

Staff Report to Council

Title: Blue Box Transition

Report Number: Environmental Services-2025-16

Director: Infrastructure & Development

Manager: Environmental Services

Meeting Date:
Wednesday, June 25, 2025

Date to be considered by Council:
Wednesday, June 25, 2025

Recommendation:

Option #1

That Council support staff recommendation for expanding Blue Box Services and Capabilities at the Waste Management Centre in Armow including procuring a contractor that will be responsible for the installation of collection bins and collection services for non-eligible sources as defined in O/Reg 391/21; and

That effective January 1st, 2026, the Waste Management Site in Armow will no longer accept recycling from eligible sources that are entitled to curb-side collection as defined in O/Reg 391/21; and

That effective January 1st, 2026, the current cardboard and compost depots established at 520 Bruce Avenue in Kincardine, 50 King Street, 20 McLaren Street in Tiverton and 1240 Concession 6 in Underwood, will be closed with the bins being removed from those sites; and

That staff will expand hours of operation at the Waste Management Site in Armow to include dedicated times on Mondays from 15:00-18:00 and Thursdays from 7:30-8:45 for drop-off for non-eligible recycling and compost only; and

That staff be directed to incorporate rates and fees into the 2026 by-law that will establish charges on recycling goods to be dropped off by non-eligible sources on a weight basis with the intent of cost recovery for the procured service; and further

That staff be directed to execute these changes and amendments with the current Certificate of Approval # A272702 and re-submit to the Ministry of Environment Conservations and Parks for approvals.

Option #2

That Council directs staff to continue to inform all non-eligible sources of the upcoming changes as defined in O. Reg 391/21 and allow those affected to obtain private contractor services.

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. In December 2024, the Council directed staff to work to communicate these changes to the non-eligible sources now affected by the change in regulations. The goal was to collect information and solutions to allow the Council to determine a strategic plan. Staff have identified two options for Council consideration and are looking for direction to work to begin to implement the preferred choice and ensure success at the transition date in January. An additional component for either option to help support recycling could be for Council to mandate that clear plastic bags be used for all curbside collection. The curbside garbage collection staff are then able to ensure that recyclables are not included in garbage and ultimately it saves landfill space. This program change could be included in either of the options recommended but would require the development of a communication strategy to ensure that the public understands the new expectations. During the research stage of this report, the communication from BAWSR was that they would not be in a position to provide a curbside recycling collection service for non-eligible properties. Staff understand that there may be newer information about recent direction from the Board which may impact considerations of options, but at the time of submission of the report do not have any further details.

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 on January 1st, 2026. 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. The Municipality currently spends about \$262,000 annually on recycling services (1.15% tax rate implications).

The 2025 waste management budget included \$82,500 for communications, advertising, and consideration for any expanded construction or services required at the site.

Additional funds would be required for communication would be required if Council wished to proceed with a mandating that curbside garbage collection be in clear plastic bags.

Option #1 would have longer term financial considerations. This would likely include cement or asphalt works on-site, fencing and containment, staffing resources and wages around expanded hours and services. Auditing, tracking, and contamination criteria would create additional workload. Establishing rates and fees, and then annual review to ensure compliance and including recovery for contamination would be required.

Option #2 would have minimal financial impacts long term. Staff would continue to work within the 2025 budget to communicate and inform ratepayers.

Policy:

N/A

Context and Background Information:

Staff are providing two separate recommendations for Council consideration. Through the process of working to inform non-eligible sources, collecting information and listening to comments and input staff believe the focus for the Municipality should be safe-guarding available landfill space. Both options could consider an additional step for Council to support moving to clear bags for garbage collection. The benefit of a clear bag garbage system is that there can be monitoring done at the curb to ensure that recycling materials do not end up in black garbage bags and then be landfilled. There are other communities that have this practice, however it is an additional change that would require public consultation and a communication strategy prior to and throughout the implementation.

O.Reg. 391/21 is a Provincial mandate, however, through our conversations, many ratepayers are viewing this as a reduction of service from the Municipality.

In discussions with various local contractors a curbside pickup system like what currently exists will no longer be an option. Contractors are advancing towards a system where they roll out bins, and collecting with an arm on the truck is now preferred. Many contractors are also reluctant to take on any additional curbside collection workload until they can assess the impacts of the transition on their workload as well.

Option #1 would see recycling services expand at the Waste Management Centre in Armow for non-eligible sources. This would include the Municipality working to procure a contract with eligible contractors for a bin system to be located on-site and disposed of on a routine basis. The recommendation also suggests no longer accepting eligible recycling at the site. The new regulation has significant tracking, auditing, and contamination thresholds. All eligible residents should be placing all recycling curbsides for collection. In the event eligible services were to continue at the site, separate bins would be required, additional cost for shipping when needed, and separate tracking and auditing would be required. The recommendation to shut down the Municipal sites currently collecting cardboard and compost directly relates to auditing and tracking but also encompasses some potential cost savings and addresses abuse issues. The depot type sites are extremely difficult to police, we would be unable to track where the product is coming from, is it eligible or non-eligible and whether the materials are coming from with Kincardine ratepayers and citizens.

Compost sites were created during the pandemic. The sites run for about 4-5 weeks both spring and fall with a bin system, however, the site (Kincardine particularly) is abused throughout the summer months. The cost for the yearly pickup and staff resources to pick-up product dropped outside seasonal parameters are about \$20,000 year.

The recommendation to expand the hours of service at the site and establish dedicated times for compost and non-eligible recycling allows ratepayers the opportunity to bring these directly to our site, avoid longer lineups where people may be disposing of garbage, and allows staff the opportunity to patrol areas and avoid contamination issues. The closure of the depot sites and the \$20,000 dollars in savings could offset additional cost of wages and labour. It may also work to eliminate abuse problems at the depot sites. Establishing a fee structure based on weight is the most fair and equitable solution for recycling services. Users will be charged based on volumes based on what they produce. While consultation did

highlight some users looking for an annual flat fee for services, staff are recommending a user pay system.

Option #2 would see the Municipality of Kincardine exit from recycling services completely, working to continue to inform non-eligible sources of the changes coming in January 2026. Council could also include the move to a clear bag garbage collections system, to protect the integrity of the landfill.

Consultation Overview:

The Strategic Initiatives Team has been the leader in working to get communications out to those affected parties. This has included working many social media platforms, newspaper advertisements, and a post card campaign through Economic Development left at several businesses. Staff have attended BIA meetings, shared information at the home and garden show, and hosted two virtual meetings to attempt to touch base with non-eligible sources. Unfortunately, all this work has yielded poor results for the Municipal survey response. Of those who responded 56% were interested in additional information on changes and to look at private collection, while 44% were interested in expanded services at the Waste Management site.

Origin:

Provincial Regulation Change.

Implementation Considerations:

Staff are looking for Council direction to determine next steps and process. The Municipality will need to be prepared for the transition on January 1st, 2026.

Risk Analysis:

Staff believe the biggest risk surrounds the available landfill space and concern around abuse. While communications have indicated this is a Provincial change, many are viewing this as a service cut implemented by Council or Kincardine. The consideration to move to clear garbage bag collection would allow staff and contractors the ability to better monitor abuse and reject recyclable materials that may be included with waste materials.

Attachments: None

Prepared by: Mark O'Leary, Manager of Environmental Services

Submitted by: Mark O'Leary, Manager of Environmental Services