



Governance & Services Committee

TO: Governance and Services Committee

FROM: David Komaike,
Director - Engineering Services

DATE: August 25, 2020

SUBJECT: Waste Reduction Update

Purpose: To provide the Regional Board with an update on alternate recyclable collection methods/options; and provide an update the on the Regional Waste Reduction Program.

Executive Summary:

Alternative Recyclable Collection Methods

On May 9, 2019, the Board directed staff to explore and report to the Board on alternate collection methods for recyclable material which is currently collected through the depot system.

Staff has completed a preliminary investigation into alternative collection methods for recyclable material currently collected through the depot system, including: glass, foam, and flexible packaging. It was found that:

- No communities within BC were identified that collect these materials for recycling outside of established Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs;
- Deposit glass, such as wine and other beverage containers, are excluded from curbside EPR programs, and are required to be brought to bottle depots, retailers, or willing donation centres for refund;
- Non-deposit glass, such as pickle jars and sauce bottles, can be collected curbside through a Recycle BC curbside program, which has been estimated to cost other BC municipalities approximately \$9 per year, per household, after the sale of glass to Recycle BC;
- London Drugs retail locations in Kelowna and West Kelowna offer an alternative collection point for foam and flexible packaging;
- The RDCO and member municipalities current recycling practices align with the regional Solid Waste Management Plan, which advocates for full cost compensation by producers.

Waste Reduction Update

Waste Reduction within the RDCO and member municipalities has been impacted by the COVID pandemic. Cart manufacturer shutdowns and shifts in waste generation from work to home have resulted in the biggest impacts, manifesting in delayed cart deliveries, an increase in missed collections, increase in waste weight collected, and an increase in the amount of time required to complete daily collections. Education and outreach programs have also been cancelled, delayed, or modified to comply with provincial health directions.

Contamination within the RDCO and member municipalities was audited in December 2019, and compared against previous performance. Kelowna, West Kelowna, Lake Country, and the RDCO decreased in contamination when compared against previous 12 month averages. Province wide survey results subsequently released by Recycle BC in April 2020 noted that the most frequent response (72%) for not recycling was a lack of knowledge regarding what is recyclable. The inconvenience of taking items to a depot for collection was least frequent response (11%). This suggests that education remains one of the most significant avenues for reducing contamination, increasing landfill diversion, and minimizing our community's environmental footprint.

RDCO staff have arranged for Recycle BC to provide an update to the Board at the October 8th Governance and Services meeting regarding the Recycle BC program and the state of recycling.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board receive the alternative recycle collection and waste reduction update as information.

Respectfully Submitted:



David Komaike
Director of Engineering Services

Approved for Committee's Approval



Brian Reardon, CAO

Prepared by: Travis Kendel, Manager of Engineering Services

Implications of Recommendation:

Strategic Plan:

- The RDCO Waste Reduction program contributes directly to reducing our community's environmental footprint.

Policy:

- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) as a policy tool shifts the responsibility for end-of-life management of products (physically and economically) to the producer and away from municipalities to create an incentive for producers to include environmental considerations in design of products.
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Background:

On May 9, 2019, the Board directed staff:

“...to explore and report to the Board on alternate collection methods including the costs for recyclable material which is currently collected through the depot system but not in residential curbside carts.”

The British Columbia Recycling Regulation requires printed paper and packaging (PPP) be collected from single family homes and paid for by producers through an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program. The producers program for PPP is coordinated by Recycle BC. The PPP program is one of 21 EPR programs in BC including others like beverage containers, tires, electronics, used oil and large appliances.

The property tax base does not subsidize the collection of any materials collected through the EPR programs, as these are borne by the producers and consumers of products. This is consistent with the RDCO Solid Waste Management Plan, which advocates “...for reasonable service levels for the region from all EPR programs and full cost compensation by producers.”

In general, most local government programs across the Province mirror what the RDCO provides with curbside material collected as per Recycle BC contracts. Depots are provided for material which is not included in curbside pick-up (non-deposit glass, foam packaging, plastic bags and overwrap, other flexible plastic packaging). In some municipalities that have multi-stream pick-up, glass is the one additional material collected curbside.

Glass Recycling

Glass was collected in the Central Okanagan’s curbside comingled program and was removed in 2007 to improve the quality of curbside paper and other recyclables. As a result, residents in the Central Okanagan have been required to take glass to various depot and drop-off locations throughout the region.

In 2014, with Recycle BC taking over the responsibility of PPP, numerous other private depots have expanded to accept glass bottles and jars, particularly local bottle depots.

There are over 176 communities who are partnered with Recycle BC and most do not collect glass curbside. However, curbside glass recycling is offered in North Vancouver, Burnaby, Mission and the Township of Langley. Other communities, such as Prince George, are on track to begin curbside glass collection by the end of 2020. These communities use, or plan to use, a separate smaller container to allow residents to sort glass for pickup and keep it separate from other materials as this is a requirement of Recycle BC, glass is not to be comingled with other recyclables.

Recycle BC is only responsible for non-beverage glass packaging and requires that curbside glass collection be used for glass jars and non-refundable glass bottles such as food and cosmetic jars. Refundable glass containers, such as wine, spirits, beer, or juice bottles should be brought to a depot for refund as part of Encorp’s beverage container EPR program.

Curbside glass recycling (for non-beverage glass bottle and jars) is an additional service, which can be opted into with Recycle BC. Municipalities that choose this option are required to pay for collection and do not receive additional per household payments for collection of glass from Recycle BC. Recycle BC will however pay municipalities a per/tonne rate for glass collected curbside. Communities with curbside glass collection fund the program via additional fees and charges to residents. For example, another community in BC has estimated the cost for curbside biweekly glass collection to be approximately \$9 per household annually (after the sale of the glass).

The RDCO and its member municipalities currently offer a single stream, comingled curbside recycling service, to collect PPP on behalf of Recycle BC, excluding glass and other depot only items. If curbside glass recycling service was offered, Recycle BC would require glass to be collected and segregated from all other PPP through a 4th curbside container (in addition to existing Garbage, Yard waste, and Single Stream PPP carts).

Another viable method of beverage container glass recycling is available outside of recycling and bottle depots, through beverage retailers. As per the British Columbia Recycling Regulation, a person may return for refund at least 6 uncontaminated containers per day to a retailer that are of the same beverage container subcategory and brand that the retailer sells. This does not apply to non-beverage containers, such as pickle jars or sauce bottles.

Foam Packaging, Plastic Bags, Overwrap, Other Flexible Packaging

Other recyclable products such as foam packaging, plastic bags, overwrap, and other flexible packing are collected through Recycle BC's depot program. Recycle BC has chosen depots to collect this material as it allows for each category to be source separate by residents. Staff at depots are on hand to ensure sorting is done correctly which minimizes contamination. Source separation of foam, plastic bags, overwrap and other flexible plastic packaging ensure Recycle BC receives marketable products.

The collection of these materials at curbside would take place outside of the Recycle BC program, if pursued. This would require the products be sold for market value, with no financial or administrative support provided by Recycle BC's EPR program. Current market value of foam packaging, plastic bags, overwrap, and other flexible packaging is low and would likely provide negative financial returns. Financial and operation risk associated with collecting, stockpiling, sorting, marketing and transporting of recyclables could be significant.

No comparative costs are available for this program, as no other communities within British Columbia were identified that have successfully initiated curbside recycling of these materials.

London Drugs retail locations have partnered with Recycle BC to provide alternative drop off locations outside of Recycle BC depots for other flexible plastic packaging, including chip bags, plastic bags, sealable plastic containers, and protective non-food packaging as well as styrofoam and plastic bags and overwrap.

Recycle BC has committed to tentatively update the Board at the October 8th Governance and Services meeting, and will update the Board on recycling markets and the PPP program.

Waste Reduction Office Update

Recycle BC Survey

Recycle BC released the results of their latest residential survey in April 2020 as part of a campaign to drive changes in recycling behaviour during the pandemic, and to help BC residents identify recycling opportunities:

- 72% - said they are 'not sure if it's accepted for recycling'
- 27% - said they reuse recyclable materials, in particular plastic bags
- 24% - said they don't want to clean them
- 15% - said they are unsure how to sort them
- 11% - said it was inconvenient to take an item to a depot

The RDCO Waste Reduction office uses data like this to inform on educational campaigns, improve depot operations, and make recommendations. This survey suggests that depot accessibility is a factor in recycling (11%), and the dominant barrier to recycling appears to be general knowledge (72%).

Contamination Rates

The last contamination audit was completed by Recycle BC in December 2019. Audit data has been summarized in the following table:

	Previous Average Contamination (12 months)	December 2019 Contamination	Change
City of Kelowna	7.6%	7.1%	-0.5%
City of West Kelowna	7.5%	5.3%	-2.2%
Lake Country	8.0%	5.1%	-2.9%
Peachland	7.6%*	13.4%	+5.8%
RDCO	8.5%	6.0%	-2.5%

All communities experienced a decrease in contamination except for Peachland, which does not have multiple previous audits with which to average and compare against.

COVID Impacts

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact curbside collection operations:

- Delayed delivery of curbside carts associated with manufacturer shutdowns
- Behavioural changes, such as working from home, have shifted large amounts of vehicles into residential roadways, creating new accessibility challenges for the curbside collector.
- Waste generation and disposal have increase with a large portion of the population staying close to home

Waste Reduction educational programs that have traditionally included large gatherings or close-quarters interactions have been cancelled. This includes the twice-annual trunk sale, repair café, and community clean-up. The Waste Reduction office is exploring alternatives that can be delivered in Fall 2020 and 2021 to achieve similar outcomes while respecting provincial health directions.

Curbside Collection

E360S reports that:

Customer Inquiries

Elevated call volume was experienced at the end of March following the announcement of the COVID pandemic, increasing overall call volume by 200%. From April to August customer inquiries and complaints have decreased, with calls from unique customers decreasing 40%, and repeat customer calls decreasing by 14%.

The number of inquiries attributed to missed collection increased from 60 to 72 per week (20%) between April and August. The biggest factors associated with missed collection included construction-related access constraints, carts not out for collection, new and unmapped homes, seasonal traffic congestion and pre-emptive calls placed before end of collection day.

Curbside Service

With summer traffic patterns and increased congestion within residential areas the amount of time to collect carts along the average block has increase in from April to July from approximately 9 minutes to 15 minutes. Waste collected curbside across the same period has increased in weight by approximately 20%.

Tag a Bag

Tag a Bag curbside service was temporarily halted while focused efforts were placed on maintaining garbage and recyclable curbside collection through the COVID-19 pandemic. As of August 25, 2020, the Tag a Bag program has resumed as per normal.

MOU Update

The Solid Waste Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has completed its technical update and review of the Regional Solid Waste MOU. This MOU formalizes the roles of the RDCO and member municipalities, as well as terms and conditions pursuant to the co-ordination of solid waste management services by the RDCO on behalf of the member municipalities.

This MOU has further reviews to complete before coming to the Board for consideration.

Wildlife Resistant Carts

The Solid Waste Technical Advisory Committee (SWTAC), through the RDCO Waste Reduction team, have initiated the roll-out of a 2nd phase of wildlife resistant curbside carts to a community in West Kelowna. The chosen location (Horizon Lane) has a history of bear interface challenges, compounded by a lack of garages within the development to allow for the safe indoor storage of curbside carts.

As more operational and customer feedback is obtained, the Waste Reduction team and SWTAC will continue to evaluate options for a regional strategy to managing wildlife and waste related attractants.

Solid Waste Bylaw

The SWTAC continues to collaborate on technical and operational updates to regional Solid Waste bylaws. It is the intention of the Committee to bring forward bylaw recommendations that are consistent across the region, while continuing to provide for responsible solid waste management.

Education Programs

Education, over the last three years in particular, has been focused on what goes where, in order to reduce unacceptable items ending up in curbside carts. This has been completed using a variety of outreach methods including curbside cart inspections, bin labelling, student ambassadors at events, social media outreach (weekly waste tips), TV ads, and the recycling guide sent to every home.

For 2020 a student ambassador program was planned to take place through the summer, but was delayed. Similar programming with students is now planned to take place in the Fall 2020, and will include curbside cart checks, bin labelling, and student led outreach events where possible.

Financial Considerations:

- Recyclables within the region are currently managed through Recycle BC programs.
- In 2019, the RDCO collected \$36,838 from Recycle BC for depot operations.
- The Recycle BC EPR program is currently funded by producers of paper and packaging.
- Independent recycling initiatives will not be eligible for producer funding, and will require alternative revenue streams, such as the sale of marketable produces and increased user fees.

Organizational Issues:

- Recycle BC currently collects, sorts, markets, and distributes recyclables on behalf of participating regions. A recycling program operating outside of Recycle BCs programming would require additional positions to undertake the same work.

External Implications:

- Current recyclable management within the RDCO and member municipalities aligns with the Solid Waste Management Plan, which advocates for reasonable service levels for the region from all EPR programs and full cost compensation by producers.
- The Solid Waste Management Plan was created with input from the public, local government, and technical experts.

Alternative Recommendation:

None

Attachment(s):

- Recycle BC Home Tour backgrounder
- Waste Reduction Update Presentation