



Report to: General Committee

Date Report Authored: March 12, 2013

SUBJECT: Clear Bag Program Launch – Education and Promotion Strategy

PREPARED BY: Claudia Marsales, Senior Manager, Waste & Environmental Management Department

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) THAT the report entitled “Clear Bag Program Launch -Education and Promotion Strategy” be received;
- 2) THAT Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

To provide an outline of the education and promotion strategy in support of the new clear garbage bag program to be launched on April 30, 2013.

COUNCIL APPROVED NEW DIVERSION INITIATIVES AND 80% DIVERSION TARGET

On October 16, 2012, Council approved an updated Diversion Strategy - “The Best of the Best” Markham’s Roadmap to 80% Diversion, which contained new initiatives to increase diversion such as clear bags for garbage and banning electronics (E-waste) from disposal.

Currently, Markham’s waste is transported to the Dongara waste processing facility in Vaughan to be made into fuel pellets or to the City of Toronto’s landfill in south western Ontario. In 2014, Markham’s waste will be transported to the new incineration (energy from waste) facility in the Municipality of Clarington in Durham Region.

Older electronics contain high levels of heavy metals that, if not handled properly, could have environmental impacts when incinerated. Some computer monitors contain lead oxide, while printed circuit boards contain a range of heavy metals. The high market value of precious metals makes E-waste highly recyclable.

A ‘clear bag’ program refers to the use of a garbage bag that is transparent or see-through. Although changing the bag colour seems trivial, it a worthwhile strategy to encourage behaviour change and ensure a ‘non toxic’ waste stream for incineration. In addition, clear bags reduce worker injuries and damage to roads, driveways and collection vehicles by making it easy to identify non compliant material such as paint cans, sharp objects, and hazardous liquid containers in the bag. In February, 2013, a Miller operator cut his leg open as a result of broken glass hidden in a garbage bag.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS

The Diversion subcommittee developed an education and promotion strategy to support the curbside collection changes.

The 2 year collection schedule was direct mailed to all Markham homes in December 2012 and informed residents of the upcoming switch to clear bags.

Comments from residents indicate the key concerns are:

**TABLE #1
CLEAR BAG CONCERNS**

ISSUE	RESPONSE
Privacy	Place clear bag into garbage can Confidential papers in Green Bin Diapers (baby/adult) in Green Bin Feminine products in Green Bin
Sufficient supply in stores	Bag manufactures notified of change Retailers notified Special in store promotions/ coupons
What to do with surplus dark bags	Donate to charity/friends/family/church Line the green bin Offer/sell on free web sites
Additional cost	Clear bags same price as dark bags Can also be used for Green Bin overflow organics

Numerous information 'tips' were advertized in the Markham Economist city page, and on the Markham web site. A Mission Green newsletter is being mailed to all residents in April 2013 with program information.

Clear bag reminder signs will be placed on Miller collection vehicles. Mobile signs and public space signs will be placed across Markham.

GLAD PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR MARKHAM'S SWITCH TO CLEAR BAGS

Clorox Company, one of Ontario's largest manufacturers of garbage bags under the trade name 'Glad' is supporting Markham's switch to clear bags. Glad has provided 10,000 clear bag sample packs with discount coupons and several hundred 10/pack boxes to be handed out to residents. Glad is working with Markham retailers to ensure sufficient in store quantities to meet demand.

In addition, the Mission Green newsletter will contain a Glad coupon offering \$2 off the purchase of Glad clear bags.

MEAC 'AMBASSADOR' PROGRAM TO EDUCATE RESIDENTS

Markham Environmental Advisory Committee (MEAC) has agreed to support clear bag program education as 'ambassadors' at various locations across Markham during Earth Week in April 2013. MEAC will attend and have a display at the Markville Mall on April 20, 2013 to promote the benefits of battery recycling and clear bags.

TARGETTED OUTREACH

Information ads are being placed in several cultural newspapers and Public Service announcements will be placed on Chinese radio.

Multi lingual speaking representatives will be at T&T stores in April to handout bag samples and answer questions about the clear bag program.

SOFT LANDING ENFORCEMENT FOR TRANSITION TO CLEAR BAGS AND ELECTRONIC BAN

The clear bag program starts April 30, 2013 in celebration of Earth Day 2013. For the first and second waste collection cycle, dark bags will be collected and an "oops" reminder sticker placed on the green bin or blue box.

Enforcement will start on the 3rd collection cycle in early June. Non compliant bags will be stickered requesting contents be placed in a clear bag. Arrangements are being made to have a special collection of this material on the following Monday.

CURBSIDE BAN ON COLLECTION OF ELECTRONICS & BATTERIES TO BE ENFORCED

Starting in April, 2013, electronics, (E-waste) placed at the curb will be stickered with information about drop off recycling opportunities. A listing of public and private retail stores that accept E-waste can be found on Markham's web site and new waste app. Reminders to recycle E-waste and batteries will be placed on public space containers, Miller collection vehicles and mobile signs throughout 2013.

Recycling E-waste and encouraging residents to 'Drop & Shop' makes economic sense as old electronics have a current market value of between 10 – 20 cents per pound in addition to avoided collection and disposal costs.

Staff are working with Markham service clubs to offer a series of E-waste drop-off events at various locations across Markham. Staff has received and is considering a proposal from the Markham Lions Club to sponsor several collection events throughout the year to raise money for charity.

Battery recycling drop off is currently offered at 12 City facilities, depots, public schools, condos, and numerous retail locations such as: Best Buy, Canadian Tire, Costco, and Staples.

YORK REGION SOLID WASTE SECTION SUPPORTS MARKHAM'S INITIATIVES

York Region solid waste staff have participated and supported the development of the new diversion strategy and indicated Markham's initiatives align with the Region's Solid Waste Master Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

With the exception of education and promotion which will be funded from the approved capital project 10291 Clear Garbage Bag Program in the amount of \$36,000, none of the initiatives result in increased operating costs or increased costs for our residents. Clear bags cost the same to manufacture as dark bags.

The switch to clear bags for garbage and the banning of E-waste and batteries will increase diversion, and ensure fuel pellets, incinerator bottom ash, and air quality standards established by the Ministry of the Environment are achieved.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

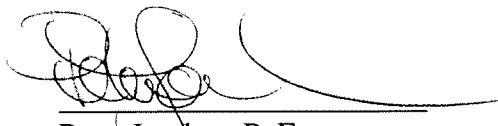
Aligns with Environmental Strategic priorities, BMFT – Municipal Services and Green Print.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

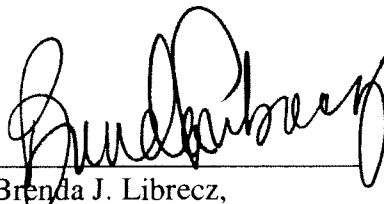
Communications and Community Relations

RECOMMENDED

BY:



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