



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Public Works and Transportation Committee **Date:** April 3, 2012
From: Cecilia Achiam, MCIP, BCSLA **File:** 01-0370-01/2012-Vol01
Interim Director, Sustainability and District Energy
Re: City of Richmond - "Tap Water First" Initiative Update

Staff Recommendation

That the report entitled "City of Richmond - "Tap Water First" Initiative Update" report be received for information.

Cecilia Achiam, MCIP, BCSLA
Interim Director, Sustainability and District Energy
(604-276-4122)

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ROUTED TO:		CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER		
Engineering and Public Works	Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			
Emergency Programs	Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			
Fire Rescue	Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			
Project Development.....	Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			
Recreation	Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES	NO	REVIEWED BY CAO	YES	NO
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

In 2009, Richmond Council adopted the following resolution:

That a letter, signed by the Mayor, be sent to Metro Vancouver indicating that the City of Richmond:

- *commits to promoting the value of municipal tap water;*
- *recognizes the purposeful uses of bottled water;*
- *intends to maximize opportunities for use of tap water in municipal facilities; and*
- *encourages Metro Vancouver, as part of their Tap Water campaign, to develop strategies for making tap water the “water of choice” and to work with the bottled water industry to develop a coordinated approach which recognizes the purposeful uses of bottled water. [referred to as “Tap Water First” initiative]*

Council requested that staff report back with information on the reduction of water bottles as well as the increase in the amount of water bottle filling stations within City facilities. This report responds to this referral.

The City’s “Tap Water First” initiative and other water conservation efforts are being advanced to meet the following Council Term sustainability goal:

Council Term Goal #8.1: “Continued implementation and significant progress towards achieving the City’s Sustainability Framework, and associated targets.”

Background

City of Richmond’s Water Sustainability Initiatives

The City of Richmond is advancing a comprehensive approach to sustainability, one that seeks to advance initiatives strategically to address the many needs of sustainability (e.g., climate protection, sustainable resource use, sustainable economy, safe, inclusive and affordable community, natural system health, etc.). A key strategy of the City is to prioritize initiatives that meet multiple objectives and create value across multiple objectives of sustainability.

The City’s “Tap Water First” initiative is one of many initiatives that the City is advancing to target wise, water use as part of the City’s overall efforts to advance sustainability. Other key initiatives include:

- Residential Water Metering Program;
- Toilet Rebate Program;
- Seasonal water use restrictions;
- Water use reduction kits for residential meter customers;
- Rain Barrel Program; and
- Fraser River water utilization for ALR irrigation.

These programs have contributed to reductions in per capita water consumption and an average 40% direct cost savings for residential metered customers. Water metering programs have been very successful to date, with 49% of residential units currently metered for water.

The City's toilet rebate program has also been successful and Council recently supported increased investment in this program to meet demand. Rain barrels are made available to all Richmond residents to enable them to harvest rainwater and reduce drinking water use for lawn and garden care. The City also distributes Fraser River water to farmers in the ALR for irrigation usage. This initiative reduces demand on the drinking water system and reduces water costs for farmers.

In addition to these water conservation programs, the City invests in activities to better preserve and enhance the City's system of sloughs, canals and watercourses and protect Richmond's local watershed.

While aimed primarily at water preservation and sustainable resource use, the City's suite of water sustainability initiatives contribute to many other important sustainability objectives, including reducing waste, reducing energy consumption, reducing costs, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving ecological health.

City of Richmond's "Tap Water First" Initiative

Richmond's "Tap Water First" Initiative is another initiative that helps the City take a comprehensive approach to water sustainability. Prompted by a 2009 MetroVancouver campaign, the "Tap Water First" Initiative is aimed at promoting the use of tap water and reducing the use of non-purposeful bottled water.

As part of their campaign, MetroVancouver sought specific endorsement from member municipalities on a proposed declaration to phase out bottled water at municipal facilities. Rather than endorsing a resolution to ban bottled water, Council elected to focus on building awareness on the value of tap water and promoting tap water use as a first choice. This "Tap Water First" approach was adopted based on the following advantages:

- it focuses on what is desired (i.e., use of tap water as much as possible);
- it provides flexibility and recognizes that bottled water has purposeful uses (e.g., emergency supply, fire services, supporting healthy choices by the community, etc.);
- it does not restrict accessibility to drinking water; and
- it respects personal choice.

Further information on the value of tap water and advantages and disadvantages of bottled water can be found in the following Council report:

http://www.richmond.ca/__shared/assets/PWT_Tap_Water_03250922325.pdf

Analysis

Results To-Date

The City has undertaken action across the organization to advance Council’s “Tap Water First” Initiative. Actions have been advanced across 3 core strategies at the corporate and community level:

1. **Demonstrate Corporate Leadership** - *reduce corporate use of non-purposeful bottled water.*
2. **Provide Choice** - *increase accessibility to tap water for the community.*
3. **Increase Awareness** - *raise awareness about the value and benefits of tap water in the community.*

Specific action initiatives, along with results achieved to-date, are summarized in the following table.

Table 1: City of Richmond “Tap Water First” Action Initiatives and Results

Strategy	Actions	Results
1. Corporate Leadership - reducing corporate use of non-purposeful bottled water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tap water use at Richmond Council meetings and Public Hearings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of almost 1000 bottles in 2 years (reduction is equivalent to saving consumption of 1 barrel of oil)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of direct tap infrastructure on all floors at City Hall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated reduction of the transport of over 1000 reusable water jugs by end of year 2012 • Estimated about \$8,000 cost savings per year by end of year 2012
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jugs of water option offered at City Hall catering company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of approximately 900 bottles per year
2. Providing Choice - increasing accessibility to tap water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of water filling stations is core practice for all new civic facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New civic facilities will have dedicated water bottle filling stations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dedicated water bottle filling station is currently being installed at Richmond Olympic Oval to augment water fountains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richmond Olympic Oval will have a water bottle filling station by the end of 2012, in addition to water fountains located throughout the Oval
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of the City’s Water Wagon at civic events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City’s water wagon is being used at various events each year, including every day of the Steveston Farmer’s market, Salmon Festival and Work’s Yard Open House
3. Increasing Awareness - raising awareness about the value and benefit of tap water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for MetroVancouver’s Tap First campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MetroVancouver’s “Tap First” campaign signage was attached to various vehicles in the City fleet
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various outreach initiatives advanced (e.g., Green ambassador’s program, corporate initiatives, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blind taste tests (City Hall and School District) found tap water to be “taste preferred”

Next Steps

Efforts will continue to advance the City's "Tap Water First" Initiative. A key action being pursued is the implementation of dedicated water bottle filling stations in approximately 20 civic facilities in 2013. Financing in the amount of approximately \$80K is being sought by the City's Parks and Recreation department through a 2012 one-time additional level request. Facilities being targeted for installation of dedicated water bottle filling stations include the City's community centres, pools, arenas, libraries and the Richmond Cultural Centre. Efforts will also continue to further raise awareness of the value of municipal tap water and advance the suite of City water sustainability initiatives.



Signage on City Vehicles is one way the City of Richmond is promoting the value of tap water.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact associated with this report.

Conclusion

Tap water being supplied through MetroVancouver and the City of Richmond provides high quality drinking water for a fraction of the cost of bottled water and significantly lowers socio-environmental impacts. Bottled water serves purposeful uses, however, such as providing supplies for emergency response rehabilitation and disaster preparedness, as well as healthy on-the-go beverages when personal water bottles have been forgotten. It is also purposeful in operations-based working environments, where there is no ready access to tap water sources.



The City of Richmond's Water Wagon provides tap water at public events.

Aimed at promoting the value of tap water, the City's "Tap Water First" Initiative has made strong progress in reducing corporate consumption of bottled water for non-purposeful uses and a sound infrastructure plan has been developed to significantly increase accessibility to tap water for the community. The City's "Tap Water First" Initiative is just one of many initiatives that the City is advancing to use and manage water resources in a more sustainable manner. The City's comprehensive and strategic approach to action has meant that the City is able to direct resources to those action initiatives that address key areas of priority and result in the greatest impact for the dollars invested.

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