

## **Automated "Flower Pot" Waste Collection System**

*(City Council at its regular meeting held on October 3, 4 and 5, 2000, and its Special Meetings held on October 6, 2000, October 10 and 11, 2000, and October 12, 2000, amended this Clause by amending the report dated July 12, 2000, from the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, embodied in the communication dated July 25, 2000, from the City Clerk, by:*

*(a) adding to Recommendation No. (2), as amended by the Works Committee, the words "and that the by-law include a short form so that tickets can be issued to assist in enforcement", so that such recommendation, as amended by the Works Committee and Council, shall now read as follows:*

*"(2) property owners in the pilot area be advised that they will be responsible for keeping their carts clean, for rolling them out on collection day and then rolling them back out of public view and away from the curb soon after collection, and to place all of their waste materials into the carts and not on the ground, and further that a property standards by-law be prepared which would require the commercial property owners to be responsible for maintaining the City property which abuts their property, including the area around the waste collection containers and that the by-law include a short form so that tickets can be issued to assist in enforcement;" and*

*(b) adding thereto the following new Recommendation No. (4):*

*"(4) the pilot project include a provision for the supply of 95-gallon recycling bins as well, and that businesses be encouraged to source separate their waste, and the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services be authorized to initiate other pilot projects he deems necessary."*

**The Works Committee recommends the adoption of the report dated July 12, 2000, from the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, embodied in the following communication (July 25, 2000) from the City Clerk, subject to amending Recommendation No. (2) by adding thereto the following:**

**"and further that a property standards by-law be prepared which would require the commercial property owners to be responsible for maintaining the City property which abuts their property, including the area around the waste collection containers":**

Recommendation:

The North York Community Council on July 18, 2000, recommended to the Works Committee that the report (July 12, 2000) from the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, Works and Emergency Services, be adopted.

Background:

The North York Community Council had before it a report (July 12, 2000) from the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, Works and Emergency Services, seeking Council's authority to conduct a pilot study in the Wilson Street and Dufferin Avenue area to test the effectiveness of removing the large 300-gallon automated "flower pot" waste collection containers from City boulevards and replacing them with 95-gallon roll-out carts; and recommending that:

- (1) a pilot study be conducted in the Wilson Street and Dufferin Avenue area to test the effectiveness of removing the large 300-gallon automated "flower pot" waste containers from the City boulevard, and replacing them with 95-gallon roll-out carts;
- (2) property owners in the pilot area be advised that they will be responsible for keeping their carts clean, for rolling them out on collection day and then rolling them back out of public view and away from the curb soon after collection, and to place all of their waste materials into the carts and not on the ground; and
- (3) property owners in the pilot area be advised that failure to comply with the above requirements may result in the City terminating their municipal waste collection.

(Report dated July 12, 2000, from the  
General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services,  
addressed to the North York Community Council)

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to seek Council authority to conduct a pilot study in the Wilson Street and Dufferin Avenue area to test the effectiveness of removing the large 300-gallon automated "flower pot" waste collection containers from City boulevards, and replacing them with 95-gallon roll-out carts.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

The City maintains an inventory of 95 U.S. gallon roll-out carts sufficient for use in the pilot area as an alternative to the 300 U.S. gallon "flower pot" bins.

Additional automated collection lifts at each stop necessitated by the use of the smaller 95 U.S. gallon carts will be incorporated into the existing automated collection routes and should have no

appreciable affect on staffing and equipment costs. However, this will be assessed through the pilot study.

Promotional materials will be developed in-house with costs being covered by existing budgets.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) a pilot study be conducted in the Wilson Street and Dufferin Avenue area to test the effectiveness of removing the large 300-gallon automated “flower pot” waste containers from the City boulevard, and replacing them with 95-gallon roll-out carts;
- (2) property owners in the pilot area be advised that they will be responsible for keeping their carts clean, for rolling them out on collection day and then rolling them back out of public view and away from the curb soon after collection, and to place all of their waste materials into the carts and not on the ground; and
- (3) property owners in the pilot area be advised that failure to comply with the above requirements may result in the City terminating their municipal waste collection.

Background:

Clause No. 30 (i) embodied in Report No. 1 of The North York Community Council, received by the Council of the City of Toronto at its meeting held on February 1, 2 and 3, 2000, established a working group to oversee the development of replacement alternatives to the present flower pot garbage collection system; and outlining the terms of reference of the working group.

Clause No. 32 embodied in Report No. 5 of The North York Community Council as adopted by the Council of the City of Toronto at its meeting held on April 11, 12 and 13, 2000, requested that a staff person from Works and Emergency Services be assigned to the working group, and that secretariat support be provided by the City Clerk’s Division.

The Automated “Flower Pot” Waste Collection System Working Group on May 3, 2000, decided to:

- (1) receive the preliminary report (November 16, 1999) from the Commissioner, Works and Emergency Services, for information, as referred to in Clause No. 30 (i), Report No. 1 of The North York Community Council, and received by the Council of the City of Toronto on February 1, 2 and 3, 2000;
- (2) request the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, Works and Emergency Services to:
  - (a) prepare a report:

- (i) providing an inventory of the areas in which the “flower pot” waste collection containers are currently being used;
  - (ii) establishing as priorities: main streets/road allowances, townhouses, apartments and the rear of properties;
  - (iii) advising what other methods of collection are being used by other cities; including what other cities have used the “flower pot” waste collection system; are those cities still using the “flower pots”; and if not, what system are they using for waste collection; and
  - (iv) providing an inventory of waste collection equipment that is currently being used throughout the City, including any surplus equipment that is available as a result of amalgamation;
- (b) identify areas where the “flower pot” waste collection system is used within the City; co-ordinate a tour date and invite members of the Working Group to attend;
  - (c) investigate all possible options as an alternative to the “flower pot” waste collection system; and
  - (d) explore ways to create efficiencies within the system; and
- (3) endorse in principle that whatever the “flower pot” waste collection system is replaced with, the waste collection will continue to be carried out by existing staff.

A tour of various properties in Solid Waste Management Services, Collection District 3 was completed by the Automated “Flower Pot” Waste Collection System Working Group (“Working Group”) on June 27, 2000. It was decided at that time, by Councillor Howard Moscoe, the Chair of the Working Group, that the report to be produced by the Working Group recommend that a pilot study be completed that includes properties on Wilson Avenue and Dufferin Street. The pilot study would involve the removal of any large 300-gallon containers located on City property and replaced with the small 95-gallon roll-out carts. In regard to the use of the small 95-gallon roll-out carts, each property owner will be directed by staff to maintain the 95-gallon containers by cleaning them regularly, roll the containers back from the curb after collection to a storage location preferable out of public view, place all waste materials inside the cart and not on the ground and actively participate in the City’s recycling program by utilizing City recycling carts (this is the subject of a separate report). Property owners will be advised that failure to comply with these requirements may result in the City terminating municipal waste collection.

Discussion:

As requested by the Working Group, Table 1 is an inventory of properties that are currently serviced with the automated “flower pot” waste collection system. The main target locations, at least initially, will be the 214 locations (total of “bolded” figures in Table 1 below) where the containers “remain at the curb”.

Table 1. Inventory of Properties Which Use the “Flower Pot” Waste Collection Containers:

Ward	Stores With Apartments			Stores Without Apartments			Townhouses			Apartments		
	Remain at Curb	Roll Out to Curb	Private Property /Rear Lane	Remain at Curb	Roll Out to Curb	Private Property /Rear Lane	Remain at Curb	Roll Out to Curb	Private Property /Rear Lane	Remain at Curb	Roll Out to Curb	Private Property /Rear Lane
6	4	2	12	0	0	2	2	1	3	16	21	29
7	0	0	0	0	0	7	6	3	8	12	11	6
8	31	13	18	7	7	9	1	0	40	36	85	27
9	4	1	2	5	0	2	1	2	1	73	11	12
10	2	1	6	2	3	5	0	3	1	2	8	9
11	0	0	1	1	0	4	2	1	6	7	1	12
12	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	4	0	0	1
Total	41	17	39	15	10	30	12	13	63	146	137	96

As requested by the Working Group, Table 2 is an inventory of waste collection vehicles that are either active or considered surplus. Note that those vehicles shown as surplus are older vehicles that are no longer considered suitable for regular service.

Table 2. Inventory of Waste Collection Vehicles Being Used, Including any Surplus:

Vehicle	Active	Surplus	Total
Rear Packers	183	15	198
Manual Side Loader	10	20	30
Auto. Side Loader	12	1	13
Recycling Truck	47	1	48
White Goods	9	1	10
Mini Recycling Truck	0	2	2
Mini Side Packer	0	3	3
Total	261	43	299

Review of Collection Systems Used by Other Cities:

Upon review of the waste management practices in ten cities in Canada and the United States, it was determined that none of these cities place large automated collection bins in front of commercial or multi-residential properties and that many systems rely on smaller carts, where a semi-automated or automated collection system is used.

In most cities surveyed, the waste containers are stored and collected in rear laneways. For those properties that do not have a rear laneway, 95-gallon carts are often used. These carts are rolled to the curbside and then rolled back to the private property after collection. For example, in San Antonio, Texas, after collection, some store owners roll their carts through their store to the back for storage. In many cases, garbage collection is not provided to commercial establishments and the property owners must receive waste collection from a private waste company. Further, in most cities in the United States, commercial waste collection is provided at a fee for service by the City.

The use of a property standards by-law for commercial property owners has assisted many cities with the battle against litter and materials left on the ground around the collection containers. Such a by-law is used in San Antonio, Texas, and is apparently common to many major U.S. cities. The by-law requires property owners to maintain city property that abuts against their property, including the area around the waste collection containers. This includes removing any litter or debris that may be placed around the collection containers or that may have been dropped by passers-by. Owners that do not comply with this by-law are first provided with a warning letter, and any subsequent incidences may result in a fine being applied.

In regard to the various collection systems used, most cities collect municipal waste using rear loading garbage packers for material set out in piles or in roll out carts. The carts are collected by using either an automated vehicle or a semi-automated cart tipper attachment on the rear of a garbage packer, as is used in Rochester, New York. Carts are often used by those cities that charge a fee for commercial waste service. The level of the fee depends upon the number of carts utilized and the frequency of service provided.

Some cities utilize a fully automated collection system. However, many use just one size of container, for example, only 95-gallon carts or large 300-gallon containers. A couple of cities surveyed use an automated system that utilizes steel bins that resemble bulk lift containers. The City of Winnipeg, for example, places these containers in laneways behind single family dwellings. The owners place their garbage in these containers and the City empties them with an automated side loading vehicle. Winnipeg considered cart collection but found that the amount of snow that the City receives would make it difficult for homeowners to wheel the carts out for collection.

A representative of Phoenix, Arizona, agreed with the Working Group's opinion that it is best to have each property owner responsible for their own waste by using their own individual container. By providing each property owner with their own 95-gallon cart, there is more accountability in regard to what is placed out and how. This is not true for those situations where a number of property owners share one large bin.

#### Removal of 300-Gallon Containers from the Boulevard:

One of the problems with the current automated "flower pot" waste collection system used by the City of Toronto is that the large 300-gallon containers located at certain locations are not aesthetically pleasing. In addition, these containers are often a magnet for illegal dumping. To resolve this problem, staff members have recommended that the 300-gallon containers be removed and replaced with 95 U.S. gallon roll out carts. A number of these carts are already in use at a number of locations in the North York community. Both the 300-gallon and 95-gallon containers can be collected by the same vehicle.

A project was completed to remove all 300-gallon waste containers off of the City boulevard along Keele Street approximately four or five years ago by the former City of North York. These containers were either relocated onto private property or, more often, were replaced with 95-gallon carts that the property owners must now roll out to the curb for collection and then roll

back to private property after collection. This program was very successful and has improved the appearance of this area.

#### Pilot Study:

It is the opinion of staff and many members of the Working Group that the use of large waste containers for servicing strip plazas only creates an opportunity for illegal dumping to occur. This is particularly true when these containers are located on the City boulevard. Furthermore, the use of large containers by numerous owners does not provide any accountability as to how waste is disposed.

Therefore, as a first step to improving the automated “flower pot” waste collection system, it is recommended that the 300 gallon containers that are located on the City boulevard be removed and replaced with 95-gallon roll-out carts. The carts would be for waste disposed of by units contained in strip plazas. Each “unit” would represent the commercial unit or store on the first floor and any apartments directly above. Initially one waste cart would be provided per “unit”. Recycling carts would also be provided as an added service, if approved. The provision of recycling carts is part of a separate report regarding I.C.I. collection and user fees.

In order to continue to receive City waste collection service, the property owner of each unit would be responsible for cleaning their cart(s) regularly, rolling the carts back from the curb after collection to a storage location preferably out of public view, placing all waste materials inside the cart and not on the ground, and actively participating in the City’s recycling program by using City recycling carts, if approved. Property owners will be advised that failure to comply with these requirements may result in the City terminating waste and recycling collection.

#### Conclusions:

It has been determined by Councillors, members of staff and representatives of other cities in North America that large waste containers should not be stored where they are in full public view as they are not aesthetically pleasing and they encourage illegal dumping. Further, it has been determined that the use of small roll-out carts promotes more accountability for property owners in regard to how they dispose of their waste and improves the aesthetics of the area considerably.

Therefore, it is recommended that a pilot study be conducted in the Wilson Street and Dufferin Avenue area to test the effectiveness of removing the large 300-gallon automated “flower pot” waste containers from the City boulevard, and replacing them with 95-gallon roll-out carts. This project will involve an intensive communications plan that will include one-on-one dialogue between the property owners and City representatives. The property owners will be required to roll the carts to the curb for collection and then roll them back before 8:00 p.m. on the same day after collection. Further, depending upon the approval of the use of recycling containers by commercial properties in the North York community, the property owners will be provided with such containers and will be expected to place all recyclable materials into them properly and not dispose of these materials.

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The Works Committee reports, for the information of Council, having also had before it during consideration of the foregoing matter a communication (September 13, 2000) from Mr. Brian Cochrane, President, Toronto Civic Employees' Union, CUPE Local 416, expressing support for the idea of conducting a pilot project as recommended in the staff report, providing that the collection work is done by Local 416 members.