

Clear garbage bags: the issues

By Reka Szekely

Privacy

- Some municipalities allow one opaque grocery bag within each clear bag.
- Exceptions would be made for residents with medical waste or diapers, who could use coloured bags after applying to the Region. A similar exemption program already exists for residents with excessive waste due to medical conditions or children in diapers.
- Baby diapers would go in the clear bags.

Enforcement

- The Region is working on a waste bylaw that would include definitions of acceptable material in the garbage and could be enforced by Regional bylaw officers.
- Haulers could quickly inspect bags to make sure they comply with the bylaw. Rejected bags would be left at the curb.
- Oshawa and Whitby collect their own garbage, so a Regional bylaw would not be enforceable. They would have to pass a local bylaw, after working with the Region, and it would be enforced by Whitby and Oshawa staff.

Illegal Dumping

- Most municipalities report no or minimal increases in illegal dumping after implementing clear bags.
- A waste bylaw would allow for strong enforcement.

Clear Bag Availability

- Staff recommend notifying stores a year in advance of implementing clear bags to allow them to ensure ample supplies of clear bags.

Education

- At least six months' notice to residents about the switch to clear bags.
- Education efforts would include collection calendars, newsletters, sorting guides, newspaper and radio ads and public consultation sessions.