

SWS 2016 Annual Report

The Solid Waste Services (SWS) Division provides waste management services and planning with a focus on;

- Excellent customer service
- Effective and efficient financial management
- Environmental stewardship

Our goal is to provide a safe, cost effective service to County of Wellington residents while protecting the air, water and land through environmentally sound practices. All operations, services and programmes are, and will continue to be, evaluated on an on-going basis to attempt to identify and implement efficiencies and improvements wherever possible.

Quick Fact:

In a phone survey conducted in February 2016, 89.8% of respondents indicated they were somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with the County's waste and recycling programme.

Customer Service

Programmes and Services

- As part of the SWS Strategy analysis, the decision was made to expand the curbside collection of waste and recyclables to all seven rural areas of the County's member municipalities. Over 7,000 households and businesses began receiving the expanded service beginning July 5, 2016. Packages containing information on how to participate in the curbside collection programme and over 14,000 blue boxes were delivered to these households in just over three weeks in May and June.
- The standard size of blue box the County distributes has been increased from 14 gallons to 22 gallons. The larger capacity allows residents to place more recyclables out for collection in fewer boxes. It also will better accommodate any new items that are added to the blue box programme. For example, in 2016, planter pots and trays were able to be recycled in Wellington County.
- Wellington County introduced a Mobile Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Depot in July 2016. The mobile depot accepts the full range of HHW materials. Previously this service was available seven days a year during HHW Event Days. The new depot is operational three days a week year-round and has improved access to the full range of HHW disposal to approximately 155 days a year.
- Improved customer experience at waste facilities:
 - Improved customer education and awareness at waste facilities and the landfill site tipping face. This interaction informed customers on source separation and on cost savings by diverting items from landfill.
 - Enhanced visual appeal with tree and shrub plantings on the entranceway berm at the Aberfoyle Waste Facility.



Key Customer Service Statistics	2015	2016	% change
number of calls and emails	2,563	4,007	56.3%
number of customers at waste facilities	277,514	272,724	-1.7%
number of garbage curbside stops	413,828	455,612	10.1%
number of garbage bags picked up at curbside	626,937	671,579	7.1%
number of blue box curbside stops	675,695	724,343	7.2%
number of recycling carts picked up at curb	14,952	15,555	4.0%

Promotion and Education

- Supported the launch of two significant service additions: the Mobile HHW Depot and the expansion of rural curbside collection to over 7,000 households. Both started July 1.
- A phone survey was done in February 2016. One of the questions asked about residents' preferred method of obtaining waste information. The top three answers were flyers and mailings, emails, and the County's website.
- In September, SWS staff promoted the Division in the County Showcase Tent at the International Plowing Match located in the Town of Minto. The booth focused on composting, our Reuse Centres, the Gold Box Reward Programme, and how batteries are recycled. The biggest draw was the 3Rs quiz where every answer earned a mini blue box. Approximately 2,700 mini blue boxes were given away over the five days of the event.
- The County launched its social media presence on Facebook and Twitter in November 2016. These are in addition to the County's news service. Up-to-date information and news is sent directly to people's computer or handheld devices.
- To make it easier to find user pay bag distributors, SWS added a map to the website that shows where all user pay garbage bags are sold, as well as the store names and addresses. There were 62 locations around the County where residents could purchase user pay garbage bags.
- Two backyard composting workshops were held during Earth Week in partnership with two of the County Library Branches. 21 residents attended two workshops in 2016, up from 19 in 2015. Feedback provided showed a 96.4% overall satisfaction with the workshop.
- SWS participated in the Drayton "Touch-a-Truck" event for the first time by placing a County roll-off truck and driver at the event.
- The SWS Hours and Locations page was once again the fifth most frequently visited page on the County's website in 2016.



County Website – SWS Pages (unique visitors)	2015	2016	% change
most visited 1 – hours and locations	21,949	22,003	0.2%
most visited 2 – garbage and recycling (home page)	12,750	11,047	-13.4%
most visited 3 – waste facilities	7,437	5,672	-23.7%
Reuse Website (total number of visits)			
# of visits	1,731	1,486	-14.2%
# of pages	20,615	29,896	45.0%
average time spent on website (minutes)	1.75	1.75	0.0%

Financial

- Scrap metal markets strengthened considerably in 2016, with total revenues of \$52,412 received for this material, an increase of 94.6% over 2015. Unfortunately this wasn't the case with other materials. A total of \$758,334, was received across all marketed materials, a 4.4 % decrease over 2015.
- For the first time since 2002, user pay garbage bag fees were changed. Bag prices at the curbside and waste facilities were standardized. A total of \$1,342,351 was received in revenues from user pay bag fees in 2016.
- Savings of approximately \$21,000 were realized through doing more equipment maintenance in-house and substituting more cost-effective and better performing, tires for the county's roll-off fleet.
- The expansion of rural curbside collection provided an opportunity to evaluate the routing for rural areas. Improved routing should lead to better pricing on the next curbside collection contract.

SWS Operating Budget	2015	2016	% change
Total Revenue	4,324,300	4,845,370	12.0%
Total Expenditure	8,236,800	8,727,890	6.0%
Net Operating Budget	3,912,500	3,882,520	-0.8%
Total Transfers to and from Reserves	527,300	735,800	39.5%
Overall Operating Budget	4,439,800	4,618,320	4.0%

Environmental Stewardship

With the encouragement and support of the SWS Committee and County Council, the SWS Division developed a "Green Strategy", and works to protect and enhance the natural environment wherever possible. Our goal is to promote green practices in all daily activities, operation plans and the overall work strategy. We incorporate "Green Principles" into all areas of waste management decisions and actions. The core green principles are:

- To protect and enhance the natural environment.
- To reduce the carbon footprint of our operations.
- To practice a "Life Cycle" approach.

Quick Fact:

In 2016, 170,970 kg of HHW was collected from County residents, a 4.8% increase over the amount collected in 2015.

All operations are tracked over time to determine if any activity or practice assists in:

- Reducing negative environmental impacts created in providing service.
- Reducing the carbon footprint created in providing service.
- Improving life cycle performance through reduction, reuse and recycling practices.
- Enhancing environmental health.

Quick Fact:

Wellington County residents and businesses diverted 31.0% of their waste materials through the services and programmes offered by SWS.



In 2016, the following projects and initiatives were implemented or enhanced:

- Re-grading activities at the Elora Waste Facility. The closed landfill site at Elora has been receiving clean fill to re-grade the top and side slopes of the waste mound. This enhancement better manages storm water on the site.
- Continued utilizing improved landfilling methods at the Riverstown Waste Facility. Enhanced waste compaction and the use of a large tarp as Alternate Daily Cover, reduces the need for soil to be used as cover material. These practices both maximize landfill capacity and revenues.

- In the time since the Mobile HHW Depot was opened for operation in July 2016, it was utilized 2033 times by residents disposing of HHW. 63,822 kg (63.8 tonnes) of materials were collected in the depot and sent for disposal in a safe and appropriate manner. Keeping HHW out of landfills protects soil and water quality and reduces health and safety risks to workers.
- Re-initiated the topsoil generation project at the Riverstown landfill site. Compost is transported to Riverstown and is placed on top of windrows of fill and clay in order to enrich the material. The following year the windrows are mixed by turning them over. In time the compost/fill/clay mix has become topsoil, suitable for final cover on the capped portions of the landfill mound. This reduces the need for purchasing and stripping native topsoil.
- Relocated litter fences at Riverstown for superior litter control. This reduces the ability of litter to blow off site and more efficiently utilizes staff time by decreasing time spent collecting litter.



Tonnes Landfilled	2015	2016	% change
Total tonnes disposed	23,241.75	23,449.38	0.9%

County Diversion Programmes	2015	2016	% change
blue box recyclables	5,453.30	5,725.34	5.0%
wood, brush, Christmas trees	2,089.86	2,408.33	15.2%
scrap metal	442.04	457.56	3.5%
electronics	164.14	141.11	-14.0%
tires	117.22	98.46	-16.0%
rubble and concrete for reuse	0.00	1.37	--
household hazardous waste	163.13	170.97	4.8%
clothing and textiles	18.28	17.68	-3.3%
reuse centres and website	12.83	12.82	-0.1%
backyard composting (estimate)	1,465.40	1,477.40	0.8%
total tonnes diverted from landfill	9,926.20	10,511.04	5.9%

- In 2016, the waste screening process was strengthened at the “tipping face” at the Riverstown landfill in order to identify and remove more hazardous and recyclable materials from the waste stream. A scrap metal bin was located beside the tipping face to allow for separation of this valuable material.
- Wellington County hosted the International Plowing Match in 2016. During the event, a high premium was placed on ensuring recyclable materials were separated from waste and diverted from landfill. These efforts yielded 8,870 kg of materials removed from the waste stream. This diversion is equivalent to 73.3 mature trees saved, 554.1 gallons of oil saved, 34,901.8 KW/hr of electricity conserved, 12.9 metric tonnes of greenhouse gases prevented and 38,228.6447 gallons of water was saved.

SWS Strategy

In 2001, at the request of the local municipalities, the County of Wellington accepted responsibility for all solid waste services from its seven member municipalities. Over the past 16 years, many changes have been made to the waste services and programmes provided to County residents.

In 2015, County Council directed SWS staff to undertake a review of waste services to help direct the future of waste management and diversion in the County. The goal of this project is to provide the County with a long term strategy for all its waste operations and services, and how they are provided.

Staff and Committee developed the framework and broad outline of the Strategy. Guiding principles, goals and priorities were established to provide direction for the Strategy. These principles reflect a balance of customer service, economic considerations, and environmental stewardship.

Rural Collection

The topic of rural collection was brought forward at the March 2016 Committee and Council meetings. A survey was commissioned which concluded there was a strong desire amongst Wellington residents for County-wide rural collection. The decision was made to expand curbside collection to rural areas of all of the County's member municipalities.

In tandem with this decision, the per bag fee to dispose of garbage at waste facilities was equalized with the User Pay curbside fee. With all residents having access to curbside collection there no longer was a rationale for lower fees at the waste facilities.

SWS staff made implementation of the expanded service and the user fee change a top priority and executed the plan to have these changes enacted by July 1.



Next Steps

A timeline was presented in the fall of 2016 for the analysis of the remaining topics to be evaluated through the rest of the waste management strategy. In 2017, decisions will be made determining if any other changes to curbside collection services are feasible or desirable. The focus of the strategic review will then shift to evaluating long-term waste disposal alternatives. Lastly, the best use of operational and closed waste facilities will be determined. The SWS Strategy is expected to be completed in 2018.

Future Initiatives

The following tables provide a list of potential projects that have been identified to continue to meet the SWS Division Green Strategy goals. The projects are continually re-evaluated and modified depending upon the County and Division priorities, budget availability, site construction requirements, potential benefits, and other factors. This is not an exhaustive list and will be adjusted as new opportunities are identified and developed.

2017-2020

Project Details	Year	Estimated Cost
Treeplanting at Active and Closed Sites Continue and expand partnership with Green Legacy. Identify locations amongst the 17 sites and plant trees where appropriate.	2017	\$0
Riverstown Waste Facility Rehabilitation Enhance biodiversity and rehabilitate the site's forests. Naturalize the on-site stream with native plantings.	2017	\$10,000
Riverstown Topsoil Generation Continue topsoil generation project.	2017	\$10,000
Enhancing Customer Service Social Marketing and Web-based Tools. Continue GIS mapping initiative with Planning and IT. Explore opportunities for social marketing and applications	2017	\$0
Investigate Waste Facility Rehabilitation for Other Closed Sites Explore planting pollinator gardens to aid stressed pollinator populations. Better integrating sites with surrounding environment to foster wildlife habitat.	2017	\$5,000
Waste Management Strategy Study feasibility of various curbside collection services options. Evaluate future waste disposal alternatives. To be completed in 2018.	2017	\$100,000
Community Engagement and Education Enhancement Develop Community Engagement strategy and explore educational opportunities. Produce content and deliver workshops, coordinate promotional activities.	2017	\$15,000
Investigate additional payment options for customers. On-line ordering for user pay bag distributors. Debit and credit payment options at waste facilities.	2018	TBD
Riverstown Waste Facility Rehabilitation Invasive species management. Improve wildlife habitat and develop wildlife corridors.	2018	\$10,000
Master Composter Programme Enhancement Develop volunteer groups for master composters. Develop training programme for master composters.	2018	\$10,000

2017-2020 (continued)

Project Details	Year	Estimated Cost
Waste Management Strategy Complete evaluation of future waste disposal alternatives. Assess and determine the optimal use of operational and closed waste facilities.	2018	\$100,000
Liquid de-icing programme Monitoring for reduced chloride impacts.	2018	\$5,000
Continuation of Waste Facility Rehabilitation for Other Closed Sites Begin implementation of pollinator gardens. Better integrating sites with surrounding environment to foster wildlife habitat.	2018	\$15,000
Explore leachate collection/treatment options as required Determine if Riverstown Phase I system is needed and research and cost options. Research and cost Phase II leachate system options.	2018	TBD
Enhance Master Composter Programme Establish vermi-composting programme. Implement composting initiatives with various organizations.	2018	\$3,000
Waste Management Strategy Completion of long-term plan for direction and goals of SWS. Begin implementation of Strategy recommendations.	2018	\$100,000
Wetland creation opportunities developed as appropriate Determine if using a wetland for on-site leachate treatment is a viable option. Do field and laboratory tests and develop as appropriate.	2018	TBD
Continue to Implement Strategy Recommendations Continue implementation and evaluation of strategy recommendations.	2019	TBD
Develop interpretive opportunities as appropriate Develop sites for interpretive studies and tours at sites. Establish relations with local naturalists and university groups.	2019	\$10,000
Continue to Implement Strategy Recommendations Continue implementation and evaluation of strategy recommendations.	2020	TBD

2021 and Beyond

Enact Waste-Free Ontario Act programme changes as required

Continue to Implement Strategy Recommendations



Quick Fact:

SWS Roll-Off Operations performed 3,489 bin lifts in 2016.



Quick Fact:

There were 42 Gold Boxes awarded to County residents as part of the Gold Box Reward programme recognizing outstanding recyclers.