

Managing Dog Waste in Parks - Update

Date:	June 19, 2008
To:	Parks and Environment Committee
From:	Brenda Librecz, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

Parks, Forestry and Recreation in partnership with Solid Waste Management Services will be implementing as an interim solution, 20 park pilot green bin locations in 2008, in addition to the 5 parks that were launched in 2007 to address dog waste in park litter bins. The parks are being selected based on their accessibility by Solid Waste Management Services trucks, as well as their features to support a green bin, such as existing and new application parks for dogs off-leash and picnic areas.

Due to processing issues with plastic, paper products are being recommended for pick-up of dog waste. Dog owner associations will be engaged in this pilot initially through a focus group setting out to provide feedback on the process and proposed products and later to promote and educate park users about the pilot. Solid Waste Management Services will test and advise on the best type of paper product for its organic processing operations. Paper dispensing machine companies have been contacted; however, the type of dispenser will be dependent on the final paper product.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation, in consultation Solid Waste Management Services, will develop a summary of steps involved in implementing a City-wide green bin program, including capital and operational costs, as well as a critical path leading to 2010 as part of the longer-term solution to be presented to Parks and Environment Committee in November when the pilot outcomes are reported.

Financial Impact

The cost to supply the 20 park pilot green bin locations with green bins, paper bags and dispensers is estimated at \$5,000 which is within the existing Waste Diversion budget. No additional funds are required for 2008.

The cost of collecting the green bins contents will be minimal and can be absorbed within the Solid Waste budget.

The implementation of green bins throughout the parks system is expected in 2010. The costs for installation and implementation including capital and operational costs, as well as a critical path leading to 2010 implementation, will be discussed in a report to Parks and Environment Committee in November 2008.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

On April 10, 2007, the Parks and Environment Committee requested that Parks, Forestry and Recreation, along with Solid Waste Management Services, report back on improving and expanding recycling in parks, options for diverting dog waste from the litter stream and increasing the green bin program in parks, as well as the effectiveness of By-law enforcement in curbing and cleaning up of household illegal dumping in parks.

For additional information, see:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/pe/decisions/2007-04-10-pe03-dd.pdf>

This report was presented to the Committee on February 19, 2008. In response to the report, the Parks and Environment Committee requested that Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Solid Waste Management Services report further on how other cities deal with dog waste in parks, including the provision of bags.

Consequently, Parks, Forestry and Recreation has researched and are providing the following information on dog waste management in parks in partnership with Solid Waste Management Services.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In addressing dog waste in park litter bins, Parks, Forestry and Recreation initiated dog waste pilots based on research on dog waste management in other cities around the world. The pilots included a carry-in / carry-out, a septic waste pilot, and a green bin pilot. Through cooperation between Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Solid Waste Management Services, green bin pilots were launched in 5 parks and focused near off-leash or picnic areas. The 2007 park locations included Trinity Bellwoods Park, Withrow Park, Earl Bales Park, Neilson Park and Cruickshank Park. The parks were selected based on their accessibility by Solid Waste Management Services trucks, as well as their features to support a green bin, such as dog off-leash or picnic areas. Audits of the bin contents were conducted in June, July and August of 2007, revealing that the material

collected in the green bins was relatively uncontaminated except for the plastic bags the dog waste was collected in.

COMMENTS

Solid Waste Management Services has advised that they will not have full capacity for implementation of city-wide parks green bins until 2010. Until additional capacity comes on-line, Solid Waste Management Services will support Parks in implementing 20 new dog/organic waste green bin pilots in 5 parks per park type: destination, regional, neighbourhood. Due to processing issues with plastic, paper is the preferred material for pick-up of dog waste. Twelve paper distributor / manufacturers were contacted and samples were gathered. Most bags are generally not pliable enough for effective collection and are not leak resistant. Parks, Forestry and Recreation will engage dog owner associations in this pilot, initially through a focus group setting to provide feedback on the process and the proposed products and later to promote and educate park users about the pilot. Solid Waste Management Services will test and advise on the best type of paper product for its organic processing operations.

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SIGNATURE

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