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To: **Committee of the Whole**

Agenda Section: Corporate Services  
Division: Engineering, Planning and Environment  
Department: Solid Waste Management

Item Number: **CCW - 2023-196**

Meeting Date: September 12, 2023

Subject: **Blue Box Transition and Collection Week Change**

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## **Recommendation**

That Item CCW 2023-196, dated September 12, 2023 regarding the Blue Box Transition and Collection Week Change, be received.

## **Executive Summary**

This item provides an update to the County's status for the Blue Box Transition. The Warden and County Clerk have signed an agreement with Circular Materials Ontario (CMO), at the recommendation of staff and further to Item CCW 2022-171, whereby the County will continue to provide recycling collection services on behalf of CMO from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2025. As of January 1, 2026, the entire province will be transitioned to the new recycling system and it is possible, but unlikely, that the County would continue to be responsible for collecting recycling material from residences.

As a result of this change, as of January 1, 2024, the County will no longer be responsible for transferring recycling material using the County owned and operated transfer station (at the Oro Waste Management Facility). In order to operate the Oro transfer station cost effectively for the transfer of garbage, the County will move to a system where half the County receives recycling collection and the other half garbage collection on the same week. Residents will not change the day of the week their collection is on, and organics will continue to be collected weekly however approximately half of County serviced units will have a minor change in the week their material is collected at the beginning of December 2023. Impacted households will have two consecutive recycling collection weeks, November 27 - 30 and December 4-7. These households will be permitted one

additional garbage bag (to be placed beside their cart) on their next garbage week, December 11-14. Residents will be informed of this change through the *Managing Your Waste* newsletter, through the *2024 Waste Calendar* and, for the half of the County that will experience the change, a postcard by direct mail. As of October all residents will be able to look up their address to see if they are changing by going to the website, using the *Simcoe County Collects App* or by calling Service Simcoe.

### **Background/Analysis/Options**

Ontario Regulation 391/21 – Blue Box, under the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, establishes requirements for the producers of blue box material to set up their own collection system by January 1, 2026, with a transition period from July 1, 2023 through to December 31, 2025. The County of Simcoe was provided a transition date of January 1, 2024. Circular Materials Ontario is the Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) acting on behalf of producers to set up the collection system.

As approved through CCW 2022-171, County Council provided delegated authority for staff to negotiate with Circular Materials Ontario (CMO) on the curbside collection, depot collection and promotion and education services for recycling. Staff worked with CMO to negotiate an agreement, which was signed by the Warden and County Clerk, at staff's recommendation, whereby the County will continue to provide the recycling services on behalf of CMO from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2025. For this period there will be no change to the method of collection or the types of materials being collected. As of January 1, 2026, there is still a possibility, though unlikely, that the County may continue to be responsible for curbside recycling collection. It is more likely that CMO will contract separately for these services and the County of Simcoe will no longer be responsible for collecting recycling material from residences.

### **Future Changes to Serviced Properties for Recycling**

The Blue Box Regulation requires producers to provide recycling collection services for residential locations, schools and non-profit long term care homes/seniors residences; however, the producer is not responsible for the collection of recycling material from Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (IC&I) properties. During transition, in 2024 and 2025, the County has arranged with CMO that recycling will continue to be collected from IC&I properties and the County will continue to bear the responsibility for collection costs from these units and be required to reimburse CMO for the transfer and processing of these materials. During the transition period no new IC&I locations may be added to the collection route however these properties can drop off recycling material at a waste facility. As of January 1, 2026, when CMO is to fully take over recycling collection, they will no longer accept the IC&I material in the same truck as the residential material. As a result, staff will be bringing a report to Council in 2024 to address whether to continue to offer curbside recycling collection for IC&I properties as of January 1, 2026 and, if directed to provide service, staff will also recommend options for the method of service. Alternatively, staff will advise on ways to inform these businesses of the cessation of this service.

It is noted that County staff will continue to utilize our voice with the province and various bodies such as the AMO and the Regional Public Works Commissioners of Ontario to encourage the servicing of IC&I locations with the same trucks as residential recycling provided that the volumes of recyclables generated at those locations are similar to what would be expected from residential units.

The County is not mandated to collect recycling from multi-residential properties (6 units or greater) however those multi-residential properties where units have ownership of waste (individual driveways to place their waste at) may apply to the County to receive curbside collection. Multi-residential properties that do not currently receive recycling collection from the County may apply to receive a financial subsidy which offsets the cost of private collection. In 2026, all multi-residential properties are eligible to be serviced for recycling collection through a Producer Responsibility Organization such as CMO. Since the County, in all likelihood, will no longer be responsible for recycling collection as of 2026 the current subsidy program will be required to be updated and a report will be brought to Council for consideration prior to 2026. The current subsidy program will remain in effect until December 31, 2025.

### Collection Week Change

As of January 1, 2024 the County of Simcoe will no longer be required to transfer recycling collected curbside. CMO has contracted their own transfer facility located in the City of Barrie to transfer this material. This means that the County's collection trucks will be required to empty recycling at the location designated by CMO and then proceed to the County's transfer station to empty organics. As a result of this change, the County will be splitting each collection day into two zones. Zone 1 will receive garbage collection and Zone 2 will receive recycling collection and then alternate for the next week. Residents will not change the day of the week their material is collected, and organics will continue to be collected weekly. Further rationale is provided below:

Currently, the majority of the recycling material being collected curbside is brought to the transfer station located at the Oro Site with small amounts transferred also at the North Simcoe and Nottawasaga Sites. The transfer station at Oro accepts garbage from the whole County on week one and recycling on week two. Once recycling is removed the County would only be using the facility every other week. To staff and service the facility consistently, transferring garbage every week is the most effective use of the facility and staff time.

Another aspect is the haulage of material from the transfer station to the processor or final disposal location. Currently, the County has one hauler which uses the same trucks to haul garbage week one and recycling week two. The current haulage contract ends as of December 31, 2023 therefore staff are procuring a new haulage contract for only the haulage of garbage. Should this change not occur, transporting material every other week will likely result in significantly higher costs as the hauler would only be able to guarantee loads half the time making it difficult to staff and capitalize the use of the trucks. By having consistent loads to be scheduled each week the hauler would be able to optimize the

trucks and staffing needed for the work and our own transfer station will be able to be staffed and used more efficiently and effectively.

The collection week change would occur the first full week of December 2023. Residents' collection day would not change however half the residents will be required to change collection weeks for garbage/recycling; organics will continue to be collected weekly. Impacted households will have two consecutive recycling collection weeks, November 27 - 30 and December 4-7. These households will be permitted one additional garbage bag (to be placed beside their cart) on their next garbage week, December 11-14. After this, residents will continue with the regular every other week schedule. The following table outlines the schedule:

	<b>Zone 1</b>	<b>Zone 2</b>
November 27 – 30	Recycling	Recycling
December 4 – 7	Garbage	Recycling
December 11 – 14	Recycling	Garbage (1 extra bag permitted)
December 18 – 21	Garbage	Recycling
December 26 – 29	Recycling	Garbage

In October, residents will be able to look up their address via the County website, on the *Simcoe County Collects App* or by calling Service Simcoe to find out if they are in an area with the collection week change. Residents will receive an initial notice through the *Managing Your Waste* newsletter in October and will receive the *2024 Waste Calendar* in November which will outline the schedule starting in December 2023. A postcard sized notice will be sent in November to those actually changing collection weeks, approximately half the County.

**Financial and Resource Implications**

An additional expense of approximately \$40,000, which was not accounted for in the 2023 operating budget will be incurred for the purposes of the additional promotion and education due to the collection week change.

The 2024 operating budget will reflect the changes to the funding received for the recycling program. Historically approximately 50% of the cost for the recycling program was funded through the producers and the County received all the revenue from marketing the recycling material. With the new Individual Producer Responsibility model 100% of the cost of collection will be funded by producers for residential properties, schools and non-profit long term care homes/seniors residences however the cost to transfer and process material from the IC&I sector will be borne by the County. The County will also not receive any of the revenue with respect to the marketing of the recycling material.

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**Relationship to Corporate Strategic Plan**

The Regulations under the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act align with the County's Solid Waste Management Strategy, in continuing to advocate for waste reduction and increased diversion. It also aligns with the County's Corporate Strategic Plan to preserve, conserve, and safeguard our environment and natural resources, while recognizing opportunity, innovation, and the needs of our community.

With regard to the CMO agreement it would align with the creation of partnerships with key stakeholders to support communities through the delivery of sustainable services.

**Reference Documents**

- CCW 2022-171 (June 14, 2022) Blue Box Program Transition Update

**Attachments**

There are no attachments to this Item

**Prepared By**                      Laura Barrett, Manager, Collections

**Approvals**

Rob McCullough, Director, Solid Waste Management

Rob Elliott, General Manager, Engineering, Planning & Environment

Trevor Wilcox, General Manager, Corporate Performance

Mark Aitken, Chief Administrative Officer

**Date**

August 25, 2023

August 28, 2023

September 5, 2023

September 6, 2023