



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Briefing Note

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**To:** Council  
**From:** Director of Operational Services  
**Subject:** Cart Exchange Portal Launch

**File No.:** 5400-06  
**Date:** September 25, 2024

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## **PURPOSE:**

To inform Council of the start of the City's Solid Waste Cart Exchange Program, including details related to the communications, implications and exchange options.

## **BACKGROUND:**

From the launch of automated collection, the most common query has been for an exchange of carts as residents were not offered a choice at the onset of the service. Several cart exchanges have been provided to residents reporting issues moving the carts, classified as a 'mobility accommodation', but for the most part, residents have been asked to wait until September for an opportunity to exchange carts. The City's Cart Exchange Online Portal will allow residents in single residential dwellings and duplexes that are a part of the curbside collection program to exchange their organics or recycling carts for a different size cart.

## **DISCUSSION:**

On September 9, 2024, a soft launch of the online cart exchange portal was made available for single residential dwellings and duplexes. The official launch of the cart exchange program is scheduled for Monday, September 16<sup>th</sup>. This launch will include three weeks of newspaper ads, social media posts, a Courtenay Collects App campaign, and a news release.

As residents have been eager to exchange carts from the onset of the launch of the automated service, with staff receiving calls or emails at the Operational Services Centre, residents now have the opportunity to request cart exchanges via the online cart exchange portal at [Courtenay.ca/CartExchange](https://Courtenay.ca/CartExchange). The overall goal is for as many residents as possible to use the website, should staff receive an inquiry from a resident not particularly internet-savvy, staff will work with them in person or over the phone to complete the online portal submission for them. It is anticipated (based on public inquiries) that the exchanges could be in the range of 1,000-2,000 dwelling units (including stratas). Residents will be allowed one free exchange

In an effort to provide both support and manage the requests from strata boards and property managers, multi-residential properties (stratas) and manufactured home parks will not have access to the online portal. Instead, the property management company or utility billing contact for the multi-family property was sent a letter in August introducing the strata cart exchange program with a form listing existing carts assigned to each address, as well as options for cart exchanges. Staff on the solid waste team have requested that the property managers of each strata coordinate the exchange effort among residents and provide the City with a completed cart exchange form by October 15, 2024. This approach will allow for a streamline exchange process by enabling a full property service exchanges to occur, rather than servicing each individual request.

In 2024, there will be no charge for the exchange service, however, if a larger organics cart is chosen an increased fee (difference only) will be charged in 2025. As recycling carts are all the same fee (Recycle BC supportive funding) and there are no garbage cart exchanges, exchanging a 120L or 360L organics cart will be the only exchange resulting in different charges in 2025. Residents can request an additional garbage cart (120L), if required, at a full cost recovery rate.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Costs to deliver the cart exchange portal were incorporated in the 2024 solid waste cart exchange budget, anticipating ~2,000 exchanges. Staff time related to developing tools and communication strategies has been funded from the solid waste budget in anticipation of the expected launch of this program in September 2024.

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:**

Staff from across the organization, including Finance, Operations, Information Technology Services, and Communications have been involved in efforts to design, build, and inform the public of the launch of the cart exchange program. During the period the cart exchange program will be available in the Fall of 2024, staff from Solid Waste and Financial Services will use the online tools to manage the cart exchanges, coordinate with the contractor doing the exchanges, and then update the financial system. The move to a database system that communicates with the financial software will allow for efficient updates rather than manual data entry. There will, however, be a requirement for error checking and quality assurance by staff during the program.

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