

## Council accepts energy-from-waste business model

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By Erin Hatfield ehatfield@durhamregion.com

DURHAM -- The path to a home-grown garbage solution has reached another milestone.

"What council has done is they adopted the business model, which is municipal ownership with a private design, build and operation," said Cliff Curtis, Durham Region's commissioner of works.

Consultants at Deloitte and Touche LLP completed an analysis of the private-sector involvement and a preliminary assessment of Durham's waste management options. It was presented to a joint meeting of the Region's finance and administration and works committees on April 17 and approved by council on April 18.

In comparing a variety of options, consultants made recommendations about the financing, design, construction and operation of an energy-from-waste facility. They recommended the facility be municipally owned, with a long-term private operation contract. Consultants said there is more control from a policy perspective if the Region was to maintain ownership.

The energy-from-waste process has reached a stage where Durham and York need to address their respective roles, responsibilities and guiding principals. A memorandum of understanding, the terms of which are being negotiated, will be entered into with York Region.

"Tonnage is the only thing that needs to be negotiated that might be difficult," Mr. Curtis said. "But, that is crucial to sizing the facility."

The next step is for Durham to issue a request for qualification to weed out companies able to complete the job. After that comes selection of the preferred site, scheduled to happen in the fall, and the recommendation of a preferred bidder sometime next year. According to Mr. Curtis, at each of these junctures, York and Durham can choose to go their separate ways.

During the meeting, council endorsed a resolution by Clarington council calling on Durham and York regions to commit to designing a facility that will not impact the health of residents now or in the future.

"They are concerned about the health aspect and so they should be," Mr. Curtis said. "I have no doubt we can meet the provincial guidelines, actually I have no doubt that we can exceed them."

Clarington is being considered to play host to a proposed incinerator that would process a minimum of 250,000 tonnes and a maximum of 400,000 tonnes of trash from Durham and York regions annually. Five of the six short listed sites are in Clarington's boundaries.

The Region agreed to pay expenses incurred with respect to studies and legal advice required for Clarington to determine its position on the proposals. The funding will later be deducted from royalty fees.

In addition, an environmental consultant will be retained to satisfy the councils that the facility won't impact the health of residents and to confirm that, on the basis of current scientific evidence energy-from-waste, it is an environmentally responsible solution.

"What is being proposed here is a peer review of the work being done by our consultant. We would have been bringing a peer review but this just brings it on earlier," Mr. Curtis said.

A more detailed project analysis will be available on tonnage commitments, power purchase agreement, service delivery, location, sizing and utilization of the facility later on down the road.

"We won't be able to give a definitive answer on a lot of questions and concerns until we pick a technology," Mr. Curtis said. "But we will confirm those answers along the way."