



# City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

**To:** Public Works and Transportation Committee      **Date:** December 21, 2022  
**From:** Suzanne Bycraft  
 Director, Public Works Operations      **File:** 10-6370-01/2022-Vol 01  
**Re:** **Amendments to the Recycling Regulation and Recycle BC Program**

### Staff Recommendation

That the expanded scope of items to be accepted in the City’s recycling programs, as outlined in Attachment 1 of the staff report dated December 19, 2022, titled “Amendments to the Recycling Regulation and Recycle BC Program, from the Director Public Works Operations, be endorsed.

Suzanne Bycraft  
 Director, Public Works Operations  
 (604-233-3338)

<b>REPORT CONCURRENCE</b>	
<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>	
<b>SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW</b>	<b>INITIALS:</b>
<b>APPROVED BY CAO</b>	

## Staff Report

### Origin

This report provides an overview of the amendments made by the Provincial Government to the *Recycling Regulation* (the “Regulation”) and the impacts of these changes on the recycling services provided by the City. These amendments include the addition of single-use products and packaging-like products to Schedule 5, the Packaging and Paper Product Category beginning in 2023.

This report supports Council’s Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #2 A Sustainable and Environmentally Conscious City:

*Environmentally conscious decision-making that demonstrates leadership in implementing innovative, sustainable practices and supports the City's unique biodiversity and island ecology.*

*2.1 Continued leadership in addressing climate change and promoting circular economic principles.*

*2.2 Policies and practices support Richmond's sustainability goals.*

This report supports Council’s Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #6 Strategic and Well-Planned Growth:

*6.2 "Green" and circular economic growth and practices are emphasized.*

### Analysis

#### Background

On June 29, 2020, the Honourable Minister Heyman announced amendments to the Regulation arising, in part, from the *CleanBC Plastics Action Plan* consultation. These amendments include the addition of the following categories as items to be included in industry-stewardship programs:

- The packaging category is revised to capture items that are typically used by the consumer for their own packaging needs and include various types of food bags and films, as well as disposable food storage containers and aluminum foil pie plates and baking trays. Various household items such as cardboard moving boxes, recycling bags, plastic painting drop sheets, furniture covers, bubble wrap, and plastic plant pots are also added.
- Single-use products are being added as a category to capture items that are not considered packaging, but serve a single or short-term use. These include: straws and items to stir beverages; utensils, plates, bowls and cups; and party supplies.

While many of the items listed have already been included in traditional recycling services, incorporating these items into the Regulation has the effect of requiring that these items be recycled through industry-funded residential recycling programs.

### Recycle BC Program Changes

To comply with the Regulation amendments, Recycle BC, as the responsible organization on behalf of industry stewards, has announced changes to their collection program. Effective January, 2023, Recycle BC will include single-use products and packaging-like items as part of their program, with specific items included in these categories detailed in Attachment 1.

Recycle BC has also announced the creation of one category for “Flexible Plastics” that will be collected at local depots beginning January, 2023. This will combine the current categories of “Plastic Bags and Overwrap” and “Other Flexible Plastic Packaging” into one category, eliminating the need for residents to separate these items at the Richmond Recycling Depot (the “Depot”) as is currently required. Also included in the “Flexible Plastics” category will be squishy cushion packaging (polyethylene foam) that was not formerly accepted for recycling in the program.

Flexible and film plastic categories were previously separated as Recycle BC was testing alternative recycling options for “Other Flexible Plastic Packaging”. Their research has since concluded that all “Flexible Plastics” can now be sent to Merlin Plastics to be recycled into a pellet as input material for new plastic items.

### Impact to Richmond Recycling Programs

Richmond residents will now have access to recycle more items at home and at the Depot as noted below.

1. *Blue Box/Cart Recycling Programs:* At home, items such as plastic straws, stir sticks, disposable plastic hangers and utensils will be permitted in the Blue Box or Mixed Containers Blue Cart.
2. *Recycling Depot:* At the Depot, flexible plastic items such as cling film, ziplock bags, and reusable plastic bags will be accepted.

A fulsome list of the new items included in Richmond recycling programs and the method of collection is provided in Attachment 1.

Staff note that while the changes to the Regulation are a positive development for requiring industry to assume responsibility for managing the products they produce, focus should remain on reducing and eliminating unnecessary plastic items in the waste stream as a part of advancing the waste management principles outlined in Richmond Circular City Strategy.

### Communications

Staff are preparing City specific communications to help inform Richmond residents of the new recycling options they will have access to beginning January, 2023. The following communications tactics will be implemented:

- Updated signage at the Recycling Depot
- Website
- Richmond Recycling App
- Environmental Programs information phone line messaging system
- Social media posts
- Digital screens at City facilities
- Elevator ads
- Update all printed materials (i.e. brochures, posters and cart decals)

Staff will also share Recycle BC messaging across all City social media platforms, and work to ensure alignment with City materials to further amplify the information to Richmond residents.

### **Financial Impact**

None.

### **Conclusion**

This report presents the amendments to the *Recycling Regulation* and subsequent changes to the Recycle BC Program that become effective January, 2023. Impacts to Richmond recycling programs and the communications tactics to be employed to promote these changes are also provided.

As the City is a collector on behalf of Recycle BC and these changes represents an expansion of current product categories only, these program changes are presented for Council's endorsement.



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Att. 1: Additions to Richmond Recycling Programs

**Additions to Richmond Recycling Programs**

Item Name	Item Description	City Collection Stream
<b>SINGLE-USE PRODUCTS</b>		
Plates/bowls/cups	Paper - uncoated	Green Cart
	Coated paper	Blue Box / Mixed Containers Cart
	Plastic	Blue Box / Mixed Containers Cart
	Foam	Styrofoam - Richmond Recycling Depot
Single-use party decor	Paper	Yellow Bag / Mixed Paper Cart
Straws	Paper	Green Cart
	Plastic	Blue Box / Mixed Containers Cart
Stir sticks	Wood	Green Cart
	Plastic	Blue Box / Mixed Containers Cart
Utensils/sampling sticks	Wood	Green Cart
	Plastic	Blue Box / Mixed Containers Cart
<b>PACKAGING-LIKE PRODUCTS</b>		
Food storage, sandwich and freezer bags, vacuum seal bags	Plastic	Flexible Plastics – Richmond Recycling Depot
Paper lunch bags	Paper	Yellow Bag / Mixed Paper Cart
Aluminium foil	Foil	Blue Box / Mixed Containers Cart
Plastic shrink film wrap	Soft plastic	Flexible Plastics – Richmond Recycling Depot
Non-durable plastic food containers	Plastic	Blue Box / Mixed Containers Cart
Aluminum foil disposables	Aluminium	Blue Box / Mixed Containers Cart
Moving boxes, banking boxes	Paper/Cardboard	Yellow Bag / Mixed Paper Cart
Gift bags/boxes	Paper	Yellow Bag / Mixed Paper Cart
	Rigid plastic	Blue Box / Mixed Containers Cart
	Soft plastic	Flexible Plastics – Richmond Recycling Depot
Recycling bags	City Yellow Bags	Flexible Plastics – Richmond Recycling Depot
Reusable plastic-only checkout bags	Plastic only	Flexible Plastics – Richmond Recycling Depot
Drop sheets for painting, covering items	Soft plastics	Flexible Plastics – Richmond Recycling Depot
Squishy cushion packaging blocks and sheets	Soft plastics	Flexible Plastics – Richmond Recycling Depot
Bubble wrap	Plastic only	Flexible Plastics – Richmond Recycling Depot
Metal storage containers	Thin-gauge metal tins	Blue Box / Mixed Containers Cart
Plant pots and saucers	Plastics only	Blue Box / Mixed Containers Cart
Disposable hangers	Plastic –lightweight (included with clothing)	Blue Box / Mixed Containers Cart
	Paper – lightweight (included with clothing)	Yellow Bag / Mixed Paper Cart
Plastic tape dispensers, plastic dental floss containers	Plastic	Blue Box / Mixed Containers Cart