



Corporate Report

NO: R032

COUNCIL DATE: February 20, 2006

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council

DATE: February 17, 2006

FROM: General Manager, Engineering

FILE: 5380-01

SUBJECT: Surrey Large Item Pick Up Program and New Website Reuse Program

RECOMMENDATION

That this report be received for information.

INTENT

To apprise Council of developments further to the November 28th Council where the Engineering Department was directed to “*work with the EAC by opening a dialogue to review problems and evaluate possible improvements to the curbside/large item pick up program.*”

BACKGROUND

Former Annual Reuse Weekend/Spring Clean up Week Program

From approximately the mid 1970's until 2004 the City of Surrey had hosted an annual “Spring Clean-up Week” event. With a surging population by the early 1990's, the City began to face operational difficulties with the annual program due to the vast majority of households placing their clean-up week materials out at curb side on the weekend prior to the event, rather than doing so the evening before their scheduled collection day as requested by the City. However, it was observed that, in many cases, clean-up materials placed at curb side during the weekend were being salvaged by passersby. Since this was conducive to reuse and recycling practices, engineering staff determined that rather than trying to avoid early starts through advertisements and enforcement the placement of salvageable materials at curb side would be encouraged. Commencing in 1994, the week-end preceding each annual clean-up week events was aptly named, the “Annual Re-use Weekend”.

With the closure of the Port Mann Landfill in 1997, Surrey's waste was diverted to GVRD facilities at the Burnaby Incinerator and Coquitlam Transfer Station. Commencing in 1998, the Re-use Weekend/Spring Clean up event was divided over a two-week period due to capacity issues at the noted facilities and to allow for more effective disposal of the large volumes of garbage typically generated over a one-week duration.

While the Annual event had its merits, with a rapidly growing City, the detriments of that program began to far outweigh its benefits. This was a result of a general lack of adherence to the clean-up week provisions in terms of:

- The non-conforming nature of materials and sheer volume of waste per household far exceeding reasonable levels;
- Uncontained and raw garbage creating scattered litter;
- Waste materials originating from outside sources being transported into Surrey neighbourhoods and indiscriminately dumped at curb side.

The above issues translated to an unsightly image of the City. In addition, there were health related concerns given the spread of the raw and uncontained garbage.

The numbers of non-compliant incidences increased dramatically with each passing year, regardless of extensive advertising in local media, the City website, and annual publications that were distributed to all participating households. In the last several years of the program the number of non-complying households was so large that it exceeded the City's ability to properly enforce the pertinent by-laws. During the final year of the program (2004) the waste volume increase exceeded 50% from the previous year. This increase was not representative of the growth of the City nor were they conducive to good reuse and recycling practices. The overall unsightliness and sanitation concerns generated considerable amount of public complaint and calls to discontinue the 'Spring Clean Up' program.

Large Item Pick Up Program

Based on the very negative experience of the 2004 Spring Clean Up, in late 2004 Surrey Council directed staff to review the program and look at alternatives. Various alternatives were presented and the "Large Item Pick-up" (LIPU) program was selected by Council and initiated in 2005. This program provides resident with the ability to dispose of large items at curb side throughout the year, rather than storing for one large event.

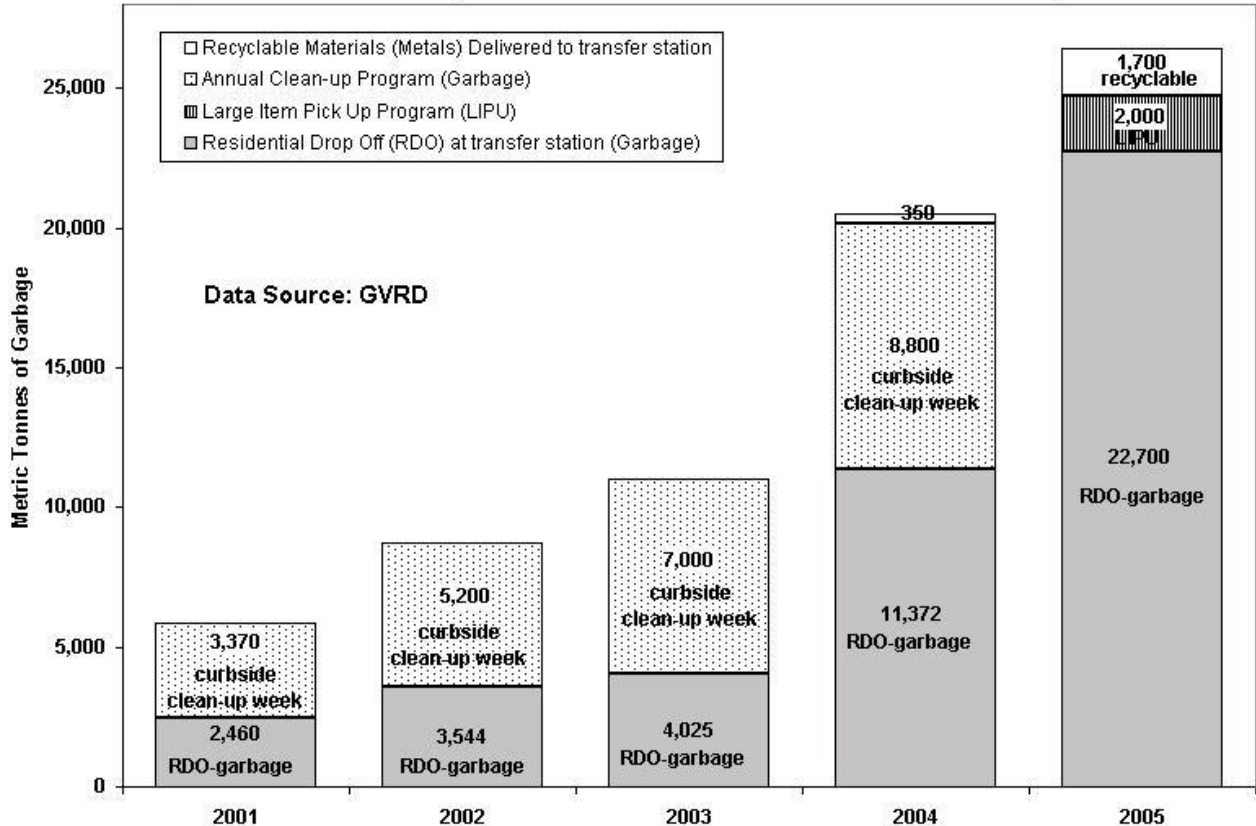
Service records indicate that a rate of approximately 1,200 Surrey households per month have been participating in the LIPU program since its initiation. The program has been operating without much incident. However, one of the main requests by residents in 2005 was that they be permitted to place several small items out for collection in lieu of one "large" item. This issue was discussed with Surrey's Environmental Advisory Committee (the EAC) in December 2005. We have since amended the program to officially allow for this provision provided that residents ensure that materials are securely bundled (or boxed) in one pile.

In 2005, the Surrey's EAC expressed a concern and perception that the replacement of the former Reuse Weekend/Spring Clean-up program will result in an increase to illegal dumping in the City. However, supporting data and actual operational efforts towards managing illegal dumping in 2005 reflected no appreciable increases to illegal dumping in 2005 compared to 2004.

In effect, it appears that the replacement of the former spring clean up program has resulted in a higher than proportionate increase in residential waste drop off activity at the Surrey Transfer Station facility (i.e. residents delivering their waste to the Surrey Transfer Station in their own vehicles) compared to waste volumes left at curbside during the former clean up events. For example, the GVRD reported that Surrey residential waste drop-off at the Surrey Transfer Station had increased from 11,400 metric tonnes in 2004 to approximately 22,700 metric tonnes in 2005 (representing a 100% increase). Conversely, curbside waste volumes dropped from 8,800 metric tonnes during the 2004 Spring Cleanup event compared to the 2,000 metric tonnes of materials left at curbside via the LIPU program.

The above discussion and figures below were presented to the EAC at their December 2005 meeting.

Surrey Waste Disposal Comparisons: 2001 to 2004 Spring Clean-up & Residential Drop Off Versus 2005 LIPU & Residential Drop Off



DISCUSSION

Since January 2005, the Engineering Department has received a relatively small number of criticisms and complaints from residents (less than 40) regarding the replacement of the former Reuse Weekend/Spring Clean up Program. A common issue expressed through these criticisms was the perceived loss of environmental and goodwill benefit derived from the former Reuse Weekend. This sentiment was echoed by the EAC in 2005.

Engineering staff has reviewed a number of approaches to potentially incorporate some of the “Reuse” elements of the former spring clean-up program. One of the greatest challenges faced by staff was the issue of how to effectively manage such a program in a City of our size and the previous very negative experience associated with the clean up event.

Given our past experiences, the re-introduction of a curbside Reuse program is not recommended for the following reasons:

- It is difficult to monitor and control issues of non-compliance due to the sheer number of households that may potentially participate (i.e. non-reusable items placed at curbside, excessive materials, blocked sidewalks, etc);
- A “sectored” approach (i.e. running the program during different months in different quadrants of the City) will result in non-reusable materials being dumped off at curbside from neighbouring areas, similar to problems that the City faced when it operated its former Reuse weekend/Spring Clean program;
- Many types of reusable items that may be placed out at curbside such as furniture, electronics, clothing, etc., may be ruined if it rains on the day of the scheduled event;
- Poor City image resulting from the vast quantities of materials placed out at curbside throughout Surrey during an annual event; and
- In some cases, materials collected at a Reuse event are stockpiled on other private properties, causing unsightly premises and by-law enforcement problems.

A single or multi disposal site option was considered, but not found supportable for the following reasons:

- Traffic management to/from the site(s);
- Difficulties and costs associated with siting a temporary or permanent site(s);
- Staffing such an operation which would be essential for material and volume control;
- Obtaining a site(s) large enough to host such an operation;
- Likely, the site(s) would not be covered, which would result in materials being damaged by the elements (similar to the hosting of a curbside event);
- A covered site(s) would be cost prohibitive; and
- Non salvaged items would need to be discarded to make way for incoming items (which defeats the purpose of “reuse”)

Ultimately, it was determined that some form of a person-to person exchange would be an ideal approach. In this regard, Engineering staff turned to the Recycling Council of British Columbia (RCBC) for assistance.

RCBC is Canada's oldest recycling council and has earned the reputation of being the most widely respected, multi-sectoral environmental organization working towards waste avoidance and sustainability. RCBC facilitates and administers multi-stakeholder processes as a means of providing information and feedback to government on policy issues. As well, RCBC offers information and research services to public and private sector clients. Their membership includes governments, businesses and non-profit organizations.

In recent years, RCBC has initiated the "Reuses Network" which allows residents of participating communities to place free listings of unwanted but reusable items online. These listings appear on the web site and can be browsed or searched by anyone. Contact information is available on request, allowing interested parties to arrange for the exchange of the reusable items.

In late 2005, Engineering staff negotiated an arrangement with RCBC where RCBC will host and manage a reuse website on behalf of the City. The website has been aptly named "SurreyReuses.com" and became functional as of February 6th, 2006.

The website will allow Surrey residents and businesses to post items to give away or trade through person-to-person exchange. It will also include a roster of non-profit organizations such as the Salvation Army, Diabetes Association, etc., that residents can alternatively contact to arrange for the drop off or collection of household goods and clothing.

The website will also provide its administrators a means to track the estimated tonnage of reused materials diverted from the landfill.

A snapshot of the SurreyReuses.com website and details of how it functions is included in **Appendix A** of this report.

Environmental Advisory Committee Support

At the February 15, 2006 EAC, the following motion was passed:

That the Environmental Advisory Committee supports the Surrey Large Item Pick Up Program and New Website Reuse Program and would recommend that Council provide funding for advertising and promotion due to its cost effectiveness and environmentally sound practice.

A suggestion was also made by the EAC to advertise the SurreyReuses.com website through CityPage and community cable television.

Sufficient funding for promotion of waste reduction initiatives is available in the 2006 Solid Waste Budget. Staff has already initiated an aggressive newspaper advertising campaign with respect to the new surreyreuses.com website (a copy of the relevant ads are attached in **Appendix B**) and will be expanding advertising efforts for all of its waste reduction initiatives via additional forms of local media.

CONCLUSION

The City's former Annual Reuse Weekend/Spring Clean-up Week event was replaced in 2005 further to public demand and Council directive. The "Large item Pick Up" Program was initiated in 2005 as its replacement. The program has operated successfully and without any significant operational issues. Slight modifications were introduced to the program in 2006.

Further to a request by the City's Environmental Advisory Committee that some of the elements of the former Reuse Weekend be reintroduced to the City, the Engineering Department has reviewed a number of options. Based on the negative previous experience of the former curbside reuse/cleanup program, it was determined that an ideal approach to reuse would be via a person-to-person exchange. Accordingly, Engineering staff negotiated an arrangement with the Recycling Council of British Columbia (RCBC) where RCBC will host and manage a reuse website on behalf of the City. The website has been named "SurreyReuses.com" and became functional as of February 6th, 2006. The website allows Surrey residents and businesses to post items to give away or trade through person-to-person contact. Engineering staff has initiated an aggressive advertising campaign of the new website and will continue to explore innovative approaches to waste reduction initiatives via the City's waste management programs.

The EAC has expressed their support of the City's Large Item Pick up program and the new website reuse program.

Paul Ham, P.Eng.
General Manager, Engineering

PH/RAC/brb/amr
Attachment

SurreyReuses.com Web Snapshot

Surrey Reuses - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address: http://www.surreyreuses.com/

reuses.com
sell it, reuse it, give it away

RCBC The Recycling Council of British Columbia presents reuses

RCBC Recycling Hotline
604 R-E-C-Y-C-L-E (732-9253)

an i-WasteNot system

Post listing My listings Create Account Feedback Help Tell a Friend

February 16, 2006

Sign In Exchange News Exchange Info

Email: RACostanzo
Password: [password]
Submit

Remember Me
Don't have a Password?

Search
Find It
Available: My Exchange
Search Tips

Free Items

Furniture
Home Improvement
Furniture

[Kitchen chairs](#)
[Patio Door Blind](#)
[White 6 drawer dresser...](#)
[Sofa & Loveseat](#)

[More Info](#)
[More Info](#)
[More Info](#)

Site Sponsors

RCBC
Our Exchange has:
229 New Listings
386 Total Listings
425 Members
100 Exchanges

APPENDIX A (continued)

Excerpt from the Surrey.com Website

The Rules

Items are allowed to be priced up to \$99 to encourage reuse of materials which would otherwise be disposed of.

No illegal materials.

No hazardous materials.

Also prohibited are listings for live animals, products whose use is illegal in British Columbia, sexually explicit materials or materials that contain hate/threatening language, or products that are toxic or hazardous, such as chemicals or weapons.

Buyer beware. We provide listing services only. Site sponsors take no responsibility for transactions or quality of goods received.

Goods should be inspected fully before acceptance. Sellers should accept cash, or get adequate assurances that payment terms will be completed as agreed.

Information provided through the exchange is supplied by the listing party. Neither the surreyreuses.com exchange, their contractors, nor any advisor, agent, or employee thereof is liable for any information, error, or representation, or makes any warranty, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy of the information regarding materials, services or products/equipment offered through the surreyreuses.com exchange.

We are not responsible for the determination of what may constitute a hazardous substance or create a hazardous situation. We reserve the right to not list a material, or to edit information provided by the listing party.

The surreyreuses.com exchange exists as an informational forum to foster the lawful exchange, reuse and recycling of otherwise waste materials. It is the responsibility of users to be familiar with any legal limitations that may exist on the exchange of any items.

The site may be used by businesses that have used surplus materials or sell used surplus materials and supports non-profit activities.

How do I create a listing?

1. Register as a member using the Create Account icon at the top of the page. We will send you a password by email.
2. Sign in as a registered user.
3. Click the Post Listing icon at the top of the page.

Tip: Clicking the Help icon will give you a how-to guide.

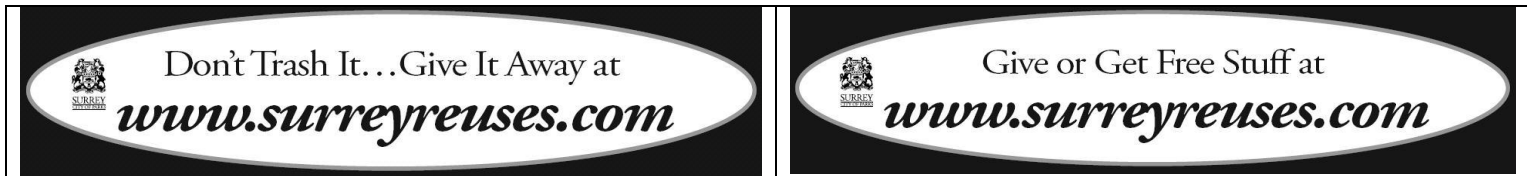
Tip: Clicking the Feedback icon allows you to email the administrator

APPENDIX B

NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENTS FOR THE NEW SURREYREUSES.COM WEBSITE

Advertising for the new Surreyreuses.com website has been initiated through the Surrey Leader, Peace Arch News and the Leader Daily newspapers. The ads will be running continuously over the next few months. Subsequently, advertising frequency will be tapered to once per week.

The following is an example of the “banner ” and ¼ page ads that have been published to-date.



 **CITY OF SURREY**
SURREY REUSES
(AGAIN)!

The City of Surrey and the Recycling Council of British Columbia (RCBC) have teamed up to bring you the official **SurreyReuses.com** website trading post.

If you have any household goods that you'd like to give away or sell for a nominal fee, but don't want to haul it away yourself or organize a garage sale, then the **SurreyReuses.com** local website trading post is what you've been waiting for.

Participation is free and available to all residents within the southwest area of B.C. Local businesses are also welcomed to participate! Certain conditions and restrictions apply. Please visit **www.surreyreuses.com** for details.

Help reduce landfill waste. Reuse and recycle... visit **SurreyReuses.com** - it's a great way to give away your old stuff, or find what you need for free (or at really low cost)!

www.surreyreuses.com

Be a part of our growing community, we invite your input.