

The Corporation of the City of Kawartha Lakes

Council Report

Report Number WM2020-007

Meeting Date: August 20, 2020

Title: Waste Management Public Education and Communication Strategy

Description: Strategy to define a set of priorities and public education resources needed to deliver the Waste Strategy initiatives

Ward Number: All

Author and Title: David Kerr, Manager Environmental Services

Recommendation(s):

That Report WM2020-Waste Management Public Education and Communications Strategy be received; and

That the Public Education and Communications Strategy attached as Appendix A to report WM2020-007 be endorsed by Council.

**Department
Head:**

Financial/Legal/HR/Other: _____

**Chief Administrative
Officer:**

Background:

At the Council Meeting of November 19, 2019 Council adopted the following resolution:

CR2019-641

Moved By Councillor Yeo

Seconded By Deputy Mayor Elmslie

That Report WM2019-012, Making Waste Matter: Integrated Waste Management Strategy Update, be received;

That Council approves the integrated waste management strategy update for implementation with the following accelerated amendments;

That an immediate focus be placed on public education;

That an immediate enhanced online presence be implemented regarding recycling;

That a \$10/ton increase to the tipping fees be implemented in January 2020 and the increase in revenue be used to offset additional operating costs to enhance diversion; and

That the by-law for allowable recyclables in waste be amended to reduce the amount from 20% to 10% starting in early 2020.

Carried

This report addresses Council's direction to focus on public education for waste.

Rationale:

One of the key initiatives in the Waste Strategy Update is an increased focus on public education. The initiative for 2020 is to create a Waste Management Public Education and Communication Strategy to define a set of priorities, outline the resources that will be needed to deliver the Waste Strategy initiatives and to improve overall public education on waste and recycling in the Kawartha Lakes community. This draft Public Education and Communication Strategy is attached as Appendix A and is presented for Council's endorsement as part of this report.

The Public Education and Communication Strategy details items that need particular attention in order for the overall Waste Strategy to be successful in meeting its diversion targets. If the diversion targets are not met the landfill site life will be used up sooner. Therefore, there are significant economic benefits for

us as a municipality and community in keeping our landfills sustainable for as long as possible and to increase waste reduction and diversion.

In putting together this Public Education and Communications Strategy staff consulted with:

- The public, through surveys and day to day communications
- Our three committees of council (Waste Management Advisory Committee, Fenelon PRC, and Lindsay Ops PRC),
- Other municipalities
- The Continuous Improvement fund (CIF), a provincially subsidized organization that oversees the blue box recycling program and supports diversion initiatives

After input from all of the above sources and review of our existing operations there were a number of initiatives that were targeted to focus on over the next several years. These initiatives are further detailed in the attached strategy document but are summarized as follows:

- Posting of weekly reduction tips on social media
- Visits to schools and community events to educate people
- Continual advertising and promotion of ways to reduce waste
- Educating our own staff to better carry the message to the public
- Improve multi-residential recycling through outreach
- Maintain a communication platform and education tools on “Jump In”
- Promote textile recycling
- Promote and improve ways to divert bulky plastics
- Educating and promotion on ways to reduce single use plastics
- Promote backyard composting and source separated organics
- Improve already successful diversion programs such as mattress recycling and construction demolition diversion
- Educating the public on curbside collection to reduce contamination in the recycling stream

Putting an increased focus on education and outreach is essential to achieving the initiatives above which are included in the Waste Strategy. These initiatives are intended to support reaching the City’s goal to increase our diversion rate to 70% by 2048 to ensure longevity of our landfill sites and sustainability of waste operations. In addition, the increased focus on public education is required due to the legislative changes with producer responsibility through the Waste Free Ontario Act and associated regulations. While there are many contributing factors to increasing diversion rates, education and outreach is key to its success.

In recognizing what public education and outreach is necessary staff next looked at ways to implement a program to deliver that education and outreach. The first step was to consult with the Corporate Communications Division to determine

what activities they would be able to undertake and what activities our existing waste staff could undertake. In the Strategy, a table has been created which describes the tasks required, the role of each division in completing them and where additional resources are needed. Staff will work within annual budgeting processes to recommend the required resources to deliver the proposed Strategy.

In any event, staff from the Communications Division and the Waste Division will perform specific public education and communication tasks listed in the “Roles and Resources” section of the strategy in Appendix A. Those tasks will include the initiatives previously listed in this report but with a focus on developing content and delivery via social media.

When staff updated the Integrated Waste Management Strategy in 2019, public education was a key theme that was brought up frequently by the public and waste advisory committees as something desperately needed.

In a survey that was posted for the public in 2019 to get feedback on Strategy initiatives approximately 200 responses were received. Through the survey when asked “Would you like to see more information on waste management programs and recycling opportunities in the City?” 65% of respondents said yes. Below are a few direct quotes from residents who filled out the survey when asked to share any other comments:

“Education and public awareness seems to be lacking in the City of Kawartha Lakes. Many people I know are confused as to what goes in the recycling and what does not.”

“More education is needed for new permanent residents that arrive in the Kawartha area. The app has been good but it would be better if there were more examples of specific recycling. More information for landfill sites is also needed as it is very intimidating when you are not familiar with the way it is set up.”

“Education programming in the schools would be a great idea. Get the information to individuals at an early age so they know why recycling/reducing/reusing is important. Knowing the how and the why something works is powerful.”

We also conducted research for this public education and communications strategy to see how other municipalities are handling promotion and education on their waste management programs. Through our research we found that the majority of the municipalities who responded felt that they would greatly benefit from having increased focus on public education.

Communications will continue to work closely with the Waste Division to ensure that any new materials developed to support the Waste Division are effective and

accessible for the community. All other methods of communication developed by Corporate Communications (such as media, websites, social media, mobile apps, advertising and publications) would be utilized by Waste to support outreach.

Finally, the draft Public Education and Communication Strategy was shared with the Lindsay Ops Landfill Public Review Committee, the Fenelon Landfill Public Review Committee and the Waste Management Advisory Committee. All committees voiced strong support for the need for a robust and do-able Waste Management Public Education and Communication Strategy. Of note the Waste Management Advisory Committee also did recommend that the City look into the option of mailing out the waste management calendars to all residents each year to ensure the best possible communication. Staff will look into this option.

Other Alternatives Considered:

Council could choose to remain status quo and not have a Public Education Strategy however delivery of the goals identified in the strategy would unlikely be achieved. Ultimately effective planning promotion and education for each Waste strategy initiative is needed in order to reach the strategy diversion rate target of 70% by 2048.

Financial/Operation Impacts:

We have estimated that an additional 5% increase in diversion from landfill can be achieved through implementing the recommendations in the Waste Management Public Education and Communication Strategy. This is part of a robust public education and outreach program which supports meeting our target of 70% diversion by 2048. Based on 40,000 tonnes of waste landfilled per year, a 5% diversion translates to 2000 tonnes per year. At a conservative cost of deferred landfill space of \$150/tonne this is a long term savings to the City of \$300,000 per year. Therefore, if diversion rates are achieved, the long term benefit of deferred landfill cost savings far outweighs the cost of any additional resources required.

Relationship of Recommendation(s) To the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan:

One of the four main Guiding Principles in the Strategic Plan is Service Excellence. With additional resources, we will be able to provide an even better service to the public which will help divert waste and keep our landfills sustainable well into the future.

One of the four Strategic Priorities of the Plan is A Healthy Environment and one of the main items under this category is Increase Waste Reduction and Diversion. This will be achieved through executing the updated Integrated Waste

Management Strategy. The Communications and Public Education Plan listed as **Appendix A**, is a key initiative from the updated Waste Strategy. By providing enough resources to increase promotion and education this will also help achieve our initiatives in the Waste Management Strategy.

Consultations:

Manager, Communications, Advertising & Marketing
Communications Officer

Attachments:

Appendix A – Waste Management Public Education and Communications Strategy



Appendix A
WM2020-007.pdf

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