

Halton may soon recycle plastic

By DONNA KELL
Herald Staff

Halton Region could soon take its plastic products out of the landfill sites and put them back on store shelves as recycled containers.

A Regional report released last week said a plastic recycling project for 30 per cent of the Region's garbage in volume and seven per cent in weight, could be in place for 1990 with an initial investment of \$500,000 and a yearly cost of \$231,000.

"To add plastic to our (recycling) program would be expensive but it depends how you weigh the costs," said Regional waste management director John MacKay at Wednesday's meeting.

He said plastic recycling would be an "investment" for the Region, and would help to meet goals of recycling 25 per cent of the waste stream by 1992 and 50 per cent by the year 2000 announced by the Ministry of the Environment earlier this year.

"Anything we do to reduce the amount of waste is a success," said Mr. MacKay.

Recycled products would be sorted with the blue box program, the Regional report says. The Region would purchase four trucks at a cost of \$100,000 each to meet the increased volume of products, which would include margarine containers, detergent bottles and shampoo containers, car products (such as oil bottles) and gardening supplies, like paint cans or herbicide bottles.

Mr. MacKay says plastic recycling costs in the Regional report are only a "guesstimate" at this stage.

Oakville Councillor Janet Mitchell said Oakville residents are anxious to recycle their plastic products. She said plastic should be part of the Region's increased recycling to meet the Ministry of the Environment recycling increases for 1992 and the year 2000.

"We've got to bring on board mixed plastics. It's really important if we're going to meet those goals," she said.

Coun. Mitchell said the plastic industry "wants to help us" recycle plastic products.

But Regional Chairman Peter Pomeroy said although the report on plastic recycling is "fair," most of the Region would find it difficult to pay the costs associated with plastic recycling.



Pete Pomeroy

"Maybe the people of Oakville can afford to pay six, seven or \$800 for recycling," he said, but other Regional benefits could suffer.

Councillors heard that some plastic products cannot be used in the curbside program for recycling because they are "contaminated." The most marketable plastic, the plastic Polyethylene terephthalate (PET), the material soft drink bottles are made of, is only four per cent of the plastic market.

Halton approached the Ministry of the Environment for financial help in launching a plastics program, but "their answer at this stage is no," Mr. MacKay said. He said funding is reserved for "new" projects, such as those launched in Mississauga and Guelph recently. Halton's recycling would not be considered a "pilot project."

To offset operating costs of plastic recycling, Halton would sell about 385 tonnes of plastic a year at an average price of \$176 a tonne, a Regional report says.

The total revenue would be about \$68,000 a year. The cost for recycling a tonne of plastic would be \$692, according to a Regional formula, based on collecting 400 tonnes of plastic a year.

Education chief lashes out at media coverage

Halton Board of Education Director Bob Williams told trustees at last week's board meeting he is "sick and tired" of the negative portrayal of Canada's public education system in the Toronto media.

In response to a recent Globe and Mail editorial and an education supplement recently appearing in the Toronto Star that both said Canadian educators are failing today's students, Mr. Williams is preparing a report to prove the articles don't apply to Halton.

Mr. Williams said this kind of alarming information appears yearly in the Toronto press and he is angry about the negative perceptions Halton residents might be developing towards the board. He is also worried about the negative effects the articles will have on moral at the board.

Although 31 per cent of Canadian students drop out of school before completing their diploma, according to the Globe and Mail, the figure is only nine per cent in Halton, the board's communication officer Brian Woodland said.

Halton residents should also be reminded the board has always willingly submitted its curriculum to provincial scrutiny and made the results public, Mr. Woodland said.

It's a good system that the board is constantly trying to improve, he said.

Mr. Woodland acknowledged the Halton board is imperfect but contrary to what the papers imply, it isn't experiencing a crisis situation, he said.

As it applies to the Halton board, the papers are wrong in implying its curriculum fails to reflect industry's needs, Mr. Woodland said.

The board is heavily involved with industry to keep its curriculum current, he added.

Halton Hills Trustee Arlene Bruce admitted she was unfamiliar with the two particular articles, but she was incensed after reading similar negative articles appearing in the Toronto papers

this summer.

A lot of the articles suggested public education is second class; children only get a good education by attending private school, she said. But Ms. Bruce says the Halton system, for the most part, offers everything a private school offers.

Ms. Bruce went on to say in some cases education in the Halton system is better than what's found in private schools. Parents whose children have come to the Halton system from a private school, have told her they are surprised at the quality of education, said Ms. Bruce.



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