

Strategy for the Reduction, Reuse and Recycling of Hot Drink Cups

Date:	May 28, 2014
To:	Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
From:	Acting General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	P:\2014\ClusterB\SWM\June\011PW (AFS#19961)

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to report back to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee on a strategy and suitable pilot project for the reduction, reuse and recycling of hot drink cups.

Reduction and reuse strategies for hot and cold drink cups will also be reviewed as part of the Long Term Waste Management Strategy. A pilot project is being undertaken that will test the effectiveness of separation techniques and determine possible suitable end-markets for this material.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Acting General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, recommends that:

1. The Public Works and Infrastructure Committee receive this report for information.

Financial Impact

This report will have no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the 2014 budget. Potential financial partnership with industry stewards are being sought which may include partial funding to assist in covering the operating costs of a pilot project. Pending the results of the pilot, staff will determine what future cost impacts may be incurred by adding hot drink cups to the Blue Bin Program.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of May 6, 7, and 8, 2014 City Council adopted a member motion requesting the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services report back to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee on a strategy and suitable pilot project for the reduction, reuse and recycling of hot drink cups.

The Member Motion “MM51.34 - Moving Towards Recyclable Drinking Cups in Toronto” can be viewed at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.MM51.34>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Hot drink cups are currently not part of the City’s Blue Bin Collection Program. However, staff are continuously researching opportunities to add new materials such as hot drink cups in the City’s Blue Bin Collection Program. Although the quantity of waste generated by hot and cold drink cups makes up a small percentage of our overall waste stream, the prevalence of these single use products carries a strong public awareness of their non-recyclability in the City’s diversion programs.

COMMENTS

As requested by City Council at its May 6, 7 and 8, 2014 meeting, staff will be undertaking a hot drink cup recycling pilot project to test the ability to efficiently separate the cups including the use of both optical and manual sorting techniques at the City’s recyclables processing contractor, Canada Fibers Ltd. Material Recovery Facility. The pilot methodology includes, but is not limited to, running dedicated single-use hot drink cups through the facility to isolate its behaviour during processing. Staff will monitor capture rates, residue rates and cross contamination of the other streams by the hot drink cups. Additionally, staff will be investigating end-markets for dedicated loads of hot drink cup material. It is important to verify that the single-use hot drink cups are actually being recycled and will not make up a significant portion of the residue of paper production.

The pilot is anticipated to take place in June/July 2014. Staff is currently investigating a potential partnership with Tim Hortons and have requested a supply of hot drink cups, information on possible end-markets, and partial funding for the pilot.

In the event that the pilot concludes that single-use hot drink cups are able to be processed using optical sorting technology, that there is minimal cross contamination of the other blue bin materials, and finally that long term markets can be secured, it may be determined that we have the ability to include hot drink cups as a permanent part of Blue Bin collection. At that time, staff will report further on the costs and benefits of adding hot drink cups as a new material to the Blue Bin Program.

City staff, with assistance from the hired consultant HDR Corporation, is currently developing a Long Term Waste Management Strategy for Toronto to provide a framework for Solid Waste Management Services policy decisions over the next 30 to 50 years. As part of the Strategy development, options for the reduction, reuse, and recycling of packaging will be reviewed including single-use hot and cold drink cups. Any potential incentives, possible policy options, and other motivations that may reduce the generation of single-use drink cups will be included as part of the Long Term Waste Management Strategy.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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