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Council green group talks trash, scrap and grass

By **SEAN MCKIBBON**, SUN MEDIA

City council's new Environmental Political Action Group has announced a flurry of pilot projects aimed at improving Ottawa's environment.

Among the initiatives, the municipality's first "green roof," a 5,000-sq.-ft. section of the roof over the sedimentation basins of the city's water filtration plant, played host to the announcement.

"People want us to be looking at the alternatives and really make this issue a priority. In many ways, we're very much behind," said Coun. Peggy Feltmate, who along with councillors Peter Hume, Clive Doucet and Jacques Legendre make up the group.

The group is hoping initiatives such as a test of a new garbage chute system for apartment buildings that will separate waste, and an asphalt shingle recycling program will help put Ottawa on the right track.

A third initiative, a scrap metal collection and recycling program, was also announced.

MAKE IT EASY

"We want to make it as easy as possible for people to be able to recycle large items like barbecues and bath tubs," said Feltmate, who added the city will be investigating options for collection.

The initiatives, which will be part of a report to be presented at the next Planning and Environment Committee, will be important steps in reducing the load on Ottawa's Trail Rd. landfill, Feltmate said.

The green roof at the plant costs about \$96,000, or 50% more than a regular roof, but is also expected to last 50% longer, said Dixon Weir, manager of drinking water services at the city.

Along with absorbing the air pollutants, the grass-covered roof adds to the insulation of the building, reducing the need for air conditioning and heating. Green roofs can also reduce stormwater runoff and the amount of heat that is reflected back into the atmosphere.

"They also protect the membrane of the roof from UV rays," he said.

The city plans to cover sections of the treatment plant every year, learning as it goes, he said. The city will also look at the suitability of other city buildings for green roofs, he said.

CLOVER COVER

While the city started out with a fairly simple grass and clover cover for this first roof, it could move on to other types of vegetation in coming years.