



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor & Members of Council

From: Eddy Wu, Director, Environmental Services

Prepared By: Dave Douglas, Manager, Waste & Environmental Management

Date: August 7, 2025

RE: Follow-Up on Recommendation #2 from the June 17, 2025 General Committee Report – *Preparing for the Transition of Markham’s Blue Box Program on January 1, 2026 (Service Impacts)*

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the Staff memorandum, dated August 7, 2025, under the subject “Follow-Up on Recommendation #2 from the June 17, 2025 General Committee Report – *Preparing for the Transition of Markham’s Blue Box Program on January 1, 2026 (Service Impacts)*” be received; and
2. THAT the City discontinue the community mailbox recycling program in 2025;
3. AND THAT Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

This memorandum outlines additional information supporting Staff’s recommendation to discontinue the Community Mailbox Recycling Program in 2025.

COMMENTS:

Staff recommend discontinuing the Community Mailbox Recycling Program in 2025, following a comprehensive assessment of its operational performance and financial viability in light of the upcoming transition to full producer responsibility for blue box materials in Ontario. The program continues to experience service delivery and maintenance challenges, as well as significant contamination issues that reduce recycling quality and increase processing costs. Over the past 12 months, approximately 300 containers have been removed as part of the work order resolution process, primarily due to ongoing contamination and persistent illegal dumping.

The estimated annual cost to continue collection of community mailbox recycling bins in 2026, as provided by the current service provider and reviewed by Finance, is \$1.77 million (before tax). This increase reflects the loss of economies of scale previously achieved through the City’s municipal waste collection contract, as well as the end of the existing blue box funding system. This estimate does not include the additional \$52,500 (before tax) estimated in annual processing and disposal costs for 250 metric tonnes of material: (250 MT × \$160/MT = \$40,000 (processing), 125 MT × \$100/MT = \$12,500 (disposal of contaminated material)).

Given the absence of regulatory obligation, high costs, and operational challenges, Staff recommend ending the program in 2025.

In response to the current operational challenges (such as contamination, litter and illegal dumping) this Spring, Staff previously launched a public outreach initiative to help reduce the impact of unaddressed advertising mail at community mailbox locations. The campaign promotes three key messages through the City's core communications channels:

1. Canada Post's Consumers' Choice Program
Encourages residents to opt out of receiving unsolicited advertising mail such as flyers, catalogues, and restaurant menus. Participants will still receive election materials, community newspapers (without commercial inserts), and government mailings.
2. "Bring it Home"
Promotes the habit of taking mail home for sorting and recycling through the curbside blue box, while also reinforcing anti-litter messaging.
3. "Go Green, Go Digital"
Encourages residents to reduce paper waste by accessing flyers and promotions online rather than in print.

These tactics can be scaled-up if Council directs Staff to proceed with the removal of community mailbox recycling containers. A standardized set of FAQs and public messaging will also be provided to support Council members and Contact Centre staff.

Regarding ongoing maintenance, Canada Post has advised that it does not support the placement of litter or recycling containers adjacent to their mailbox infrastructure and does not provide litter collection at locations with City-issued blue boxes. If recycling bins are removed, Staff have coordinated with Canada Post to transfer maintenance responsibilities for these locations back to the agency. Residents will be able to report future litter or maintenance concerns through Canada Post's online ticket system.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Report to GC - Preparing for the Transition of Markham's Blue Box Program on January 1, 2026 (Service Impacts) - June 17, 2025.pdf