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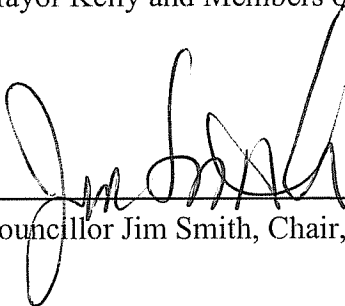


PO Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Halifax Regional Council
March 4, 2003

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:



Councillor Jim Smith, Chair, Solid Waste Resource Advisory Committee

DATE: February 27, 2003

SUBJECT: Weekly Summer Green Cart Collection

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

The Solid Waste Resource Advisory Committee met on February 27, 2003 to consider the issue of weekly summer green cart collection.

DISCUSSION

After reviewing the enclosed staff report, the Solid Waste Resource Advisory Committee accepted the staff recommendation that weekly organic green cart collection during the months of July and August not be provided.

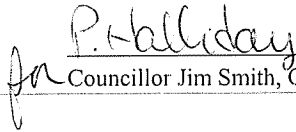
Because of the Council interest in the green cart collection issue, the Solid Waste Resource Advisory Committee agreed to provide the results of their discussion to Council.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Staff report dated February 20, 2003 to the Solid Waste Resource Advisory Committee

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by:

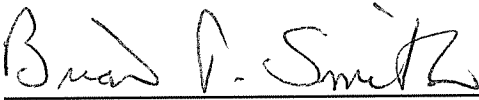

Councillor Jim Smith, Chair, SWRAC



PO Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

**Solid Waste/Resource Advisory Committee
February 27, 2003**

TO: Councillor Jim Smith, Chairman
Members of the Solid Waste/Resource Advisory Committee

SUBMITTED BY: 
Brian T. Smith, General Manager, Solid Waste Resources

DATE: February 20, 2003

SUBJECT: **Weekly Summer Green Cart Collection**

ORIGIN

Program and Service Review Committee discussion 2002/03 budget approval process.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that;

Weekly organics green cart collection during the months of July and August not be provided.

BACKGROUND

During the 02/03 budget discussion and approval process, staff was instructed to obtain prices for the provision of weekly summer green cart collection. The commencement of a new five-year collection contract on July 1, 2003 provided an opportunity to obtain competitive pricing for this service. Previous pricing obtained, as an addition to the last two years of the current contract, was between \$800,000 and \$1,000,000 per year for all of HRM.

DISCUSSION

The assessment of weekly summer green cart collection, which would be an enhancement of the existing collection service, included a survey of residents to determine the present usage and satisfaction of the biweekly organic collection services. As SWRAC was advised on January 30, 2003, LURA Consulting arranged a survey of urban/suburban HRM residents during September 2003, while the experiences related to green carts would be fresh in their minds after the periods of warmer summer weather.

Attachment # 1 is an overview of the seven objectives of the survey, and the postal codes where the survey was conducted. The margin of error is standard for professional surveys, i.e., nineteen times out of twenty.

1. Summary of the Survey Results:

- 91% say green cart is convenient to use;
- 95% say green cart is an effective environmental program;
- 98% use the green cart;
- 93% place the green cart at the curb every two weeks;
- 90% of residents who experience odours/flies say green cart is convenient to use;
- 96% use green cart all year;
- 2% often don't use the green cart in the summer;
- 66% feel biweekly collection is satisfactory;
- 33% would like weekly collection in the summer;

-66% are not prepared to pay an extra cost for weekly collection (13% would pay an extra fee, 18% would pay depending on the cost).

The survey results showing more than 90% of residents find the green cart convenient, and 93% use the green cart every two weeks, are consistent with a previous Corporate Research Associates survey conducted in 2001.

2. Cost of Weekly Summer Green Cart Collection:

The Request For Proposals 02-097, Collection and Transportation of Source Separated Solid Waste, for services for a period of five years commencing July 1, 2003, included, as an option, the weekly collection of green carts in July and August. The provision of this service was broken out into three areas, reflecting the most frequent reports of green cart related nuisances, plus all of HRM. These prices are for collections only, and do not include additional communications, administrations, or start up costs.

<u>Option (A)</u>	<u>Price (1 year)</u>	<u>Price (5 years)</u>
Weekly collection in downtown Halifax and Dartmouth: Area 1- east of Windsor Street/Oxford Street, south of Quinpool Road/Jubilee Road) Area 2 - north of Portland Street, west of Joffre Street, west of Wyse Road to and including Wallis Heights	\$32,100	\$150,200
<u>Option (B)</u>		
Weekly collection in former City of Halifax and Dartmouth:	\$96,300	\$467,500
<u>Option (C)</u>		
Weekly collection for all of HRM:	\$257,200	\$1,285,500

3. Assessment of Weekly Summer Green cart Collection:

The conclusions from the green cart usage survey, information provided by the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, and the impact of increased cost of residential collection services for 2003/04, are the basis of staff's recommendation not to provide weekly summer green cart collection.

3.1 Survey Findings:

- a) the green cart program is widely supported;
- b) 98% of residents use the green cart;
- c) two-thirds of residents surveyed support biweekly summer green cart collection;
- d) 62% are not in favour of a tax increase for weekly summer green cart collection
- e) larger households more frequently experience problems with green carts;
- f) households that backyard compost are less likely to experience problems.

3.2 Green Cart Nuisances:

As the survey confirmed, the most common nuisances related to the green carts are odours and flies. The NS Department of Natural Resources eptimologoist (at the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park) has advised that during temperatures above 15 Celsius, the development of a fly from an egg through larvae to hatching is less than four days.

Although odours are common with a green cart organics system, as the survey showed, in excess of 90% of residents continue to support and participate in the program. A comprehensive HRM education campaign assists residents of the HRM through such mediums as:

- Green Cart Tips Brochure;
- Tips in the Naturally Green Newsletter;
- Local Radio and Televisions Ads;
- The HRM Web Page; and
- The Call Centre.

As residents become familiar with the green cart system, in each successive year the number of residents experiencing severe green cart nuisances, based upon enquires becomes less. In 2000, one of the local residential collection companies provided a weekly green cart service on a subscription basis; the demand was so low (fewer than 30 residents) that the service was not continued.

3.3 Solid Waste Resources Residential Collection Services Budget:

As staff has previously advised Regional Council, the prices submitted for residential collection services in 03/04 will increase by approximately 16%, or in excess of \$1.2 million. The 03/04 Solid Waste Resources budget envelope does not contain funding for summer weekly organics collection.

Conclusion:

The concept of weekly summer green cart collection would be attractive from a customer service perspective, if resources were available to provide it to part or all of HRM. In staff's view, the implementation of weekly summer organics collection is not justified financially or, in terms of increasing source separation, by residents. Nuisances related to green carts, i.e., flies and odours (which appear to have no influence on public acceptance and participation), will not be eradicated by weekly summer green cart collection. The incidents of nuisances related to green carts appear to be well managed by the majority of residents and they are not affecting the performance of the program.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The 2003/04 Solid Waste Resources budget envelope does not contain funds for the provision of weekly summer green cart collection. There are no budget implications with the recommendation not to introduce weekly summer green cart collection.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLANS

This report complies with the Municipality's's Multi -Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES

There are three alternatives, none of which are recommended:

1. Option 'A' - weekly collection in downtown Halifax and Dartmouth;
2. Option 'B' - weekly collection in Halifax and Dartmouth;
3. Option 'C' - weekly collection in all of the HRM.

ATTACHMENTS

Organics Green Cart - Residential Survey Results, Summer 2002 - Survey Overview

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Jim Bauld , Diversion Planning Coordinator , 490-7176

Organics Green Cart Residential Survey Results

1.0 Survey Overview

The purpose of this study was to gauge HRM residents' perceptions and usage of the organics green carts during the summer months. More specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the general satisfaction with the green cart program, particularly in the summer months;
2. Identify the primary concerns regarding the green carts;
3. Determine the significance of households that experience problems with their green carts, particularly in the summer months;
4. Determine the significance of households that stop using their carts in the summer months and why (including summer vacations and holiday collection changes);
5. Evaluate the public perception of bi-weekly collection;
6. Assess the willingness to pay a higher cost for weekly collection in July and August; and
7. Correlate the green cart problems with:
 - Residents' knowledge of green cart tips
 - Recognition of communications materials
 - Knowledge of "what goes in" and "what stays out"
 - Green cart usage behaviors including grass clippings
 - Family size
 - Other waste reduction behaviors

The survey was conducted during September. This period was selected to because it was after the vacation season yet close enough to summer to gauge the summertime experiences with the green cart program.

The survey targeted households from the urban/suburban areas of HRM, but did not include apartment buildings with 7 units or over, businesses and institutions. These areas included those whose postal codes begin with the following first three letters:

Halifax	Dartmouth	Lower Sackville
1. B3H	9. B2V	16. B4C
2. B3J	10. B2W	17. B4E
3. B3K	11. B2X	18. B4G
4. B3L	12. B2Y	
5. B3M	13. B2Z	Bedford
6. B3N	14. B3A	19. B3Z
7. B3P	15. B3B	20. B4A
8. B3R		21. B4B

Surveys were conducted with 327 households. The confidence interval for this survey is 5.4%, 19 times out of 20.