SUBJECT: Waste Reduction Task Force (WRTF) Motion Regarding Plastic Bag Reduction (PW07155) - (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(a) That the minutes of the July 18, 2007 Waste Reduction Task Force meeting be received;

(b) That the Director of Waste Management be requested to review and report back to the Public Works Committee on options for reducing plastic bag use including the feasibility of banning plastic bags, taxing plastic bags and other reuse and recycling initiatives for plastic film in 2008 as directed by the WRTF in their Minutes of June 20, 2007 (previously received for information by Public Works on October 15, 2007).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At the June 20, 2007 Waste Reduction Task Force (WRTF) meeting a motion was put forward recommending that staff review and report back on the feasibility of implementing a ban on plastic bags as well as undertaking additional plastic bag reuse and recycling initiatives. Banning the use of plastic bags is one of several options for managing film plastic. Staff has indicated that a report could be prepared in 2008 and this has been supported by the Solid Waste Management Master Plan Steering Committee.

Additionally at the July 18, 2007 meeting, the WRTF put forth a recommendation calling for recycling containers to be placed next to all garbage containers in all City parks by
the end of 2008. Parks staff has indicated that they are evaluating options to improve recycling in parks and will be reporting this as an enhancement to Public Works Committee as part of the 2008 budget process.

It is recommended that the plastic bag recycling motion be reviewed by staff and report on the findings for consideration initially by the Solid Waste Management Master Plan Steering Committee, followed by the Public Works Committee.

**BACKGROUND:**

The information and recommendations in this report have City Wide implications.

The Waste Reduction Task Force was established in response to Recommendation #17 of the Solid Waste Management Master Plan (SWMMP), which was approved by Council in 2001, to assist in increasing waste diversion and promote the implementation of the SWMMP recommendations.

At the June 20, 2007 WRTF meeting the following motion calling for staff to undertake research and report back on the feasibility of a ban on plastic bags, as well as to undertake the promotion of plastic bag reuse and recycling. The motion put forth was as follows:

- “That the WRTF recommends through the SWMMP Steering Committee to request City staff to review, recommend and report to the public at large the feasibility of a ban on plastic bags within a specified thickness.
- That the nature of the specified thickness is to impact bags that are most readily available and contributes greatest to landfill waste.
- That Hamilton continues to aggressively educate the need to reuse and recycle plastic. Moving toward a plan to reduce the availability of plastic will aid in the goals and objectives of seeing greater recycling and reuse.

  The motion was moved by Dan Rodrigues, seconded by Mary Lou Dickson. The motion passed unanimously.”

Additionally at the July 18, 2007 meeting, the WRTF put forth the following recommendations pertaining to the provision of recycling containers in all City parks:

“Whereas Recommendation 19 of the Solid Waste Management Master Plan states:

  That the General Managers review and report back on how their respective departments' policies, by-laws and operations can be enhanced to implement and support the Solid Waste Management Master Plan.

And whereas Recommendation 10 of the Solid Waste Management Master Plan states:

  The City of Hamilton must implement, sustain and support a comprehensive public education, awareness and marketing program in all areas of the City outlining the benefits and encouraging participation in waste reduction, re-use and recycling programs.

And whereas Recommendation 2 of the Solid Waste Management Master Plan states:

  The Glanbrook landfill is a valuable resource, and the City of Hamilton must optimize the use of its disposal capacity to ensure that there is a
And whereas Recommendation 13 states in part that:

The City of Hamilton is committed to continually improving its waste management system.

The Waste Reduction Task Force is resolved that the Public Works Department should take immediate steps to supply recycling containers at all City parks and recreation centres. Any garbage container at these locations must be accompanied by a recycling container to receive cans and bottles.

The Public Works Department should make the financial arrangements necessary to achieve this requirement by the fiscal year ending in 2008.

The Waste Reduction Task Force is concerned that the absence of such containers in areas and facilities that are clearly the responsibility of the City of Hamilton sends the wrong message to residents who are being asked to increase diversion in their own homes and businesses.

(Moved by Mike Caruso, seconded by Dave Hart Dyke) The motion passed unanimously.”

Both of these motions were included in the WRTF minutes which have been reviewed by the Solid Waste Management Master Plan Steering Committee. The Committee is in support of further review by staff for the plastic bag recycling motion.

The motion made by the WRTF on July 18th, 2007 is in keeping with Public Works Recommendation Report PW07030 dated February 21st, 2007 and previously received by Committee and Council. This recommendation report stated that the Parks Section of the Operations and Maintenance Division will be reporting back on the potential of expanding parks recycling and will be brought forward as part of the 2008 budget process. Therefore no additional action is required in relation to this motion.

The purpose of this report is to provide staff input on the plastic bag motion to the Public Works Committee and seek direction from the Committee on how the motion is to be addressed.

**ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:**

a) Plastic Bag Bans

At the May 16, 2007 meeting, the WRTF received a presentation from the Environment & Plastics Industry Council (EPIC) which is a body of the Canadian Plastics Industry Association (CPIA). This presentation focused on the promotion of plastic bag recycling and reuse and put forward a position against the banning of plastic bags. At the June 20, 2007 meeting a Task Force member gave a presentation on plastic bag bans and recycling and provided counter arguments to some of the claims made by the EPIC representative. There are several options available to deal with the disposition of film plastic bags. Waste Management staff will review and report back on these options in 2008.
b) Parks Recycling

Due to some WRTF members' observations of a limited number of recycling containers currently in place in City parks the provision of additional parks recycling containers has been requested. Currently, a parks recycling initiative is being addressed by the Parks section of the Operations & Maintenance Division as a program enhancement within the 2008 Budget process.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

Alternatives will be considered as staff develop a position on plastic bag recycling.

Staff is recommending that this motion be further reviewed to determine environmental benefits, waste diversion impacts, implementation considerations and costs.

**FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

There will be no financial, staffing or legal implications from this report. The reviews can be undertaken using existing resources. Future reports resulting from these recommendations may have such implications.

**POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:**

The following recommendations of the Solid Waste Management Master Plan pertain to recommendations being put forward in this report:

Recommendation 2 - "The Glanbrook landfill is a valuable resource, and the City of Hamilton must optimize the use of its disposal capacity to ensure that there is a disposal site for Hamilton's residual materials that cannot be otherwise diverted".

Recommendation 10 - "The City of Hamilton must implement, sustain and support a comprehensive public education, awareness and marketing program in all areas of the city outlining the benefits and encouraging participation in waste reduction, re-use and recycling programs".

Recommendation 13 - "The City of Hamilton is committed to continually improving its waste management system and will support annual investment in research and development."

Recommendation 17 - "The City of Hamilton should establish a waste management implementation task force to help staff and politicians implement and monitor the new waste management system."

Recommendation 19 - "That the General Managers review and report back on how their respective departments' policies, by-laws and operations can be enhanced to implement and support the Solid Waste Management Master Plan".

The recommendations within this report pertain to the following vision drivers and priority actions within the Public Works Strategic Plan:

- "Services that our communities connect with and trust"; and
- "The leader in the greening and stewardship of the City".

Reviewing the motions from the Waste Reduction Task Force is an opportunity to consider public input on environmental improvements for the City.
RELEVANT CONSULTATION:
Ongoing discussions have taken place with the Parks & Cemeteries Section of the Operations & Maintenance Division on the parks recycling issue.

CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:
By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

Community Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
Public services and programs are delivered in an equitable manner, coordinated, efficient, effective and easily accessible to all citizens.

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
Waste is reduced and recycled.

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
Hamilton’s high quality environmental amenities are maintained and enhanced.

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines?
☑ Yes ☐ No

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants?
☐ Yes ☑ No

Reviewing the motions does not have any impacts on staff at this time.