

City wants to divert 60 per cent of non-residential waste by 2015

Jake Rupert

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The city has set an aggressive waste-diversion target for the industrial, commercial and institutional sectors, and it plans to lead by example.

Next week, municipal garbage officials will table a report calling for 60 per cent of the waste created by the sector to be diverted from landfills by 2015 and outlining ways to achieve this.

It's an aggressive goal for several reasons, chief among them the fact the city has limited control over waste disposal in this sector. As it stands now, the city has a great deal of control over residential garbage, but only the province can enforce reduction, reuse and recycling programs aimed at businesses and institutions.

The city has to manage landfills and disposal, and this sector creates 70 per cent of Ottawa's waste.

Faced with diminishing capacity in existing landfills, the city decided to engage the province, waste management companies and businesses to try to find ways to reduce the amount of garbage going to landfills. Under the plan, called Diversion 2015, the city is aiming to introduce a number of programs designed to make it the lowest-waste municipality possible while leading discussions on how to implement such programs in the sector. At the same time, it will develop incentive programs for companies and institutions to lower the amount of waste produced and sent to landfills, including financial incentives. Once the programs are in place, the city plans to monitor waste-diversion rates and report on them regularly.

A report on the plan says recycling programs will initially be aimed at materials that have big volumes and established reuse markets, such as cardboard, paper, newsprint, plastic bottles, aluminum, organic materials, shingles, metals and wood.

The report predicts it will cost about \$1 million over the next four years to develop and implement the plan, but the target of 60 per cent will be met.

The plan is to be discussed at the environment committee next week, and at city council near the end of the month.