



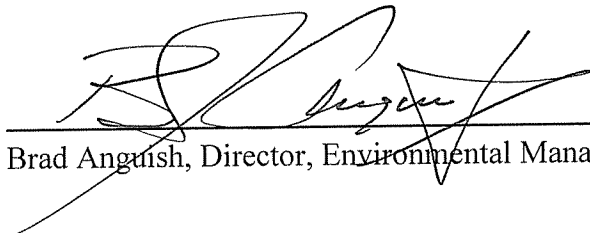
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Halifax Regional Council
August 19, 2003

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:


Brad Anguish, Director, Environmental Management Services

DATE: August 11, 2003

SUBJECT: Garbage and Litter on Streets

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

At the Regional Council meeting on May 27th, Councillor Blumenthal expressed concern with refuse along streets throughout the HRM, and requested a staff report on clean up efforts and an increase in penalties for littering. Councillor Hetherington requested that staff explore, as an option, the Restorative Justice Program to have the streets cleaned.

BACKGROUND

The volume of litter and refuse along HRM streets is influenced by a multitude of factors, e.g., seasonality, current service levels of the Public Works and Transportation Services, Streets and Roads street litter program, public awareness and education, enforcement, and general public consciousness of the importance and benefits of a clean community. This report will briefly highlight initiatives and programs by various HRM business units currently underway or being assessed for potential implementation in the future.

DISCUSSION

1. Refuse on Streets:

Solid Waste By-Law S-600 specifies that refuse, recyclables, and organics are permitted to be placed at the curb for collection in front of a property after 7:00 p.m. on the evening before collection and not after 9:00 p.m. on the day of collection. Reports of materials curbside outside the approved hours are to be reported to the HRM Call Centre for action by Community Services, By-Law Enforcement.

HRM residential collection contractors commence collection at 7:00 a.m. in the former County of Halifax and 7:30 a.m. elsewhere, servicing downtown streets first to attempt removal prior to noon.

Where material is reported at the curb on a non collection day, By-Law Enforcement staff visit the property and provide twenty-four-hour notice to the property owner for the removal of the material. Should the material not be removed within twenty-four hours, HRM can remove the material at the property owner's expense. Of the 430 properties visited by By-Law Enforcement in the 12 months ending June 30, 2003 for materials at the curb (other than on collection day), 73% of the property owners had removed the materials once notified, HRM removed the materials from the remaining properties at the owner's expense.

To effect an improvement in compliance by the public, By-Law Enforcement has implemented (as a trial for the summer) a schedule of Friday evening and Saturday enforcement. The success of this pilot project will be assessed for potential continuation, subject to funding availability in fiscal year 2004-2005.

2. Litter:

Public Works and Transportation's yearly budget is \$969,000 for litter pickup and \$608,000 for street cleaning. These totals include the following services:

- Approximately 850 litter baskets serviced on a one or two day cycle, depending on the demand;
- Two person litter crew between 12 midnight and 8:00 a.m., five days a week in the downtown Halifax area;
- Street Sweeping Service Standards were adopted in Fall 1998 and outline the areas and time frames for this operation is attached as Appendix A (during tourist seasons, street sweeping occurs three times a week in the Halifax downtown core);
- In conjunction with the Capital District, coordinate a litter collection/maintenance program over the summer months (funding for two students);
- Adopt-A-Highway program, working with community groups to clean up roadways;
- Clean up litter on the urban/suburban roadsides on a demand basis and budget allows;
- Mayor's Community Cleanup campaign: material pickup, advertising, and items to be used for the cleanup (e.g., gloves, bags, etc.).

In addition to the HRM services, the Downtown Halifax Business Commission engages summer staff who, as one of their duties, provides litter pickup along streets in downtown Halifax. An HRM mechanical sidewalk sweeper is in service in downtown Halifax on a regular basis during the tourist season.

3. Community Clean Up Campaign:

To date a total of 46 groups have registered with the HRM Call Centre for the 2003 Community Clean Up campaign. More than 2,800 residents have participated in the clean up of side roads and ditches. HRM benefits greatly from the efforts of many residents who are concerned in and take pride in their community. The Community Initiative Group is also organizing some neighbourhood clean up as part of their program.

4. Enforcement & Penalties:

Enforcement is the last tool to effect a resolution of the complaint. Provincial legislation provides for Summary Offence Ticket (SOT) fees of \$387.50 for littering on a highway and \$445.00 for releasing litter into the environment. Staff believe these fines are high enough to provide a general deterrent to potential littering, but that fines are only one element in reducing the prevalence of litter on streets. Many jurisdictions have successfully implemented a sustained campaign highlighting the benefits of clean streets and encouraging residents to become actively involved. Many have adopted a catchy slogan, one of the best known is "Don't Mess In Texas". In 1990, the City of Halifax ran a campaign called "Slam Dunk Your Junk" with signs, newspaper advertisements, and notices as communication pieces for the public.

5. Restorative Justice:

The HRM Community Initiatives group is using Restorative Justice for community street cleaning and is working with the youth as well as the John Howard Society for adults. This approach has been used for two cleanups in Clayton Park as well as four cleanups in Dartmouth. Three others were cancelled due to weather. As an option for more regular clean up of on-street litter, the Restorative Justice Program has limitations, particularly the degree of supervision required by the participants to complete a project.

The best success with Restorative Justice occurs when a community leader agrees to assist with a cleanup and the community takes ownership of the problem. This was done on the Montague Road in Dartmouth partnering with the RCMP, community and other HRM business units. The community also brought in two of the local businesses to assist and set up a Neighbourhood Watch utilizing CityWatch.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

An increase over the current level of service requires additional funding allocation in future year budgets.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality'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

No alternatives apply, report for informational purposes.

ATTACHMENTS

Street Sweeping Service Standards Table

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.

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Report Approved by: _____
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Appendix A

Street Sweeping Service Standards

	EAST REGION	CENTRAL REGION	WEST REGION
Downtown & Business Districts	1 time / 2 weeks	1 time / 2 weeks	2 times / week
Main Arteries	1 time / month	2 times / month	2 times / month
Residential Streets	2 times / year + on demand	2 times / year + on demand	Signed Routes - 2 times / month # Routes & other 1 time / month
Industrial Parks/Business Parks	4 times / year	5 times / year	5 or 6 times / year
Traffic Islands	On demand, as debris build-up requires	On demand, as debris build- up requires	On demand, as debris build-up requires
Special Events, Emergencies & Unforseen Occurrences	On demand	On demand	On demand