

Potential Changes coming to Quesnel Recycling Locations

On Tuesday, Sept. 4, the North Cariboo Joint Committee, made up of Northern CRD Directors and Quesnel City Council, received Staff recommendations to pursue an expanded Recycle BC depot at the Quesnel landfill and close the current drop off locations.

Currently the Quesnel landfill collects plastic bags, polystyrene foam and glass only on behalf of Recycle BC, the organization responsible for residential packaging and paper recycling in BC. The rest of the recyclables collected at the Quesnel Landfill and satellite depots are processed and marketed by Northern Recycling Inc. (NRI) through their contract with the City of Quesnel.

Quesnel City Council went on to endorse the recommendation at their Sept. 4 City Council meeting. The next steps will involve working out contract details with NRI, and planning the operational changes with Recycle BC and their contractors. The City and the CRD will also provide the public with information on why the existing system is no longer viable.

The proposed changes being considered will see all packaging and paper (household recyclables) accepted by Recycle BC collected at a controlled (overseen by an attendant), centralized, fenced depot instead of at the current non-controlled recycling depots at West Park Mall, Maple Park Mall, Sani-loop and the Quesnel landfill. These changes are being recommended by Staff due to ongoing unacceptable levels of contamination mixed with the non-controlled depot recyclables and changes in the global recycling market.

Despite the City's education campaigns regarding contamination in the depot recycling material, the non-controlled recycling locations continue to see significant contamination issues. The current contamination rates are too high to create marketable products in the current global recycling market.

In January 2018, China reduced the level of contamination they accept with recyclables. China will only import the cleanest recyclable material, which makes marketing the contaminated paper and plastic recyclable materials from Quesnel's current depots extremely challenging and costly. Recycle BC is still able to market their recyclables due to strict rules, such as requiring attended depots, which produces a cleaner product.

Establishing a full Recycle BC depot will ensure that the City and Cariboo Regional District recycling programs in Quesnel can continue. The non-controlled depots in Quesnel are the only ones left in the Cariboo; all other depots are controlled sites that collect recyclables for Recycle BC.

For more information, please email talktrash@cariboord.ca or cityhall@quesnel.ca

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Frequently Asked Questions

Potential Changes coming to Quesnel Recycling Locations

What is wrong with the current satellite recycling drop-off sites?

24/7 non-controlled access and lack of user accountability are causing the problems at the current drop-off locations. Without attendants to help residents learn what is accepted and how to sort recyclables, the recyclable material coming from these locations is non-marketable. Quesnel is one of the last jurisdictions in B.C. to have non-controlled recycling drop-off areas.

Why can't the existing satellite drop off locations be controlled?

Most of the existing satellite depots are not located on City- or CRD-owned property, the sites are not secure, and they do not provide a suitable work environment for an attendant (shelter, washroom facilities, etc.). The City and the CRD will be responsible for the costs of a controlled site with an attendant and operating four sites would be too costly.

Why are these changes being recommended now?

In January 2018, China reduced the level of contamination they accept with recyclables. China will only import the cleanest recyclable material, which makes marketing the contaminated paper and plastic recyclable materials from Quesnel's current depots extremely challenging and costly.

What is "contamination" in recyclables?

There are three main types of contamination in recyclables.

1. Materials that are not accepted, like bags of garbage, clothing, garden hoses, strapping, shoes, wood items, ceramics, etc.

2. Accepted items that have been put in the wrong collection container. Glass is the most problematic in this type of contamination.
3. Recyclables that are not packaging and paper. Some examples include electronics, batteries, tires, used oil containers, hazardous waste, and propane cylinders.

All types of contamination lower the quality of recyclables as a commodity. Plastic bags are the number one type of contamination that has caused China to take such a firm stance on recyclables.

The Quesnel satellite depots have never accepted plastic bags, as they are very expensive and hard to market; yet, they are present in all the satellite material. Recycle BC depots have a separate collection container for plastic bags, so they can be properly managed.

Who is "Recycle BC"?

Retailers, manufacturers, and other organizations that supply packaging and printed paper to BC residents are responsible for collecting and recycling these materials when residents are finished with them. This is called extended producer responsibility, or EPR.

Recycle BC is a non-profit organization that uses fees paid by these organizations to finance residential recycling programs in many areas across B.C., either directly or by working with local governments, First Nations, private companies and other non-profit organizations. Recycle BC is among more than 20 EPR programs introduced in B.C. over the past two decades.

What is going to happen to the contaminated recyclables currently collected at the non-controlled depots?

Northern Recycling Inc. will make every effort to remove contamination and ship all marketable recyclables. Recyclables that can only be shipped at a negative price will be shipped within reason. If the cost to manage the remaining recyclables is not economically feasible, landfill disposal will have to be considered, which is why it is important to make depot changes as soon as possible.

When will the existing depots close?

The timing for opening the new depot and closing the existing sites is not known at this time. There are several operational and contractual aspects that must be finalized first, but the goal is to make the changes in Fall 2018. Once the dates are known, they will be made available to the public and posted at the existing depots.

What will be accepted at the new controlled recycling depot?

All packaging and paper recyclables within Recycle BC's program will be accepted at the depot. This includes:

- **containers** (plastic, aluminum, steel, paper and glass)
- **paper** (newspapers; shredded paper; paper bags; cardboard; boxboard; and molded boxboard i.e. egg cartons and take out beverage trays)
- **plastic bags and overwrap** (grocery, produce, bread, frozen food, water softener salt, and wood pellet bags and overwrap for mattresses; furniture; electronics; diapers; paper towels; toilet paper; and flats of drinks and canned goods)
- **foam packaging** (foam egg cartons; meat trays; cups; take out food containers; and

cushioning to protect electronics and appliances)

- **other flexible plastic packaging** (zipper lock bags and pouches, stand up pouches, cereal bags, cheese wrappers, cellophane, foil bags i.e. chip bags, candy wrappers, mesh bags for produce, bubble wrap, crinkly plastic bags for dry pasta and more).

Visit recyclebc.ca/what-can-i-recycle for a complete list.

Where will the new controlled depot be located?

It is anticipated that the new location will be at the entrance to the landfill, near the ball fields.

What will the hours of operation be for the new controlled depot?

It is anticipated that the new depot hours will be the same as the landfill hours: Tuesday to Sunday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

What will the attendant do at the controlled depot?

The attendant at the controlled depot will educate the public on what materials are accepted in Recycle BC's program and teach them how to sort their recyclables. The attendant will not be responsible for sorting recyclables; they can assist, but the public will be required to pre-sort or sort on site themselves. During the initial few months, additional staff and volunteers will be on site to help residents with the transition.

Will commercial/business recyclables be accepted at the new depot?

Recycle BC's stewardship program is regulated by the Provincial Recycling Regulation, which stipulates that it is a residential program only. Institutional, Commercial and Industrial (ICI)

material will not be accepted with the residential packaging and paper materials. However, separate commercial cardboard collection bins will be located at both the landfill and the new depot.

Where can businesses take their recyclables?

Businesses generating cardboard can arrange for a private cardboard bin at their property, or use one of the commercial cardboard bins at the landfill and new depot. For inquiries about other recyclables, email talktrash@cariboord.ca

How will the new controlled recycling depot benefit taxpayers?

The collection, processing, transportation and marketing of recyclables collected at the non-controlled sites has always been paid for with City and CRD tax dollars.

Recycling is an expense, especially when the materials are so far away from the market. These expenses are at record highs, and there is a real risk of not being able to ship some of the recyclables at all.

Recycle BC is funded by the producers of packaging and paper; therefore, the cost of managing the recyclables will be covered by the producers of the products and consumers who purchase them. Recycle BC also services most of the Province and has the economies of scale to ensure that their recyclables are indeed recycled. Their contractor Green By Nature (GBN) owns and operates a plastic recovery facility in the lower mainland that produces recycled plastic pellets for re-sale, so their plastic containers do not have to be shipped overseas for recycling.

How will recycling depot changes affect City residents with curbside recycling collection?

The new controlled depot will not affect the existing curbside collection. Quesnel residents who receive curbside collection can continue to use their blue boxes to recycle packaging and papers. Any inquiries about what can be recycled at the curb, or about additional blue boxes or the use of non-blue box recycling containers can be made to (250) 992-2626 or emailed to askmebc2@emterra.ca.

Residents receiving curbside collection can use the new depot to drop off plastic bags and film; other flexible plastic packaging; glass; and polystyrene foam (Styrofoam). Go to recyclebc.ca/what-can-i-recycle for a full list of these items.

How come CRD residents south of the City limits do not have curbside recycling collection?

Recycle BC provides the City of Quesnel curbside recycling collection, and only provides collection to incorporated municipalities with populations over 5,000 and existing curbside garbage collection. The CRD area south of City limits does not meet these criteria and is not eligible for curbside recycling collection.