

Council extends waste contract with GFL

By Mark PavilonsEditor

GFL will continue to provide waste collection for King, through 2029. Council approved an extension to the contraction for an additional maximum period of one year and 9 months (January 1, 2028, to September 30, 2029) at a total maximum cost of \$179,639 above the base budget. The extension is intended to maintain uninterrupted waste collection service while the Northern Six (N6) municipalities complete a joint competitive procurement process for a new long-term contract. The proposed extension has a total maximum financial impact of \$179,639 above the base budget over the 1 year and 9-month extension period. This approach, staff noted, reduces the risk of service disruption and allows additional time to address market changes, including automated cart-based collection. The York Region N6 municipalities, comprising the Towns of Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, Newmarket, Whitchurch-Stouffville, and the Township of King, have partnered on a joint approach to solid waste collection since 2007. By procuring services collectively under a single contract, the N6 has achieved economies of scale through more competitive pricing and reduced duplication in procurement, contract administration, and service oversight. This coordinated approach has also enabled standardized service levels and consistent program delivery across the municipalities. The current 10-year solid waste collection services agreement with GFL is approaching the end of term and is set to expire on Dec. 31, 2027. Georgina has taken the lead in preparing the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the next joint waste collection contract for the N6. In 2024, the Town of Newmarket led the procurement of a waste consultant to support development of the next waste collection contract Request For Proposal (RFP). As part of this work, the consultant, in collaboration with N6 staff, conducted Public Information Centres (PICs) in each participating municipality to gather resident feedback on current service levels and gauge interest in automated cart-based collection. While feedback from these PIC sessions provided insight into resident preferences, broader market research indicates a clear industry shift toward automated collection, with many municipalities transitioning away from manual systems. This shift is primarily driven by labour shortages and health and safety considerations, including improved worker safety. The transition of municipal recycling programs to Full Producer Responsibility under Ontario's Blue Box Regulation has further altered the curbside collection landscape. In the N6 communities, this has introduced automated recycling collection. As a result, the N6 must consider how best to align garbage and organic collection services within an evolving system that may include a mix of collection methods. Staff pointed out that maintaining flexibility through the upcoming RFP process for the next waste collection contract will be critical to evaluating available service delivery options for the N6 and ensuring an efficient, cost-effective, and consistent approach. Given the range of potential service delivery methods currently used in the market, additional time is required to develop a comprehensive joint RFP for the N6 that accurately reflects current conditions, and positions the N6 to complete a cost-effective, evidence-based competitive procurement process that maximizes market participation and delivers best value for residents. Newmarket staff engaged in preliminary discussions with GFL regarding an extension of the agreement beyond the current expiry date of Dec. 2027. The pricing increases proposed by GFL for the two extension periods from Jan. 1, 2028, to Sept. 30, 2029, have been discussed with the consultant retained to assist with development of the new waste collection RFP and have been found to be commercially reasonable. This reflects GFL's requirement to commit to continued service delivery to the N6 during these additional extension periods while maintaining service levels under the agreement with aging equipment. The extension periods are optional for each municipality in the N6 to exercise and does not commit any of the municipalities to proceed if approval from their respective councils is not obtained. The agreement with GFL currently can be terminated by the municipalities for convenience with 180 days' written notice and will continue for the extension periods, providing ongoing flexibility throughout the extension period and the transition to a new contract. GFL does not have similar termination rights in the agreement, nor will it have that during the extension periods, ensuring service continuity regardless of the timing or outcome of Georgina's procurement process. GFL was originally retained through a competitive, qualification-based selection process for waste services provided under the current agreement. GFL's existing waste collection routes, schedule, staffing and equipment requirements are in place to allow it to continue providing the waste collection services for the N6 municipalities for the further extension periods.