

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON
MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT
RAPPORT

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DATE 21 November 1996

TO/DEST. Coordinator
 Planning and Environment Committee

FROM/EXP. Director, Solid Waste Division
 Environment and Transportation Department

SUBJECT/OBJET **PROPOSED SOLID WASTE COLLECTION
SCHEDULE CHANGE RE STATUTORY HOLIDAYS**

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning and Environment Committee and Council receive this report for information.

BACKGROUND

This report is in response to a memorandum from Councillor Bellemare dated 13 September 1996 requesting that staff consider a change in policy regarding the solid waste collection schedule, specifically to eliminate the collection day delay caused by statutory holidays by maintaining a Monday to Friday collection.

In developing the Regional Solid Waste Collection Contract, staff wanted to (1) expand the Blue Box Program to increase diversion, (2) standardize the levels of service for leaf and yard material collection, and (3) find economies of scale that would result in a truly regional system. In searching for economies of scale, it was determined that municipal boundaries were no longer appropriate as collection day boundaries, and thus the contract tender allowed the contractors to create the most efficient collection routes which included changing collection days. Both successful contractors took advantage of this clause to restructure routes throughout Ottawa-Carleton.

The current practice of solid waste collection delays for statutory holidays was one area in which the regional contract did not change from past municipal contracts. Currently, nine of the ten municipalities, except for Urban Kanata, follow the one-day delay for the entire week after a statutory holiday. In Urban Kanata there is no collection on holiday Mondays and this collection is completed on Tuesday along with the usual Tuesday collection. Collection, therefore, is not affected on the remaining days of the week. Goulbourn-Stittsville Sanitation employees do not want to work on holidays and they also value their Saturdays off. This arrangement was agreed to by the City of Kanata and works because the Monday collection has been scheduled to make it lighter. This still creates a very heavy Tuesday collection after the holiday. Urban Kanata will move to the standard Regional practice when its contract expires in December 1997.

DISCUSSION

During the implementation of the Regional contract and the changeover of contractors, many residents experienced a change in their collection day, the time of their collection, and, for some, in early June and July a delay in collection from their scheduled day. This has sometimes created confusion concerning collection schedules. Some residents also expressed frustration when their collection day changed to Friday as it then becomes Saturday on a week following a holiday Monday.

The following concerns have been expressed:

1. Residents who go away for the weekend do not want to leave garbage at the curb on a Friday night as they cannot remove the empty containers after collection, thus giving the signal that no one is home.
2. Condominium associations are dissatisfied with the Friday collection as the waste usually accumulates over this period and employees have to be paid to come in after the collection to clean up any waste that is not properly packaged.
3. Residents do not want large trucks on residential streets on the weekend because the noise is disturbing. They also have concerns for children playing in the area.

Staff have attempted to provide solutions for residents by arranging for condominium collection to be scheduled for early morning so that management can schedule clean-up for the afternoon. Residents who are going away for the weekend have been advised to use bags for their garbage so containers are not left behind, or arrange with a neighbour to retrieve their containers.

Generally speaking, because the current one-day delay is the long-standing waste collection practice, most residents regardless of their collection day are aware of the impact of the holiday schedule. For residents who are unaware or forget, the problem is somewhat self-correcting in that material is collected on the following day. These residents simply leave their garbage out for the next day and it is collected. If the suggested change were implemented, residents in the

Monday to Friday collection areas who did not see, hear or read our communications message and continue to put their garbage out on the delay would miss a collection that week, as the truck would have passed the day prior. For a temporary period, until all residents are aware of the new practice, this change could create frustration and confusion on all five days of the week.

If Monday to Friday collection were implemented with no delay, the *away for the weekend* problem would move from the Friday to the Monday, as residents leaving for the long weekend would have to put out their garbage on Friday night to ensure Monday collection. Alternatively, residents could make arrangements with neighbours or they could miss collection that week. Depending on how the holiday schedule is handled, it is inevitable that truck traffic will take place on either the holiday or the following Saturday in residential neighbourhoods while people are at home.

Other options do exist. In some municipalities, no collection is provided on the statutory holiday and no catch-up collection is provided on the Saturday. The end result is that everyone's collection day changes after each holiday.

COMMUNICATIONS

Because of the consistency of the past holiday practice, current notification consists of advertisement in daily and community newspapers following the established theme that *even garbage takes a holiday*. Throughout the contract changes of the last few months, a number of methods have been used to communicate changes to the residents: door-to-door notices, mass flyer distribution, advertisements in daily and community newspapers, radio and television, and reminder notices left by the contractor or our inspector. No single method has proved completely satisfactory. A change in holiday practice would require a broad approach using some or all of the above-noted techniques.

The current advertising cost for a statutory holiday is in the range of \$5,500. A change in practice would likely require an expanded program that would probably triple or quadruple the costs. This expanded advertising would be required for a number of statutory holidays after the change.

It is anticipated that during the next two and a half years, the Department will monitor and support its current programs using various communication methods. The next large scale, broad based information/communication blitz is not anticipated until the next solid waste contract and related changes, anticipated in the summer of 1999.

CONSULTATION

There has been no public consultation on this proposal. Staff could be directed to conduct public consultation on this issue prior to the next Regional contract.

The four waste management contractors which would be affected by this proposal, Exel Environmental, Laidlaw Waste Systems Ltd., Huneault Waste Management and Goulbourn-Stittsville Sanitation, were consulted. All contractors stated that they would have no major objections to this proposal but that labour issues could arise because employees would have to work on holiday weekends.

Depending on the success of the advertising/notification programs, the contractors may be unable to go back the following day to handle the late put-outs because of the number of people who missed the changes.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There would appear to be no financial impact on the Region's collection contracts for either approach to collection schedules but there would be costs involved in communicating a change in the collection schedule, as well as additional inspection and enforcement costs throughout the period of the change.

CONCLUSION

Residents of Ottawa-Carleton have been very patient over the past six months as the first Regional Solid Waste Collection Contract was implemented. Changes to the Blue Box Program, leaf and yard material collection schedule changes, the implementation region-wide of paper bags for leaf and yard material, collection day changes in many areas, as well as the phasing out of municipal contracts over the second half of 1996 have amounted to a great deal of change for residents to absorb at one time. It is the Department's recommendation that this is not the time to change the schedule for statutory holiday collection. A change at this time may create more confusion and frustration than it resolves, but should be reconsidered at the time of design of the next contract.

In the review of service levels and contract requirements prior to the next solid waste collection contract, staff will review options for handling the impact of statutory holidays on the residential collection schedule.

*Approved by
P. McNally, P.Eng.*