



Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing



Association of Municipalities of Ontario

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**ONTARIO CENTRE FOR MUNICIPAL BEST PRACTICES**

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**SW – WD – 05**

**Best Practice Identification Methodology Report**

**May 2005**

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**Identification of Municipal “Best Practices”  
For  
Waste Management - Solid Waste Diversion**

**May 2005**

**Prepared for the Ontario Centre for Municipal Best Practices**

**By Lura Consulting**

## 1. Introduction

In March 2005, the Ontario Centre for Municipal Best Practices (OCMBP) in collaboration with Lura Consulting identified potential Solid Waste management Best Practice Municipalities using the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing 2003 MPMP (Municipal Performance Measurement Project) data call, and Waste Diversion Ontario's 2003 municipal waste diversion program data.

A Best Practice, as summarized by the Ontario Centre for Municipal Best Practices, is one which has demonstrably assisted at least one Ontario municipality to achieve a high level of measured performance in a service or activity, or to achieve a significant improvement in measured performance in a service or activity.

The practice may be in place in one or more Ontario municipalities, in a form similar to that in the municipality or municipalities identified. However, the practice may not yet be universally implemented in all Ontario municipalities where its application could potentially improve measured performance in the service or activity.

The OCMBP specifically recognizes that a practice which has verifiably contributed to service performance improvement in the case-study municipality may not be applicable or equally cost-beneficial in all other Ontario municipalities. Even within Ontario, municipalities exhibit considerable variation in service-significant factors such as population size and density, climate and terrain, non-resident usage of services and infrastructure, industrial base, or age of settlement.

The identification of Best Practices, (including the verification of essential features, contribution to measured service performance in at least one case-study municipality, and the preparation of the Best Practice Summary Report) is the responsibility of the OCMBP, and not of any case-study municipality or any other party. Neither the OCMBP nor any Summary Report in any way establishes minimum performance standards for municipal services or prescribes service delivery approaches. Best Practice Summary Reports are intended to be an efficient reference tool for municipal service providers to learn about and investigate alternative approaches to delivering efficient and effective services.

The objective of the study was to:

- Identify those municipalities having completed the MPMP 2003 data call information for municipal residential diversion programs;
- Determine above-average Municipal performers using the MPMP and Waste Diversion Ontario 2003 data;

- Establish unique and valid waste diversion initiatives in an above-average performing municipality, or establish practices which are consistent over a number of above-average performing municipalities.

## **2. Best Practice Identification Methodology**

### **2.1 Stage I**

The purpose of stage 1 was to use the Ontario Municipal Affairs & Housing's 2003 Municipal Performance Measures Project (MPMP) data to provide a preliminary screening of municipalities. It included an evaluation of municipal program cost and the percentage of waste diverted from disposal.

#### **2.1.1 Performance Measures**

The following measures from the 2003 MPMP reporting year were used:

- Operating costs for residential waste diversion per tonne (Schedule 91, line 3602, column 13 of the MPMP schedules)
- Percentage of residential solid waste diverted (Schedule 92, line 3655, column 07 of the MPMP schedules)

For purposes of the performance measures, operating costs were defined as the sum of salaries, wages and employee benefits; materials; contracted services; rents and financial expenses; and internal cost adjustment. Revenue received from other municipalities was deducted from total operating cost. For consistency in the comparison of data, only municipalities which reported operating costs per tonne were analyzed.

#### **2.1.2 Objective of this Stage**

The objective of Stage I was to use the filtering data outlined in section 2.1.4 below to identify municipalities with lower than average costs per tonne (efficiency) and average or higher than average percentage of residential solid waste diverted (effectiveness).

#### **2.1.3 Basic Groupings**

Municipalities were divided into 3 groups based on population as follows:

- Under 25,000
- 25,001 to 99,999, and
- Over 100,000

Population refers to enumerated population for 2001 (Schedule 90, line 0020, column 01 of the MPMP schedules)

### 2.1.4 Filtering Data

Municipalities were considered to have completed the **efficiency** measure if the value was non-zero. Note that it was possible for a municipality to have a negative value for this measure if revenues received from other municipalities exceeded operating costs.

Municipalities were considered to have completed the **effectiveness** measure if the value for the measure was greater than zero and less than 100%

To be considered for further evaluation, a municipality had to meet the following conditions:

- Residential tonnes reported as denominator of efficiency measure
- Efficiency measure less than average for population group
- Effectiveness measure greater than or equal to the average for population group

### 2.1.5 Statistics for Each Group of Municipalities

The table below summarizes the information for each group of municipalities:

<b>Summary of Statistics</b>					
<b>Population Groups</b>	<b>Mean: efficiency measure</b>	<b>Number of municipalities reporting efficiency measure</b>	<b>Average or above average percentage of diversion of residential waste from disposal</b>	<b>Number of municipalities reporting effectiveness measure</b>	<b>Number of municipalities meeting criteria for efficiency, effectiveness and reporting solid waste diversion tonnage</b>
<25,000	\$ 217.90	47	22.0%	25	11
25,001 TO 99,999	\$ 134.50	36	33.4%	28	9
100,000 +	\$ 131.50	21	34.0%	21	7

## **2.2 STAGE II: Detailed Survey of Selected Municipalities**

Stage II included an analysis of waste diversion programs operated by those municipalities identified in Stage I having higher than average percentage of solid waste diverted and lower than average operating costs for diversion programs. The objective was to identify specific programs or operational initiatives that have decreased the municipality's costs and/or increased the percentage of solid waste diverted.

### **2.2.1 Municipalities Selected for Follow-up**

Twenty-seven municipalities met the criteria outlined above and were selected for further evaluation. The municipalities were interviewed based on the following conditions:

- The ability to locate the appropriate staff person who could answer further questions;
- The willingness of a municipality to answer further questions in the allotted time frame (interviews were conducted between May 2 and May 16, 2005);
- The ability to confirm 2003 MPMP efficiency and effectiveness data.

Based on the above conditions, the following number of follow-up telephone interviews was completed:

- 8 municipalities having a population less than 25,000;
- 6 municipalities having a population between 25,001 and 99,999;
- 7 municipalities having a population over 100,000.

### **2.2.2 Survey Conducted**

A questionnaire was developed to explore a number of operational issues not evident from a review of the MPMP or WDO data call information. Telephone interviews were scheduled with the municipalities and a copy of the questionnaire was e-mailed to the respondent before the interview. This process provided an opportunity to:

- Confirm the cost allocation and tonnages as reported in the 2003 MPMP data call;
- Review the types of waste diversion programs and initiatives undertaken by the respective municipalities;
- Identify which programs and or initiatives municipalities consider to have had the greatest impact on diversion rates;
- Identify program initiatives that had decreased operational costs; and
- Identify the non-controllable issues relevant to that community (i.e. administration, demographics, geography etc).

The surveys indicate inconsistency between some municipalities' reported 2003 and 2002 MPMP data. Several municipalities stated that their 2003 data reports were more accurate than the data reported for the 2002 MPMP mostly because they have become more familiar with the data requirements. Therefore, some municipalities may not have been identified in 2002 as better-performing municipalities and comparisons between 2002 and 2003 MPMP data were ineffective due to inaccuracies of the reported data.

### **3.0 Results**

Analysis of the survey data resulted in the identification of Best Practices for solid waste diversion. The resulting practice reports appear on the OCMBP website in the SW – WD – 05 series, and describe the benefits and implications derived from implementation of the practice.

#### **Additional Observations**

A few municipalities also commented on the amount of time required by them to complete the various data calls. Some of the large municipalities claimed to have a full time staff person working up to two months per year completing data requests. The Ontario Centre for Municipal Best Practices could consider aligning the MPMP and WDO data calls to reduce the time and effort required by municipalities to complete these two very similar data requests. This could result in improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of the performance measures procedures.