

**Waste Diversion Program**

<b>Date:</b>	June 15, 2009
<b>To:</b>	Toronto Public Library Board
<b>From:</b>	City Librarian

**SUMMARY**

---

To provide the Toronto Public Library Board with an update on the Toronto Public Library Waste Diversion Program, in response to a request from the Board at its November 24, 2008 meeting.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

---

There is no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the operating budget.

The Director, Finance and Treasurer has reviewed this Financial Impact Statement and is in agreement with it.

**ISSUE BACKGROUND**

The City of Toronto’s Waste Diversion Plan is an essential component in their efforts to preserve the environment, and the Library is committed to this program. The City of Toronto formed a Waste Diversion Team in 2003, whose main purpose is to help ensure that all Agencies, Boards, Commissions and Departments (ABCDs) meet the City’s waste diversion targets from landfill through the development and implementation of waste diversion plans. The Waste Diversion Team continues to meet quarterly to discuss initiatives and achievements. The Facilities Department represents the Library on the Team.

**COMMENTS**

The City has set an aggressive goal of 70 percent solid waste diversion from landfill by 2010. The Library’s waste diversion rate in 2008 was calculated by the City at 86 percent, an increase from 60 percent in 2004 when statistics were first kept, and well in excess of the City’s goal. The diversion rate is calculated using a ratio of the weight of recyclables against the weight of all waste (recyclables plus garbage). The Library is a model for the

City, with its achievement of an 86 percent diversion rate being the highest of any ABCD.

The Library has many recycling initiatives currently in place, including the recycling of fluorescent lamps and toner cartridges, cardboard, and the resale of materials through branch book sales, Friends of Toronto Public Library's book stores and Better World Books, an online book store.

Facilities staff is completing an audit of garbage and recycling containers at all locations, and will work with the contracted cleaners to establish a standard and improve recycling practises, in consultation with Library staff. Fortunately, the City is now able to accommodate the mixing of paper products and containers (e.g. bottles and cans). This will assist the Library in its goal of making recycling easier and more efficient, while using fewer containers.

Some of the main challenges of the Library's existing Waste Diversion Program are:

- The City cannot include paper towels in its Green Organics program for ABCDs at this time due to the sheer volume produced in City buildings. The recycling of paper towels would be the Library's main diversion initiative in order to achieve further waste reductions.
- The City is not able to accommodate waste and recycling collections at some locations (i.e. Services Buildings, branches in plazas, Toronto Reference Library). At these locations, private companies are employed to provide these services, at a higher cost.
- The City has a Yellow Bag Program in place, which is part of its new waste disposal program, and encourages commercial customers to decrease garbage and increase recycling. The Library is required to place yellow bag tags on its garbage bags, at a cost of \$2 per tag, in order for garbage to be picked up by the City. As a result of other people dumping garbage at Library sites, the Library has had instances of garbage not being picked up and costly tickets being issued by by-law officers to the Library for bags without tags.
- The City has a mixture of curbside bag pickups and automated (blue and grey bins) collection services still in place in different regions. Automated collections at all locations would assist the Library with waste storage issues and problems with animals getting into garbage before it is collected.

The Library will continue to stay aware of the City's processes and follow any new recycling initiatives put forth by the City's Solid Waste Management Division, while encouraging Library staff to be vigilant in their recycling efforts. As there is a fee for the City to pick up waste, but not recycling, the benefits of these efforts are two-fold: helping save the environment and reducing costs.

## **CONTACT**

Ron Dyck, Director, Information Technology & Facilities; Tel: 416-393-7104;  
Fax: 416-393-7083; Email: [rdyck@torontopubliclibrary.ca](mailto:rdyck@torontopubliclibrary.ca)

Gail Rankin, Senior Manager, Facilities; Tel: 416-395-5881; Fax: 416-395-5916;  
Email: [grankin@torontopubliclibrary.ca](mailto:grankin@torontopubliclibrary.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

---

Jane Pyper  
City Librarian