

Proposed Actions to Achieve 60% Residential Waste Diversion Blue Box (Blue Cart) Recycling Improvements – Increase capture of recyclables

1. Increase capture of recyclables

Summary:

- The responsibility for the Blue Box program will be transferred to industry in the future (as early as 2023 based on current legislation and policy timelines);
- the province will mandate increased capture of recyclables from the current 63% (provincial average) to 75%; and
- Other proposed initiatives (bi-weekly garbage collection, reduced container limits, consideration of user pay or clear bags) will encourage more use of the existing program.
- These changes will increase London's diversion rate by an additional 2% to 3% and the transition of all Blue Box costs to industry will reduce the City's waste diversion costs by \$1.5 to \$1.8 million dollars per year.



Existing Program

The City provides opportunities to recycle Blue Box materials through its curbside, multi-residential, depot and public space recycling programs. The City diverted approximately 23,000 tonnes of recyclables in 2017. This is approximately 14% of all residential garbage.

The City collects a wide range of materials which has increased over the years.

Most items in the Blue Box are common to municipalities, with the key differences being: plastic film (e.g., plastic bags) and expanded polystyrene (e.g., Styrofoam™). London has not added plastic film and expanded polystyrene to its program due to the high costs and limited markets.

It is expected that a common basket of materials to be recycled will be established once responsibility for the program is transferred to industry. For this reason, no changes to the materials collected are planned for London in the near future.

Why doesn't the City recycle Expanded Foam Polystyrene (EPS) and film plastic?

- ✓ EPS does not have stable markets and can contaminate other materials at the recycling facility.
- ✓ Film plastic wraps around moving equipment parts at the recycling facility and is costly to collect and process.

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Information on materials collected in the City's Blue Box program can be found in Appendix A of the 60% Diversion Action Plan.

New Provincial Direction

The existing Blue Box Program Plan (2003) is based on a cost share model of 50/50 between municipal governments and the companies that produce the Paper Products and Packaging (PPP) collected in the Blue Box Program. The programs are being managed and operated by Ontario municipalities.

The new proposed model is a combination of extended producer responsibility (EPR) and eventually moving to Individual Producer Responsibility (IPR) (also commonly called full producer responsibility). It is based on individual producers being legally and fully responsible for meeting outcomes set by the government, which would include waste diversion targets, service standards, promotion and education requirements and administrative penalties. Industry would fund 100% of the recycling costs of their products and product packaging.

The current Blue Box program diverts approximately 63% of all designated recyclables. The province has indicated that a capture rate of 75% of all designated recyclables may be more appropriate under the new model.

The Strategy for a Waste-Free Ontario (2017) shows the transition of the Blue Box Program to the new model being completed by 2023. In February 2018, Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority (RPRA) announced that "In light of comments received on this consultation draft [the report cover above], Stewardship Ontario and the Authority have determined that more time is needed to address the comments received." As of end of June 2018, no further details have been released.

