

# DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

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**Title:** Provision of Recycling Carts or Nets

**Date Prepared:** July 6, 2022

**Report To:** Committee of the Whole

**Councillor and Role:** Councillor Sandy Hickman, Public Works

**Ward:** N/A

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## **Decision/Direction Required:**

For Council to consider and provide direction on strategies the City can adopt to secure blue bag recycling placed at the curb on collection days.

## **Discussion – Background and Current Status:**

In May 2022, Staff brought forward some options for Council to consider in order to assist residents with securing blue bags on collection days. These options generated further discussion amongst Council and requested that some further analysis be completed by staff that may incorporate a “hybrid approach” that involved a combination of the options presented.

### Analysis

The previous note discussed the benefits and challenges of using carts or nets for curbside collection of blue bag recycling. The previous note also presented the option of amending the Sanitation Regulations to mandate the use of carts or nets. This note does not incorporate any amendments and assumes that use of carts or nets for blue bags is voluntary participation. This analysis is focused on if Council were to approve a program that incorporated the use of carts or nets, how could it be delivered and what would be the effect for residents of the City.

Three options were identified by Council as potential methodologies to provide residents access to carts or nets for curbside collection of blue bag recycling:

1. Applying an annual fee to all households that receive curbside collection to support and maintain programs such as provision of recycling carts or nets;
2. Allowing households to purchase carts or nets through the City directly at a reduced cost if one were to purchase from a retailer;
3. Partnering with retail to provide households access to carts or nets at a reduced cost from the retailer directly (ie. Coupons).

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# ST. JOHN'S

OPTION	PROS	CONS
Annual Fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constant source of revenue to support program</li> <li>• Similar to what other local municipalities have set up to support the automated cart programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would need to be a mandatory fee applied to all households that receive curbside waste collection as program will be available to all those households</li> <li>• Current billing software would require customization in order to apply fee to appropriate households</li> <li>• Due to a mandatory two-year upgrade a customization at the current time poses a substantial risk to the City</li> <li>• Increased cost to residents</li> <li>• Would need to identify storage location for inventory of carts/nets and manage that inventory</li> <li>• Additional staff to manage inventory and program</li> </ul>
Purchase of Nets or Carts Through City and sold to residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “One stop shop” for residents</li> <li>• Leveraging purchasing power of City would allow bulk purchases and lower costs due to no retail markup</li> <li>• With proper costing, program can be self supported</li> <li>• Residents can choose to participate in program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City would be infringing on retail sector which already provides these materials.</li> <li>• No control of product as it is not required for collection (ie residents can purchase for others, for cabins, etc)</li> <li>• Would need to identify storage location for inventory of carts/nets and manage that inventory</li> <li>• Additional staff to manage inventory and program</li> <li>• Additional duties for Access Centre in taking payment from residents</li> </ul>
Partner with Retail to Provide Discounted Rate on Nets or Carts (Coupons)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No infringement on retail sector</li> <li>• Residents have access to lower priced products</li> <li>• Residents can choose to participate in program</li> <li>• No management of carts/nets inventory involved by City resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No control of product as it is not required for collection.</li> <li>• Could be used by non-residents</li> <li>• Potential cost with retail partnership</li> <li>• Defined period program rather than long-term, on-going program</li> <li>• Difficult to assess cost as it depends on partnership details and uptake of program</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potentially require some administration of program depending on partnership details.</li> </ul>
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From the residents perspective, the greatest impact would be the option that includes the annual fee as it would require that this be applied to all households that receive curbside collection or blue bag recycling. This would also be the “largest” program from the City perspective as it would involve approximately 50,000 households and involve distribution or planning for distribution to all households.

The first two options become more complex if both carts and nets are included in the program. Inventory control of multiple products becomes more challenging as households have the ability to choose one or both options to meet their needs (eg. two carts, one cart plus one net, one cart, two nets, etc.). If Council wants further analysis of any programs that involve management of inventories then staff can present a Decision Note with options on program delivery.

All of the options are distinctively different than the automated cart program. With the automated carts, the City provides carts to properties but maintains ownership of those carts. Those carts are then required to be used for curbside garbage collection. For the fact that the carts are required to be used (ie mandatory), each cart has a unique identifier and the City owns those carts, there are controls in place to manage that inventory.

Without mandatory use of carts or nets, then there is no reasonable method to manage (or control) the distribution of the products. The City simply becomes another retail option for residents (consumers) to obtain a blue cart or a blue net.

**Another Option**

This year was the first year of the mandatory recycling / clear bag program. There were a number of “new” recyclers in the City and many people were trying to figure out the logistics of recycling during the first few months. The City was also in another wave of covid and there were many operational issues during this time which resulted in delayed pick up of both garbage and recycling. Now that residents have had time to get used to these changes and the pandemic is ending the City could monitor this program for another year and revisit the issue next year. During this time the City could also increase communications with residents regarding collections including the curb it app, website and enhanced messaging on windy days.

All of the options presented in this note would require communications support to implement.

**Key Considerations/Implications:**

1. Budget/Financial Implications: Options presented above have estimated capital costs ranging between no additional costs up to \$4 million. Sources of funding for options with a capital requirement would need to be determined. Some options will also require increased operational budget which would need to be included in annual budgets. The cost of billing software upgrades will need to be scoped further.
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders: Residents of the City of St. John's, Local hardware retailers
3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans: An Effective City, A Sustainable City
4. Legal or Policy Implications: Amendments to the Sanitation Regulations may be required
5. Privacy Implications: N/A
6. Engagement and Communications Considerations: Communications support is required to implement any of the options and educate households on the program
7. Human Resource Implications: Some options may require the hiring of staff.
8. Procurement Implications: Any procurement needs would follow requirements laid out by the Public Procurement Act.
9. Information Technology Implications: N/A
10. Other Implications: It is anticipated that any of these options will result in a blue bags being more secured on collection days.

**Recommendation:**

All of the "hybrid" approaches presented have significant drawbacks specifically in program controls.

Given the current budget situation, staff recommend utilizing some of the communication tools already in use by the city to support curbside collection. Additionally, households are becoming more used to recycling. Staff can monitor collection activities and assess whether these measures alone may reduce situations where blue bags move on windy days.

**Prepared by:** Andrew Niblock, Director, Environmental Services

**Approved by:** Lynnann Winsor, P.Eng, M.A.Sc., Deputy City Clerk of Public Works

**Report Approval Details**

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This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**No Signature - Task assigned to Andrew Niblock was completed by delegate Lynnann Winsor**

**Andrew Niblock - Jul 6, 2022 - 3:58 PM**

**Lynnann Winsor - Jul 6, 2022 - 3:58 PM**