**Waste Management Project Proposal**

* John Jackson

**The Objective:** To maximize waste reduction, reuse, recycling & composting in Waterloo Region, and to remove incineration as an option for garbage in Waterloo Region.

**The Situation:** The Region of Waterloo is revising its Waste Management Master Plan (WMMP) to extend through 2031. They adopted a revised WMMP in November 2013. The issues they have not determined yet in the WMMP and are working on over this year and beyond are: 1) “to further investigate thermal technologies” as an option to expanding or obtaining a new landfill, which they predict will run out of space sometime between 2028 and 2031; and 2) to explore handling biosolids from sewage treatment in the garbage disposal options.

**Why GREN:** 1) No other environmental or citizen group is working on the broad issue of waste management within the Region. Groups arise to work on localized specific parts of the waste issue, but to really change the system we need to look at the whole waste management system. 2) GREN has considerable expertise on waste management.

**Benefits:** GREN could make a difference in the long-term management of waste management protecting the environment and saving resources by helping move our society to a “circular economy.” Could raise GREN’s profile in the community because waste issues are issues that people feel very directly and personally. They see the impacts.

**Drawbacks:** It would be work within Waterloo Region so would not help us reach out to the whole watershed. See proposed action 5 below to help reduce this drawback.

**Actions:**

1. Make recommendations to Region to expand reduce, reuse, recycling and composting to decrease need for disposal from residences. Waste diversion in revised WMMP only gets to 60% by 2031 [it is already over 50% diversion]. We can do at least 85%. Get a focus on apartment buildings (even more important as development intensification occurs according to the Region’s Official Plan).
2. Make recommendations on what the Region can do to decrease institutional, commercial, and industrial (IC&I) disposal. Region takes no actions in its revised WMMP to increase waste diversion in the IC&I sections, even though they are planning to have half of their needed disposal space taken up by IC&I in 2031.
3. Show the problems with thermal treatment as a disposal option: 1) contamination, 2) expensive, 3) wasted valuable resources, contrary to circular economy where waste is a resource that is “reintegrated” back into the economy to make new products, 4) GHG substantially reduced by reusing and recycling materials instead of burning.
4. Hold community event(s) to show the public options to avoid need for thermal treatment and expanded landfill.
5. Share our findings with people throughout the Grand River Watershed.
6. Make comments with other groups across the province on Ontario’s “Strategy for a Waste Free Ontario: Building The Circular Economy” and the Waste-Free Ontario Act 2015 (Bill 151). The Province describes the “circular economy” as having no resource extraction and no disposal. Timing: By end of February and through spring.