

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

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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. The Voluntary Measures Program will use tactics to understand the requirements of businesses and 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. Communications will also encourage residents to use reusable alternatives such as bags, straws, utensils, containers and cups where possible. The Voluntary Measures Program will also include communications to discourage businesses from substituting items with single-use items labelled as compostable or biodegradable.

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. 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.

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

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.