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Canada

York's trash bill set to skyrocket

BY JEFF MITCHELL
Staff Writer

York Region's garbage disposal bill will more than double next year, as a result of the closure of the Keele Valley landfill site.

The region's tab for waste disposal will be \$12.6 million in 2003, as 140,000 tonnes of trash are shipped to landfill

sites in Michigan and western Ontario. The municipality will spend \$6 million this year to dispose of household waste at the Maple dump, which is slated to close in December 31.

Thursday morning, regional councillors voted to approve two new contracts with companies that will ship

the region's waste west beginning next year.

The region now has agreements with three companies, two of them shipping to Michigan and the other to Southwold Township, near St. Thomas.

But the search for a made-in-Canada solution for the region's waste disposal issues will continue.

Markham Councillor Gordon Landon, chair of the region's solid waste committee, put forth an amendment that requires the region to begin looking for Ontario landfill solutions in three years time.

The contracts approved Thursday have five-year terms, with options to renew for up to 20 years.

High costs and uncertainty about the willingness of U.S. states to continue accepting trash from abroad necessitate more research, said Mr. Landon, who noted several new Ontario landfill sites are close to gaining provincial approval.

"The concern that's been expressed is we are still shipping a significant amount of waste to the U.S.," Mr. Landon said.

Andy Campbell, director of waste management for the region, said even if the contractor with a landfill site in Ontario increased the amount of tonnage it accepted, some 40,000 tonnes of York's trash would still be going to Michigan under current circumstances.

The council approved two contracts Thursday.

Green Lane Landfill has a contract to ship 50,000 tonnes a year to a landfill site near St. Thomas for \$2,056,500 a year.

Onyx Hills Landfill Inc. will truck 90,000 tonnes a year to its dump in Washenaw County, Michigan. The annual value of that contract is \$4,550,400.

And the region already has a contract with Republic Services for 50,000 tonnes of trash a year, to be disposed of in Michigan. That contract is worth \$2,592,000 a year.

Meanwhile, the region has approved spending \$38.8 million on a new waste transfer site and recyclable material recovery facility on industrial land in East Gwillimbury, northeast of Newmarket.

The search for a made-in-Canada solution for the region's waste disposal issues will continue.

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