



## **Council Report**

### **For the Meeting of December 10, 2015**

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**To:** Council **Date:** December 8, 2015  
**From:** Fraser Work, Director, Engineering and Public Works  
**Subject:** Preliminary Resource Assessment – Analysis of a Proposed Ban of Single-Use Plastic Bags

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#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

- Receive and consider this report and its resource estimates for staff to complete a comprehensive analysis in support of the proposed ban on single use plastic bags, and direct staff as to the required analysis, actions and associated timelines pertaining to the proposed bylaw to ban single-use plastic bags; and
- Consider directing Staff to prioritise their resources towards the completion of an ongoing, technical review (by 14 April 2016) of solid waste management to recommend how to best mitigate the impacts of the city's multiple waste streams, which include single-use plastics.

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide a preliminary resource assessment and some initial commentary pertaining to an analysis of the proposal to ban single-use plastic bags in the City. Single-use plastic bags specifically refer to the polyethylene carrier bags provided by retailers, pharmacies, grocery and convenience stores, etc.

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The staff analysis required to support the proposed bylaw will include investigation of environmental, economic, legal, options and precedent issues to completely understand the risks and opportunities pertaining to the proposed ban on single-use plastic bags. The execution of this analysis using City resources can likely be completed by April 2016 in-line with current commitments, or earlier with a shift in priorities; however, it may be the most effective use of City resources to instead concentrate efforts on progressing a comprehensive City of Victoria waste management review, which would consider this discrete proposal as part of the overall waste management system risks and benefits.

#### **BACKGROUND**

At the November 12, 2015 City Council meeting, Council received a proposed bylaw from the Vancouver Island Surfrider Association to prohibit single-use plastic bags in local retailers in order to reduce the harm of plastic-waste in local aquatic ecosystems or accumulation in landfills. Council directed staff to estimate resource requirements that would be needed to complete a comprehensive analysis of a proposed bylaw.

#### **ISSUE AND ANALYSIS**

In order to provide a comprehensive review of the economic, social and environmental implications of a bylaw to ban single-use plastic bags, the following subject areas will have to be examined to better understand the risk, benefits, and issues:

- **Environmental** risks posed by both single-use plastic bags and their alternatives, while considering the issues/benefits of this proposal within the city's overall waste reduction programs;
- **Economic** considerations related to the proposed restrictions and the City costs associated with bylaw administration;
- **Legal and jurisdictional** implications of restricting the use of plastic carry bags across local retailers. Note: preliminary legal review suggests that the City's power to regulate is broad enough to include a ban on retail plastic bag use;
- **Alternative options**-analysis and comparison with this proposed bylaw;
- **Precedent**, leadership and stewardship considerations associated with the adoption of bylaw waste reduction strategies.

#### **Preliminary Resource Estimates for Staff Analysis**

Total level of effort to complete an analysis of a bag-ban bylaw is estimated to require several weeks of FTE, with the overall duration dependent on sequencing (i.e. Citizen Engagement can only begin liaison once environmental and legal reviews are near completion). Due to current and upcoming strategic / operational planning objectives, Staff will not likely be able to complete such work before end-March 2016, without modification to current commitments (see below points for amplification).

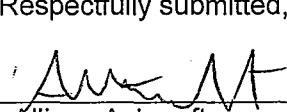
The following resource analysis to support the proposed ban is estimated for planning purposes:

- **Engineering and Public Works:** Review of the environmental risks, benefits and linkages with local and regional waste-management schemes is estimated to require approximately 3 weeks of effort. Suitably qualified staff is limited to a single FTE in this area, and this file could not be completed before the end of February 2016 without adjusting current priorities.
- **Legal Counsel:** Initial estimates for legal review of any proposed bylaw could be completed with approximately 1 week FTE, within a 4-6 week window, alongside other priority work.
- **Economic Development & Citizen Engagement:** Liaison with local businesses, associations and other key marketplace stakeholders is likely to require 2-3 weeks of FTE, and could not be achieved before end Q1-2016 without reprioritising current commitments.
- **Senior Staff Review:** Senior staff will be able to complete review and provide professional guidance using 1 week of FTE, in line with ongoing priorities.

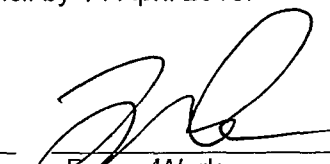
Partnering with external agencies or consultants to complete the required analysis may achieve some efficiencies, but will impose additional coordination and administrative requirements on staff. Due to upcoming holiday season and the required baseline 'in-house' analysis, timelines are not expected to be significantly shorter using contracted or external staff.

Staff recognise that the need to reduce single-use plastics is a key element in any comprehensive waste management strategy. Staff are currently undertaking a review of how to best deliver the most effective, affordable and sustainable management of the City's multiple waste streams. As City resources in this area are limited, Staff recommend they privilege the completion of a waste-management strategy as a first priority, in order to best understand how to integrate this any important reduction initiatives. Staff recommend presenting their waste management review to Council by 14 April 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

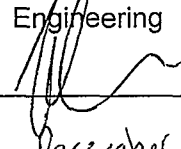
  
Allison Ashcroft  
Senior Planner Environment

  
Jas Paul  
Assistant Director of  
Engineering

  
Fraser Work  
Director of Public Works and  
Engineering

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Date:

  
December 8, 2015