

Whitby waste challenge not a fair fight, say come Clarington councillors

But, it could be beneficial nonetheless, say some

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By Jennifer Stone

CLARINGTON -- Whitby is so far ahead of Clarington in terms of waste diversion that accepting a challenge from the Town would be like "the Toronto Maple Leafs challenging one of our peewee teams at hockey," said Clarington Mayor Jim Abernethy.

But that doesn't mean Clarington shouldn't participate, council has decided.

Whitby Mayor Pat Perkins issued a friendly challenge to Clarington, in which the municipality achieving the highest waste diversion rate in 2008 would provide official congratulatory remarks during a 2009 televised council meeting.

But with Whitby achieving 61 per cent diversion in 2007 -- about 20 per cent better than Clarington -- it wouldn't be a fair fight, said Clarington Regional Councillor Charlie Trim, chairman of the Region's works committee.

He suggested Clarington "say thank you for the invitation, but this particular year, that we not be involved with the challenge," said Coun. Trim. It's simply not a "level playing field," he said.

"We could write a letter back saying maybe when we have a team to compete, we'll have a game," said Mayor Abernethy.

Another issue is the fact Clarington will be changing to weekly recycling and bi-weekly garbage pickup soon, Clarington Regional Councillor Mary Novak said.

"Maybe a year from now, when we have the new system on, it would be much easier," she said.