

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - MARCH 5, 2006

PROVISION OF BLUE BOXES AND GREEN BINS TO LARGE HOUSEHOLDS

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works recommends:

That Council provide direction with respect to the provision of additional free green bins and blue boxes to large households who generate excessive amounts of waste and recyclable materials.

Economic Impact

Depending on the direction of Council, the impacts can range from no to a significant financial impact, depending on the model adopted for provision of additional bins to residents.

Communications Plan

The City's Greening Vaughan initiative has been widely advertised throughout the City via such means as: public meetings, newsletters, advertisements in local papers, mobile signs, and door-to-door education.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's direction on an issue that has been brought forward to staff and the Greening Vaughan Advisory Committee concerning waste generation issues that large households may encounter with the Greening Vaughan program and the current number of containers provided per household free of charge.

Background - Analysis and Options

The Greening Vaughan program was designed on the basis of a detailed waste audit, waste generation rates, bag set-outs, participation rates, and diversion rates. The program was designed to deal with the "average" household in Vaughan, and to date, it has overwhelmingly met this criteria.

An issue that has been raised at the Greening Vaughan Advisory Committee (GVAC), is that in some single family dwellings, there are more than the average number of persons per household, and that 1 green bin and 2 blue boxes are not enough for these large households.

When the Greening Vaughan project was adopted by Council, the following are some of the recommendations that were passed:

"7. That the City provide each household one (1) large green bin and an approved number of small in-house containers for organic waste;"

"9. That a 3 container limit/dwelling/week (a combination of bags, containers and bulky items) for the residual waste stream, be implemented in conjunction with the Source Separated Organics collection and additional tags be sold for \$1.00 each;

"11. That the City implement a full cost recovery fee for all new, replacement, stolen, or lost blue boxes and green bins effective Tuesday October 31, 2006;"

On September 25, 2006, Council also adopted the following recommendation:

“Schedule “L” of By-law No. 396-2002 (as amended by By-law No. 286-2004), be further amended as outlined in this report to allow for the sale of green bins at a cost of \$20 each, in-house organic collection containers at a cost of \$6 each, blue boxes at a cost of \$6 each, and garbage tags at a cost of \$10 for a sheet of 10 tags.”

As noted above, the City sells additional blue boxes and green bins for \$20 and \$6 each respectively. The cost of the additional containers has been raised at the GVAC as being a potential impediment for large households to take full advantage of the City's waste diversion programs, and some mechanism should be in place to accommodate these large households. While the amount of waste generated by large households would be above the average, not all members of the committee feel that accommodations should be made for large households. Some members feel the existing costs of green bins or blue boxes are not excessive, and considering the costs relative to other amenities that large households would require to function, paying for additional green bins and/or blue boxes should not be an impediment to actively participating in the City's waste diversion programs.

As there seems to be no clear consensus among the GVAC members as to providing special consideration for these large households, it is respectfully requested that Council provide direction with respect to this issue. Below are two options for Council's consideration.

Option 1 - Status Quo

The cost of blue boxes and green bins to residents is based on tender results. Based on comments from residents who purchase the containers at the City's JOC, cost is not an issue. To date, over 500 green bins have been sold to residents who indicated they require additional units due to the amount of waste generated in their household.

When the City was providing free green bins to all residents, the City's blue box diversion rate was approximately 11.5% (Waste Diversion Organization 2002), and the cost to provide the blue boxes free of charge increased annually, whereby in 2005 the City accrued approximately \$90,000 in costs / year for the provision of blue boxes alone. As can be seen by the diversion rate, the provision of free boxes did not have a correlation to high recycling levels.

Maintaining the current policy whereby all additional blue boxes and green bins are sold at rates approved by Council, would result in no negative impact on revenues to the City, and provides a fair playing field for all residents who require additional blue boxes and green bins, regardless of the size of their household.

Option 2 – Offer Additional Green Bins and Blue to Large Households Based on Waste Audits

This option would require large households to undergo a full waste audit by Waste Management staff, and depending on the results of the audit, free containers could be provided to encourage additional waste diversion.

The purpose of the current Greening Vaughan Education and Audit Program is to ensure residents have a firm and full understanding as to the acceptable items for each waste stream (i.e. green bin, blue box, yard waste, and garbage). The audit is intended to provide first hand instruction on “what goes where”, as well as provide alternative waste handling methods for residents have difficulty meeting the requirements of the City's waste management program. (Please refer to Attachment 1)

There are concerns with this option though. It is extremely difficult to define exactly what a “large household” is.

In discussions with the Director of Legal Services, it is noted that Section 35 of the Planning Act prohibits the municipality from passing a zoning bylaw distinguishing between persons who are related and persons who are unrelated in respect of occupancy of a building. Accordingly, there are a number of types of large households. A large household could be made up of a number of students living together. There are large households made up of families with many children, or multi-generational families. There are many instances where there are two or more families, or extended families (related persons) sharing a single family dwelling, which is permitted by the zoning bylaw as long as they form a single housekeeping unit. The zoning bylaw also permits a single family dwelling to have up to two roomers or boarders. It would be arbitrary to define a large household by a set number of persons in a dwelling, and it would also be difficult to ascertain if in fact all the persons included were residing in any particular dwelling without inspecting the property.

Another concern would be the financial impact of providing additional free containers. As the total number of these "large households" cannot be readily defined, the number of households eligible for free green bins and blue boxes, based on the amount of waste they generate, could be in the thousands. Given the current cost of blue boxes and green bins, the expense to provide additional green bins and blue boxes could be significant.

A further concern would be the impact on current staff. Given the current staff level of 1 Manager, 1 Waste Co-Ordinator and 1 Education and Promotions Planner, the demand for waste audits could far exceed staff's current capabilities in terms of time availability. Depending on the demand for waste audits, either additional staff would be required or waiting periods for waste audits would be experienced.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council, specifically Vaughan Vision:

A-1 "Pursue Excellence in the Delivery of Core Services",
A-3 "Safeguard Our Environment",
A-5 "Plan and Manage Growth"

Regional Implications

Notwithstanding that waste management in York Region is a two tier system, a decision by the City to supply or not to supply additional containers to households who generate excessive amounts of waste and recyclable materials has no direct impact on the Region's operations.

Conclusion

The issue of large households, and the amount of waste and recyclable materials they generate has been raised numerous times at the Greening Vaughan Advisory Committee. As there appears to be no clear consensus among the members, it is respectfully requested that Council provide direction as to the provision of free containers to large households.

Attachments

Attachment 1 - Greening Vaughan Education and Audit Program

Report prepared by:

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Respectfully submitted,

Bill Robinson, P. Eng.
Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works

Brian T. Anthony
Director of Public Works

ATTACHEMENT 1 – Greening Vaughan Education and Audit Program



CITY OF VAUGHAN GREENING VAUGHAN - EDUCATION AND AUDIT PROGRAM

The City of Vaughan has enforced set out requirements to ensure that consistent with the materials set out for collection comply with all municipal, provincial and federal legislation. In addition, they are designed to compliment the City's "Greening Vaughan" comprehensive waste management plan.

The purpose of this education and audit the multi- phased program is to:

- Ensure acquaint residents are aware of the City's set-out requirements
- Educate to the City's waste diversion programs and educate residents on the merits of diverting waste from landfill.
- Educate residents on the City's and Region's various waste diversion programs and opportunities

In March 2005, Council adopted a report which outlined the Greening Vaughan initiative. The report intentionally did not speak to any exemption policy and / or special provisions for those entities that may have difficulty meeting the prescribed garbage limit. This philosophy is consistent with waste management programs adopted by many municipalities in Ontario. Some municipal waste programs do not allow any more than the prescribed limit (therefore no tag program), whereas others, like the City of Vaughan, permit residents to exceed the garbage limit via the use of a paid garbage tag.

To mitigate the Regardless, there still may be a need to use paid garbage tags, Waste Management staff will provide one-on-one education services to occupants of single family dwellings when so requested. The manner in which the City's Education and Audit program would be implemented is outlined below.that may have difficulty meeting the prescribed garbage limit.

The Process

1. A resident notifies the City's Waste Management staff of their challenges in meeting the set out requirements put forth by the City.
2. City staff will ask them if they would like to participate in an education / audit program. The purpose is to ensure the resident has a firm understanding as to what can be diverted from landfill through the City's waste management program and to educate them about the various diversion programs offered by the Region of York.
3. If the resident is willing to participate, staff will arrange a meeting (via in person, phone or email), to assist and educate the resident on matters concerning the City's waste management program (including the Region's programs).
4. The education plan will consist of literature and visuals showing residents what is accepted in the diversion programs, what is permitted in the household waste stream etc. The City will also provide some waste and recycling tips that may also be beneficial to the resident (i.e. breaking down boxes etc.).
5. After the education process is complete, staff will ask the resident to make all efforts to divert acceptable materials through the City's blue box and green bin programs.

6. After the education process is complete, staff will audit the waste set out at curbside. There may be more than one audit to determine average waste generation rate for the household. The resident will be informed that this will be happening, but will not be informed of the date.
7. Staff will document the findings of the audit and take necessary photos.
8. A follow-up meeting will take place to go over the results of the audit to explain the findings to the residents, and to further educate the resident on what additional materials could have been diverted through existing programs that were still found in the waste stream (if applicable). Staff will inform the resident ways to improve their waste diversion or waste set-out practices, if so required. The resident will be provided a copy of the audit findings and the subsequent recommendations put forth by the City.

I, _____ have read and understood the contents of the City of Vaughan’s “Education and Audit Program” and authorize the City to implement this program at the residential location noted on the Education and Audit Program Form on the following page (applicant to complete Part ‘A’ of form).

Applicant’s signature

Date

Continued...

GREENING VAUGHAN - EDUCATION AND AUDIT PROGRAM FORM

Applicant to complete part 'A'	Part A: APPLICANT INFORMATION	
	Applicant's Name: _____	
	Application Address (address where Education and Audit Plan will take place) _____ _____	
	City _____	Postal Code _____
	Number of people in household	Occupancy status (Owner / Tenant) <input type="checkbox"/> Owner <input type="checkbox"/> Tenant <input type="checkbox"/> Owner / Resident
	Applicant's contact informaton Telephone number(s) (daytime): _____ Email address: _____	
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	Applicant's concerns / challenges in meeting set out requirements _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	
	Part B: CURRENT SET OUT PRACTICES	
	Number of Blue Boxes	
	Number of Green Bins	
	Number of Garbage Items	
	Other	

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Part C: EDUCATION COMPONENT OF PROGRAM

Date education component took place

Comments:

Part D: AUDIT COMPONENT OF PROGRAM

Date audit component took place:

Findings of Audit:

Part E: RECOMMENDATION(S):

Staff conducting education and audit program & date of completion: