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February 7, 2001

WASTE DIVERSION 2010 TASK FORCE:

The Works Committee at its meeting on February 7, 2001, had before it a report (January 23, 2001) from the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services responding to the request of the Committee at its last meeting for a report on the development of a directory for the City of Toronto similar to the Ottawa "Take It Back" directory; and recommending that:

- (1) staff continue to monitor the Ottawa "Take It Back" program and report to the Works Committee as soon as their results are analyzed;
- (2) this initiative be assigned a low priority for funding, given the other initiatives proposed for 2001; and
- (3) the Province of Ontario be requested to expeditiously promulgate regulations which would streamline the approvals process for establishing household hazardous waste collection sites at retailer locations.

The Committee referred the aforementioned report to the Waste Diversion 2010 Task Force.

City Clerk

Trudy Perrin/lv.012

c: Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services
General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services

TORONTO STAFF REPORT

January 23, 2001

To: Works Committee

From: Barry H. Gutteridge, Commissioner, Works and Emergency Services

Subject: Household Hazardous Waste - "Take It Back" Program

Purpose:

To respond to a request from Works Committee to report on the development of a directory for the City of Toronto similar to the City of Ottawa "Take it Back" directory.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

The projected cost of establishing a retailer "Take it Back" program for the City of Toronto is \$740,000 in the first year and \$240,000 annually thereafter. The extent to which it would assist in reducing household hazardous waste in the waste stream and in achieving our diversion targets cannot be accurately estimated.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) staff continue to monitor the Ottawa "Take It Back" program and report to Works Committee as soon as their results are analyzed;
- (2) this initiative be assigned a low priority for funding, given the other initiatives proposed for 2001; and
- (3) the Province of Ontario be requested to expeditiously promulgate regulations which would streamline the approvals process for establishing household hazardous waste collection sites at retailer locations.

Background:

At its meeting of January 10, 2001, Works Committee had before it a report from the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services on the possibility of locating household

hazardous waste (HHW) depots at municipal buildings. Works Committee requested that the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services report to the next meeting of the Committee on “a proposal for a “Take it Back” directory of products similar to the program of the Region of Ottawa-Carleton, and the addition of a toxic waste reduction and toxics tax component to the apartment recycling pilots proposed for 2001”.

On October 3, 4, and 5, 2000 Council requested the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services to report on the City of Ottawa’s voluntary take-back program. Prior to that Works Committee, at its meeting of July 12, 2000 received a report from the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services that addressed the Ottawa Take It Back Program and requested a report on “including manufacturers and distributors in addition to retailers with respect to the paint industry and including the British Columbia model”.

Comments:

The City of Ottawa operates a “Take It Back” program where waste material is returned to retailers. Residents can drop off certain categories of HHW at participating retail locations such as gas stations, hardware stores, automobile garages, pharmacies, etc. The “Take it Back” program is a voluntary program whereby the retailers only accept selected materials for which they have appropriate disposal/recycling programs in place (e.g., pharmacies accept needles but not oil). The cost for collection and disposal/recycling is the responsibility of the retailer with the exception of latex paint, which is collected from the retailers by the City and is redistributed through a municipal paint exchange program. Staff from the City feel that the participating retailers are benefiting from this “Take it Back” program by promoting an environmentally responsible corporate image to their customers and from an increase in sales resulting from an increase in traffic flow through their establishments. The “Take it Back” program is in addition to Ottawa’s HHW depot program.

Advertising space was sold in the City of Ottawa’s Directory of Take it Back Products to participating retailers. The total cost to produce the required 240,000 copies of the directory in the year 2000, was \$60,000 of which \$15,000 was offset through private sector advertisement space. The local Ottawa Citizen newspaper distributed the directory free of charge. Additional costs incurred in 2000 included \$25,000 for in-store promotion (signs, counter cards, etc) and approximately \$112,000 in staff time which is comprised of a dedicated staff person, three summer students and part of a communication person’s time.

We are very supportive of a retailer-based program that collects HHW in the City of Toronto, however, there would be significant budget implications. Due to the vast number of retailers that would have to be contacted and could potentially be involved, two dedicated staff would have to be added to the Solid Waste Management Services staffing establishment to implement, monitor, and sustain the program. It is estimated that this would cost approximately \$150,000 annually, comprised of \$60,000 for each person’s salary and benefits, and an additional \$15,000 each for auxiliary expenses.

An extensive promotional campaign would be required in the first year to introduce this new retailer-based HHW collection program. The promotional campaign would include newspaper /

radio advertising, in-store signage, and the production of a booklet outlining the retail program and the depot locations which would be delivered to all households in the City. It is estimated that the start up promotional cost for the first year of the program would be approximately \$590,000 and that the promotional cost to maintain the program would amount to \$90,000 annually.

Therefore, it is estimated that the total cost of a HHW retailer program would amount to \$740,000 during the first year and \$240,000 annually thereafter. The 2001 operating budget submission for Solid Waste Management Services does not contain a request for this initiative.

Part of the cost to produce the directory could be offset by participating sponsors. However, until we engage in this process we cannot predict what private sector sponsorship will be realized. Furthermore, the current guidelines for advertising in City of Toronto published directories is unclear and Council would have to provide direction to this Department on the amount and type of advertising space that is permissible.

The City of Ottawa does not yet have data on the quantity of HHW captured through participating retailers. They will be attempting to quantify the material collected and we will continue to monitor their program to assist us to estimate the potential quantity that could be collected in the City of Toronto through a retailer based "Take it Back" program. At this time, Ottawa staff are uncertain when this data will be available.

The return to retailer program would complement our existing program and provide outlets for residents to dispose of their HHW, in addition to our current depots, Environment Days and the Toxics Taxi. One would expect that if residents have the option of bringing certain types of HHW to retail outlets in Toronto, quantities recovered through our existing program would decline, thus reducing our current costs. However, it is difficult to prepare an accurate cost/benefit analysis of implementing a retailer based HHW collection program at this time since recovery levels cannot be projected.

If a retailer or service company wishes to set up a HHW depot at their outlet, a Certificate of Approval (C of A) from the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) would also be required with the exception of certain automotive products. The current MOE regulations only permit oil, oil filters and antifreeze to be accepted at locations where automotive goods and services are sold.

In June of 1998, the Province released its proposed General Waste Management Regulation which included a change to the Selected Waste Depot Regulation. The proposed regulation would allow retailers to set up, handle and temporarily store selected waste that corresponds to products regularly sold at their business, such as paints, pesticides and batteries without requiring a C of A. Retailers would be required to inform the MOE of their depot and meet the storage, training, ventilation and handling requirements and meet all fire codes and other regulations. This regulation has yet to be promulgated.

If the City of Toronto organized a retailer based take back program it would adopt a similar approach to that of the City of Ottawa which assumes no responsibility for the operation of the retailer HHW depots and the onus is on the retailer to insure that their depot is operating in accordance with all regulations.

With respect to product stewardship initiatives which include manufacturers and distributors, some other Provinces have legislated stewardship programs that require certain industries to manage the HHW generated from their products. British Columbia is the most advanced in its HHW stewardship program. B.C. regulations require the producers of paints, solvents/flammable liquids, domestic pesticides, gasoline and pharmaceuticals to take responsibility for the management of their products that contribute to HHW. Industry operates a network of collection depots to accept HHW from residents. Consumers are charged an "eco-fee" at the point of purchase on new products to cover the cost of operating the HHW collection program.

In Ontario, the Minister of the Environment has announced his support of the Waste Diversion Organization (WDO) report "Achieving Sustainable Waste Diversion Programs in Ontario". The report includes a number of product stewardship initiatives, one of them being that the cost of operating HHW programs be shared equally between Ontario municipalities and the related consumer products industry. Municipalities would continue to operate the HHW programs with industry contributing approximately 50% of the net cost of the programs. Since industry would be sharing in the cost of municipal operated programs, they would not be required to operate their own recovery programs as in the British Columbia model. However, this would not prevent specific industry sectors from initiating and funding their own HHW collection systems on a voluntary basis. It is expected that municipal costs related to an HHW return to retailer program would be eligible for funding under the WDO proposed funding model assuming it was deemed to be an efficient method of collecting HHW.

With respect to the apartment pilots, we will be providing residents the opportunity to dispose of their HHW waste separately. Each apartment will be visited by the Toxics Taxi on a specific advertised day during the pilot.

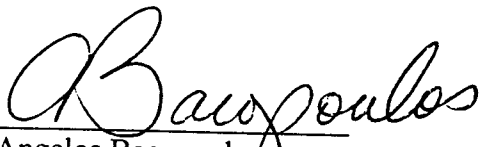
Conclusions:


An HHW "return to retailer" program whereby retailers accept from residents specific types of HHW corresponding to products sold in their stores has potential for significantly increasing diversion of HHW from landfill. Setting up a retailer based HHW system in Toronto is projected

to cost \$740,000 in year one and \$240,000 in subsequent years; however this may be partially offset by a reduction in HHW operating costs if quantities received through our existing HHW decline and if potential WDO product stewardship funding is forthcoming in the future.

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