



Staff Report for Council Meeting

Date of Meeting: November 25, 2020

Report Number: SRCS.20.29

Department: Community Services
Division: Public Works Operation

Subject: **SRCS.20.29 – Recycling at Super Mailboxes**

Purpose:

To update Council on the recycling program at super mailbox locations and to provide a recommendation for this program moving forward.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That the City continue to provide weekly collection services to the existing recycling containers installed at 210 super mailbox locations
- b) That the City no longer accept new requests for installation of recycling containers at additional super mailbox locations.

Contact Person:

Grant Taylor, Director, Public Works Operations, extension 2966

Vlad Gaiu, Manager, Energy and Waste, Public Works Operations, extension 2524

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Darlene Joslin, Commissioner of Community Services

Approved by: Mary-Anne Dempster, City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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Background:

There are approximately 1,300 residential super mailboxes located in neighborhoods throughout Richmond Hill. Occasionally the City receives complaints from residents regarding litter found around these mailboxes. Most of the litter comes from unwanted mail that some residents discard near the mailboxes, instead of taking it home with them for recycling. Canada Post was contacted several times by City staff to assist with the litter issues to no avail.

In response to this issue, City staff undertook a pilot project in 2013. Recycling containers were installed at 92 super mailbox locations with reoccurring litter complaints. Permanent recycling containers were installed on concrete pads and they are collected on a weekly basis by the City's waste collection contractor, Miller Waste. Collection is done as part of the regular residential collection routes which means that there is no extra cost to the City for this collection service since the current waste contract is based on a cost per tonne model. In other words, the cost to the City is the same whether recycling is collected from a resident's blue boxes or from recycling containers at the super mailbox.

In 2016, based on the results of the pilot program, Council approved a recommendation to add permanent recycling service to the 92 pilot locations and to add recycling containers at additional super mailbox locations based on requests from residents (SREIS.16.028). As a result, in 2019 permanent recycling containers were added at 210 super mailbox locations. This number includes the 92 pilot locations and 118 additional locations requested by residents.

Since the installation of these containers in 2019, the City has received 47 additional requests for recycling containers at super mailbox locations. Requests for additional recycling containers are expected to continue in the near future. The purpose of this staff report is to inform Council of the program's performance to date and to provide a recommendation on the future of this program.

Program performance

Monitoring of the volume and composition of the material collected at the 210 locations has shown that these recycling containers are well used by residents with most locations being half full or full by collection day. However, contamination has been observed as an issue at some locations. Contamination observed in these recycling containers typically includes household garbage and organics as well as pet waste. In addition, since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City's collection contractor has observed that gloves, masks and wipes are being disposed of in some of the recycling containers at super mailboxes. This creates a health and safety concern for collection and sorting staff who have to manually remove this contamination. Illegal dumping has also been reported at some of the super mailboxes with a recycling container.

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Benchmarking

Most GTA municipalities including Toronto, Vaughan, Mississauga and the northern 6 municipalities in York Region do not provide recycling containers at super mailboxes. The City of Brampton installs recycling containers at super mailbox locations based on requests from residents, similar to Richmond Hill. Markham has setup curbside blue boxes at all super mailbox locations in Markham and these are collected on the residential recycling collection routes. The containers used in Markham are not anchored to the ground and therefore they tend to get blown away by the wind and go missing from time to time.

Strategic considerations and recommendations

An analysis of the requests received for litter clean-ups around super mailboxes indicates that, most super mailbox locations in Richmond Hill do not have a reoccurring litter issue and therefore do not require a recycling container. Staff are of the opinion that the 210 recycling containers installed to date, already service most of the super mailbox locations with reoccurring litter problems and therefore the containers at these locations should continue to be maintained and collected weekly. However, given the contamination issues experienced so far, staff are recommending that recycling containers should not be added at any additional super mailbox locations. Litter complaints for super mailboxes without a recycling container can be handled through a combination of staff cleanups and resident education/enforcement regarding littering and illegal dumping.

In addition, the Province of Ontario has announced that over the next 5 years it will transition the responsibility and cost for Ontario's Blue Box program from municipalities to producers of the products and packaging collected in the Blue Box. It is unclear at this point if the transition of responsibility will also include collection from municipal recycling containers like the ones at super mailboxes. If the regulation does not include them, the City will incur additional collection costs for these containers as a separate collection route may be required.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

The recommendations of this staff report do not have any financial or staffing implications. The costs to maintain and service the existing 210 recycling containers at super mailboxes are embedded in the City's operational budget.

If Council chooses to continue to add recycling containers at additional super mailbox locations requested by residents, the cost is estimated to be approximately \$1,200 per location to purchase the container and mount it to a concrete pad. There are currently 47 additional requests for recycling containers at super mailboxes and based on past numbers, it is expected that an additional 30 requests per year will be received for the next 5 years. Based on this, the estimated cost to continue this program for the next 5 years is approximately \$240,000 to install recycling containers at an additional 197 super mailbox locations.

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Relationship to the Strategic Plan:

The recommendations in this report aim to strike a balance between service levels and the wise management of resources as outlined in the Strategic Plan Goal Four.

Conclusion:

Since super mailboxes started being used in new subdivisions, the City of Richmond Hill has responded to litter complaints at these locations, often as a result of residents discarding unwanted mail on the ground. In response, Council approved the installation of recycling containers at 210 super mailboxes. Due to contamination issues experienced at existing locations and in light of the financial impact, staff are recommending that recycling containers should not be added at any additional super mailbox locations. Litter complaints around super mailboxes without a recycling container can be handled through a combination of staff cleanups and resident education/enforcement regarding littering and illegal dumping.

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRCS.20.29 Recycling at Super Mailboxes.docx
Attachments:	
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This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Vlad Gaiu - Nov 6, 2020 - 11:10 AM

Grant Taylor - Nov 9, 2020 - 1:27 PM

Darlene Joslin - Nov 9, 2020 - 1:29 PM

MaryAnne Dempster - Nov 9, 2020 - 2:43 PM