

Priorities Committee Meeting_Oct23_2018

REPORT FOR INFORMATION**Green Routine 2.0 – Blue Bag Changes Update****Report Purpose**

To provide the Priorities Committee with an update on the recent changes to the blue bag program under Green Routine 2.0.

Our Prioritized Strategic Goals

Goal 4 - Ensure effective stewardship of water, land, air and energy resources

Report

World-wide recycling changes prompted Strathcona County to alert its residents about necessary modifications to the blue bag program. As soon as the County learned which items were no longer marketable, an extensive resident communication campaign began in June of 2018.

Recognizing that change takes time, the County had three months to help residents develop new routines. The initial communication commenced on June 8, 2018. It generated an important conversation on Facebook, from which the team developed further messaging and communication approaches. Through Facebook, the County reached 109,341 people, with 2,374 engaged (reactions, comments and shares).

Over the course of the summer months, a number of communication tools were used, with emphasis placed on direct conversations with residents at special events that Utilities attended or hosted (Trashfests, Canada Day, farmers markets, etc.).

As part of the education campaign and leading up to the compliance date of September 10, 2018, Utilities prompted residents with reminders about the new waste sorting routine during the weeks of August 27 to September 7, 2018. A reminder door hanger was used when it was found that homeowners were not sorting recycling properly.

As of September 10, 2018, bags refused due to contamination were stickered using an 'Oops! Stickers' to leave instructions for residents in order to help educate on proper waste sorting. Since the changes have come in to effect, Utilities has the following information to report.

- The first two weeks of compliance saw approximately one in eight homes being stickered and requiring correction for the following week.
- During this time frame, some leniency was granted to residents who had overflowing carts; carts were collected and reminders were placed on black carts to ensure that residents kept lids closed in the future. This was less than 8% of households.
- Less than 0.3% of households have opted to get an additional black cart since rolling out the changes.
- Call volume through the Green Routine line has been less than expected; there have been less complaints and more clarifying questions about what is now acceptable.
- There has been increased usage of the Waste Wizard tool since launching the changes in June of 2018; at the time of writing this report, there have been over 17,000 material views (same time frame in 2017 was only 3,000 checks).

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- Initial indication of blue bag volumes shows that tonnage is decreasing as anticipated, however waste tonnages are not increasing equivalently, which may indicate that some households are focusing on reduction and reuse. Utilities will continue to monitor tonnages in relation to the changes.
- Utilities has increased support at the Broadview Enviroservice Station to assist residents and to ensure that materials remain clean and marketable.
- The Ardrossan Recycle Station is an unmanned site; Utilities has increased checks, yet over the course of the summer there has been an upsurge in contamination and dumping.

Overall, feedback to date indicates residents will continue to support waste diversion. Strathcona County residents were trailblazers ten years ago when the Green Routine was first introduced with a curbside recycling program, organics collection and roll-out collection carts.

The global market change is impacting programs across Alberta, and many municipalities are moving in a similar direction to Strathcona County. However, some communities have chosen to continue to collect all materials due to contractual obligations, ability to stockpile or inability to make quick program changes. In addition, some municipalities may use a different material recovery facility that has different technology or processes for separation.

Change communication will continue with a focus on waste sorting habits to improve space in the black cart and the waste hierarchy: reduce and reuse before you recycle. Another area of focus will be on waste as a shared responsibility – residents are ultimately responsible for the waste they produce and the County for the service to remove materials.

Council and Committee History

May 15, 2018	Priorities Committee received an update on the waste diversion program.
March 24, 2015	Council approved Waste Management Bylaw 39-2014, repealing Bylaw 41-2013.
June 25, 2013	Council approved Waste Management Bylaw 41-2013, repealing Bylaw 11-2008.
April 1, 2008	Council approved the Integrated Waste Management Plan and Waste Management Bylaw 11-2008 that supported the implementation of the Green Routine program.

Other Impacts

Policy: n/a

Legislative/Legal: Waste Management Bylaw 39-2014

Interdepartmental: Communications

Master Plan/Framework: n/a

Communication Plan

In coordination with Communications, Utilities will continue to converse with the community about the blue bag changes, including results and next steps.