

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - JUNE 20, 2005

ANTI-TAMPERING DEVICES ON FIRE HYDRANTS

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works, in consultation with the Fire Chief, recommends that:

1. Subject to satisfactory results of a field test being conducted by the Vaughan Fire & Rescue Service with anti-tampering devices for fire hydrants, a pilot project be implemented in an area of new construction using hydrant banding as a deterrent to unlawful use of City water; and,
2. Should the pilot project be deemed successful, the installation of anti-tampering devices for fire hydrants be made mandatory in all areas of new construction, with the cost associated with such devices being borne by the developer(s).

Economic Impact

The cost of anti-tampering devices is approximately \$45 - \$55 per hydrant, depending on the quantity ordered. While the City would purchase a number of these for use in a pilot project area, the long-term goal would be for the developers to pay for, and install, these devices on the hydrants immediately once they were put into service.

Purpose

To update Council on the issue of installing anti-tampering devices on fire hydrants.

Background - Analysis and Options

As part of the direction arising from the 2005 Water and Wastewater Budget deliberations, the issue of water loss came up, and discussion took place concerning the use of anti-tampering devices being installed on fire hydrants to deter unlawful use of City water.

Since then, Public Works staff have held discussions with representatives of the Vaughan Fire & Rescue Service (VFRS) over the use of these devices. The VFRS is opposed in principle to the use of hydrant anti-tampering devices because it is another impediment to the rapid service that VFRS tries to provide. A hydrant anti-tampering device may only take a few seconds to remove, but when combined with other impediments to response times, such as traffic congestion and speed humps, it all adds up to increasingly longer response times. However, the VFRS appreciates the concern over water theft and is ready to deal with the anti-tampering devices.

VFRS would like to have field tests performed on these units prior to approving their widespread use. VFRS's main concern is with respect to how easy or difficult these devices are to remove in an emergency situation. As such, Public Works staff are in the process of obtaining some of these units for installation on hydrants at the Joint Operations Centre where VFRS staff can perform tests on them. Following the testing, it will take some time to train all 216 VFRS operations staff on the use and removal of these devices.

Should these anti-tampering devices be acceptable to the VFRS, it is recommended that the City conduct a pilot project in an area of new development to determine their effectiveness in preventing the unlawful use of City water.

Should the test be successful, the intent would be to require developers to install such devices in all areas undergoing significant new housing construction. It is intended that the City would authorize the devices to be removed when the areas are fully occupied or assumed by the City.

In addition to dealing with the water loss issue, anti-tampering devices may also reduce the risk of damage to the hydrants by unauthorized users, and may help prevent water quality being impacted.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council, and complies with Vaughan Vision A-2 "Promote Community Safety, Health & Wellness".

Conclusion

Pending a successful field test of the anti-tampering devices for fire hydrants, and a pilot project in an area of new construction, the installation of anti-tampering devices for fire hydrants in areas of new construction may assist in preventing the unlawful use of City water.

Attachments

N/A

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Respectfully submitted,

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