

...and the Greater Toronto Area initiative is born

York sees the GTA as a long-term measure

York Region to the north of Metropolitan Toronto, may be the GTA member that least needs the Greater Toronto Area initiative to meet its landfill needs.

York has 13 million tonnes of capacity remaining at its Keele Valley landfill site, near Canada's Wonderland.

The site, located in Vaughan, is jointly-operated with Metro Toronto. Metro will look after York's waste management needs until 2003, York Chairman Eldred King said.

"We don't have shortcomings some other municipalities have"

-York Chairman Eldred King

But the Region will enter the GTA along with Halton, Peel, Durham Region and Metro for "long-term waste management planning," but it is not an emergency measure, Mr. King said. "We don't have the shortcomings some of the other municipalities have."

York says, like Halton, the Region will be given time to choose a landfill contingency site that could be required to host some or all of the GTA's four million tonnes of garbage a year until a permanent site is found.

But "York will not announce a contingency site until it has seen the long-term program," Mr. King said. He said Halton has also been given "some forgiveness" on announcing a site.

The long-term plan will likely be available next March.

Reaction to the GTA in York has been mixed, but there is some disappointment about the pace the five-region plan is making, Mr. King said.

"We have not proceeded as quickly as I had hoped."

York has a population of 441,000 people in an area of 1,650 square kilometres. It has nine municipalities, including Richmond Hill and Newmarket.

The Region recycles six per cent of its waste and is looking at adding a blue box recycling program to the three municipalities that are not yet recycling.

Under the GTA objective, the five regions will recycle 25 per cent of waste by 1992 and 50 per cent of waste by the year 2000.

But York's problems extend beyond landfill. Transportation in the rural areas is "\$400 million behind," the chairman says. Studies are presently being conducted to solve the transportation problem.

Water and sewage also present a problem for York. Mr. King said both areas "are in question." The Region purchases its water from Metro Toronto but is looking at striking a deal with the province to get water hook-up.

Peel almost pulled out of GTA

Peel Region, Halton's neighbor on the east side of Winston Churchill Boulevard, is the same Region that threatened to pull out of the GTA last month because its own landfill problems were mounting.

But Peel, with almost two-thirds of its 644,000 population in the City of Mississauga, was also first in the Greater Toronto Area Regions of Halton, Peel, Durham, York and Metropolitan Toronto, to put a blue box recycling program in place in 1985.



Frank Bean

Peel also has a plastic recycling facility.

Regional Chairman Frank Bean and Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion met with Environment Minister James Bradley recently to discuss landfill. The Britannia Road landfill site now in use will reach capacity next year, Mr. Bean said.

But Peel will pile the garbage higher at Britannia Road, and the Region has been assured by the province that under the GTA process, the site would not have to undergo a lengthy environmental assessment.

The 200-acre site at Airport Road called the Tullamore site, will serve as Peel's entry into the five-region GTA.

Chairman Bean said the Region received some "flack" from people who disapprove of the GTA initiative. But this, he says, is due to

lack of knowledge.

"At the moment, most people don't know a lot about the GTA," the chairman said. "Each area, including my own, has been pre-occupied with its own particular sites and its own particular problems."

Peel has three landfill sites on its 1,257 square kilometres. Two small sites are in the Town of Caledon. A larger site sits at Britannia Road and Second Line in Mississauga. The City of Brampton will host Peel's contingency site if it is approved under the GTA.

There will be two public meetings in September to explain landfill, Mr. Bean said. One meeting will be held at Mississauga's city hall. A second meeting will take place at Mayfield Secondary School in Brampton.

The Peel chairman said the GTA

is "not trying to work magic," but is trying to reduce waste going to landfill sites by 25 per cent in 1992 and 50 per cent by the year 2000.

Peel Region produces almost 900,000 tonnes of garbage a year.

"We at the GTA have a responsibility to bring about a clear message to the general public what we are all about," said Peel's chairman.

A public relations firm met with the GTA last week to discuss public education, he said.

Peel is looking at Energy from Waste, a program previously considered by Halton Region.

Although Peel threatened to leave the GTA, Mr. Bean said the Region is now "optimistic" about the future of the five-region initiative.

"We're very much involved with Halton and the other members of the GTA."

Peel will step up recycling

Peel Region has an ambitious forecast for waste recycling over the next year.

The Region will bring waste recycling up to 13.9 per cent, putting Peel two percentage points behind Halton.

Peel currently recycles 7.3 per cent of its waste, but there is a new program under way to ban cardboard and wood from landfill sites, said Peel's waste production manager Glen Milbury.

Industrial waste now at 7.8 per cent recycling will increase to 17.8 per cent.

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