



REGION OF WATERLOO

**TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
Waste Management**

TO: Chair Jim Wideman and Members of the Planning and Works Committee

DATE: April 20, 2004

FILE CODE: C06-60/ER.04

SUBJECT: LITTER REDUCTION IN THE REGION OF WATERLOO – PROGRAM LAUNCH

RECOMMENDATION:

For information.

SUMMARY:

NIL

REPORT:

In June 2003, Regional Council approved report E-03-065 "*Litter Reduction and Clean-Up in Waterloo Region.*" That report proposed a coordinated strategy between the Region, the Area Municipalities, the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and local educational institutions to promote anti-littering behaviour and ensure prompt cleanup when required.

A task force of staff representatives has been meeting since last fall to develop a program to achieve the following goals:

- a) develop a region-wide anti-littering message;
- b) clarify litter cleanup responsibilities;
- c) clarify and strengthen by-law enforcement; and
- d) involve educational institutions, community groups and the private sector in cleanups and the promotion of anti-littering behaviour.

Task force progress to date is summarized in Appendix A. With the recent completion of the 2004 budget process for most municipalities, implementation of the program can now begin. The Region has committed \$80,000 to promotion and physical cleanup activities, while the three cities have each provided \$20,000 towards the combined promotion effort. (City of Waterloo to be confirmed in May.)

The task force has already developed an overall creative theme for the program consisting of a common message and logo. This message will be used during the initial launch of the program this spring.

Given that the heads of Council for the three cities and the Region are all members of Planning and Works Committee, the unveiling of the message/logo will take place at the beginning of April 20 committee meeting with all members of the task force invited to attend. The three cities and other program partners will also be using this new message/logo to promote cleanup activities during Earth Week.

With respect to next steps, physical cleanup of accumulated litter following the snowmelt is already underway. Regional staff have worked closely with City of Waterloo staff to coordinate cleanup activities in that municipality. Much of the initial efforts have been focused near the two universities with temporary staff retained to assist in a prompt cleanup. In response to a suggestion from the City, blue box collection routes near the universities were modified recently so that all blue box collection activities are completed first, before garbage collection trucks enter the area. Non-recyclable materials in the blue and other items such as muddy pizza boxes can then be placed directly in the garbage truck which provides a consistently cleaner streetscape. While litter cleanup will occur mainly in the spring, problem areas will be addressed throughout the year.

The promotion and education effort will likely begin in May. Using the common message and logo to be unveiled on April 20, the awareness program will include ad boards on GRT buses, posters offered to all schools in the Region, a radio message and various other media avenues. Private sector participation will be encouraged once the program launch is underway.

The task force has also met with MTO staff and its local contractor. While MTO has not yet agreed to pick up any litter at its interchanges, the task force will likely suggest a strategy in the near future to Planning and Works committee to persuade the Province of Ontario to improve the appearance of its property.

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN:

This program supports the Corporate Strategic Goal of maintaining a sustainable and livable community.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The \$80,000 program cost was approved during the recent budget process.

OTHER DEPARTMENT CONSULTATIONS/CONCURRENCE:

The Region's by-law enforcement section is involved with this project.

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix A: Litter Reduction Task Force – Progress Report

PREPARED BY: *Susan White*, Manager, Waste Collection and Diversion

APPROVED BY: *Michael Murray*, Commissioner, Transportation and Environmental Services



Litter Reduction Task Force

Progress Report

Prepared by

Susan White, Manager
Waste Collection and Diversion
Region of Waterloo

March 31, 2004

BACKGROUND

In June 2003, Regional Council approved report *E-03-065 Litter Reduction and Cleanup in Waterloo Region*. This report proposed a coordinated strategy between the Region, the Area Municipalities, the MTO and local educational institutions to promote anti-littering behaviour and ensure prompt cleanup when required.

While the Area Municipalities and the Region have all placed greater emphasis on litter reduction and cleanup recently, residents regularly point out to councillors and staff that they believe the problem is still growing and is not considered within acceptable limits. With seasonal changes such as the spring snowmelt, large volumes of litter appear throughout the Region and lead to significant public concern over both the source of the litter and cleanup efforts. There is agreement that the overall appearance of the community can be improved. What is required is an overall strategy to coordinate a powerful anti-littering promotion effort, along with clearly defined responsibility for cleanup activities and costs.

This report was circulated to all Area Municipal Councils, the MTO, Public and Catholic school boards, Conestoga College, Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU) and the University of Waterloo (UW) for information and to encourage their participation on a litter reduction task force. The following goals were proposed for the task force:

- a) to develop a region-wide anti-littering message;
- b) to clarify litter cleanup responsibilities;
- c) to clarify and strengthen by-law enforcement measures; and
- d) to involve educational institutions, community groups and the private sector in cleanups and promotion of anti-littering behaviour.

LITTER REDUCTION TASK FORCE

The first meeting of the Litter Reduction Task Force (Task Force) was held October 7, 2003 where Task Force members (Attachment A) considered two major issues:

- a) the ability of their organization to contribute financially or otherwise to the anti-littering promotion effort; and
- b) if their organization was prepared to meet as a subgroup to clarify cleanup and by-law enforcement strategies.

Pending budget approval, the Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo intend to each commit \$20,000 towards an external advertising budget for the next three years. The Region of Waterloo has committed \$50,000 to an external advertising budget, ad space on GRT buses, an anti-litter message in each edition of Environews and an additional \$30,000 towards physical cleanup in the spring. The Region also agreed to waive the tipping fee for litter specific cleanup activities. Other members will provide in-kind support to develop the promotion program.

Two sub-committees were established including one to focus on promotion, and the other to address by-law issues and cleanup.

Promotion Sub-Committee

A coordinated promotion effort is needed to not only raise awareness and understanding of the litter issue, but to also foster actual behaviour change. Our progress to-date is as follows:

- a) The Committee recognizes that behaviour change will require long-term promotion efforts on behalf of the Task Force.
- b) Five target audiences have been identified: kindergarten to grade 6, grades 7 & 8, high school students, university and college students and adults who litter.
- c) Task Force members will use their internal promotion venues to promote the anti-litter message. Examples include radio stations at the University of Waterloo and Conestoga College, student newspapers, GRT bus signage, posting of anti-litter posters, Leisure Guides in the tri-cities, websites and Environews.
- d) The City of Kitchener noted that the City of Mississauga had invited them to use their LitterBug logo to promote litter awareness. The feasibility of incorporating this logo into the campaign will be discussed once the overall program scope has been determined.

Quarry Integrated Communications, an external creative service, was engaged to develop the overall creative theme of the program. A politically neutral, strong anti-litter message and logo that can be applied consistently across our member organizations and media has been developed.

A strategy is currently being developed with regard to launching this campaign during Earth Week, beginning on April 20, 2004. The Area Mayors and Regional Chair will be invited to participate in the official launch. Area Municipalities and the Region are awaiting budget approval, which will be finalized by the end of March 2004 and pending the outcome, this strategy will be reviewed and revised as necessary.

By-law and Cleanup Sub-Committee

Historically, litter by-law enforcement has been reactive. It is very difficult to catch the people who actually throw the litter. As a result, the municipality or the private property owner (if applicable) must bear the cost of cleaning the area where the litter has accumulated. The key focus must be changing behaviour through education.

It is important however, to ensure that by-laws contain sufficient provisions to ensure a successful prosecution where one is warranted. The Cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo have reviewed their existing by-laws in the context of litter enforcement and are satisfied that no significant changes are required. Cambridge and Waterloo may investigate applying for set fine approval, thus allowing for on the spot tickets to be issued when violations are observed.

The three cities also discussed the potential for a revision to their Property Standards By-laws that would require plaza owners to install and maintain adequate litter receptacles. Likewise, planning staff will be encouraged to incorporate this concept into the landscape plan approval process for new or redevelopment applications.

The provisions of the Region of Waterloo By-law focus on garbage and recycling collection. This issue is significant in neighbourhoods where poor or inadequate practices (i.e. placing garbage and recyclables at curbside for collection) are experienced. The enforcement process for the Region may be strengthened with the addition of a set fine approval.

The Committee is also attempting to formulate a 'Litter Hot Spots' list which will reflect those locations throughout the Region that are known to experience large accumulations of litter. These locations could be targeted for regular checks by all municipal staff involved in the enforcement or cleanup of litter.

Representatives of the Committee also met with staff from the Ministry of Transportation and the contractor retained by the Ministry to provide maintenance along the MTO corridors. These discussions centred on the current provincial standards for litter cleanup and opportunities to request a change in these standards. Ministry staff also indicated that there might be some opportunities to have some signage strategically located at problem areas. The focus of these areas related to such situations as where the off-ramps from MTO highways intersect with municipal roads.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

There are numerous, effective community groups and organizations providing litter cleanup activities in the Region of Waterloo, including City Green Strategy in Cambridge, Adopt-A-Road, Adopt-A-Highway, school organized cleanups, and spring cleanup activities supported by the Cities and Universities. Recognition and support for the significant contribution these groups provide is important and the Task Force will assist by:

- a) compiling a list of the various groups and provide this list to interested residents wishing to participate,
- b) support the initiatives by promoting their activities and collecting the bagged garbage,
- c) pending financial resources, provide various clean-up tools such as bags and gloves, and
- d) provide a list of 'litter hot spots' where groups could help their communities in the cleanup.

Task Force members agree that corporate sponsorship is vital to a long-term, sustainable campaign. Seeking sponsorship opportunities will become an important focus once the campaign is launched and may provide further opportunities for community group support.

NEXT STEPS

Once the respective Councils have approved their budgets, finances will be organized so the program can be fully implemented.

Next steps:

- a) prepare promotion/media campaign strategy and costs
- b) organize launch with political leaders
- c) confirmation of budget approval (end of March)
- d) match promotion campaign to funding
- e) initiate promotion/media campaign
- f) long term planning, sponsorship opportunities

Area Municipalities will soon begin their annual spring litter cleanup activities.

ATTACHMENT A**LITTER REDUCTION TASK FORCE - Member Contact List**

March 2004

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