




Hamilton

INFORMATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	February 17, 2016
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Waste Management Updates – Scavenging Impacts and Recycling Revenues (City Wide) – (OPS1603)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Betty Matthews-Malone, P.Eng. Director, Operations Division Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

At the February 12, 2016 General Issues Committee meeting, during the Public Works Operating Budget deliberations, Council requested information on the impact of steel scavenging on the City’s potential recycling revenues. This Information Update overviews the City’s policy related to scavenging and summarizes program trends.

Overview

Many municipalities face the problem of scavenging of recyclable materials. Blue boxes and multi-residential recycling carts provide an easy source of materials for individuals. They target what they perceive to be high-value commodities such as metal or refundable items. For example, after the launch of the “Bag-It-Back” Ontario deposit-return program in 2007, many municipalities had an increase in the number of individuals scavenging beer cans, wine and spirit containers from curbside recycling containers. Some individuals also target other waste materials left at the curb, namely scrap metal. In 2007, the City of Hamilton discontinued its former curbside scrap metal/appliance recycling program because a significant portion of the items placed at the curbside were scavenged before the City’s contractor was able to collect the items. Although the City has discontinued the scrap metal collection program, there have been cases of individuals collecting scrap metal placed out at curbside.

The City receives approximately 24 complaints annually related to scavenging. The City’s Solid Waste Management By-Law 09-067 outlines the prohibitions to restrict the unauthorized removal of materials from the curb:

8.1 General Conditions for Waste Collection

(b) Except as authorized by the General Manager, no person shall remove Recyclable Materials or other Waste placed or apparently placed for collection by a Collection Operator. All Recyclable Materials and Waste placed or apparently placed for collection by a Collection Operator are the property of the City.

Scavenging carries a fine of up to \$200 as per the By-Law and investigations and charges are imposed on a complaint basis. Municipal Law Enforcement staff use their discretion with laying charges and their first effort is to educate the individual to prevent reoccurrence. Over the past five years there have been approximately 10 to 15 charges issued under By-Law 09-067 for scavenging, which have been primarily for cases of removal of large quantities of recyclable materials from curbside blue boxes.

Recycling Program Impact

It is difficult to quantify the amount of materials removed from curbside recycling containers and its associated revenue loss. Considering that scavenging is occurring in isolated cases, it is not deemed to have a significant impact on the City’s overall recycling program. There are other factors which are having a greater impact on the quantity of materials collected and associated revenue generation. The following table summarizes the quantity of materials collected in the City’s recycling program and associated recycling revenues since 2011.

City of Hamilton Recycling Program Summary				
Year	Total Recyclables Collected (Tonnes)	Total Metal Marketed – Aluminium & Steel (Tonnes)	Total Recycling Revenues	Revenues from Marketed Aluminium & Steel
2011	49,493	2,116	\$6.59M	\$1.45M
2012	46,982	2,068	\$4.67M	\$1.28M
2013	47,610	1,998	\$4.27M	\$1.01M
2014	47,963	1,977	\$4.75M	\$1.41M
2015	46,900*	2,041*	\$4.16M*	\$1.01M*
<i>*Note – 2015 data currently being finalized</i>				

Information on the City’s blue box commodity revenues was provided to Council as part of Information Update OPS1508. Recycling revenues are impacted by the quantity, quality, and type of materials being captured. There have been fluctuations in the amount of recyclable materials captured due to changes in consumer packaging. For example, many industries are producing products with lighter weight packaging and some companies have changed from metal packaging to other materials. End markets for recyclable commodities are also becoming more stringent on the quality of materials they accept. Recycling revenues have also decreased over the past few years due to reduced fossil fuel prices and global economic factors. This is expected to continue in 2016.

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If you require further information please contact Emil Prpic, Manager of Recycling and Waste Disposal at extension 4203 or Colin Vidler, Manager of Waste Collections at extension 4770.

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