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REUSE PROGRAM AT THE GEORGINA TRANSFER STATION

The Solid Waste Management Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, December 17, 2003, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Goodwill Industries operate the Reuse Program at the Georgina Transfer Station for 12-months commencing in the spring of 2004.
2. Regional Council approve a budget of \$10,000 to operate the Reuse Program over the 12-month period subject to budget approval.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide details regarding the Reuse Program at the Region's Solid Waste Transfer Station in Georgina.

3. BACKGROUND

A 12-month pilot project to accept reusable items from residents at the Georgina Transfer Station was approved by Regional Council through the adoption of Clause 2 in Report No. 2 of the Solid Waste Management Committee at its meeting on June 12, 2003. The report provided preliminary details on the Reuse Program, and recommended that a detailed report on the program be provided prior to launching it.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Reuse is the second "R" in the hierarchy of the 3Rs (reduction, reuse, recycling). Reuse is defined as "prolonging the life of an item before recycling or eventually or ultimately discarding it." Reuse facilities, over the years, have been established by individuals, businesses, governments and communities for the purpose of exchanging reusable items in order to maximize their useful life and avoid waste disposal as long as possible.

The Regional Municipality of York used the Keele Valley Landfill Site for many years to dispose of the majority of its residential and industrial, commercial and institutional (IC&I) solid waste. With the closure of the landfill site on December 31, 2002, the Region began to ship the majority of its waste to two landfills in the State of Michigan. In light of increased transportation and waste disposal costs faced by the Region, the

implementation of reuse programs will hopefully help to focus attention on diverting more waste from landfill.

There are different types of reuse programs in operation throughout Ontario. Some reuse centres are full-scale such as those operated by the City of Guelph and the Region of Peel accept reusable items and allow donors to take away for free or purchase other times on site. Other reuse programs such as those operated by the Region of Halton and the Region of Waterloo operate on a smaller scale, focussing on the acceptance of reusable items which are subsequently transported off-site for resale.

The reuse program proposed by the Region at the Georgina Transfer Station will not be full-scale, as it will strictly focus on the acceptance of reusable items for shipment and resale off site. This decision was made in order to test the initial concept of reuse with residents on a smaller scale. Assuming that the Georgina Reuse Program is successful, the Region will consider implementing a full-scale reuse program, which could involve the sale or giveaway of reusable items at its new small vehicle transfer station, which is scheduled to open in the southern portion of the Region in 2004. The new facility is outlined in a separate report, which is also on this meeting's agenda, entitled "Preliminary Results of the Site Search for a Small Vehicle Transfer Station".

In other municipalities in Ontario some reuse programs are operated in conjunction with local charitable organizations. In the fall of 2003, staff had discussions with the Canadian Diabetes Association, Goodwill Industries, Habitat for Humanity and the Salvation Army to determine their interest in such a program in York Region. Given the proposed short term pilot, the broad range of items to be collected, and the facility location, only Goodwill Industries was able to undertake the program.

4.1 Description of Contractor

Goodwill Industries is a registered Canadian charity that was established by a group of local doctors, lawyers and citizens in 1935. The organization was originally known as The Society for Crippled Civilians. The purpose of the organization is to develop and provide employment, support and services that meet the needs of people facing barriers of employment. This targetted group includes persons with disabilities, new Canadians, individuals with limited education, lack of competitive work skills or lack of work experience. Goodwill's programs combine the ability to learn about work with the opportunity to practice on-the-job skills. Goodwill offers its workforce the opportunity to work and learn new skills, which provides a foundation for self-reliance. This self-reliance is accomplished through the provision of sector-based Workforce Development to people through five areas of work:

- Call Centre.
- Customer service/retail.
- Food services.
- Janitorial and maintenance.
- Creative services.

The Society for Crippled Civilians changed its name to Goodwill Toronto in 1974 and operated out of a retail store in Toronto. This facility was a retail/recycling operation that provided an opportunity for people with disabilities to refurbish and re-sell donated goods. Today, Goodwill operates 35 retail stores throughout Ontario including those in York Region, Barrie, Peel Region, Orillia, Kingston and Ottawa. Each year, Goodwill receives an estimated 30 million pounds of reusable clothing and housewares. Goodwill currently employs about 700 people and works with over 300 active volunteers each year. Goodwill's Jarvis Street location recycles items not sold in stores by converting old clothes into industrial wipes (cleaning cloths), and other items which are unfit for retail sale are sold to salvage brokers. The vast majority of all donated goods are resold.

4.2 Description of Reuse Program

For the purpose of the pilot project, Goodwill has agreed to provide a 52-foot trailer (Attended Donation Centre) to serve as the storage unit for the reusable goods and office area for the attendants. The trailer will be provided by Goodwill and will include identification that it is an Attended Donation Centre and may also include a temporary banner for the Reuse Program. The trailer will be equipped with a wooden staircase and electrical hook-up. The Region and Goodwill will share the cost of monthly trailer fees, transportation costs, labour and marketing.

4.2.1 Reuse Facility Location

The proposed Reuse Program will be located at the Region's Solid Waste Transfer Station, located at 23068 Warden Avenue, in the Town of Georgina. The reuse trailer will be located on a grassy area just west of the existing Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) building.

This location was selected due to the following reasons:

- Good visibility to the transfer station weigh scale.
- Sufficient space for the queuing of cars and parking.
- Options for placement of trailer.
- Easy access to weigh scales for customers with reusable and disposable items.
- Minimal amount of site work required (e.g. good drainage).

4.2.2 Operation of Program

The trailer will be the focal point for the Reuse Program. Residents and businesses which have reusable items will initially be directed to the trailer to drop off their items. There will be direct interaction between the contractor and the donors when items are dropped off. Items which cannot be reused will be communicated to the donors and alternative options (recycling and/or waste) will be provided. Wherever possible, Goodwill staff will accept the items in order to avoid potential disagreements.

Once the trailer is full with reusable items, it will be picked up and removed from the site with an empty trailer being dropped off simultaneously. Each trailer load will be weighed to determine the quantity of reusable items being diverted from landfill. The trailer load of reusable goods is transported to Goodwill's central location in Toronto, where the contents are segregated by material type and shipped out to its stores for resale.

Regional staff also initially considered the option of allowing donors to purchase reusable items or obtain them free of charge on site. However, it was determined that since a trailer would be used to store the items, this would not be conducive to allowing donors to shop for items, as there is inadequate parking available on site to allow for the public to purchase items, and this would create traffic congestion on busy days. Consequently, for the purpose of the pilot project, the focus will be on the collection of goods only rather than donors also taking away reusable items from the Transfer Station.

4.2.2.1 Hours of Operation

The Reuse Program's hours of operation will be similar to those of the Transfer Station on Saturdays. Consequently, the hours of operation will be 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays beginning April, 2004. During the winter months (January through March, 2005), the operating hours will be based on the time of day when the majority of customers have visited the facility in the past. This will be determined through discussions with Goodwill Industries.

4.2.2.2 Material Accepted

The following items will be accepted by Goodwill during the course of the pilot project: men's and women's clothing, shoes, books, toys, electronics and television sets (in good working order), housewares including dishes and furniture including couches, beds and dressers. Goodwill does not wish to accept items that are not in good working order such as couches, console television sets, stereos, mattresses, large appliances, and barbecues.

4.2.2.3 Approvals for Reuse Program

The launch of the Reuse Program is contingent upon the proposal being reviewed by the Town of Georgina and the Ministry of the Environment. Regional staff will be working on submitting applications for approvals on zoning, building and site plan. The Ministry of the Environment will be contacted to determine if the proposed program is covered under the current Certificate of Approval, or whether an amendment would be required.

4.2.2.4 Estimated Tonnage Diverted from Landfill

It is estimated that the Reuse Program could divert between 20 and 30 tonnes of reusable goods from landfill during the pilot project. While the diversion rate would be modest in the first year when compared to over 200,000 tonnes of waste being generated each year in the Region, it represents an important first step toward the implementation of a reuse program for the Region. It is anticipated that the quantity of waste collected for reuse would increase in subsequent years once the public is fully aware of its existence.

4.2.2.5 Advertising and Promotion

Since reuse programs are new to the Region, it will be necessary to have a focussed advertising campaign to reach a wide audience. For example, the Region will be launching cross-promotion strategies with Goodwill such that the Region would advertize the Reuse Centre through Goodwill's local stores and Goodwill will advertize its stores in the Region's and/or local municipal advertisements. Other advertising mechanisms may include local newspapers, flyers, and radio and television advertisements. The details of the advertising and promotion program will be finalized in due course.

4.2.2.6 Kick-off Event

The Region is currently contemplating the organization of a “kick-off event” which would notify residents of the importance of reuse, and serve as a lead-in to the pilot project. The Region is investigating the provision of a flyer and garbage bag to promote the Reuse Program to be distributed to households in the northern portion of the Region in advance of the launch of the Reuse Program. This will hopefully generate interest in the program and serve as a beneficial starting point to advertise the program.

4.2.2.7 Official Launch

The Region will organize an official launch ceremony for the Reuse Program in the spring of 2004. This will include the issuance of a press release, and attendance and participation by local and Regional politicians at the ceremony.

4.2.2.8 Evaluation of Reuse Program

Prior to the conclusion of the 12-month pilot project, Regional staff, in conjunction with Goodwill, will examine the program in detail to assess its impact on the community. At that time, the Region will examine its options to potentially expand the program to include other charities and drop-off locations. The assessment will be summarized in report to Council in 2005.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of the pilot project is to test the concept of a Regional Reuse Program to determine whether it is successful in terms of diverting waste from landfill. If the program is successful, Regional staff may recommend that the program be expanded in the future to the new Transfer Station, to be constructed in the southern portion of the Region.

Goodwill has estimated that the operation of a permanent Reuse Program to be \$60,000 per year and would divert between 180 and 300 tonnes of material. The major expenditures for such a project would include the cost of providing one full-time and one part-time staff person operating the depot during the normal operating hours of the Transfer Station (Monday to Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.), and the cost to transport full trailers to Goodwill’s facility in Toronto and replace them with empty trailers.

Regional staff propose to operate a smaller-scale reuse pilot program than the one indicated by Goodwill. It is proposed that the Region budget \$10,000 which is anticipated to divert between 20 and 25 tonnes of material operating only one day per week. The budget will include items such as the provision of monthly utilities, site preparation and signage, along with sharing the cost of transportation, labour and marketing/promotion that will be determined through negotiations with Goodwill Industries in due course. This may result in the pilot being operated for less than one year depending on when the budget will be expended. The expenditures for the reuse pilot program are listed as an enhancement in the 2004 operating budget.

The program expenditures will be offset by an avoided waste disposal cost, which is material that would otherwise be disposed of is being reused. Assuming that the program is successful, the avoided waste disposal cost would escalate with the receipt of increasing quantities of reusable material.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The Reuse Program will have positive impacts on waste diversion, improve public perception concerning the protection of the environment, and broaden the scope of the Region's 3Rs waste management programs.

Goodwill Industries has been involved in reuse programs in the Region for many years, and is looking forward to expanding its role through the Region's Reuse Program.

7. CONCLUSION

It is proposed that Goodwill Industries be the contractor of the Reuse Program at the Georgina Transfer Station for 12 months commencing in the spring of 2004. It is recommended that Regional Council authorize a budget of \$10,000 to operate the Reuse Program. The Program will enhance the public's perception of the Region in terms of protecting the environment, enhancing the development of the Region's 3Rs programs and reducing the amount of waste destined for landfill.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.