

Cost Effective “Waste Management” Strategies

Reducing your building budget & environmental impact

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How can a Board predict and control costs, while understanding and complying with regulations?

Over the past couple of years there has been substantial change in the managing of waste materials. In Toronto buildings, implementation of a “fee for service model” targeted at garbage removal (a.k.a. – “The Waste Levy”) has increased operational budgets substantially. The fee model will change soon (to be approved by council in July) providing greater budgeting clarity. The revised model changes to per unit / per year formulas. An allowable .852 cubic yards will be introduced & and the rebate increased to \$175.00 (up from \$157.00). The previously assumed compaction ratio of 3:1 is reduced to 2:1 saving costs by one third. Together these measures will reduce costs, which will be closer to Private Sector options, particularly if the building is taking advantage of all associated “free” city services.

The Province has also initiated substantial legislative changes focused on Waste Diversion and targeting “Municipal Special Hazardous Wastes” (MSHW). These programs remove costs from local property taxes – passing them on to producers, creating incentives to reduce packaging. For general MSHW Program info:

www.dowhatyoucan.ca / www.ontarioelectronicstewardship.ca
Toronto has initiated the most substantial evolution, creating the need for a timely, priority response. They have updated program information online <http://www.toronto.ca/garbage/multi/index.htm> and plan to begin two new free MSHW collection services soon.

The implementation of Organics Diversion will require a clever strategy for a successful outcome. Other jurisdictions are undergoing changes on various timetables, while observing the Toronto model.

Rather than reacting to mandatory program and equipment changes on a short timetable a proactive informed board can; assess predictable future needs; create a comprehensive solution and eliminate poorly considered, piecemeal short term investments.

What changes to waste management programs should be introduced and on what timetable?

Where to start? – A building review

What are Boards, residents, management, maintenance and cleaning staff roles going to evolve to, going forward? Resident populations require clear, con-

cise, repeated communications. Revised accountable staff protocols, are key elements for success. Behavioral changes do not happen overnight.

The need to amend unique “limited space” infrastructure is the other key for your building.

How should your system(s) change? What can be done to insure you control short and long term costs?

Boards that have succeeded in effective cost control have undergone a thorough review understanding several variables and then developed a comprehensive strategy. There will be growing pains. Try to allow for flexibility and minor adaptations. Repeated understandable communications are a must to ensure you achieve your goals and targets. Your program implementation timetable may be complete or phased, depending on the reviewed elements.

Ignored “Levy Fees” will remain high. The opposite can be your reality with a thorough, focused effort.

Step 1 – Immediate Cost Mitigation Strategies - (Pick the low hanging fruit...now!)

Maintenance / Cleaning staff

GARBAGE BIN QUANTITY SET OUT FOR COLLECTION

Historically, on the scheduled days, staff placed *every bin with any garbage in it out for collection.*

If each bin is not full you are paying too much! Create a log to track this activity.

Compactor bins must be outfitted with an adjustable “lid lock-down bar” keeping the bin closed to ensure they are filled. A pair of “adjustable” bars and larger bin will extend the time period prior to removing a full bin. This often solves short staffed weekend anomalies. Implementing these changes often



requires a “bin mover” so staff can move heavier bins properly.

Monitoring - Suppliers can outfit your compactor with a Pressure Gauge, helping staff know when the bin is full. Recent advancements offer an automat-

ed “web based / wireless” control panel enhancement, which will maximize operational disciplines and monitor accountability.

The system sends alerts to handheld PDA’s advising when bins are full and ready for removal. It also notifies of equipment disruption events with troubleshooting tips thus saving third party service costs.

The website offers secured access for designated users facilitating team achievements and data monitoring. The information acts as an audit tool to reconcile collection invoices and predict the ideal time for repairs or replacement thus limiting your expenditures on obsolete equipment.

Enhancing waste diversion is facilitated with the export of Excel spreadsheet information. Create dynamic reports and newsletters – keys to successfully motivating everyone in waste diversion.

Deal effectively with this issue and you will have achieved the surest way to reduce costs.

Step 2 – ASSESS - Resident mix / Building infrastructure & Program options

With the reduced garbage bin savings realized, it is time to establish further “waste diversion targets” and a revised budget.

Plan a meeting to assess current issues; conduct a building tour; create key program options; then summarize your preferences so that an action plan can be engaged.

There is no exact science to this process. Often CCI member peers or consultants can offer timely advice, helping to focus your key options.

2A – Resident mix?

Who are your neighbours and what can be done to motivate their cooperative participation?

Know the primary languages spoken and communicate using them. Municipalities have free multi-lingual key information items online or in printed form. Use what is available; flyers, posters, container stickers, superintendants manual, etc. Toronto also has an “Ambassadors Program” where city staff works with your building volunteer(s).

Educational session presentations from Spring Fest & PM Expo conferences



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are posted online and offer insight & "Case Studies". <http://www.ccitoronto.org/Links/otherwebsites.asp> (select ACMO)– News & Media Releases

How can the current convenient "garbage chute cultural behavior" be redefined and improved?

Part 2B - Building infrastructure – what can be changed and how? (Comprehensive planning)

Each building has unique space configurations, storage issues and various bin requirements!

To begin, understand what containers you will need and where resident access will be.

Containers

- *In-Suite containers*

It starts here, try to ensure each suite has the ability to separate and accumulate the "3 primary material streams".



- *Truck collection containers*

In the end, most sites will transform to steel truck collection bins (*i.e.*, the steel garbage type).

With this in mind, a comprehensive program; internal containment system assessment and decisions are required.

Avoid piecemeal short term changes. Reversing these decisions is often costly!

- *Various Internal / External building containers*

Within the building there will be various containment; location and resident / staff service alternatives.



The primary options are outlined in 2C: Depot; Automated Chute Sorter OR Staff Managed Operation.

Board/Management Assessment

Assess predictable program changes and outline how best to communicate and implement changes.

Create a checklist before observing the "various building space options". At the conclusion you should determine your diversion program(s) preferences, building alteration and equipment needs.

Building Tour

To begin a building layout review, grab a note book (maybe digital camera) and do an investigative "retrofit tour". Residents need convenient disposal options for all materials.

- Do the current site conditions help residents "do the right thing" and separate recyclables?

Review all common areas: mailroom / laundry / party "recreational" rooms, entrance & exit areas. Are these areas equipped with only "garbage bins" and no waste diversion options?

What currently unused areas might be better utilized?

"High traffic area" depot bins are essential to compliment any primary system - increasing diversion.

- Where are final "truck collection

bins" located? Will these change to steel bins, like the garbage type (both recycle & organic)?

Can residents directly deposit into these bins or will staff have to "transfer" from inside bins into them?

How will Organics work; with bins in the chute room on each floor (less messy) or taken downstairs by residents?

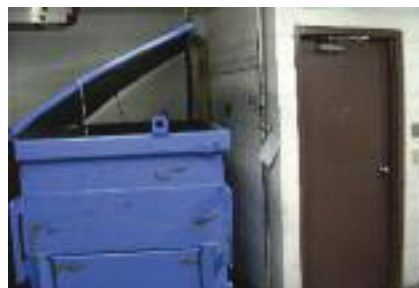
There are additional MSHW streams you should also consider! (*Building Depot with collections OR Offsite program information only?*)

Part 2C – Program Options – Goal / Budget / Timetable

A - Depots - Low Cost; Convenience; Diversion & Savings.

This is the most common starting point, often "added to" in an evolutionary "depot only" program system. Additional cleaning protocols for Organics should be planned for and budgeted.

Review potential for installation of an inside chute style door, enabling direct deposit into steel bins, saving staff costs.



Before selecting this preferred "default option" review Options B & C – steel container investments are irreversible and elevator usage has imbedded costs.

B - Staff Managed Chute Room Operations – Medium / Low Cost - High Convenience: Diversion & Savings.

Many buildings have containers in the

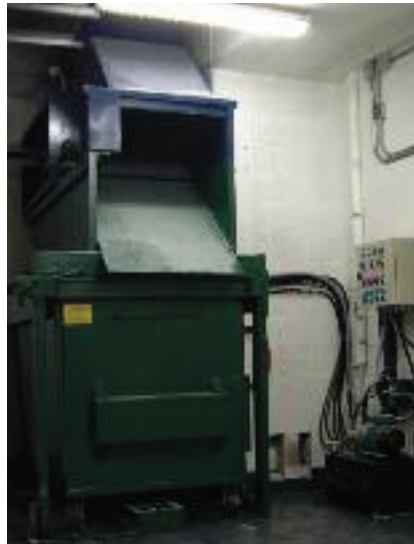
garbage chute rooms on each floor.



Staff collects recyclables (Organics?) taking them down the elevator, then loading them into steel bins.

Alternatively, the chute may be used exclusively by staff on a timetable saving time and elevator use.

A retrofit at the bottom of the chute where the compactor is, needs to be undertaken. This could involve a “deflector” or new “overhead compactor” with interchangeable bins. A revision of staff operations and time is required.



Considerations include: service routines (weekends); schedule to insure no overflowing bins (no elevated fire risk); suitable bin selection to fit in rooms and potential to “create space” by reversing the hallway door (opening outward).

“New Toronto Chute Closing By-law” (Condo Voice article Spring 2010). This concept may be integrated to monitor and create fully “equal convenience”.

It is also possible to consider additional streams (i.e., MSHW).

C - Automated “Push Button” Chute Sorters - High Cost; Convenience; Diversion & Savings.

Most newly constructed buildings are outfitted with Tri-sorters. Is retrofitting your garbage chute wise?

There are various key elements to assess when a retrofit is being considered:

- Will it fit properly and not create excessive maintenance costs?
- Quality; functionality and warranty of the unit and control system.

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Step 3 – DECISION TIME - The System - Board; Management & Resident Participation - Staff Protocols

Resident empowerment; Team interaction & System design

Waste Diversion experts use the “as convenient” expression, when referring to program creation. While true, this is easier said than done. Try to be mindful of this concept as you develop strategies and select your primary options!

The “Real Estate axiom” location; location; location also holds true for your infrastructure design choices. Of equal, if not greater importance... communications!

Having assessed your site and team considerations, budget and funding issues now need to be integrated. Reserve funds or low interest financing options need to be balanced with the operational budget. Obtain budget pricing for equipment and building alterations to ensure you can calculate the payback period.

Would your CCI peer’s or a consultant’s experience be helpful at this point?

Summary

What messages, infrastructure and material handling protocols, now exist? What will be improved? How are the roles that residents, staff & management play now, going to be impacted? What various bins will be needed – Inside; Outside (on each floor?) Do you

have “Secondary Depot Plans”?

Have you budgeted for a comprehensive plan? Will implementation be phased or immediate as you “set changes in motion”?

Will the plan meet all Board goals and

targets? Are a few additional Committee/Board meetings or conference calls required?

The task ahead is challenging. Take a comprehensive approach and invest once wisely! ■

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