This page was exported from - Shelburne Free Press
Export date: Sat Oct 31 13:27:31 2026 / +0000 GMT

Study shows much room for waste diversion in Dufferin County

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

There are ever-evolving factors to be considered in waste management.

Dufferin County's long-term waste management strategy, developed in 2018, is a roadmap for waste reduction, diversion, and long-term disposal planning. Updating that will reflect changes in legislation and system performance and will include community input.

Lori Andrews, an associate at Dillon Consulting Ltd., provided county council with details on work to update the long-term waste management strategy during its March 12 meeting.

As part of continuing effective waste management programming, an updated strategy means assessing expansion of the organics program; exploring textile collection options; advancing waste reduction and reuse initiatives; exploring enhanced contamination-monitoring technologies; and assessing long-term disposal service options to mitigate cross-border dependency.

Andrews said Ontario's garbage is currently trucked to Michigan. But that has become complicated with the recent trade difficulties with the United States.

At home, Ontario's landfill capacity is expected to be exhausted in about 10 years, she said.

A transition to producer responsibility under the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act has shifted responsibility for residential Blue Box recycling and eliminated the county's access to recycling tonnage data.

That means a comprehensive diversion rate is no longer a feasible primary performance metric. So county staff will consider household waste disposed of, supported by waste audits, participation studies, and program monitoring tools.

Waste audits indicate that while the Green Bin program performs well, a sizable portion of materials currently disposed of as garbage remain recoverable, including organics, recyclables, and textiles.

?There's still a lot of potential for diversion,? Andrews said, and added that about 46 per cent of disposed trash in garbage bags is materials that can be diverted through reuse or recycling.

Primary barriers to diversion include sanitation concerns, infrastructure anxiety, and Blue Cart size and acceptability.

Andrews said other worrisome factors in attempts to promote diversion are illegal dumping of materials in ditches and backroad forest tracts, and what's called seasonal mismatch. That is mismatched yard waste.

Potential waste management avenues for growth include accepting more organic waste in the Green Bins, enhancing the textile collection program, and adopting curbside giveaway days of larger reusable items.

Councillor Gail Little, Amaranth's deputy mayor, asked about agricultural waste such as net wraps and plastic used in large volumes.

Melissa Kovacs-Reid, the county's waste services manager, said there is an option for collecting that material, but it comes with an associated cost.

?It's one of those areas where there hasn't been a lot of movement, unfortunately,? Kovacs-Reid said.

Little suggested using bins in strategic locations across the county for such agricultural materials.

Coun. Darren White, Melancthon's mayor, said the county's long-term waste management strategy has two major problems that will likely persist.

He said there aren't enough Household Hazardous Waste Days and too few collection sites.

?Nobody wants to go and wait four hours to drop off three cans of paint,? White said. ?We continue to make them do it and then we wonder why things are showing up in ditches.?

The second problem in his estimation is public access to drop-off places for household construction waste from renovations. White also noted that the price for somebody to bring refuse to the Orangeville transfer station is four times more than the cost of bringing refuse to other transfer stations.

?It's a captive audience, it's a captive market, it's a monopoly, it's ridiculous,? he said. ?I don't know how they (GFL) manage to get away with it other than you don't have a choice.?