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Staff Report

Infrastructure & Public Works

Report To: Committee of the Whole
Meeting Date: October 24, 2016
Report Number: CSPW.16.136
Subject: Bi-weekly Waste Collection
Prepared by: Jeffery Fletcher, Manager of Solid Waste and Environmental Initiatives

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report CSPW.16.136, "Bi-weekly Waste Collection";

AND THAT Council approve to preserve current waste collection service levels and that service levels be reviewed during the next tendering process.

B. Overview

The purpose of this report is to provide a review of an investigation into the option of bi-weekly waste service.

A handful of Ontario municipalities are using every other week garbage collection as a tool to reduce waste. Town Staff do not recommend a move towards bi-weekly service at this time in The Blue Mountains. This type of change in service structure should be designed prior to tendering or renewing contracts to coordinate the correct type equipment and combination of Staff to optimize the system. This type of service reduction should also be carefully considered through a robust public consultation process.

C. Background

On January 25, 2016 Council passed a motion to "direct Staff to provide a report investigating a reduced number of garbage collection days, including organics and recycling collection, for the 2017 budget year." In response to this request Town Staff have met with the current collection contractor to discuss a bi-weekly collection program. Town Staff have also reviewed tonnage data and costs to-date which will be reviewed in the following sections of this report.

Staff have also put some critical thinking towards the concept of reduced collection service and the impacts of reduced service on the community. The findings are reviewing in the following sections.

D. Analysis

In October 2015, The Town completed a comprehensive tender process for all waste collection services. As a result of this process a contract for waste collection was executed with Miller Waste Systems. This new contract implemented a number of new services. New services include: Town wide organics collection, increased seasonal collection of recyclables at condo units (twice a week over 16 of the busier weeks). The new contract also implemented curbside yard waste collection (seasonally over 8 weeks) and Town wide household battery collection in November of each year.

The current contract performs garbage, recyclables and organics collection on a weekly basis. There are no provisions in the current contract to reduce any of the collection items to bi-weekly. The current contract price and truck/staff combination is based on a weekly program. Changing to a bi-weekly system may not necessarily reduce the number of trucks needed to complete collection. Collecting double the waste in one week may actually increase the number of trucks needed. Also, the current fleet of trucks are not all interchangeable, being that two are specific to recyclables (top load) and two are specific to garbage/organics (side load). The recent tender was based on a weekly program and using the current fleet of trucks may not transition to a bi-weekly program and actually find significant financial savings.

Furthermore, any potential savings in contract costs should be weighed against potential negative impacts. Waste collection is a highly valued service among the residents in the Town. It is also a highly visible service, a drastic reduction in service such as a switch to bi-weekly service has been documented in other municipalities to significantly increase the number of complaints which in other municipalities has led to the need to hire additional staff to increase promotions and handle complaints.

A long standing objective of the current collection program is to make the system coordinated and predictable to assist the full-time and part-time residents' understanding of the program. This includes collecting all waste items on the same day of the week, collecting on most holidays and collecting the high weekend use areas on Monday.

Some municipalities in Ontario have a bi-weekly schedule. However, few if any of those municipalities have the extreme number of seasonal/weekend occupancy of homes such as the case in The Blue Mountains. Some municipalities also alternate garbage and recyclables in a bi-weekly system also collecting recyclables every other week. However, reducing weekly access to organics and recycling is not identified as a best practice. It is likely that not a single municipality operates a system of bi-weekly organics collection. The organics bins the Town utilizes are sized for weekly pick-up. In addition, the nature of organics (odour producing waste) does not lend well to two weeks of storage. The odours and growth of pest organisms in the green bins would negatively impact resident participation.

Inevitably, with a bi-weekly system, residents will place out waste on non-collection days. The Solid Waste Division does not currently have the resources nor Staff to respond to the enforcement and or clean-up and removal of an increase in orphaned waste. A weekly waste collection system allows for each street in the Town be cleared of waste weekly. Staff believe a

weekly program greatly assists in keeping the streets free of litter and waste. Staff believe a bi-weekly system for any stream of waste will be tremendously unpopular with system users. Town Staff are already faced with a significant volume of complaints and inquiries related to the current collection program. A bi-weekly program will require an increase in Town Staff to adequately deal with education, inquiries and enforcement.

The Town's current one bag limit was at the time of implementation in 2003 and continues to be the most stringent among municipal programs. For the 2017 Budget year Town Staff are proposing an increase to the bag tag cost, from \$1.00 to \$2.00 per tag. This will keep the Town in-line with other surrounding municipal bag tag fees and encourage use of more diversion options.

A new act Bill 151 was passed in June in Ontario to enact the "Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act" and the "Waste Diversion Transition Act". The transition Act will move many of the currently diversion programs, including curbside blue box collection, to 100% industry funded and potentially industry operated. This means the packaging and printed paper producers will be obligated to run and fund the blue box program. Municipalities currently pay for over half of the blue box program out of taxation and industry funds the other portion.

The timeline for this transition proposed by the Ministry of Environmental and Climate Change (MOECC) is 3 years. The intention of the MOECC is to ensure blue box collection and the level of service currently being provided by municipalities does not change. With this significant change in the funding model on the horizon, Town Staff are advising against substantial changes to the current blue box program.

Beyond just considering curbside collection, the Town collects waste from all residential condos (Approximately 1,400 residential units) by front end loading and side loading containers. The capacity of these containers is limited and transitioning these locations to bi-weekly collection will create overflowing central waste areas and a host of negative impacts for property owners and visitors.

The opportune time for designing a bi-weekly waste program is prior to the collection tendering process. Town Staff do not recommend attempting to modify the current contract to a bi-weekly system. The current contract is a 6 year agreement with two one year extensions. The end of the contract may be the time to consider system changes.

E. The Blue Mountains Strategic Plan

Goal #1: Create Opportunities for Sustainability

Goal #2: Engage Our Communities & Partners

F. Environmental Impacts

None

G. Financial Impact

One goal of a bi-weekly collection system is to reduce system costs. However, without designing a bi-weekly program into the system from the start, system savings are difficult to realize. The costs under a per tonne payment system could end up being the same as the current weekly program, if the same tonnage of waste is collected bi-weekly instead of weekly.

The potential contract savings for every other week collection do not translate into 50% savings for garbage collection costs. Optimistically, and only if the structure of payment is changed the savings could be in the order of \$50,000 per year. However, as mentioned, and as found in other communities that have implemented bi-weekly service, the Town will need to hire additional staff to contend with the increase in orphaned waste and the complaints. This additional staff, even in a part-time capacity, would eliminate any contract savings.

Savings in 2016

One of the underlining goals of bi-weekly service is to reduce costs. Staff has provided the year one budget versus actual cost analysis below to highlight expected savings within the 2016 budget. This reduction is not related to bi-weekly collection, although this level of savings may be the reduction Council was looking for form bi-weekly service.

The new collection program has almost completed a full year of operation. The table below shows the budgeted and actual (estimating the 12th month) system costs. The analysis in the table below shows that the 2016 solid waste services costs are projected to be approximately \$100,000 below the 2016 budget estimate.

All Waste Services	Year One Actual (Oct. 2015 to Sept. 2016)	2016 Budget	Total Net Difference, Actual and Budget
Gross	\$813,088.06	\$913,999.20	
Revenue	\$25,881.82	\$25,000.00	
Net	\$787,206.24	\$888,999.20	
Savings			\$101,792.96

The actual costs show a budget savings of just over \$100,000 for the first year. This reduced cost is a result of a reduction in the number of tonnes collected in some waste streams. Yard waste collection is only at approximately 15% of the expected tonnage and organics is at 77% of the budgeted tonnage. Also, down are garbage and recycling collection at between 75% and 90% of the estimated tonnage. Multi-unit recyclables collection is up at 130% which is likely a reflection of collecting twice a week over a selected 16 weeks.

H. In consultation with

Sam Dinsmore, Deputy Treasurer, Manager of Budgets and Accounting

I. Attached

None

Respectfully submitted,

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