

Staff Report



To	City Council
Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services
Date	Monday, May 25, 2020
Subject	Transition of Blue Box to Producer Responsibility Framework

Recommendation

1. That the City of Guelph state that the preferred transition date for Guelph's Blue Box program as required under the Waste Free Ontario Act is January 1, 2023.
 2. That the City's resolution be forwarded to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.
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Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is for City Council select a preferred transition date between January 1st 2023 and December 31st 2025.

Key Findings

- The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) forwarded a "Call for Action to Pass a Resolution to request Guelph's preferred date of Transition of the Blue Box to Full Producer Responsibility", between January 1st, 2023 and December 31st, 2025. AMO notes that a stated preference may not be the final determination of a transition date, nor does it obligate the municipality by the date that is specified.
- As the City is the operator of the Blue Box program and owner of all assets related to collection and processing the City has the ability to plan to transition at the earliest opportunity.
- As outlined in the December 2nd Waste Free Ontario Act – Update and Key Considerations staff report (Report# IDE-2019-121), work continues to assess potential impacts and service delivery considerations and options including alternate uses for infrastructure and service delivery options.
- The impact of the current COVID 19 Pandemic with respect to transition timelines that has emerged since staff's report in December, if any, is unknown at this time.
- Staff continue to monitor and advocate for Guelph's interests and will report back to Council as new information becomes available.

Financial Implications

Early estimated financial implications are as reported in the December 2nd Waste Free Ontario Act – Update and Key Considerations staff report (Report# IDE-2019-121). Work is ongoing through the Solid Waste Resources Master Plan update to refine potential impacts with respect to revenues, expenditures and assets. Implications and recommendations to Council will be presented as part of the SWMMP update process.

Report

In December, 2019, the President of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) forwarded a “Call for Action to Pass a Resolution about Transition of the Blue Box to Full Producer Responsibility”. This included a request for municipal Councils to pass a resolution outlining their preferred date to transition their Blue Box program to the producer responsibility framework if provided the opportunity to self-determine (between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2025).

The AMO email noted that, while the Province has not yet determined what mechanism will be used to choose when municipalities will transition, AMO believes that individual municipalities are in the best position to decide the best time to make the transition, based on their specific circumstances.

AMO is asking that a Council resolution be passed by June 30, 2020, and that it be directed to AMO and the Ontario Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks (MECP).

The resolution will be used to help map out and coordinate transition timelines across the province in an effort to transition approximately one third of the Blue Box programs throughout the province per year in each, 2023, 2024 and 2025 planned transition years.

Background

Staff continue to monitor and prepare for changes to how waste will be managed in Ontario, and in particular how the new producer responsibility framework will impact City waste operations. The new framework makes producers individually responsible and accountable for their products and packaging at end-of-life, and is an outcome resulting from the enactment of the Waste-Free Ontario Act.

In total there are four programs mandated by the Province to “wind-up” operations as the province transitions to its new producer responsibility framework:

- Used Tire Program (transition completed December 31, 2018; service is now offered to residents by over 80 registered used tire collectors in the City);
- Municipal Hazardous Special Waste (MHSW), effective June 30, 2020 for single-use batteries and effective June 30, 2021 for remaining materials;
- Electrical and Electronic Equipment (EEE), effective December 31, 2020; and
- Blue Box program (Printed Paper and Packaging), starting January 1, 2023 and complete by December 31, 2025.

The City continues to provide services for the recovery of electronic waste, MHSW and Blue Box materials. As part of the Solid Waste Management Master Plan scope, Dillon Consulting has been tasked to develop a transition strategy to decide whether the City should fulfill any producer obligations by operating as a contracted service provider under the producer responsibility framework. While the

development of a transition strategy for all three of these services is underway, the request for Council to state a preference with respect to the transition timeline pertains to the transition of the Blue Box program only due to its relative level of complexity.

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Consultations

Staff will continue to advocate to the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP), Stewardship Ontario, and the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority (RPRA) for Guelph's interests.

It is anticipated that SO's consultation with respect to their transition plan will take place in the Spring of 2020, and MECP's consultation on the new Regulations will take place in the Fall of 2020.

City staff are members of the Regional Public Works Commissioners of Ontario, as well as participants in the Municipal Resource Recovery and Research Collaborative, which includes the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the City of Toronto, the Regional Public Works Commissioners of Ontario and the Municipal Waste Association, and will continue to work with these parties to advocate on the progress of the provincial transition plans.

The City will also be seeking input from the Public Advisory Committee on the Strategy Framework as part of the scope of the Solid Waste Management Master Plan.

Staff are consulting with other City departments including Finance, Communications, Human Resources and Legal Services and will continue to keep Council continually informed of any changes and key milestones as the transition moves forward.

Strategic Plan Alignment

Building our future: Maintain existing community assets and secure new ones.

Through the resolution, the City is expressing its desire to maintain and operate existing assets while transitioning to the new framework. At the same time, the City will explore opportunities for alternative uses for assets post transition.

Working together for our future: Develop a long-term financial and resource strategy that is achievable and affordable.

The new producer responsibility framework offers an opportunity for the City to recoup full funding for operating the Blue Box program or, if conditions imposed by producers do not support full cost recovery, transfer operations to the producers.

Sustaining our future: Mitigate climate change by reducing Guelph's carbon footprint.

One of the overall objectives of the province's circular economy approach is improved resource management through greater recovery, waste reduction, reuse, and recycling, including promotion of design-for-the-environment that would increase the environmental performance of the Blue Box system.

Attachments

Not applicable

Departmental Approval

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