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COMMERCIAL YARD WASTE FROM THE ASIAN LONG-HORNED BEETLE REGULATED AREA

The Solid Waste Management Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, June 14, 2004, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Regional Municipality of York accept yard waste and wood from commercial sources, which has been generated within the Region's Asian Long-horned Beetle regulated area, conditional upon the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) confirming in writing that it will reimburse the Region for its net cost to process and dispose of this material, as outlined in this report.
2. Regional staff be directed to issue a written request to the CFIA for this funding.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to address the problem in that commercial sources in the Region have no outlet for yard waste and wood that is potentially infested with the Asian Long-horned Beetle.

3. BACKGROUND

The Federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food issued the Asian Long-horned Beetle (ALHB) Infested Place Order on February 27, 2004. Regional staff have made several presentations to Committee and Regional Council regarding this matter.

4. ANALYSIS

4.1 Materials from Commercial Sources

The Region is not responsible for the management of waste from commercial sources. Accordingly, Regional staff advised the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) that the Region would not be taking any measures to accept yard waste and wood from commercial sources.

The CFIA has not done anything to date to rectify this problem. Furthermore, when the CFIA receives telephone calls from landscaping companies and businesses asking what they should do with their regulated materials, they direct them to call the Region.

The City of Toronto accepts yard waste and wood for a fee from commercial sources at its Emery Works Yard which is located near Finch Avenue and Weston Road. Toronto staff advised the Region in early May that due to space limitations they cannot accept material that has been generated within the Region's regulated area. Since that time, they have accepted material from commercial sources in the Region on occasion, but most often they deny them access and advise them to call the Region.

4.2 Region's Establishment of a Temporary Facility

Regional staff established a temporary processing facility at its Transportation and Works Southwest Patrol Yard at the beginning of April. This was necessary because the City of Vaughan commenced its spring municipal yard waste collection program on April 6th and needed a location to unload the collected material. This location can only be used until the fall as all of the space will be taken over by winter road maintenance operations.

It is noted that the Region has received a few requests from residents regarding access to this site because they had large quantities of material that were not practical for curbside collection. Regional staff confirmed that the requests were legitimate and allowed the residents to deliver their materials.

4.3 Status of a Permanent Facility

Regional staff have identified a site that appears to be suitable for the establishment of a permanent processing facility. The Director of Realty Services has initiated the process to appraise the value of the property. It is intended that options to lease and/or purchase it will be negotiated.

The site will be required for at least the next four years, by which time it is hoped that the ALHB will be eradicated. Assuming the site can be acquired, Regional staff will be submitting an application to the Ministry of the Environment for a Certificate of Approval to operate the facility.

4.4 Need to Address Commercial Material

The Ministerial Order restricts the movement of certain types of yard waste and wood. Accordingly, the Region may not transport these materials outside of the regulated area unless they are ground to a size no greater than $\frac{5}{8}$ inches in two dimensions. If the processed material meets this specification, then the CFIA will issue a Movement Certificate to allow it to be transported outside of the regulated area.

The grinding of yard waste and wood to this specification can only be achieved by using a special type of grinder. These machines are very large and there are only a limited number of them available. Therefore, the cost to the Region to retain a contractor to bring one of these machines to the Region's site is quite significant.

It has only been necessary for the Region to engage a grinding contractor at the Southwest Patrol Yard once to date for this project. This was for a half-day at the end of April. A second half-day of processing is scheduled for mid-June.

Since there are no weigh scales at the Region's Southwest Patrol Yard, it is very difficult to determine the cost per tonne to process this material. However, preliminary estimates indicate that it is in the order of \$100 to \$150 per tonne.

The material that has been processed to date will be used by the Region's forestry staff as mulch for tree planting. However, there is a finite limit as to the quantity of mulch that they can use. Therefore, it is very likely that the Region will need to find a receiver for this material outside of the Region. The cost for transportation and disposal to a potential receiver could be in the order of \$60 per tonne.

Commercial sources from the Region, such as landscaping companies, are used to delivering their yard waste and wood materials to the Composting Facility on Bloomington Road in Richmond Hill, which is owned and operated by Miller Waste Systems. The company charges them \$50 per tonne. In accordance with the Ministerial Order, this facility is not accepting any material that has been generated in the regulated area.

If the Region were to accept materials from commercial sources, then it may need to charge as much as \$150 to \$200 per tonne to cover its costs. It would also need to assign a person to the site to control access and accept payment. Commercial sources will not be willing to pay \$150 to \$200 per tonne, if they are used to paying Miller Waste Systems \$50 per tonne.

If the Region's total cost to process the material is \$200 per tonne and it is able to receive payment from commercial sources of \$50 per tonne, then its net cost would be the difference, which is \$150 per tonne. Regional staff have informally asked the CFIA if it would subsidize the Region's cost to handle material from commercial sources. The informal response from the CFIA is that it would not likely provide funding for this item.

It is noted that if the Region decides to accept materials from commercial sources for a fee, then it will have to enact a by-law. Furthermore, the Region would have to hold a public meeting before enacting the by-law and provide the public with a minimum of 21 days advance notice of the meeting.

The Region needs to formally address this problem with the CFIA as soon as possible in order to minimize the risk of the ALHB infestation spreading outside of the regulated area through uncontrolled commercial sources. Therefore, it is recommended that the Region accept yard waste and wood from commercial sources, which has been generated within the Region's ALHB regulated area, conditional upon the CFIA confirming in writing that it will reimburse the Region for its net cost to process and dispose of this material.

It is further recommended that Regional staff be directed to issue a written request to the CFIA for this funding.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Region did not include any funds within its 2004 Operating Budget for Solid Waste Management to deal with the special processing of yard waste required because of the ALHB problem. Authorization has been obtained to draw funds from the general Capital Reserve to cover the handling of yard waste delivered by the City of Vaughan and residents only.

The Region has never been responsible for processing yard waste generated by commercial sources. Therefore, there is no data available with respect to the tonnage of yard waste and wood that may be generated by commercial sources within the regulated area on an annual basis. Accordingly, it is very difficult to estimate at this time what it would cost the Region to handle yard waste and wood from commercial sources if no funding is provided by the CFIA.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The regulated area within the Region at the present time is approximately bounded by Rutherford Road to the north; Steeles Avenue to the south; Dufferin Street to the east; and, Highway 27 to the west. If steps are not taken to control the materials generated by commercial sources, then this will increase the risk that the infestation will spread outside of the regulated area.

The City of Vaughan has been incurring extra costs to carry out a special collection of regulated yard waste materials from residents within the regulated area. If the ALHB infestation spreads and increases the size of the regulated area, then collection costs for the City of Vaughan and possibly other local municipalities will also increase.

7. CONCLUSION

There is no facility currently available to accept yard waste and wood from commercial sources within the Region's ALHB regulated area. The recommendations of this report, if adopted, would be the first formal step taken by the Region to reach a potential solution to this problem.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.