



**REGION OF WATERLOO**

**TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES  
Waste Management**

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

**DATE:** April 18, 2006

**FILE CODE:** C04-30

**SUBJECT: LITTER REDUCTION IN THE REGION OF WATERLOO - UPDATE**

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

For information.

**SUMMARY:**

In the fall of 2003, the Region of Waterloo joined with several public sector partners to establish the Litter Reduction Task Force, a committee mandated to raise awareness of the growing amount of litter in the Region and to clarify litter cleanup and by-law roles and responsibilities. The promotion campaign, *The Only Cure for Litter is You*, is now well established in the Region and permanent signage can be seen Region-wide. A new, positive reinforcement program, The Cash for Trash Contest, will be launched in June 2006 to support *The Only Cure for Litter is You* campaign.

**REPORT:**

**Background**

Resulting from an invitation from Regional Council, the Litter Reduction Task Force was established to develop an aggressive and effective anti-litter campaign that focuses attention on the increasing and troubling litter issue. The joint committee was formed in 2003 and includes representatives from the cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo, Township of Wellesley, Waterloo Regional District School Board, Conestoga College, University of Waterloo, Ministry of Transportation and the Region of Waterloo. The Region has committed \$80,000 annually to public education and promotion and physical cleanup activities, while the three cities have each provided \$20,000 towards the promotion effort.

To date, activities have primarily focused on promotion and education through the establishment of *The Only Cure for Litter is You* litter awareness campaign. This tagline is now well known in the Region, and can be observed on Regional Adopt-A-Road and MTO Adopt-A-Highway signs, GRT buses, exterior signage on public buildings and education institutions, and waste containers in public areas such as parks, trails and pedestrian routes. Youth oriented radio ads can be heard on stations hosted by the University of Waterloo and Conestoga College, as well as on THE BEAT. Posters are visible in all schools and various public sector buildings throughout the Region. Garbage bags and gloves are available to support community litter clean-ups.

The committee also reviewed and clarified litter cleanup roles and responsibilities, ensuring prompt cleanup of accumulated litter following the snow melt. In the City of Waterloo student areas, the coordinated effort of street sweeping and hiring of temporary staff for litter cleanup proved to be very successful. While litter cleanup occurs mainly in the spring, problem areas are addressed throughout the year.

The next step for the committee is to introduce a positive reinforcement program, supporting the existing anti-litter program. The Cash for Trash Contest, first successfully implemented in the City of Vaughan, will be launched region-wide as a pilot program in June 2006.

### **The Cash for Trash Contest – Program Details**

The Cash for Trash Contest provides additional motivation for individuals in the community to adopt anti-litter behaviour in their day-to-day activities. Clearly identifiable municipal staff acting as “spotters” will be traveling throughout the Region looking for individuals picking up or depositing trash in its proper place. The program is open to any resident or visitor to the Region and a maximum of 125 winners will be identified during the campaign. When a spotter sees someone exhibiting anti-litter behaviour, the person will be instantly notified and awarded a prize and a financial prize voucher. Winners will be eligible for a minimum cash prize of \$25, and tri-city mayors’ offices will be invited to act as prize redemption locations, ensuring a positive experience for the winners. If permitted, photos will be taken of the winners and their names will be entered to win a draw for one of four grand prizes of \$1,000. Mayors of the three cities and the Regional Chair will be invited to draw the grand prize winners and, if approved, the four grand prize draws will take place at the beginning of the Planning and Works committee meeting on October 17. All prize winners will be invited to attend. This initiative will run from June through September and is intended as a pilot for an annually recurring initiative.

The pilot program will be supported by extensive public awareness measures and media coverage, including local radio, television and print media. Press kits will be prepared for the launch in June, and a press gathering will be scheduled in October for the Grand Prize draws.

The Cash for Trash Contest objectives are:

- To change behavior through positive reinforcement. Studies demonstrate that positive reinforcement is more effective in changing behaviour than “punishment” or negative reinforcement (i.e. fines);
- To reduce litter in the Region. This initiative will generate publicity and increase awareness to the litter problem;
- To provide opportunity for positive interaction between Council and citizens; and
- To demonstrate a clear commitment to litter reduction.

This program was successfully piloted in the city of Vaughan in the summer of 2005. The roll-out of our program has the advantage of their experience with program design and implementation, approved methods of approaching potential winners (such as children), and other possible program challenges.

Assessment of the pilot program will determine the feasibility of continuing the initiative in future years. A successful first year will provide incentive for financial and merchandise sponsors to support future Cash for Trash Contest programs.

### **CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN:**

The education program meets the Corporate Strategic Plan for public promotion and education on environmental issues.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The 2006 Waste Management budget has \$80,000 provision for the overall litter reduction and clean up program while the cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo each contribute \$20,000 per year. Out of the total \$140,000 program, \$8275 will be awarded as Cash for Trash prizes.

**OTHER DEPARTMENT CONSULTATIONS/CONCURRENCE:**

Legal Services has been consulted on this program. A draft copy of this report was provided to Litter Reduction Task Force members.

**ATTACHMENTS**

NIL

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

**APPROVED BY:** *Thomas Schmidt*, Commissioner, Transportation & Environmental Services