

To: David Creery, Chief Administrative Officer

From: Jeff Molenhuis, Director of Public Works

Re: Solid Waste Service Update – Upcoming Curbside Collection Changes

AIM

To provide an update regarding solid waste service changes coming to the City of Woodstock with respect to garbage, recycling and the new green bin (organics) program.

BACKGROUND

Under the *Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act*, curbside recycling changes come into effect January 1, 2026, for Oxford County. With this change, recycling collection services will no longer be provided by the City and will be the producer's responsibility. At the same time, the City of Woodstock will begin collecting curbside organics as part of Oxford County's phased approach to the green bin program. With this, the County will be shifting to a 6-day collection schedule. County and City staff have been in the planning phase for these solid waste program changes and additions. The City will continue to provide garbage collection services, and will add organics collection services within the existing collection program complement. Recycling collection services will move to a third-party service provider organized under the provincial producer level, and no longer associated with the County or the City services.

COMMENTS

Green Bin (Organics) Program

The City will begin the collection of organic waste in January 2026. The new program will begin rollout in October 2025, starting with the distribution of containers to residents with information packages on the organics program, including what is appropriate for the green bin and what is not. The rollout is anticipated to take place until November.

Blue Box (Recycling) Program

Curbside Blue Box collection will no longer be provided through City resources, with the service delivery shifted to the Producer Responsible Organization (PRO) service provider Emterra. The changes to the Blue Box program are mandated by the Province and many communities have already transitioned to this new service delivery model. However, the program continues to evolve as staff work toward our implementation date on January 1, 2026. The City will need to review recycling services provided at the Enviro Depot where residential recycling is currently accepted. This will need to be reviewed in the future with respect to City program impacts as a result of the service delivery change to Emterra.

The most recent updates from the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks included proposed changes that would alter the current set out framework. Staff are working alongside the County to track proposed changes and ensure Woodstock users are considered and planned for in any program changes required under the Act. The proposed changes include delaying recovery targets, allowing energy recovery to contribute to diversion targets, removal of some collection requirements, clarification on multi-residential, and a requirement for producers/PRO to make offers for servicing small businesses. These changes will be provided to Council once adopted by the Ministry and outlined in the amended regulations.

With the timing and number of on-going service changes with respect to recycling, City staff recognize the need for an adaptable approach to some elements of the solid waste budget and program delivery.

Collection Schedule Changes

As part of the overall changes to waste collection, Oxford County Council approved moving to a 6-day rotating collection cycle for garbage and organics (green bin) materials. Moving from a 5-day cycle to a 6-day cycle provides cost savings in the delivery of this service. Staff are aware that this makes for a significant change and will be challenging to adapt to, but are committed to providing residents with tools and resources to support them.

The 6-day cycle changes apply to green bin and garbage collection only. Curbside recycling collection will no longer automatically align with garbage collection as this will be provided by the PRO funded contractor, Emterra.

Communications Planning

City and County staff are collaborating on a Communications Plan to support the adjustments and program changes. Implementing this number of new processes at the City scale is recognized by staff as a significant challenge, and communications will play a critical role in successful roll-out. Early and regular communication is planned for internal and external stakeholders throughout implementation, and in the future stable state of service delivery.

ATTACHMENTS

Oxford County Information: <https://speakup.oxfordcounty.ca/new-waste-collection>

General Blue Box Information: <https://rpra.ca/programs/blue-box/>

Proposed Changes to Blue Box Program: <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/025-0536>

County Waste Line Calendar and App:

https://webresources.oxfordcounty.ca/documents/2024-25_Wasteline_Calendar_FINAL.pdf

RECOMMENDATION

That Woodstock City Council receive the report regarding Solid Waste Service Update – Upcoming Curbside Collection Changes as information.

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