



May 24, 2021

City of Toronto - Infrastructure and Environment Committee  
ATTN: Matthew Green, Committee/Council Administrator  
City Hall, 100 Queen Street West, 10th floor, West Tower, Toronto, ON M5H 2N2  
Via email: [iec@toronto.ca](mailto:iec@toronto.ca)

**Re: IE22.6 Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy -**

Dear Mayor Tory and Councillors of the City of Toronto,

I am the Coordinator for Zero Waste Hub Toronto, a grassroots not for profit organization that works with local established organizations and green groups to help promote waste reduction education in, and create a zero waste future for, Toronto; we've organized Toronto's first two zero waste fairs (May 2018 and 2019) and more; and were nominated for Best Enviro Group in NOW Magazine Readers Choice 2019.

I strongly encourage the City of Toronto to reduce unnecessary single-use plastics via regulations. This is urgent, and we have an opportunity to help businesses right away to reopen with reuse.

**Reusables are [safe](#) and [doable](#).** This voluntary phase is important, and should take effect immediately in June **2021**. For real change, it needs to be followed with mandatory measures that take effect in **2022** - including 'ask first', in-store signage ([1](#), [2](#)), and fees, followed by bans, with 'upon request' available to accommodate people with disabilities, such as for straws.

**Reusables are available now in Toronto, support the local economy and reduce waste and litter.**

**Across Toronto:** Freshco eliminated single use bags [March 18, 2021](#); Bulk Barn's Reusable Container Program (launched in [2017](#)) came back [March 2021](#);

reusable takeout container and cup programs are available through [DreamZero.ca](#) (and Muuse by DreamZero), [Inwit.ca](#), and [MySuppli.ca](#); reusable kegerators and kegs filled with local nonalcoholic beverages are offered by [CraftonDraft](#); meal kit delivery in reusable packaging is available from [Crisper](#);

reusable bottles, containers, cups/mugs, cutlery, straws and straw cleaning brushes, are available from many locations, as are reusable bags, including bags made from upcycled textiles by many local makers;

upcycled reusable bags made from **existing local textile waste** would seem to be the lowest footprint material, increase local good green **jobs** that have often been held by people who have been **marginalized**, and **reduce Toronto's waste costs and landfill space use**;

[PlateShare.ca](#) has residents hosting 13 reusable dishware sets so far, to lend for parties free since 2019.

[CSI](#) (2017), [Junction Night Market](#) (2019), and Ecofair Toronto (2019) all offered reusable dishware at their events. Withrow Park Farmers' Market hosted a Zero Waste Picnic in [2019](#). Live Green Toronto hosted a single use plastic free lunch in [2019](#). Three BIA's (Bloorcourt, Bloordale, and Roncesvalles Village) have promoted BYO (bring our own) containers by sponsoring ad space and [two](#) different full size colour posters at TTC shelters in 2019 and 2020. There are certified EcoSchools in all 25 wards ([1](#), [2](#)).

[Retailer examples:] **Ward 3** (Etobicoke-Lakeshore): Birds & Beans Cafe has been offering returnable

reusable ceramic cups with lids since [2018](#) and is now among [9 restaurants](#) participating in the Muuse stainless steel reusables program. **Ward 4** (Parkdale-High Park): Golden Gecko Coffee started offering returnable reusable bowls for soup and chili in [2019](#) (and is participating in Muuse). **Ward 6** (York-Centre): [Johnvince Foods](#) has had a policy to allow customers to bring their own containers. **Ward 9** (Davenport): [Anarres Apothecary](#) has had a reusable refillable program and bring your own container policy since [2008](#). **Ward 11** (University-Rosedale): [Karma Co-Op](#) has “[long had a bring your own bags and containers policy](#)”. **Ward 12** (Trinity-St. Paul’s): Craque de Creme has offered returnable reusable mini mason jars for its creme brulee since opening in [2017](#). **Ward 14 (Toronto-Danforth)**: [bare market](#) has had a reusable refillable program and bring your own container policy since **2018** (and is participating in Muuse); and Withrow Park Farmers Market lent reusable dishware 2K times in [2018](#) and 10K times in [2019](#).

[79% of respondents](#) said they support stronger regulations on plastics, in an Angus Reid poll conducted for Dalhousie University, during COVID. Mandatory regulations and structural changes are needed as per a [2017 study](#) that showed people including environmentalists were not motivated to reduce their environmental footprints by education campaigns and knowledge alone. People are more motivated to avoid a fee than take advantage of a discount ([link](#)). Reusables have [lower embedded emissions](#). Toronto is to reduce upfront embedded emissions in what it consumes **66% by 2030** as per a [2019 report](#) by **C40 Cities** which the **City of Toronto** is a member of. PFAS (petrochemicals), found in [food packaging](#), [worsen COVID](#).

**Would the City of Toronto please:**

- include one-time-use takeout cups, lids, food containers, stir sticks, cutlery, straws, and grocery, produce, and dry goods bulk bags, in the restrictions, and require recycled napkins to be offered;
- provide clearer public health guidelines for reuse and BYO including helping businesses and residents know that reuse is safe;
- provide grants and support for businesses that provide reusables, reusables services, or to make the shift, and for local makers of bags upcycled from local textiles that would otherwise be destined for Toronto waste collection;
- ask Live Green Toronto to assess and bring a report and plan to provide a reusables kit free to everyone who receives a fair fare pass, discounted to seniors and students, and offset by offering individual pieces and kits for sale at 6 to 7 kiosks across the city and online (as NYC has done for years);
- bring back a cigarette butt collection campaign and distribute pocket ashtrays;
- urge City staff, the provincial and federal governments to apply a public health lense to waste reduction policies because plastic is toxic, and recycled content has not been proven safe for food contact use.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
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