

TORONTO STAFF REPORT

August 11, 2005

To: Economic Development and Parks Committee

From: Brenda Librecz, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Subject: Operation of Snack and Hot Drink Vending
(All Wards)
Request for Proposal No. 0613-05-0166

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the healthier foods criteria used in the Request for Proposal (RFP) 0613-05-0166 for the operation of snack and hot drink vending within the Parks, Forestry and Recreation facility locations, and to advise that a staff report will be presented in October 2005 detailing the results of the RFP and recommending an award.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) this report detailing criteria used to develop the healthier foods component of the RFP for operation of snack and hot drink vending be received for information;
- (2) a staff report be submitted to Committee and Council in October 2005 recommending the award of the License Agreement; and
- (3) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

In July 2000, the City issued a RFP to enter into a license agreement for the operation of snack and hot drink vending within the then named Parks and Recreation Division. The successful

Proponents of this RFP entered into a five (5)-year license agreement with the City effective November 1, 2000 in the East and West Districts and May 1, 2001 for the North District. The license agreements expire on October 31, 2005 for the East and West Districts and April 30, 2006 for the North District. The South District did not have a license agreement.

To ensure continuity of service, a RFP was issued in April 2005 through the Purchasing and Materials Management Division for this service that is scheduled to start on November 1, 2005 in the East, West and South Districts and May 1, 2006 for the North District. Evaluation criteria were changed from the previous RFP to reflect the City of Toronto's commitment to ensuring that healthier food choices are available in Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division facilities.

Comments:

Prior to the development of the RFP, staff met with Dr. Wayne Roberts, Project Co-ordinator, Toronto Food Policy Council and Public Health Nutritionists to discuss the recent Provincial initiatives regarding healthy food and beverages in school vending machines. Discussions focused on the role that Parks, Forestry & Recreation could play in ensuring that healthier choices were available in our facilities. It was mutually agreed that due to the fact that our facilities service a wide range of patrons, it would be more appropriate to ensure that healthier food choices are available at our facilities rather than eliminating unhealthy products from vending machines.

Staff worked closely with a Toronto Public Health Nutritionist in developing the RFP to reflect healthier choices being made available, which resulted in the establishment of a mandatory ratio of healthier choices and criteria for the definition of healthier foods. Staff reviewed the current "Fuel to Excell" vending program that the City of Ottawa Public Health Department initiated in Secondary Schools and incorporated some of their strategies.

The RFP contains a minimum requirement of 25% healthier products being available in the first year of the contract, and this must increase to 50% by the start of the third year. This incremental scale was proposed due to the fact that several practical barriers exist that influence the selection of healthier products. These barriers include: (1) Size of healthier food products – Many products are not packaged in a format that is compatible with vending machines. Often healthier products are not available in a single-serving size. In addition, the packaging of products needs to be sufficiently sturdy to prevent breakage, tearing or bruising of the product. (2) The cost of healthier products – Snacks that are lower in fat and sugar are higher in nutritional value are often more expensive than conventional snacks, which is a barrier to their selection. (3) Shelf life – Healthier products often have a shorter shelf life and the logistics of monitoring stale-dates can be a disincentive to carrying these products. (4) Labelling – While there are many products available outside of Canada, the fact that the labels contain no French language prohibits their sale in Canada. Current trends indicate that the snack industry will continue to increase the number of healthier snacks available for purchase.

The criteria used for identifying healthier food choices was based primarily on the October 2004 document "Dieticians of Canada – Recommendations for School Food and Nutrition for the

Ontario Ministry of Education”, and was developed by a Public Health Nutritionist. Healthier food choices were based on four components per vending portion:

- 1) Calories – less than or equal to 300 calories
- 2) Fat – no more than 30% of total calories from fat
- 3) Saturated + Trans Fat – no more than 10% of total calories from saturated plus trans fat
- 4) Sugar – no more than 35% by weight (excluding naturally occurring sugars in fruit and vegetables)

Several foods were exempted as they provide important nutrients, whether they meet the criteria as set above or not.

- 1) Vegetables or fruit (raw, canned, dried or frozen)
- 2) 100% natural nuts, seeds, or legumes or any mixture of these
- 3) Yogourt (plain or fruit-flavoured)
- 4) Cheese
- 5) Applesauce

The five-member evaluation team for the RFP contained a Toronto Public Health Nutritionist, who was present at the Proponent’s information meeting to provide information on the healthier food criteria and respond to any questions. In addition, Toronto Public Health will provide ongoing support for the successful proponent(s) as we strive to increase the availability of healthier food choices in our Parks, Forestry and Recreation facilities

Conclusions:

Healthier food choices at City facilities are a sensible approach to follow. This report is provided to outline those choices and the process used for the information of Committee. A report will be prepared for the October 2005 meeting recommending a successful proponent.

Contacts:

Neil Zaph
Acting Director, Strategic Services
Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Phone: 416-395-6065
Fax: 416-392-8565
E-mail: nzaph@toronto.ca

Doug McDonald
Manager, Business Services
Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Phone: 416-392-8578
Fax: 416-392-3355
E-mail: dmcdonal@toronto.ca

Brenda Librecz
General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation