

Corporate Report

REPORT NUMBER 151-2024-Infrastructure, Development & Operations-Environment		
DATE PREPARED	April 22, 2024	FILE
MEETING DATE May 6, 2024		
SUBJECT Blue Box Program Transition Update		

RECOMMENDATION

For information only.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

This Report directly supports the Sustainability Pillar in the 2023-2027 Maamawe, Growing Together Corporate Strategic Plan, to plan and deliver cost-effective services.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Thunder Bay will, in accordance with O. Reg 391/21, transition its residential Blue Box (blue bag) recycling program to full producer responsibility on July 1, 2024. Circular Materials (CM) will manage the program after July 1, 2024 and have contracted GFL (the City's current recycling service provider) to continue providing Blue Box collection services to City residents after transition. GFL will be implementing a new automated recycling cart system effective July 1, 2024 in which blue bags will no longer be accepted.

Multi residential households (i.e. apartments) will also be switching over to a new collection system, where buildings will be assessed to move to either cart based or front-end bin collection services.

Administration has partnered with CM on some promotion and education initiatives and is currently working with both CM and GFL to support a successful transition of services.

DISCUSSION

On June 3, 2021, the Province approved the Blue Box Regulation O. Reg. 391/21. The regulation removes the responsibility to operate residential Blue Box (blue bag) recycling programs from municipalities and instead makes the Producers of blue box materials directly responsible for the operation and financing of the programs and outcomes established in the regulation. The responsibility for the promotion, education, collection, and processing for blue box materials now falls to Producers. Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs) have been contracted by Producers to manage the program on their behalf.

Communities are transitioning their residential Blue Box (blue bag) programs between 2023-2025. On July 18, 2022, Council approved the City opt out of providing residential recycling service during the transition period from July 1, 2024, to December 31, 2025. The City of Thunder Bay will, in accordance with O. Reg 391/21, transition its residential Blue Box (blue bag) recycling program to full producer responsibility on July 1, 2024.

Residential Recycling Service Changes

Blue Box (blue bag) Collection

Producers have contracted GFL Environmental Inc. (the City's current recycling service provider) to continue providing Blue Box collection services to City residents after transition. As part of this change, GFL will be implementing a new automated recycling cart system effective July 1, 2024. Residential households will each receive a split body recycling cart, where half the cart will be for paper products and the other half for containers. Multi residential households (i.e. apartments) will also be switching over to a new collection system, where buildings will be assessed to move to either cart based or front-end bin collection services. Residents will no longer be permitted to use blue bags after the transition date.

Cart delivery to residential households is scheduled to begin early May and wrap up end of June. GFL has indicated they currently intend to complete delivery of carts/front end bins to multi residential household properties by end of July 2024. The multi residential transition is significantly more complex, hence why more time is required.

GFL has indicated that the collection day, frequency of collection and list of acceptable recyclable materials for residents will not change at the present time.

Recycling Depot Operations

Producers are required to maintain depot collection services for Blue Box materials in the City of Thunder Bay during the transition period between July 1, 2024, and December 31, 2025. The existing three residential recycling depots owned by the City will continue to be operated by GFL during this timeframe. Administration is currently finalizing license/lease agreements with GFL for them to operate the City's recycling

depots during the transition period. Operation beyond that is subject to review and possible change by the Producers.

Roles and Responsibilities

Circular Materials

The City of Thunder Bay's recycling program will be managed by Circular Materials (CM) as of July 1, 2024. CM is the administrator of the common collection system in Ontario on behalf of Producers. CM has retained GFL to deliver collection and processing services on their behalf in Thunder Bay. CM is responsible for contract administration and oversight of GFL. To achieve this, they have hired a company called Reverse Logistics Group (RLG). RLG will be responsible to provide direct contract administration of the day-to-day operations GFL performs. CM is also responsible for the delivery of residential Blue Box promotion and education initiatives, not only to inform residents of the changeover to recycling carts, but to support ongoing program communications.

GFL Environmental Inc.

GFL will be responsible for collection and processing of Blue Box material and the operation of the City's recycling depots. GFL is also responsible for setting up the new automated recycling cart system for both residential and multi residential households, including the actual cart delivery to households. The actual 'on the ground' delivery of carts will be done by the cart manufacturer. GFL will become the sole point of contact for any issues residents may have related to cart delivery and Blue Box collection services on July 1, 2024, and beyond.

City of Thunder Bay

Effective July 1, 2024, the City will no longer be operationally and financially responsible for the residential Blue Box (blue bag) program in the community. If a resident is unsatisfied with residential Blue Box recycling services, they are to contact CM's service provider, GFL, not the City after the transition date. The City, however, is partnering with CM on some promotion and education initiatives (e.g., waste collection calendars, recollect mobile waste app/reminder service), and will still own the three residential recycling depots in the community, operating under license/lease agreement to GFL during the transition period of July 1, 2024 – December 31, 2025.

The City will continue to be responsible for all other waste diversion/recycling operations and programs, including Blue Box collection in parks, municipal facilities and city events.

Administration is currently supporting both CM and GFL to ensure a successful transition of services.

LINK TO EARTHCARE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

The initiatives identified support actions within the Waste section of the EarthCare Sustainability Plan.

- The EarthCare Objective A, Corporate Action B “Recover the costs of waste from those creating the waste. (Follow the Extended Producer Responsibility model for managing waste as per provincial guidelines)”.
- The EarthCare Objective A, Corporate Action C “Maintain and promote provincial waste minimization programs”.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

The financial implications related to Blue Box Transition are accounted for in the 2024 Solid Waste and Recycling Services Operating Budget.

CONCLUSION

This report is provided for information. Information is provided on upcoming changes in accordance with O. Reg. 391/21 to residential recycling services.

BACKGROUND

At the May 7, 2018, Committee of the Whole Meeting, Report R 62/2018 - update on the Solid Waste Management Strategy was provided for information.

At the June 3, 2019, Committee of the Whole Meeting, Report R 27/2019 - update on the Solid Waste Management Strategy was provided for information.

At the August 12, 2019, Committee of the Whole Meeting, memo was provided on Provincial Solid Waste regulatory changes for information.

At the September 14, 2020, Committee of the Whole Meeting, Report R 108/2020 - update on the Solid Waste Management Strategy was provided for information.

At the May 3, 2021, Committee of the Whole Meeting, Report R 54/2021 – update on the Solid Waste Management Strategy was provided for information.

At the September 22, 2021, Committee of the Whole Meeting, memo on regulatory updates to the Provincial Blue Box Program was provided for information.

At the April 4, 2022, Committee of the Whole Meeting, Report R 48/2022 - update on

the Solid Waste Management Strategy was provided for information.

At the July 18, 2022, Committee of the Whole Meeting, Report R 120/2022, Council approved the City opt out of providing residential recycling services during the transition period from July 1, 2024 to December 31, 2025.

At the May 1, 2023, Committee of the Whole Meeting, Report R 148/2023 - update on the Solid Waste Management Strategy was provided for information.

REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED

None

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REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY

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Date (04/24/2024)