




COMMUNICATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	October 1, 2024
SUBJECT:	Status of Blue Box Program Transition (WM2402) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Angela Storey Director, Waste Management Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

This Communication Update is to provide the Mayor and Members of Council with an update on the status of the transition of Hamilton's Blue Box Program to an Individual Producer Responsibility model. Staff are providing this update to highlight that transition is scheduled to occur in six months from today on April 1, 2025. The information below includes a reminder of the Provincial Regulation and the status as it relates to the steps we are taking to successfully implement the transition in Hamilton.

Background

On June 3, 2021, the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks released O. Reg. 391/21 (Regulation) that transitions the current Blue Box Program to Individual Producer Responsibility and as of January 1, 2026, will transfer 100% of the cost and operating responsibility of the eligible Blue Box Program to producers of paper products and packaging. The transition schedule released with the Regulation assigned April 1, 2025 as the transition date for the City of Hamilton, which will result in a transition period for the City between April 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025.

Ongoing Work Related to Transition

- Staff are engaged in a number of activities to prepare for transition and below are some of these activities that are in progress or will happen over the coming months: Staff continue to participate in consultation activities led by producer organizations, such as Circular Materials Ontario (Circular Materials), and other waste industry associations, such as Waste to Resources Ontario, the Community Improvement

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Fund, the Regional Public Works Commission of Ontario Waste Sub-committee, etc., to learn and to provide input on both the transition.

- Staff were recently informed that Green for Life Environmental Inc. is Circular Materials' preferred operator to collect curbside Blue Box material in Hamilton. This is advantageous to the City as it is Hamilton's current curbside collection contractor. As identified in the Regulation, residents and other eligible sources should not see any changes to the collection of their recyclables during the transition period and the continuity of Green For Life Environmental Inc. as the collection contractor should support this consistent and expected level of service.
- As Council previously approved the continuation of collecting recycling from businesses, City facilities and other non-eligible properties during transition (Report PW24021) and as Green For Life Environmental Inc. has been deemed the preferred operator to collect recyclables during transition, staff have entered into discussions to finalize pricing to collect these properties during the transition. Staff are also in discussion with Circular Materials' contractors on pricing for receiving and processing Blue Box material from non-eligible sources during the transition period.
- An Information Report will be brought to Council in the coming weeks, that will include details on the City entering into an agreement with Circular Materials to continue to accept Blue Box materials from eligible sources at the City's three Community Recycling Centres during the transition period.

Post Transition Work for January 1, 2026

- In early 2025, Staff will bring a Recommendation Report to Council to discuss the collection of recyclables for non-eligible properties.
- Staff are working with Circular Materials to confirm the number and locations of public space recycling containers that will be installed and managed in Hamilton. Based on our size, we estimate our eligibility to be 1500 public space recycling containers.
- Staff are attending waste industry association meetings to learn about how contaminated blue boxes will be handled at the curb to ensure the recycling material left behind does not become the City's to manage as garbage.

Blue Box Transition Communication to Residents

Staff are developing a comprehensive communications plan, which includes methods to ensure that all residents and other stakeholders are well-informed and prepared for the upcoming changes to the Blue Box Program in Hamilton. Staff will provide updates on the Blue Box transition to residents via the City website, social media, printed material, such as the annual waste guide, and communication updates to applicable Committees and the Mayor and City Council. In addition to information being shared on the Blue Box transition by the City, Circular Materials will have a dedicated webpage for Hamilton and information on their own waste app for residents to access. Staff will work with Circular

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Materials to ensure the information is easy to find and easy to understand so residents are able to follow the new program.

For further information, please contact myself or Ryan Kent, Manager of Waste Policy and Planning, at extension 7686.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

N/A