



## Memorandum

To: Committee of the Whole

From: Erin Mahoney, M.Eng.  
Commissioner of Environmental Services

Date: June 9, 2016

Re: **2014 Waste Diversion Ontario Diversion Rate Verification and Adjustment Update**

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York Region ranks first by WDO among large urban municipalities in Ontario

On April 21, 2016, Waste Diversion Ontario (WDO) verified the York Region 2014 WDO diversion rate at 61.3 per cent, a 4.7 per cent increase over 2013. York Region continues to rank first among large urban municipalities in Ontario. WDO defines large urban municipalities as those with populations greater than 250,000 residents and population densities greater than 400 residents per square kilometre. The large urban municipal diversion rankings are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Waste Diversion Ontario 2014 Large Urban Municipal Diversion Rankings**

Rank	Municipality	Diversion Rate
1	Regional Municipality of York	61.3%
2	Regional Municipality of Halton	56.0%
3	City of Toronto	51.9%
4	City of Hamilton	48.0%
5	Regional Municipality of Peel	45.1%
6	City of London	44.0%

Overall, York Region’s 2014 diversion rate of 61.3 per cent is the fourth highest diversion rate in Ontario, seen in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**Waste Diversion Ontario 2014 Overall Municipal Diversion Rankings**

Rank	Municipality	Diversion Rate
1	City of Guelph	66.5%
2	City of Kingston	63.0%
3	City of Orillia	62.0%
4	Regional Municipality of York	61.3%
5	Simcoe County	59.0%
6	Township of Alfred and Plantagenet	58.2%

WDO annual adjustments to non-Blue Box program material tonnes amended York Region Diversion Rate from 64 per cent (unverified) to 61.3 per cent

In May 2015, staff reported to Council the unverified 2014 WDO diversion rate at 64 per cent. The WDO takes up to 18 months to complete the verification process.

Each year, WDO employs third-party auditors to assess Blue Box tonnes and costs reported on the Datacall. However, the audit process does not include verification of garbage, organics and other non-recyclable material tonnes. To ensure waste diversion rates are calculated consistently, WDO applies adjustments to non-Blue Box program material tonnes. These adjustments apply to tonnes outside of a pre-determined statistical range, or where disposal tonnages are missing. In previous years, the WDO adjustments have never impacted York Region’s verified WDO Diversion Rate.

Successes gained by York Region diversion programs resulted in data out of range relative to similar municipal programs

Through the verification process, a pre-determined maximum of 123.5 kg/capita is applied to municipalities with a green bin program. York Region reported 128.5 kg/capita in 2014 and was adjusted down. In late December 2013, the ice storm resulted in over 11,000 tonnes of debris processed in 2014 as yard waste. Furthermore, all collected organics were processed through reliable processing capacity as opposed to previous years where a portion of green bin organics collected had to be disposed due to processing issues.

Prior to 2014, WDO applied a minimum amount of 100 kg/capita for garbage. However, in 2014, a minimum amount of 110 kg/capita was applied. As a result of successful diversion programs and waste reduction efforts delivered through the SM4RT Living Plan, York Region reported 96.4 kg/capita but this value was unilaterally adjusted by WDO up to 110 kg/capita.

York Region requested review of Datacall methodology

Since receiving notification of this adjustment Region staff has discussed the adjustments and Datacall methodology with WDO. Staff was informed that the Municipal Industry Policy Committee (MIPC), a WDO Board Subcommittee, which developed the methodology for the Datacall, will be reviewing the process. WDO would not disclose what municipalities were impacted by the methodology, however Toronto, Peel, Niagara and Halton have confirmed their 2014 WDO diversion rate was adjusted as well.

Staff will continue working with WDO and the MIPC municipal members to actively participate in the review of current methodologies used in the Datacall process and advocate for an equitable process. A meeting has been set for June 2, 2016 between York Region and senior staff at WDO to address York Region's concerns regarding these adjustments.

Staff consulted with Legal Services to determine what actions can be taken on this matter. Legal staff indicated participation in the Datacall process is voluntary and there is no formal agreement in place with WDO.

New metrics developed through SM4RT Living Plan better indicator of success towards waste reduction

Waste generation rates provide a better indication of resident actions that contribute toward reducing waste at the curb. Measuring waste generation considers reduction and reuse efforts in addition to diversion that ultimately reduces the amount of waste that enters the system and requires processing. Reduction and reuse minimize reliance on raw materials and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Staff will continue to report to Council on waste generation rates as a means to measure effectiveness and success of the SM4RT Living Plan.

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