



Ontario



---

## ONTARIO CENTRE FOR MUNICIPAL BEST PRACTICES

---

### Best Practice Summary Report SW – WD – 04 – 02

---

### Solid Waste – Waste Diversion – Long-term Waste Management Plan June 2004

---

**Practice Identification:** Solid Waste Diversion – Long Term Solid Waste Management Plan

**Case Study Municipality:** Regional Municipality of Niagara

**Key Word:** Program Planning  
Management  
Policies

#### **Benefits Derived from the Implementation of the Practice:**

- Provides direction for budget and resource allocation
- Provides support for development of a comprehensive system
- Allows for public involvement and endorsement of new initiatives
- Effective and efficient use of existing resources and operations

#### **Description of Practice in the Case Study Municipality**

In 1999, the Regional Municipality of Niagara's Council endorsed a Long Term Waste Management Plan that sets out short and long-term waste diversion goals and objectives. Prior to the development of the Waste Management Plan, the Region's waste management programs were inconsistent across the area municipalities and waste disposal capacity at the Region's landfill site was quickly becoming depleted. Development of a long-term Waste Management Plan provided staff with a tried and tested best practice planning approach to help them plan future initiatives using a collaborative public and stakeholder consensus approach. The process allowed the Region to develop an acceptable waste management system to manage the Region's waste for the next 25 years and can be viewed on the Region's website at:

[www.regional.niagara.on.ca/government/works/Policy-Planning.aspx](http://www.regional.niagara.on.ca/government/works/Policy-Planning.aspx)

The long-term plan was managed by staff and overseen by a steering committee consisting of municipal staff, Councillors and members of the general public and included public consultation on waste management objectives. Short-term commitments included a decision to replace the existing level of collection service with a uniform level of service across the municipality. The Master Plan directed a reduction of waste collection to three containers per household a week, extended leaf and yard waste collection and increased the types of recyclable materials collected. Between 1999 and 2002, Niagara's diversion rate increased from approximately 24% to 42%. In 2004, the Region implemented a full organic collection program, enhanced recyclable materials collection program and reduced waste collection to two containers per household a week in 2004. The goal of the Waste Management Master Plan is to achieve 65% waste diversion. It is anticipated that the Region should achieve 60% diversion of curbside residential waste by the end of 2005.

The Region of Niagara has a population 424,900 and has single-tier responsibility for Waste Management. The waste collection service area is 89% urban and consists of approximately 87% single family and 13% multi-family dwellings. In 2002, the Region collected 177,101 tonnes of residential solid waste of which 75,108 tonnes were diverted from landfill through blue box and organic collection programs resulting in a 42% diversion rate.

The Regional Municipality of Niagara is a participating municipality in the Ontario Municipal CAO's Benchmarking Initiative. The Ontario Municipal CAO's Benchmarking Initiative is the result of a CAO's partnership effort to continuously strive for service excellence in municipal government. Participating municipalities are working together to identify and share performance statistics and operational best practices, and to network in a spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship to push for even greater successes.

## **Evaluation of the Practice**

### *Efficiency*

Based on the 2002 MPMP results, the Region of Niagara has a lower than average operating cost per tonne for waste diversion programs than most municipalities with a population over 100,000. The Waste Management Plan helped to focus resources and maintain low operating costs. The Region has established a relatively small number of staff consisting of three people to manage the development and implementation of their Long Term Waste Management Plan. This practice provided for efficient use of existing resources to increase diversion and landfill capacity thereby avoiding an estimated \$50 million in disposal costs, that would have been incurred if waste management had not been made a single-tier responsibility.

### *Effectiveness*

The implementation of the Region of Niagara's Long Term Waste Management Plan has provided staff with a plan forward that aligned and increased service levels by maximizing use of existing resources. Prior to adoption of the Plan the diversion rate was 24% and increased to 42% over the following three years of implementation. Staff believes the increased diversion rate would not be achievable without the development of the Waste Management Master Plan. This practice allows for planning and implementation of a comprehensive system to increase the diversion of waste using a consistent and effective approach. The Waste Management Master Plan will move Niagara to 65% waste diversion prior to the Region's target date of 2012.

### *Community and environmental outcomes*

Long-term waste management planning typically follows the decision-making and evaluation process that is required under the Environmental Assessment Act. This approach helps to facilitate and simplify the approval process of any undertaking identified as a result of the long-term plan. Furthermore, long-term planning using a collaborative approach provides the municipality with a vision and contingency for the future of waste management in its jurisdiction. This practice can result in a community-endorsed outcome that will have considerable environmental benefits including less reliance on waste disposal. Waste Management planning processes, especially those that involve the community have demonstrated high participation in diversion programs. For example the City of Halifax developed a Long-term Waste Management Strategy endorsed by the public that is currently achieving 65% diversion and a participation rate of greater than 90%.

### *Legislative Initiatives*

With the announcement by the Ontario Ministry of Environment to achieve 60% waste diversion and the creation of Waste Diversion Ontario (WDO), municipalities will be expected to achieve higher diversion rates through effective and efficient municipal programs. Waste Management Master Plans demonstrate commitment and provide a strategy to attain higher diversion through effective and efficient methods.

### **Replication of the Practice**

This practice is relevant to all municipalities who have responsibility for waste diversion operations. Almost one third of the municipalities with below-average costs and above average diversion rates have developed long-term waste management plans and are in the process of implementing the Plan's objectives. This practice requires little direct investment other than staff time and can be developed in as little time as six months to a year.

The document “Preparing a Waste Management Plan”, prepared by the European Commission on Environment, identifies a number of the benefits of developing a waste management plan. It outlines objectives of a long-term plan to achieve cost efficient and effective sustainable waste management programs. Title: Preparing a Waste Management Plan, May 2003, The European Topic Centre on Waste and Material Flows (from the European Commission Environment)  
<http://waste.eionet.eu.int/Publications/Working%20documents/Wasteguide>

Limitations may include costs to implement new technologies or waste diversion initiatives but does not preclude building on and expanding existing programs to increase efficiencies and effectiveness. Other obstacles to long-term waste management planning could involve two tier municipalities where the responsibility for collection, processing and disposal is split. Lack of political support and financial backing for future waste diversion programs could also hamper the benefits of developing a long term waste management plan.

Other municipalities with above average 2002 MPMP results that have developed long-term waste management plans include Greater Napanee, Brockville, Tyendinaga, Orangeville, North Glengarry, Petawawa, Peterborough, Waterloo, Peel and Halton.

**Contact:** Janine Ralph  
Manager, Waste Policy & Planning  
Regional Municipality of Niagara  
[janine.ralph@regional.niagara.on.ca](mailto:janine.ralph@regional.niagara.on.ca) , Tel: 905 685-1571