

New Toronto Waste Fees & Organics Program

By Doug King

MOST OF us would never have thought the subject of garbage could be so complex – just pitch it in the bin, recycle some if a container is handy. But what are we supposed to recycle, exactly. Today big changes are underway, including Organics diversion.



■ City of Toronto — Updates and Strategies

Managers, boards and residents in Toronto face substantial changes for waste diversion. Less proactive buildings are facing a major wake-up call now that the bills are here!

Add Organics diversion (yuck!) What are resident, staff and management roles going to be? Each building will have a unique strategy or “balancing act” to develop then implement.

Embraced, you can reduce your garbage collection costs – ignored, the opposite is the new reality. Where to begin?

■ Waste Reduction 101 — Review the Basics

Managers, set the invoice down, take a deep breath and undertake a review. What are the regulatory obligations? How might resident and staff roles and interaction be redefined? Is a board or general building meeting in order to discuss various views? There are many of your peers who may help you – consider a consultation if you are overwhelmed.

Assess your available building space to drive waste reduction – the traditional “default garbage” selection will need new thinking. Use common sense; survey the building. What do the options look like now?

As you consider building space renovations to improve convenience and minimize waste, plan for recycling, organics and storage for large bulk items (these are all free City services).

Many are considering private service – what are the costs and long-term implications? How will Organics fit into new regulatory realities? If you choose this route, be sure to undertake complete pricing comparisons, include all costs and compliance variables. Organics is complex; conversion to private service has uncertain long-term stability elements. The Organics program will offer further waste diversion and while this will be “messy,” your plan should be well thought out. Be sure residents will embrace it.

Our advice is to consider whatever waste diversion improvements you can achieve now. This is prudent no matter who you select for service. The City position of “all-in service” (all or nothing) and “Opt

Out / Request to Opt Back In” has conditions / consequences. Opting in requires a loosely defined “convenient system standard” and “new or redevelopment standards” that could be very expensive depending on the site location. Older buildings could have extensive renovation requirements!

If you decide to shop private service get prices for equivalent services. These waste and recycling services represent clear regulatory requirements today. Also cost out bulk item collection (furniture, mattresses, etc). City’s plan is for you to create a storage area for “soft” non-compacted, hand load collections.

This group of services represents an equivalent cost comparison today – but wait there is more! Organics collection (coming soon) will offer a further waste diversion option. Be sure a viable long-term collection option is included. Also get pricing for Organics collection. It should be noted that the “long-term” viability



In-suite options for separation of materials.

of private organics service may be difficult as end markets are limited.

■ Action Plan

Site Review

Grab a notebook, a digital camera and do a “walkabout site review.” Observe how your conditions help residents “do the right thing.” Can they conveniently separate materials – do they know what to separate? While you are reviewing recycling think about how Organics might work? Will you use various bins inside or outside or both?

Keep a record of garbage bins set out for collection. Are they full? Is a Lid Hold Down bar being used? Is equipment (compactor, various bins) functioning properly and user friendly?

Communications

What material handling protocols, infrastructure and messages currently exist? What can improve at your property?

A picture is worth 1000 words! Maybe a volunteer craft project to create a “story-board” with sample recyclable materials. It overcomes

language issues and creates community / team participation, with a simple message. Have you taken advantage of the free City materials – Superintendent’s Handbook, bin stickers, posters and multi-language flyers? Start by reviewing the handbook. Consider advice from others who have succeeded – attend sessions to hear from experts and understand case studies.

Infrastructure Equipment Plan — Building

Are garbage containers still dominating the building landscape with no other options in sight? Ideally “twinning side-by-side bins” are handy, easier to separate and will drive recycling. The “hand loaded” collection of “re-usable” large items need space too – dumpsters being phased out.

Some type of container (at right) will be needed for Organics, maybe smaller ones for inside will help. Comprehensive quality chute system/compactor redesigns may offer your best long-term solution!

Infrastructure — In-Suite

It all starts here. Do not miss the



The official City of Toronto organics recycling unit.

most important step in the process! What containers do residents have for “convenient” separation of materials? Space is a challenge especially in small suites. Reduce the waste



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bag size; Reduce your costs.

Recycling. The City provides Recycling Blue Bins or Bags. These might be “unit numbered” to transfer easily in a resident/staff team effort. (See the flyer included in this CM.)

Organics. As your building comes online for collection (during next 18 months) a small kitchen pail will be supplied for every suite.

Waste. Often this is the only thing in the suite. The city supplies two parts – consider a simple cheap space efficient “bag hangar.”

Peel Region – Update

This January Peel began to use Front Loader bins for recycling, implementation starting in Brampton. The process will be phased in over a couple years. We are pleased to have won the bid to provide these bins.

Provincial Updates

In March Environment Minister Gerretsen is to announce a decision on proposed changes. Among them is Extended Producer Responsibility EPR – *taxes would not pay for recy-*

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for the
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taking place on
Friday November 6 and Saturday November 7, 2009
at the Markham Hilton Suites Hotel

Watch for more details.

cling – industry would! It is now a 50–50% split. This could positively impact Municipal program costs!

Many other Hazardous “Special Wastes” (HSW) will be 100% industry funded. This is aimed at producers to reduce packaging by design, and take responsibility for what they produce. Models include “return to retail” depot & private /public col-

lection & MRFs’ systems. Consumers pay at the cash register.

The task ahead is challenging – take a comprehensive approach and invest once wisely! ■

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