

DATE OF MEETING JULY 5, 2021

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SUBJECT CURBSIDE RECYCLING CONTAMINATION

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To provide Council with an update on the Residential Curbside Recycling Contamination Levels and Recycle BC requirements and expectations for developing a Contamination Remediation Plan.

BACKGROUND

The Province of British Columbia provides “product stewardship” to improve access to recycling markets to the residents and businesses across BC through Extended Producer Responsibility Programs (EPRP’s). These EPRP’s are regulated through the Recycling Regulation within the *Environmental Management Act*. The EPRP’s require businesses that supply designated materials (“producers”) to be responsible for the cost of collecting, sorting, and recycling these materials. There are multiple not-for-profit organizations that collect funding from the producers that organize the collection, sorting, and recycling. Recycle BC is responsible for residential packaging and paper recycling in BC.

As part of the Residential Waste Collection Services, the City of Nanaimo provides curbside recycling collection (Blue Cart) on behalf of Recycle BC. Materials accepted in the program are household mixed paper, cardboard, plastic containers, paper packaging for liquids, and aluminum food containers. Contamination is a major obstacle in the recycling process and occurs when non-recyclable materials are introduced into the recycling carts. Some examples of contamination include:

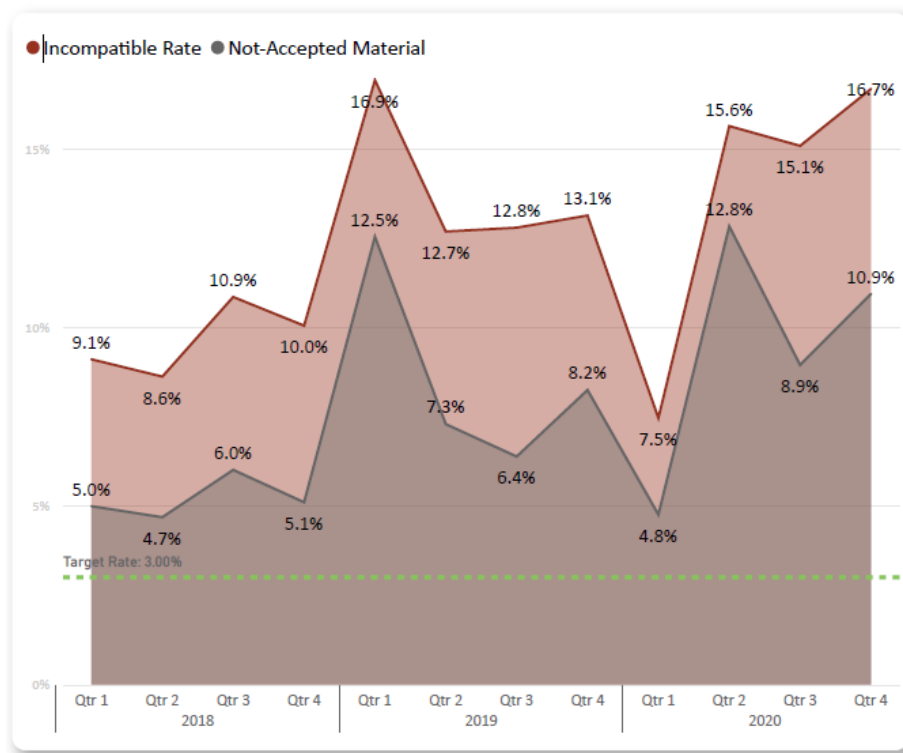
- Hazardous material, including batteries, propane or butane cylinders, needles, lighters etc.
- Containers with food or liquid inside
- Hard/Softcover Books

The target contamination rate in the contract between the City and Recycle BC is set to 3% or less, and Recycle BC performs quarterly audits to measure this contamination rate.]]

DISCUSSION

City Staff have continuously monitored curbside contamination rates since the inception of the Automated Collection Program, through an outreach public education program including targeted handouts, news releases, online advertisements, and in person conversations.

Despite these efforts, Recycle BC analysis shows that the contamination rate has been above the target rate and has increased in the past two years.



Similar increase in contamination are present in other municipalities when transitioning from Manual Collection to Automated Collection Programs.

On May 28, 2021 Recycle BC requested the City of Nanaimo develop and submit a formal Contamination Remediation Plan for the Curbside Recycling Program (CRP). The plan is to outline actions and procedures to be implemented for the purpose of contamination reduction in order to maintain compliance with program requirements. Primary points of concern are the high level of not accepted materials found in the CRP (currently averaging above 8%), and the high level of incompatible materials, specifically film plastics and other flexible plastics, being collected in the CRP. Considering the recent staffing changes in the Sanitation Team, Recycle BC has agreed to extend the submission date from July 23, 2021 to August 27, 2021 for the Contamination Remediation Plan.

CONCLUSION

City Staff will develop the Contamination Remediation Plan, as outlined by Recycle BC.
The plan will include:

- Promotion and Education
- Monitoring
- Training
- Enforcement
- Tracking

The plan will be presented to Council before the final submission. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- The contamination rate in the Curbside Recycling Program has been above the 3% target rate and has increased in the past two years.
- Recycle BC requested the City of Nanaimo to develop and submit a formal Contamination Remediation Plan by August 27, 2021.
- City Staff will develop and implement a Contamination Remediation Plan including:
 - Promotion and Education
 - Monitoring
 - Training
 - Enforcement
 - Tracking

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Contamination Scorecard

Attachment B - Request to submit Contamination Remediation Plan |

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