

# City of Mississauga Corporate Report



9.6

Date: May 18, 2021

To: Chair and Members of General Committee

From: Shari Lichterman, CPA, CMA, Commissioner of  
Community Services

Originator's files:

Meeting date:  
June 9, 2021

## Subject

**Dog Waste Demonstration Pilot - Results and Recommended Next Steps**

## Recommendation

That the corporate report dated May 18, 2021 entitled "Dog Waste Demonstration Pilot - Results and Recommended Next Steps" from the Commissioner of Community Services be approved.

## Executive Summary

- In 2017, staff from the Parks, Forestry and Environment Division explored innovative ways to address the disposal of dog waste while at the same time helping to improve waste diversion and reduce recycling contamination in City parks.
- Staff collaborated with Sutera Inc. (Sutera) to develop an innovative in-ground prototype container that would be used to collect dog waste where the waste would be diverted from landfill and be converted to renewable energy (see Appendix 1).
- In 2018, Council approved a sole source contract for Sutera to support the development of a three year dog waste demonstration pilot program.
- Beginning in late 2018 through to December 2019, thirteen dog waste containers were installed in specific City parks and in 2020 one, specially designed container, was installed at the Mississauga Animal Services facility.
- Along with the amount of dog waste collected during the pilot demonstration, three additional performance indicators were used to assess the pilot; increased diversion of uncontaminated recycling, resident feedback and container service levels.
- In February 2021, staff conducted benchmarking of other Ontario municipalities' dog waste collection programs. Information collected showed that Mississauga's pilot program resulted in the highest amount of weights diverted.

- Based on the success of the pilot project, staff are recommending the continuation of the existing in-ground dog waste container program and future expansion of the program to other select City parks in 2023, based on specific location criteria.

## Background

Improper disposal of dog waste is a widespread challenge and leads to contaminated recycling in City parks. It is a major impediment to increasing waste diversion from landfill as once dog waste is deposited into recycling containers; it contaminates the entire container, requiring its content to be treated as landfill.

To address this problem, in January 2018, Council approved a three year sole source contract with Sutera for \$90,000 for the install and servicing of underground dog waste containers for the dog waste demonstration pilot. Council approved Sutera as a sole source as there were limited commercially available dog waste containers that would meet the City's needs for a dog waste demonstration pilot.

The dog waste demonstration pilot was implemented at the same time as Park Operations began their phased replacement of dual stream waste and recycling containers. The new dual stream containers have pictograms that clearly show that dog waste is not recyclable and should be placed in the waste side of the container.

## Present Status

Staff identified the most appropriate parks to participate in the pilot. Consideration included year round paved vehicle access to service the containers and high usage sites by pet owners, such as Leash Free parks. The final locations of the 14 units are found in Appendix 2.

Staff have tracked the overall performance results of the pilot which are summarized in greater detail in Appendix 2. The amount of dog waste collected has increased year over year with 9.7 metric tonnes (MT) collected in 2019, 16 MT collected in 2020 and 8.7 MT collected as of May 2021 for a total of 34.4 MT. The combined MTs of dog waste collected and sent for diversion to a waste-to-energy facility produced approximately 18920 kWh of energy, which is enough to power 21 homes for a month.

In February 2021, staff conducted benchmarking of other Ontario municipality's dog waste collection programs. Information collected showed that Mississauga's in-ground pilot program resulted in the highest amount of MTs diverted. Appendix 2 shows that Mississauga outperformed other municipalities using either in-ground or above-ground containers.

There has also been a reduction in the amount of dog waste contaminating recycling collected in parks based on completed waste audits. The installation of the new park dual stream waste containers and the in-ground dog waste containers are helping to educate park visitors where to

appropriately place dog waste. Waste audits of recycling containers were completed in 2017 and 2020 at three participating parks; Jack Darling, Lake Aquitaine and Community Common. Overall, results saw a significant decrease in contaminated recycling, from 47.1 per cent in 2017 to 18.8 per cent in 2020. Appendix 2 provides a breakdown of the percentages of recycling that was uncontaminated with dog waste.

In December 2020, a survey was launched to gauge resident awareness, better understand park user behaviour in regards to dog waste disposal and help guide future planning. The survey gathered 1286 responses, significantly exceeding the goal of 200 responses. Of the 1286 responses, 608 respondents answered specifically around the use of the in-ground dog waste containers. Below are highlights of the survey responses:

- 87% of respondents bring a dog to City parks regularly and, of those, 55% were aware of the existing in-ground dog waste containers in select City parks and leash-free zones.
- Around 30% of respondents noted using one within the past week.
- The majority of respondents noted that the in-ground waste containers are convenient to use, clean and odour-free.
- The most frequently used in-ground dog waste containers were at Jack Darling Park, based on 52% of respondents.
- 84% of respondents indicated there were too few dog waste containers.

Appendix 3 lists all of the questions in the Dog Waste Public Engagement Survey.

In addition to the positive public feedback and benchmarking results, the dog waste demonstration pilot has also resulted in additional benefits:

- Improved staff safety by minimizing interaction with dog waste.
- In-ground containers store dog waste below-grade where it is cooler and out of direct sunlight, thereby reducing odour.
- Improved recycling rates based on the waste audit results. In 2017 81.2% of recycling was contaminated. In 2020 only 53% of recycling waste was contaminated.
- Increased container service levels, from a six week cycle to every four weeks, addressed initial 311 complaints about full or overflowing units.

## Comments

Based on the results of the performance indicators, benchmarking and other benefits, staff are recommending that the program continue for 2021 and 2022 with the existing containers and, continuation of performance monitoring. Beginning in 2023, expand the program to install additional dog waste containers in select parks across the city (installing approximately 10-15 units per year).

Criteria for expansion include:

- Parks that have higher pet usage rates
- Parks with year-round paved access to service the units.
- Remaining Leash-Free Areas (where access allows)

## Strategic Plan

The dog waste collection demonstration pilot aligns with the Green and Prosper Pillar in Mississauga's Strategic Plan, the Climate Change Action Plan and the Living Green Master Plan.

## Engagement and Consultation

To date, the dog waste demonstration pilot program has been co-managed by the Parks Operations and the Environment Section. Moving forward, the program will be managed by Park Operations.

The results of the survey suggests that respondents are in favour of continuing and expanding the dog waste program, with overwhelmingly 84% of respondents indicating there were too few dog waste containers.

City staff will continue to engage with residents as the dog waste program continues.

## Financial Impact

The total cost of the dog waste demonstration pilot from commencement of the project in 2018 to date for the capital investment and servicing of the dog waste units was \$97,000. Capital costs for installation were approximately \$44,000 and servicing of the units was approximately \$53,000. These costs were absorbed through existing operating and capital budgets.

### June 2021-December 2022 (service of existing units)

Costs to service existing units (14) from June 2021 to December 2022 is estimated at \$57,000, approximately \$3,000 per month. These costs will continue to be absorbed through existing operating budgets.

### 2023-2025 (expansion of the dog waste program)

Based on existing contract costs, operational costs in 2023 and beyond are estimated to be approximately \$36,000 per year for servicing of existing units. For each additional 10 units, the equipment costs will increase by approximately \$26,000 per year at current pricing. Future operating and capital costs of the program will be brought forward through the 2023 Business Plan & Budget.

## Conclusion

Staff are committed to exploring innovative solutions that can increase diversion rates and reduce recycling contamination. Based on the results of the three-year dog waste demonstration pilot staff recommend continuing and expanding the dog waste program.

## Attachments

Appendix 1: View of the dog waste system

Appendix 2: Dog Waste Demonstration Supplementary Tables

Appendix 3: Dog Waste Public Engagement Survey Questions



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Shari Lichterman, CPA, CMA, Commissioner of Community Services

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