

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - APRIL 30, 2007

PUBLIC SPACE LITTER AND RECYCLING COLLECTION

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services, the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works and the Commissioner of Planning, recommends:

- 1) That staff continue to require all new development proposals categorized as multiple unit residential dwellings and apartments, mixed use, commercial and employment area use continue to install and maintain litter containers on private property as a component of the private streetscape zone;
- 2) That all existing York Region Public and Catholic School Boards be requested to install and maintain litter / recycling containers on the schools' outdoor property adjacent to areas where the students may congregate on city land such as bus waiting areas etc.;
- 3) That staff require, as a condition of approval for all proposed new schools, the installation and maintenance of litter / recycling containers on the school's outdoor property to the satisfaction of the City;
- 4) That the City support the York Region Transit's (YRT) program to install and maintain litter / recycling container at all sheltered York Region transit stops by 2010, and at all YRT stops by 2012;
- 5) That the City not expand the trial use of the 'Envyrozone' recycling / litter / bulletin board container, and these units be removed from their current locations no later than September 10, 2007;
- 6) That a Task Force comprised of staff from Parks, Urban Design, Parks Development, and Public Works be created to develop site criteria pertaining to the placement of public space containers, to approve designs and specifications for public space litter containers and that \$50,000 be approved to allow the task force to purchase and test various container designs for public space litter / recycling or, alternatively, an RFP be created by the Task Force to solicit interest in the supply and maintenance of litter / recycling containers at no cost to the City;
- 7) That the Province of Ontario again be requested to implement an environmental surcharge on all single serving paper, coated paper, waxboard, polystyrene, and primarily polystyrene beverage containers, and the funds generated by this surcharge be made available to municipalities to offset the cost of litter clean-up within their boundaries; and,
- 8) That the Province of Ontario again be requested to implement a deposit return system for all beverage containers made from polyethylene terephthalate (PET), glass, steel, or aluminium.
- 9) The City continue to request Canada Post to install and maintain Litter/Recycling containers adjacent to the community mailbox locations.

Economic Impact

The cost to implement recommendations No. 1 – 5 has no economic impact on the City.

Recommendation 6 has a financial impact should \$50,000 be allotted to test different container styles, and this has not been allotted for in the draft 2007 Operating Budget. However, if the City is successful in securing a company to provide and maintain containers at their cost, due to the expected advertising revenues, there would be no cost involved.

Recommendation number 8 has an economic impact, should the province of Ontario proceed with the deposit-return system for all beverage containers made from polyethylene terephthalate (PET), glass, steel, or aluminium. Should such a system be implemented, it is anticipated that less monies would be available through the Waste Diversion Organization to offset collection costs. Currently, these industries pay a Stewardship Ontario monies which are then in part funneled into the WDO program. The recently implemented LCBO deposit–return initiative will result in a payment reduction to WDO of approximately \$5 million, commencing 2009. Should this program be rolled out to include other types of beverage containers, it is anticipated that the majority of residents will participate in the deposit-return program, reducing the amount of beverage containers being deposited in the public space litter / recycling containers. This could potentially provide savings on the collection component, depending on the structure of the contract.

Communications Plan

In preparing this document, staff from the three Commissions met to review past history of how litter containers have been placed in the past, and come forward with a plan for moving forward. Depending on Council's direction, appropriate staff will prepare future communications plans to promote the City's initiatives in this subject.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to respond to Council's direction to:

- Review the current policy regarding the placement of litter / recycling containers in public places, such as parks, boulevards and walkways;
- Implement a new policy that will rationalize responsibilities for the placement and maintenance of public litter / recycling containers;
- Provide these containers more widely according to an established criteria throughout the City;
- Emphasize encouraging residents to utilize recycling containers rather than trash bins;
- Develop this policy in consultation and co-operation with York Region Transit and the Regional Municipality of York who also provide various types of litter / recycling containers in the City of Vaughan

Background - Analysis and Options

PART 1: History

There have been 3 areas of the City that have been involved with litter containers, as well as York Region Transit (YRT). Below is a brief history of each area's involvement.

a) **Parks and Forestry Operations**

The Parks and Forestry Department, through the Boulevard Maintenance contract, oversees contractors who cut grass and clean debris on City and Region owned boulevards that are not fronted by residential or business establishments. The contract is in effect April 1st to December 31st each year, while staff are responsible for removing the debris during the remaining three months, as required

The Parks and Forestry department are also responsible for emptying exterior litter containers in Parks and community centers on a rotation, based on the seasonal demands as well as ground debris. Since the project began in 2004, these cans have been emptied by Parks staff.

b) Public Works Department

Transit Stops

When Transit was a function of the City, the Public Works Department maintained litter containers at a number of transit stops (approximately 28 in total). This collection was performed by the City's waste collection contractor. For a while after the Region took over the transit function, the City continued to provide this collection service to the limited number of York Region Transit (YRT) stops. In 2005, YRT initiated its own program of installing litter containers at selected transit stops. Over a period of approximately one year, YRT assumed collection responsibilities for all containers at the transit stops, including the containers historically serviced by the area municipalities. The YRT assumed responsibility of the transit locations serviced by the City of Vaughan January 1, 2006. As a result, Public Works no longer provides any collection services to YRT.

Anti-Littering

In 2003, when the City launched its anti-litter campaign, one of the recommendations of the report was to purchase litter containers and place them throughout the City. Public Works, in consultation with Parks, purchased approximately 100 of these litter units and placed 96 containers throughout the city that were part of a pilot project initiative, and the Parks Department maintains them.

Community Mail Boxes (CMB)

In September 2005, Council approved a pilot program that involved locating 5 combination litter / recycling and bulletin board units across the City, with one being located in each ward. The units were provided to the City at no cost by Envirozone, and were placed in high volume community mail box locations. These 5 units are still in place and are the only public space containers maintained by the Public Works Department. Since their installation, staff has monitored the effectiveness and efficiencies of these containers. The containers were assessed both on the functionality of the container as well as issues pertaining to the collection of the containers. The tables below provides an overview of staff's findings:

| COLLECTION Concerns (5 Envirozone 'Pilot' containers at CMB) |
|--|
| 1. In some areas, the existence of the litter / recycling bin attracted frequent occurrences of illegal dumping. |
| 2. Collections were done at the same frequency as residential curbside collections. In many cases, the litter / recycling bins required more frequent servicing, as the bins would often be overflowing. |
| 3. Even though the containers provided residents with the option to recycle acceptable materials, the recycling section of the container was always contaminated with pet waste and other non recyclable material. As a result of the high contamination, all materials collected were disposed of as garbage. |
| 4. The pilot litter / recycling containers required a key to access the waste for disposal purposes. This was problematic from an operations perspective as the key was at times misplaced or the locking mechanism became frozen or rusted. |
| 5. In some cases the existence of the litter / recycling container did not minimize the amount of litter thrown onto the ground by users of the super mail box |
| 6. Winter collections were difficult as the accumulation snow hindered access to the container as well as the doors used to access the waste for collection purposes. |

| CONTAINER Concerns (5 'Pilot' containers at CMB) |
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| 1. Design of container allowed for rain and snow to fall into the bin. In the winter months the bags became frozen into the receptacle itself, which in turn led to some collection challenges. |
| 2. Message Board frequently vandalized and misused – With the posting of numerous messages they became an eyesore and required staff time to clean and maintain. |
| 3. Access doors vandalized (i.e. kicked in) and as such difficult to open |
| 4. Rust on containers was quite evident on many locations of the containers. Paint was peeling away in some areas. |
| 5. Locking mechanism was problematic – premature rusting |
| 6. The design of the container provided a flat top with two 8” diameter holes (one for recycling one for litter). The flat top permitted many pieces of garbage and pet waste to just sit on top of the waste container, making the appearance of the container very unsightly. |

Although the concept of providing litter / recycling containers at designated community mail box locations is laudable, the findings of the pilot project concluded that there were significant collection and contamination issues that have to be resolved should the City wish to implement such a program at designated locations city wide. The findings also concluded that the style of bin used in the pilot did not perform as well as anticipated, and as such, should not be recommended for future use in the City of Vaughan.

As waste collection will change to every other week in September, and there is no provision in the contract to service such containers on a weekly basis, it is recommended that due to the collections concerns and deficiencies in bin design, that all five pilot litter / recycling containers be removed from their current locations no later than September 10, 2007

c) Urban Design / Planning Department

Since 2001 it has been standard practice for staff to request new subdivision development proposals to include litter receptacles supplied and installed as a condition of development approval. The litter receptacles are predominately installed in the following instances and locations:

- Block community gateways;
- Major subdivision entry features;
- Stormpond seating area / lookout nodes;
- Woodlot trail entry nodes; and
- Open space / valley trail entry nodes.

Traditionally, a 32 gallon decorative metal waste receptacle with side-door openings have been installed for all of the above referenced scenarios; however, 20 gallon decorative metal waste receptacles are installed for storm pond seating area / lookout nodes to deter illegal dumping, side-door openings promote easier maintenance and positive ergonomics.

Waste receptacles are generally designed and installed within subdivision neighbourhoods in accordance with the following criteria:

- Should be located at high visibility areas (i.e. adjacent to road frontage, community gateways, entry features, etc.) to deter illegal dumping and potential vandalism;
- Waste receptacles should be installed and anchored on p.i.p. (poured in place) concrete pads to deter theft and vandalism;
- Waste receptacles should have heavy-duty plastic liners with weep holes (at the base) to promote drainage and easier maintenance.

For private development applications it has been standard practice for staff to request litter receptacles be included as a important component of the site plan streetscape design. The receptacles are generally designed and located based on the following criteria:

- Exclusively on private property;
- Close proximity to main entrances, gateways, and specific access locations into the site from the public sidewalk system; and
- At least 3 metres away from seating bench locations

Typically, a 32 gallon decorative metal waste receptacle with side-door openings is installed at 20 metre intervals along the pedestrian network throughout the site plan. It is the responsibility of the property owner to maintain the litter receptacles including the removal garbage.

d) York Region Transit (YRT)

In 2005 YRT initiated a program of installing litter / recycling containers at selected transit stops. YRT's policy regarding the placement of litter containers is that they are to be placed at bus terminals and bus stops with that have 20 or more boarders per day. The vast majority (95%) of the locations that have 20 plus boarders per day also have bus shelters. To date, YRT has a total of approximately 4,000 bus stops. Of these, approximately 700 have shelters. Currently, they have outfitted approximately 300 of the 700 designated sheltered locations with litter / recycling containers. It is anticipated that all sheltered locations have litter / recycling containers by approximately 2010. Of the 700 designated sheltered locations, approximately 258 are in Vaughan. Approximately 35% of these have been outfitted with litter / recycling containers.

PART 2: Moving Forward

In response to Council's direction, staff has held a number of meetings, and has come forward with the following recommendations:

a) Deposit-Return Legislation

In 1970, prompted by the amount of litter created by soft drink containers, the province of British Columbia introduced the first deposit-refund system in North America. Since that time, the debate over curbside recycling programs vs. deposit-return systems has been waged.

In order to capture more of the materials that often are found on the roadways and public spaces as litter, it is recommended that Council request the Province to introduce a deposit-return system for all beverage containers made from polyethylene terephthalate (PET), glass, steel, or aluminium. Such a deposit–return system would result in increased awareness of packaging, and would provide a financial incentive for people not to throw these types of containers on the roadways.

b) Environmental Surcharge

As part of a growing trend, coffee shops are increasing in numbers across the province and the country. With the growing number of stores, the number of single use cups being produced and sold also increases. Unfortunately, a significant number of these containers appear to be ending up on highways, in roadside ditches and parks throughout the City, Region and Province.

In order to offset the rising costs of litter control, it is recommended that Council request the Province to implement an environmental surcharge on all single serving paper, coated paper, waxboard, polystyrene, and primarily polystyrene beverage containers, and the funds generated by such a surcharge be made available to municipalities to offset the cost of litter clean-up within their boundaries.

c) York Region School Boards

School Boards provide litter containers for students, but their litter containers are not usually placed adjacent to City owned property where students often congregate and leave litter. Schools have actively participated in the "20 Minute Makeover" and caretakers respond quickly to requests for clean up if complaints are received by the City of Vaughan. Staff will continue to foster these good relationships in an attempt to reduce litter.

However, to help reduce litter and capture recyclables, all existing York Region Public and Catholic School Boards should be formally requested to install and maintain litter / recycling containers on the schools' outdoor property adjacent to City property where the students may congregate. In addition, both school boards should be required, as a condition of approval for all proposed new schools, to install and maintain litter / recycling containers on the school's outdoor property to the satisfaction of the City.

d) Development Agreements

As a condition of approval for new development proposals, it has been standard practice for staff to review the proposed landscape/streetscape drawings and require litter receptacles in specific locations of the development based on typical urban design criteria and their connectivity to the site's pedestrian network. Once the area is assumed the litter container is plotted on a route map and added to the Parks litter pick up rotation.

e) Illegal Dumping

It should be recognized that in some situations, public space litter / recycling containers attract illegal dumping. Consideration must be given to minimize the occurrences of illegal dumping by minimizing excessive or inappropriate placement of containers and securing a style of bin that prohibits bags of garbage (or other non-litter material such as paint cans) being dumped into the container. Even with the limited number of public space litter containers currently maintained and serviced by the City, the repercussions of illegally dumped garbage is significant. Aside from providing the City with an unfavourable image, it impacts the City's resources, as staff is often required to provide unscheduled runs to clean up illegally dumped materials including bags of garbage and household hazardous wastes.

More containers may lead to more instances of illegal dumping, and as such will further impact City resources, especially given the frequency of waste collection changing in the Fall. Given this dichotomy, a balance must be found between the perceived need of a public space litter / recycling bin in a given location, and the resources available to maintain and monitor bins for illegal dumping.

f) Canada Post

The results of the City's 5 pilot garbage / litter containers at Community Mail Box locations is not isolated to the City of Vaughan. The Canada Post Corporation has been reviewing the placement of garbage / litter container issue as well, and similarly has conducted trials of garbage / litter containers at Community Mail Boxes or Kiosk sites. Attachment 1 shows a typical picture of the results from the trials that Canada Post had conducted in the City of Brampton.

Canada Post indicated that the reasons for the disappointing results were because:

- 1) Canada Post could not control the type of litter deposited into the receptacle (i.e. household garbage, animal waste)
- 2) Some locations became targets of illegal dumping and vandalism (i.e. tipping over containers, contents lit on fire, containers damaged)

3) Containers were stolen if not affixed to immovable object

In addition to the concerns noted above, the perception that the presence of the receptacle could encourage customers to discard ad-mail without reading it, which would generate complaints from Canada Post's mailing customers.

Canada Post have related that they are willing to support community efforts to protect the environment through possible joint awareness campaigns, or by other communication means. However, installing garbage / recycling bins has not shown to be successful in the past and is not something that the Canada Post Corporation is willing to support further. Notwithstanding the foregoing, it is recommended that staff continue discussions with Canada Post regarding options to deal with litter at the community mailbox sites.

g) York Region Transit (YRT)

The Region of York has recently entered into a five year contract, whereby the contractor agrees to design, supply, install and maintain litter / recycling containers with advertising panels at the contractor's sole expense. YRT developed a comprehensive plan to install litter / recycling containers at designated transit stops throughout the Region by approximately 2010. The City of Vaughan supports the Region's initiative as it addresses the needs of transit users as it pertains to the disposal of small quantities of litter / recycling at designated bus stops in the Region of York. However, as all transit stops have the potential for litter to be deposited, it is recommended that YRT incorporate litter / recycling units at all YRT stops by 2012, not just those locations with transit shelters.

h) Public Space Litter / Recycling Container Task Force

In an effort to address the need of public space litter / recycling containers in Vaughan, it is recommended that a task force be created. The task force shall be comprised of staff from various departments inclusive of Parks, Parks Development, Public Works and Urban Design. The mandate of this task force would be to develop a business plan that would address in part criteria pertaining to the placement of containers and to approve designs and specifications that would dictate acceptable style of bins. In order to evaluate different styles of containers, \$50,000 is requested to purchase and test them in terms of operational issues and aesthetic acceptance.

Part of the Task Force's review would be to see how any such new containers would be serviced. Although Miller Waste currently provides collection services for the 5 pilot containers at a nominal cost, all other public space litter containers located on municipal property and not associated with YRT are emptied by the City's Parks Department. There is no provision in the City's current waste collection contract that requires the City's collection contractor to collect public space litter / recycling receptacles, as this was not a projected service when the contract was developed, and, the frequency of waste collection changes to every other week in September. The Public Works Department also lacks the necessary resources (i.e. staff, collection vehicles) to conduct such a service in-house, and the existing small garbage trucks used by Parks do not allow for the collection of two materials at once.

Alternatively, the Task Force could simply be charged with looking at criteria for locating such containers, and then prepare an RFP whereby interested parties would be invited to put forward their proposals for the supply and installation of litter/recycling units at locations across the City. The intent would be that such containers would be provided and maintained at no cost to the City due to their potential for advertising revenue, similar to the arrangement YRT has with their contractor. In an effort to determine the economic impact should the City enter into an agreement similar to that of YRT, compensation under this agreement requires *"the contractor shall pay the Region, annually, guaranteed revenue equal to \$8.00 multiplied by the aggregate number of units installed under this agreement or five percent (5%) of the contractor's net revenue from the sale of all advertising faces installed in units under the agreement, whichever is greater"*

i) Parks and Forestry Department

Working with the partners in the Task Force, staff will identify additional locations that meet the public demand for debris containers. It is recommended that the present 96 locations be considered to include the recycle unit as well. The strategy for increasing and adding recycling containers will be inline with the present guidelines and consistent throughout the city.

There are presently three types of boulevard containers around the City, which include a pole mounted, grey and wrought iron style of container. As the Task Force decides on the most suitable style, this will become the new standard throughout the city.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

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

A-1 "Pursue Excellence in the Delivery of Core Services"

A-2 "Promote Community Safety Health & Wellness"

A-3 "Safeguard Our Environment"

A-5 "Plan & Manage Growth"

D-2 "Develop Internal/External Collaborative Solutions"

However, not all of the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Regional Implications

As York Region operates the transit system, the recommendation requesting YRT to install litter/recycling containers at all YRT stops by 2012 would have a financial impact on the Region, if approved by Regional Council.

Conclusion

On a go forward basis, the recommendations contained in this report will address Council's direction to rationalize placement and servicing litter/recycling containers, and will provide opportunities for the public to recycle their materials.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Canada Post – Trial of garbage / litter containers at Community Mail Boxes

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APPENDIX 1: CANADA POST – TRIALS OF GARBAGE / LITTER CONTAINERS



Canada Post conducted several trials of litter containers at their Community Mail Box locations. In many cases the litter bins proved to be highly problematic, as illustrated in the picture above.