
MEMORANDUM

PWC-C 29-2020

Subject: Update on Public Education Campaign and Contract Implementation
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020
To: Public Works Committee
From: Susan McPetrie, Waste Management Services Advisor; Katelyn Avella, Waste Management Contract Supervisor; Kate Ashbridge, Waste Management Contract Supervisor

This memorandum provides an update of the public education campaign underway to raise awareness of the collection service level changes that will occur with the commencement of the new waste collection contracts on October 19, 2020. This memorandum also provides an update on the status of activities related to the implementation of the new curbside collection contracts in October.

Overview of Campaign Implementation Phases

As outlined in PWC-C 14-2020, implementation of the campaign began in June and will continue until November 2020. The campaign was designed to be delivered in three phases:

Phase 1: The Pre-Change Campaign – June to September 21, 2020

The focus of this phase is on educating all residents and businesses in Niagara about the upcoming changes and why they are being made.

Phase 2: The Build-Up - September 21 to October 19, 2020

In the month before the waste collection changes take effect, outreach and communication activities will ramp up. The goal is to encourage residents to prepare for every-other-week garbage collection by picking up a Green Bin and downloading the waste collection mobile application, currently in development.

Phase 3: The Launch and Post-Launch - October 20 to November, 2020

The final phase of the campaign will feature messages focusing on compliance and illegal dumping, while at the same time recognizing and expressing appreciation to residents and businesses that have embraced and adapted to the changes.

After completion of the campaign, program maintenance and support will occur as part of the annual divisional social marketing and outreach strategy.

Campaign Activities Completed in June and July

The campaign was officially launched in mid-June with a media release on June 17. This provided an overview of the waste collection changes and the key outreach activities leading up to October 19 to raise awareness of these changes. Since that media release, the following campaign tactics have been completed:

- June 17:
 - A new subsection with details on the upcoming collection changes was added to Niagara Region's Waste Management webpage. The webpage includes information on the rationale and benefits of the changes, details of how different sectors will be affected and a section on illegal dumping.
- June 17, June 19 and June 22
 - Posts on Niagara Region's Facebook and Twitter accounts reflected upcoming waste collection contract changes. Topics have included: a general announcement of the upcoming changes, notification that recycling and organics containers are available for purchase online, the cancellation of curbside battery collection and the start of online garbage tag sales.
 - The June 17 Facebook post on the upcoming collection changes received 653 comments and was shared 797 times.
- First week of July:
 - Residents throughout Niagara received postcards with information on every-other week garbage collection, the new collection limit for large household items and the discontinuation of collection of scrap metal and appliances. The postcards also included information on diaper and medical exemptions.
 - There were 162,535 postcards delivered to single-family households and low-rise residential properties with two (2) or more units.

- July 1:
 - A two (2) page spread, including an editorial about the upcoming collection changes, was placed in Niagara's Home Show Digital Magazine. This publication was distributed to approximately 4,500 email addresses of past customers of the Niagara Region Home Show.
- July 15:
 - An advertisement informing readers of the move to every-other-week garbage collection was placed in the Seniors Review. This is a free publication with 20,000 copies distributed in outlets including senior's centres and apartments, pharmacies, libraries, retirement homes, hospitals and clinics.
- July 27 and ongoing:
 - With current COVID-19 restrictions, there have been challenges in arranging community outreach. Unstaffed booths have been scheduled at a mix of business types, such as grocery stores, hardware stores and pharmacies, in eleven (11) Local Area Municipalities (LAM). In every LAM, except Wainfleet, banner displays and take-away postcards will be set up for three (3) or four (4) days to provide information to residents on the upcoming collection changes.
 - The displays will be set up in at least two different locations in each municipality. In Welland, Niagara Falls and St.Catharines, the displays will be provided at four (4) different business locations.
 - The first unstaffed display started on July 27 and the last booth is scheduled to be completed on September 24.
- Last week of July:
 - There were 16,411 direct letters were sent to owners of Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (IC&I) properties, Mixed-Use (MU) properties and Multi-Residential (MR) buildings throughout Niagara. The letters were customized to provide each IC&I, MU and MR property owner with a summary of their waste collection services as of October 19th. The letters also provided the rationale for any changes they will experience and directed them to resources available to help prepare for those changes.

Appendix A provides examples of graphics and messages used in campaign.

Following these communication tactics, there has been an increase in calls about the collection changes to Niagara Region's Waste Info-Line. There were 56 calls regarding

the changes in July, compared to zero in the two previous months. In particular, there has been an increased interest in diaper exemptions and waste related to medical conditions. While there are typically fewer than 40 exemption applications per month, there were 909 exemption applications received between July 6 and July 31.

Green Bin distribution data also suggests that residents are beginning to prepare for the start of every-other-week garbage collection in October. In June and July, 2,250 Green Bins were delivered to distribution sites. This is a 127% increase in Green Bin distribution compared to June and July of 2019.

Upcoming Campaign Activities

Campaign activities will ramp up as the start date of the new collection contract approaches. Key tactics that will take place in the upcoming months include:

- Formal launch of Niagara Region's online collection calendar, updated disposal search tool, and mobile application;
- Banners at Regional landfill sites and take-away postcards at scale houses;
- Magnets for Waste Management on-road staff vehicles;
- Staffed booths at farmers markets;
- Webinar presentations to organizations representing businesses (i.e. Business Improvement Associations, Chambers of Commerce etc.);
- Advertisements on buses in St.Catharines, Welland and Niagara Falls;
- Billboard advertisements;
- Radio advertisements;
- Interviews on YourTV;
- A second reminder letter to all businesses and ICI/MU/MR property owners;
- Letters to all properties that will experience a collection day change;
- Direct mail out of Collection Guides to all low-density residential properties and apartments with 2- 6 units;
- New animated video segments promoting Green Bin use, diversion and the upcoming collection changes posted online and on social media;

- New series of hosted video segments demonstrating Green Bin and recycling tips and dispelling common myths about participation posted online and on social media;
- Print advertisements in weekly and daily newspapers;
- Outreach to school aged children through school presentations and videos;
- Dedicated e-blasts to the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce and the South Niagara Chambers of Commerce;
- In-person delivery of Designated Business Area collection guides to businesses;
- Advertisement in Business Link magazine;
- Metroland Media digital display and banner ads;
- New illegal dumping videos posted online and on social media;
- Participation in a virtual vendor fair for post-secondary students hosted by Brock University; and
- Ongoing social media posts with key campaign messages.

Contract Implementation Update

Since January, Niagara Region has continued to meet with GFL and Miller on a monthly basis to discuss various aspects of the implementation for the next waste collection contract. The sections below provide a high level update on major items/tasks.

GFL & Miller Yards

GFL's yard is located at 411 Glendale Avenue in St. Catharines, which is the current yard of Emterra Environmental (Emterra). GFL currently only has access to the upper floor of the operations building and has begun renovations. GFL plans to have full access to the new yard in St. Catharines on October 1, 2020.

The Miller yard, located at 335 Townline Road in Niagara-on-the-Lake, is currently undergoing renovations to the parking lot. Work is scheduled to be completed for October 1, 2020.

Collection Vehicles

As reported in the July 14, 2020 memorandum PW-C 22-2020, as a result of COVID-19, GFL is still reporting that potentially four (4) collection vehicles will not arrive until just before or after the start of the new collection contract. As a result, GFL has committed that six (6) vehicles from another municipal contract will be used for the October 19 new contract start. GFL has not reported any further delays or issues with fleet delivery.

GFL's collection vehicles will be fueled with compressed natural gas (CNG) and beginning September 1, 2020, work will begin at the new GFL yard to install CNG fuel rails. It is estimated that the installation work will take approximately three (3) weeks to complete.

Miller is reporting no delays to the original equipment delivery schedule, with the first vehicles scheduled to arrive in late September. Four additional vehicles that were ordered following the confirmation of enhanced services, may arrive later than the contract start date. However Miller has indicated existing equipment resources will be utilized at the start of the contracts to supplement the Niagara Region fleet and ensure a successful contract transition. The supplemental fleet will be used to facilitate training and ensure timely completion of collection.

Collection Routes

Wainfleet, Pelham, Thorold, West Lincoln, St. Catharines, Niagara-on-the-Lake, and Fort Erie will receive garbage collection on week 1 (October 19-23, 2020) of every-other-week collection. Lincoln, Grimsby, Niagara Falls, Welland and Port Colborne will receive garbage collection on week 2 (October 26-30) of every-other-week collection. No municipalities will be divided between week 1 and week 2, allowing for clear communication to residents.

The Region has accepted GFL's proposed collection day changes in Wainfleet and Pelham. Beginning October 19, all of Wainfleet will be collected on a Monday and the area in Pelham currently collected on Wednesday will also be changed to a Monday collection day. GFL has indicated these changes will create a full five (5) day work week that will balance the workload throughout Area One and also help retain staff. No collection day changes will be occurring in Area Two (Miller).

Staffing

As previously communicated, both collection contractors have hired their Operations Managers. They have been working cooperatively with staff as part of the contract implementation process.

Miller hosted job fairs during the months of July and August. Both Miller and GFL have attended meet and greets at Emterra's current Niagara office. Both contractors reiterated to current contract staff the importance of completing the existing contract, prior to being hired full-time by GFL and Miller.

GFL has begun recruiting On-Road Supervisors and drivers. If needed, two temporary agencies will conduct job fairs in Niagara on behalf of GFL to assist with hiring new collection staff.

GFL and Miller have both confirmed their compensation to all employees will not be less than the Living Wage, as set by the Ontario Living Wage Network. GFL has committed to becoming a member of the Ontario Living Wage Network.

Next Steps

Niagara Region staff are meeting with GFL and Miller on a bi-weekly basis to ensure deliverables and reporting requirements are being met as per the established contract timelines. Staff have finalized contingency plans with GFL and Miller in the event a second wave of COVID-19 occurs. Any changes to collection days/schedules will be communicated to residents and/or businesses in advance of October 19, 2020. Staff will be available during the contractors' employee training sessions, scheduled for late September and early October.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

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Appendix A: Examples of Campaign Graphics and Messaging



Figure 1: Display banners and take-away postcards with information on the upcoming changes. Photo taken at a St.Catharines' grocery store.



Figure 2: Photo of mascot with recent Green Bin delivery used for to promote Green Bins in media release and social media post



Figure 3: Graphic used in Niagara's Home Show Digital Newsletter