



MUNICIPALITY OF **West Elgin**

Staff Report

Report To: Council Meeting

From: Lee Gosnell, Manager of Operations & Community Services

Date: 2022-06-23

Subject: Large Item Collection

Recommendation:

That West Elgin Council hereby receives the report from Lee Gosnell, Manager of Operations & Community Services; And

That West Elgin Council supports staff's decision to eliminate large item collection beginning in 2023 and replace it with a 'Free' large item week at the municipal landfill.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to brief West Elgin Council on the 2022 large item collection program and provide an environmentally friendly/cost effective alternative for future years.

Background:

The municipality of West Elgin has offered a large item collection day in conjunction with its curbside pickup program in past years. This day was typically set in May and consisted of the municipality's waste contractor(s) collecting 'large items' at the curb. The list of acceptable items was well defined, and consisted of bulky furniture, mattresses, and metal appliances. These would be things that could not be set out on a normal collection day.

Residents of Rodney and West Lorne received this service for many years as part of town collection, and rural areas began receiving the service in 2021 with the move to municipal wide collection. In past years, the waste contractor could complete this program within 1-2 days, utilizing one crew of 3-4 operators.

The 2020 large item collection was anything but normal. With Covid restrictions in place, and residents being stuck at home, many people used the program to purge 'all things waste'. The majority of garbage placed curbside did not constitute as large item, with much of it being left loose or piled on top of the items that qualified for pickup. The contractor did remove all items, even though it went against the true intention of the program. Collection times in Rodney and West Lorne double from the previous year.

After the issues faced in 2020, staff worked to educate residents on the large item program, and what types of items were deemed acceptable. Waste Collections had not charged extra for the additional work in 2020, and everyone hoped it would be an anomaly. However, due to the ongoing Covid pandemic, and this being the first year of municipal wide large item pickup, staff planned on utilizing a small crew from public works in the rural area to help assist the waste contractor. It was very evident after the first day that more resources would be needed to deal with the large volume

of material which had again been placed curbside. It required five days of collection (Mon-Fri), two crews from Waste Connections and two crews from public works to eventually collect all the items.

Fast forward to 2022 large item collection. Elimination of Covid restrictions and targeted advertising regarding program details did help reduce the quantity of material slightly, however it still took crews from Waste Connections and West Elgin public works five days to complete the collection. Like the previous two years, much of the garbage placed curbside would not be eligible for collection under the program. Crews collected a wide variety of loose material, including brush/yard waste, metal, tires, and many other things that could easily be recycled.

This leads to the concerns regarding continuation of this program. When these items are piled together and collected curbside, there is no way of sorting them once they reach the landfill. Collection crews must utilize the West Elgin landfill for dumping purposes, therefore large volumes of waste are being needlessly landfilled, and reducing valuable landfill capacity. It is estimated the municipal landfill received 30 – 35 full truckloads of garbage from this year's large item collection. On a volume basis, this equates to one-quarter to one-third of the total yearly household garbage collected in the municipality. In addition, increased labour and equipment costs, coupled with allocation of staff time to collect and manage the incoming trash, have put a strain on operations and budgets.

For these reasons, staff are recommending elimination of the large item collection program in favour of a 'Free' large item week to be held annually at the municipal landfill. During the advertised week (ideally held during the same time in May), residents could dispose of large items at no charge. This change would create two important benefits –

1. By requiring items be delivered to the landfill, a detailed sorting/inspection program on site would ensure ALL recyclable material is handled properly and does not end up in the landfill. This option is environmentally friendly, increases landfill life expectancy and provides revenue for the municipality from added material delivered to the processors.
2. This program would greatly reduce staff time required for curbside collection, thus reducing waste handling expenses and allowing staff to focus their attention on other springtime operations

Financial Implications:

Rising fuel costs are putting a strain on many operations, especially areas like waste collection, where trucks are required to move material. While elimination of the program does require residents to deliver material rather than receiving curbside pickup, the benefits of free disposal, proper sorting, extended landfill life, reduced costs and enhanced revenue will benefit all residents of West Elgin in future years.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Large Item Collection - 2022-56-Operations Community Services.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Jun 21, 2022

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Jana Nethercott