

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE APRIL 7, 2003**

### **BAN ON GRASS CLIPPINGS FROM THE WASTE STREAM**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works recommends that By-law 350-94 be amended to add "Grass Clippings" to the list of materials defined as "Non-Collectible Waste".

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to revise the definition of non-collectible waste in By-law 350-94 (the waste & recycling collection by-law) to ensure that the waste that is hauled to the various landfills for disposal is in strict compliance with all applicable Certificate of Approvals (C of A's), local regulations, and contractual waste disposal agreements.

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

Although waste management service delivery in York Region is a shared responsibility between nine local municipalities and the Region of York, the framework of this shared responsibility has changed somewhat since January 1, 2003. The new Municipal Act clearly delineates the responsibilities between the upper and lower tier municipalities. The lower tier municipalities like Vaughan, are responsible only for collection, and the Region is responsible for the other waste management activities, including disposal and diversion.

The Region has entered into various contracts for the provision of waste disposal capacity. As such, they are required to ensure that the waste that is being hauled to various landfills (Michigan and St. Thomas), for disposal, is in strict compliance to all applicable C of A's, local regulations, and contractual disposal agreements. The landfills that are receiving York Region's waste, including the City of Vaughan's waste, are not permitted to receive organic leaf and yard material (including grass clippings), in the waste stream. Failure to comply with these restrictions will result in significant penalties that may or may not be attributed to a local municipality.

In the fall of 2002, staff presented a report to Committee entitled '*Steps to Increase Waste Diversion*'. The report provided six (6) recommendations that would increase waste diversion through existing waste diversion programs. One of the recommended waste diversion initiatives was that Council ban leaf and yard material, including grass clippings, from the waste stream. In February of 2003, Council endorsed a modification of that recommendation as follows:

"That By-law 350-94 be amended to add "Organic Yard Waste (excluding grass clippings)" as defined in the by-law, to the list of materials defined as 'Non-collectible Waste' as defined in the by-law".

Although Council has already banned leaf and yard waste materials from collection as waste, the City must further amend its waste collection by-law so that grass clippings are banned from collection as waste to ensure that the materials being delivered to the various landfill sites comply with all C of A's, local regulations and contractual agreements.

Vaughan residents will still be able to dispose of their leaf and yard material (including grass clippings) in clear plastic bags, kraft paper bags, or open type rigid containers (i.e. bushel baskets) during the 8 week collection period in the Spring (April and May), and again during the 8 collection period in the Fall (October and November).

As the City's current waste and recycling collection contract does not provide for leaf and yard waste collection in the months of June, July, August and September, staff are making a concerted effort to educate residents on other ways to manage their leaf and yard waste. Grasscycling and Backyard Composting will be the primary options for managing the waste on site. Grasscycling encourages residents to leave their grass clippings on their lawn to decompose naturally, and Backyard Composting encourages residents to divert their organic material (kitchen and yard) through the use of a backyard composter.

The various modes of communicating the ban on leaf and yard waste materials in the waste stream are as follows:

- a section in the new and larger, Spring/Summer waste & recycling collection calendar that will be mailed to each resident at the end of March;
- 39 mobile signs strategically located at major intersections throughout the City of Vaughan;
- information will be disseminated to local landscaping companies informing them of the ban of leaf and yard material in the waste stream;
- updated information on the City's web site;
- paid advertisements in local newspapers;
- use of door hangers and/or fluorescent orange stickers to be placed on bags not in compliance; and,
- working with the Corporate Communications Department, and the Region of York on additional promotion/education literature.

Any resident that does not wish to manage their organic leaf and yard waste materials on site, or has excessive leaf and yard waste material, can take the material to the new Small Vehicle Transfer Station located at the Keele Valley Landfill site in Vaughan for composting. The cost for disposal at the Small Vehicle Transfer Station is \$70.00/tonne with a minimum charge of \$7.00 per load.

### **Conclusion**

As organic leaf and yard waste materials (including grass clippings) are banned from the waste disposal sites that the City's waste is now being hauled to, it is necessary for the City to ensure these materials are banned from collection as waste. Adding grass clippings to the list of "Non-Collectible Waste" as defined in By-law 350-94, as amended, will accomplish this.

### **Attachments**

N/A

### **Report prepared by:**

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Respectfully submitted,

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