

Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy – Stage 1

Date: May 7, 2021

To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee

From: General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services

Wards: All

SUMMARY

In 2018, Toronto City Council directed Solid Waste Management Services staff to develop a Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy (Reduction Strategy). The primary goal of the Reduction Strategy is to reduce the use and disposal of single-use and takeaway items regardless of the material type and the waste stream in which they are currently managed (e.g., garbage, Blue Bin recycling, Green Bin organics). During the consultation process, a single-use or takeaway item was defined as any product designed for a single use and not designed for durability or reuse. In the fall of 2019, after two rounds of public consultation, the City of Toronto (City) identified strong public support for the implementation of mandatory measures (e.g., bylaws) restricting single-use and takeaway items.

In March 2020, the Reduction Strategy was put on hold as the City focused its efforts on the emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In October 2020, the Government of Canada released a list of six plastic items it intends to ban or restrict by the end of 2021 through their Discussion Paper: A proposed integrated management approach to plastic products to prevent waste and pollution (Discussion Paper).¹ The Discussion Paper has further informed the proposed Reduction Strategy development.

In consideration of the potential social, financial, and health-related impacts on Toronto residents and businesses, and the release of the Discussion Paper, Solid Waste Management Services does not recommend proceeding with the implementation of mandatory measures (e.g., a fee, ban or "ask first/by request" bylaw) at this time. Solid Waste Management Services staff recommend the Reduction Strategy start as a Voluntary Measures Program encouraging businesses to voluntarily adopt measures to reduce single-use and takeaway items. The City will provide support through the creation of resources to support businesses' efforts to adopt "ask first/by request" measures for items including, but not limited to bags, straws, and utensils along with

¹ Discussion Paper, link: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/canadian-environmental-protection-act-registry/plastics-proposed-integrated-management-approach.html>

accepting reusable containers for takeout containers and beverage cups. The Voluntary Measures Program will be the first stage of the Reduction Strategy focused on maintaining the momentum of support identified during the public consultations. A second stage of the Reduction Strategy that re-evaluates mandatory restrictions will be presented to City Council in 2022. It will consider any further impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Government of Canada final list of restricted plastic items.

This report also provides a summary of the results from Phase Two consultations gathered prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The input was provided by a range of stakeholders including the retail sector, food and restaurant establishments, environmental organizations and residents. During Phase Two consultations, stakeholders were asked to comment on possible bylaw elements approaches restricting five types of single-use and takeaway items including straws, bags, utensils, cold and hot beverage cups, and expanded polystyrene (foam) containers and cups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services recommends that:

1. City Council approve the Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy's Voluntary Measures Program, Stage 1 as outlined in Attachment 8.
2. City Council direct the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, to report back in the first quarter of 2022, with an update and action plan on Stage 2 of the Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy, including:
 - a. Any new considerations of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic;
 - b. Any further implementation details on the Government of Canada's proposed integrated management approach to plastic products to prevent waste and pollution (Federal Program);
 - c. An implementation timeline and approach aligning the City's proposed Phase Two consultation mandatory measures with the Federal Program;
 - d. An implementation timeline and approach to implement the City's proposed Phase Two consultation mandatory measures should the Federal Program not come into effect in 2022, which will demonstrate the City's commitment towards zero waste and a circular economy;
 - e. An implementation timeline and proposed approach for any recommended additions or enhancements to the City's originally proposed Phase Two consultation mandatory measures to reduce and prevent the generation of single-use and takeaway items in the City of Toronto;
 - f. A review of options to incentivize businesses in the City of Toronto to reduce single-use and takeaway items such as partnership opportunities, financial incentives and grant programs; and

- g. Next steps in planning for additional items to address through Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy, Stage 2.
3. City Council request the Government of Canada to consult with the City of Toronto to identify how the City of Toronto can support the Government of Canada's proposed integrated management approach to plastic products and prevent waste and pollution.
4. City Council authorize the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services to negotiate and enter into any and all agreements and amending agreements necessary to collaborate with businesses, non-profit organizations, and community organizations to support the implementation of the Voluntary Measures Program outlined in Attachment 8, on terms and conditions satisfactory to the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.
5. City Council direct the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services to develop and implement a promotion and recognition program for businesses in the City of Toronto that adopt the Voluntary Measures Program outlined in Attachment 8.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from this report. The initial communications costs for the Voluntary Measures Program will be accommodated within the 2021 Operating and Capital (Long Term Waste Management Strategy) Budgets for Solid Waste Management Services.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

EQUITY IMPACT OF THE REDUCTION STRATEGY

Using the City's Equity Lens Tool,² Solid Waste Management Services staff assessed the potential impact of the Reduction Strategy on Indigenous, Black and equity-seeking groups of Toronto.

There are no equity implications resulting from this report.

² City of Toronto Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Guidelines, and Procedure, Link: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accessibility-human-rights/equity-diversity-inclusion/>

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on October 2 and 3, 2019, Toronto City Council adopted item MM10.1 entitled "Promoting Reusable Food Serviceware at Toronto Restaurants - by Councillor Jaye Robinson, seconded by Councillor Brad Bradford," which directs the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services to report back to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee in the third quarter of 2020 on the feasibility of implementing a requirement for all dining establishments to provide reusable food serviceware for eat-in customers to reduce the use of single-use plastics in Toronto's restaurant industry.

The City Council Decision document can be viewed at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.MM10.1>

At its meeting on May 23, 2019, the Infrastructure and Environment Committee adopted without amendment item IE5.9 entitled "Single-Use and Takeaway Items Consultations and Reduction Strategy Next Steps." This report provides an overview of the results from the first phase of consultation on the development of a single-use and takeaway items reduction strategy that took place in fall 2018.

The Infrastructure and Environment Committee Decision document can be viewed at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.IE5.9>

At its meeting on April 16 and 17, 2019, City Council adopted item MM6.9 entitled "Report on eliminating single-use plastic in all City of Toronto facilities - by Councillor Mike Colle, seconded by Councillor Jennifer McKelvie," which directs the City Manager, in consultation with the appropriate staff, to report to City Council, through the Infrastructure and Environment Committee, on a comprehensive plan to reduce or eliminate single-use plastic products in all City facilities and City events and campaigns where feasible and practical, and to include in the report an outline of other options, including reusable and alternative products that may be deployed to replace single-use plastic products.

The City Council Decision document can be viewed at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.MM6.9>

At its meeting on July 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 30, 2018, Toronto City Council adopted item PW31.10 entitled "Options to Address Single-Use Items, Misleading Advertising, and Textile Waste in the City of Toronto," which directs the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services to develop a policy which would restrict plastic straws in the City of Toronto by the end of the first quarter of 2019; consult with key stakeholders that would be impacted by the restriction of plastic straws and report to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee at its first meeting in 2019; and consult with residents and stakeholders by fall 2018 to identify items for targeted reduction and solicit input on policy tools with a report back in January of 2019.

The City Council Decision document can be viewed at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.PW31.10>

At its meeting on April 24, 25, 26, and 27, 2018, City Council adopted item PW28.8 entitled "State of Toronto's Blue Bin Recycling Program," which directs City Council to request the Government of Canada to develop a national strategy that addresses plastic pollution that would include several regulations aimed at making the producers of products and packaging directly responsible for reducing resource, as well as developing a national single-use plastics reduction and/or recycling performance standard; establishing a national single-use plastics recycled content performance standard; eliminating the use of problematic products and packaging that pollute the environment; and reducing consumer and industrial use of single-use plastics, including, but not limited to, plastic bags, bottles, straws, tableware, polystyrene (foam), plastic tea bags, cigarette filters, and beverage containers.

The City Council Decision document can be viewed at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.PW28.8>

At its meeting on January 19, 2018, the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee considered item PW26.7 entitled "Reducing the use of Single-Use Products" and referred the item to the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, to report back to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee by July 2018 with a review of options to reduce the use of (including, but not limited to, municipal fees and prohibitions), or increase the recycling rates of: single-use plastic bags; single-use hot beverage cups and lids; single-use coffee pods; black plastics used in takeout foods, grocery stores; single-use plastic straws and cutlery; and single-use plastic take out containers.

The Public Works and Infrastructure Committee Decision document can be viewed at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.PW26.7>

At its meeting on July 12, 13, 14, and 15, 2016, City Council adopted item PW14.2 entitled "Final Long Term Waste Management Strategy," and adopted the recommended options and implementation plan, as presented in Attachment 1 to the report (June 2, 2016) from the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services. The Strategy focuses on waste reduction, reuse and recycling activities that promote resource conservation and reduce environmental impact. It also sets a goal of diverting 70 per cent of Toronto's waste away from landfill by 2026 and supports the City's move towards a circular economy and zero waste future.

The City Council Decision document can be viewed at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.PW14.2>

At its meeting on June 19, 2013, the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee adopted without amendment item PW24.2 entitled "Options to Reduce the Use and Disposal of Plastic Shopping Carryout Bags in Toronto." The report responds to City Council's direction to review a range of measures to reduce the use and disposal of plastic shopping carryout bags in Toronto.

The Public Works and Infrastructure Decision document can be viewed at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.PW24.2>

At its meeting on November 30, December 1, 2, 4, and 7, 2009, City Council adopted item PW28.18, entitled "Potential Changes to the *Waste Diversion Act, 2002*, and the Blue Box Program Plan and Impacts on Hot Drink Cup and Plastic Take-out Food Containers," including direction to defer any further work with respect to policies and bylaw development related to plastic take-out food containers and hot drink cups until after Provincial policies have been established.

The City Council Decision document can be viewed at:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2009.PW28.18>

COMMENTS

Requirement for a Reduction Strategy

The City's Long Term Waste Management Strategy, adopted by City Council in 2016, prioritizes the waste hierarchy through reduction, reuse, and recycling and also places an emphasis on the implementation of policies and programs that reduce waste. It is estimated that approximately 400 million single-use plastic bags, 85 million foam takeaway containers and cups, and 39 million single-use hot and cold drink cups are generated annually by single family households in Toronto.³ The 2017 Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup, the leading source of shoreline litter data in Canada, recorded over 2,000 pieces of plastic cutlery and 5,700 straws on Toronto's shorelines.⁴

This report outlines the development of the Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy (Reduction Strategy), including public consultation processes and results, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Government of Canada's Discussion Paper: A proposed integrated management approach to plastic products to prevent waste and pollution (Discussion Paper). A forthcoming report from the Government of Canada to finalize the list of restricted items, approaches and timelines is anticipated, hereinafter referred to as the "Government of Canada's Proposed Approach". The report concludes with further details on the first stage of the Reduction Strategy, the Voluntary Measures Program, and an explanation of how the City will support its implementation.

Overview of the Public Consultation

The development of the Reduction Strategy was comprised of two phases. This section provides an overview of the public consultation of each phase.

Phase One Public Consultation

In 2018, Phase One consultation determined the single-use and takeaway items to be prioritized in the Reduction Strategy and the preferred reduction methods (as in mandatory and/or voluntary measures). As presented in the May 2019 report, Single-

³ 2018 City of Toronto waste audit of 200 single- family households.

⁴ Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup 2017 Toronto Summary

Use and Takeaway Items Consultations and Reduction Strategy Next Steps, the results of the polling indicated that a majority of the public were supportive of the City adopting both mandatory and voluntary measures to address single-use and takeaway items. For example, between 87 per cent and 93 per cent of survey participants supported restrictions on plastic bags, cutlery, straws, drink cups, expanded polystyrene foam takeout containers, and black plastic containers.

Phase Two Public Consultation

In the spring of 2019, Phase Two consultations began to determine the potential type of mandatory measures and/or programs the City should develop to address single-use and takeaway items. This work involved:

- Retaining an independent, external consultant to inform proposed policies and programs;
- Analyzing all feedback from Phase One consultations including prioritization of single-use and takeaway items to be reduced and the preferred measures for reduction;
- Reviewing available data on single-use and takeaway items including environmental and financial impacts;
- Considering operational challenges related to identified materials and items; and
- Considering availability of alternatives to the items evaluated.

The following proposed reduction principles, in no prioritized order, were used to consider and rank potential mandatory and voluntary measures:

- Address materials which are not recyclable or are not effectively recycled in the City's Blue Bin Recycling Program;
- Target materials which are known to contribute to street litter and marine litter;
- Consider survey and polling data on preferred approaches and items to target;
- Obtain measurable environmental impacts; and
- Ensure harmonization and consistency with policies and programs being developed nationally and locally to reduce single-use or takeaway items.

A summary of the process for selecting the proposed single-use and takeaway items and measures to reduce these items, along with consultation results and findings from a jurisdictional scan of best practices, are outlined in Attachment 1.

Outreach, Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement

The Phase Two consultations were held between September 24 and December 10, 2019 and involved residents and various stakeholders including dine-in and take-out food and restaurant establishments, retail and manufacturing groups, non-governmental organizations, and accessibility advocates. The consultation provided opportunities for stakeholders to give feedback on the recommended single-use and takeaway items to be targeted for reduction and the proposed measures and timelines to reduce these items. Consultation activities included a public open house, stakeholder meetings, an online survey, independent third-party polling and telephone town halls (tele-town halls). Internal stakeholder meetings were also held with City divisions to gather input on the proposed items and reduction measures, and to ensure that a proposed bylaw would not conflict or interfere with other City divisions' policies or programs.

Solid Waste Management Services presented to the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee on the proposed bylaw for the reduction of specific single-use and takeaway items. Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee members provided feedback on the proposed Reduction Strategy mandatory measures, as well as best practices in the accommodation of individuals with disabilities. Based on the feedback from Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee members, tele-town halls were introduced as an accessible consultation tactic to offer opportunities for people to participate from home in addition to in-person and online live public consultation events.

Equity and accessibility considerations were an integral part of the development of the proposed Reduction Strategy including the public consultation process. All public Reduction Strategy documents such as display panels, presentations, and staff reports to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee were compliant with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.⁵ In addition, all public meetings were held in accessible locations near public transit to ensure an inclusive consultation process. Also, accessibility accommodation and translation services were made available during the public and stakeholder meetings, if requested.

The presentation used at the public event and other stakeholder sessions can be found in Attachment 2. The Public Consultation Report on Phase Two consultation activities can be found in Attachment 3.

Due to impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the release of the Discussion Paper, the proposed strategy developed from Phase Two is not being recommended at this time.

Revisions to the Reduction Strategy

After the completion of the two phases of public consultations, Solid Waste Management Services planned to present a recommended Reduction Strategy to City Council in the second quarter of 2020 which would have included a bylaw that established mandatory fees, place bans on, or require "ask first/by request" on certain

⁵ *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, link: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11>

single-use and takeaway items. However, the Reduction Strategy was put on hold as the City focused its efforts on the emergency response to COVID-19 pandemic. The Reduction Strategy was revised to minimize its impact on Toronto residents and businesses due to the COVID-19 pandemic and also consider the release of the Discussion Paper.

COVID-19 Pandemic Response and Recovery and Rebuild Considerations

A key finding from Toronto's Office of Recovery and Rebuild report titled "COVID-19: Impacts and Opportunities" states that the City will need to make decisions that consider the personal, social, and financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Toronto's businesses and residents of all ages, in all communities and circumstances, and those who have been hardest hit.⁶ In consideration of these impacts, Solid Waste Management Services does not recommend proceeding with the implementation of a single-use and takeaway item bylaw at this time. The introduction of a new bylaw could place additional financial pressures on both residents and businesses. The adoption of a bylaw could require businesses to incur additional costs to develop and train staff on new business processes required for compliance. Additionally, restaurants may be relying on single-use and takeaway items as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic-related shutdown and lockdown restrictions resulting in many restaurants pivoting to a take-out and third-party delivery model.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Toronto Public Health supported the direction of the Reduction Strategy as presented during Phase Two consultations to establish a bylaw and provided guidance on the use of reusable cups and containers in food premises (see Attachment 4). At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, some businesses suspended the practice of accepting reusable cups and food containers as a precautionary health and safety measure. However, this was not a requirement of Toronto Public Health or the Government of Ontario. Some businesses have since chosen to reinstate the practice of accepting reusable cups and food containers; and a few examples of local companies that are considering deposit programs for reusable cups and food containers have also emerged.⁷

Government of Canada's Approach

In 2018, the federal, provincial and territorial governments, through the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, approved in principle the Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste.⁸ This led to the Canada-wide Action Plan on Zero Plastic Waste: Phase 1 being approved by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment in 2019.⁹ This action plan set out to develop a roadmap to address priority single-use and disposable plastics most commonly released into the environment by December 2021. The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment released the Phase 2 Action

⁶ COVID-19: Impacts & Opportunities Report from Toronto's Office of Recovery & Rebuild, link: <https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-reopening-recovery-rebuild/covid-19-about-reopening-recovery-rebuild/>

⁷ Suppli has started a reusable container deposit program in Toronto: <https://www.mysuppli.ca/>

⁸ Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste, link: <https://ccme.ca/en/res/strategyonzeroplasticwaste.pdf>

⁹ Canada-wide Action Plan on Zero Plastic Waste, Phase 1, link: https://ccme.ca/en/res/1589_ccmecanada-wideactionplanonzeroplasticwaste_en-secured.pdf

Plan in July 2020 which focuses on consumer awareness, aquatic activities, research and monitoring, clean-up and global action.¹⁰

In October 2020, the Government of Canada released the Discussion Paper that proposes a national ban or other restrictions as early as 2021 on the following six items:

- Plastic bags;
- Plastic cutlery;
- Plastic straws;
- Plastic six-pack rings;
- Plastic stir sticks; and
- Food packaging and service ware made from problematic plastics.

Solid Waste Management Services coordinated a City of Toronto staff response to the Discussion Paper which was submitted on December 9, 2020. Comments on the Discussion Paper as well as comments on the Draft Science Assessment of Plastic Pollution¹¹ submitted in April 2020, can be found in Attachment 5.

On May 12, 2021 plastic manufactured items were added to Schedule 1 of the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999*.¹² This provides the Government of Canada with the ability to introduce and propose risk management measures to address plastic pollution. The risk management measures to eliminate the six single-use plastic items listed above may be different than the measures presented in the City's Phase Two of the development of the Reduction Strategy consultation. A significant difference between the two strategies is that the Canada-wide Strategy is focused on reducing items made of plastic, compared with the Reduction Strategy's goal of overall reduction of single use- items regardless of the material type.

Four items listed in the City's Phase Two of the development of the Reduction Strategy correspond with the Government of Canada's proposed items but with different proposed mandatory measures. These items were: plastic bags, cutlery, straws and expanded polystyrene foam (food packaging and service ware made from problematic plastics that are difficult to manage or do not have sustainable markets). For example, Phase Two proposed that plastic bags be restricted by implementing a fee bylaw whereas the Discussion Paper proposes that plastic bags be banned outright. In this example, if the Government of Canada enacts a law that bans plastic bags and the City enacts a bylaw that mandates a fee for plastic bags which conflicts with the federal law, the municipal bylaw would be inoperative to the extent that it conflicts with the federal law.

The criteria used by the Government of Canada to determine the items to be restricted aligned with the evaluation process applied by the City when selecting materials for reduction (these were also consulted on as part of the 2019 Phase Two of the development of the Reduction Strategy). These criteria were:

¹⁰ Canada-wide Action Plan on Zero Plastic Waste, Phase 2, link: <https://ccme.ca/en/current-activities/waste>

¹¹ Government of Canada's Draft Science Assessment, link: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/evaluating-existing-substances/draft-science-assessment-plastic-pollution.html>

¹² Canadian Environmental Protection Act, link: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-15.31/>

- Is the item environmentally problematic?
- Is the item difficult or costly to recycle?
- Does the item have readily available alternatives?

There are similarities between the Discussion Paper and the City's Reduction Strategy. The Government of Canada's list of targeted plastic items to restrict includes a number of items the City consulted on as part of the 2019 Phase Two of the development of the Reduction Strategy. These items are also supported by waste audit data from The Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup,¹³ Solid Waste Management Services operational considerations, and feedback received in both phases of the Reduction Strategy's public consultation.

Attachment 6 shows a comparison of the proposed bylaw the City consulted on in Phase Two of the development of the Reduction Strategy (including the Voluntary Measures Program) and the proposed list of items from the Discussion Paper. Given the similarity between original proposals for the Reduction Strategy and the Discussion Paper, staff is not recommending mandatory measures until there is more certainty at the federal level.

Moving Forward: Stage 1 of the Reduction Strategy – Encourage Voluntary Measures in 2021

The first stage of the proposed Reduction Strategy is the Voluntary Measures Program to encourage food establishments to adopt "ask first/by request" processes for items including, but not limited to bags, straws, and utensils. The Voluntary Measures Program will also encourage businesses to allow the use of reusable cups and takeaway containers in their operations instead of single-use takeaway items. These measures take into consideration the changes to the landscape within which the Reduction Strategy was originally developed, most notably the impact of the potential restrictions on plastic items by the Government of Canada and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Toronto residents and businesses.

The Voluntary Measures Program approach builds on the momentum of public support for waste reduction evidenced by the results of the City's public consultation activities. City staff anticipate the Government of Canada will present regulations or measures by 2022 under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999* to restrict the use of certain plastic items. Once further details on the Federal Program are known and the City impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is assessed, City staff will report back to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee and Toronto City Council with any recommended Reduction Strategy enhancements as well as a report on the outcomes of the progress of the Voluntary Measures Program. The anticipated timeline to begin communications and engagement support for the Voluntary Measures Program is planned for fourth quarter 2021/first quarter of 2022.

In Phase One consultations, residents and stakeholders strongly supported the use of voluntary measures to reduce the use of single-use items in Toronto. The Voluntary Measures Program will use tactics to understand the requirements of businesses and

¹³ The Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup: <https://www.shorelinecleanup.ca/>

encourage them to voluntarily adopt reduction efforts for single-use items that may include, but not be limited to the following:

- Providing businesses with information workshops;
- Conducting research to better understand industry needs and challenges; and
- Developing and providing a toolkit with resources, communications templates and information about best practices to support their implementation of reduction efforts.

Toronto Public Health will be consulted on the development of operational guidelines and promotional materials to address any common public concerns or misconceptions on the proper handling of reusable cups and containers.

Communications – Promotion, Outreach and Engagement

Communications for the Reduction Strategy will primarily target the food and restaurant industry, as well as other retail businesses, to encourage them to adopt ask first/by request policies for single-use items and to encourage the acceptance of reusable containers and beverage cups.

A common misconception heard during Phase One and Phase Two consultation was the existence of a City bylaw that prohibits food establishments from accepting and serving food or beverages in reusable containers provided by their customers. Communications will also encourage residents to use reusable alternatives such as bags, straws, utensils, containers and cups where possible.

To encourage food establishments to accept customer-supplied reusable alternatives for single-use and takeaway items, Solid Waste Management Services will explore any opportunities together with input from Toronto Public Health, on how best to incorporate information on the use of reusable items in food establishments.

Solid Waste Management Services will leverage its existing networks to promote messaging including the 3Rs Ambassador Volunteers Program and the Community Reduce and Reuse Program community hub network.¹⁴ In order to communicate as broadly as possible, City staff will also seek to leverage communication channels of other City divisions. For example, the Energy and Environment Division's network of Live Green Volunteers, and Social Development, Finance and Administration's Local Planning Tables as part of the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy.¹⁵

Phase Two consultations also found that there is confusion as it relates to single-use items labelled as compostable or biodegradable as alternatives to plastic single-use items. Compostable or biodegradable plastic, wooden and some fibre-based items are

¹⁴ Community Reduce and Reuse Programs, link: <https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/recycling-organics-garbage/long-term-waste-strategy/waste-reduction/community-reduce-reuse-programs/>

¹⁵ Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020, link: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/long-term-vision-plans-and-strategies/toronto-strong-neighbourhoods-strategy-2020/>

not accepted in the City's Green Bin organics or Blue Bin recycling programs. The Voluntary Measures Program will include communications to address this confusion in an effort to discourage businesses from substituting items with single-use items labelled as compostable or biodegradable.

It is recommended that the Voluntary Measures Program include dedicated support from the City to promote and recognize businesses that adopt voluntary measure to reduce single-use and takeaway items. This work will help support Toronto's Recovery and Rebuild efforts to support a green recovery.

Monitoring plan

As the proposed Voluntary Measures Program does not recommend a new bylaw restricting the distribution of single-use and takeaway items, no enforcement is required at this time. Solid Waste Management Services will work to complete waste audits to monitor single-use and takeaway items in the residential waste stream through weight and unit counts. Public space and streetscape audits will also be performed to quantify the amount of single-use and takeaway items found in the public realm.

The monitoring plan will seek to establish a baseline in 2021 and additional measurements will be conducted in subsequent years to evaluate the outcomes of the Reduction Strategy. Results from the audits will also be used to inform future recommended changes.

Updated jurisdictional scan of waste related policies that could impact the Reduction Strategy

As the initial jurisdictional scan was completed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, additional research was recently undertaken to update the status of single-use and takeaway items related programs, policies and laws regionally, nationally and internationally.

Jurisdictional Scan of Single-Use and Takeaway Items Policies and Programs

A scan of policies, strategies and laws related to single-use and takeaway items from across Canada was completed to better understand the changing landscape as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Discussion Paper (see Attachment 7). Vancouver, British Columbia, Montreal, Quebec, and Wood Buffalo, Alberta already have laws that ban or place other restrictions on single-use items and have decided to delay or suspend these laws due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Discussion Paper. Many other jurisdictions in Canada have moved ahead with planning or implementing laws to ban certain single-use items as well and some already having taken effect. It should be noted that the majority of these laws pertain to the banning of plastic bags, which may eventually be restricted nationally under the Federal Program.

Globally, other cities, states and countries have continued to push forward strategies to reduce single-use items despite the COVID-19 pandemic, most notably the European Union where member states are beginning to follow through with the directive to ban some single-use items by the end of 2021.

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, some businesses have suspended programs accepting reusable cups,¹⁶ while other businesses have eliminated plastic carryout bags from their operations.¹⁷ However, at the same time, there are also examples of businesses planning to pilot deposit programs for reusable cups and food packaging in Toronto.¹⁸ There have also been a number of local small businesses in Toronto that are working on piloting and establishing reusable container and takeaway cup sharing programs in the City.^{19,20,21}

Government of Ontario Considerations

Participants of Phase Two consultations expressed a need for any measures being implemented in Toronto to be consistent with other government strategies and legislation. The Government of Ontario participates in the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment and has shown continued commitment to address single-use plastics and products by moving to an extended producer responsibility model, which makes producers financially and operationally responsible for the end-of-life management of the packaging and products that they introduce into the market place.

In October 2020, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks posted the draft Blue Box Regulation for public consultation. The definition of “blue box packaging” in the draft regulation included convenience packaging (e.g., boxes or bags to facilitate consumers’ transport of products) and single-use disposable straws, cutlery or plates. This means producers could be responsible for the management of these items from eligible sources such as single family and multi-residential households, schools, long-term care facilities, and parks (all subject to final Provincial regulations yet to be released as of the date of this report).

Corporate Real Estate Management Single-Use Plastic Reduction Strategy

Corporate Real Estate Management, working in collaboration with Solid Waste Management Services, developed a plan to reduce the use of single-use plastic items in City facilities, events, and campaigns, where feasible. This work is complementary in nature to the Solid Waste Management Services Reduction Strategy, however, focuses on plastics reduction. Corporate Real Estate Management completed a comprehensive internal consultation with City divisions, comprised of a corporate-wide survey in November 2019, and follow-up meetings with key divisions in February 2020. The Corporate Real Estate Management plan has been put on hold as the City focuses its efforts on the COVID-19 pandemic response.

¹⁶ Starbucks pausing reusable cup program, link: <https://stories.starbucks.com/press/2020/navigating-covid-19-update-on-changes-to-our-stores-as-we-care-for-partners-customers/>

¹⁷ Sobeys Inc. no longer distributing plastic checkout bags, link: <https://corporate.sobeys.com/corporate-responsibility/plastic-packaging/>

¹⁸ Tim Hortons, Moving from Single-Use to Reusable, Link: <https://www.rbi.com/English/sustainability/packaging-and-recycling/default.aspx>

¹⁹ Case Reusable Containers, Toronto, link: <https://www.getcase.ca/tellmemore>

²⁰ Suppli Reusable Container Deposit Program, link: <https://www.mysuppli.ca/>

²¹ Circulr reusable packaging, link: <https://circulr.ca/>

Requiring reusables at eat-in establishments

This section specifically addresses the Member Motion 10.1 entitled "Promoting Reusable Food Serviceware at Toronto Restaurants." Solid Waste Management Services staff consulted with City divisions including Toronto Public Health, Legal Services, and Economic Development and Culture to explore the feasibility of implementing a requirement for all dining establishments to provide reusable food service ware for eat-in customers. Not all food establishments have sufficient infrastructure to support reusable service ware. Mandating a requirement for reusable service ware for eat-in establishments could result in significant cost implications to business owners. Voluntary Measures Program will look at ways to encourage voluntary uptake of this measure rather than implementing a new bylaw. For example, this could include supporting the use of patron supplied cutlery, straws and service ware.

Next Steps

Solid Waste Management Services staff will work with the Strategic Communications Division to develop a Communications Plan to help inform businesses, residents and other key stakeholders of the Voluntary Measures Program (Attachment 8). Resources to support the Voluntary Measures Program will also be developed to communicate best practices with establishments and also recognize and promote those that adopt voluntary measures to reduce single-use and takeaway items. Efforts will be made to engage and work collaboratively with neighbouring municipalities to share key messages with the goal of amplifying the impact of the message throughout the Greater Toronto Area and establish foundational and stronger harmonized approaches to single-use and takeaway items reduction.

Staff will also continue to monitor other single-use and takeaway items reduction policies, including the Federal Program, and any new considerations of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to demonstrate the City's ongoing commitment to zero waste and a circular economy progressing Solid Waste Management Services staff will also report back with the following in the first quarter of 2022:

- Any further implementation details on the Government of Canada's proposed integrated management approach to plastic products to prevent waste and pollution;
- An implementation timeline and approach aligning the City's proposed Phase 2 consultation mandatory measures with the Federal Program, or, an implementation timeline and approach to implement the City's proposed Phase 2 consultation mandatory measures should the Federal Program not come into effect in 2022;
- An implementation timeline and proposed approach for any recommended additions or enhancements for the City's Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy;

- A review of options to incentivize businesses in the City of Toronto to reduce single-use and takeaway items such as partnership opportunities, financial incentives and grant programs; and
- Next steps in planning for additional items to address through Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy, Stage 2.

CONTACT

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachments 1a 1b and 1c – Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy Development (Policy Evaluation Approach, Jurisdictional Scan, Final Recommendation)

Attachment 2 – Presentation from September 24, 2019 Public Event "Addressing Single-use and Takeaway Items in Toronto"

Attachments 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d and 3e – Single-use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy - Phase Two Public Consultation Report and Activities (Public Consultation Report, Online Survey Questions, Online Survey Analysis, Tele-town Hall Report, Public Opinion Polling Report)

Attachment 4 – Toronto Public Health Guidance on the Use of Reusable Containers in Food Premises

Attachments 5a and 5b – City of Toronto Responses to the Government of Canada (Plastic Assessment & Discussion Paper)

Attachment 6 – Comparison of the Reduction Strategy and the Discussion Paper

Attachment 7 – Updated Jurisdictional Scan (Canada, International, Private)

Attachment 8 – Moving Forward: Stage 1 of the Reduction Strategy – Encourage Voluntary Measures in 2021