

Goal is to reduce waste by 14 per cent

Local residents part of pilot project

Five hundred and fifty residents in Georgetown have been selected to take part in a new Halton Region pilot program to reduce garbage—including collecting leaf and yard waste in large paper bags.

The program is part of an overall waste reduction strategy called Waste Less, said Halton Region waste management co-ordinator David Miles.

The program has been developed by the Joint Municipal-Regional Waste Management Committee—of politicians and residents—which is trying to come up with solutions to reduce the amount of waste being generated in Halton. It was approved by Halton regional council recently.

The Georgetown neighborhood of 550 residents around Centennial School has been selected to participate in the program. Neighbourhoods in Milton, Burlington and Oakville have also been selected to take part.

The pilot project will start the first week of October and continue until June 1. Selected residents this week will be receiving their information kits. As well, an information meeting for the residents was held at Centennial Middle School on Wednesday (Oct. 4).

There will be no change to the current level of service (other than the paper bags), said Miles. Instead, the goal will be to study the residents' response to education efforts, their adaptation to new practices, their limits to accept new changes, as well as the best way Halton Region can achieve waste reduction, based on time, cost, and effectiveness.

Components will include the yard waste campaign, grass-cycling (leaving grass clippings where they're mowed), purchasing practices (buying reusable, easily recyclable or less packaged items), using distributed composters and encouraging more Blue Box use.

A study on the makeup of garbage found that kitchen organics made up 18 per cent of all garbage collected. About half of that material was compostable and it is hoped that by providing composters to residents, that waste will be eliminated.

Over the eight-month period, the study will monitor changes in the waste's weight and composition. It is hoped there will be a waste reduction of about 14 per cent.

Part of the emphasis will be to encourage residents to place their yard waste into the large kraft paper bags, instead of plastic. The plastic bags create a problem at the Halton Waste Management Site in Milton. The plastic cannot be completely screened out of the finished compost, lessening its value. As well, the bags create an extensive litter problem at the site.

The City of Toronto has already banned the use of plastic bags for yard waste starting next year.

In addition to this pilot project, Halton regional council approved the funding of \$25,000 annual to start an Environment Day in Halton Hills, Oakville and Burlington on a rotational basis.

A pilot program, held in Georgetown last June, was determined a success. More than 500 residents disposed about 25,552 litres of hazardous household waste as well as about nine tonnes of tires and



John Smith, Halton Region acting director of waste management services, (right) and Rick Bonnette, chair of the region's planning and public works committee, show off the composters, boxes and bags the region is giving out as part of its WasteLess pilot project aimed at reducing the amount of curbside garbage. Photo by Herb Garbutt

electronics for recycling.

The total cost for that event was \$17,500, but "it was cost-effective and that's worthwhile," said Halton Hills

Regional Councillor Rick Bonnette, who is the chair of the region's planning and public works committee.

—By Cynthia Gamble, staff writer



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