

Nipissing Environmental Watch



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A Green Agenda for North Bay

2010

In 2005, Nipissing Environmental Watch (NEW) produced its first “Green Agenda for North Bay”. The document outlined suggestions of environmental action and policy that North Bay City Council could undertake. Green Agendas were presented to council in 2005, 2006 and 2008.

A number of Green Agenda items were implemented by City Council since our last presentation including:

- A year round hazardous waste facility
- The hiring of a by-law enforcement officer
- Gains in supporting healthy active transportation by extending trails and bike paths
- A timeline to introduce water meters as part of a water conservation plan
- The introduction of reusable grocery bags in all major retailers
- Instituted an anti-idling by-law near school properties
- Initiated a storm water management plan by developing an infrastructure needs study

Members of Nipissing Environmental Watch and the public are pleased with these accomplishments. We would like to continue to work with City Council to make North Bay greener. To this end, we have produced a new document for 2010. This document lists further areas of need and/or gaps in our existing municipal environmental programs and policy. The list is in no way comprehensive, however, we believe it provides a solid environmental platform for city council to undertake in the near future.

Waste

Our landfill is now in its 16th year of operation. The life of the landfill was estimated at 20 years at that time. However, current estimates suggest that we may not reach the landfill's capacity for another 23 years. Nonetheless, it is in the best interests of the municipality, both financially and environmentally, to extend the life of the landfill for as long as possible.



Of particular interest and concern, is the percentage of waste tonnage that has been reduced since the opening of the landfill. In 1994, the yearly tonnage to the landfill was 50, 000. Last year, the tonnage land filled was 45, 000. This accounts for a decrease of 10% over 16 years. We now divert 31% of municipal household waste through recycling programs. These numbers suggest that commercial waste has thus increased during that time. It is estimated that commercial waste accounts for 66% of all tonnage going to the landfill.

The following suggestions are made with these concerns in mind.

1. Encourage greater participation in the blue box program. Implement a targeted educational campaign for those people in the city who are not currently using their blue box. Many residents still dispose of their recyclables in the regular garbage stream.
2. Develop a plan to incrementally move towards a ban of recyclables in the landfill.
3. Increase the blue box program. There are still many more products that can be recycled. In particular we would like to see an increase in the number of plastics collected by the city. It is our hope that with the renovations to our existing recycling facility that council will encourage a widely expanded recycling program.
4. Introduce a user-pay system for our garbage collection. Reduce curbside pick-up of garbage to two bags per week. Additional bags would be purchased from the city.
5. Improve recycling in the ICI (Industrial, Commercial and Institutional sector) as they account for the greatest percentage of waste to our landfill. Schools hospitals, apartment buildings and restaurants need greater access to recycling services.
6. Encourage the use of biodegradable bags for kitchen waste to aid in methane production.
7. Provide blue box receptacles in public places – parks and main shopping areas such as Main Street.
8. Reinstate the litter committee.
9. Encourage home composting.
10. Create a depot to collect usable construction waste and encourage free-cycling of building materials in the same spirit as the free-cycling of paint at the hazardous waste facility.

Air and Energy

Air quality has been an increasing concern for the residents of North Bay as we have experienced considerably more smog alert days in recent years. As well, our concern has been heightened by the specter of global warming, the weather we are experiencing, and the ongoing discussions of the Copenhagen accord. The following issues are presented with these concerns in mind.

Tree Removal



1. Create an urban tree by-law. Develop a tree protection by-law to restrict indiscriminate tree removal. The intent of a city-wide tree by-law is to protect trees situated on private property from being damaged or removed unnecessarily and to ensure the ongoing health and well-being of the City's urban forest.
2. Enhance Public Transportation. Create more routes and provide more energy efficient vehicles on less used routes.
3. Promote active transportation through city planning. For example the expansion of bike routes should be a priority.
4. Provide more bike racks throughout the city.
5. Provide bike carriers for buses.
6. Provide space & services for community gardens.



Water

North Bay is surrounded by water. We rely on our lakes for our water supply and our fishery. It is imperative that we protect these resources. The following items would enhance the current state:

1. Develop a public education program on blue green algae. Homeowners need to be educated on the use of such products as fertilizer, detergents, and septic system maintenance.
2. Develop a public education program on the impact of urban run-off to our lake and streams. Education regarding the proper use of sump pumps, sump pump connections, and down spouts needs to be reviewed.
3. Participate in a project to build a demonstration rain garden in partnership with NEW, the Greater Nipissing Stewardship Council, and the Conservation Authority.
4. Develop a city sponsored rain barrel program.
5. Require businesses which handle toxic waste to disclose what they use, where they use it and how they dispose of it.



business parking lot with rain garden to absorb rainwater runoff