Supports Item No. 3
CS&B Committee Agenda
April 23, 2009

CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date:	April 7, 2009
Contact:	Brian Crowe
Contact No.:	604.873.7313
RTS No.:	7599
VanRIMS No.:	08-2000-20
Meeting Date:	April 23, 2009

TO: Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets

FROM: General Manager of Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Bottled Water in Civic Facilities

RECOMMENDATION

A. THAT the City of Vancouver adopt Metro Vancouver's Tap Water Declaration and immediately eliminate the Civic purchase of single serving sized bottled water for Staff and delegation consumption, and substitute with tap water options.

B. THAT staff incorporate access to municipal drinking water into designs for new civic facilities and those scheduled for renovation, such as City Hall and Crossroads at an estimated cost of $15,000. Source of funds to be the 2009 Facilities Capital Budget, subject to approval of the 2009 Basic Capital Budget.

C. THAT staff pilot options for year-round access to municipal drinking water in outdoor public spaces at an estimated cost of $35,000. Source of funds to be a reallocation of $5,000 from the 2009 Waterworks Operating budget and $30,000 from the 2009 Waterworks Capital Budget, subject to approval of the 2009 Basic Capital Budget.

D. THAT Council forward recommendations A, B and C to the Board of Parks and Recreation, PNE Board, Library Board, and Police Board for their consideration.

E. THAT staff report back on options that will promote access to municipal drinking water in all new buildings.

COUNCIL POLICY

There is no applicable Council Policy.

SUMMARY

Eliminating bottled water sales in civic facilities is a tool being used by some municipalities to promote the use of tap water while reducing the environmental impacts associated with bottled water. The City of Vancouver supplies excellent quality drinking water through its water distribution network. With the new Metro Vancouver water filtration plant becoming operational in 2009 water quality will be even better, ranking among the best in the world.

The environmental costs of bottled water include the effects of bulk water removal, the life cycle of bottles and greenhouse gas emissions associated with the transportation of the beverage. With the exception of bulk water removal, these costs are associated with any packaged beverage. The availability of bottled water in civic facilities is limited and represents only a tiny fraction of the market. It is unlikely that its elimination will have a significant impact in terms of reducing solid waste and greenhouse gasses. However, Vancouver is committed to providing leadership on sustainability; the elimination of the availability of bottled water is one way of demonstrating that leadership.

Adoption of the Metro Vancouver Tap Water Declaration would provide staff with direction to begin phasing out municipal use of bottled water and the availability of bottled water in municipal facilities. Its adoption will also encourage the installation of accessible drinking water fixtures in new and refurbished buildings and public spaces thereby further promoting the importance of municipal water.

Eliminating the availability of bottled water in civic facilities and increasing the number of publicly accessible drinking fountains are two ways of promoting tap water. There are, however, some consequences and costs associated with using these tools. The sale of bottled water is a source of revenue for some civic operations; loss of this revenue would have an impact on City budgets. Projected revenue losses in this report represent lost revenue from the Civic Theatres and non-market housing operations. Estimates of revenue impacts on the PNE and Park Board are also included for information.

By increasing access to municipal drinking water the City will enable consumers to decrease their use of bottled water. This will hopefully mitigate the potential for residents and visitors to increase their consumption of less healthy beverages that can lead to health concerns like obesity and diabetes.

Providing occupants of existing civic buildings with better access to drinking water could also be costly. It is estimated that fully equipping the current inventory of City of Vancouver buildings that are occupied by staff and/or the public would involve installing 70 commercial grade drinking water dispensers. Staff recommend incorporating drinking water facilities into the design of new civic facilities and those scheduled for renovation, rather than immediately retrofitting all civic buildings.

Increasing public access to drinking water is consistent with the City's sustainability objectives. Currently public drinking fountains are the primary source of publicly accessible drinking water and there are many issues associated with them. Efforts to increase public access to drinking water around the city should be coordinated across departments. Public drinking fountains may be one of many tools to be used in addressing the issue of access to water. The first step in this process will be to overcome the technical challenges of providing year-round access at outdoor drinking fountains.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information regarding the impacts of eliminating bottled water sales from City departments and services, along with options for increasing access to drinking water in public spaces as requested by Council on July 22, 2008.

BACKGROUND

In the summer of 2008, the Metro Vancouver Water Committee approved the launch of a tap water campaign that seeks to reduce the use of bottled water by 20 per cent by 2010 and increase public awareness of the quality of Metro Vancouver tap water.

On July 22, 2008, Vancouver City Council passed a motion requesting this report on eliminating bottle water being sold to/available from all City departments and services along with options for increasing access to public drinking fountains.

On September 10, 2008, the Metro Vancouver Water Committee endorsed the Tap Water Declaration and agreed to forward it to member municipalities for adoption. The declaration is attached as Appendix A.

On March 7, 2009, the National Board of Directors of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities passed a resolution encouraging municipalities to "phase out the sale and purchase of bottled water at their own facilities where appropriate and where potable water is available." The resolution is attached as Appendix B.

In June 2009, the Seymour-Capilano Water Filtration Plant is scheduled to begin operation.

DISCUSSION

Health professionals advocate drinking water over less healthy beverages that can contribute to health concerns such as obesity and diabetes. The intent of the Tap Water Declaration is not to discourage people from drinking water, but to encourage them to choose tap water as their source of drinking water. If the Tap Water Declaration is adopted, increasing access to municipal drinking water is an important part of ensuring that residents and visitors can choose water over less healthy beverages.

The discussion below provides information about the implications of adopting the Tap Water Declaration, including the consequences of eliminating the availability of bottled water to and from City departments and services, providing drinking water access for civic building occupants, and lost revenues from bottled water sales. The civic facilities under consideration in this report include administrative buildings, works yards, non-housing operations like Carnegie Centre, and Civic theatres. Although the Park Board, Library Board, and Police Board are responsible for their respective operations, some information regarding the impacts of these Boards adopting the Tap Water Declaration is included for Council's information.

Information about expanding public access to drinking water is also provided below, with a proposed framework for moving forward.

Municipal Use of Bottled Water

The City of Vancouver and City staff purchase the following bottled water for staff and visitor use:

1) The Learning and Innovation group provides a bottled water dispenser for participants in the City Learn Centre. Housed in a former parking garage, this area has no running water. This supply of bottled water comes at a cost of approximately $70 per month.

2) One bottled water cooler is located on the third floor of City Hall to provide Councillors with a convenient supply of drinking water. This supply is provided at a cost of approximately $22 per month.

3) Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services and other emergency services keep a small supply of bottled drinking water on hand.

4) The City supplies bottled water as part of a mix of beverages when hosting workshops and meetings in locations where water supply and drinking glass cleanup are problematic.

5) One bottled water dispenser is provided at the VPD firing range in Coquitlam. This water is supplied due to concerns about the quality of water in this facility.

6) The VPD Emergency Operations Section keeps a supply of bottled water on hand for operational deployment and emergencies.

7) Other bottled water dispensers are funded and operated by staff groups. These dispensers provide water in areas where easy access to drinking water is not available on the floor or is available only via a faucet in a bathroom. There are at least two staff groups that have staff-funded water coolers on the City Hall campus. Easy access to drinking water and lack of confidence in water quality are two of the reasons staff elect to supply their own drinking water in this way.

Access to drinking water in City facilities

Providing staff and visitors to civic administration buildings with easy access to drinking water should result in a reduced need for bottled water dispensers and single serving sized purchases. Office space in City administration buildings is at a premium. As buildings are renovated, amenities such as kitchen spaces with sinks are often removed to make way for office space. This practice limits access to drinking water to the supply from bathrooms. For some staff getting drinking water from faucets in bathrooms is unpleasant and is thought to be unsanitary. Additionally, in some buildings access to bathrooms can be limited due to high usage, or staff are required to travel to different floors for access.

Some staff have concerns about the water quality in older buildings that may have older pipes (including City Hall). To investigate these concerns, in the fall of 2008 the drinking water quality was tested at 12 City of Vancouver buildings from either washroom taps or interior drinking water fountains. The results at all locations showed high

Examples of fountains that can be fitted with a glass or bottle filler.

quality water that meets Provincial drinking water standards and Health Canada's guidelines and disinfection targets.

Ideally, new and renovated civic facilities will provide access to water with a multi-function station that includes a kitchen-style sink. Where a kitchen-style sink is not feasible, water fountains that can be fitted with glass or bottle fillers should be installed when renovations are underway to ensure they are well located and to reduce costs. Funding to implement these dispensers could be pursued through renovation budgets. Commercial grade water dispensers would be plumbed directly into a building's water supply and drainage system as a retrofit. The type and quantity of dispensers in civic facilities will be determined by the Director of Facilities Design and Management.

Re-usable containers

In the July 22, 2008 motion, it was suggested that re-usable drinking containers could be purchased with monies saved by eliminating bottled water. Providing all civic staff with reusable containers would cost approximately $60,000; as the City only expends approximately $100/month for bottled water for staff and Councillors, the cost of purchasing re-usable containers would not be offset by reduced bottled water purchases.

In 2008/2009, the City's employee health and wellness incentive program (Fit City) will award up to 750 stainless steel water bottles to participants who actively participate in the Fit City program and reach the appropriate achievement level. No other funding is currently available for purchasing re-useable containers.

Example of commercial grade tap water dispenser and cooler

Bottled Water Sales in Municipal Facilities

The sale of bottled water through facilities under the direct authority of City Council is limited to sales in Civic theatres, social service providers including the Gathering Place and Carnegie Centre, and through contracted service providers. Information regarding bottled water sales in Park, Library, and Police Board facilities is provided to capture the full impact.

Civic Theatres:

The City of Vancouver sells bottled water to audiences at each of its three theatres: Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Orpheum, and Vancouver Playhouse. While attending events at Civic Theatres, refreshments are purchased and consumed by patrons in the lobby prior to the start of a performance and during scheduled intermission(s). In the majority of cases glassware is used for this purpose, except for bottled water.

As in most public theatres, food and drink are not allowed in the auditorium. The only exception is bottled water. For those patrons who want or require water during the course of any given performance, bottled water is permitted. Water fountains are available to patrons on site in the lobby but these do not provide the same convenience as personal and portable refreshment. If bottled water sales are eliminated, alternatives will need to be developed that meet the intent of the existing policy.

At present, staff encourage the recycling of single-use water bottles, among other materials, through several strategies:

- Recycling drop off locations are located in the lobbies for patrons
- A staff-implemented recycling program exists for glass, aluminium and plastic beverage containers
- Civic Theatres staff have been working with City of Vancouver facilities staff to implement a comprehensive recycling program that will be launched in 2009 further supporting recycling efforts
- Vancouver Civic Theatres staff are working with a group of Metro theatres on the feasibility of sourcing bio-degradable water bottles

Civic Theatres staff believe that providing bottled water is a service expected by theatre patrons. Discontinuing the availability of this product may impact customer satisfaction as well as revenue targets at Civic Theatres. To illustrate the potential financial impact, in 2005, the last full year of operation before the start of the phased theatre renewal project, net revenue from bottled water sales exceeded $109,000. This revenue was used to offset operating costs for Civic Theatres. Discontinuing the sale of bottled water would not eliminate this revenue stream entirely as some patrons would likely purchase less healthy alternatives. Nevertheless, staff believe that phasing out the sale of bottled water will likely result in a decrease in revenue and have a negative impact on Civic Theatres budgets.

Social Development Services:

Providing patrons with access to water is a function of civic facilities like the Gathering Place, the Evelyn Saller Centre, and Carnegie Centre.

The Gathering Place:
A small amount of bottled water is sold at the Gathering Place as part of its mandate to provide meals to the public in the downtown south neighbourhood. The volume of bottle water sales at this facility is very low providing a net revenue stream of up to $3000 annually.

Evelyn Saller Centre:
This facility does not sell bottled water to its clients. Instead, tap water is distributed through a drinking fountain and a sink using reusable plastic cups.

Carnegie Centre:
Until recently the Carnegie Centre concession sold bottled water to some clientele. Carnegie Centre now supplies patrons with tap water distributed through 20 litre beverage containers and reusable plastic cups. This distribution method is unwieldy and a permanent tap water dispenser would be preferred, at an estimated cost of $7500. The elimination of bottled water sales at Carnegie Centre represents a loss of revenue of approximately $4300 each year, which may require an offsetting budget increase in 2010 and forward.

Contractors and Tenants:

Several contracted services also sell bottled water at outlets within City of Vancouver facilities. For example, the cafeteria in City Hall is a contracted service that sells bottled water. The City's capacity to restrict items for sale is limited within the terms of the current agreement and could be negotiated at the time of contract renewal. Requests for jugs of

water and glassware at meetings catered by the cafeteria are generally met, although logistical limitations such as limited storage space for glassware and no elevator service to some meeting areas can result in the use of disposable cups. Staff are working with the contractor to maximize the availability of tap water and glassware at meetings.

Other civic buildings lease retail space to tenants who also may sell bottled water. These include restaurants and stores within Library Square and the Vancity Building. Current market conditions do not support the restriction of saleable items in contract negotiations.
There are also approximately ten contracted vending machines that may sell bottled water to staff at a number of civic facilities. These machines are typically sourced by individual branches with the proceeds going to support staff activities.

Vancouver Public Library Facilities:

There are no sales of bottled water to the public through the Vancouver Public Library, other than through lessees in retail spaces.

Vancouver Police Board Facilities:

The Police Mutual Benevolent Association contracts with a service provider to operate the cafeteria service at police headquarters which sells bottled water. There are no sales of bottled water to the public or staff at any other Vancouver Police Board facilities.

Increasing Public Access to Drinking Water:

A recent Ipsos Reid survey of Lower Mainland residents commissioned by Metro Vancouver indicates that while tap water is overwhelmingly the primary source of drinking water (75 per cent), 55 percent of the population use a mix of tap and bottled water on a daily basis. The top three reasons (comprising 72 per cent of all reasons) that people cite for using bottled water are convenience, travel, and unavailability of tap water. The same survey revealed that 82 per cent of respondents rate the quality of tap water as excellent or good. Making public drinking water more convenient and accessible may therefore have a significant effect in reducing the use of bottled water.

The City of Vancouver has approximately 250 outdoor drinking fountains, most of which are within parks. Approximately 25 fountains are located outside parks, primarily in areas of high commercial foot traffic, in mini-parks, and along greenways. Currently most City-owned public drinking fountains are shut off from November to April to avoid damage from freezing temperatures. There are no clear guidelines as to when and where to install drinking fountains. Nor are there clear guidelines as to the design of fountains to be installed. The maintenance of existing City-owned drinking fountains is performed by the Operations staff of the Water Utility and by Park Board staff.

Existing public drinking fountains are not easily found, and many people perceive outdoor fountains to be dirty and unhygienic. Little is known about how much existing drinking fountains are used. However, we are aware of some problems that surround existing public drinking fountains.

The public perception that outdoor fountains are unhygienic is compounded by the use of fountains by dogs. Dog bowls can be incorporated into fountain designs and may resolve this issue. Additionally, the general state of existing drinking fountains contributes to the perception that drinking from these units is unsanitary. While the fountains are serviced monthly the focus of these efforts is on the cleanliness and functioning of the drinking area, not the condition of the pedestal itself which, over time, often develops a grimy appearance.

Example of public drinking fountain accessible for able-bodied adults, wheelchair users, children, and dogs.

Not so easily resolved are the issues that arise from people who have little access to clean running water using drinking fountains for other purposes. Some activities associated with public drinking fountains include bathing, laundry, and the washing of bottles and cans. The homeless population typically has very little other access to clean running water.

Neighbourhood disruption as the result of people with conflicting purposes congregating around drinking fountains is not uncommon, and provides impetus for neighbourhoods to request the removal of drinking fountains from their areas. Additionally, fountains located on sidewalks with high volumes of pedestrian traffic are often seen as an impediment to pedestrian traffic prompting residents and businesses to request their removal.

Spigot for filling personal water bottles

Some drinking fountains are subject to vandalism. Often the targets of graffiti, drinking fountains are also occasionally dismantled to remove the brass fittings that have monetary value.

Expanding public accessibility to drinking water aligns with the City's sustainability objectives, transportation targets of prioritizing walking, cycling, and transit use over personal vehicles, and desire to increase the liveability of Vancouver. Overcoming the issues outlined above and optimizing use and enjoyment of drinking water will require a thorough understanding of the public's needs and desires around public drinking water and its integration into neighbourhoods. Drinking fountains may be only one of a number of options that arise from this analysis.

Increasing public access to drinking water facilities in Vancouver will require administration, installation, and maintenance functions, each of which will require a funding mechanism. There are three ways that the City currently provides street amenities:

1. The City administers, installs, and maintains the amenity.
2. The amenity is paid for through development cost levies (DCLs) and is maintained by the City.
3. The amenity is provided through the Street Furniture Contract that is funded by advertising revenues.

Increasing the number of publicly accessible drinking facilities could be delivered through any one or a combination of these methods.

Finally, a comprehensive public information campaign will be an important part of building public confidence in drinking water facilities. Staff will investigate opportunities to collaborate with Metro Vancouver on messaging and data sharing.

Public access to drinking water in all new buildings:

The City of Vancouver has a green building strategy requiring new construction to adhere to several regulations that promote a reduced environmental footprint. In general terms, green building practices limit the amount of water used in a building, through the regulation of plumbing fixtures, landscaping irrigation, and alternative water supplies; however, there are no incentives for installing drinking water fixtures (fountains or sinks). Typically developers design access to water facilities based on the intended occupants' water requirements; there are no regulations or requirements in place that address access to tap water for drinking.

Developing strategic options that will promote access to municipal drinking water in all new buildings will require research and stakeholder consultation. Staff recommend that they review and report back on implications of promoting access to municipal drinking water in new buildings, likely through changes to the Building By-law or other procedural changes.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

The following actions are proposed to move toward the full implementation of the Tap Water Declaration:

Short term (immediately):

- Eliminate the Civic purchase of single serving sized bottled water for staff and delegation consumption
- Direct staff to supply tap water at meetings
- Work with City Hall concessionaires to voluntarily reduce their sales of bottled water
- Reallocate funding to improve maintenance of existing outdoor drinking fountains - $5000 funding from the 2009 Waterworks Operating budget
- Incorporate access to municipal drinking water into designs for new civic facilities and those scheduled for renovation – initially, staff moving to Crossroads space and City Hall renovations

Intermediate term (within 1 year):

- Pilot year-round outdoor water fountains – $30,000 funding from 2009 Waterworks Capital Budget
- Stop contracted provision of 18L bottled water coolers at civic facilities (CityLearn Centre, Councillor's office) and provide appropriate access to tap water - $15,000 funding from 2009 Facilities Capital budget
- Report back on implications of promoting access to municipal drinking water in all new buildings through changes to the Building By-Law or other procedural changes

Long term (within 3 years):

- Renegotiate contracts with concessionaires in Civic facilities to eliminate single-serving bottled water sales

- Incorporate options for increasing year-round public access to municipal drinking water in public spaces (beginning in the 2012- 2014 Capital Plan, subject to approval)

PARK BOARD STAFF COMMENTS:

Bottled water is sold at 15 concession stands, 3 golf courses and 79 vending machines in locations operated by the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation. Providing bottled water is a service expected by parks and recreation patrons. Discontinuing the availability of this product would impact customer satisfaction as well as revenue targets. In high tourist and recreation areas such as Stanley Park and along the beaches there is a high level of expectancy from both visitors and locals that bottled water is available for their purchase, especially in the summer months. In many countries around the world there is a perception that water fountains do not provide safe drinking water and therefore some visitors are unlikely to use the fountains available in our public parks.

Currently the net annual revenue generated by the sale of bottled water is approximately $149,800. Eliminating the sale of bottled water would dramatically reduce this revenue stream although some patrons would purchase a less healthy beverage. Additionally there could be an annual reduction in sponsorship monies from Coca Cola as the amount of their total sales is expected to drop as the result of eliminating bottled water. This reduction is estimated at $100,400. The impact on the Park Board annual operating budget could therefore be a loss of revenue totalling up to $250,000. In order to mitigate the environmental impact of bottled water containers, the Park Board is in the process of installing recycling bins or trays at each of the concession locations and high traffic beach/seawall areas.

Additionally bottled water is currently sold at some snack bars operated in community centres. Some of these facilities are operated directly by the community association or a licensed vendor. These operations generally operate on a cost recovery basis while others make a small profit.

The Park Board partners with many tenants, including 8 restaurants, with lease agreements that enable them to sell foods and beverages without restricting the sale of bottled water. Similar to Library Square and the Vancity Building, there could be adverse financial implications if restrictive clauses concerning the sale of popular beverages were included in any future lease negotiations.

The Park Board has approximately 300 water fountains in parks and recreation facilities. There are 183 free standing water fountains, 76 in facilities and 20 attached to facilities. Of these 300 water fountains, 12 of them are outdoor fountains (8 of which are in Stanley Park) which operate year round. That is to say that they continuously run to prevent freezing in the winter months. Overall, these fountains provide the public many opportunities to access to tap water. As previously noted, some members of the public and tourists are not accustomed to drinking tap water as it is not safe in many parts of the world. In order to serve these clients, it is important to provide another source of water.

PACIFIC NATIONAL EXHIBITION STAFF COMMENTS

The Pacific National Exhibition sells more than 240,000 units of bottled water annually at events hosted in the Pacific Coliseum as well as during Playland, and the Fair at the PNE. These sales account for net revenue of approximately $450,000.

The Pacific Coliseum is a full service venue in which concerts, sporting events and trade shows take place. This facility sells bottled water to patrons. Additionally there are currently six drinking fountains available to guests in this venue.

The Pacific National Exhibition operates Playland where bottled water is sold at concession stands and vending machines. The Fair at the PNE attracts more than 900,000 people to Hastings Park every year. If bottled water sales were eliminated on PNE grounds, some patrons may chose less healthy options such as pop or juice.

Both figure skating and short track speed skating events will be held in the Pacific Coliseum during the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games. Many international athletes, officials and spectators will expect that bottled water will be readily available and sold at the Pacific Coliseum.

To mitigate the effects of water bottle disposal, the PNE has an agreement with the Salvation Army Recycling Program, who collects recyclable items, and returns them for a portion of the container deposit.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Eliminating Bottled Water Sales

The elimination of bottled water sales would result in some revenue losses. The numbers below do not account for an increase in sales of alternative beverages in the absence of bottled water which may reduce this potential impact.

	Lost Revenue Potential
Civic Theatres	$109,000/year
Carnegie Centre	$4300/year
Gathering Place	$3000/year
PNE	$475,000/year
Park Board Facilities	$250,000/year

Costs of Short and Immediate Term Action Items:

Action	**Funding**
Increase maintenance on existing outdoor fountains	$5000 from 2009 Waterworks Operating budget
Pilot year-round outdoor water fountains –	$30,000 funding from 2009 Waterworks Capital budget
Stop contracted provision of 18L bottled water	$15,000 funding from 2009 Facilities

coolers at civic facilities and replace with tap water supplies (CityLearn Centre, Councillors' office)	Capital budget

Drinking Water in Civic Buildings:

Commercial grade drinking water dispensers are available at an average cost of approximately $6000 fully installed. This amount covers the cost of the fixture itself along with installation of electrical, water supply and drainage assuming the units are installed during construction or renovation. Retrofitting buildings with units would require different fixtures and would cost slightly more to install and maintain. A unit fitted into an existing facility would cost up to $7500 with a $175 annual maintenance cost. These units have a life cycle of approximately 15 years and would have to be replaced over time at a cost of approximately $2000 per unit.

Ideally, units should be installed when renovations are underway to ensure they are well located and to reduce costs. Funding to implement these units could be pursued through renovation budgets, over the next five to ten years.

Interior Fountain/Dispenser Costs	
Number of units	70
Capital costs (at $6000/unit)	$420,000
Annual Operating costs (at $285/unit/year)	$20,000

Annual operating costs include maintenance and life cycle replacement.

Increasing public access to drinking water:

The financial implications of increasing public access to drinking water are dependent on the types of facilities required and the locations in which those facilities are placed. Drinking fountains are likely to be utilized at a significant number of the locations. Drinking fountains cost approximately $15,000 fully installed. If staff determine that 200 fountains are desired across the City, then a Capital Program budget of $3.0M would be required along with $100,000 in ongoing maintenance funding. If supported through analysis, funding for a proposed program could be considered as part of future capital plans.

Piloting a small number of the winterized fountains would be a useful first step, the cost of which can be absorbed in existing budgets.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Eliminating bottled water in civic facilities and using municipal regulations to encourage better access to tap water in buildings is a demonstration of the City's confidence in the tap water quality and commitment to leadership in sustainability. It is possible that this signal will encourage the public to turn to tap water as their beverage of choice.

Quantifying the reduction of solid waste and greenhouse gas emissions by eliminating bottled water use in civic facilities is difficult. Most of the available estimates on the number of bottles in circulation and the number of bottles that are land filled or recycled are based on extrapolations from industry sales reports and statistics from Encorp Pacific, British Columbia's beverage container recycling service provider. Greenhouse gasses are emitted in

the production, transportation, sale, and disposal and/or recycling of the bottles. Each of these factors is dependent on other factors including water source, packaging choices, distribution methods, and disposal/recycling of bottles.

Overall, British Columbia residents achieved a 76 per cent return rate on all beverage containers carrying a deposit in 2007.

City use of bottled water represents a small fraction of the current market; eliminating its availability is unlikely to have significant direct effects on solid waste and greenhouse gas production. However, along with providing wider public access to tap water through the existing public water distribution infrastructure, it may be a contributing factor in the reduction of bottled water usage among the larger population.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Improving access to public drinking water will improve liveability for Vancouverites including people who have little access to water, support the transportation plan objectives of prioritizing walking, cycling, and transit use over personal vehicles, support the objective of providing improved infrastructure to densified neighbourhoods, and provide people a choice of a healthy beverage when about town.

CONCLUSION

As the distributor of superior quality water to Vancouverites, the City of Vancouver could take a leadership role in promoting the use of tap water for drinking. Decreasing and eventually eliminating the sale and purchase of bottled water in civic facilities is one way to promote drinking tap water. Providing access to drinking water for staff and the public is key to providing healthy beverage choices and would reduce the environmental impacts of bottled water.

* * * *

TAP WATER DECLARATION

WHEREAS, Metro Vancouver's municipal water systems are among the finest in the world; and

WHEREAS, high quality, safe drinking water is already available at most public locations; and

WHEREAS, Metro Vancouver's tap water is strictly regulated by British Columbia's Drinking Water Protection Act and is tested over 25,000 times per year and bottled water is regulated by the Food and Drug Act; and

WHEREAS, Metro Vancouver will open a new state-of-the-art water filtration plant early in 2009 to further improve the high quality of the region's tap water; and

WHEREAS, bottled water often costs more than an equivalent volume of gasoline, equivalent to 2,000 times more than tap water; and

WHEREAS, up to 40 per cent of bottled water on the market comes from municipal water systems; and

WHEREAS, bottled water often travels many miles from the source, resulting in the burning of large amounts of fossil fuels, releasing CO2 and other pollution into the atmosphere; and

WHEREAS, millions of single-use plastic water bottles end up in Metro Vancouver's municipal waste; and

WHEREAS, municipalities are responsible for delivering safe and affordable water to our citizens; and

WHEREAS, decreasing and eventually eliminating bottled water from government use demonstrates the emphasis municipalities place on the quality of their tap water and decreases the impact of bottled water on municipal waste; and

WHEREAS, Metro Vancouver and member municipalities recognize the importance of bottled water in times of emergency and times when municipal water is unavailable.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Vancouver will:

a) seek to phase out municipal use of bottled water and the availability of bottled water in municipal facilities, and will promote the importance of municipal water;

and,

b) will, wherever possible and appropriate, encourage the installation of accessible drinking fountains in new and refurbished buildings as well as new and refurbished parks and other public spaces.

FCM RESOLUTION – NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – MARCH 7, 2009

ENV09.1.02 BOTTLED WATER

WHEREAS bottled water consumes significant amounts of non-renewable fossil fuels to extract, package and transport water creating unnecessary air quality and climate change impacts;

WHEREAS it takes about three litres of water to manufacture a one litre plastic bottle of water;

WHEREAS bottled water companies use municipal water and groundwater sources when a growing percentage of Canadian municipalities have faced water shortages in recent years;

WHEREAS although bottled water creates a container that can be recycled, between 40% and 80% of empty bottles end up as litter and/or are placed directly into the garbage and take up unnecessary space in landfills;

WHEREAS tap water is safe, healthy, highly regulated and accessible to residents, employers, employees and visitors to Canadian municipalities and substantially more sustainable than bottled water; and

WHEREAS some municipalities have enacted by-laws to restrict the sale and purchase of water bottles within their own operations;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities urge all municipalities to phase out the sale and purchase of bottled water at their own facilities where appropriate and where potable water is available; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that municipalities be urged to develop awareness campaigns about the positive benefits and quality of municipal water supplies.