

IE22.6 Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy - Stage 1, City Council consideration on June 8, 2021



June 8, 2021

VIA E-MAIL: councilmeeting@toronto.ca

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Dear Mayor Tory and Council Members,

I am writing on behalf of ProtectNatureTO, a group advocating for the protection of wildlife and natural areas across the City of Toronto.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy - Stage 1.

Single-use plastics and takeaway products are a serious and growing problem - from plastic pollution in our greenspaces, devastating impacts on migratory birds and overall affecting biodiversity and environment negatively, growing problems and complexities in recycling, to the impact of fossil fuel extraction and plastic production on our health. Dealing with unnecessary single-use products and packaging is not just about litter, or improving recycling and waste management, but about biodiversity and climate crisis, human health and transitioning to sustainable, regenerative and circular economy.

Biodiversity crisis is happening even faster than climate change. Natural world, wildlife, especially migratory birds are affected in a massive rapidly progressing way by plastic pollution.

We urge you to take swift action to reduce single-use waste and move Toronto towards a circular economy:

- Move quickly with the Voluntary Measures Program to provide guidance and support for businesses to make reuse and waste reduction a part of their reopening strategy this summer.
- Don't stop with voluntary measures – mandatory measures must follow in 2022. We strongly encourage the City of Toronto to proceed with reducing unnecessary single-use plastic items via regulations.
- The City Council adopted motion **MM31.22 Officially Recognizing Toronto as a Certified Bird Friendly City** - by Councillor Mike Layton, seconded by Jennifer McKelvie, City Council consideration on April 7, 2021. **On May 7, 2021, City of Toronto received Bird-Friendly City certification from Nature Canada** as a recognition for its efforts and leadership in urban bird conservation by being awarded a high-level certification as a bird-friendly city. This certification comes with obligations, among *others* ***“Municipality takes regulatory measures and encourages voluntary measures to reduce the amount of plastic waste generated (e.g. banning of single use plastics) and provide proof of regulatory (e.g. a municipal bylaw) and voluntary measures (e.g. a local business) such as a ban on single use plastics, shopping bags, plastic straws, etc.”***

ProtectNatureTO wants Toronto Council to stay firm in its commitment to reduce single use items.

This voluntary phase is important, but for real change, it needs to be followed with mandatory measures in 2022.

Yours sincerely

Lenka Holubec on behalf of [ProtectNatureTO](#)

Background:

Bird Friendly City application

	c) Outreach campaign for residents and businesses to promote responsible light control practices within the municipality.	there must be evidence of both standards for new development and a retrofit program. c) One point for educational and outreach campaigns to reduce light attraction during migration periods such as the "lights out Toronto" campaigns of the past.	
1.4 THREAT REDUCTION	Municipality has a policy to reduce or eliminate non-essential pesticide use that directly or indirectly harms birds, on public and private land that is implemented through local bylaws. This policy should include restrictions on pesticides used to control nuisance insects such as mosquitoes (such as Bti) unless there is a demonstrated health risk (such as proof of West Nile in larvae).	Proof of the policy is provided. Examples of such policies would include a ban on cosmetic use of pesticides or the use of rodenticides when harm to bird populations has been demonstrated. The use of Bti to control mosquitoes and blackflies is controversial, in that it is increasingly used by municipalities to kill mosquitoes and fly larva in wetlands in response to neighbourhood pressure. There is strong evidence that this reduces the available food for aerial insectivores like swallows and has a negative impact on their populations.	1 point
1.5 THREAT REDUCTION	Municipality takes regulatory measures and encourages voluntary measures to reduce the amount of plastic waste generated (e.g. banning of single use plastics).	Provide proof of regulatory (e.g. a municipal bylaw) and voluntary measures (e.g. a local business) such as a ban on single use plastics, shopping bags, plastic straws, etc.	1 point
1.6 THREAT REDUCTION	Measures in place to reduce bird collisions with vehicles such as lower speed limits when passing through important bird habitat, and measures to reduce the number of vehicles on the roads (such as a good public transit system and cycling infrastructure).	Provide proof of measures to protect birds from vehicle collisions. For example, at locations where a busy road cuts through a wildlife corridor, evidence of mitigation would include lower speed limits, signage about wildlife crossing, or proof of engineered solutions such as wildlife underpasses or overpasses.	1 point

Birds and Plastic Pollution – A Case Study in Toronto

“Plastics make up most of the anthropogenic debris found in the natural environment and can take hundreds of years to break down. Most research on birds and plastic pollution has been documented in marine environments. However, data from freshwater ecosystems – like the Great Lakes – remains limited.

A recent study analyzed the stomach contents of double-crested cormorant colonies in both Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, and found alarming levels of debris ingestion. It is not only cormorants that are being affected; almost 800 species globally have been negatively impacted by plastic pollution. This growing trend needs to be halted.”