

Niagara Regional Council
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

February 26, 2025

Re: Urgent Request to Maintain Recycling Services for Lincoln, West Lincoln and Grimsby Business Areas

Dear Regional Councillors,

On behalf of the West Niagara Chamber of Commerces representing Grimsby, Lincoln and West Lincoln, we strongly urge you to reject staff's recommendation to exclude the business areas of Lincoln from Niagara Region's recycling collection services. This decision will have significant financial, environmental, and operational consequences for our business communities, which play a crucial role in supporting local economic development, enhancing community beautification, and organizing events that attract both residents and visitors.

Environmental and Economic Consequences

Recycling is a cornerstone of responsible waste management and a key element of Niagara Region's own sustainability goals. The proposed elimination of recycling collection for these business areas would:

- **Increase landfill waste:** Businesses that have relied on regional recycling collection will be forced to divert excess recyclable materials into landfill waste streams, undermining the Region's own environmental commitments.
- **Contradict the Region's waste diversion programs:** The proposed decision is inconsistent with initiatives like the Niagara Region Business Waste Reduction and Diversion program, which encourages businesses to reduce their environmental footprint.
- **Impose financial burdens on small businesses:** Without regional recycling services, businesses will need to contract private waste management services, adding costs that disproportionately affect small business owners.
- **Create enforcement challenges:** Without a clear and cost-effective alternative, some businesses may resort to improper disposal methods, increasing contamination and burdening enforcement efforts.
- **Threaten the cleanliness and attractiveness of downtown areas:** Our Chambers of Commerce invest significantly in business development, sustainability initiatives, and community support programs. These efforts enhance the vibrancy and appeal of our downtown areas, fostering economic growth and social engagement. Excess waste buildup could undermine these investments, negatively impacting both the aesthetics and the overall health of our local business environments.

Flawed Consultation Process and Unreasonable Timeline

The process by which this decision was communicated to our chambers has been flawed and rushed, providing insufficient time for meaningful stakeholder engagement.

Key concerns include:

- **Delayed initial outreach:** Niagara Region staff first contacted a single Chamber on December 18, 2024, inviting them to webinars on January 9 and 14, 2025. That Chamber relayed the information to others, at which point we learned about the potential elimination of services.
- **Limited time for advocacy:** Chambers of Commerce were asked to submit letters to the province, which some did. However, the call for a provincial election has paused these efforts, deprioritizing our concerns during the election period.
- **Failure to provide timely updates:** The staff report was only received on February 24, leaving us with virtually no time to consult with boards, engage with members, or advocate for alternatives before a final decision is made.

A Reasonable Compromise: Retaining Recycling Services for Business Areas

The Region has an opportunity to reduce costs while still maintaining recycling collection in the business areas. This aligns with the recent Council motion supporting Niagara's business community and advocating for economic resilience. The projected savings of approximately \$600,000 (42%) from reducing services outside these business areas demonstrate that a compromise is feasible without eliminating recycling collection for businesses in our downtown cores.

Furthermore, 4,375 non-eligible source properties currently rely on curbside recycling services. Eliminating this service without a viable alternative will create disruption, increase waste management costs for businesses, and burden an already strained landfill system. Instead of a blanket elimination, we urge Council to work with the Province to develop a more effective solution that ensures recycling support for our businesses while addressing financial sustainability.

Our Request

We respectfully urge Niagara Region's Councillors to:

Reject the proposed option to lapse recycling collection for all non-eligible sources and support the option of providing separate recycling collection for non-eligible sources inside business areas only.

West Niagara businesses are vital to the economic and cultural fabric of Niagara Region, and we must be included in waste diversion strategies that align with both environmental and economic sustainability goals. We are ready to work collaboratively with the Region to develop a solution that supports businesses while maintaining Niagara's commitment to sustainability.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your support in ensuring the continued success and sustainability of Grimsby, West Lincoln and Lincoln's business areas.

Sincerely,
Lincoln Chamber of Commerce
West Lincoln Chamber of Commerce
Grimsby Chamber of Commerce