



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

3Rs Working Group 2008 Annual Report

Date:	March 23, 2009
To:	Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
From:	General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services Chair, 3Rs Working Group
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	p:/2009/swms/April/007PW

SUMMARY

The 3Rs Working Group (“3RWG”) Terms of Reference, approved by City Council in November 2007, requires an annual status report submitted jointly with the General Manager of Solid Waste Management Services. This annual report summarizes the group’s work and activities through 2008, changes to membership and plans for 2009. This report recommends changes to the 3RWG Terms of Reference regarding rotation schedule, nominating panel composition, and attendance and also recommends the City to enter into amending agreements with the current members of the 3RWG to reflect the change to the Terms of Reference.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services and the Chair of the 3Rs Working Group recommends that:

1. City Council amend the 3Rs Working Group Terms of Reference as described in Attachment 1.
2. Subject to the adoption of Recommendation 1, the General Manager be authorized to enter into amending agreements with the current 3Rs Working Group members, in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor, to reflect the changes to the Terms of Reference in Recommendation 1 and to reflect the specific term of membership for each current member as set out in Attachment 2.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts arising from this report.

DECISION HISTORY

The 3Rs Working Group was convened after City Council adopted the recommendations contained in PW10.11 “Transition from CEAT to the 3Rs Working Group and Residual Waste Working Group” at its meeting of November 19 and 20, 2007:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/pw/bgrd/backgroundfile-7848.pdf>

The 3Rs Working Group Terms of Reference is contained in Attachment A to the report PW10.11 and was adopted by City Council at its meeting of November 19 and 20, 2007:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/pw/bgrd/backgroundfile-7855.pdf>

City Council adopted the recommendations contained in PW14.18 and thereby appointed new members to the 3Rs Working Group, in accordance with the 3Rs Working Group Terms of Reference at its meeting of April 28 and 29, 2008, and a list of replacement members to be appointed in the order listed in Confidential Attachment 2 to report PW14.18: <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/pw/bgrd/backgroundfile-11869.pdf>

COMMENTS

As per Section 13 of the 3RWG Terms of Reference, the group shall submit an annual status report jointly with the General Manager of Solid Waste Management Services to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee detailing:

1. the issues, achievements and challenges dealt with by the 3Rs Working Group over the previous year;
2. membership changes, if any;
3. consultation activities undertaken, including but not limited to, meetings with the public and stakeholders, focus groups or phone polls and references to the resulting feedback received;
4. meetings with vendors or lobbyists; and
5. goals and plans for the upcoming year.

1. Issues, Challenges and Achievements

Issues identified by 3Rs Working Group

The City's solid waste management programs are complex and changing rapidly, and may not be well understood or used to its fullest potential by many Toronto citizens. Hence communication with citizens was a general area where the 3RWG felt it could and should try to make a difference as a citizen advisory body.

Early in 2008, the 3RWG identified three priority issues where it felt that communications with the public could be enhanced. These included:

- waste diversion in multi-unit dwellings (apartments and condos);
- the first R: waste reduction; and
- SWMS websites and other communications tools.

A description of each issue and a summary of 3RWG input and advice related to each issue are given below. Notably, in addressing these issues, the 3RWG focused mainly on promotion, education and outreach rather than technical aspects of Solid Waste Management Services.

1 a) Waste diversion in multi-unit dwellings

"Obstacles need to be removed to be successful" – 3RWG member, 2008

The 3RWG (whose members include 6 multi-unit building residents) were concerned not just with the low diversion rate in multi-unit buildings compared to single-unit dwellings in Toronto, but also with difference in City services provided to multi-unit building.

For example, the 3RWG was concerned that although the new fee structure was applied first to multi-unit buildings on July 1 2008, multi-unit building residents did not have equal access to composting programs (back yard or Green Bin), individual unit recycling containers, or solid waste management information about services.

The 3RWG formed a Multi-Family Subcommittee to focus specifically on multi-unit building programs and issues. Following the general 3RWG interest in communications (rather than, for example, infrastructure), this subcommittee provided input into the multi-unit building communications plans for the new fee structure and communications products such as the "Toronto recycles" card, the pilot multi-unit building calendar, and multi-unit Green Bin rollout posters and flyers. The subcommittee also commented on the rollout plans for the in-unit containers for multi-unit buildings, and developed new ideas for a 3Rs toolkit for multi-unit building residents. Subcommittee members participated in events such as information sessions for multi-unit building owners about the new fee structure, focus groups of condo and apartment dwellers recycling behaviour

and attitudes, and meetings of the multi-stakeholder “Multi-Family Waste Diversion Working Group.”

The Multi-Family Subcommittee, along with the 3RWG, proposed to the City a new outreach and education program called the 3Rs Ambassadors, aimed specifically at residents of condos and apartments. The program was approved at a pilot scale for 2009, with budget for a 3Rs Ambassador Program coordinator.

In order to improve waste diversion in multi-unit buildings SWMS have:

- Budgeted and begun the hiring process for a 3Rs Ambassadors program coordinator;
- Budgeted and begun the hiring of 10 full time staff to assist in the outreach and education for the multi-unit building Green Bin rollout in 2009;
- Conducted focus groups and research aimed at improving recycling in multi-unit buildings;
- Launched a HHW and electronics collection pilot for multi-unit buildings.

1 b) The 1st “R”: waste reduction

"What you buy becomes garbage" – 3RWG member, 2008

The 3RWG also felt that progress must also be made on waste reduction – stopping waste before it starts - in addition to the work being done to maximize the success of the City’s recycling, composting and reuse programs.

The 3RWG noted that the 2008 Operating budget for SWMS allocated \$1,994,400 for a:

“comprehensive, ongoing promotion and education campaign aimed at changing the purchasing behaviour of residents...[which] will assist in reducing waste at the source and prevent the material from being generated in the first place”. [Budget Analyst notes 2008]

As this policy direction relates directly to citizen’s knowledge and behaviour, it the 3RWG identified this as an area where citizen input and advice could be particularly helpful.

The 3RWG, therefore formed a Reduce Subcommittee to provide input and advice on the City’s waste reduction initiatives. Members of this subcommittee, along with other members of the 3RWG, followed the development of, and provided comment on, the in-store packaging waste reduction policy adopted as amended by City Council in December 2008. As part of this initiative, members also attended the Packaging Waste Reduction forum at Fort York Sept 10, 2008.

Members of the Reduce Subcommittee also worked on developing a waste reduction promotion and education campaign that would focus on a specific waste item that is particularly warranting reduction or elimination from the City's waste stream. As part of this effort, members helped design a statistically valid telephone survey of Toronto residents (conducted in August 2008) about waste reduction attitudes and behaviour, including their willingness to reduce use of wasteful items. This research as well as a review of the City's waste audit data led the 3RWG to recommend coffee cups as the central focus of this waste reduction campaign. At the request of the 3RWG, the General Manager has invited 3RWG to participate on the City's Hot Drink Cup Taskforce.

1 c) SWMS websites (toronto.ca/garbage) and other communications tools

"It is apparent that the first thing that must be done to improve responsible stewardship of waste at the home and family level is to find a way to get more people interested!" – 3RWG member, 2008

The 3RWG also identified other areas where communications with citizens can and should be improved. Of particular note were the City's solid waste website (toronto.ca/garbage) and phone lines. Members observed that although considerable information is available on the City's website, or through the City's help line, that the desired information is not always easily obtained. Many citizens including 3RWG members encountered problems with the phone lines or websites in 2008 (e.g., busy phone lines, redirected calls or inaccurate answers, printing problems, etc.).

Concerns about the website and phone lines were identified to staff for resolution throughout 2008. The 3RWG has also proposed a more comprehensive citizen review of the City's websites, including its own site (toronto.ca/3rwg) and exploration of ways these sites can be made more useful and/or accessible. The 3RWG anticipates reporting back to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee on this review in 2009.

Challenges

As a new group, the key challenge the 3RWG faced in 2008 was establishing itself as an effective advisory body in the context of an ambitious and notable year for solid waste management in Toronto. The group also faced some challenges typical of a citizen advisory body with a diverse and busy volunteer membership.

Some of the specific challenges included:

- Selecting and integrating 7 new members from an applicant pool of 150;
- Addressing technical problems with respect to the rotation schedule of members in the 3RWG Terms of Reference;

- Getting and keeping up to speed on multiple Target 70 initiatives which were rolling out rapidly and simultaneously implemented;
- Establishing and maintaining effective communication within the group, City staff and Councillors;
- Obtaining budgetary support for the 3Rs Ambassadors program as proposed by the 3RWG (i.e., beyond pilot scale); and
- Making tangible progress on other projects or issues with aggressive timelines, so that 3RWG members felt their input counted.

Many of these challenges were successfully addressed throughout the year, in part through gaining experience as a group and in part through undertaking a year-end survey of members and City staff about what worked, what didn't, and how improvements could be made. Best practices were identified in this review and will be applied in 2009.

"The more you put into it the more you get out of it." – 3RWG member, 2008

Achievements

Key achievements in 2008 identified by the 3RWG are listed below:

- The 3RWG forged a well-organized, engaged, diverse 15-member citizen advisory group that works collaboratively and effectively with City staff;
- The 3RWG made good use of our independent reporting relationship to PW&I;
- The 3RWG raised the profile of key solid waste management issues such as outreach, education and communication with citizens.

The 3RWG also identified and developed specific project ideas that would improve communication with citizens about important solid waste issues. Significant progress was made on two of these projects in 2008, including the 3Rs Ambassadors proposal and "The One" waste reduction education campaign. Project-specific achievements in 2008 were:

- Support from the City for the 3Rs Ambassadors proposal to get the program started in 2009; and
- The 3RWG identified the focal point for a waste reduction campaign, the coffee cup, based on considerable thought and research.

"I like being connected to like-minded people who care about this stuff, and want to do something to address the challenges we face as a city." – 3RWG member, 2008

2. Membership Changes and Recruitment Activities

In January 2008 the 3RWG membership consisted of the initial membership listed in section 15 of the 3RWG Terms of Reference with the exception of Susan Williams who resigned her position at the end of 2007 before the first meeting.

Over the course of the 2008, the following members resigned their position on the 3RWG:

- Jon Neuert – March, 2008
- Philip Knox – June, 2008
- Mike Moselhy – January 2009

At its meeting of April 28 and 29, 2008 City Council approved the appointment of 6 new citizen members to the 3RWG (Attachment 1 to staff report PW14.18, publicly released May 2, 2008), and an additional list of 6 names to be appointed as replacement members are needed (Confidential Attachment 2 to staff report PW14.18).

In May 2008, six Toronto residents appointed by Council joined the 3RWG:

- Melodie Barnett
- Vince Higgins
- Madhusudan Kannaiah Nambakkam
- Cait Ryan
- Charlotte Ueta
- Sarah Webb

In June 2008 and January 2009, two names were drawn from the list of replacement members, in the order approved by City Council, to fill vacancies:

- Garry Tanuan – June 2008
- Francesca Millescamps – January 2009

As of January 2009 four names remain on the replacement member list to fill future vacancies on the 3RWG. Staff and the 3RWG may need to conduct recruitment sessions and convene the Nominating Panel, which includes a member of the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee, in 2009 or 2010 in order to fill vacancies.

3. Meetings Communications and Consultation with the Public

The 3RWG held eleven regular meetings in 2008. All meetings were open to the public and agendas, minutes and presentations from each of the meetings are posted on the 3RWG website:

http://www.toronto.ca/garbage/3rwg/meetings_2008.htm

The 3RWG formed three subcommittees, under section 11 of the 3RWG Terms of Reference, in order to deal with specific issues to help the 3RWG carry out its work. The Reduce Subcommittee, the Multi-Family Subcommittee and the Administration and Development Subcommittee each held approximately one meeting per month throughout 2008 with each subcommittee providing a status update to the subsequent full 3RWG meeting.

The 3RWG Terms of Reference, section 13, provides for a standing deputation by the Chairs of the 3RWG at the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee. The Chairs of the 3RWG made the following deputations in 2008:

- April 2008 – Overview of 3Rs Working Group and new member recruitment process;
- June 2008 – Detail of project ideas;
- October 2008 – Presentation on 3Rs Ambassador concept;
- November 2008 – Deputation on In-store packaging report.

Members of the 3RWG also participated and made presentations to the Multi-Family Waste Diversion Working Group and the Integrated Solid Waste Stakeholder Working Group.

The 3RWG distributed project and working group updates to a mailing list of interested Toronto residents through two newsletters emailed in June and October, 2008. In August 2008 the 3RWG participated with staff in the development of a telephone survey conducted by Ipsos Reid that polled residents of Toronto on 3Rs awareness and willingness to reduce waste.

4. Meetings with Vendors or Lobbyists

The 3RWG was approached with a proposal by Jay B. Hancock, President of Kibbles Software Inc. with an inquiry of support and involvement in a project related to an online coffee cup consumption calculator. Mr. Hancock originally contacted the office of Councillor DeBaeremaeker with the idea to build a program to increase awareness of waste in coffee cups but needed data from the City to work on the site further.

The group was informed of the proposal over email, heard a presentation at a meeting of the Reduce Subcommittee and ultimately decided, at the October 16, 2008 meeting of the 3RWG, to not pursue involvement with the project.

5. 3RWG Goals and Plans for 2009

Organizational structure - Project Teams

In 2009, the 3RWG has shifted from an issue-based subcommittee structure to a project-oriented structure. Members will continue to communicate on a broad basis in monthly plenary meetings, but individuals and smaller groups will concentrate on very specific tasks.

Three project teams have been established, as described below, and may meet more often and less formally. Tasks and plans outlined below will be undertaken by 3RWG members working jointly with City staff, and are subject to Council direction.

“The One” project team (4 members)

Overall Goal:

To implement a waste reduction promotional campaign focused on disposable coffee cups.

Key Tasks:

- Complete detailed research target audiences e.g., heavy cup users who are open to changing their habits;
- Determine ways/means of communicating with targeted demographics, especially by non-traditional means (e.g., web 2.0 social media);
- Sketch out initial parameters of communications plan, including success measures;
- Test and launch campaign;
- Monitor ongoing Hot Drink Cup Task Force work for implications on the reduction campaign.

Key timelines:

- June 2009: staff report to PW&I on hot drink cup recommendations;
- Fall 2009: target launch date for education and promotion campaign;
- Throughout 2010: measure effectiveness and recommend updates as required.

The 3Rs Ambassadors project team

Overall goals:

- To implement the pilot scale 3Rs Ambassadors program in 2009;
- To review program and make recommendations to expand for 2010.

Key Tasks:

- Develop 3Rs Ambassadors training modules and curriculum; materials for Ambassadors toolkit; and measures of success/audit design;
- Explore partnership opportunities with Mayor's Tower Renewal Project, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, Toronto Environment Office "Live Green Toronto" Community Animators, Toronto Environment Volunteers, and other organizations;
- Mobilize first wave of 3Rs Ambassador volunteers, train and get active in their buildings;
- Continue to recruit future 3Rs Ambassadors and plan for expanded program in 2010.

Milestones:

- Spring/Summer 2009: Mobilize first wave of 3Rs Ambassadors;
- Summer/fall 2009: SWMS budget process for 2010 including 3Rs Ambassadors budget;
- Late 2009/ Early 2010: Measures results of 3Rs Ambassadors work and hold 3Rs Ambassadors recognition event.

Websites project team

Overall goals:

- To recommend changes the 3RWG webpage (toronto.ca/3rwg), in conjunction with the corporate website update, in order to develop a 'citizens page' which promotes interaction with citizens on various 3RWG activities and increases household level 3Rs awareness;
- To review the City's other 3Rs-related webpages (toronto.ca/garbage) for citizen usability and areas for improvement.

Key Tasks:

- Develop and recommend a feedback form / survey and post on 3RWG webpage;
- Explore social media opportunities to promote 3Rs messages;
- Maintain up-to-date content on project teams' activities;
- Develop communications plan for launching 3RWG website and increasing traffic;
- Recommend a usability/ user surveys for City's 3Rs-related websites;
- Participate in development of on-line searchable recycling database (based on Region of Peel model) and provide input on other updates to Toronto.ca/garbage pages.

Key Timelines:

- April 2009: update all content on 3RWG webpage;
- April 2009, Sept. 2009: coordinate with launch timelines for the Ambassadors and the One projects;
- Throughout 2009: monitor traffic data and make recommendations for SWMS sites.

Non-project goals and plans

The main focus for 3RWG in 2009 will be on implementing the projects described above. However, the 3RWG will also provide input and advice to the City on other waste diversion and reduction initiatives as per its mandate. Non-project goals and planned Activities are listed below.

- To provide input and advice on planned new SWMS 3Rs-related infrastructure developments such as the re-use centres, new recycling and green bin facilities. Activities may include commenting on facility designs in terms of public use, awareness or impact of these facilities;
- To provide input and advice on 3Rs-related aspects of the 2010 SWMS budget, including the 3Rs communications and outreach budget;

- To increase outreach and interaction between the 3RWG and the wider public and to provide a forum for citizens to share ideas. Activities may include networking with community groups, expanding and communicating with our mailing list, holding 3RWG meetings in locations outside of downtown and inviting more citizen participation/ attendance at our meetings;
- To develop new project ideas and teams as required. A bi-annual retreat is planned where the 3RWG can brainstorm new ideas and reflect on what we have done and where we can improve.

The 3RWG will also continue to actively provide general input and advice on the implementation of Target 70 initiatives (particularly those related to communication, education, waste reduction and the multi-residential sector), and continue to work with other City-organized stakeholder groups such as the Integrated Solid Waste Working Group, the Multi-Family Waste Diversion Working Group and the Residual Waste Working Group.

Changes to the 3Rs Working Group Terms of Reference

In accordance with Section 2 of the 3RWG Terms of Reference, the 3Rs Working Group may, from time-to-time, suggest changes to its mandate.

Member Rotation Schedule – Section 4 “Composition / Term of Membership”

The current wording describing the member rotation schedule in Section 4 of the 3RWG Terms of Reference is:

“Half of the initial members will be appointed for a three year term. The other half of the initial members will be appointed for a one year term to provide for a normal rotation of half the membership every two years. Replacement members will be appointed for a four year term.”

When the 3RWG Terms of Reference was being drafted by members of CEAT and SWMS staff, the intention was to establish a membership term that achieved a balance of new members and incumbents through rotating half the group every two years.

However, in the first year of the 3RWG’s mandate, the membership rotation clause in the Terms of Reference proved to be excessively complicated to apply in practice because of the different provisions for initial and replacement members. After considerable discussion amongst 3RWG members, SWMS staff, the City Manager’s Office and Legal Services, it was agreed that the membership provisions required clarification and amendment. While not necessarily bound by the Public Appointments Policy, the 3RWG considered this City Policy for guidance in developing the recommended change to the Terms of Reference. The Public Appointments Policy recommends a 4 year term, with a limit of 2 consecutive terms, with all member terms beginning and ending with the Council terms.

The 3RWG mandate necessitates a high level of commitment from members, who typically attend 2 to 3 meetings per month with consequent time spent in preparation, document review and travel. Members felt that a four year term was too long a commitment, while a term shorter than three years would not permit members to gain enough knowledge and experience to be maximally effective. Notably, other citizen advisory groups, such as the Toronto Pedestrian Committee and Union Station Revitalization public advisory group, also have three year term of service. Thus a three year term for the entire membership is recommended.

As recognized in the Public Appointments Policy (sec 3.2), there is a need for continuity as well as new ideas on advisory bodies such as the 3RWG. The 3RWG thought the best way to maintain this balance was not a complicated rotation design, nor through simultaneous start and end dates, but through natural attrition and replacement of members with equal three year terms. The natural staggering of three year terms has the advantages of gradual turnover as well as of not disadvantaging replacement members by partial terms.

The natural staggering of terms also facilitates the participation of 3RWG members in the selection of its own members. This is an important feature of the 3RWG Terms of Reference, where the 3RWG Chair and Vice Chair sit on the member Nominating Panel alongside City staff and Councillors. If all member terms were to end with the term of City Council and the full recruitment process performed only at the beginning of the term of City Council, as recommended in section 3.5 of the Public Appointments Policy, this feature could not be implemented as the Chair and Vice Chair would not be members at the time of recruitment. Extending the Chair or Vice Chair's terms for the purposes of recruitment would not be desirable insofar as they would either be placed in a conflict of interest (should they wish to be reappointed) or they would be selecting members for a group in which they would no longer be participating (should they not want to be reappointed).

Upon consideration of these issues, the 3RWG subsequently voted to adopt these key principles for amending the membership provisions at their January and February 2009 meetings:

1. The length of all members' terms should be three years, once renewable;
2. A rotation schedule was not necessary, since a balance of new members and incumbents could be achieved by 'natural' staggering of terms as members joined and left their group.

The recommended change to the Member Rotation Schedule in the 3RWG Terms of Reference is set out in Attachment 1. As a result of this recommended change, current members of the 3RWG will require a change to their existing agreements with the City to reflect the new term of membership. This is shown in Attachment 2.

Nominating panel composition – Section 7 – “Appointment Process for the 3Rs Working Group”

The current wording in section 7 describing the establishment and Role of the Nominating Panel in the 3RWG Terms of Reference:

“When required, a Nominating Panel of three members will be established, comprised of: the Chair or Vice Chair of the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee; the General Manager or Director of Policy and Planning, Solid Waste Management Services; and the Chair or Vice Chair of the 3Rs Working Group to interview applicants and recommend new members and potential replacement members to City Council”.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee have demanding schedules. While every effort is made to make the recruitment and interview process as efficient as possible, it is nonetheless time consuming for all participants.

The recommended change gives the Chair and Vice Chair of PW&I added flexibility to delegate their role in the selection of 3RWG members while preserving the principle of having political, staff and citizen representation on the Nominating Panel.

The recommended change to the Nomination Panel Composition in the 3RWG Terms of Reference is found in Attachment 1.

Attendance – Section 9

The current wording in Section 9 of the 3RWG Terms of Reference is:

“Members will be deemed to have resigned if they miss 3 consecutive meetings or any three meetings within a 12 month period, extenuating circumstances notwithstanding. The 3Rs Working Group, with the agreement of the PW&I committee, may waive this requirement provided the member in question has provided a satisfactory, prior written notification of the expected absence to the Chair.”

It was felt that the decision to grant a member temporary absence from the 3Rs Working Group should not lie with the group itself, but should be subject to PW&I approval. The Chair and/or other members should not have the power to grant or deny any member an attendance waiver. As such the 3RWG agreed that this decision should be made by PW&I.

The recommended change to Attendance section in the 3RWG Terms of Reference is found in Attachment 1.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Recommended changes to the 3Rs Working Group Terms of Reference

Attachment 2 – Revised Membership Term of Current Members of 3RWG