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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Bill Karsten, Chairman and Members of the Solid Waste Resource Advisory Committee

**CC:** Mike Labrecque, P.Eng., Director, T&PW  
Robert Orr, P.Eng., Collection & Processing Coordinator

**FROM:** Jim Bauld, Manager, Solid Waste Resources

**DATE:** November 14, 2007

**SUBJECT: Ban of Furniture Products in Municipal (Otter Lake) Landfill**

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Solid Waste Resources has completed a preliminary analysis of the banning of furniture from the Otter Lake landfill. The attached handout has been prepared for the information of members of SWRAC.

Subject to the discussion and direction at the November 22, 2007 meeting, the matter is to return to Regional Council, once members of SWRAC are satisfied with the analysis/approach.

attachment

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*Each landfill cell costs \$15 million and is full in three years.  
Help extend the life of each cell by recycling and composting.*

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**TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC WORKS, Solid Waste Resources**

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# **Solid Waste By-Law S-600 Furniture**

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**SWRAC  
November 22, 2007**

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## **Ban of Furniture Products in Municipal (Otter Lake) Landfill**

- **Motion at Regional Council, October 2, 2007,  
referred to SWRAC for discussion and a  
report back to Regional Council.**

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## I) General Comment

- Banning of Furniture from the Otter Lake landfill – to further waste diversion and reuse of furniture, is consistent with HRM’s objective of maximizing waste diversion/minimizing disposal – towards achieving the target of 60% waste diversion.

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## I) General Comment

- HRM has supported and encouraged the reuse of good used furniture for the past 5 years by:
- Promoting approx. twenty (20) goodwill/non profit agencies on the back page of the Naturally Green newsletter (which is also linked on HRM’s web site). Many of these agencies pick up and/or accept drop-off of good used furniture at residential and commercial properties.

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## II) Staff's Analysis

There are many considerations with banning furniture from the Otter Lake Landfill.

### Stakeholder/Business Unit Involvement:

#### A) Potential Benefits Include:

- Providing clients of goodwill agencies furniture that is usable or in good repair;
- Enhancing HRM's diversion rate;
- Local Furniture Banks, sheltered workshops, etc.
- T&PW – SWR
- Corporate Communications
- Legal Services
- Police – By-Law Enforcement
- MIRROR NS
- Residential Collection Contractors

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## II) Staff's Analysis

*(Note: potential tonnage of material diverted from Otter Lake landfill by banning furniture is unknown – no data available)*

### Stakeholder/Business Unit Involvement:

*Best estimate 3% of total waste stream = 4,800 tonne/year;  
If 50% reusable = 2,400 tonne/year*

- Unknown correct # of tonnes of furniture being diverted to furniture banks/goodwill agencies yearly

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## II) Staff's Analysis

### B) Potential Challenges:

- i) Determine what furniture is included (and excluded) in the disposal ban, i.e. criteria what is "good"?

#### Comments:

- Only good (i.e. non soiled, dry, non broken) items – mattresses, sofas, etc. banned;
- Who determines what is not acceptable/banned at Otter Lake – and at the curbside;
- How is the public informed of what furniture is banned and what isn't.

#### Stakeholder/Business Unit Involvement:

- Legal – definition "furniture", amendment to By-Law S-600
- T&PW – SWR – (MIRROR & Residential Contractors)
- Corporate Communications
- Call Centre

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## II) Staff's Analysis

### ii) How is the ban enforced?

- Banned furniture (stickered) rejected at the curb by residential contractor.

*(Note: HRM's Collection and Transportation of Source Separated Solid Waste contract scope of work does not include identifying banned furniture and rejecting same at the curb. By-Law S-600 (since 1999) allows one bulky item per household on refuse week for disposal.)*

*(Note: amendment to By-Law S-600 required before enforcement applies.)*

#### Stakeholder/Business Unit Involvement:

- T&PW – SWR/Residential Collectors
- HRM Residents (req'd to store old furniture, keep clean, dry and in good repair, i.e. indoors)
- Legal
- Public Hearing

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## II) Staff's Analysis

iii) What happens to the banned furniture rejected at the curb?

A) If not removed by the homeowner, complaint received by HRM;

- By-Law Enforcement engaged;
- If not removed after 24 hours, HRM has item(s) removed & stored/taken to?

■ **Stakeholder/Business Unit Involvement:**

- Call Centre
- Police – By-Law Enforcement
- T&PW

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## II) Staff's Analysis

B) Removed from the curb by the resident

■ **Stakeholder/Business Unit Involvement:**

- **Resident may:**
- Call or take to local goodwill agency;
- Leave item on the property (where it will decay and become unsightly; or
- Illegally dispose of the item.

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## II) Staff's Analysis

iv) Is there a demand and capacity locally for banned furniture?

*(Note: Landfill bans should be market driven, i.e. proven/verified that the volume of banned furniture can readily & continually be utilized by local goodwill/non profit agencies)*

### ■ Stakeholder/Business Unit Involvement:

- Meet with local non profit/goodwill agencies to verify the type/condition/ quantity (i.e. capacity) for furniture.
- Reports of some agencies only require specific type of furniture and/or limited number.

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## II) Staff's Analysis

### ■ Alternatives to a Ban:

- a) HRM continue to promote the reuse of furniture through the Naturally Green newsletter and web page;
- b) Serve as a public voice for goodwill/non profit agencies desiring furniture (i.e. expanding reuse campaign in Naturally Green/HRM web page;
- c) Issue a RFP for the private sector to provide the collection, refurbishing and delivery of furniture to goodwill agencies.

### ■ Stakeholder/Business Unit Involvement:

- T&PW – SWR
- T&PW – SWR
- Call Centre
- T&PW – SWR (Council approval required, Budget implications)
- Not recommended at this time.

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## Preliminary Conclusions

1. Unknown if banning furniture from Otter Lake landfill can be effectually and efficiently administered;
2. Traditionally, recovery of good used furniture is by the private sector – promoted by the HRM. (Local non profit/goodwill agencies eligible for financial assistance from HRM Grants Committee);
3. Questionable if a ban on furniture will result in additional usable furniture being diverted to local nonprofit/goodwill agencies.

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## Next Steps

- Staff prepare a report for SWRAC, detailing potential benefits/challenges and budget implications to be forwarded to Regional Council;
- Discuss with local goodwill/sheltered workshops to verify the type, condition and quantity of furniture required for their clients and capacity for storage.

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