



Administrative Report

To: Warden MacDonald and Members of Essex County Council

From: Melissa Ryan, CPA, Director, Financial Services/Treasurer

Date: Wednesday, December 17, 2025

Subject: Green Bin Program Billing Updates

Report #: 2025-1217-FIN-R35-MR

Purpose

To update Council on the billing framework for the regional Green Bin Program and confirm the use of a User Fee model for cost recovery. This report summarizes the legal and administrative findings since Council endorsed a hybrid approach in June 2024 and outlines the next steps to ensure a clear and consistent billing process for residents.

Background

The Green Bin program provides weekly curbside organics collection to single-family residences and multi residential buildings with 6 units or less across Essex County and Windsor, with Phase 1 service launched in October 2025 for Essex, Lakeshore, LaSalle, Tecumseh, and Windsor. Amherstburg, Kingsville, and Leamington will join the program in fall 2026 (Phase 2).

Operational rollout of the program is being led by the Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority (EWSWA), while the County is responsible for coordinating funding and billing on behalf of the Local Municipalities.

At its meeting of June 5, 2024, County Council reviewed a range of funding models and endorsed the Hybrid Model and passed the following resolution:

159-2024
Moved By Dennis Rogers
Seconded By Michael Prue

That Essex County Council receive the Regional Food and Organics Waste Program Funding Model Discussion report for information;

That Essex County Council approve the proposed hybrid model that combines the county levy-based funding model with a user fee methodology for the expenses associated with the Regional Food and Organics Waste (Green Bin) Program; and

That Essex County Council directs Administration to prepare a report that identifies their preferred funding model with rationale and forward it to the EWSWA Board for their consideration.

Under this approach, each municipality's tonnage/use of the Green Bin Program is used to calculate a unique user fee on a per residential property basis for that municipality. The user fee would then appear on the property tax bill for each residential property with access to the service.

Discussion

Since Council approved the Hybrid Model in June 2024, Administration continued to monitor the program rollout, refine the billing framework, and confirm legal and administrative considerations. The discussion that follows provides Council with an update on work completed to date.

Billing Implementation

The Green Bin service launched in October 2025 for Essex, Lakeshore, LaSalle, and Tecumseh. The first billing will appear on the final 2026 property tax bill, which is typically distributed in June. The 2026 charge will cover approximately 15 months of service, from October 2025 through Dec 2026. Residents were not billed in advance for 2025, ensuring that charges reflect only the months of service actually received.

On the tax bill, the new line item will appear as "CTYBIN" in the user fee/other section of the tax bill. A standard bill insert and a dedicated FAQ page on the County's website will provide residents with clear information about the program and the associated fee.

Beginning in 2027, the annual user fee will represent a full 12 months of service. Phase 2 municipalities, Amherstburg, Kingsville, and Leamington will join the program in approximately October 2026, with their first billing appearing on the 2027 property tax bill.

Communications Plan

To ensure consistent messaging and broad public awareness about County billing, the following approach was/will be implemented:

- **Web Presence:** A dedicated Frequently Asked Questions page will be launched on the County's website, directly linked to billing information and cross-posted on the Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority's Green Bin webpage.
- **Tax Bill Insert:** A one-page Frequently Asked Questions insert will be included with the June 2026 tax bills in Essex, Lakeshore, LaSalle, and Tecumseh. We will follow the same process in the following year with the Phase 2 municipalities.
- **Social Media:** Scheduled posts will coincide with the start of the program, and the billing periods. All posts will direct residents to the Frequently Asked Questions webpage.
- **Coordination with Local Municipalities:** Materials will be shared with municipal communications teams for optional local posting.
- **Media and Public Inquiries:** This billing update report is being provided to County Council to generate additional awareness about County billing. Public-facing materials will designate the County for billing inquiries and Essex-Windsor Solid Waste Authority staff for operational inquiries.

Billing Approach and Legal Considerations

When County Council approved the Hybrid approach in June 2024, the direction was that the Green Bin Program should be funded at the County level rather than through Local Municipalities. This represented a departure from typical EWSWA charges, which are generally recovered directly from the Local Municipalities.

For regional context, the City of Windsor has chosen to recover Green Bin Program costs through its general levy using a Weighted Assessment model, where costs are distributed proportionally based on property assessment values to all property owners.

User Fee Model

A flat User Fee is legally permissible and aligns with Council's direction to fund the program at the County level. Under this model, households receiving the Green Bin service are charged a fee tied to the actual cost of

providing the program. The fee will appear as a separate line item on the property tax bill, labeled "**CTYBIN**".

While legally allowable, this approach still requires careful administrative coordination with EWSWA and Local Municipalities to ensure that all eligible properties are accurately billed. This includes confirming property lists, coordinating billing systems, and addressing any operational considerations.

Administration will monitor the user fee model process and its impact on resources both at the County and Local Municipal level. A follow up report may be presented to County Council after the first billing cycle if administration experiences unforeseen challenges implementing the user fee/tax bill model.

Financial Implications

The overall cost of the Green Bin Program remains unchanged; however, the User Fee billing model determines how those costs are distributed among County taxpayers.

Under this model, each household with access to the Green Bin Program will be charged an annual fee that reflects both fixed program costs and variable tonnage-based components. This approach ensures that only households receiving the service are billed directly, maintaining transparency and fairness in cost recovery.

Participation is mandatory for all eligible residential properties as defined under legislation, there is no option to opt out of the service. Should future legislation expand organics collection requirements to include industrial, commercial, multi-residential (above 6 units) etc., Administration would re-evaluate the billing method at that time.

The User Fee model aligns with Council's preferred direction and provides a clear, direct connection between the service provided and the cost recovered. Charges will vary slightly by municipality to reflect actual tonnage collected and related program costs.

Appendix A has been included outlining the estimated cost for residential households in each local municipality. The chart illustrates the estimated annual charge that will appear on tax bills in upcoming tax years as both Phase 1 and Phase 2 municipalities are transitioned to receive the Green Bin service.

Consultations

Claire Bebbington, Deputy County Solicitor
 MTE Tax Consultants
 EWSWA Team
 Tony Ardovini, Deputy Treasurer, City of Windsor

Strategic Plan Alignment

Working as Team Essex County	Growing as Leaders in Public Service Excellence	Building a Regional Powerhouse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Scaling Sustainable Services through Innovation <input type="checkbox"/> Focusing “Team Essex County” for Results <input type="checkbox"/> Advocating for Essex County’s Fair Share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Being an Employer with Impact <input type="checkbox"/> A Government Working for the People <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Promoting Transparency and Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Providing Reliable Infrastructure for Partners <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Dynamic and Thriving Communities Across the County <input type="checkbox"/> Harmonizing Action for Growth <input type="checkbox"/> Advancing Truth and Reconciliation

Recommendation

That Essex County Council receive report number 2025-1217-FIN-R35-MR, Green Bin Program Billing Updates as information.

Approvals

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Ryan

Melissa Ryan, CPA, Director, Financial Services/Treasurer

Concurred With,

Sandra Zwiers

Sandra Zwiers, MAcc, CPA, CA, Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix	Title
A	Estimated Annual Green Bin User Fee per Local Municipality