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OPENING OF THE ELGIN MILLS COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE

The Environmental Services Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report dated August 29, 2011, from the Commissioner of Environmental Services.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

2. PURPOSE

This report provides information on the opening of York Region's second Community Environmental Centre on Elgin Mills Road in the Town of Richmond Hill.

3. BACKGROUND

The continued growth of the Region's network of Community Environmental Centres is a key element of the Region's Solid Waste Management infrastructure, as put forward in the Joint Waste Diversion Strategy and approved by Regional and Local Municipal Councils in Fall 2006.

Community Environmental Centres provide the public with conveniently located points of access to solid waste management services and ensure the materials received are dealt with in a manner consistent with our sustainable, integrated waste management strategy. These facilities enhance local municipal collection programs by providing the opportunity to manage materials not easily handled by curbside programs. They also offer additional flexibility for users by providing greater access to waste management services through their extended operating hours (*see Attachment 1*). By providing these additional services to the public it is anticipated that Community Environmental Centres will increase material reuse and recycling, contributing to York Region's waste diversion objectives.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The Elgin Mills Community Environmental Centre is located at 1124 Elgin Mills Road East adjacent to the Town of Richmond Hill's Operations Centre. The facility includes permanent canopies covering the collected materials and a Reuse Centre operated by both Habitat for Humanity York Region and Goodwill Industries, Inc.

The facility functions in a coordinated manner with the Town's existing facilities that include vehicular access, common use of internal roadways, partial use of the Town's building for the Reuse Centre and a coordinated Stormwater Management Strategy.

The Elgin Mills Community Environmental Centre provides a locally-based, environmentally beneficial public service that incorporates a conservation themed public education and information area. The public education and information area will include a display for resource materials and information about waste management, sustainable development and environmental conservation. Information related to local and Regional programs (i.e. Blue Box, Green Bin, Water for Tomorrow, etc.) will be available.

Partnering with socially focused community reuse organizations

Initial discussions with Goodwill Industries and Habitat for Humanity have confirmed their interest in operating the Reuse Centre to collect quality reusable goods from the public. As managed at the McCleary Court Community Environmental Centre, they will distribute reusable goods collected at their retail business outlets. Consistent with operations at the McCleary Court Community Environmental Centre, neither organization will be conducting retail activities at the Community Environmental Centre.

Operations and haulage contract awarded to GFL Environmental Corporation

The operations and haulage tender for the Elgin Mills Community Environmental Centre was issued on June 30, 2011 and closed on July 19, 2011. The contract was awarded to GFL Environmental Corporation, which had the lowest tender price. Work commenced on September 1, 2011.

GFL Environmental Corporation brings qualified experience to the Elgin Mills Community Environmental Centre as the operators of the McCleary Court Community Environmental Centre in Vaughan. The McCleary Court Community Environmental Centre has received recognition for its excellent customer service and operational efficiencies.

In September 2009, McCleary Court Community Environmental Centre facility users were surveyed over a period of three days. Of the 64 participants 100% were extremely pleased with the clean site and 98% indicated that staff were helpful and friendly. GFL Environmental Corporation are committed to maintaining the same level of customer satisfaction for the Elgin Mills Community Environmental Centre.

Lessons learned through operation of McCleary Court Community Environmental Centre incorporated in Elgin Mills Community Environmental Centre

Based on experience from operating the McCleary Court Community Environmental Centre in Vaughan, numerous items and tactics are included in Elgin Mills Community Environmental Centre. Some of these include:

- promotion and education efforts will be delivered on a continual basis to encourage regular use. For the remainder of 2011 and throughout 2012 there will be regular advertisement and promotion of the Elgin Mills Community Environmental Centre
- facility is located in a prominent location where it will be recognizable and easy for residents to access
- facility is located in a densely populated area and is accessible within a 20 minute drive time radius by many York Region residents

Additionally, making Community Environmental Centres a 'one-stop' shop for residents' waste management needs is desirable as it improves convenience for residents, increases the number of users and improves service delivery efficiency by consolidating operations. Currently staff are developing plans for incorporation of household hazardous waste drop-off services at the McCleary Court and Elgin Mills Community Environmental Centres. Staff will work with Richmond Hill staff to coordinate the integration of household hazardous waste within the Community Environmental Centre. Staff will evaluate incorporation of household hazardous waste at Elgin Mills Community Environmental Centre after one year of operating experience.

Celebrating the opening of the Elgin Mills Community Environmental Centre slated for September and October

The Community Environmental Centre opened in three phases, similar to the opening completed at McCleary Court in Vaughan.

Soft Launch – September 8, 2011

The site opened its gates on September 1, 2011 as a soft opening to the residents living in the vicinity of the site. This opening was advertised via direct mail to the surrounding homes as a VIP invitation to use the facility. The area targeted was the residential area of approximately 1,200 homes just south of the facility. The soft opening approach allows staff to trial the operation of the facility with limited attendance before the Grand Opening.

Official Grand Opening and Media Launch are planned for late October 2011

The official Grand Opening of the facility will be held in late October, 2011. The event will include speeches, an official ribbon cutting ceremony and an unveiling of the facility placard, followed by refreshments and site tours of the grounds and facility for the guests.

A media advisory will be distributed prior to the Grand Opening.

Public Grand Opening to occur in late October 2011

The official public opening for the facility will also occur late October, 2011. On this day, staff will be on-site to answer questions, direct visitors and hand out information and provide a welcome gift (to be determined) to the first 100 vehicles who visit the facility.

An advertising campaign is being developed that will include media kits, newspaper advertisements in the local newspapers throughout the Region, brochure distribution at public events and municipal offices, webpage updates, a direct mail announcement to residents of Richmond Hill, Aurora, Markham and Whitchurch-Stouffville, and a media release that will inform residents of the facility opening, which materials are accepted, the benefits to the environment and its hours of operation.

Facility mirrors the “4 Rs” hierarchy

The Elgin Mills Community Environmental Centre has been designed to accommodate a variety of materials within specifically designated areas:

- Reuse Centre
- Household goods (tenant/operator – Goodwill Industries)
- Building materials (tenant/operator – Habitat for Humanity)
- Receiving and storage area for large appliances
- Drop-off areas for receiving recyclable materials and residual waste
- Receiving and storage area for electronic waste

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding for the design and construction of the Elgin Mills Community Environmental Centre is included in the 2011, 10 Year Capital Plan and is funded through York Region tax levies.

Subsequently, Infrastructure Stimulus Funding was approved for this initiative. The funding program provides the Region with two-thirds of the initial estimated cost of facility actual costs \$13,000, 000. The funding amount of \$6,500,000 is shared equally between the federal and provincial levels of government. Fund disbursement is based on adherence to the fund’s conditions including a project completion date of no later than October 31, 2011.

The total cost for communication and education activities planned in support of the opening of the Elgin Mills Community Environmental Centre for 2011 is \$70,000. Funds have been approved and allocated in the 2011 Solid Waste operations budget.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Elgin Mills Community Environmental Centre will provide surrounding area residents with local access to enhanced Regional waste management services. These services will augment existing curbside collection programs and will also serve as an educational hub where residents can learn about the Region's environmental based programs.

Region staff continue to work with local municipalities on the development of the Community Environmental Centre network through the Integrated Waste Management Master Plan process.

7. CONCLUSION

The Elgin Mills Community Environmental Centre is reflective of the Region's sustainability strategy and commitment to environmentally sound waste management. By providing residents with convenient access to facilities to drop-off a broader set of reusable and recyclable materials, Community Environmental Centres further enhance the already positive engagement of the public in waste diversion while improving access to waste management services. The public education area at the Elgin Mills Centre also promotes waste conservation and York Region waste programs at the effective point of communication to encourage sustainable practices. Additional waste diversion achieved through this facility will assist the Region in achieving its waste diversion objectives.

For more information on this report, please contact Laura McDowell, Director of Environmental Promotion and Protection at 905-830-4444, Ext. 5077.
The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is attached to this report.)

Please refer to Clause 7.9.

Elgin Mills Community Environmental Centre

Hours of Operation, Accepted Materials and User Fees

Day	Hours
Monday	9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.*
Friday	9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Saturday	9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Sunday	9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

***Note:** From April 1 to October 31, on Thursdays, the Elgin Mills Community Environmental Centre will remain open until 7 p.m.

Acceptable Materials

- Batteries – small household (e.g. watch batteries, AAA through D size batteries)
- Blue Box recyclables
- Clean soil
- Clothing (reuse)
- Concrete
- Compact fluorescent light bulbs
- Drywall
- Electronics
- Furniture (reuse)
- Garbage
- Household goods (reuse)
- Refrigerated appliances
- Rubble
- Scrap metal
- Shredded paper
- Tires
- Wood (Non-treated lumber)

Material Type	Residents User Fee per Load	Small Business User Fee per Load
Residual Waste:		
• Car or minivan	\$10.00	\$28.00
• Car or minivan + small utility trailer	\$13.00	\$28.00
• Car or minivan + large utility trailer	\$23.00	\$28.00
• Pick up truck	\$30.00	\$35.00
• 12 foot or 14 foot cube van	\$89.00	\$90.00
Tires (limit of 4 per visit):		
• Car and light truck (off rim)	No Charge	No Charge
• Heavy truck (off rim)	No Charge	No Charge
Recyclable Blue Box Materials	No Charge	No Charge
Scrap Metal	No Charge	No Charge
Refrigerated Appliances containing CFCs	\$20.00 each	\$20.00 each
Refrigerated Appliance with CFCs removed	No Charge	\$10.00 each
Other, such as electronics, wood, dry wall, concrete, scrap metal, etc.	No Charge	No Charge

*Note: Vehicles larger than a 14 foot cube van are not permitted. They may use the Georgina Transfer Station as an alternative.

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