

GreenCart program would go Halton-wide

Region plans major shakeup for trash collection

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Special to The IFP

The Region's GreenCart program took a major step toward becoming a Halton-wide initiative last week.

After hearing from several local residents and groups largely in favour of the program, the Region's planning and public works committee supported taking the GreenCart from a small pilot project to homes all across Halton.

The motion also calls for weekly GreenCart and Blue Box collection and bi-weekly garbage collection with a six-bag limit. Currently garbage is collected weekly with a six-bag limit and recycling is picked up bi-weekly.

If the resolution is approved by regional council today (Wednesday), it means residents throughout the region will have the opportunity to put their kitchen scraps out separately at the curb in a GreenCart for collection as early as next year. These scraps would then be turned into compost.

Oakvillegreen, the newly formed Miltongreen and Halton Hills-based Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources (POWER) all voiced their support for the GreenCart initiative at Wednesday's session. But, they weren't so happy with the six-bag limit for garbage.

"We feel the garbage bag limit should not exceed two bags bi-weekly," said Gillian Earle of Miltongreen. "Garbage bags should also be clear and if recyclable material is visible in these bags they should not be collected."

Oakvillegreen president Liz Benneian shared similar sentiments.

"The see-through bags allow for the new community standard of recycling whatever possible to take effect, with neighbours being able to see what their neighbours are doing and community pressure leading people to adopt recycling to keep step," she said.

Barbara Halsall noted that POWER also supports bi-weekly garbage pickup and weekly Blue Box and GreenCart collection.

But, not everyone was so positive about the GreenCart.

Jim Harding of the Milton Rural Residents Association told the committee that he recently drove around his neighbourhood, which is in the GreenCart pilot project, and saw that only 17 of the estimated 90 homes had their GreenCarts out.

"It does raise concerns for me in terms of the participation rate," he said.

Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette supports the region-wide GreenCart initiative and voted in favour of it at the Planning and Public Works meeting.

Bonnette stressed that education is the key for the program to succeed and regions



BARBARA HALSALL



Garbage collection

- Would move to bi-weekly pickup with a six-bag limit from the current weekly collection



Blue Box collection

- Would move to weekly collection from the current bi-weekly pickup



GreenCart collection

- Pilot project would go region-wide
- Collection would be weekly

such as York, Durham and Hamilton, have been very successful with similar programs.

"We are presently at 43 per cent (diversion rate) and the life of our landfill is only about 13 more years so this will extend our land fill by another eight years or so," said Bonnette.

He said at this point he does have a concern about requiring residents use only clear garbage bags.

"I think there is a privacy issue as well as sometimes the wrong piece of information may be put in by accident and someone may get information that doesn't belong to them," said Bonnette.

Wards 1/2 Regional Councillor Clark Somerville intends to support the initiative at regional council for the urban area.

"We've got to do something. If we don't do anything we're going to run out of landfill capacity by 2023," said Somerville.

But he said he isn't convinced the GreenCart system "is the best idea for the rural area because most of those residents (already) compost."

He said he has heard mixed opinions from both rural and urban residents on the program.

On the clear bag issue Somerville said, "I don't think we want to get into the garbage police."

Wards 3/4 Regional Councillor Jane Fogal said she will be supporting introducing GreenCart region-wide.

"I view it a bit as resource management," said Fogal. "It's time to stop just throwing away our resources and burying them. It makes more sense to capture the resource (compost) and reuse it."

She believes there will have to be an educational component when launching the program.

"But I think there is a willingness. The idea of the landfill sites filling up is something people are very aware of," said Fogal.

Milton Ward 3 Councillor Jan Mowbray also reported that she has been contacted by a considerable number of residents in her ward and the vast majority are opposed to the GreenCart.

She also said while she doesn't necessarily have a problem with GreenCarts, she doesn't support them in her rural area because of the large amount of composters already there.

After hearing from the residents, the councillors in attendance at the committee meeting further discussed the GreenCart.

Milton Wards 1 and 3 Councillor Barry Lee asked if certain parts of municipalities can be exempt from the program.

Commissioner of Planning and Public Works Peter Crockett said while the issue of service levels is currently established at the local municipal level, staff is looking at whether the Region's waste bylaw should be altered so those decisions are made by regional council.

'We've got to do something. If we don't do anything we're going to run out of landfill capacity by 2023.'



Wards 1&2 Regional Councillor Clark Somerville

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