CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Corporate Assets & Strategic Planning Division

TO: Chair and Members
   Public Works Committee
WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE

COMMITTEE DATE: December 2, 2013

SUBJECT/REPORT NO:
Trash Tag System and Distribution Method for 2014 - 2015 (PW13088) (City Wide)
(Outstanding Business List Item)

SUBMITTED BY:
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General Manager
Public Works Department

PREPARED BY:
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SIGNATURE:

RECOMMENDATION

(a) That the City of Hamilton continue with a Trash Tag system for eligible residential units for the 2014 - 2015 waste collection year, which includes making 26 tags available at no charge for eligible residential properties with curb side collection service, with twelve of tags delivered by Canada Post in the first quarter of 2014 and making the additional fourteen tags available for pick up or mail out as requested over the telephone or through the City’s online trash tag request form.

(b) That the item ‘Garbage Tag Mail Out Options’ be removed from the Public Works Committee Outstanding Business List.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report recommends utilizing the same trash tag distribution process for the 2014 - 2015 waste collection year as utilized in 2013 - 2014. This recommendation was supported by the Waste Management Advisory Committee held on October 8, 2013. In March 2013, twelve trash tags were included in the City’s garbage and recycling guide and were delivered to all eligible curb side residential properties by Canada Post. The twelve trash tags represent one extra bag or container of garbage per month. Council’s direction allowed 26 trash tags to be available for residential properties, therefore the remaining fourteen trash tags could be picked up at a Municipal Service Centre, or...
residents could call 905-546-CITY, or complete a web form on the City of Hamilton website and the fourteen additional trash tags would be mailed to their home.

Data analysis of the “additional fourteen” trash tag requests supports the status quo staged distribution model for the upcoming waste collection year. Between March 2013 and September 2013, approximately 6,600 residents requested the additional fourteen trash tags. This represents approximately 4% of the eligible residential units, which means 96% of the eligible properties have not seen the need to request the additional fourteen tags at this point. By staging the mailing of the trash tags, twelve tags per eligible residential unit equates to 1,920,000 tags in circulation at initial mail-out.

With respect to the delivery of the tags, costing and success rate analysis supports the distribution method of unaddressed mail delivery by Canada Post. Based on calls from residents who did not receive their trash tags or Waste and Recycling Guide in March, we estimate a 95% success rate with the current distribution method.

The only change to the trash tag system for the upcoming waste collection season is to select another colour for the tags, recommended as bright green. This colour will contrast from the existing bright pink and yet will be highly visible to collectors approaching the garbage containers at the curb. Also, staff recommends to select a trash tag colour to distinguish the City’s trash tag from waste tags being used in neighbouring municipalities who charge for their trash tags, namely Niagara Region and Halton Region.

Alternatives for Consideration - See Page 5

**FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Financial:** The Waste Collection Services RFP included a detailed financial analysis to determine the costs for each waste collection system including the service enhancements.

**Staffing:** There are no staffing implications associated with the recommendations in this report. The current staff complement will continue to be used to handle the trash tag distribution system.

**Legal:** There are no legal implications with the recommendations in this report.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

At the February 22, 2012 meeting of Council a new waste collection system for the period of April 2013 - March 2020 was approved. This system included weekly collection of green carts, recyclables, yard waste, garbage, and weekly call-in service for bulk waste. Council approved the continuation of the weekly one container garbage limit for residential households; however, this was supplemented with a trash tag system to provide households with up to 26 tags per year.
The intent of the trash tag system is to provide increased flexibility for residents to set out additional garbage containers during any week throughout the year rather than waiting for a scheduled amnesty week as offered in the previous waste collection system. The use of trash tags provides enhanced service to the public with the goal of reducing cases of illegal dumping of household garbage. There have been 637 illegal dumping complaints on City property reported to Municipal Law Enforcement at September 30, 2013 compared to 732 for the same period in 2012. This small reduction could be seen as an improvement due to the flexibility of the trash tags.

In March of 2013, the trash tag system was implemented. Twelve trash tags were included in the garbage and recycling guide and were delivered to all eligible curb side residential properties by Canada Post. Following the initial mailing, if residents required their additional fourteen tags, they could call 905-546-CITY or complete a web form and their tags would be mailed to them or they could visit one of the City’s Municipal Service Centres to pick up the additional tags.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS/LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS**

The recommendations in this report are guided by the Public Works Business Plan, ‘Innovate Now!’, the Solid Waste Management Master Plan (SWWMP), and the Solid Waste Management By-law 09-067.

Public Works Business Plan - ‘Innovate Now!’

The recommendations in this report support the vision drivers of Processes and People as they provide innovative solutions to creating a more efficient service delivery model to the citizens of Hamilton.

Solid Waste Management Master Plan (SWMMP)

The scope of this report falls within the guiding principle of the SWMMP since the City of Hamilton must maintain responsibility for the residual wastes generated within its boundaries.

Solid Waste Management By-law 09-067

The City’s Solid Waste Management By-law 09-067 defines the requirements for the City’s waste collection programs. By-law 09-067 was amended in 2012 to allow for the use of garbage tags as part of the garbage collection program.

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

The development of the current trash tag system required staff involvement from several Departments and Divisions.

Corporate Services, Information Technology Division worked with Operations staff to create the online ordering form for trash tags.
Corporate Services, Customer Service Division have supported the waste collection system, including trash tags by responding to public inquiries on the trash tag system and distributing tags to residents.

Public Works, Operations and Environmental Services Divisions have provided data related to collections and tonnages for analysis.

Members of Council and their administrative staff took the opportunity to provide feedback on the trash tag system and identified that the tag system is working better for residents as it allows them the flexibility of disposing their extra waste at the curb any week of the year which removes the need to take it to a community recycling centre.

The recommendations outlined in this report were reviewed and supported by the new Waste Management Advisory Committee at their meeting on October 8, 2013.

**ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

This report provides the recommendations to continue with the current distribution method for trash tags for the waste collection period between April 2014 and March 2015. Residential properties that receive curb side collection will be eligible to receive 26 trash tags per year. The trash tag distribution system includes sending twelve trash tags with the 2014-2015 garbage and recycling program information guide, and allowing residents to request the additional fourteen tags through the City’s online form, contacting the City’s Customer Contact Centre, or picking up the tags at one of the City’s Municipal Service Centres.

The City has received approximately 6,600 requests for the additional fourteen trash tags as of September 30th, with 60% of the requests being submitted through the on-line form. The majority of the requests were received during April and May 2013, shortly after the distribution of the garbage and recycling guide to residential households.

Trash tags will continue to be used exclusively for residential properties with curb side waste collection and will not be applicable for other types of properties such as eligible commercial properties.

In addition to the trash tag system, trash tags will continue to be used for properties approved for the City’s special consideration policy. As of April 2013, those approved for special consideration will receive 104 trash tags per year. Prior to April 2013, 780 properties were approved for special consideration. Following the implementation of the new collection system, 914 additional properties have been approved, mainly in the young family and medical category. Staff recommend to maintain the status quo system for the special consideration policy. We currently have 1694 properties approved for special consideration.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

An alternative to the recommended staged distribution of trash tags would be to deliver all 26 tags to eligible properties in the first quarter of 2014. While this option would
alleviate the need for a second mailing or having property owners pick up the additional fourteen tags once they realized they required them, it would require the City to print and distribute 26 tags to all eligible properties when our analysis currently identifies that only 4% of households requested the additional tags. If 26 tags are mailed to eligible residential properties, the number of tags in circulation would be 4,160,000 instead of 1,920,000.

At the June 3, 2013, Public Works Committee meeting, discussion took place around the success of the distribution method of the garbage and recycling guide and the twelve trash tags. A number of Councillors had received inquiries from residents who had not received their guide and tags. Approximately 5% of households, or 8,000 residents have contacted the City for a copy of the garbage and recycling guide and the initial twelve trash tags. Some confirmed that they do not receive flyers so their mail carrier would not have left one for them, while others admitted to throwing it out as they didn’t realize what was in the envelope. There were a few areas, however, that should have received the package and tags that did not. As a result, Public Works staff were asked to investigate alternative methods of delivering trash tags to eligible residential units, specifically distribution with the City’s tax bills. The 2013 garbage and recycling guide and previous waste collection calendars were mailed by Canada Post as unaddressed mail.

Approximately 5% of households have contacted the City for a copy of the garbage and recycling guide and the initial twelve trash tags. Some confirmed that they do not receive flyers, others admitted to throwing it out as they didn’t realize what was in the envelope. There were a few areas, however, that should have received the package and tags that did not.

The following table provides a comparison of delivery methods, their estimated costs and comments about each method.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery Method</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada Post - Addressed Mail</td>
<td>• Distribution with individual addresses</td>
<td>$105,000</td>
<td>• Higher cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Delivered by Canada Post employees</td>
<td>($0.63 per piece)</td>
<td>• Item is directed to a specific address</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Can be perceived as junk mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• A more personal perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada Post - Unaddressed Mail</td>
<td>• Distribution without individual addresses</td>
<td>$16,800</td>
<td>• Lower cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Delivered by Canada Post employees</td>
<td>($0.10 per piece)</td>
<td>• Can be perceived as junk mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Impersonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery Method</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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</tbody>
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| Distribution through local newspapers (Hamilton Spectator and Hamilton Community News) | • Distribution without individual addresses  
• Delivered by the Hamilton Spectator and Hamilton Community News employees | $15,300 ($0.09 per piece) | • Lower cost  
• The Hamilton Spectator is subscription based  
• Tags may not stand out in the newspaper  
• Cannot guarantee there is a newspaper carrier in all areas |
| City of Hamilton Tax Bills | • Distribution with individual address through the Hamilton municipal mailing of tax notices | N/A by the Taxation Division | • Only 50% of properties receive the initial tax bill  
• Tax bills are addressed to owner, not occupant therefore tags may not be received |

Following this analysis, the current distribution method of unaddressed mail by Canada Post provides us with the lowest cost option while reaching 95% of our desired audience. In order to correct some of the known delivery issues, such as residents who live on the boundary of Hamilton and a neighbouring municipality, staff will work closely with Canada Post to ensure packages are delivered to our residents and are not delivered outside of our boundary. In addition, where pockets exist that have a common postal code with homes that are not eligible to receive the waste package, staff will hand deliver to those homes.

**ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 - 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN**

**Strategic Priority #1**

A Prosperous & Healthy Community

*WE enhance our image, economy and well-being by demonstrating that Hamilton is a great place to live, work, play and learn.*

**Strategic Objective**

1.5 Support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents.
Strategic Priority #2
Valued & Sustainable Services

*WE deliver high quality services that meet citizen needs and expectations, in a cost effective and responsible manner.*

**Strategic Objective**

2.1 Implement processes to improve services, leverage technology and validate cost effectiveness and efficiencies across the Corporation.

2.2 Improve the City's approach to engaging and informing citizens and stakeholders.

2.3 Enhance customer service satisfaction.

Strategic Priority #3
Leadership & Governance

*WE work together to ensure we are a government that is respectful towards each other and that the community has confidence and trust in.*

**Strategic Objective**

3.4 Enhance opportunities for administrative and operational efficiencies.

### APPENDICES / SCHEDULES

None