



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

COMMITTEE REPORT

To: Chair and Members of the Solid Waste Services Committee
From: Das Soligo, Manager of Solid Waste Services
Date: Wednesday, January 12, 2022
Subject: Solid Waste Services January 2022 Report

Background:

2022 is anticipated to be another busy year for the County of Wellington's Solid Waste Services (SWS), with a number of projects either underway or soon to be initiated. The purpose of this report is to provide a brief update on notable projects and other important matters that are relevant to the County's waste management programmes and to the commitments made through the Solid Waste Services Strategy.

Projects:

Transitioning the Blue Box Programme

As reported previously, the Province of Ontario has advanced a regulation to amend the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act (2016) through Bill 229 – Protect, Support and Recover from COVID-19 Act (2020). The draft regulation provides a framework to continue the transition of municipal recycling systems to full producer responsibility. Through the proposed plan, the County of Wellington transition year is scheduled to be 2025.

There are a number of beneficial elements of the proposed regulation, such as transitioning approximately \$2 million a year in recycling system costs to producers and standardizing and expanding the materials that will be accepted in the Province's Blue Box Programme. However, there are also several concerning aspects of the plan. Staff have attended numerous workshops and webinars to stay updated on the progress towards the transition, and have also submitted feedback to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) on the draft regulation.

Staff will continue to monitor the progress of this, and associated regulations, and will participate in consultations and report back to the SWS Committee as appropriate.

Riverstown Phase II Development

The Riverstown landfill site has an approved design, which includes two distinct waste-filling mounds. Phase I has been in operation as a landfill since at least 1970, and will reach capacity this year. Phase II is a fully engineered waste mound and was constructed according to design specifications in 2020.

In 2022 a leachate pumping station will be installed once the design is finalized, at which point waste can be managed at Phase II. Staff and consultants also continue work on a feasibility study and Environmental Assessment for the leachate conveyance and treatment systems. In the meantime, SWS was successful in receiving approvals from the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to manage leachate on-site while the eventual leachate treatment and conveyance solutions are

being determined and constructed. These approvals will result in short-term operational savings as treatment costs will be avoided.

Build on Success of New Curbside Collection Contract

The County's current curbside collection contract came into effect on July 1, 2020. With this new contract, some key features of the curbside collection service changed, including;

- Standardized collection frequency for both urban and rural households
- Collection on both sides of all roads (i.e. in driveway)
- Weekly recycling and organics collection
- Bi-weekly waste collection
- Leaf and yard waste collection (in 56 designated urban areas) eight times a year (monthly, April-November)
- Collection fleet using a compressed natural gas fuel source (which will decrease greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality and vehicle noise)

The new collection programmes are being well received and utilized by residents. Participation and tonnage rates have exceeded the original estimates. Staff plan on continuing to promote and encourage the use of all of the new services in order to realize the environmental benefits of the collection system while maintaining a high level of service. This will be done in part, through enhanced emphasis on doing presentations, utilizing virtual and in-person platforms where appropriate.

Our Food Future

SWS is an active participant in the Our Food Future, Smart Cities initiative, as the Waste as a Resource workstream is one of the three pillars of the project. While there are multiple opportunities within the Waste as a Resource workstream and collaborative opportunities across the other workstreams, some of the more notable projects that SWS is involved in include;

- Explore, develop, execute and evaluate opportunities to collaborate on food waste reduction and diversion initiatives between the City of Guelph and County of Wellington
- Acquire baseline data related to food waste generation at the household level, and design, test and evaluate interventions to reduce food waste
- Participant in the successful Circular Innovation Council pilot project, which is providing food waste diversion opportunities to the industrial, commercial and institutional sector
- Participate in the development and provision of community focused education and engagement opportunities related to food waste

Staff will provide periodic updates to the SWS Committee on the status and results of the various projects related to Our Food Future.

Elora and Rothsay Waste Facility Upgrades

In September 2020 County Council approved upgrades to the Elora and Rothsay waste facilities, in order to provide similar infrastructure, working conditions and patron experience, to the County's other four waste facilities. In 2022 staff designs will be finalized and approvals will be sought from the MECP, in working towards completing the upgrades in 2023.

Environmental Enhancements at Closed Landfill Sites

Over the past four years SWS has begun establishing pollinator habitat and food sources at selected County closed landfill sites. These efforts have ranged from introducing wildflower seed mixes in landfill capping works to planting trees, shrubs and grasses which will benefit local pollinator populations. These works will continue in 2022, along with the planned introduction of barn swallow habitat support at selected waste facilities.

Spring Clean-Up Events

Through the Solid Waste Services Strategy, a commitment was made to extend the invitation to support municipally organized roadside clean-up events, to all of the County's member municipalities. The County can support these initiatives through waiving tipping fees for waste collected, and providing physical and informational resources.

The Province has also indicated its desire to hold an annual Day of Action on Litter across Ontario. The Province delayed and/or pared down what would have been the first two Days of Action on Litter in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19, but has announced the date this year as May 10, 2022. The Province has encouraged municipalities to host events on or around that date. SWS will seek to coordinate its invitation with the Province's timelines and reach out to municipalities by early Spring with more information on this initiative.

Recommendation:

That the report titled "Solid Waste Services January 2021 Report" be received for information.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Das Soligo', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Das Soligo
Manager of Solid Waste Services