

Report of the
Inter-Municipal Waste Diversion Strategy Committee

August 21, 2006

JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE DIVERSION STRATEGY

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council endorse the attached Joint Municipal Waste Diversion Strategy.
2. Regional Council adopt a goal to divert a minimum of 65% of its waste from landfill.

2. PURPOSE

This report summarizes the public consultation conducted over the summer of 2006 as part of the development of the Joint Municipal Waste Diversion Strategy (Strategy). Amendments made to the Strategy as a result of the comments received through the public consultation process are also discussed.

3. BACKGROUND

In January 2006, Regional Council directed staff to prepare an updated waste diversion strategy and finalize it by the summer of that same year. The nine local municipal councils were asked, and agreed to participate in the development of a joint municipal waste diversion strategy. Local and Regional staff subsequently formed the Inter-Municipal Waste Diversion Committee (IMWDC), chaired by staff from the Town of Newmarket and the Region to develop the Strategy. The draft Strategy was developed over the spring of 2006 and May 25th, 2006 Regional Council received a report from the IMWDC and endorsed its recommendation to “approve, in principle, the Inter-Municipal Waste Diversion Strategy subject to the outcome of the public consultation planned for this summer”.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The primary purpose of the initiative was to establish a strategy that could be supported by all ten jurisdictions and would facilitate coordination of joint municipal waste diversion efforts. Doing so would also allow the Region to determine how much residual waste it could anticipate managing through its Residual Waste Environmental Assessment process with Durham Region.

4.1 Waste Diversion Options

Over the first quarter of 2006, staff from the ten municipal governments met to identify and discuss options to improve their collective diversion rates. Options considered included possible improvements to existing programs and development of new initiatives. Staff were also asked to provide insight into a common diversion target that their local Councils would likely support within the ten year timeframe contemplated by the Strategy. Barriers to implementation, within the context of the proposed options, and possible timing issues associated with meeting the suggested diversion target were also discussed. The various options were then prioritized accordingly.

Table 1 provides a description of the major waste diversion options originally identified jointly by municipal staff as approved by Councils within the Draft strategy. The proposed priority and diversion potential assigned to each option for implementation purposes is also identified. These options formed the basis of the discussions held at the public consultation sessions.

Table 1
Description of Identified Options and Implementation Schedule From the
Draft Strategy

Option and Proposed Timing of Implementation	Description	Diversion Potential
Source Separated Organics Diversion <i>Immediate Implementation</i>	Diversion of household compostable wastes excluding yard waste. Requires specialized containers, collection and processing.	30%
Optimized Blue Box Diversion <i>Immediate Implementation</i>	Weekly collection; addition of new materials; using alternative collection containers; and/or collecting from local schools.	8%
Improved Yard Waste Diversion <i>Future Consideration</i>	Improved collection service across all municipalities to a minimum of biweekly collection (April – November).	5%
Use of Community Environmental Centres <i>Immediate Implementation</i>	Location of convenient and accessible depots to receive reusable and recyclable materials and waste that can not be set out for curbside collection.	5%
Use of Mandatory Recycling By-laws <i>Future Consideration</i>	Development of by-laws by the Region and local municipalities to mandate recycling and/or restrict collection of waste containing recyclables.	5%
Use of Bag Limits & Financial Incentives <i>Immediate Implementation</i>	Restriction of the number of bags of garbage set out for collection. Often combined with financial incentives such as bag tags that require payment for any additional amounts set out.	5%
Increased Promotion & Education <i>Immediate Implementation</i>	Expanded and cooperative promotion and education efforts by both levels of government using multi-media and public engagement techniques and tools.	3%

Construction & Demolition (C&D) Diversion <i>No further consideration</i>	Diversion of reusable and recyclable waste from residential and/or commercial renovation & construction.	2.5%
Textiles Diversion <i>Immediate Implementation</i>	Engagement of not for profit organizations such as Goodwill to divert clothing and other goods via a collection or drop off program.	2%
Expansion of Regional Processing Infrastructure <i>Immediate Implementation</i>	Expansion/upgrading of the Region's MRF and development of new HHW, CEC and/or composting facilities to meet local municipal needs in a timely manner.	N/A
Expanded Advocacy Efforts by the Region <i>Future Consideration</i>	Lobbying of organizations/governments responsible for policy decisions such as "over packaging".	N/A

4.2 Diversion Strategy Public Consultation

Over the months of July to September local and regional staff jointly organized and held a number of consultative sessions. Four public open houses were held at central locations throughout the local municipalities. Representatives from several local environmental groups attended the sessions. A number of Regional and local councillors also attended the sessions to lend support and facilitate discussion with residents. Meetings were also held, or are scheduled, with each of the local Environmental Advisory Committees.

Information about the Strategy, along with an explanation on how to provide comments, was also posted on municipal web sites. The Strategy was also brought to the attention of residents at other public events organized by municipalities during the summer such as the Region's EA public consultation meetings. Table 2 summarizes the consultative efforts of the IMWDC.

Table 2
Diversion Strategy Public Consultation Activities

Activity	Location	Date
Public Open House	Oak Ridges Recreation Centre, Richmond Hill	June 21 st
Public Open House	City of Vaughan Civic Centre	June 27 th
Public Open House	York Region Waste Management Centre, East Gwillimbury	July 6 th
Public Open House	Town of Georgina Civic Centre	July 11 th
Newmarket EAC	Town of Newmarket Offices	June 7 th
Aurora EAC	Town of Aurora Civic Centre	June 12 th
Georgina EAC	Town of Georgina Civic Centre	June 13 th
King EAC	King Township Offices	June 22 nd
Markham EAC	Town of Markham Offices	June 29 th
East Gwillimbury EAC	TBA	September 12 th
Whitchurch-Stouffville EAC	Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Offices	September 18 th

4.3 Outcome of the Public Consultation

Public attendance at the open houses was limited, averaging less than twelve residents per event. This low turnout was not entirely unexpected given that the events were held during the summer months and the budget to promote the open houses was limited. However, informal survey work conducted by Regional staff also revealed that even though residents knew of the open houses, they did not plan on attending as they had no concerns with the proposed Strategy.

In general, public feedback on the proposed Strategy and the various options outlined in Table 1 were overwhelmingly positive and were broadly supported by the attendees.

The primary concerns raised by attendees were, in fact, focused on a desire to see implementation of several of the proposed options sooner:

Yard Waste:

See the collection frequency of yard waste increased to a bi-weekly level of service as appropriate in each area municipality.

Source Separated Organics

The implementation of source separated organics will result in an estimated 30% diversion rate increase and is the primary initiative required to achieve the 65% diversion goal. At all public open houses there was overwhelming support for the source separated organics program as well as its immediate implementation in all local municipalities.

Optimized Blue Box Collection

Need to expand the acceptable type of collection containers which residents can use as well as address further diversion opportunities within multi-residential buildings.

The public consultations also indicated a desire; in particular, for greater action by governments to encourage and/or force businesses and industry to do more to divert waste was repeatedly expressed. The majority of comments (summarized in Attachment 1) were centered on three key points including:

- action by government to encourage manufacturers to reduce over packaging
- action by government to encourage manufacturers to make plastic packaging more recyclable
- action by government to encourage local businesses to establish recycling programs in stores and multi-residential dwellings

The environmental groups contacted as part of the consultation process were also very supportive of the draft Strategy. Again, the most common comment was that local and Regional governments should be doing more to advocate for change by industry and businesses. These groups were also supportive of the Strategy as a means to minimize the amount of waste that must be managed through the Region's residual waste Environmental Assessment process.

Comments were also received suggesting that staff's recommendation in the draft Strategy to drop further consideration of diverting construction and demolition (C&D)

waste be reconsidered. C&D waste was initially identified by staff as a possible diversion option. Subsequent discussion led staff to conclude that this option should be dropped as it is not normally handled in significant quantities curbside. It was suggested, however, that efforts should be made by all local jurisdictions to educate residents about non-municipal diversion (including charitable) opportunities for this material such as Habitat for Humanity.

4.4 Proposed Changes to the Strategy Based on Public Input

The draft strategy as approved by the various municipal councils was broadly supported by the local public and environmental groups. It was, however, clear from the public that there is a desire to see local government take immediate action to lobby manufacturers and senior levels of government on issues such as over packaging and extended producer responsibility. Staff, therefore, propose to change the option “Expanded Advocacy Efforts by the Region” from “Future Consideration” as originally proposed in the draft Strategy (see Table 1) to “Immediate Implementation”. Staff further recommends amending the Strategy to recognize current local municipal efforts to increase multi-residential diversion. Staff’s recommendation in the draft Strategy to drop further consideration of diverting C&D waste has also been changed to propose that both the Region and local municipalities partner with and promote related not-for-profit groups such as Habitat for Humanity.

Table 3 below summarizes the recommended amendments to the final Strategy based on public input.

Table 3
Recommended Strategy Amendments Based on Public Input

Option	Public Comment	Proposed Change
Source Separated Organics Diversion	Overwhelming support for the immediate implementation	Implementation by all local municipalities expected by September 2007
Optimized Blue Box Diversion	Desire to add new materials, make packaging more recyclable and use alternative collection containers to assist with added material volume and litter	To be considered as part of the proposed strategy.
Improved Yard Waste Diversion	Concerns with collection frequency in communities with limited service	Staff to review current service levels to work towards biweekly level of service.
Use of Community Environmental Centres	Broadly supported particularly to divert C&D waste for reuse	No action required
Use of Mandatory Recycling By-laws	General support for some form of action to push non-recyclers	No action required
Use of Bag Limits & Financial Incentives	General support for bag limits	No action required
Increased Promotion & Education	Supported	No action required
Construction & Demolition Diversion	Concern that this option should be a higher priority to support groups like Habitat for Humanity	Staff to consider how to promote existing groups
Textiles Diversion	Supported	No action required
Expansion of Regional Processing Infrastructure	Supported	No action required
Expanded Advocacy Efforts by the Region	Concern that this be prioritized higher	Local municipalities are currently working on improving multi-residential diversion. Region staff to propose an advocacy program in the Region's 2007 budget.

4.5 Anticipated Diversion Rate

The draft Strategy proposed an initial diversion target of 65% based on implementation of the options recommended for immediate implementation as outlined in Table 1. Some residents thought that higher levels of diversion might be possible through actions such as those identified by staff for future consideration in Table 1. It is important to recognize, however, that many of the options suggested by residents and local environmental groups such as reducing packaging, while potentially reducing the amount of waste managed, will not increase diversion rates as they are currently reported under Provincial guidelines. Moreover, the Region's reported diversion rate unlike that commonly reported by local municipalities, must also take residue from processing of recyclables

into consideration. This fact will ultimately reduce the Region's diversion rate several percentage points below the local municipal curbside diversion rate.

Staff believes implementation of the options identified for future consideration could increase local curbside diversion levels as high as 75%. Staff, however, recommend against modifying the joint municipal diversion target until action plans for the various options are developed and the cost implications is fully understood.

4.6 Next Steps

Pending Council approval of the Strategy, staff from the ten jurisdictions propose to begin working on action plans for each of the options to establish more detailed timelines and budgets.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A total of \$65,000 was allocated from the Solid Waste Management Branch's 2006 operating budget to complete the Strategy.

Cost estimates to implement the various options have been included in the Strategy. It will, however, take time for staff to develop a detailed analysis of each option so that the full cost implications of the Strategy can be considered and budgeted accordingly.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Implementation of the options included in the final Strategy is expected to have significant cost and service level implications on the Region and local municipalities. Their implementation is, however, expected to make York Region and its local municipalities leaders in the field of waste diversion and reduce Regional and local municipal dependence on out of jurisdiction landfill capacity.

7. CONCLUSION

In the spring of 2006 York Region and its local municipalities agreed to develop a joint municipal waste diversion strategy. The purpose of the joint strategy was to ensure the coordinated efforts of all ten jurisdictions in the implementation of waste management efforts. A draft strategy was approved in principle in the spring. Public consultation conducted over the summer confirmed support from local residents and environmental groups for the strategy. Amendments made to the strategy, based on public input, include: an immediate emphasis on advocacy efforts to encourage industry and businesses to show greater environmental leadership, diversion of construction and demolition waste through promotion of not-for-profit organizations and addition of information on local municipal efforts to improve multi-residential diversion.

Prepared by:



Jeff Meggitt, B.A.
Manager, Waste Management & Traffic Operations
Town of Richmond Hill

Reviewed by:



Brian Jones, P.Eng.
Chair,
Joint Municipal Diversion Strategy
Committee

Attachment (2)
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314994 P27 Sept 13/06