

Curbside Recycling Program Recommendation

Evaluation Process

After significant research and public consultation, Administration utilized an objective decision making process to consider two program changes to the curbside recycling program. Choosing by Advantages (CBA) is a systematic method for evaluating the value proposition and importance of the advantages each alternative design element provides to an overall program.

Recommended Service

Administration is not recommending any recycling service changes at this time. Administration will consider offering a smaller cart size as part of future service contracts for curbside recycling and increasing frequency at Christmas time.

Service changes that were evaluated included:

- Increasing collection frequency to weekly.
- Changing the cart size to a smaller cart size.

Christmas collection (extra collection at Christmas) was discussed but not specifically evaluated.

Values and Key Considerations for Decision Making

Throughout the decision-making process, administration relied on the Council-approved values to identify the importance of various considerations.

Waste Diversion Potential

Administration considered waste diversion potential as one of the most important factors throughout the decision making process as it responds directly or indirectly to Council-approved values:

- Environmental Values:
 - Impact on landfill life – Less recyclables going to landfill.
 - Waste diversion rate – Increased capture of recyclables.
- Financial value:
 - Life Cycle Costs – The cost of replacing the landfill will be passed on to future generations.

However, the research showed that biweekly and weekly recycling programs have similar diversion. Recycling cart size can become a factor for waste diversion performance when cart capacity is a barrier, but since the option considered was to reduce cart size (not increase) this was not relevant. Additionally, the '2017 Waste

Awareness & Behaviour Survey' showed that 94% of residents were satisfied with the amount of room in their blue cart.

Convenience & Citizen Experience

Convenience & Citizen Experience was also an important factor when assessing the options. It responds to:

- Social Values
 - Public image/perception – considers if the changes to the recycling service result in improved satisfaction due to better service or more diversion.
 - Time, travel, complexity and other measures of convenience – considers if changes to the recycling service result in increased convenience for residents.

Citizen experience of the current recycling program is very good, as measured by the 2017 Waste Awareness & Behaviour Survey that showed that >90% of residents are satisfied with the program. The considered program changes had some advantages with regards to citizen experience.

Weekly vs biweekly collection for recycling

While weekly collection offers a higher level of service to residents which may be more convenient, this does not necessarily equate to increased citizen experience and satisfaction.

During engagement, residents were asked about different scenarios. Of those that responded, half said they would prefer more frequent collection while just as many responded that they were either satisfied with existing collection frequency, or that they would like decreased frequency. It is important to note that feedback was not collected on what residents would be willing to pay for more frequent collection. Administration assumes that more residents would be frustrated by increased utility fees as a result of increased frequency, than those that would be excited about the change. Further, results of the 2017 Waste Awareness & Behaviour Survey showed that 92% of residents are already satisfied with their current frequency of pick up.

Given survey and engagement results, there was no clear advantage in weekly or biweekly collection that would lead to a better citizen experience.

Cart size options for recycling

Engagement results showed that some residents would like to see a smaller recycling cart offered. Results indicated that a smaller cart size would provide a greater level of customization for smaller households (or those with a lack of storage space) and make the program more accessible for those with mobility challenges.

The 2017 Waste Awareness & Behaviour Survey showed that 94% of residents were satisfied with the amount of room in their bin. It was assumed that this meant the

majority of residents were satisfied with their existing cart size and only a small percentage of residents desire a smaller cart size.

Affordability and Cost

Affordability and Cost respond to:

- Financial Values:
 - Cost per user and cost per tonne – the impact on costs, including costs passed on to the user of changing the recycling service.
 - Capital and operating costs – expected increases as a result of changing the service.
 - Susceptibility to inflation and price shocks - renegotiating the contract could result in other changes to contract prices.
- Social Values:
 - Responsiveness to affordability challenges (ability to pay) – any increased cost to the user will have affordability implications.

Switching to weekly recycling collection would lead to a significant increase in collection costs, and would require a capital investment by the contractor to increase their fleet. The result would be increased utility fees for the user.

Offering a smaller cart size would result in increased capital costs to purchase smaller carts, plus operational costs associated with swapping carts. This would likely result in a restocking fee that could be passed on to the user.

Implementation

Implementation considered:

- Social Values:
 - Employee and Public Safety – increased risk as result of the changes.
- Financial Values
 - Immediate and long-term cost impact – changes may be challenging to implement, require contract changes, and have associated operational and capital cost impacts.

Any changes to the curbside recycling program, would result in a renegotiation of the existing contract with Loraas and a change in pricing. The contract expires on December 31, 2019 which is a more reasonable time to consider changes to the program.

Climate Change Implications

Climate Change Implications respond to:

- Environmental Values:
 - Greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions.

Increasing frequency to weekly collection would result in approximately 75% more GHG emissions. Offering an additional recycling cart size would have no significant impact on GHG emissions.

Other Values, that were not relevant to this recommendation included:

- Environmental – Projected impact on groundwater: While reduction of waste generally has an impact, given the nature of recyclables, the impact on groundwater was not an important consideration.
- Social – Alignment with environmental regulations: There are no environmental regulations that will be impacted by the changes.
- Social – Regionalization potential: Changes to the recycling program should not have a regional impact.

How the Program Responds to Themes Identified through Community Engagement

During engagement, many participant comments indicated interest in weekly collection when asked what could improve about their current service level.

However, even more commenters preferred to maintain large carts collected bi-weekly when they were presented with the weekly collection scenario with a medium cart.

Other Comments:

- Clear incentive to recycle in a PAYT utility system.
- Desire to include more materials, like Styrofoam.
- Concern about not accepting plastic bags.
- Emphasis on continuing to accept glass.
- Concerns about improper sorting, desire for more education about what goes where, suggestion to impose fines for improper disposal.