
MEMORANDUM

WMPSC-C 37-2019

Subject: Anti-Litter Initiatives – Blue Box Lid

Date: Monday, October 28, 2019

To: Waste Management Planning Steering Committee

From: Lucy McGovern, Collection & Diversion Program Manager

The purpose of this memorandum is to advise members of the Waste Management Planning Steering Committee (WMPSC) of initiatives planned to support the reduction of litter observed in Niagara Region communities and to complement the Region's existing Anti-Litter campaign.

Current Initiatives

The last updates on recycling container lids/covers (lids) and options to reduce windblown litter were presented to the Waste Management Planning Steering Committee on June 26, 2017 (WMPSC-C 25-2017) and February 25, 2019 (WMPSC-C 11-2019). These memos outline the Region's deliberation of recycling container lid options, the pros and cons related to these options, and the consideration that was made for recycling carts with lids. The memos also summarize the progression and development of how the Niagara Region has addressed the issue of litter. The Region's current approach to dealing with wind-blown litter includes the following:

- Providing recycling boxes with a larger capacity of 83 litres (approximate increase of 30%) to minimize the overfilling of recyclables
- Allowing clear bags and containers with a lid that is clearly marked 'Recycling' as an alternative recycling container
- Advising residents that they are able to purchase and use their own recycling box covers/lids
- Reminding residents that there are no limits to the quantity of recyclables that they are allowed to place at the curbside and advising them to consider holding on to their recycling for set-out the following week when conditions are more favourable (i.e. not windy).
- Using social marketing and outreach initiatives to encourage good recycling box set-out practices and anti-litter campaigns

Anti-Litter Campaign

In May 2019, Niagara Region initiated an Anti-Litter awareness campaign which included targeted public space advertising in litter hot spots (i.e. bus shelters or waste

containers), web promotion, and social media posts and advertisement (see WMPSC-C 19-2019). As part of this campaign, municipal representation was sought to initiate a working group to tackle the problem of litter in Niagara. Next steps include the development of this working group and an expansion of the Anti-Litter campaign in 2020 where the working group will connect with local community clean up groups.

New Initiative

During the first week of November 2019, Region staff will distribute one blue recycling box and one locally sourced, vented, plastic recycling box lid, to a total of 350 households in Lincoln and residential student areas in Thorold (see Appendix A for a photo of the recycling box and vented lid). These zones were selected based on resident and Councillor comments and concerns in these known problem litter areas (see Appendix B for a list of eligible household addresses).

A promotional card will accompany each blue recycling box and lid to promote the use of the provided tools to help reduce litter on their curbside recycling collection day. Niagara's recycling program is a dual stream program which collects recycling from the curbside from blue boxes (containers and rigid plastic packaging), and from grey boxes (paper, cardboard and bundled plastic bags). The promotional card will encourage residents to place the blue recycling box with lid on top of the grey recycling box at the curb on their collection day to reduce the potential of litter from both boxes. Additional tips to encourage the reduction of litter will also be provided.

To solicit feedback from residents in the test areas on their experience with the recycling box and lid, the promotional card will request user participation in a short online survey. The survey will open two weeks after residents receive their recycling box and lid, and remain open for a period of two weeks. An incentive prize of a \$100 VISA gift card will be offered to encourage residents to participate in the survey. A call-in option to respond to the survey by telephone via the Waste Info-Line will also be provided.

A limited supply of approximately 150 of the vented, rigid, plastic lids will also be available at the Region's Recycling Centre for free distribution to any resident that may enquire about the availability of the lid. Historically, Niagara Region has purchased recycling containers through a competitive process from a number of different manufacturers. The available lids will fit the recycling boxes currently distributed and sold by Niagara Region, however, these lids may not fit the wide variety of recycling boxes in use by all Niagara residents.

The cost of this initiative is expected to be approximately \$3,300, which can be accommodated within the 2019 operating budget, and includes the cost of the program boxes and lids, as well as the design and printing of the promotional cards.

Next Steps

Niagara Region will continue to monitor other municipal programs, such as Durham's blue box lid project, and bring the results of Niagara's survey back to the WMPSC, to discuss the expansion and development of the Anti-Litter working group in the first quarter of 2020.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Lucy McGovern
Collection & Diversion Program Manager

Appendices

Appendix A – Photo of blue recycling box with lid

Appendix B – Program test zones