



# City of North Bay Report to Council

Report No: IO 2021-09

Date: June 30, 2021

Originator: Karin Pratte, P.Eng.

Business Unit  
Infrastructure & Operations

Department:  
Public Works & Services

Subject: Waste Diversion Strategy

Closed Session: yes ☐ no ☒

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## Recommendation

1. That City Council refers RTC IO 2021-09 to committee.
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## Background

### History

North Bay's Blue Box Program was launched in 1991. When first established, the City only collected five different materials as mandated by the Province. Since this time, the program collects most of the packaging material found on grocery store shelves.

In 1999, the City implemented bans on the collection and disposal of corrugated cardboard. The City has expanded the materials collected and extended the program to schools and multi-residential dwellings. A weekly corrugated cardboard collection service was provided in the Downtown Improvement Area in 1998.

Listed below are some of the more prominent waste diversion programs implemented in the City of North Bay:

- Blue Box Program
- Corrugated Cardboard Ban
- Electronic Drop-off Depot

- Electronic Equipment Ban
- Grass Collection Ban
- Household Hazardous Waste Facility
- Large Brush and Wood Waste Recycling Area
- Leaf and Yard Waste Drop-off Depot
- Mattress Recycling Program
- Paint Exchange Facility
- Scrap Metal Drop-off Areas
- Tire Recycling Program
- Textile Ban

### **Waste Diversion Strategy**

The City of North Bay's Environmental Services department prepares the City of North Bay's Waste Diversion Plan on an annual basis and a copy is forwarded to the Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks as required by the Environmental Assessment Conditions of Approval for the Merrick Landfill Site. The annual Waste Diversion Plan includes data and statistics in regards to diverted materials.

Staff have developed the attached Waste Diversion Strategy ("Strategy") which provides a high level overview of waste diversion for the City of North Bay over the next 5 years. The Strategy seeks to identify and implement programs to expand participation in recycling/waste reduction initiatives and increase waste diversion from the City of North Bay Merrick Landfill site.

The Strategy has 5 central and constant goals:

1. Increase program participation by those eligible to receive the service
2. Expand the scope of eligibility to more users.
3. Decrease contaminants (non-recyclables) in the recycling stream.
4. Provide diversion solutions for more types of waste products; and
5. Reduce the amount of material entering the local waste stream

The Strategy details current and new initiatives to meet these goals along with timelines for implementation, and monitoring protocols for measuring the City's progress on waste diversion. Over the coming years the vision for waste diversion in the City of North Bay involves the implementation of a robust and conscientious system that encourages the participation of environmental interest partners, private industry, government, and local residents.

The Strategy is a living document, which provides a wide-range of programs identified by staff and residents to date which warrant further examination. The programs identified will be fully investigated on the timelines noted and presented to Council in the form of Service Level Changes or Reports to Council for consideration.

### **User Pay Garbage Collection – Reduction in allowable bags at the curb**

The first new program being proposed is the reduction in allowable bags at the curb for residential and ICI customers. This service level change was presented to Council in the fall of 2020 as part of the 2021 budget deliberations, Council was supportive of the initiative as presented and summarized below however, noted that a Waste Diversion Strategy must accompany the service level change prior to implementation. Environmental services has completed a Strategy which details goals and objectives for Waste Diversion in the City of North Bay over the next 5 years and is now prepared to implement the service level change with a start date of **January 1 2022**. Environmental services has also updated the service level financial presented in the fall of 2020 with any new and relevant information.

### **Service Level Change Details:**

Currently residential users are allowed 3 free waste receptacles (bags) per week while ICI customers are allowed 12 free waste receptacles per week. Each receptacle has a weight limit of 35lbs and volume limit of 33 gallons. Therefore residents have the option to discard just over 100 lbs/100gallons of waste per week.

Council also approved a user pay system for garbage collection in 2019 which included receptacle/bag tags sold at \$1/tag and allowed residents to put out up to 4 additional tagged waste receptacles to the curb per week. The number of free receptacles, which is 3, never changed and therefore there have been a very minimal number of tags sold (427 YTD). This however allowed for waste receptacle tags to be out in the community and begin the communication strategy to the public. Since tags were made available just over a year ago there have been no complaints or issues with the waste receptacle tags from the Contractor or residential users.

### **Two Free Bags for Residential Users & 10 Free Bags for ICI Users**

The current contract for garbage collection with Miller Waste has the provision for a partial User Pay Collection Program. Contractor costs to the City would not change however additional revenue would be realized through the already existing bag tag system. This service change would see the reduction from 3 free waste receptacles to 2 free waste receptacles per week. The increased annual cost to a household would be dependent on the number waste receptacles put out each week. Currently households put out approximately 1.5 receptacles per week. This means that most households would not require purchasing additional tags. There are, however, residents who will choose to put out more than 2 receptacles out of convenience. Therefore, a conservative estimate assumed half the households will put out 3 receptacles (1 tagged) quarterly. The increased annual cost to an ICI customer would also depend on how many receptacles they put out per week. Currently ICI customers are putting out an average of 9 per week. As a conservative estimate we have assumed half the ICI customers will put out an additional 2 receptacles (tagged) quarterly.

### **Communication Strategy**

Communication is critical to the success of any waste diversion initiative. It is essential that clear, concise messaging is provided to users which details what the change in service is, how they can participate and why the City has moved forward with the change. If Council supports this service level change, communication will begin in September 2021 in order to provide sufficient lead-time notification for residents and businesses.

Service information such as the number of allowable bags at the curb; availability of bag tags and what can be reused and recycled will be reinforced with key messaging aimed at increasing public education, awareness and understanding that the change will help to increase waste diversion and preserve landfill capacity; save valuable natural resources and protect the environment. Key messages will also incorporate notable facts and figures (i.e. most North Bay households already place two or fewer bags at the curb per week) to help inform citizens that the change is based on research and best practices.

Communications will target all residents and businesses with curbside garbage and recycling collection, utilizing various tools including the City's website, social media, recycling app, brochures/handouts, press releases/public service announcements, as well as traditional and digital media advertising.

Promotion and education in the lead up will be important to ensure residents and businesses are well informed about the change and how they will be affected. This will begin with high-level notifications of the coming change through press releases /public service announcements, the City's website and social media channels. Additionally, staff will look at how collection crews may be able to assist in distributing notifications/reminders and will explore opportunities to partner with community groups, resident and business associations, schools and other stakeholders.

Communications will involve ongoing notifications, including frequently-asked-questions and answers, as well as information about existing programs and how citizens can reduce the volume of garbage for collection and stay within the new bag limits. Updates on accomplishments and key insights, including recognition of residents and business that have embraced the change will also be incorporated into the communication strategy.

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### **Financial/Legal Implications**

This service level reduction to less allowable bags at the curb also included the cost of a receptacle (bag) tag to go from the current cost of \$1/bag to \$2/bag. The cost of recycling and garbage collection has gone up in the past year due to a renewal of the existing contract with Miller Waste. Also, the cost of \$2/tag is more in line with other Northern

communities which do have partial User Pay systems including Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Sault. Ste. Marie.

If half of the residential households put out one additional bag 4 times per year the additional revenue would be \$75,284. There are an estimated 1,000 ICI customers that are currently entitled to put out 12 bags per week for garbage pickup. Their new free bag allotment would be 10 bags per week. If half the ICI customers put out 12 bags 4 times per year the additional revenue would be \$16,000. Therefore, total increased revenue of \$91,284.

This is a small revenue stream however the largest change is that this will encourage customers to recycle. The City of North Bay has completed garbage audits in the past and residential waste arriving at the landfill contains 30-40% recyclable items which are unnecessarily filling our landfill. The Merrick Landfill Site is a multi-million dollar City asset and space in the landfill is extremely valuable.

Each extra bag will need to be tagged and the cost of each tag is approximately \$0.07 therefore \$3,200 of costs associated with the purchase of tags has been included.

Typically when a full user pay system is put in place the amount of recyclables goes up by approx. 20-30%. As this is a partial user pay system a cost estimate for increase in recyclables of 10% was estimated and would increase costs annually by \$48,000. It is expected that the annual volume of garbage will be decreased which will increase the life expectancy of the landfill.

Therefore estimated costs for 2022 are \$51,200 while annual revenue is estimated at \$91,284 for an annual total cost savings of \$40,084. These values are only estimates and true costs will be based on actual bag tag sales and actual recycling weights received. During the 2021 budget deliberations Council approved the service level change to increase the cost per tag as well as reduce the number of free bags. The 2021 Environmental Services budget was established with a net savings of \$18,142. The approval of this Waste Diversion Strategy as well as the enclosed communication strategy will allow the program to come into full force for January 2022 therefore, the 2021 budget savings will not be realized.

Its also important to take into consideration that from 2023 to 2026 the Province of Ontario will roll out its new producer pay program for blue box recycling. This system will involve a transition away from the current system in which producers of recyclable materials share recycling costs with municipalities. The new system will see the province take complete control of blue box recycling with producers being responsible for the entirety of the cost of the program. The City of North Bay has been notified by the Province that we will be transitioning to the producer responsibility program in 2025.

This program shift will make producers fully responsible for all costs associated with blue box collection and marketing which will reduce the financial burden of recycling on Municipalities. It is important to note that MECP has developed a minimum service level within the regulation and if the City would like a service level that exceeds the minimum requirements in regulation this would be funded through municipal tax dollars.

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### **Corporate Strategic Plan**

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|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natural North and Near                | <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Prosperity     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable Balanced Growth                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Spirited Safe Community |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Responsible and Responsive Government |  |

### **Specific Objectives**

Provide smart, cost effective services and programs to residents and businesses.

Protect, promote and enhance the environment in all aspects of the city's operations and plans

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### **Options/Analysis**

1. That City Council refers RTC IO 2021-09 to committee.
  2. Do not refer RTC IO 2021-09 to committee.
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### **Recommended Option**

1. That City Council refers RTC IO 2021-09 to committee.
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Respectfully submitted,

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Name: Karin Pratte, P.Eng.  
Title: Senior Facilities & Environment Engineer

We concur with the above noted recommendation.

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Name: Domenic Schiavone  
Title: Director of Public Works

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Name: Margaret Karpenko  
Title: Chief Administrative Officer

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Name: David Euler, P.Eng., PMP  
Title: Chief Administrative Officer

Personnel designated for continuance: Senior Facilities & Environment Engineer