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The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Works Committee
From: Commissioner of Works
Report: #2021-WR-1
Date: January 6, 2021

Subject:

Long-Term Waste Management Plan 2020 Consultation, Vision and Objectives

Recommendation:

That the Works Committee recommends to Regional Council that Council endorse the guiding principles, recommended vision and objectives to be used as the framework to develop a draft Long-term Waste Management Plan 2021 to 2040.

Report:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report provides an update to Regional Council on the consultation and feedback received to date on the development of a new Long-term Waste Management Plan (Waste Plan) for the Regional Municipality of Durham (Region).
- 1.2 This report presents the proposed vision and objectives for Regional Council endorsement to be used as the framework for development of the Waste Plan.

2. Background

- 2.1 At its meeting of January 30, 2019, Regional Council directed staff to begin developing an updated Long-term Waste Management Plan 2021 to 2040 as part of the 2019 Solid Waste Management Servicing and Financing Study.
- 2.2 In 2019, staff developed a scope of work and obtained consulting services to lead consultation and drafting efforts for the Waste Plan.

- 2.3 Waste Plan development kicked-off in early 2020 with a consultation plan that included several in-person events with Regional and Local area municipality staff, Regional advisory groups and the public. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all consultation efforts were moved to on-line engagement and virtual events.

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

- 3.1 Report #2019-COW-3 “2019 - Solid Waste Management Servicing and Financing Study” directed staff to obtain consulting services and commence development of a Long-term Waste Management Plan 2021 to 2040 with a draft vision to continue and enhance the reduce, reuse and recycle principles and to incorporate using waste as a resource as a foundation of the plan.
- 3.2 Report #2020-COW-3 “Solid Waste Management: 2020 Strategic Issues and Financial Forecast” described the guiding principles for the Waste Plan and identified in general terms the consultation planned for 2020.
- 3.3 Report #2020-INFO-26 “Long-term Waste Management Plan 2021-2040 Development Schedule” provided Regional Council with an anticipated development schedule and milestones for the Waste Plan consultation and drafting.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 Staff launched consultation on the Waste Plan in April 2020 with a workshop for Regional staff. Regional employees from various departments participated in a virtual meeting to discuss current and future waste management challenges and potential solutions to challenges in the areas of policy, promotion and education, infrastructure and programs.
- 4.2 Following the Regional staff workshop, a similar workshop was held in May 2020 with staff representatives from local area municipalities. This workshop was informed by a survey, completed by attendees in advance of the workshop, regarding current and future challenges, waste management goals and objectives. There was general support by participants of the guiding principles, draft vision and objectives.

- 4.3 Waste staff also sought input from several Regional Advisory Committees through June to November 2020. Durham Environmental Advisory Committee, Durham Agricultural Advisory Committee, Durham Region Roundtable on Climate Change and Energy-from-Waste Waste Management Advisory Committee were provided a presentation on the draft vision and objectives for the Waste Plan, time for questions and answers and a request to complete a survey to identify their top waste management concerns and priorities. The survey also included opportunity for additional comment. The Energy-from-Waste Waste Management Advisory Committee also held a special meeting in November to develop committee comments.
- 4.4 A webpage for the Waste Plan was launched in late 2019 that provides project updates as available. The webpage provides a timeline for the Waste Plan development, project updates and links to background documents. There is also a Frequently Asked Question section and a dedicated email for residents to contact the Waste Plan development team with questions or suggestions.
- 4.5 An online, public virtual open house and survey was launched on August 19, 2020. The virtual open house provided information on the draft vision and objectives followed by a link to an online survey for participants to offer input on the guiding principles, draft vision and objectives. The survey also sought information regarding resident's waste management habits and areas where additional support to better manage waste is needed.
- 4.6 Between August 19 and November 8, 2020, there were 2,094 residents that completed the online survey. Most residents expressed agreement with the guiding principles and draft vision and objectives. Most of the comments received were suggestions for improvement of the existing waste collection system and questions about the Region's waste management system.
- 4.7 A virtual town hall was held on November 5, 2020 to provide an opportunity for the public to ask questions to staff in a live forum regarding the Waste Plan. The virtual town hall included a presentation on the draft vision and objectives and the feedback received to date. Following the presentation, participants were invited to submit questions via the chat feature in Microsoft Teams. In total, 305 residents participated in the virtual town hall. A recording of the event is available on the [Waste Plan](#) website.
- 4.8 A summary of consultation is provided in Attachment #1.

5. Waste Plan Guiding Principles, Vision and Objectives

- 5.1 The guiding principles, draft vision and objectives for the Waste Plan have been refined to reflect the input received during consultation. With Regional Council endorsement of the vision and objectives, staff will commence drafting the Waste Plan.
- 5.2 The Waste Plan will include background information regarding the Region's integrated waste management system, anticipated regulatory changes, and current and future waste management challenges.
- 5.3 The Waste Plan vision and objectives will be supported with specific targets for implementation and an Action Plan to focus efforts for the first five years and each five-year increment after that. The Action Plans will be assessed and refined every five years to guide the completion of the Waste Plan.

Guiding Principles

- 5.4 Regional Council approved guiding principles for the Waste Plan development as part of the 2020 Strategic Issues and Financial Forecast for the Waste Management Services Division:
 - a. Working with rapid and diverse population growth to ensure community vitality and innovate how the Region delivers cost effective waste management services to its communities;
 - b. Working in collaboration with producers and importers of designated products and packaging under "Extended Producer Responsibility" regulations and strategies to transition the full costs of managing these materials from municipalities to producers and importers;
 - c. Applying innovative approaches to repurposing the Region's waste streams and managing them as resources in a circular economy and developing local opportunities that contribute toward ensuring the Region's economic prosperity; and
 - d. Demonstrating leadership in sustainability to address the climate crisis by adopting new or adjust existing waste management programs and technologies and green energy solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

- 5.5 During consultation, over 70 per cent of stakeholders supported the guiding principles and provided no additional comment. Comments from some stakeholders suggested that explicit reference to reduce and reuse be included as a guiding principle.
- 5.6 As a result, Regional staff propose an additional guiding principle to highlight the importance of reduce and reuse for effective waste management and to simplify the wording of the remaining guiding principles. The updated wording for the guiding principles is proposed below:
- a. Emphasize reduce and reuse principles as the first step in reducing waste generation;
 - b. Deliver cost effective waste management services to a rapidly growing and diverse population;
 - c. Work with producers of designated products and packaging to implement “Extended Producer Responsibility” and adjust Region waste programs as required;
 - d. Apply innovative approaches to Region waste streams to manage waste as a resource in a circular economy; and.
 - e. Demonstrate leadership in sustainability to address the climate crisis by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from waste management activities.

Vision

- 5.7 Based on feedback received during the 2020 consultation, the following Waste Plan vision is recommended:
- a. Together, with our residents, we will reduce the amount of waste we create and manage the generated waste as a resource. We will build an innovative system, balancing financial needs and environmental sustainability.
- 5.8 During consultation, 94 per cent of stakeholders expressed support for the vision statement with multiple stakeholders suggesting the wording should be simplified.

Objectives

- 5.9 Based on the feedback received during the 2020 consultation, the following Waste Plan objectives are recommended:
- a. Engage with residents to build an understanding and awareness of the 5Rs (Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover) and the Region's waste management programs and services;

- b. Reduce the quantity of waste we create;
 - c. Increase diversion of waste from disposal and support the Circular Economy;
 - d. Support the Region's greenhouse gas reduction and climate change mitigation efforts; and
 - e. Protect or improve water, land, and air quality in Durham Region.
- 5.10 A new objective has been added to increase understanding of the 5Rs: Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover, and to improve residents' awareness of Region waste management services that support each of these areas. Rethink will be formally added to the Region's waste hierarchy to emphasize the importance of resident decisions prior to waste reduction.
- 5.11 Approximately 90 per cent of residents supported the objective of reducing the quantity of waste to be managed. The wording of this objective generated the most questions for clarification of what is meant by reducing waste quantities. The wording has been modified to indicate the objective is intended to reduce the quantity of waste created. This objective has also been reordered as the second objective to reflect the importance of reduce in the waste hierarchy.
- 5.12 As a result of the online survey, we learned that 97 per cent of residents support the objective focused on waste diversion and the Circular Economy.
- 5.13 Approximately 95 per cent of residents support the objective to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas generated and improve climate change mitigation efforts.
- 5.14 The objective addressing protection of air, land and water quality received 98 per cent support from residents.

Waste Plan Development Framework

- 5.15 Some initiatives are already underway or being planned that support the identified objectives. Attachment #2 illustrates the Waste Plan Framework and how current Region projects and legislative initiatives fit into the Waste Plan.
- 5.16 Projects such as the Mixed Waste Pre-sort and Anaerobic Digestion facility support the diversion of waste from disposal objective and the climate change mitigation initiatives. Specific targets will be developed to further support the implementation of the AD facility. Specific targets could increase organics diversion with supporting actions such as re-launching an enhanced Green Bin program for curbside collection and education on organics reduction and diversion.

- 5.17 Other initiatives include the transition of the Blue Box to Extended Producer Responsibility in 2023 or 2024. The transition will support the Region's objective of increased diversion and enhancing the Circular Economy. Actions will be developed to support the smooth transition of this program.
- 5.18 Other initiatives that will be considered as targets or actions in the Waste Plan to support the identified objectives include reducing single use plastics, enhanced resident education and improving the accessibility of Waste Management Facilities and diversion programs.

6. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 6.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:
- a. Goal 1.2 Increase waste diversion and resource recovery
 - b. Goal 5.1 Optimize resources and partnerships to deliver exceptional quality services and value
 - c. Goal 5.4 Drive organizational success through innovation, a skilled workforce, and modernized services

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Extensive public consultation has taken place during the early stages of the Waste Plan development with over 2,200 contacts made.
- 7.2 The proposed vision and objectives reflect the public input and will be expanded with targets and an Action Plan to support the implementation of the vision.
- 7.3 For additional information, contact: Gioseph Anello, Director Waste Management Services, at 905-668-7711, extension 3445.

8. Attachments

Attachment #1: Summary of Consultation

Attachment #2: Long-term Waste Management Plan Development Framework

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by:

Susan Siopis, P.Eng.
Commissioner of Works

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original signed by:

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer

LTWMP Consultation Summary

Durham Region (Region) developed its initial Long-Term Waste Management Strategy (LTWMS) in 1999 to cover the twenty years to 2020. The Region is now undertaking the development of a Long-Term Waste Management Plan (Waste Plan) for the next twenty years (2021 to 2040). Development of the Waste Plan includes a significant consultation component to ensure feedback from various stakeholders including the public is considered. Starting in the late spring through fall 2020, four groups of consultation were held which included Regional staff, Local Area Municipalities (LAMs), Regional Advisory Committees and the public to get feedback on current and future waste management challenges as well as the proposed vision and objectives of the Waste Plan.

Stakeholders Consulted

There were twenty-one (21) Regional staff members, twenty (20) Local Area Municipality (LAM) representatives, four (4) Regional Advisory Committees and 2,094 public respondents consulted throughout 2020, shown in the table below.

Stakeholder	Date of meeting
Regional Staff	April 16, 2020
Local Area Municipalities	May 28, 2020
Regional Advisory Committees	-
Durham Agriculture (DAAC)	June 9, 2020
Durham Environmental (DEAC)	June 18, 2020
Durham Region Roundtable on Climate Change (DRRCC)	June 19, 2020
Energy from Waste - Waste Management Advisory Committee (EFW-WMAC) – two meetings	July 15, 2020 November 18, 2020
Public (Virtual open house, online survey and one virtual town hall event)	August 19 to November 8, 2020

Consultation Format

The consultation formats with Regional Staff, LAMs and Regional Advisory Committees were similar including surveys, discussions, activities and question/answer sessions. All consultation was originally planned to be in-person, live events. However, due to COVID-19, the consultations were converted to on-line formats to maintain physical distancing. The following are more details of each consultation event.

Regional Staff Workshop

The staff workshop was hosted by HDR via Webex with twenty-one (21) Regional staff participating. Staff from different departments within the Regional Municipality of Durham attended including from solid waste, planning, communications, facilities, contract management, and operations/public works.

In advance of the staff workshop, HDR developed a workbook with a series of exercises on current and future challenges. Responses from 17 staff were received. These responses were discussed at the workshop. Attendees were also asked to provide input on the proposed vision statement and objectives for the Waste Plan. After the presentation, attendees were asked to complete a survey to propose key messages for the Waste Plan.

Local Area Municipalities

The LAM workshop was hosted by HDR via Webex with twenty (20) local area municipality staff participating. Staff from seven of the eight local area municipalities within the Regional Municipality of Durham attended.

Participants were asked to complete a short survey in advance of the workshop to aid discussion on the waste management needs of the LAMs, current and future challenges, alignment with the Region's proposed objectives and vision, and preferred method of future communications.

Regional Advisory Committees

Regional Advisory Committees were given a presentation providing an overview of the results from the Staff Workshop and Local Area Municipality (LAM) Workshop hosted prior to the committee meetings. The committees were asked to provide input on the proposed vision, objectives and key considerations for the Waste Plan. A survey was provided to each committee member after the meeting.

- The Durham Agriculture Advisory Committee meeting was attended by twelve (12) members of the committee and five (5) staff members from the Region.
- The Durham Environmental Advisory Committee meeting was attended by ten (10) members of the committee and eight (8) staff members from the Region.
- The Durham Region Roundtable on Climate Change Committee meeting was attended by fourteen (14) members of the committee and nine (9) staff members from the Region.
- The Waste Management Advisory Committee meeting in July was attended by six (6) members of the committee, seven (7) Staff members from the Region and three (3) consultants from HDR.
- The Waste Management Advisory Committee meeting in November was attended by six (6) members of the committee and five (5) Staff members from the Region.

Public

A virtual open house and survey was launched in August 2020 to solicit feedback from the public. The virtual open house provided background information on the Waste Plan, proposed vision and objectives and examples of what the Waste Plan could include. Participants were invited to complete an online survey to offer input on the proposed guiding principles, vision and objectives. The survey also asked respondents about waste management habits and areas where additional support to better manage waste is needed. The survey was available until November 8 to allow residents time to provide input.

A virtual town hall was held on November 5, 2020 to provide an opportunity for the public to ask questions to Regional staff in a live forum regarding the Waste Plan. The virtual town hall included a brief presentation on the proposed guiding principles, vision, objectives and the feedback received to date. Following the presentation, participants were invited to submit questions via the chat feature in Microsoft Teams which were answered live by Waste Management staff. The virtual town hall resulted in 305 unique views with residents joining the meeting for various amounts of time throughout the session.

In addition, throughout the Plan development, the public was encouraged to reach out to Regional staff by email. In total, 38 emailed comments were received and recorded in the Record of Consultation.

What We Heard

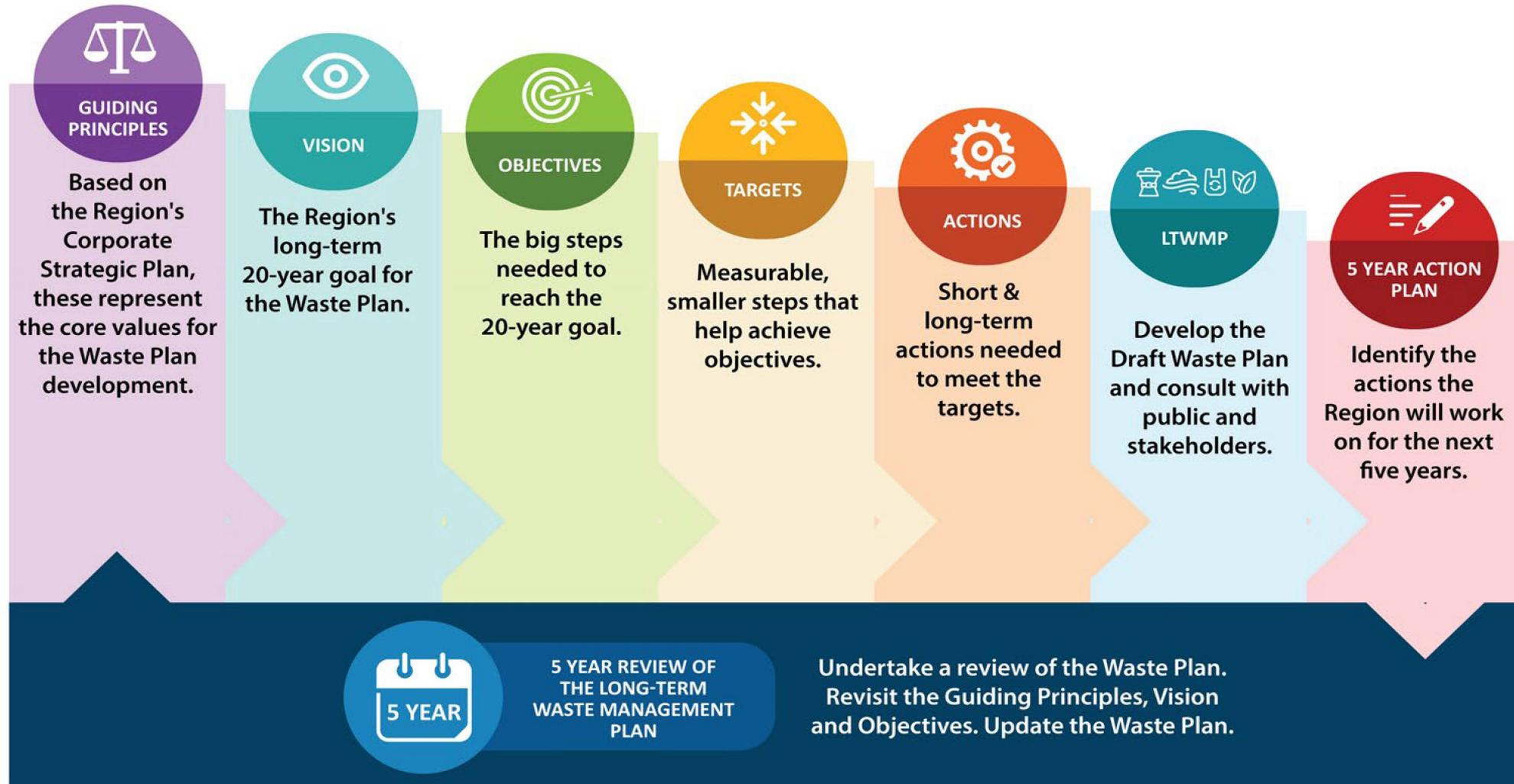
The feedback received from the various consultation events in 2020, including regarding the guiding principles, vision and objectives proposed by the Region, is summarized below.

- Regional Staff Feedback
 - Include policy changes that align with Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), improve collection and processing operations and reduce barriers to improve participation.
 - Improve diversion through program enhancements and development of new projects, include producers/importers in research and development of new technologies and best practices and improve participation/awareness of waste reduction and Circular Economy.
 - Enhance promotion and education (P&E) by improving communication/education, include other languages and target diversion problem locations.
- Local Area Municipalities
 - Focus on improving diversion from multi-residential buildings and in high population density areas.
 - Maximizing reduction, reuse and diversion, the inclusion of zero waste/ circular economy were the most important objectives, followed by considering the environmental/climate change impact.
 - Develop new/changes to policy/bylaws to tackle EPR and the 4Rs.
 - Improve P&E of waste management to the public.
 - Most agreed that the Region's proposed objectives and proposed vision aligned with theirs.
- Regional Advisory Committees
 - Increase P&E to encourage participation and improve multi-residential diversion initiatives.

- Reduction/ Reuse/ Zero Waste were the most important objectives and should also be included within the guiding principles.
- The EFW - Waste Management Advisory Committee suggested that reduce and reuse be added to the guiding principles.
- Most Regional Advisory Committee members did not have specific comments on the proposed guiding principles, vision, or the proposed objectives.
- Public
 - Increase amount of Promotion and Education, promote the 4Rs with an emphasis on reduction, implement aggressive waste diversion methods, changing frequency of curbside collection, switching curbside collection boxes to carts, and improve diversion overall (including from commercial and multi-residential buildings).
 - 70% of respondents replied that there were no barriers to using the Green Bin program and 85% of respondents felt that there were no barriers to the Blue Bin program.
 - The public were asked to comment on the four guiding principles. When asked if there were any other guiding principles that should be considered, 73% of survey respondents indicated “no”, provided favourable comments to the existing guiding principles or did not provide any comment.
 - A majority (~94%) of the respondents agreed that they support the proposed vision with additional comments relating to more waste reduction, encourage use of waste-as-a-resource, making industry/ businesses accountable for their waste and keeping costs affordable.
 - A majority (over 89%) of the respondents agreed that they support the proposed new Waste Plan objectives with additional comments to improve promotion and education, changes to curbside collection, cost reductions, imposing financial incentives, and encouraging reducing/ reuse/ circular economy practices.

Long-Term Waste Management Plan

Development and Update Framework



<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">GUIDING PRINCIPLES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Emphasize reduce and reuse principles as the first step in reducing waste generation. ● Deliver cost effective waste management services to a rapidly growing and diverse population. ● Work with producers and importers of designated products and packaging to implement “Extended Producer Responsibility” and adjust Region waste programs as required. ● Apply innovative approaches to Region waste streams to manage them as resources in a circular economy. ● Demonstrate leadership in sustainability to address the climate crisis by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from waste management activities. 	<p>PHASE 1:</p> <p>PENDING COUNCIL APPROVAL</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">VISION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Together, with our residents, we will reduce the amount of waste we create and manage the generated waste as a resource. We will build an innovative system, balancing financial needs and environmental sustainability. 	
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">OBJECTIVES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage with residents to build an understanding and awareness of the 5Rs (Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover) and the Region's waste management programs and services. ● Reduce the quantity of waste we create. ● Increase diversion of waste from disposal and support the Circular Economy. ● Support the Region’s greenhouse gas reduction and climate change mitigation efforts. ● Protect or improve water, land, and air quality in Durham Region. 	<p>PHASE 2:</p> <p>WASTE PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND CONSULTATION (TO BE COMPLETED)</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">POTENTIAL TARGETS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase organics diversion with Mixed Waste Pre-Sort & Anaerobic Digestion Facility ● Support Federal phase-out of select single-use plastics ● Support Provincial transition of Blue Box Program ● Improve access to Region Waste Management Facilities 	
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">POTENTIAL ACTIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Re-launch enhanced Green Bin Program ● Phase-out select single-use plastics at municipal facilities ● Targeted education campaign to support transition of the Blue Box Program ● Review hours of operation for Waste Management Facilities 	