

FAQ - Changes to the Curbside Collection Program Coming Late-2020

Abbotsford City Council approved the implementation of a new Solid Waste Operations Master Plan on July 22, 2019. The new Master Plan outlines several changes to the curbside collection program to align with Council's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. These changes will provide more efficient delivery of program services, improve worker health and safety, recognize our commitment to the environment, and potentially lead to additional collection services for residents.

The major change will be adopting a cart-based automatic collection system where residents will be provided three carts; one each for recycling, compostables and garbage. The City will also be analyzing what it costs to collect glass and large oversized items such as furniture and mattresses.

The changes to the curbside collection program are expected to be operational by late-2020. City staff are still working out the details for many aspects of the cart-based program, including cart sizes and options. Residents will be informed well in advance of any changes. All current information on this initiative can be found at abbotsford.ca/curbside2020.

The following information has been developed as a reference for questions frequently received by the City regarding the upcoming changes to the curbside program.

How will the curbside collection program change?

The major change is adopting a cart-based, automatic collection system, where residents are provided with three carts; one each for garbage, recycling and compostables. These carts are wheeled to the curb on collection day and automated trucks will pick-up and dump the contents. The new program will provide a more efficient delivery of services, improve worker health and safety, and allow for the possibility of additional services for residents.

Why are we changing the program?

The City's goal is to provide efficient and cost-effective services to residents. The City reviews all its programs and services regularly and adjusts them periodically to ensure we are using the latest and most efficient technology, providing value for service, and meeting our goal to be an inclusive and sustainable community.

We understand that we need to provide similar services to our neighbouring municipalities and ensure our waste is managed efficiently, creating the least amount of impact on the environment as possible. The new program will allow the City to replace our aging collection vehicles and decrease our fleet's greenhouse gas emissions. An automated collection process will cut down on collection worker injuries and keep our city streets cleaner. We will be able to provide a more efficient and cost-effective processing of our recyclables by evaluating and streamlining the processes at the AMRD, in addition to possibly providing a new glass and large item pick-up service to residents.

When will the program change?

It is anticipated that changes will be rolled out in late-2020. The City is currently developing an implementation schedule. This timeline provides lots of time to ensure all residents have the information they need to smoothly transition to a new system.

How will I know about the program changes?

The City will be informing residents through a variety of ways including direct mail, utility bill inserts, newspaper advertisements, at public events, through City social media channels and the City's website and engagement portal: Let's Talk Abbotsford. The most up-to date information can always be found online at abbotsford.ca/curbside2020.

Will I have to pay more for these changes?

Solid waste user fees at \$220 per house have been the same since 2012 and are part of your municipal taxes. The City also receives approximately \$1 million in annual revenue from the contract with Recycle BC. If all the proposed changes and additional services are funded through the solid waste user fees, we anticipate an increase of 2-3% based on 2018 dollars. Any changes to user fees will be brought to Council for approval.

Will the City be providing the new carts?

Yes, the City will provide the new carts for curbside collection. Staff are still working out the details for cart sizes and distribution, but there will be many opportunities for pick-up and/or delivery. The new carts will be included in the solid waste user fee.

How much will each cart hold and how big will they be?

City staff are working out the details for cart sizes and options. Information will be shared with residents when it becomes available.

Will my collection day change?

Possibly. The City will be looking at the current routes to ensure they are most efficient under the new system. There may be changes to the days and frequency that your curbside material is collected. You will be informed well ahead of time if there are any changes in your schedule.

What if I have more recycling or compostable waste than will fit in the cart?

Staff are still working out the details for cart sizes and options for managing additional waste and will provide information once it becomes available. For managing recycling, space can be conserved in both the existing blue bag collection program and the coming cart collection program by flattening items like plastic jugs, cartons, and stacking containers that held the same contents, for example, yogurt cups.

Will a second set of carts be provided for basement suites or coach houses?

Under the current curbside collection program, the Suite Registration Fee and the annual Infrastructure Fee paid for secondary suites under the City's *Building Bylaw* does not include additional curbside collection services for the suite. However, staff are working out the details for cart sizes and options, including how they may be applied to secondary suites. Information will be shared with residents when it becomes available.

Will there be changes to the yard waste coupon program?

The City does not anticipate any changes to be implemented for the yard waste coupon program. Residents currently receiving curbside collection service will continue to receive six yard waste drop off coupons in the annual mail out of the curbside collection calendar. Each coupon will continue to be valid for one free yard waste drop off of a load equivalent to a 5x8 ft utility trailer to a maximum weight of one tonne. More information on the yard waste coupon program is available at abbotsford.ca/collection.

Will I still be able to use blue bags for my recycling under the new program?

No. Reusable containers are more environmentally friendly and create less waste, reducing the amount of material going to landfill or needing to be recycled. They also take the onus off the resident to purchase the bags in order to participate in the curbside recycling program. There are also post-collection health and safety impacts as these bags need to be manually opened at the recycling facility in order to access the recyclable material. Plastic bags, when included in the sorting line, also negatively impact the recycling process by getting tangled in the sorting equipment, requiring a shut-down of the sorting line in order to clean the equipment. For these reasons, Recycle BC requires the City to phase out the use of single use blue bags for the collection of curbside recycling. Shredded paper is the only exception and will continue to be accepted in the recycling cart in blue/clear bags. All other recycling will be required to be placed loosely and unbagged in the recycling cart.

Will I still be able to use garbage bags for my garbage under the new program?

Yes, bagged garbage can be placed in the garbage cart. All types of garbage bags will be accepted.

Will there be changes to what can go in the recycling, compostable waste and garbage cart?

No, the materials in each stream will remain exactly the same as the current collection program. Recyclable items such as foam packaging, plastic bags, electronics, batteries, etc. must continue to be taken to a depot or other drop-off location (not placed in the recycling cart). The City is analyzing what it costs to collect glass with the new cart-based system and is hoping that this can be offered as an additional service in 2020 if it is cost effective. Collection of curbside glass would be in a separate box container if implemented.

What should I do with my existing garbage cans and compostable waste containers?

All existing curbside garbage cans and compostable waste containers should continue to be used until program changes are implemented in late-2020. Residents will be notified in advance of any changes prior to implementation. City staff are looking into options for recycling and/or disposal.

Will glass be collected with the new program?

The City is currently analyzing what it costs to collect glass with the new cart-based system. We are aware that our neighbours in Mission and Chilliwack collect glass and that Abbotsford residents want to see glass collected at the curb. We are hoping that we can add this as an additional service in 2020 if it is cost effective.

What other pick-up services are being added to the program?

Besides picking up glass, the City is also looking at the cost to pick up large oversized items such as furniture and mattresses. We are looking at a variety of options and comparing how other municipalities manage large items. We are hoping that we can add this as an additional service in 2020 if it is cost effective.

What other municipalities have automated collection for curbside materials?

Vancouver, Surrey, Port Coquitlam, New Westminster, Port Moody, Burnaby, Prince George, Kamloops, Williams Lake, Victoria, Port Alberni, and many more!

Will apartments, condos, and townhouses be included in the new program?

No, multi-family properties will continue to make their own arrangements with a private waste hauler for the collection and disposal of all waste streams.

Who can I contact if I have more questions or concerns about the new program?

The Engineering & Regional Utilities department at the City of Abbotsford. Call 604-864-5514 or email curbside2020@abbotsford.ca.

You can also find more information online at abbotsford.ca/curbside2020.