



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Green Bin Implementation in Multi-Residential Buildings and Waste Reduction/Diversion Education Initiatives

Date:	June 4, 2013
To:	Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
From:	General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	P:\2013\Cluster B\SWM\June\010PW (AFS#17439)

SUMMARY

This report is in response to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee’s request for a report on the Green Bin Program implementation plan for all City-serviced multi-residential buildings, and a summary of Solid Waste Management Services annual promotion and education initiatives to encourage waste reduction and diversion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, recommends that:

1. The Public Works and Infrastructure Committee receive this report for information.

Financial Impact

This report will have no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the 2013 budget. According to the Solid Waste Management Services 2013 budget, approximately \$2.7 million (or approximately one dollar per Toronto resident) will be spent on communications activities for 2013. More than \$1.3 million of the overall funding is dedicated to the multi-residential program. The remaining \$1.4 million is dedicated to single-family (curbside) residents, Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Corporations, schools, commercial establishments, and non-residential organizations.

The 2013 Solid Waste Management Services approved operating budget also includes funding to actively continue the roll-out of the Green Bin Program to City-serviced multi-residential buildings.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of March 19, 2013, the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee requested the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, to report to the June 19, 2013 meeting of the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee with a detailed plan for 2013 and 2014 on increasing education and support to all residential customers to reduce the amount of divertible waste ending up in the waste stream; including, staffing, budget and actions.

Also at this meeting, the General Manager of Solid Waste Management Services was directed to present a plan to implement the Green Bin Program in all City-serviced buildings in 2013, 2014 and beyond.

Public Works and Infrastructure Committee's Decision document can be viewed at: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.PW21.1>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Multi-Residential Green Bin Implementation

Toronto is unique among large Ontario municipalities in that multi-residential units (apartments and condominiums) make up approximately 55% of dwelling units in the city. Solid Waste Management Services currently provides services to almost 435,000 multi-residential units and to 11,500 residential units above commercial properties. This presents particular education and program challenges in meeting the 70% waste diversion goal set in 2007. In 2012, the multi-residential sector achieved a diversion rate of 24%, which lags behind the single-residential diversion rate of 66%. To improve the multi-residential diversion rate, Solid Waste Management Services implemented an aggressive campaign to have more buildings participating in the Green Bin Organics Collection Program, as well as improve the efficiency and diversion rate of those buildings already enrolled. This report presents the Division's enhanced multi-residential strategy to implement the Green Bin Program in City-serviced multi-residential buildings.

Other Public Education and Promotion

Educating and motivating the public are the keys to the success of any solid waste management program. Implementing a new program operationally will not be successful until the public has been informed, embraced it, and is actively engaging in the desired behaviour. The purpose of public education is to educate, inform and persuade people to accept new ideas and change existing attitudes and behaviours. A crucial part of behaviour-change communications is identifying the barriers to making the desired

change. Some barriers may include a lack of motivation, peer pressure, inconvenience, existing beliefs or inadequate positive feedback. In addition, the receptivity of the audience, the specifics of what they are being asked to do, the tools they are provided, their underlying socio-economic characteristics, etc., are all important factors in the ultimate success of a program.

This report also focuses on public education measures taken in 2013 and planned for 2014 to educate the single-family residential units and multi-residential buildings that receive City service to reduce the amount of divertible waste ending up in the waste stream.

COMMENTS

Green Bin Implementation in Multi-Residential Buildings

Prior to having sufficient processing capacity for organic materials, Solid Waste Management Services took a phased approach to having multi-residential buildings participate in the Green Bin Program. This meant that invitations were sent out to all buildings and staff worked only with those buildings that showed a keen desire to participate. Since the launch of the multi-residential Green Bin Program in 2009 up to February of 2013, approximately 1,100 buildings of 4,500 that receive City services were participating.

Additional processing capacity as a result of construction of the Disco Road Organic Processing Facility, however, has allowed Solid Waste Management Services to adopt a more aggressive strategy in rolling out the Green Bin Program to City-serviced buildings. As of May 2013, approximately 1,810 of City-serviced multi-residential buildings (over 170,000 units) are participating in the Green Bin Program, 880 of which are front-end collection buildings (buildings with large 2 cubic yard bins) and 930 are curbside buildings (buildings with 35 gallon wheeled carts). This amounts to an increase of over 700 buildings enrolled and participating in the Green Bin Program between March 1st and May of 2013. The 2013 target goal is to have 2,000 buildings participating by year end and over 4,000 buildings by the end of 2014.

Beginning in March 2013, staff initiated a second round of invitations along with follow up phone calls to non-participating buildings. Staff reminded buildings that in order to be eligible to receive City collection services, Section 844-3 (D) of the Municipal Code states that buildings must participate in the City's collection of recyclable and organic materials. The implementation process includes a staff site inspection to explain the collection process, recommend placement of collection containers, delivery of kitchen catchers, offer promotional material, and a presentation to the tenants if requested. Furthermore, staff also undertake follow up inspections at newly participating buildings to ensure that the Green Bin Program is operating successfully and that organic materials are being placed in the correct bin. The Field Monitoring Team inspects Green Bin collection containers for contamination and will speak to building

staff and residents should they come across incorrect materials found in the bin. Staff will continue to monitor the building's progress and offer ongoing assistance by providing additional Green Bin information handouts or staff presentations to building residents on how to properly participate in the Green Bin Program.

Buildings that receive curbside collection are provided at no cost with 35 gallon Green Bin containers, and in-unit kitchen containers. Multi-residential buildings receiving front-end collection service purchase a bulk bin for Green Bin collection. The additional cost of purchasing a collection container is a possible deterrent to participating in the Green Bin Program; therefore, Solid Waste Management Services have been operating a pilot project to provide multi-residential buildings with free 2 cubic yard front-end collection containers to encourage more buildings to participate in the Green Bin Program.

Solid Waste Management Services staff have also reached out to Toronto Community Housing Corporation buildings and will work with them to provide additional support to ensure a smooth roll-out and implementation of the Green Bin Program at these buildings.

Staffing and Operational Efforts

To support the enhanced multi-residential waste diversion strategy, the Customer Service and Waste Diversion Implementation unit was established. Collectively, this unit will be responsible for rolling out all the tasks described in the above section, as well as ensuring improved customer service and improved diversion rates at multi-residential buildings.

Customer Service and Waste Diversion Implementation staff are assigned to each collection district to manage, oversee and address multi-residential collection and waste diversion related issues in their respective areas of the City. This structure streamlines the communication channel between property managers, superintendents and Solid Waste Management Services staff. This allows staff to provide better support to buildings as property managers will have one point of contact, a regular staff person who is familiar with the operations of their location and can receive tailored recommendations to improve waste diversion at their building.

To further promote the roll out of the Green Bin Program to buildings, an outreach team was established to staff a multi-residential information booth at Community Environment Days to answer questions from residents on the Green Bin Program roll out to multi-residential buildings. Finally, staff is exploring opportunities to set up information tables in building lobbies to further promote the Green Bin Program.

In consultation with Municipal Licensing and Standards, Solid Waste Management Services will develop and implement a stronger enforcement protocol to ensure participation of City-serviced buildings in the Green Bin Program and to continue to increase the multi-family residential diversion rate.

Multi-Residential Building Education

Changing the behaviour of residents in multi-residential buildings is difficult for a number of reasons. For example, there are significant differences in the waste management system in each building making it challenging to create detailed informational materials that apply to all. There is also less ability for the City to communicate directly with residents as much information dissemination relies on the cooperation and commitment of building superintendents and managers. As opposed to single-family homes where residents have personal “ownership” of their bins and where there is neighbourhood expectation to participate in waste diversion programs, there is anonymity in multi-residential buildings with no accountability for what occurs in the chute room. There can also be significant language, literacy and cultural barriers among residents, a lack of tools provided; i.e. bag or bin, and participating in waste diversion programs may be inconvenient and require additional physical effort.

To contend with these challenges, consistency and sustained communication support for multi-residential customers is important. Some of the communications activities planned for 2013 include a campaign to promote recycling and waste diversion in general, and the distribution of the multi-residential calendar which is a key annual communication piece that provides direct contact with individual multi-residential residents. More than 550,000 calendars are delivered door-to-door through Canada Post. While they do not have a collection schedule, as none is required, the calendars have a pull-out insert of the Toronto Recycling Guide and also contain reference information about all of Solid Waste Management Services diversion programs.

In 2013, the 3Rs Ambassador Program will continue to be promoted and supported. The Program is an education and outreach program that uses multi-residential resident volunteers to help people living in their buildings learn to reduce, reuse and recycle more of their waste. Volunteer activities may include putting up lobby displays and information posters, writing and distributing a newsletter, or planning reuse activities such as book exchanges. Solid Waste Management Services will also maintain the distribution of existing multi-residential education pieces such as diversion posters, bin stickers, recycling guides and waste diversion handbooks for superintendents. Select education pieces, such as the Green Bin guide are available in 18 languages including Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, French, Greek, Gujarati, Italian, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil, Ukranian, Urdu and Vietnamese.

With respect to the roll-out of the Green Bin Program to multi-residential buildings, there are a number of communication and education efforts targeted to support the program’s implementation. Some of the communication activities being considered include: dedicated advertising to apartments and condominiums, a direct mail campaign, information sessions for property managers and superintendents to provide support and training (two are scheduled for June with more to follow in the fall of 2013), as well as targeted outreach to large property management groups. City Councillors were also sent

status updates on the number of multi-residential buildings participating in the Green Bin Program so they can add promotion of the program to their outreach material.

Public Education and Promotions

The Solid Waste Management Services 2013 public education plan to improve residential waste diversion will target multi-residential buildings, while continuing to support single-family homes. Other communication efforts in 2013 will focus on adding mixed rigid plastics to recycling, initiatives targeted to non-residential waste reduction, and the introduction of organics collection from schools.

It is anticipated that the Communications funding for 2014 will be increased from \$2.7 million to \$3 million, depending on the 2014 budget process. The 2014 budget will be set according to priorities and needs that are identified by senior management staff. It is anticipated that there will again need to be a strong focus on multi-residential diversion, both in improving Blue Bin recycling participation and in supporting the continued roll-out of the Green Bin Program.

Additionally, an education campaign may be needed to promote the reduction of plastic bags pending City Council's direction on measures to reduce the use and disposal of plastic bags in Toronto; as well as possible communication regarding cigarette butt litter in the downtown core.

Single-family Dwellings and Overall Program Support

The focus of communication to single-family homes is to reinforce the need to reduce the amount of waste, sort waste correctly (Blue Bin, Green Bin, Garbage) and set out items properly at curbside to facilitate collection. There are numerous communication and public education tactics designed to help residents in single-family homes manage their waste. Foremost of these is the production and distribution of the annual Curbside Collection Calendar (460,000 copies) and the annual Residential Units Above Commercial Calendar (11,500 copies). All calendars include the Toronto Recycling Guide and Drop-Off Depot reference chart. As well, Solid Waste Management Services provides promotion and communication support for 44 Community Environment Day Events (attended by 26,000 people in 2012), promotes Waste Wizard (the online search tool to help residents properly sort their waste), produces communication pieces to remind residents about proper set out and sorting practices for Blue Bin, Green Bin and garbage, and provides public education for other diversion programs including electronic waste, household hazardous waste, metal collection, yard waste and oversize materials.

Depending on the nature of the information that needs to be communicated, other platforms may include advertising, direct mail, newsletters (such as Our Toronto), social media, website content, letters, brochures (such as the City's utility brochure), media relations, stakeholder relations, stickers/post-it notes, bin hangers (collection dos/don'ts).

Mixed Rigid Plastics

The addition of mixed rigid plastics (e.g. clear takeout containers, molded bakery trays, etc.) to the Blue Bin Recycling Program was first introduced to Toronto residents in November and December 2012. It is the first addition to the Blue Bin since 2008 when film polystyrene and foam polystyrene were added, requiring a recycling behaviour change for residents. Phase two of the communications and education campaign is currently underway (May through June of this year) and will build on the initial message and remind residents about this change.

The communication tactics for the mixed rigid plastics campaign include a print advertising campaign (ads in English and six other languages), radio ads, subway advertising and on-line ads, as well as a direct mail campaign to approximately 455,000 single-family homes. While the addition of mixed rigid plastics affects all households – both single and multi-residential – the direct mail piece is targeted to houses because the timing of the single-family collection calendar did not allow information about this addition to be included. The information was included in the 2013 multi-residential calendar. These news items have been included in the Toronto Recycling Guide, on posters/stickers, and on the Solid Waste Management Services website, including Waste Wizard.

In addition, Solid Waste Management Services is considering a joint mixed plastics campaign with six other municipalities (Halton, Peel, York, Hamilton, Niagara and Durham), tentatively scheduled for Fall 2013.

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SIGNATURE

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