

Region okays use of trash bag tags

By **CHRISTINA COMMISSO**
Metroland Media Group

Six new waste diversion strategies will be rolled out in Halton over the next few years, adding another four years to the lifespan of the Region's landfill.

Wednesday, Regional Council approved Halton's new Solid Waste Management Strategy that aims to increase the waste diversion rate in Halton from 57.4 per cent—currently the leading diversion rate in Ontario—to 65 per cent by 2016.

The biggest game changer will be the introduction of garbage bag tags.

Currently, residents can place up to six bags of garbage for curbside pick-up every other week. The Region is looking to cut that limit in half to three bags every other week, and residents can purchase tags for additional garbage bags for \$1 or \$2.

Rob Rivers, director of waste management, said the bag tag program will be rolled out in a phased approach with full implementation expected in 2016.

He said currently Halton has the highest garbage limit in the GTA and about 80 per cent of households place three bags or less for curbside collection.

The initiative will divert three per cent more waste from the Regional Road 25 landfill and is the most expensive diversion tactic, costing taxpayers an additional \$3.61 a year (based on a \$350,000 property assessment).

Rivers said while the bag tags and new limit will divert more waste from the

landfill, it's expected more materials will end up in Blue Bins or Green Carts, which cost the Region more to process than it would if it sits in the landfill.

The Region also plans to expand the list of items that can be recycled in Halton and increase the size of blue bins from 18 gallons to 22 gallons.

Plastic plant pots, plastic trays and paint cans are some of the materials the Region plans to permit in blue bins and will divert another 1.6 per cent of waste from the landfill.

Enhanced promotion and education about waste management will divert 1.5 per cent more waste and implementing the Green Cart and enhanced Blue Bin programs at apartment buildings will divert another one per cent of waste.

While most of the new initiatives require another year or so of research before implementation (the full strategy isn't expected to be fully implemented until 2016) there are two initiatives the Region plans to roll out in 2012.

Expanded special waste drop of days where residents can recycle hazardous waste and electronics will divert 0.2 per cent of waste, a small but important amount, said Rivers.

Promoting the recycling of clothing to charities or reuse centres will divert 0.3 per cent more waste from the landfill without costing the taxpayers a penny.

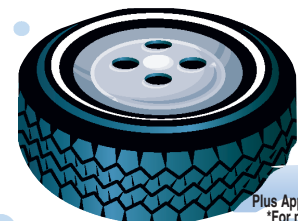
In total, the six initiatives will increase Halton's waste diversion by 7.6 per cent and cost taxpayers an extra \$8.65 a year.

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