, 2006, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that staff be authorized to pursue a more effective recycling program in all publicly-funded schools in York Region.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the recycling initiative established by the Region for the York Region District School Board and possible future inclusion of the York Catholic District School Board in the program.

3. BACKGROUND

In the summer of 2005, the Region switched to a co-mingled blue box program. The York Region District School Board (Public Board) wanted to establish consistency between the recycling program at home and in the school to minimize confusion amongst the students about what items are recyclable. The Region's Waste Management Centre was, at the time, the only facility capable of processing commingled blue box recyclables. The Public Board, therefore, expressed to the Region an interest in delivering recyclables from their program to the Region's Waste Management Centre. Clause 2 of Report No. 7 was approved by Regional Council on November 17, 2005. The report authorized the Regional Chair and Regional Clerk to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Public Board and the York Catholic District School Board (Catholic Board) to allow delivery of recyclable materials to the Region's Waste Management Centre in East Gwillimbury. To date, a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed by the Public Board. Delivery of recyclable materials from the Public Board commenced in mid-January, 2006.

Schools and other institutional uses are mandated through Ontario Regulation 103/94 under the Environmental Protection Act to maintain waste diversion programs. Most schools are serviced by private sector contracts.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The following sections outline the progress made to establish a working partnership with the Public Board, along with the issues identified and proposed measures for improvement.

4.1 Material Received to Date

To date, the program has greatly exceeded the 150 tonnes of recyclables per year that the Public Board expected to deliver to the Waste Management Centre. Year to date, a total of 650 tonnes have been received. It is projected that about 1,100 tonnes will be received by the end of the year. This quantity will, however, have a negligible impact on the overall processing of recyclable materials, as the facility has a capacity of 120,000 tonnes per year.

4.2 Implementation Issues

There are a number of operational issues that Regional staff has been working on in conjunction with the Public Board relating to the initiative. These issues include problems with contamination and over-compaction of loads and communications problems with Public Board staff. The Waste Management Centre has a maximum tolerance of 10 percent contamination per load. When contamination exceeds this amount, residue levels increase at the Waste Management Centre, contamination of finished products increases and production is hampered resulting in higher operating costs. The facility also has limits on allowable compaction levels. Loads that are over-compacted are more difficult for staff and equipment to sort effectively. This, in turn, increases the level of contaminants in the finished products and increases operating costs. To date, 19 percent of the loads delivered by the Public Board have exceeded Regional tolerance levels although none have been turned away. Table 1 below summarizes the violations issued to waste haulers for over-compacted loads from February through July, 2006. Please note that other Local Municipalities, such as Vaughan, deliver their material to the Miller Waste Transfer Station in Markham and consequently their data is not reflected in the table.

Table 1
Violations for Over-Compacted Loads
February to July 2006

Source	# of Total Violations	Total # of Loads Processed	Violations as % of Total Loads	% of All Violations
York Region Public Board	29	155	19	10
East Gwillimbury	2	367	1	1
Georgina	13	557	2	5
Newmarket	140	741	19	49
Richmond Hill	102	1,483	7	36
Total	286	3,303		100%

4.3 Resolution of Implementation Issues

The problems of contamination and compaction of loads has been significant. Investigation of the source of the problems by Regional and Public Board staff revealed information gaps amongst custodial staff, teachers and students about how the Public Board's recycling program operates. Operational challenges related to contamination of recycling bins such as bin control and security were also identified. Regional staff has taken steps to address these problems by:

- Communicating the Region's requirements to the Public Board and their staff
- Arranging tours of the Region's recycling facilities and meetings with school custodians and their supervisors to provide clarification of impacts of contamination and compaction on the Waste Management Centre
- Providing lists of acceptable/non-acceptable materials to custodial staff
- Working with the Public Board and its haulers to address load compaction issues
- Developing generic posters explaining what is and is not recyclable for use in elementary and secondary classrooms

Unanticipated staffing challenges faced by the Public Board have delayed implementation of many of the required improvements including dissemination of program information to the individual classrooms. The issues of contamination and compaction are significant, and if not resolved in a timely fashion, would compromise the future of the initiative. Regional staff do, however, believe that these issues can be resolved once the Public Board has resolved its staffing issues and plan to meet again with senior school board officials to discuss the above issues and ways of resolving them. Regional staff will reassess the progress at year end and report back to Committee and Council at that time if discontinuation of service is recommended.

4.4 Future Plans

Regional staff is endeavouring to foster a growing partnership with the local boards and private schools. The Region currently works with both school boards to hold an annual "Litter Roundup". This successful event involved over 9,500 students and teachers and removed over 4,300 kgs of garbage from local street-sides, parks and school yards in 2005. In addition, Regional staff is in the process of developing a waste management educational program for presentation to schools touring the Waste Management Centre and potential use in the classroom. The Region is also working with the Public Board to develop additional promotion and education materials for use in specific locations such as school cafeterias and to address other operational challenges such as the lack of standardized recycling containers throughout the schools.

4.5 York Catholic District School Board

The Catholic Board has not yet entered into an agreement with the Region to deliver recyclable materials from its schools. Staff do not propose to enter into a partnership with the Catholic Board until successful implementation of the Public Board's recycling

program has been completed. This approach is intended to allow the Catholic Board and Regional staff the opportunity to learn from the experience of the Public Board.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Table 2 summarizes the projected cost of receiving and processing the school board's recyclables at the Waste Management Centre in 2006. As indicated, the cost to process the recyclable materials is currently recovered by revenue from the sale of materials. It is anticipated that once the Region establishes a recycling initiative with the Catholic Board, the financial cost would be comparable to that of the Public Board.

Table 2
Projected Costs of Processing Blue Box Materials

	Incremental Unit Cost (per tonne)	Projected Annual Cost
Processing Costs	\$62.00	\$68,200.00
Capital Replacement	\$22.00	\$24,200.00
Revenue – Material Sales	(\$90.00)	(\$99,000.00)
Net Cost	(\$6.00)	(\$6,000.00)

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The receipt of recyclables by the Region from the Public Board has no direct impact on the local municipalities. At the present time, some municipalities are collecting recyclable materials from some of the schools as part of their residential curbside collection program.

7. CONCLUSION

The Region entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the York Region District School Board to receive their recyclables. The program was launched in January, 2006. To date, the initiative has been successful in terms of the amount of recyclable material collected and processed at the Waste Management Centre. There have also been a number of problems, including excessive compaction and contamination of loads. Region and Public Board staff are working to resolve these problems and enhance the initiative over time. Regional staff intends to implement a similar recycling program with the Catholic Board, once the issues with the Public Board program are resolved.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.