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TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING ON AUGUST 11, 2008
FROM:	PAT McNALLY, P. ENG. ACTING GENERAL MANAGER OF ENVIRONMENTAL & ENGINEERING SERVICES & CITY ENGINEER
SUBJECT:	UPDATE: PROPOSAL TO ELIMINATE THE PURCHASE AND SALE OF SINGLE-USE BOTTLED WATER AT CITY FACILITIES

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Acting General Manager of Environmental & Engineering Services & City Engineer, the following actions be taken:

a) Municipal Council **APPROVE** a resolution stating the following:

WHEREAS the Corporation of the City of London operates and maintains a highly regulated and sophisticated water distribution system that meets some of the most stringent water quality requirements in the world;

WHEREAS the regulatory requirements for monitoring water quality contained in bottled water are not as stringent as those that must be met by Corporation of the City of London;

WHEREAS the Corporation of the City of London delivers water to its residents and businesses that translates, on average, to about 1/8th of a cent per litre;

WHEREAS single-use bottled water sold in London is 230 to 3,000 times more expensive than water from the tap in London, even though estimates suggest that between 10% and 25% of the bottled water originates from municipal water systems;

WHEREAS resource extraction, packaging and distribution of single-use bottled water creates unnecessary air quality and climate change impacts and consumes unnecessary resources such as oil in the manufacture of plastic bottles and in the fuel used in the transportation of bottled water to the consume;

WHEREAS single-use plastic bottles, although easily recycled through the City of London recycling program, approximately 60 percent are captured in the Blue Box Program and the rest end up in the garbage bag and ultimately delivered to the City's landfill site taking up unnecessary space without any further contribution to society;

WHEREAS single-use plastic bottles that are not recycled in the Blue Box Program or placed in the garbage become litter in London's streets, parks and boulevards;

WHEREAS the cost of managing single-use plastic bottles along with other recyclable materials in the Blue Box program, after material revenue, has been removed is currently 35% paid by industry stewards and 65% paid by London taxpayers and when the single-use plastic bottles and other recyclable materials are sent to landfill industry stewards do not pay any of the costs;

WHEREAS City of London tap water is safe, healthy and accessible to Londoners and visitors, and substantially more environmentally sustainable than single-use bottled water;

WHEREAS City of London tap water is readily available at most indoor public facilities, either in the form of a faucet in a bathroom or drinking fountain and, where it is not readily available a plan be put in motion to increase access to municipal water subject to water quality and safety requirements, budget and other considerations;

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WHEREAS a priority of London Municipal Council remains that where easy access to municipal tap water does not exist, the availability of bottled water is a very appropriate alternative;

WHEREAS the City Council wishes to set a positive example to the London community on environmental matters;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT a) single-use bottled water will no longer be sold in the City Hall cafeteria, from City-owned or City administered concessions and vending machines in public facilities where easy access to municipal tap water exists; b) single-use bottled water will no longer be purchased and provided at meetings where easy access municipal tap water exists; c) the availability of water jugs with municipal tap water will be increased, where required; d) a City staff and public awareness campaign be developed to support the rationale for these important changes including the need for Londoners to do their part; and e) the following implementation schedule be followed subject to an assessment that tap water is readily accessible at these locations:

Phase	Locations/Equipment/Item	Target Implementation Dates
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Hall Cafeteria • City Hall Catering Services • Market Tower Building • A J Tyler Building 	September 1, 2008
2	Vending Machines and Contracted Food Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • various locations including arenas and community centres 	To be determined (this may be phased in during 2008 and 2009)
3a	Municipal Drinking Water Awareness Strategy	To be determined – late 2008 or early 2009 is current target
3b	1 st Update Report to ETC	To be determined – late 2008 or early 2009 is current target
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golf Courses • Storybook Gardens • any City operated concessions 	Spring 2009
5	2 nd Update Report to ETC	September 2009

- b) Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to form a working group with officials from the Middlesex-London Health Unit to ensure that progress is examined from different perspectives including health, safety, environmental, operational and financial.
- c) Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to update the details in the report entitled *Environmental Statement on the Need to Reduce Consumption of Single-use Bottled Water* to ensure that new information from industry has been included in the document and that revised document be the one made publicly available.
- d) Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to ensure that the future Municipal Drinking Water Awareness Strategy includes the cost and maintenance of public water fountains and refill stations and related infrastructure requirements.
- e) Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to include a specific section in the upcoming discussions on maximizing waste diversion that focuses on litter prevention and recycling noting that improvements in these areas must come from partnerships across all sectors including local government, businesses and the community.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER

Relevant reports that can be found at www.london.ca include:

1. Report to the May 26, 2008 ETC Meeting, Proposal to Eliminate the Purchase and Sale of Single-use Bottled Water at City Facilities (Agenda Item #16)



2. Report to the December 10, 2007 ETC Meeting, Waste Diversion Strategy Public Consultation Document and Recent Waste Diversion Initiatives Proposal to Eliminate the Purchase and Sale of Single-use Bottled Water at City Facilities (Agenda Item #9)

BACKGROUND

PURPOSE

On December 17, 2007, Municipal Council resolved that the General Manager of Environmental & Engineering Services & City Engineer **BE DIRECTED** to:

- (iv) examine the viability of implementing a ban on single-use drinking water bottles at municipal buildings and making municipal water readily available in public spaces and to report back at a future Environment & Transportation Committee (ETC) meeting with the findings.

On May 26, 2008, City staff presented a detailed report entitled Proposal to Eliminate the Purchase and Sale of Single-use Bottled Water at City Facilities which included an attachment: *Environmental Statement on the Need to Reduce Consumption of Single-use Bottled Water*. This work resulted in 5 actions from Municipal Council with 2 actions due for August 11, 2008:

- (b) the Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to consult with the Middlesex-London Health Unit and other interested parties on the plan to eliminate the purchase, sale and distribution of single-use bottled water at City owned facilities and on the Environmental Statement on the Need to Reduce Consumption of Single-Use Bottled Water;
- (d) the Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to report back to a public participation meeting at the Environment & Transportation Committee meeting to be held on August 11, 2008 on any potential changes to the target implementation dates as stated in the proposal to eliminate the purchase and sale of single-use bottled water;

CONTEXT

The subject matter in this proposal involves many related programs and services of the Environmental Programs and Water Operations divisions of the Environmental & Engineering Services Department (EESD) as well as Parks & Recreation of the Community Services Department. Potential service areas including solid waste management, recycling, source water protection, water awareness and climate change impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions. It is a topic that City staff have been closely monitoring since 2005.

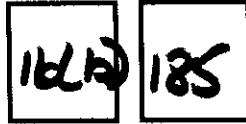
The May 26, 2008 ETC report and attachment formed a broad discussion on the topic of bottled water, the related environmental and economic issues, and a direction forward to eliminate the purchase, sale and distribution of single-use bottled water at a number of City owned facilities in a phased approach including the need to raise the awareness of the value of municipal water in the community.

To assist ETC and Council with its deliberations into this important subject matter, we have prepared a series of Questions and Answers. Shortly after the release of the May 26, 2008 report there was much informal public debate on this proposal and interestingly the debate went into many different areas, many well beyond the current proposal from staff.

Important Questions and Answers Regarding the Proposal to Eliminate the Purchase and Sale of Single-use Bottled Water at City Facilities

Q - Is bottled water being banned from City facilities and publicly-owned spaces?

A – No; this is not a ban on bottled water. The proposal is to not sell bottled water in certain areas or make it available at meetings, for example. Bottled water may be brought into any City-owned facility or publicly-owned space.



Q – What beverage is the focus of this proposal?

A – The target is bottles that contain a product that is similar to municipal tap water. The Canadian Bottled Water Association (CBWA) indicates that “Bottled water cannot contain sweeteners or chemical additives and must be calorie and sugar free.” The CBWA offers the following definitions of water that is routinely bottled and is the focus of the London proposal:

- *Spring Water* - According to the current federal food regulations, spring water is potable water that comes from any underground source but not from a public community water supply. The spring water collected and bottled is considered natural water and must have all the same properties and be of the same composition and quality as the water underground. Normally, spring water is expected to contain fewer than 500 parts per million (ppm) of total dissolved solids (minerals).
- *Mineral Water* - Respects the same definition as spring water except that it is normally expected to contain more than 500 ppm of dissolved solids.
- *Purified Drinking Water* - Bottled water that has been produced by distillation, deionisation or reverse osmosis. The water can come from a spring, or a public community water supply. Other suitable terms for bottled water produced by one of the above processes include “distilled water,” “deionised water,” and “reverse osmosis water.” These waters have no added minerals.
- *Carbonated Bottled Water* - Bottled water that contains natural or added carbonation. Soda water, seltzer water and tonic water are considered soft drinks, not bottled waters.”

Q – What about flavoured water or energy drinks?

A – These beverages will continue to be sold or made available.

Q – Where will bottled water not be sold or made available?

A – In Phase 1 which would start September 1, 2008, bottled water would not be sold or made available at City Hall (cafeteria or catering services), Market Tower Building or A J Tyler Building. Other location would be phased when the most important criterion is met; that is easy access to municipal tap water.

Q – Why is it proposed that bottled water not be sold or made available at some City facilities and City locations?

A – In many locations, municipal tap water is readily available through fountains and refillable bottle dispensing units. For example, City Hall has a water fountain on 13 of the 14 floors.

Q – What about other City facilities and City locations; when will they be included?

A – Other facilities and locations will be phased in over a period of time provided that easy access to municipal tap water is available. The locations to look at next include vending machines, city operated concessions and contracted food services; and golf courses.

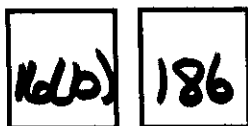
Q – What about public parks like Victoria Park and the events held within or around them?

A – For the summer of 2008, the City installed 3 new water fountains in Victoria Park and created a special water dispensing unit (the “Water Bar”) to help improve access to municipal water. This is a very important step in understanding what easy access to municipal water means in a large public area with thousands of people. City staff view these areas as challenging and require significant coordination and cooperation from event operators. This is a longer term project that will continue in 2009 after further evaluation in 2008.

Q – What are some of the benefits of London municipal tap water over bottled water?

A - Municipal tap water has many benefits over bottled water including it:

- **is significantly more cost effective.** Tap water is a substantially more economical choice than bottled water. It costs about 1/8th of a cent for a litre of water. Bottled water in London may range from \$0.30 to \$4.00 per litre. Prices for bottled water will vary substantially due to sales, volume discounts and location. Based on the above range, bottled water is 230 to 3,000 times more expensive than water from the tap in London.



- **has a much lower environmental impact.** Among the most significant concerns are the resources required to produce the plastic bottles and to deliver filled bottles to consumers, including both energy and water. For London, using averages for consumption and transportation costs to the nearest bottling locations, all activities associated with producing, filling, transporting and drinking bottled water would release between 250 and 350 times more greenhouse gases than drinking tap water. The energy used by the City of London to treat and pump drinking water to every single tap in London only releases about 10 tonnes per year of greenhouse gases – a very small amount that is equivalent to one-half of one family's greenhouse gas emissions. In comparison, best available estimate suggest that over 2,600 tonnes of greenhouse gases are released to meet the bottled water needs of Londoners. There is a significant gap between the two.
- **is subjected to a broader range of quality standards.** A glass of London drinking water is tested and safeguarded to a much more rigid standard than bottled drinking water bought in stores. More than 130 organic and inorganic parameters are routinely tested to safeguard the quality of London's municipal drinking water system. It is important to recognize that bottled water is also highly regulated with different companies performing even higher levels of quality control on their products that required through Federal laws.
- **has created value for Londoners in many other ways.** Beyond the high quality needed to meet drinking water standards, Londoners receive additional value for their investment such as a water supply system that is reliable with standby pumping and emergency storage provided; piping and hydrant systems that increase fire safety in the community; connections to two Great Lakes ensures an abundant supply and delivery to over 160,000 households and businesses; and the convenience of the water supply system ensures such quality of life functions as cooking, bathing, sanitation and irrigation plus essential inputs into the industrial sector of London.
- **does not generally create an empty container that needs to be recycled.** Recycling is good for the environment but it is important to recognize that if you do not have the container in the first place, you do not have to pay to have it recycled. The cost of managing single-use plastic bottles along with other recyclable materials in the Blue Box program, after material revenue has been removed is currently 35% paid by industry stewards and 65% paid by London taxpayers. When the single-use plastic bottles and other recyclable materials are sent to landfill industry stewards do not pay any of the costs.
- **does not generally create an empty container that all too often ends up as litter or directly in a garbage container.** In London, a review of overall plastic recovery rates using data from Stewardship Ontario (generation rates) and City of London marketed tonnes reveals an overall capture rate for the plastic materials collected in its Blue Box is between 55% and 60%. There are no local statistics on what percentage of all PET bottles is comprised of PET used for single-use bottled water. Based on PET generation data from Stewardship Ontario and the Environment Plastics Industry Council (EPIC) it is estimated that Londoners generate over 1,200 tonnes of PET bottles (all types) for recycling. Analysis of recycling rates has found about 500 tonnes is not captured by the Blue Box and potentially ends up in landfill and also if improperly disposed as litter. There are financial costs associated with both increased recycling of these bottles, landfill costs and litter costs.

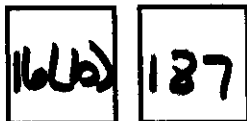
Q – Are we doing this because recycling is not working in London?

A – No. Our recycling program is working very well. For example, over 90% of Londoners recycle through the Blue Box program at least once per month. Municipal council wishes to see it improved.

Q – What are some of the benefits of bottled water over London municipal tap water?

A – Bottled water has some benefits over tap water as it:

- is very easy to transport
- is very convenient



- is ideal in emergency situations
- readily available for purchase in many public locations where municipal tap water is not available
- suitable for storage for many months or even years; and
- reprocessed so it may taste better to some consumers.

Q – Are we taking away any rights that belong to Londoners because bottled water will not be sold?

A – No. Many beverage products are not offered by the City of London where beverages can be purchased.

Q – How are Londoners going to access municipal tap water?

A – They do now. The goal will be to encourage more use by promoting refillable/reusable bottles, the benefits of doing so and the overall value of London municipal tap water.

DISCUSSION

Consultation Activities

Civic Administration were directed to meet with the Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) and other interested parties on the plan to eliminate the purchase, sale and distribution of single-use bottled water at City owned facilities. The following activities have occurred:

- On May 31, 2008, a number of London citizens from the Council of Canadians and Waste Free World organized a water forum entitled *Tap Into Your Water* held at City Hall. City staff presented at the forum and were a sponsor along with the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, Novack's, Trojan Technologies, The Tea Haus, Ten Thousand Villages and locals of CAW and CUPE.
- Discussions were held with MLHU staff on the draft resolution and numerous discussions were held with MLHU Health Inspectors on making municipal water accessible in outdoor environments. MLHU was engaged in the health aspects of the mobile water dispensing unit that was unveiled at two major festivals this summer. It is our understanding the MLHU will be submitting a letter to the August 11 ETC meeting. The main concerns highlighted by MLHU was the concern that if municipal tap water was not available, bottled water should not be discouraged as it is a very good alternative. Concern was also expressed that the switch to other beverages should be followed to ensure that less healthy choices were not being made.
- A meeting was held with the Executive Director of Refreshments Canada, the organization that represents many beverage suppliers. The primary concerns expressed were some of the details provided in the *Environmental Statement on the Need to Reduce Consumption of Single-use Bottled Water* were not accurate as the documentation contained errors and that Refreshment Canada was very opposed to the proposal to eliminate the purchase and sale of single-use bottled water at City facilities. The Executive Director informed City staff that significant work was being performed by Refreshments Canada regarding the life cycle analysis of bottled water. These details will be submitted directly to City staff and ETC as part of their submission.
- A meeting was held with two representatives from Nestle Waters Canada, a major bottled water supplier located in the City of Guelph. Nestle Waters is very opposed to the proposal to eliminate the purchase and sale of single-use bottled water at City facilities. A major concern expressed was the potential health concerns if bottled water is not available or sold. Data was presented on the public opinion of bottled water which is very supportive of bottled water. These details will be submitted to ETC as part of their submission. Nestles Waters also proposed to work the City of London on a pilot project dealing with recycling in public spaces, an anti-littering awareness campaign and a health and awareness campaign.
- The Canadian Bottled Water Association (CBWA) was contacted on two separate occasions by City staff. To date, a meeting or discussion has not been held. Nestles Water staff



confirmed that they are a member of CBWA and their opinions were very consistent of the membership of CBWA.

- Further meetings and discussions were held with City staff in the areas of:
 - Environmental & Engineering Services (Facilities Operations),
 - Community Services (Parks & Recreation Operations, Recreation Business Development & Attractions including Food Services)
 - Finance & Corporate Services (Purchasing & Supply)

Changes to the Proposed Target Implementation Dates

Civic Administration was directed to report back to a public participation meeting on any potential changes to the target implementation dates. Two additional reporting phases have been added to the proposed phased approach to reduce the use of single-use bottled water at City facilities is proposed.


Proposed Implementation Strategy

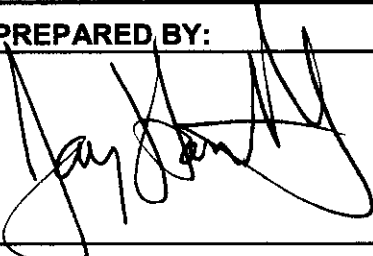
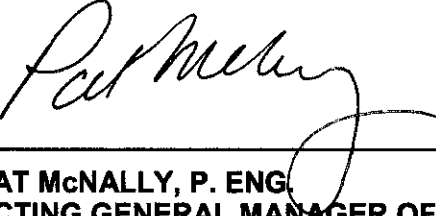
Phase	Locations/Equipment/Item	Actions Required (2008)	Target Implementation Date
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Hall Cafeteria • City Hall Catering Services • Market Tower Building • A J Tyler Building 	Ongoing – August: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review water fountains for improvements • create education and awareness materials 	September 1, 2008
2	Vending Machines and Contracted Food Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • various locations including arenas and community centres 	Ongoing – October: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review contractual requirements • review access to municipal water • create education and awareness materials 	To be determined (this may be phased in during 2008 and 2009)
3a	Municipal Drinking Water Awareness Strategy	Ongoing – December: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in progress • strategy to be submitted to ETC 	To be determined – late 2008 or early 2009 is current target
3b	1 st Update Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • submitted to ETC 	To be determined – late 2008 or early 2009 is current target
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golf Courses • Storybook Gardens • any City operated concessions 	Ongoing – December: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review access to municipal water including outdoor water fountains • create education and awareness materials 	Spring 2009
5	2 st Update Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • submitted to ETC 	August 2009

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was prepared with assistance from Jamie Skimming, Manager, Air Quality; Joe van Koeverden, Manager, Recreation Business Development & Attractions; Roland Welker, Division Manager, Water Engineering; Wesley Abbott, Division Manager, Solid Waste Management; and Anne Boyd, Waste Diversion Coordinator.

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