



REQUEST FOR DECISION

File # 5360-02, 7130-02

Report To: Mayor and Council
From: General Manager of Integrated Services
Presenter: Victor Shopland
Subject: Administration Report No. 0055/20
Recycling and Garbage Collection Options
Meeting: Special Open Council Meeting
Meeting Date: 30 Mar 2020

RECOMMENDATION:

"THAT, Council approves increasing garbage collection to weekly with bi-weekly recycling collection until Oct. 31, 2020;
AND THAT, the increase in costs be paid for from the Solid Waste Reserve Fund."

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS:

Support recommendation as it provides a significant increase in garbage collection as well as maintains our recycling program which is used by many in our community.

ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATION:

- 1."THAT, Council approves weekly garbage collection and the cessation of recycling collection until further notice."
- 2."THAT, Council approves additional enforcement to reduce the contamination in the recycling bins."
- 3."THAT, Council receives this report for information only at this time."

KEY ISSUES(S)/ CONCEPTS DEFINED: There have been concerns related to considerable non-recyclable materials contaminating the material in the recycling bins as well as the potential health and safety risks to the workers at the recycling depot. With the COVID-19 pandemic, people are home more, changing their dining habits, eating mostly at home - through more take out orders or cooking at home because of the closure of dining rooms in

restaurants. This may result in more contamination in the recycling stream as peoples garbage bin fills up and they use the recycle bin to get rid of garbage. Additionally, with people forced to be home, projects or clean-up may result in additional volumes of waste being generated. This report provides some options for Council's consideration regarding this issue.

RELEVANT POLICY:

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION

COMPLIANCE WITH STRATEGIC GOALS:

Goal No. 2 - Demonstrate leadership in environmental responsibility through sustainable and effective practices for municipal operations.

Goal No. 3 - Build and manage public assets and human resources that support the current and future needs of the community.

COMPLIANCE WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: This change is not one of Council's strategic priorities.

GENERAL:

Since the inception of the recycling program there has been a problem with contamination of the recycling stream by people deliberately putting garbage in the recycle bins, plus other more innocent contamination. This includes whole bags of garbage, dirty diapers, cat litter and other animal feces, and a number of other items that do not belong in the recycle stream. With the pandemic, there are more concerns that the garbage cart will overflow and more people will be tempted to throw the wrong things into the recycling cart. There have also been concerns expressed regarding the health and safety of the workers at the recycling depot that have to handle this material, especially since they have to remove and handle the contaminated material, whereas they don't have to physically handle the actually recyclable materials.

Below is an extract from the Province related to essential services:

(Portion of the) - List of Essential Services in B.C. during COVID-19 pandemic:

- waste (garbage and organics) and recycling collection, processing and disposal

As solid waste and recycling are listed as essential services, the recycling

depot has to remain open through the pandemic to receive and process our recycling. The operator has assured staff that all necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) is being utilized to ensure worker safety.

Options for mitigating this risk are:

- 1) stop collecting recycling and move to weekly garbage collection (cost implications)
- 2) continue collecting recycling and move to weekly garbage collection (cost implications)
- 3) additional enforcement (staffing implications)
- 4) status quo (potentially worse contamination)

Implications of Options

Option 1 - This would be the same as it was prior to recycling. There are essentially 4 collections that occur per month, there would still be 4 collections per month (unless there is a fifth week), so the cost of collection would stay the same. The cost implication would come from an potential increase in landfill costs. Currently we pay \$55/tonne for sorted household waste, for unsorted waste the fee is \$110/tonne. In 2019 there were 4113 tonnes (approximately 343 tonnes per month) of household waste hauled to the landfill (this number would increase by the amount of recycling that is no longer diverted, approximately 80 tonnes per month). If the landfill charged us the higher rate, (which frequently happened prior to recycling) then the cost per month could increase to approximately \$46,500 per month from the current landfill cost of about \$18,900. If Council chooses to continue this form of operation until the contract end on Oct. 31, 2020 (7 months) then the costs could be \$325,500 compared to \$132,300 (an increase of almost \$200,000. Additionally corrugated cardboard is a restricted waste at the landfill and if any loads are deemed to contain more than 25% corrugated cardboard then the whole load would be charged at \$250/tonne. Loads can range widely in weight up to 11 tonnes, this would increase a truckload from (using 11 tonnes) from \$605 to \$2750. To further complicate this cost analysis - there would be cost savings that would come back through the Regional District allocation process as there would be less costs related to recycling.

Option 2 - The cost implication would be from the increased number of collections, by changing from bi-weekly garbage collection to weekly. The contractor currently charges \$6/month/household unit. Using 4 collections per month that equals \$1.50 per week, increasing this by two collection per month would increase the cost by \$3/month/unit to \$9/month/unit. The contractor has already provided written agreement that this would be the adjusted cost. There are just under 7000 household units

that we provide collection for. The increased cost would be approximately \$21,000/month or \$147,000 for 7 months. Staff would recommend that if this option were implemented, that the change would continue until the end of this current contract.

Option 3 - Increased enforcement - As we are trying to limit exposure and keep people home to flatten the pandemic curve, this option is not practical at this time.

Option 4 - Status Quo - There has been a large amount of contamination each week in the recycling stream. Something really should be changed, with the new tender that will be issued this year for collection, there will likely be added technology to help identify households that place contaminated materials in the recycling bins, this is not available with the existing trucks. Over the next few months it is likely that the level of garbage in the recycling bins will increase as peoples normal behavior changes.

If curbside recycling collection was temporarily suspended, then there would likely be an increase in traffic at the depot as many people would still want to recycle and "do the right thing".

ORGANIZATIONAL:

FINANCIAL:

Both options 1 and 2 have cost implications. Council may choose to pass this cost on to the residents (an additional \$3/month/unit) or an alternative option is use the funds that are currently in the solid waste reserve to pay for the increase for the duration of the change in operation. At the end of 2019 there was \$211,947 in this reserve. Residents are charged \$10/month/unit for solid waste collection and recycling. The collection costs currently are \$6/month/unit and then the landfill costs and some staff costs account for the rest of the charge. Over the last few years there has been some modest surpluses that have accrued to form this reserve. Solid Waste is a cost centre that is supposed to be self funded and the reserve is required if there are unusual costs in a budget year.

An unintended consequence of a change to weekly garbage collection may be that people that now have additional garbage carts may want to return them.

FOLLOW UP ACTION: If Council approves the recommendation, then

communication with the contractor would occur and weekly collection of garbage would start with the first additional collection happening on the week of April 6. Communication to the residents of Fort St. John would start immediately.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:

COMMUNICATION:

DEPARTMENTS CONSULTED ON THIS REPORT:

Attachments:

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Victor Shopland, General Manager of Integrated Services
27 Mar 2020