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# The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

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To: Works Committee  
From: Acting Commissioner of Works  
Report: #2023-WR-5  
Date: June 7, 2023

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## **Subject:**

Approval of a Curbside Swap Day Pilot in Local Area Municipalities in the Regional Municipality of Durham

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## **Recommendations:**

That the Works Committee recommends to Regional Council:

- A) That Regional Council approve a pilot one-day Curbside Swap Day in local area municipalities where the Regional Municipality of Durham is responsible for waste collection to promote the reuse of household items; and
  - B) That a copy of this report be forwarded to the City of Oshawa and the Town of Whitby to determine if there is an interest in participating in the proposed one-day Curbside Swap Day.
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## **Report:**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to obtain approval for and to outline the operational parameters for a one-day Curbside Swap Day to promote the reuse of household items and consider the purchase of used items before buying new.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 In 2022, the Regional Municipality of Durham (Region) adopted a new Long-term Waste Management Plan 2022-2040 (Waste Plan) that includes a focus on the

5Rs (Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover) to reduce the quantity of waste we create, which is objective two of the Waste Plan.

- 2.2 The Region has previously supported waste reduction and reuse initiatives by hosting seasonal reuse events where residents can drop off unwanted useable household goods for donation and allowing charitable clothing donation boxes at Waste Management Facilities.

### **3. Previous Reports and Decisions**

- 3.1 Report [#2022-WR-1](#) titled 'Long-term Waste Management Plan 2021 Consultation, Final Long-term Waste Management Plan 2021 to 2040 and first Five-Year Action Plan' resulted in Regional Council endorsement of the Long-term Waste Management Plan 2022-2040 with actions to support the objective to reduce the quantity of waste we create.

### **4. Pilot Curbside Swap Day**

- 4.1 A Curbside Swap Day is a low-cost way for the Region to promote an attitude of "Reduce and Reuse" and encourage residents to donate items or consider purchasing gently used items before buying new. Both approaches contribute to reducing the quantity of waste generated.
- 4.2 Staff propose a pilot Curbside Swap Day be held on September 16, 2023 (Saturday), with September 23, 2023, as a rain date. This date is chosen to avoid peak Leaf and Yard waste generation and collection times and before the weather becomes colder.
- 4.3 The following key messages are proposed as parameters for the Curbside Swap Day:
- a. Residents are encouraged to visit the Curbside Swap Day event page and indicate their participation.
  - b. Residents should put gently used but still usable items on the curb after 7 a.m. and remove items by 7 p.m. the same day.
  - c. Items still available at the end of the day should be donated to local thrift stores or reuse centers. The Region's [Reduce and Reuse](#) webpage has suggestions.

- d. Material left at the curb after the Curbside Swap Day event will be subject to by-law enforcement.
  - e. Baby items such as car seats and cribs should not be placed at the curb for safety reasons.
  - f. For additional guidance: [Facts for Garage Sale Vendors - Canada.ca](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov2/serv/bc/gov/garage_sale/vendors/index.html)
- 4.4 Staff-level discussions have taken place with the City of Oshawa and the Town of Whitby regarding their interest in participating in a Region promoted Curbside Swap Day. A copy of this report will be shared to reassess interest in participating, however, the City of Oshawa and the Town of Whitby have local approval processes that must be followed. If the City of Oshawa and the Town of Whitby choose to participate, the Region will coordinate with the appropriate staff.
- 4.5 Several Ontario communities promote curbside swap days at various times of the year and do not report significant levels of litter or material being left at the curb immediately following the event. Comparable results are expected for a Regional event; however, by-law enforcement officers will be prepared to remind residents to remove items from the curb as necessary in the week following the event.
- 5. Measuring Participation**
- 5.1 The Region does not currently measure reuse activities that occur outside the seasonal Reuse Days hosted in partnership with local area municipalities on a rotating basis.
- 5.2 Direct measurement of resident participation in a Curbside Swap Day is not practical, however, there are several approaches to gauging the level of support:
- a. The number and collected tonnes of curbside bulky item appointments are tracked for the Municipality of Clarington, Brock Township, Scugog Township and Uxbridge. September 2022 data for these local area municipalities will be compared to September 2023 data for any change in volume.
  - b. The Curbside Swap Day event page and/or Waste App will include the option for residents to indicate participation in the event allowing the Region to track the number of residents that express interest.
  - c. Following the Curbside Swap Day, a brief survey will be distributed through the Waste App, social media and the Region's webpage to seek resident feedback on participation.

## **6. Swap Days in Other Municipalities**

- 6.1 Several Ontario municipalities promote Curbside Swap Days in their communities. The following information was obtained through a website review:
- a. The City of Kingston promotes four Giveaway Days in April, June, and October each year. Residents are required to remove items from the curb by 6 p.m. on Saturday.
  - b. The City of Guelph promotes two Goods Exchange Weekends each year in the spring and fall. Residents are encouraged to set out reusable goods after 5 p.m. on Friday and remove any untaken items by 7 p.m. on Monday.
  - c. York Region promotes Curbside Giveaway Days with tips on its webpage. Each local area municipality selects the dates and number of events for their area. In 2023 all local area municipalities in York Region are promoting Curbside Giveaway Days except for one.
  - d. The City of Vaughan promotes six Curbside Giveaway Days each year with items allowed to be set out after 7 a.m. on Saturday. Untaken items must be removed from the curb by 5 p.m. on Sunday.
  - e. The City of Belleville started a Giveaway Day in 2021 that was initiated by the Green Task Force made up of citizens and councillor members. Items are permitted to be set out for giveaway between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. on the designated day.
  - f. Niagara Falls promotes a Community Curbside Giveaway Day on two Saturdays a year. Items not taken by other residents must be removed from the curb by 5 p.m. on Saturday.
  - g. Second-hand Sunday is promoted by a charitable group in the City of Toronto. The group has recently partnered with the City of Toronto to expand into more neighbourhoods.
- 6.2 Staff reached out to several of the above municipalities for lessons learned and received information from two. Both municipalities indicated material being left at the curb was not a major concern and that participants were responsive to following the parameters outlined for the event.
- 6.3 The municipalities contacted also indicated no efforts were made to track participation or the quantity of material diverted from disposal.

**7. Relationship to Strategic Plan**

7.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:

- a. Goal 1.2 Increase waste diversion and resource recovery

**8. Conclusion**

8.1 Curbside Swap Days are a low-cost way to promote Reduce and Reuse activities in the Regional Municipality of Durham. A one-day pilot will allow staff to evaluate the logistics and impact of a Curbside Swap Day promoted by the Regional Municipality of Durham.

8.2 Other Ontario municipalities that promote Curbside Swap or Giveaway Days do not report significant levels of dumping or material left at the curb following the designated event day.

8.3 Staff will use online tools to measure resident interest leading up to the event and to evaluate levels of participation following the day. Monitoring and feedback from the event will be used to assess the feasibility for inclusion as a regular event.

8.4 For additional information, contact: Andrew Evans, Director, Waste Management Services at 905-668-7711, extension 4102.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by:

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Ramesh Jagannathan  
MBA, M.Eng., P.Eng., PTOE  
Acting Commissioner of Works

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by:

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Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair  
Chief Administrative Officer