

Staff Report to Council

Title: Blue Box Transition Program Update

Report Number: Environmental Services-2024-30

Director: Infrastructure & Development

Manager: Environmental Services

Meeting Date:
Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Date to be considered by Council:
Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Recommendation:

Option 1 – That Council discontinue the curbside collection of recyclable materials from ineligible sources through the municipal funding effective January 1, 2026; and

That staff be directed to communicate the changes as a result of Ontario’s Blue Box Program transitioning to a new Extended Producer Responsibility model in accordance with the provincial Blue Box Regulation.

OR

Option 2 – That Council discontinue the curbside collection of recyclable materials from ineligible sources through municipal funding effective January 1, 2026; and

That Council endorse the investigation of a new municipal program to provide the option for non-eligible properties to drop off recycling at the arrangements at the Waste Management Site in Armow; and further

That staff will collect information to bring forward to a future Council meeting for considerations related to licensing, costing, hours of service at the waste management site, dedicated recycling times, and any other findings brought forward from data collected through surveys and information sessions to best support all non-eligible properties; and further

That staff be directed to communicate the changes as a result of Ontario’s Blue Box Program transitioning to a new Extended Producer Responsibility model in accordance with the provincial Blue Box Regulation.

Executive Summary:

In 2021, O. Reg 391/21 was passed requiring producers of packaging to become responsible for managing the end of life for these materials. By 2026, the Provincial program will transition municipalities out of the business of collecting recyclable materials with responsibility turned over to the producers of products and packaging. The regulation identifies non-eligible sources for the collection program as Institutional, Commercial, and Industrial properties; some of whom currently have been supported through the household curbside collection through the municipality. Some communities that have transitioned to the new provincially mandated program have opted to establish a program to allow non-eligible properties to drop off recycling at a designated municipal transfer station or landfilling site, if provided for under ministry approval. Some communities have opted to discontinue collection of recyclables from ineligible sources and non-eligible properties are required to make their own arrangements for recycling. Council is being asked to consider which direction it wishes to pursue. If Council wishes to establish a new program for non-eligible properties to be able to drop off their recyclables there are several factors to be considered, including availability of contracted services for ICI properties, and the new costs associated with establishing a program. If Council determines that it wishes to pursue a new program, staff recommend that to accommodate the existing non-eligible properties would be through becoming a producer at the Armow Waste Management site. Staff would then work to collect information to support these non-eligible sources, based on information gathered through educational webinars, while factoring local geography and sorting site and staff capabilities.

Strategic Priorities:

D.15-Serve, communicate, collaborate and engage with the community to build trust and confidence in municipal services, Council and staff

Financial Considerations:

The transition to the new recycling framework will be fully transitioned in 2026 and producers will be responsible for the recycling of their products and packaging across Ontario and municipalities will no longer be responsible for the costs of the household recycling collection system. It is anticipated that there should be some savings associated with the change, as currently the municipality pays for the full cost of the household collection recycling program and is reimbursed for a portion of it by producers.

Municipal staff have included funds in the 2025 budget to support communications on the change within our municipality and to inform non-eligible sources of the upcoming changes.

In addition, funding is proposed in the event that there is consideration of a potential new program at the Waste Management Site, including expansion, alterations, or containment, if Council wishes to provide a program to support Industrial, Commercial, or Institutional properties that are not eligible for the producer responsible recycling program. Costs may also include roadways and overall improvements for functionality of the program.

There would be no contribution from producers for a new recycling program for non-eligible properties meaning it would be funded through the general levy with potential consideration for user fees.

Policy:

N/A

Context and Background Information:

The Municipality of Kincardine is a member of Bruce Area Solid Waste Recycling (BASWR) <https://www.brucerecycling.com/> not for profit organization. BASWR provides household waste and recycling collection.

With the shift to financial and operational responsibility of recycling from municipalities to the producers of packaging, paper and packing products, the communities served by BASWR are expected to see little change to the household collection service. Households will continue to receive pick up services.

Institutional, Commercial, and Industrial (ICI) properties are not eligible for this new provincial framework. The intent of the program is for ineligible properties to arrange for private recycling collection materials or for them to be dropped off at an eligible drop-off facility.

There are existing ICI properties within the municipality that already have their own arrangements for private collection of recyclables. There are some that have been benefiting from the municipal recycling household collection program.

In September, Council received a report pertaining to the new Blue Box Transition and its impact on the non-eligible properties. Municipal Staff have continued to work through the changes and gather information, attend various webinars, workshops, and have identified two options related to ICI properties for its consideration. Both options have been executed in municipalities in Ontario that have already transitioned, as per the regulation.

Option 1 – Once the Municipality's recycling collection program ends at the end of 2025, ineligible properties will need to make alternate arrangements (e.g. contract a private contractor) for their recycling to be collected.

Option 2 – Initiate the process to move towards a new program that would allow for ineligible properties to drop off recycling by expanding services at the Waste Management Centre in Armow.

Staff are recommending Council consider the options to help inform budget, workplans, and communication strategies in order to initiate a path forward.

The direction will help inform the non-eligible properties of the changes to the curbside collection program. This work includes working with the Strategic Initiatives team who have already started to develop a website where more information can be obtained. Surveys will be used to collect data from non-eligible sources and better inform future Council decisions. Staff will also attend BIA meetings to communicate the information to all sources.

The expansion of the site in Armow would turn the Municipality into a producer of recycling products. We would start the process of collecting the new blue box materials and holding them on-site. Staff would then procure a vendor to pick this product up and have it transported to a collection facility.

Staff initially presented other options to Council that could be included in an initial survey sent to non-eligible sources. One of these included an option for curb-side pickup collection. Through speaking with various collection vendors, and the logistics and needs of each non-

eligible source, staff no longer see this as a viable option. The resources that would be required to survey, procure a vendor, establish routes, and frequency of pick-ups are beyond our current staffing resource capabilities for a service that will no longer be a municipal program. Additionally, the new change in the regulations is impacting several collection agencies. These impacts are affecting how these vendors are collecting and then transporting these to proper sorting facilities. In discussions with our existing collection agency, they are currently unsure if they would be able to produce a curb-side collection route for non-eligible sources.

Finally, through this process and working to inform non-eligible sources, any of these groups could work to procure a private contractor that would distribute bins and have a private collection process established.

Consultation Overview:

The transition has established working groups and bi-weekly webinars and workshops that provide information to the Municipality. Speaking with our local contractors and collections agencies has also highlighted the impacts and challenges they are facing. These regulation changes were not something the Municipality implemented, they are Provincial and very few resources have been provided to help with the transition.

Staff certainly have concern that these changes will impact non-eligible sources. The regulation changes eliminate a service that has existed for a long-time and has functioned well for those groups. The lack of local sorting facilities and vendors could also raise concern to the overall costs associated with this program. Staff are concerned that in a rural Municipality such as Kincardine this is another burden non-eligible sources must face and could have the opposite effect of the intended regulation change.

Origin:

Provincial Regulation Changes

Implementation Considerations:

Staff have been working to get the website created, surveys produced and established to collect necessary information, and lists of our non-eligible sources. We feel this information would be distributed quickly to those affected with the goal of having this collected and reviewed by the end of March 2025. Based on the information provided, we feel we would be able to get a report back to Council in Q2 of 2025, to present the findings, information and make recommendations to best support the non-eligible sources. The remainder of 2025 we would work to inform non-eligible sources of the Municipalities plan but would also need to start to bring in the residential component of the program. This would include highlighting the new process of single stream recycling at the curb and informing them of changes that may impact them.

Risk Analysis:

Staff feel we are in a good position to develop and support these changes currently. We want to work to inform the non-eligible sources, to alleviate risk. Failure to inform and attempt to provide resources for these changes could lead to risks such as illegal dumping, or recycling

ending up in the landfill as an option for disposal. While the changes are Provincial, staff acknowledge the inconvenience will likely fall back to the Municipal level and want to ensure we have worked to try and provide a solution.

Attachments: None

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