

February 5, 2004

City of Toronto 2003 Waste Diversion Goal Fast Facts

Background

- Established in January 2001, the Waste Diversion Task Force 2010, comprised of all Toronto City Councillors, is charged with finding a “made-in-Toronto” solution for waste diversion from Michigan landfill. The three-part goal of Task Force 2010 is:
 - a) 30 percent waste diversion from landfill by 2003;
 - b) 60 percent by 2006;
 - c) a vision of 100 percent by 2010.
- When the decision was made to ship its waste to Michigan, Toronto was already diverting 25 percent from landfill—a respectable and even progressive achievement for a City its size, particularly since 50 percent of Toronto’s housing stock consists of multi-family dwellings, which is a sector that traditionally has lower participation in recycling initiatives.
- After consulting with Toronto residents, environmental organizations and industry, senior levels of government, and the private sector, Task Force 2010 presented a report to Toronto City Council in June 2001, recommending a comprehensive waste diversion plan.
- Over the past couple of years, the City has implemented a number of initiatives designed to move us toward 30 percent diversion by 2003:
 - a) Rolling out the **Green Bin Program** to all single-family households in the GTA by 2005;
 - b) Introducing a corresponding shift from **weekly to bi-weekly residual waste collection**;
 - c) Undertaking a blitz to ensure basic recycling programs are available in all 5,100 **multi-family apartments** and condominiums;
 - d) Expanding the **Blue Box Program**, both in terms of introducing a wider range of acceptable items (e.g. gable-top milk and tetrapak containers), and capturing more recyclables overall through mandatory use of the Blue Box Program (curbside recycling);
 - e) Moving to **Kraft paper bags** designed to enhance collection of leaf and yard material for composting.

2003 Achievement

- The City announced on February 5, 2004 that it exceeded its 2003 waste diversion goal of 30 percent. Year-end results have been calculated to be 32 percent.
- The 32 percent rate of diversion represents a blended average of *high performers* (communities with tools and systems in place, such as the Green Bin Program, that allow them to deliver a stellar performance), and *potential performers* (sectors or communities with room to improve, such as multi-family dwellings (e.g. apartment buildings) and those jurisdictions about to climb on board with the Green Bin Program).
- The difference between the City of Toronto's 2000 and 2003 waste diversion rates (25 percent and 32 percent, respectively) represents 2,000 fewer trucks on the road to Michigan, annually.
- Achieving 32 percent diversion from landfill in 2003 propels the City toward its next milestone, which is even more aggressive: 60 percent by 2006.

Looking Ahead

- Although we now have some momentum toward our 2006 goal, the initiatives currently underway are not, by themselves, enough to allow us to reach the 60 percent target. Toronto is looking ahead at some difficult decisions if it is to reach its next milestone; for example:
 - a) Rolling out the Green Bin Program to multi-family dwellings;
 - b) Considering a reduction of bag limits;
 - c) Setting up re-use centres for convenient drop-off and pick-up of reusable items.
- Similarly, it is unrealistic to believe we can recycle, reuse and compost our way to 100 percent diversion from Michigan landfill by 2010. The City will need to continue to explore new and emerging technologies that will allow us to manage the estimated 40 percent residual waste that will remain after recycling and green bin participation is maximized.

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