

STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

York Region is moving forward with a pilot project to use biodegradable bags in residential composters. A small bag retails for about seven cents.

Pilot project will 'waste time', complained Mayor Emmerson

From page 1.

by 50 per cent, putting a dent in the residuals.

Whereas a mandatory program could see the residuals drop from 15 per cent to 9 per cent, a voluntary program should drop it to 12 per cent.

They expect the cost per diverted tonne of organic waste to go from \$137 to \$133, saving taxpayers more than \$400,000 next year.

With the region endorsing the principle that biodegradable bags are the way of the future, some felt there was no point playing it safe at this point.

"We seem to be one step behind . . . you're going to waste time by doing a pilot," Mr. Emmerson said, urging to council to pick a date to make biodegradable bags mandatory and work towards it.

Mr. Grossi pointed out that residents already dealt with a mandatory change from plastic to paper bags for yard waste.

"I think residents are ahead of this on this one," Newmarket regional councillor John Taylor agreed.

Markham Regional Councillor Jack Heath recalled when Markham launched its green bin program in 2005, plastic bag maker Glad informed them biodegradable bags were still of inferior quality. However, today, the company has its own brand on the market.

T&T Supermarkets are among the few retailers whose shopping bags are biodegradable.

Aside from shifting to biodegradable bags, what else can you do?

While diapers can be included in green bins, they can become a processing problem if wrapped into too tight of a ball.

Similarly, pet waste does not get digested by the system if doubled-bagged.

Some 13 tonnes of reusable items diverted from landfill

More than 13 tonnes of reusable materials have been diverted from landfill through three reuse/recycle events hosted this year by The Regional Municipality of York in partnership with Goodwill and Habitat for Humanity.

Thanks to the participation of hundreds of York Region residents, over 10 tonnes of reusable items were collected for Goodwill and nearly three tonnes collected for Habitat for Humanity.

All items were given back to the community and given a second life, rather than going to landfill.

"The success of diversion programs in York Region can be directly attributed to the hard work and commitment of our residents," York Region Chairman and CEO Bill Fisch said. "I'm confident this program, combined with our other waste management initiatives, will allow us to achieve our goal of a minimum 65 per cent diversion from landfill by 2010."

Reuse/recycle events give residents more opportunities to divert materials from land-

fill while also giving back to the community. Items collected at events throughout the region included clothes, housewares, books, CDs and DVDs, tools, fabrics, games, sports equipment and building supplies. Over 600 kilograms of shredded paper was also collected for recycling at these events.

"Even before recycling and composting, we should strive first to reduce and to reuse," Vaughan Regional Councillor Mario Ferri, Chair of the Region's Solid Waste Committee, said.

"York Region residents are getting involved and our individual efforts are coming together to produce powerful results."

This is the fifth year York Region has hosted Reuse/recycle events and more will be coming in 2009. In the past five years, York Region residents have diverted over 60 tonnes of materials through Reuse/Recycle events.

For more information on York Region's waste management programs, visit www.york.ca/waste or call 1-877-464-9675 ext. 5746

Major building projects were all products of the Great Depression

From page 1.

Building and Maple Leaf Gardens were all products of the Great Depression.

Infrastructure is just a start, Ms Hogg said.

Creating more affordable housing and integrating immigrants are also ways to "buy our way out of this recession".

How the unravelling of the rest of the federal red tape will take place remains to be seen, but Mr. Perrault was optimistic the answers will be known as soon as January.

In the meantime, \$3 billion has already been allocated, but not spent, on infrastructure projects, giving a huge potential to Mr. Perrault and his municipal cohort.

Their report points out that failing to invest in infrastructure compounds costs, with traffic congestion and the need to resurface roads, which could have been patched before problems got bad, for example.

A November 2007 study put the cost of eliminating Canada's infrastructure deficit at \$123 billion and growing.

In York Region, the infrastructure is relatively new, but the fast-growing region is close to approving a transportation master plan that includes nearly \$15 billion in road and transit

improvements.

Even if revenues decline, the region should not have to slam the brakes on infrastructure plans.

"It's a long-term plan and you can't deduce long-term trends based on the last three months of what has been happening in the economy," regional infrastructure manager Paul May said.

Minor year-to-year adjustments could be made as annual budgetary needs change, but the overall plan remains, he said.

"There's a responsibility on the part of government to look into the future beyond the immediate situation," agreed John Stillich, director of the Sustainable Urban Development Association.

The non-profit group promotes Smart Growth and made a presentation to regional council earlier this year about what they could be doing better. The key, Mr. Stillich said, is to be flexible when possible.

That could mean trading light rail transit for cheaper bus rapid transit, for example, but falling behind in infrastructure planning is certainly no answer.

"It's a very good time to invest in people, jobs and infrastructure to keep us competitive," Ms Hogg said.

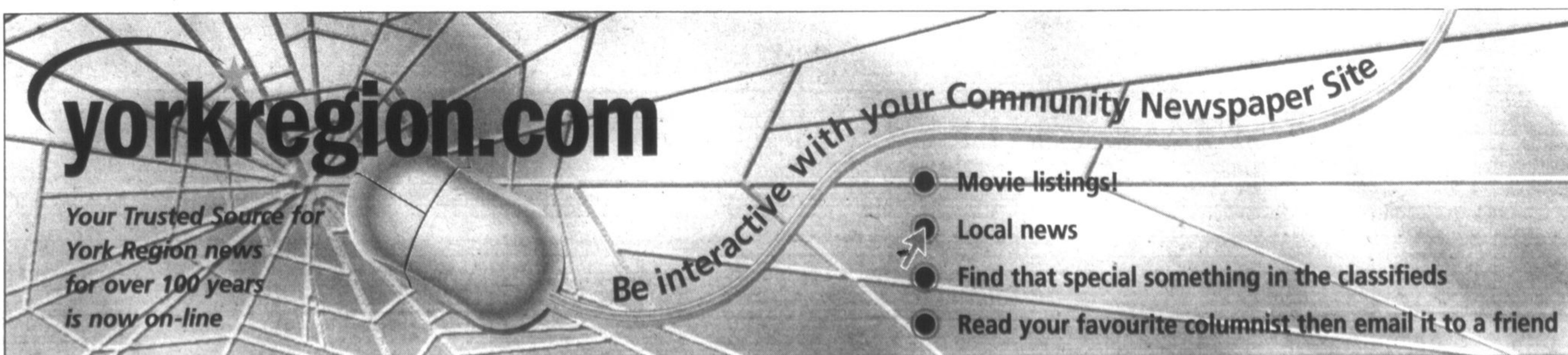


Touching the lives of the deafblind in Ontario

DeafBlind Ontario Services supports deafblind adults with community-based housing, trained intervention support, independent living skills, work experience and other specialized support.

www.deafblindontario.com

This message brought to you as a community service of The Economist/Sun Tribune



yorkregion.com

Your Trusted Source for York Region news for over 100 years is now on-line

Be interactive with your Community Newspaper Site

- Movie listings!
- Local news
- Find that special something in the classifieds
- Read your favourite columnist then email it to a friend