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YORK REGION LITTER PREVENTION STRATEGY

The Solid Waste Management Committee recommends the following:

- 1. The presentation by Michael Birrett, Manager, Program Development and Planning, be received; and**
- 2. The recommendations contained in the following report, September 7, 2004, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works, be adopted:**

- 1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

1. The Litter Prevention Strategy as outlined in the report be endorsed.
2. Council approve the concept of private sector sponsorship of the Strategy to help defray operating expenses, as outlined in Section 4 of the report.

- 2. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide details of the proposed five year Regional Litter Prevention Strategy to be launched in October, 2004 and implemented over a five year period.

- 3. BACKGROUND**

Regional Council adopted Clause 2 of Report No. 1 of the Solid Waste Management Committee entitled “The Regional Municipality of York – Anti-Litter Campaign” on January 22, 2004. Council amended the recommendations to indicate that in addition to working with the local municipalities, the City of Toronto and other Greater Toronto Area regions to develop the Strategy, Regional staff should also work with the school boards and encourage the local municipalities to review and enhance their anti-litter by-laws. The report provided general information on litter, a synopsis of anti-litter programs within York Region and other jurisdictions, and provided the results of a litter survey done for the Region by MGM Management in July, 2003. The report recommended that staff present a subsequent report that detailed a proposed anti-litter campaign along with its associated costs.

- 4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS**

Litter has been recognized as a significant behavioural problem in our society for many years. Staff has developed a Litter Prevention Strategy (the Strategy) which is intended to

reduce the problem through litter collection events and advertising designed to change people's behaviour. The following sections outline the components of the Strategy.

4.1 Provincial Litter and Illegal Dumping Committee

Clause 2 of Report No. 1 of the Solid Waste Management Committee included a recommendation that the Region work with the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) regions, and the City of Toronto, to develop an anti-litter strategy. The recommendation was subsequently discussed with GTA municipalities, and it was determined that a provincial strategy would be more desirable, as it would have greater impact on communities throughout Ontario.

York Region staff developed a Terms of Reference and presented it to the Board of Directors of the Municipal Waste Integration Network (MWIN), a province-wide association of municipal waste management professionals that represents over 85 % of Ontario municipalities, in May, 2004. The proposal was endorsed by MWIN's Board, with illegal dumping of waste being added as an additional area of focus. The new MWIN committee is referred to as the Litter and Illegal Dumping Committee, and York Region staff was selected to chair the Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to develop a coordinated marketing campaign through the use of focus groups which is aimed at building a brand image for litter prevention, and develop effective promotion and education materials to alleviate illegal dumping. The intended outcome of the campaign is to motivate the public to change its behaviour, such that littering would no longer be socially acceptable. The Committee is in the process of developing a province-wide media campaign.

4.2 Advertising Components of the Litter Prevention Strategy

Litter is recognized as a socio-behavioural issue. The development of an advertising campaign to highlight this behaviour as inappropriate is necessary if change is to take place. The proposed campaign will involve creation of a slogan and imagery to capture the public's attention to the litter problem and encourage reducing behaviour of this nature.

4.2.1 Litter Focus Groups

The purpose of the focus groups is to obtain feedback from the public to develop the appropriate slogan and images that will be used as the basis for the advertising campaign.

A series of four focus groups will be conducted using a broad cross-section of the local population. The City of Mississauga has implemented the "Don't be a LitterBug!" slogan and logo, which has been officially endorsed by all nine of the local municipalities in the York Region. The Region will be testing this slogan, amongst others, to determine if it should be adopted as the basis for the Region's advertising campaign. Participants will also be interviewed to determine appropriate messaging and advertising media to ensure a successful campaign. The results will be used to create various forms of advertising, as outlined in Section 4.2.2.

4.2.2 Advertising Elements of the Strategy

Use of the following advertising elements is proposed pending feedback from the focus groups:

- A series of advertisements will be placed in local newspapers.
- Posters and brochures will be distributed at key community locations including libraries and community centres throughout the Region.
- Litter will be incorporated as a theme at Regional environmental events.
- Promotional and educational information on litter for adults and students will be posted on the Region's website.
- Litter prevention signs will be developed and placed at entry and exit points to the Region, and potentially on Regional roads.
- Advertising of the litter program will be developed and appear on Regional buses, at bus shelters and on litter containers using the appropriate slogan and imagery.

Staff is also currently investigating the distribution of litter bins on Regional roads, and will be monitoring the results of a new pilot project being conducted in the City of Toronto to test billboard-type public garbage bins developed by Urban Equipment of Canada, Inc (EUCAN). The pilot project results will be the subject of a separate report to Committee and Council.

4.3 Litter Cleanup Events Planned for October, 2004

Organization of a series of events to clean up litter throughout the Region is also proposed as part of the Strategy. The events were planned to coincide with Waste Reduction Week in Canada, which will be held from October 18 to 24, 2004. The following section describes the proposed events.

4.3.1 Litter Cleanup Event at York Region's Facilities

It is proposed that a litter cleanup day be organized on Wednesday, October 13th, 2004. Selected facilities, including the York Region Administrative Centre and neighbouring businesses, will be cleaned up during the day. Specific litter reduction information will be posted on the intranet and sent to all staff. Local businesses will be invited to pitch in.

4.3.2 "Litter Roundup" Events for Schools

"Litter Roundup" events will be organized at schools in the York Region District School Board and the York Region Roman Catholic District School Board. Regional staff has had discussions with school board representatives on plans for our events. Information packages will be sent out to schools in September. The package will include general information on litter in the Region and a flyer promoting the "Litter Roundup" event that will take place on Thursday, October 21st. Schools will be encouraged to clean up litter not only on their properties but also from areas in the immediate vicinity of the schools, such as paths leading to local plazas.

The budget for the event is comprised of costs associated with graphic design, production and printing of an information package to be distributed to schools, along with the provision by private sector sponsors of garbage bags, gloves, etc. if these items cannot be supplied on an in-kind basis.

4.3.3 “Community Clean-up Blitz” Event for the Community

A “Community Clean-up Blitz” event will be held on Saturday, October 23rd, 2004 in partnership with the local municipalities, some of whom have agreed to organize the participation of community groups, with the Region providing necessary supplies such as garbage bags and gloves.

The event will encourage residents and community organizations to clean up littered areas within their municipalities.

The largest proportion (60% or \$15,000) of the costs associated with the event consists of placing advertisements in local newspapers to encourage participation in the event. The remainder of the costs consist of designing the advertisements, private sector sponsors providing garbage bags, gloves, etc. if these items cannot be supplied on an in-kind basis, and the cost associated with litter pickup at locations throughout the Region.

4.4 Other Components of the Litter Strategy

Efforts to reduce unintentional sources of litter are also proposed within the Strategy.

4.4.1 Litter from Blue Boxes

Litter resulting from items placed at the curb for blue box collection has been a problem experienced by communities throughout Ontario. It is proposed that newspaper advertising be developed in conjunction with the local municipalities to try and address this issue. The proposed advertising would stress the importance of properly placing lightweight items such as paper securely in the blue box.

In addition, it is proposed that the Region work with local municipalities to conduct a pilot project to investigate the feasibility of distributing blue box lids. The Region will be participating in prototype testing of the blue box lid in 2005 to determine if the concept is viable in principle.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is anticipated that the gross cost for the anti-litter campaign will be a maximum of \$61,000 in 2004. Use of private sector sponsorship, if approved by Council, will reduce the net cost significantly. There are sufficient funds available in the 2004 Operating Budget to cover the balance of the expenditures. The budget for the proposed Strategy is summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Cost of Litter Prevention Campaign

Activity	Annual Cost	
	2004	2005-2008
• School Litter Roundup event	\$10,000	\$10,000
• Operation Clean business event		20,000
• Community Clean-up Blitz event	25,000	25,000
• Focus groups	14,000	N/A
• Blue Box litter advertisement		5,000
• Posters		2,000
• Pamphlets	6,000	3,000
• Ads on transit vehicles, shelters, litter bins		2,000
• Litter reduction signage		12,000
• Production of litter bags for distribution	1,000	1,000
Sub-Total	56,000	80,000
20% contingency	5,000	16,000
Total	\$61,000	\$96,000

5.1 Review and Evaluation of Litter Prevention Strategy

There will be sufficient funds set aside in the 2004-2008 Operating Budgets to carry out the Strategy. As noted above, the annual budget for the strategy in 2005 and subsequent years will decrease, since the cost to design the slogan and imagery will be incurred in 2004. In the event that changes are made over time to the advertising campaign, additional costs will be incurred in subsequent years. Prior to the conclusion of the five year period, staff will submit a report to Council which outlines the outcome of the campaign, and a recommendation as to whether it should be continued.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Region has been actively working with the local municipalities to develop the proposed strategy. Where appropriate, the local municipalities are organizing operational components of the litter events, with the Region providing necessary supplies such as garbage bags and gloves.

All of the nine local municipalities have officially endorsed the “Don’t be a LitterBug!” campaign developed by the City of Mississauga. This slogan will be tested along with others as part of the developmental phase of Strategy’s advertising component. Should a different slogan be selected for the Regional Strategy, additional efforts would be required to try and harmonize the different promotional messages at the two levels of local government.

7. CONCLUSION

Litter has been recognized as a major societal and environmental problem for many years. The Region has proposed a five year litter prevention strategy which is intended to change the public's littering behaviour. It is anticipated that the strategy will have a positive impact throughout the Region. Prior to the conclusion of the five year period, staff will submit a report which summarizes the results of the Strategy, and provide recommendations as to whether it should be continued.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.