

The Corporation of the City of Kawartha Lakes
Council Report

Report Number WM2020-010

Meeting Date: July 28, 2020

Title: Use of Large Roll-Out Carts for Curbside Collection

Description: Feasibility assessment of using large roll-out carts for public curbside waste and recycling collection

Ward Number: All

Author and Title: David Kerr, Manager of Environmental Services

Recommendation(s):

That Report 2020-010, Use of Large Roll-Out Carts for Curbside Collection, be received; and

That Council maintains the current By-Law 2016-144 that prohibits the use of large roll-out recycling carts for public curbside recycling collection except for Industrial, Commercial, Institutional, high density multi-residential and seasonal trailer park applications, and that prohibits the use of large roll-out carts for curbside waste collection.

Department Head: _____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Background:

Staff have reviewed the merit of allowing people living in low density residential locations (less than 3 units) to use large roll-out carts for their curbside recycling and/or waste collection. Although this practice is not allowed as per the City's Waste Management By-Law 2016-144 it has occurred to a limited degree within the City. This issue was identified by staff through increased monitoring of the curbside collection contract. As a result, staff had requested Miller Waste Systems Inc. to cease this practice, sticker the carts and not collect from them. Some members of the public did not agree with this approach and have requested the City to allow them to use large carts.

In the interim and in the interest of not leaving waste and recyclables at curbside during this pandemic state, staff have asked Miller Waste Systems Inc. to continue collecting from these carts until Council provides direction.

The intention of this report is to discuss the pros and cons of using these carts for ongoing curbside collection so that Council has the information needed to provide direction on how to proceed.

As further background, By-Law 2016-144 (A By-Law for Collection and Management of Waste and Recyclables within the City of Kawartha Lakes) states that the large carts (65 and 95 gallon sizes) are approved only for the following locations:

- Industrial, Commercial or Institutional Building and Resort Recyclable Material – a maximum of four (4) at each collection location
- High Density Multi-Residential Buildings (3 or more units) and Seasonal Trailer Park Recyclable Material – unlimited recycling at each collection location

Low Density Residential Buildings are allowed unlimited recycling in 14 – 22 gallon green or blue recycling boxes or similar sized containers. The use of these large carts for Low Density Residential Buildings are not permitted.

As well, large carts are not permitted for curbside municipal waste collection within the City. Acceptable containers for waste are listed in the By-Law as approximately 15 gallons in size.

In order to ensure the public is following the By-Law and prior to the pandemic state, large carts for waste and recycling have been left behind and tagged (with a sticker that explains the reasoning). Providing this education and training ensures that the City and the contractor are delivering a consistent message to the public which aims at increasing the City's diversion rate. Increased diversion extends landfill life and lowers the cost for processing of recyclables.

This following section provides further details on the pros and cons of roll-out carts and provides recommendations for Councils' consideration.

Rationale:

Large roll-out carts are popular for the following reasons:

- Reduction in litter: this heavier type of bin with lids attached is much less prone to scattering litter on collection days
- Ergonomic benefits: the mechanics on the truck do the majority of the labor that would normally be completed by collection staff
- Convenience and ease for the residents: with wheels and a handle, residents do not have to lift these to the curb
- Hesitancy to change: there are some people within the city that purchased these bins and have been using them for multiple years with no issue until recently, and they want to continue this practice

However, the following reasons are why use of roll-out carts is not ideal:

1. Hidden Waste: Roll-out carts are proven to increase contamination by up to 20%, as studied by other municipalities and the Continuous Improvement Fund (CIF). Large roll-out carts make it extremely easy to hide material that should not be in and are more difficult to assess for contamination.
2. Increase in residual waste: Roll-out carts would potentially cause a 20% increase in residual waste at our MRF (material recovery facility). In 2019, 820.28 tonnes (12.31%) of waste was found in our recycling stream and ended up being landfilled. This cost the City over \$86,000 to process and dispose. Allowing wide spread use of roll-out carts would increase costs for our MRF contract and cost more for transportation of waste to and from the MRF.
3. City integrated Waste Strategy: In 2020, Council approved the reduction of the amount of allowable waste in recycling from 20% to 10%. It would be challenging to enforce this By-Law amendment and Waste Strategy initiative with the widespread use of large roll-out carts.
4. Needles/sharps/syringes and hazardous materials: These materials are more common in roll-out carts than in standard blue or green boxes. Unfortunately, these items are only noticed after they have been emptied into the truck, and it is then too late to remove them. There have been multiple occurrences in Kawartha Lakes where an entire waste disposal truck of recycling has had to be emptied and disposed of in the landfill due to this contamination which is costly for the municipality.

5. Increase contract costs for our curbside collection contract:

Although some households have been receiving curbside collection of their roll-out carts, the curbside collection contract does not include roll-out cart collection for every location in Kawartha Lakes. With over 38,000 stops in the municipality, the majority of residences do not use/nor have they ever used recycling carts.

According to Miller Waste Systems Inc., allowing residential use of these large carts increases the amount of time per stop (on average) by approximately 30 to 45 seconds, due to the longer time required to operate the mechanized arm on the trucks. Also, not all trucks in the Miller fleet have this mechanism installed and the arms are more expensive to maintain. As a result, Miller has indicated physical modifications to trucks would be required to accommodate widespread use of roll-out carts. Although the exact cost could not be given as formal contract talks with Miller would have to first take place, Miller has provided preliminary estimates of over \$1.0 million for modifications to the existing fleet.

6. Incompatibility of some carts with the collection vehicles:

Currently the City maintains inventory for sale of stock 65 and 95 gallon roll-out carts for approved locations only. These can be lifted by the Miller trucks. There are many similar types of containers commercially available that do not have the proper lift bar to be lifted by Miller. When these other carts are emptied the collection staff must lift them manually which is onerous on staff. This is a health and safety hazard as the carts are heavy and awkward to lift or bend into to retrieve garbage bags.

7. Experience of other Municipalities

We do not use large carts similar to many other municipalities such as Niagara, Durham, Halton, Waterloo, Kingston, Sudbury, Northumberland and Peterborough. Peel conducted a pilot program for the use of carts and ultimately decided to move forward with them for residential use. They noted many difficulties with the carts such as increased contamination and increased downtimes at the curb and at their MRF. They found that if left unchecked they would incur an additional \$490,000 in expenses from these issues above their already increased operational costs. In order to control these expenses, they had to hire 21 staff to perform curbside waste audits.

In summary, based on the experience of other municipalities and studies indicating carts are more expensive, there is compelling rationale to recommend that the use of carts for all curbside collection not be considered further.

Other Alternatives Considered:

The alternative is to allow carts to be used at all 38,000 stops. This option would come at significant expense to the City and resultant lowering of our diversion rate. Although there are convenience factors that favor carts over boxes they do not outweigh the reasons to not use them.

Financial/Operation Impacts:

Staff's recommendation to continue services as they are currently outlined in the By-Law would come at no additional cost to the City.

Allowing every location to use the carts for just recycling would be an estimated increase of over \$1.5 million over the life of the operations contract.

In addition to the initial vehicle modification costs identified above potentially in excess of \$1.0 million, it is anticipated there will be additional costs for disposal of non recyclables (residuals) that end up in the recyclable stream at the MRF. Currently the MRF charges us approximately \$75,000 for residual disposal which is about 12% of our total volume of recyclables. Based on experience from other municipalities using carts could easily double the residual contamination portion of the recyclable stream costing the municipality approximately \$75,000 in additional annual costs. Extrapolating this estimated increased cost over the 7-year life of the contract is an additional \$~500,000.

These estimates are for using carts for recycling only and if the carts were used for waste as well the cost would be significantly greater.

Relationship of Recommendation(s) To the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan:

The staff recommendation is consistent with A Healthy Environment, one of the four Strategic Priorities in the Plan. The staff recommendation will help increase waste reduction and diversion. The key performance indicator for increasing waste reduction and diversion is to execute the updated Integrated Waste Management Strategy. Council has been very supportive of these initiatives and had recently requested fast tracking them. An example is reducing the amount of allowable waste in recycling from 20% to 10%. The staff recommendation will help achieve these targets.

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