



Waste Diversion Committee

August 1, 2019

Council Chambers

9:00 AM

Members Regional Councillor Jack Heath, Chair Regional Councillor Joe Li Councillor Reid McAlpine Councillor Khalid Usman Guests Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton Valerie Burke Regrets Karl Lyew, MEAC Representative Sara Tam, Manager, Business Planning & Innovation	Staff Brenda Librecz, Commissioner of Community & Fire Services Eddy Wu, Acting Director of Environmental Services Claudia Marsales, Senior Manager, Waste and Environmental Management Juliana Aparicio, Diversion Programs Technician Angela Perry, Waste Operations Assistant Michael DiPasquale, Supervisor, Waste Operations Holena Newton, Water Conservation Specialist Irene Weiss, Assistant to the Director of Environmental Services Laura Gold, Council/Committee Coordinator
--	---

1. Call to Order

The Waste Diversion Committee convened at 9:12 AM with Deputy Mayor Heath in the Chair.

2. Review of Minutes from the Previous Meeting

Moved by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton

Moved by Councillor Reid McAlpine

That the July 9, 2019 Waste Diversion Committee Minutes be approved as presented.

Carried

3. Refillable Water Stations

Holena Newton, Water Conservation Specialist presented some of the challenges with respect to installing refillable water stations. The City needs to ensure there is enough water turnover to maintain legislative standards with respect to water quality. Staff support refillable water stations where there is

no risk of water contamination. Five large parks in Markham have refillable water stations attached to a City facility. These stations are regularly maintained by the City's Operations Department.

Committee provided the following feedback:

- Asked staff to look for a way that minimizes the cost to add a refillable water station to Main Street Unionville when doing the detailed streetscape for the street;
- Suggested that an application to the Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund could be utilized
- Suggested refillable water stations should be provided for residents as a way of eliminating single-use plastic water bottles.

Staff advised that a staff report on proposed enhancements to the Markham Environmental Sustainability Fund will be brought forward to the General Committee for its consideration.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton

Seconded by Regional Councillor Joe Li

That the presentation on refillable water stations be received.

Carried

4. "Best or the Best 2" – Curbside Collection Enhancements

Claudia Marsales, Senior Manager, Waste & Environmental Management presented the "Best of the Best 2"-Curbside Collection Enhancements.

a. Future trends of curbside recycling

The future trends in curbside recycling were presented to the Committee. A key trend impacting single and multi-residential units is the massive increase in home delivery of food and products resulting in additional packaging waste.

Committee discussed the following:

A Committee Member asked if the Province will tackle the littering of cigarette butts. Staff advised that under EPR – Extended Producer Responsibility, the Province could make cigarette manufacturers responsible for costs related to cigarette butts and packaging.

Committee discussed anaerobic versus aerobic processing of green bin material. Staff explained that an aerobic machine can only process food waste in a compostable bag, where an anaerobic digester

can process food waste, and many other things, such as diapers, coffee cups, and dog poop. Currently, Markham's green bin waste is sent to a facility outside of Ottawa. York Region will be asked to provide details of the processing process.

Committee asked for clarification on who the Blue Box 'stewards' are. Staff advised that they are companies that produce the products that go into Ontario's Blue Box such as Johnson & Johnson, and Coke/Pepsi. The stewards pay up to 50% of all Markham's Blue Box recycling costs - approximately 1.2 million to from the 8 million annual payment to York Region.

b. Recommended program enhancements

i. Recycling – Blue Box

Enhancements to the City's Blue Box Program were presented to the Committee.

The following was discussed:

Clear Blue Recycling Bags

Committee generally supported residents being able to put their recycling in clear blue recycling bags and discussed why York Region is opposed to purchasing a bag breaker to permit this. Staff noted the Region paid a consultant to complete a business case for a bag breaker but did not proceed for unknown reasons. Staff noted that funding for recycling facility improvements including bag breakers has always been available from the stewards. It was suggested that York Region may be opposed to purchasing a bag breaker, as accepting the bags is an extra step in the process, which may impact their recycling processing contract.

It was suggested that all municipalities should have the same recycling program across Ontario to avoid confusion, as residents think they can use blue recycling bags since big cities like Toronto, Mississauga and Oakville permit them. Residents also appear to want to use these bags to recycle for many different reasons. In addition staff noted that recyclables from Markham parks are in blue bags and from older multi-res units. Importantly, allowing the use of recycling bags reduces litter, increases recycling participation rates and diversion.

York Region has requested that Markham not collect recyclables in bags and to remove items from its recycling program, such as black plastic, coffee pods, take out coffee cups, and plastic bags. Staff will need direction from Council, as it is anticipated that removing these items and leaving bagged recyclables at the curb will not be well received by residents. Staff are not currently supporting any change to the Blue Box recycling program until the Province announces their changes.

The Committee suggested that the City invite representatives from Miller and York Region to come to a future meeting to discuss Markham's waste management program and some of the above issues.

Moving to Larger Blue Boxes

Committee supported no longer providing the 60 l small blue boxes and only offer for sale the 80 l blue boxes with the understanding smaller bins can still be purchased at a many retail stores such as Home Depot.

Deposit Return systems reduce litter

Staff proposed that the City look at a pilot program with deposit return fee for take out coffee cups. Such a pilot would be very innovative and would reduce the amount of litter in Markham.

Committee suggested that this year's Children Festival either have paper straws or no straws to show civic leadership. Councillor Khalid Usman will bring this up at the next Children's Festival meeting. Chairman Heath offered to contribute to the cost of paper straws for the event.

Replacement of Broken Green and Recycling Bins

Committee recommended that the fee to replace broken recycling and green bins be eliminated in the 2019 budget, as the City wants to encourage participation in the program. Staff are recommending this be negotiated into the new waste management contract.

Recycling of Car Seats and Bulky Plastic

Committee supported the idea of recycling car seats, and bulky plastic if recycling options exists.

ii. Organics – Green Bin

Enhancements to the City's Green Bin program were presented to the Committee.

The following was discussed:

Green Bin

Committee discussed whether future fleet vehicles should be equipped with a cart tipper. Staff are recommending this so that residents can have the option to purchase larger green bins, as the bins are well utilized and the waste is heavy. This will also help with the pick-up of waste at multi-residential buildings with larger green carts. Committee requested additional details on the size of the larger green carts and suggested residents could just buy another green bin. Staff strongly suggested an option for residents to purchase a larger green bin is preferable to collecting multiple green bin from homes.

Committee asked which businesses receive green bin collection service from the City. Staff advised that the City collects green bin waste from businesses located in the BIAs only as permitted by legislation.

Staff clarified that under the City's current waste management program, disposable coffee cups can be put in either the green bin or the recycling bin. York Region is requesting that they no longer be put in the recycling bin and be put in the garbage.

Banning Placing Food Waste in Backyard Composts

Committee supported educating residents and possibly prohibiting putting food waste in their backyard composters due to it attracting wildlife and rodents such as mice and rats. Staff clarified that Markham no longer sells backyard composters as we have an extensive weekly green bin service. York Region continues to offer low cost backyard composters for sale at their recycling centers.

iii. Garbage – Clear Bag

Clear Bags

Staff suggested promoting the benefits of the clear bag program to York Region and to the other municipalities in York Region, as a way of reducing the amount of waste sent to the incinerator and saving money. It was noted that Durham Region is currently investigating the possibility of expanding the incinerator for an additional 20,000 tonnes per year. 15,000 for Durham and 5,000 for York) It was suggested that a clear bag program across York Region would reduce waste by more than 5,000 tonnes.

Committee discussed whether the City should sell small and large sized “Markham approved” clear bags at its recycling depots. The idea is being proposed, as residents indicated at a focus group that was held by the City that sourcing the bags was sometimes a challenge. They also indicated that they are sometimes confused, which bags to purchase. The proposed pricing of the bags will be competitive and the packaging can say “Markham Approved”. Residents will also need smaller bags if the City proceeds to ban plastic bags. Clear bags will still be able to be purchased at retail stores. Committee supported this idea, as long as residents could still purchase the bags at retail stores. It also suggested that privacy bags should be limited to two bags on a go forward basis.

Staff are requesting that next collection contract require the contractor take pictures of residents’ set out not in compliance with the City’s guidelines. The City could then educate residents on why they were not in compliance and eliminate the need for staff to drive to the home to inspect the improper set out.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton

Seconded by Regional Councillor Reid McAlpine

That the presentation on the “Best of the Best 2” Curbside Enhancements be received.

Carried

Brenda Librecz reported she will respond to an email received from York Region regarding the blue box / bagged recyclables contamination issue. She will respond that Regional staff will be invited to a Waste Diversion Committee meeting to discuss the City’s waste management program.

A Committee Member suggested that the City needs a new residents guide to provide to new residents that includes key information residents need when they first move in. Staff supported this suggestion.

5. New Business

There was no new business.

6. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the Waste Diversion Committee will be held on August 7, 2019.

7. Adjournment

The Waste Diversion Committee adjourned at 12:26 PM.