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DATE 09 July 1996

TO/DEST. The Chair and Members of Regional Council

FROM/EXP. Director, Finance and Administration
Environment and Transportation Department

SUBJECT/OBJET **RESPONSE TO OUTSTANDING INQUIRY - COUNCIL
DIRECTIVE - 24 JANUARY 1996 - LEAF AND YARD WASTE
COMPOSTING**

BACKGROUND

During the review of the 1996 Capital Budget, Council deferred authority for Capital Project #992-42317, Leaf and Yard Waste Management, until 1997. In addition, staff were directed to:

1. investigate the advisability and feasibility of opening a second leaf and yard waste composting facility in the Region to handle growth in the diversion from disposal of leaf and yard waste;
2. investigate the possible role of the private sector in the development of such a facility.

DISCUSSION

Since the assumption of responsibility for waste management programs by the RMOC and the establishment of a standard level of collection service, solid waste planning has been changing rapidly. The Region's approach towards the composting of organics must go beyond the traditional function of composting leaf and yard waste to planning for the entire organic waste stream. This broader diversion goal coincides with an increase in private sector activity that will, in turn, generate local opportunities to divert a greater quantity of organic waste from disposal.

Requirement for a Second Leaf and Yard Composting Facility

At its meeting of 28 May 1996, the Planning and Environment Committee received a report entitled "Solid Waste 3Rs Strategic Planning", which sets out the three-year planning process for

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the next regional solid waste collection contract. That report indicated, among other things, that the Department will be embarking on a pilot project to determine the diversion potential, operational considerations and residents' acceptance of an organics (leaf, yard and food waste) collection system. This pilot will generate an annual estimated 625 tonnes of organic material, which is planned to be composted at a private composting facility.

This pilot project will assist the RMOC in determining whether or not the next regional collection contract will be based on a three-stream wet/dry integrated collection system. At that time, a facility to compost mixed food, leaf and yard waste and possibly biosolids may be required. In addition, based on experience to date, it appears the Trail Road facility has sufficient capacity to handle the anticipated leaf and yard waste tonnage for 1996 and 1997. Therefore, the establishment of a second facility in the Region to compost leaf and yard waste is not required at this time.

Private Sector Role in Composting

In 1992, the Region conducted an extensive Waste Composition Study, which indicated that food waste from the Industrial, Commercial and Institutional sector (IC&I) contributed about 28,000 tonnes to the waste stream or 14 percent of the total IC&I generation. This waste could be composted and turned into a useful material for soil amendment, rather than sent to the landfill site as is currently being done.

The Region's 3Rs Study (January 1995) identified an IC&I Food Waste Composting Demonstration Project (Option #51) as a primary option. The Solid Waste 3Rs Strategic Planning report indicated that the Solid Waste Division planned to conduct a pilot project to compost food waste from supermarkets, cafeterias and similar IC&I generators and would likely result in a public/private joint venture.

In order to compost food waste, the private sector requires a source of amendment material, such as leaf and yard waste. As noted above, leaf and yard waste may be collected with residential food waste, should the RMOC implement a region-wide wet/dry collection system in three years' time. However, for the interim, a portion of the leaf and yard waste currently collected and composted at Trail Road may be better utilized to assist the private sector in starting a private composting facility.

The Department intends, therefore, to seek proposals in a joint public/private venture to compost IC&I food waste. The purpose of this venture is to divert IC&I food waste from landfill, to help establish a local IC&I food waste composting industry and to foster economic development within the Region. The Region's part in the venture would be to provide a portion of the leaf and yard waste for use as amendment material. The Department is of the opinion that the private sector's role in composting is potentially broader than just leaf and yard waste. The Department intends to report to Committee on the results of the request for proposals to compost leaf and yard waste and IC&I food waste.

CONSULTATION

The Region's 3Rs Study was the subject of an extensive public consultation program. The three-stream wet/dry pilot project and the composting of IC&I food waste are included in the 3Rs Study as primary options. Staff have been approached with various private sector proposals to utilize residential leaf and yard waste.

ALTERNATIVES

At this time, there are no cost-effective alternatives to encourage the private sector to start composting IC&I food waste. The provision of amendment material is intended to be a low cost, efficient method to establish a self-sufficient private composting facility within the Region.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications at this time as both pilot projects are at a preliminary stage.

CONCLUSIONS

As solid waste management in the RMOC moves toward integrated systems that address multiple material streams, it is important to consider leaf and yard waste as part of a broader strategy in conjunction with other organic waste materials. The establishment of a second facility to compost only leaf and yard waste at this time does not fit into this broader waste diversion mandate.

The Solid Waste Division will be operating a three-stream wet/dry pilot project to investigate the feasibility of an integrated wet/dry collection system for the next regional waste collection contract in three years' time. For the interim, the Region is well positioned to utilize a portion of the residential leaf and yard waste in order to encourage the establishment of a private facility to divert and compost food waste from the IC&I sector. Staff will proceed with a request to solicit private sector proposals to utilize leaf and yard waste as part of a broader IC&I operation aimed at establishing a financially viable system to support the diversion of leaf and yard, food waste, and other waste materials.

If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Pat McNally, Solid Waste Director at ext. 2609, or myself at ext. 2611.

Approved by
J. Yelle-Weatherall

cc: M.J.E. Sheflin
P. McNally