



**Pilot Project to Evaluate Tools and Tactics  
Maximize Diversion of Household Organic  
Material and Recycling**

**The County of Brant  
Solid Waste Management Diversion Plan**

**August 2008**

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# Pilot Project to Evaluate Tools and Tactics Maximize Diversion of Household Organic Material and Recycling

## Introduction

The County of Brant has completed its Solid Waste Management Diversion Plan and is now in a position to move forward and evaluate the best methods to implement the Plan's initiatives. The Plan has set a goal of a minimum 60% waste diversion and provides the County with the framework to implement a sustainable waste management system that reflects the balance and integration between the environmental, economic and social values of the community. The following tasks, timeline and requirements outline the steps necessary to fulfill the provisions of the Plan and meet the needs of the community for future management of its waste.

The Solid Waste Management Diversion Plan sets out the following strategic activities:

- Enhanced Communication and Public Outreach;
- Increased waste minimization;
- Enhanced Blue Box recycling;
- Enhanced yard waste collection;
- Separate collection of food waste; and,
- IC&I waste diversion communications and support.

The County's next steps toward implementation will be to investigate and develop appropriate methods and tools to implement the Plan's initiatives that will maximize correct participation. Evaluation of activities for implementation will start with household organic waste and maximizing participation in recycling. These two initiatives from the Waste Diversion Plan provide will provide the County with the highest diversion potential to commence the roll out of the Plan. A pilot project will be undertaken to test methods of diverting organic waste and maximizing recycling. The outcome of the pilot project will be an effective waste diversion program that increases the amount of organic and recyclable waste diverted from disposal and that can then be rolled out to all homes within the County. The tasks to do this are as follows:

### **Task 1: Determine Appropriate Tools and Methods to Maximize the Diversion of Organic and Recyclable Waste**

Waste diversion initiatives should focus on increasing correct participation in current programs and new programs to maximize capture of recyclable and compostable material that is currently disposed.

The first and one of the most critical pieces of information required to complete this task includes the completion of a resident survey and participation study to determine capture rates, review program strengths and performance and make recommendations on opportunities for improvements. This task also provides an important qualitative aspect to the evaluation, which is equally revealing as the quantitative measures that will be captured through the survey. A public survey on waste management programs will assist the County identify barriers to participation, opportunities to overcome these barriers and provide a baseline against which progress in program improvement can be measured. The objectives of the survey are to:

1. Determine the attitudes and level of knowledge of residents regarding waste management issues;
2. Identify barriers to the desired behaviours (correct participation in organic and recyclable waste programs) and opportunities to remove those barriers;
3. Obtain information from which communications messages and participation strategies will be developed;
4. Identify media to be used to deliver messages; and,
5. Identify and learn about the target audience.

#### **Activities:**

- ✓ Complete a random, significantly significant telephone survey of 400 households within the County of Brant. A sample size of 400 homes provides a confidence level that is accurate 19 out of 20 responses within a 4% plus/minus ratio. Survey questions will be developed to collect the following qualitative information:
  - types of waste diversion behaviour currently undertaken in each household;
  - Perceived barriers to participation in waste diversion programs;
  - Willingness to participate in new waste diversion programs such as the collection of household organic waste;
  - How residents currently receive information or 'learn' about waste management programs;
  - How they would prefer to receive information about their waste management programs;
  - The types of tools residents perceive they require to increase their participation in existing waste diversion programs and take part in new programs such as the collection of household organic waste.
  
- ✓ The information collected through the telephone survey will be used to determine the communication methods and types of tools to be tested in the pilot project.

#### **Schedule:**

- ✓ Week of September 21, 2008

**Outcome:**

- ✓ Upon completion of the telephone survey a report will be prepared identifying a list of preferred tools, messages and media to pilot test, e.g.:
  - Types of backyard composting containers;
  - Types of household compost containers;
  - Alternate containers for recyclable material;
  - Types of communication methods and tools such as prompts and reminders.

**Task 2: Evaluate and Benchmark Organic Composting Processes**

A critical requirement for the successes of the Solid Waste Management Plan is to provide composting for organic material. Composting facility alternatives require review to evaluate their application, effectiveness and cost as a long term disposal option for the County. A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis will be undertaken to analyze the program and look for opportunities to mitigate risk and liabilities and reduce costs if possible.

Furthermore, an assessment of the County's current disposal facilities will be evaluated regarding their social, environmental and economic potential for providing long term capacity for processing compostable material.

This task will also include benchmarking the preferred system against similar systems in other municipalities to evaluate various aspects of their processes in relation to best practice.

**Activities:**

- ✓ Evaluation of existing County waste disposal sites for suitability;
- ✓ Business case evaluation of neighbouring public and private composting facilities.

**Schedule:**

- ✓ September to October 2008

**Outcome:**

- ✓ Preferred, cost effective option for composting County material

**Task 3: Develop a Communication and Public Engagement Strategy**

A comprehensive communication and public engagement strategy is necessary to ensure maximum participation in new programs such as organic waste diversion and increased participation in existing initiatives such as the County's Blue Box program. New programs

often fail because of inadequate engagement of the public. The goals of the communication and public engagement strategy will be to educate County residents about:

- The County's long-term goal to reduce the amount of resources going to landfills to just 40% and to increase recycling and diversion to 60%.
- The significant opportunity for Brant to reduce the amount of resources being landfilled through improved recycling and organics management programs.
- The importance of removing organic or compostable materials from the County's landfills as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**Activities:**

- ✓ Complete a focus group to refine the methods and tools identified through the telephone survey. A focus group consisting of approximately 8 to 12 community residents will be convened to identify specific elements of materials and methods that will be used in the pilot program such as:
  - Differences in audience receptiveness, based on knowledge of the area, existing demographic data, and team and staff expertise;
  - Target audiences and associated key drivers behind behavior change;
  - Effective communication mechanisms and tools e.g. prompts, reminders, etc.;
  - Types of collection tools required to maximize participation;
  - Core Messages and Design Elements.

**Schedule:**

- ✓ September 2008

**Outcome:**

- ✓ Development of Detailed Communications Strategy that will contain the following:
  - Goals, communications objectives, tactics, tools, audiences, messages and communications methods/vehicles appropriate to your various audience;
  - Implementation timeline, steps to implement the strategy, and cost;
  - Performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the communications program.

**Task 4: Pilot Project**

Based on the results of tasks 1 to 3, a pilot project will be established to test communication methods and messages, collection tools and methods of collection to divert organic waste and increase recycling. The objective of the pilot is to:

- Raise the awareness of the new waste management initiatives; and,

- Foster a change in behaviour in residents so that waste minimization and diversion becomes the norm instead of the exception, with the goal of significantly reducing material such as organic waste sent for disposal.

After the pilot program has been conducted, the program components will be reviewed for effectiveness and revisions will be made to program and approach where necessary for the roll-out of the communication and collection program to the entire community.

The evaluation will be completed by conducting interviews with members of the pilot area about the program's effectiveness and the change in their level of awareness and behaviours regarding waste management.

The result of the pilot will be to ensure that the communication materials and collection strategies that are used in the full roll out to the community are the most effective they can be due to their testing in the pilot. Full implementation will result in an effective waste diversion program that will help to achieve the County's goal of reaching 60% waste diversion.

The pilot will consist of a rural and urban component. The rural component will test waste reduction and recycling methods such as how to maximize onsite composting, reducing the amount of waste generated and maximizing recycling. The urban component will test various methods

The urban pilot study area will consist of 500 homes in the County of Brant as follows:

- Paris            200 homes
- St. George    100 homes
- Burford        100 homes
- Scotland      100 homes

The rural pilot component will consist of 100 homes and the area to be determined in areas that can be effectively coordinated with the urban program.

The pilot will:

- Develop strategies to break down the barriers to participating in new waste diversion initiatives, including an assessment of communications, types of organic waste collection containers, etc.;
- Develop effective messaging to enhance the public's understanding of the new initiatives;
- Determine the best vehicles for delivering promotion and education;
- Develop effective collection methods for organic waste;
- Develop informational materials and prompts to promote awareness and behavioural change;
- Develop commitment strategies and methodologies to secure commitment in order to make the behavioural change sustainable;
- Test the program materials in informal focus groups;

- Modify the program as required.

Results of the pilot will:

- Develop effective collection methods and materials and strategies to be used to raise awareness and overcome barriers to participation;
- Change behaviour from a sustainable practice amongst the public; and,
- Test the program on a pilot target audience for roll out County wide.

**Activities:**

- ✓ Coordinate pilot collection areas with waste collection contractor;
- ✓ Develop communication material to be tested;
- ✓ Notice of pilot project to participating areas;
- ✓ Delivery of equipment and communication materials;
- ✓ Complete a waste audit:
  - Waste will be collected from ample 50 homes from the pilot area;
  - The sampled waste will be sorted at the landfill site to determine composition;
- ✓ Gather information on level of participation and waste set out;
- ✓ Door to door survey of participants will completed to gather information regarding residents satisfaction with the pilot program and ways the program could be improved to maximize participation;
- ✓ Evaluation of tactics and tools.

**Schedule:**

- ✓ September 2008 – March 2009

**Outcome:**

- ✓ Raise the awareness of the existing and new waste diversion programs;
- ✓ Foster a change in behaviour in residents so that waste disposal is no longer the norm and instead is the exception, with the goal of maximizing the amount of waste diverted from disposal.
- ✓ Distinguish a set of preferred tactics and tools for County wide roll out.

Implementation Schedule																																																
	Jun-08				Jul-08				Aug-08				Sep-08				Oct-08				Nov-08				Dec-08				Jan-09				Feb-08				Mar-08											
Weeks	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4				
<b>Evaluation and Testing of SWMP Initiatives</b>																																																
Determine waste diversion program requirements																																																
Public attitude survey																																																
Asses available/potential composting facilities																																																
Determine composting alternatives																																																
Benchmark viable options																																																
Evaluate County's current facilities for composting																																																
Develop a communication strategy																																																
Pilot project																																																
Determine pilot area(s)																																																
Develop/acquire equipment/communications																																																
Determine metrics																																																
Notify pilot area residents																																																
Pilot new initiatives																																																
Gather information and evaluate pilot program																																																
Develop pilot compost site or export																																																
Review and modify program prior to County wide roll out																																																