



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Waste Audit of City Parks

Date:	March 9, 2007
To:	Parks and Environment Committee
From:	Brenda Librecz, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

As part of its three-year Waste Diversion Plan, approved in 2004, Parks, Forestry and Recreation recently conducted a Parks Waste Audit (Attachment 1). Staff examined almost three metric tonnes of waste from 585 litter and 157 recycling baskets at 126 parks – sorting, weighing and recording material using 14 separate categories (i.e. glass, paper, plastic, pet waste). A summary of findings and recommendations can be found on pages 49 to 51 of the attached Parks Waste Audit Report.

Subsequent to its 2004-2006 plan, the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division submitted a four-year Waste Diversion Plan in January 2007 which sets out initiatives selected to improve future diversion rates. This year's program will continue twinning litter baskets with labelled recycling baskets to improve the diversion rate of recyclable materials from the litter stream as well as educational and outreach activities to address the large amount of recyclables and pet waste entering the Park's litter stream.

The Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division will continue with its effort to meet future diversion targets and explore innovative methods to reduce park's waste.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff continue to work with Solid Waste Management Services to improve and expand waste diversion initiatives in City parks; and

2. Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff collaborate with Solid Waste Management Services to educate the public and increase awareness of the need for waste diversion.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on June 14, 15 and 16, 2005, City Council adopted Report No. 6 of the Works Committee titled “2004 Waste Diversion Rates for City Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Departments and an Update Regarding the Solid Waste Diversion Plans Being Implemented by these Organizations”. Additionally, the Committee directed that all divisions be required to achieve an individual diversion rate of 40 percent by 2006 and 60 percent by 2007, and that the Deputy City Manager, the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, and the Chair of the Works Committee (or her delegate) work with the General Managers of each division to ensure that these targets are met.

As directed by Council, Parks, Forestry and Recreation is continuing its efforts to achieve the approved waste diversion targets and has completed a citywide Waste Audit of City Parks as identified in its three-year waste diversion plan.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In 2001, the Mayor and City Council established the City’s Waste Diversion Task Force 2010 to find a “made in Toronto” solution to the growing issue of waste generation and disposal in Toronto, with the goal of reaching 100% diversion from the landfill by 2010.

In 2004 Parks, Forestry and Recreation embarked on a three-year Waste Diversion Plan to incrementally reduce waste being sent to landfill. As part of its strategy to address waste diversion issues, Parks, Forestry and Recreation conducted a Parks Waste Audit (Attachment 1) to collect information about the current composition of waste collected at City of Toronto parks. This information will assist Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff to make informed decisions on ongoing waste diversion and by-law enforcement activities at City parks.

In January of this year, Parks, Forestry and Recreation submitted a four-year Waste Diversion Plan, in accordance with the Corporate Waste Diversion Plan. This new plan sets out the initiatives selected to improve future diversion rates.

The Solid Waste Management Services Division will be presenting its annual report on the current status of waste diversion efforts and forthcoming initiatives to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee on May 2, 2007. Under the leadership of Solid Waste Management Services, Parks, Forestry and Recreation will continue efforts to improve its diversion rate and participate in the City-wide partnership initiatives.

COMMENTS

Since Parks, Forestry and Recreation's Waste Diversion Plan was approved in 2004, the Division's diversion rate for parks and open spaces has improved annually from 28% in 2004, to 39% in 2005. In 2006, Parks, Forestry and Recreation achieved a diversion rate of 43% - 3% above the target directed by Council.

As part of the Corporate Waste Diversion Program, the Solid Waste Management Services Division reports annually on the achievements and plans of all Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Divisions (ABC&D's). This report is scheduled to be presented to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee on May 2, 2007. The report identifies both corporate and division achievements over the past year and identifies initiatives for the coming year and beyond. Parks, Forestry and Recreation's successes and initiatives are detailed in the attached summary chart (Attachment 2) which updates information from previous year that was provided to the Works Committee in May 2006.

2006 Parks Waste Audit

One of the key successes in 2006 was the completion of the Parks Waste Audit. This audit was conducted to collect information about current waste composition collected at City of Toronto parks in order to assist Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff in making informed decisions about ongoing waste diversion activities and by-law enforcement activities in parks.

Previous assessments of parks waste composition consisted of visual inspections of park litter baskets in 2002 and a surface litter study in 2004. The 2006 audit was the first in-depth analysis of content for both litter and recycling receptacles. It measured the Division's success and is guiding directions for improvement. Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff will conduct follow-up inspections or audits in 2008 to measure our success.

The Waste Diversion staff audited almost three metric tonnes of waste from 585 litter and 157 recycling baskets at 126 parks. The content of each basket was sorted, weighed and recorded using 14 separate categories (i.e. glass, paper, plastic, pet waste). Staff also gathered data regarding location, including the number of baskets at each park, recorded whether litter and recycling baskets were twinned and labelled, and documented 'fast food' waste products in park's waste.

Principle findings from the audit include:

- The composition of the parks litter stream contained:
 - 24-28% recyclables
 - 23-27% pet waste
 - 35-40% other litter (organics, non-recyclable plastics and paper)
 - 10-15% illegally dumped materials

- The composition of the parks recycling stream contained:
 - 59-66% recyclables
 - 17-21% other organics
 - 18-20% other non-recyclables
- Twinned and labelled recycling baskets had 25% less contamination.
- Illegal dumping of household waste was seen in the majority of parks audited, almost exclusively in litter baskets.

2007 Divisional Waste Diversion Plan

Informed by the 2006 audit, Parks Forestry and Recreation's 2007 program will continue twinning litter baskets with labelled recycling baskets to improve the diversion rate of recyclable materials from the litter stream. Diverting only three-quarters of the recyclables currently in the litter stream could increase the overall diversion rate as much as 12%, which would put Parks, Forestry and Recreation in the position of diverting more than 50% of its waste.

Continued education of the public about waste diversion in parks is essential through more advertising and outreach activities. The 2007 Waste Diversion public outreach program will emphasize education to encourage patrons to recycle in parks and recreation facilities, to take their pet waste home to be disposed of in a toilet or green bin (Carry-out), to reduce non-recyclable waste such as most 'fast food' waste, and to not dump household waste in parks

Removing litter and/or recycling baskets from 'high-risk' dumping locations, improving litter basket design and continued by-law enforcement will assist in further reducing illegal dumping in parks.

In response to a direction from the former Works Committee, the Division and the Solid Waste Management Services conducted a four-park pilot project to assess the capabilities of the public and City to use green bins within City parks in 2006. This pilot project will continue in 2007.

Further diversion of pet waste could improve the Division's diversion rate past the 2007 target of 60%. Until Solid Waste Management Services are able to implement a green bin program in City parks, the Division's options to divert pet waste and other organics are limited to small scale pilot strategies. The 2007 Waste Diversion public outreach program will emphasize education to encourage patrons to take their pet waste home to be disposed of in a toilet or green bin (Carry-out).

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Brenda Librecz

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ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1: 2006 Parks Waste Audit – Final Report

Attachment 2: Summary of the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division's 2006 Waste
Diversion Successes and 2007 Initiatives.