REPORT FOR ACTION

Update on Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy - Reducing Single-Use (formerly Voluntary Measures) Program Launch

Date: June 21, 2022
To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee
From: General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services
Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the City of Toronto's Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy including the status of the development of mandatory measures (bylaw) that would require businesses to implement approaches to reduce single-use and takeaway items in their operations. This report also provides an update on status, timelines and steps taken to implement the ReduceWasteTO program, "Reducing Single-Use", (formerly named the Voluntary Measures Program), which provides supports for businesses within Toronto to voluntarily adopt single-use and takeaway item waste reduction measures in their operations. Lastly, this report provides an overview of the plans for the City to take a leadership role in supporting the reduction of single-use and takeaway items at City-owned and managed facilities and City-organized and permitted events.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services recommends that:

1. The Infrastructure and Environment Committee receives this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no immediate financial implications resulting from this report.

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

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of May 25, 2022, the Infrastructure and Environment Committee adopted Item IE30.17 and requested the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services to provide an update to the next Infrastructure and Environment Committee on the Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy status and timeline, including the steps to implement the Voluntary Measures Program to provide support for small businesses, and the steps to ensure the City is leading by example by shifting away from single-use in City operations and facilities.

The Infrastructure and Environment Committee document can be viewed at:
http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2022.IE30.17

At its meeting on June 8 and 9, 2021, City Council adopted Item IE22.6 entitled "Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy – Stage 1" which included Council direction to implement a Single-Use and Takeaway Item Voluntary Measures Program and directed the General Manager, Solid Waste Management Services, to report back in the first quarter of 2022 with an update and action plan on the Reduction Strategy – Stage 2. City Council also directed 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, and to develop and implement a promotion and recognition program for businesses in the City that adopt the Voluntary Measures Program.

The City Council Decision document can be viewed at:
http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.IE22.6

At its meeting on June 8 and 9, 2021, City Council adopted Item IE22.7 entitled "Urging the Federal Government to Take Action to Manage Plastics," and endorsed the integrated management plan for plastics proposed by the Government of Canada, which includes: adding plastic manufactured items as a toxic substance to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act; banning six single-use items: checkout bags, stir sticks, six-pack rings, cutlery, and certain takeout containers and straws; and, establishing a minimum requirement for recycled plastic content. City Council requested the Government of Canada to implement the management plan as soon as possible; requested the Government of Canada to work with the City to explore, with a view to investing in, reuse systems to replace single-use plastic products; requested the Government of Canada to establish a registry that publicly reports on: descriptions of the plastic manufactured items in Canada, a list of chemicals found in each product, and the amount of plastic that enters the waste stream in Canada each year. City Council also requested that the Government of Canada establish a framework for the adoption of Extended Producer Responsibility regulation across the country and to set a national recycling target for plastic products.

The City Council Decision document can be viewed at:
http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.IE22.7

At its meeting on October 2 and 3, 2019, City Council adopted Item MM10.1 entitled "Promoting Reusable Food Serviceware at Toronto Restaurants - by Councillor Jaye Robinson, seconded by Councillor Brad Bradford," which directed 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 Item IE5.9 entitled "Single-Use and Takeaway Items Consultations and Reduction Strategy Next Steps." The report provided an overview of the results from the first phase of consultation on the development of a Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy that occurred 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 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

COMMENTS

Background

In 2018, 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 distribution, use and disposal of single-use and takeaway items regardless of the material type and the waste stream in which they are currently managed, for example - garbage, Blue Bin recycling, or Green Bin organics. Initial consultations, held in 2018 and 2019, identified strong public support for the implementation of both voluntary and mandatory measures to reduce single-use and

takeaway items in Toronto.[1] In early 2020, the Reduction Strategy was put on hold as the City of Toronto (City) focused its efforts on the emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At its meeting on June 8 and 9, 2021, City Council approved the Reduction Strategy – Stage 1. City Council directed staff to focus on the development and implementation of a Voluntary Measures Program (Reducing Single-Use) to encourage businesses to voluntarily adopt measures to reduce the distribution of single-use and takeaway items in their operations. City Council also directed staff to identify where and how Reducing Single-Use could be implemented at City-run facilities, events and with City vendors, in order to take a leadership role in supporting the reduction of single-use and takeaway items.

At that same meeting, City Council further directed Solid Waste Management Services to report back in 2022 with details on the next steps of the Reduction Strategy – Stage 2.

Update on the Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy

The report back on the Reduction Strategy has been delayed until 2023 to ensure alignment of the Reduction Strategy with proposed Government of Canada regulations on single-use plastics and to consider opportunities to harmonize the Reduction Strategy recommendations with other Canadian municipalities' strategies to address single-use and takeaway items. This will also provide those businesses impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, particularly restaurants and the food and beverage service sector, time to recover without additional regulations.

Federal Regulation on Single-Use Plastics

On December 25, 2021, the Government of Canada published the proposed *Single-Use Plastic Prohibition Regulations* in the *Canada Gazette* with a consultation period for comments that closed on March 5, 2022. Solid Waste Management Services coordinated the City's response with input from various subject matter experts, including staff from the Environment & Energy Division. The City's response to the proposed *Single-Use Plastic Prohibition Regulations* included the City offering to collaborate with the Government of Canada on the development of a national strategy to explore reuse systems that can replace single-use products (Attachment 1). City staff continue to liaise with Federal government staff on the City's Reduction Strategy progress.

On June 22, 2022, the Government of Canada published the *Single-Use Plastic Prohibition Regulations* in the *Canada Gazette,* Part II. The *Single-Use Plastic Prohibition Regulations* officially prohibits the manufacture, sale and import of six plastic manufactured items: checkout bags, plastic cutlery, foodservice ware made from or containing problematic plastics (such as expanded polystyrene foam or black plastic),

[1] Toronto City Council adoption of Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy – Stage 1, Link: http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.IE22.6

ring carriers, stir sticks, and straws. The Government of Canada has published two guidance documents to help businesses adjust to the *Single-Use Plastic Prohibition Regulations* and to help businesses and the public choose more sustainable alternatives to the six single-use plastic items.

The Government of Canada will be implementing the *Single-Use Plastic Prohibition Regulations* on a staggered timeline as outlined in Table 1:

Table 1 - Implementation Schedule for the *Single-Use Plastic Prohibition Regulations*

Single-use plastic item	**Prohibition of Manufacture and import for sale in Canada**	**Prohibition of Sale**	**Prohibition of Manufacture, import and sale for export**
Checkout bags, cutlery, foodservice ware, stir sticks, straws*	December 20, 2022	December 20, 2023	December 20, 2025
Ring carriers	June 20, 2023	June 20, 2024	December 20, 2025
Flexible straws packaged with beverage containers	N/A	June 20, 2024	December 20, 2025

* Single-use plastic flexible straws that are not packaged with beverage containers are excluded under certain conditions to ensure they remain available for people who require them for medical or accessibility reasons.

In late 2022, the Government of Canada also intends to publish for public comment a proposed regulation that will set a target of 50 per cent recycled content in plastic packaging by 2030. The Government of Canada has further indicated that they will present other proposed regulation for consultation as early as summer 2022, including a proposed mandatory registry for plastic producers and rules for labeling plastics as recyclable. Staff will monitor the implementation of the Government of Canada's *Single-Use Plastic Prohibition Regulations* and other emerging components of the Canada-wide Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste to ensure alignment with the proposed approaches for the City’s Reduction Strategy.

2022 Consultation on Reduction Strategy

In February and March 2022, the City undertook further consultation to gather feedback on the City's proposed revisions to the Reduction Strategy due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Government of Canada's *Single-Use Plastics Prohibition Regulations*. This consultation specifically addressed:

- Additional single-use and takeaway items to be targeted through the Reduction Strategy;

- Proposed timing for the implementation of mandatory measures (bylaw) for specific approaches and single-use items; and

- Fee amounts associated with proposed mandatory measures.

Previous consultations held in 2018 and 2019 included the consideration of a proposed ban on certain targeted single-use and takeaway items. Potential bans were removed from the 2022 consultation since the Government of Canada's proposed *Single-Use Plastics Prohibition Regulations* addresses bans for similar items.

More than 12,000 stakeholders and members of the general public participated in consultation activities which included six online consultation sessions, independent polling of stakeholders and the general public, and targeted surveys of local businesses. The consultation data is currently being reviewed, analyzed and summarized for presentation in a report back on the Reduction Strategy – Stage 2 to be presented to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee and City Council in 2023.

Reducing Single-Use Program (formerly Voluntary Measures Program)

In June 2022, the Voluntary Measures Program was launched under its new name, Reducing Single-Use. Reducing Single-Use is one of a suite of ReduceWasteTO programs, which also include Food Waste reduction, the 3Rs Ambassadors Program, Community Reduce and Reuse Programs and Community Environment Days. The original launch of Reducing Single-Use was delayed to allow businesses to focus on their recovery efforts and return to full operations in the spring/summer of 2022. This has also provided additional time for Solid Waste Management Services to build up its stakeholder contact list to ensure a more extensive engagement of Toronto businesses when Reducing Single-Use launched.

Reducing Single-Use will be rolled out in three phases:

- Phase 1: To encourage and support businesses to voluntarily adopt practices to eliminate the unnecessary use of single-use and takeaway items in their day-to-day operations. Education and supports provided are consistent with proposed mandatory measure approaches recently consulted on as well as the Government of Canada's *Single-Use Plastics Prohibition Regulations*.

- Phase 2: To finalize and present mandatory bylaw components of the Reduction Strategy to City Council. Once a final Single-Use and Takeaway Item bylaw is approved and enacted by City Council, Reducing Single-Use will provide additional educational resources to businesses to facilitate achieving compliance with any bylaw.

- Phase 3: Reducing Single-Use will encourage businesses to demonstrate waste reduction leadership beyond compliance with any existing Federal regulations

and City bylaws, and be a part of a more ambitious transition to zero waste and a circular economy in the City.

Reducing Single-Use – Phase 1

Phase 1 of Reducing Single-Use provides resources and supports to stakeholders, opportunities for recognition of businesses demonstrating leadership in single-use and takeaway item reduction, as well as promotion and outreach activities to businesses.

Resources and Supports to Businesses

Reducing Single-Use offers businesses and stakeholders online resources that can be accessed from a dedicated webpage.[2] The resources include posters and practical tips on how businesses can take cost-effective steps to reduce waste from single-use and takeaway items, downloadable, printable signage to promote their waste reduction activities as well as links to public health best practices in accepting reusable containers from customers (Attachment 2). Webinars and workshops will also be coordinated as a forum for businesses to engage with City staff directly as well as learn from other businesses or organizations that have implemented waste reduction efforts successfully. These webinars also provide guidance on items that are compatible with the City's Blue Bin program, as well as provide more information on considerations as it relates to the use of compostable and/or biodegradable plastics.

Opportunities for Recognition of Businesses

Reducing Single-Use will establish a program to showcase the leadership of businesses already taking action to eliminate the unnecessary use of single-use and takeaway items and service providers with innovative business solutions addressing single-use and takeaway item waste. As an initial step, businesses who wish to be featured for recognition must complete an online application form, outlining how their business addresses and eliminates the unnecessary use of single-use and takeaway items. Solid Waste Management Services staff will review the submissions to ensure they meet criteria demonstrating how they address targeted single-use and takeaway items reduction.

Approved businesses may be featured on the Reducing Single-Use Webpage in an online directory and potentially through other forms.

Promotion and Outreach

The primary target audience for promotion and outreach activities are businesses in the food and beverage service sector. Communication tactics may include the cross-promotion of messaging by local businesses and industry associations to reach a broad range of businesses and stakeholders, and targeted digital and social media advertising campaigns. In spring 2022, a separate waste reduction advertising campaign targeted the general public and promoted practical behaviour changes such as the adoption of

[2] Reducing Single-Use & Takeaway Items – City of Toronto - https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/recycling-organics-garbage/long-term-waste-strategy/reducing-single-use-takeaway-items/

durable, reusable alternatives while encouraging refusal of single-use and takeaway items.

Educational and outreach materials will be distributed through various communication channels and will seek to leverage opportunities through other City Divisions such as Strategic Public & Employee Communications, Economic Development & Culture and the Environment & Energy Division.

Reducing Single-Use Phase 1 activities and events, including the online survey for businesses and service providers, will be used to gather feedback from stakeholders in order for the City to be able to build and enhance supports made available in future phases. City staff will share the work of Reducing Single-Use with other municipalities and relevant industry associations to support potential for harmonization and similar efforts across cities.

Phase 1 will continue until any proposed mandatory measures are enacted by City Council and come into effect.

The planned communications costs for Reducing Single-Use will be accommodated within the 2022 approved budget of $300,000.

Efforts to Reduce Single-Use and Takeaway Items at City of Toronto Facilities

The City's Corporate Real Estate Management Division will support the implementation of Reducing Single-Use at City facilities by distributing communications and promotional materials to relevant tenants in City-owned spaces, such as Civic Centres, St. Lawrence Market and Union Station. The Corporate Real Estate Management Division will work with Solid Waste Management Services to develop these materials, identify appropriate communication channels to tenants and report back to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee in 2023 with an update on the single-use and takeaway item waste reduction efforts that have been undertaken.

In February 2022, Solid Waste Management Services reached out to each of the City's Divisions to serve as City 'champions' to help incorporate the goals and principles of the Reducing Single-Use program within the operation of each Division. This cross-divisional partnership will help ensure that City-owned facilities and properties demonstrate leadership in reducing single-use and takeaway items on-site.

All City vendors and lease-holders, along with organizers of City-run events will receive promotional and educational information to encourage voluntary reduction of single-use and takeaway items. Additionally, these locations will be supported to ensure they are aware of future restrictions on single-use and takeaway items and compliance requirements, such as the Government of Canada's *Single-Use Plastics Prohibition Regulations* or should the City adopt a bylaw addressing these materials.

Corporate Real Estate Management Division will help promote the use of reusable eating utensils, cups and containers, using City-approved communications, to reduce single-use and takeaway waste and contribute to environmental sustainability.

As part of the City's Raptors Den program (which provides staff with the opportunity to pitch ideas to the Senior Leadership Team to boldly innovate and accelerate the re-thinking and reimaging of our organization and community) the 'TO on Tap' program was recently launched. TO on Tap calls on City of Toronto facilities and staff to eliminate the use of single-use plastic water bottles and drink Toronto's excellent tap water. In addition to supporting single-use waste reduction it also supports employee wellness goals from Toronto's TransformTO Net Zero Strategy, the Stronger Together Strategy, and Solid Waste Management Services' Long Term Waste Management Strategy.

To further support efforts towards reducing single-use waste in City operations, the Solid Waste Management Services and Purchasing and Materials Management Divisions have developed a framework to support staff in applying circular economy principles in procurement. In summer 2022, a suite of online training modules will be rolled out to City staff that will provide best practices, case studies, and considerations for achieving circular economy outcomes in procurement, including reducing single-use and takeaway items and unnecessary packaging.

Solid Waste Management Services will continue interdivisional collaboration and conversations with all City Divisions implementing programs that utilize single-use or takeaway items.

Next Steps

Solid Waste Management Services staff, with support from Strategic Public & Employee Communications, will work to implement Reducing Single-Use in order to support and recognize businesses with best practices in waste reduction efforts.

To inform the approach of the Reduction Strategy – Stage 2, Staff will continue to monitor other jurisdictions' proposed and existing single-use and takeaway items reduction policies and regulations along with the implementation of the Government of Canada's *Single-Use Plastics Prohibition Regulations* and any new components of the Canada-wide Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste.

In 2023, Solid Waste Management Services staff will report back with the results of the review and analysis of the data gathered through the most recent consultation activities as well as provide updates on the Reducing Single-Use program. The report back will include:

- An implementation timeline and approach for the Reduction Strategy – Stage 2, ensuring alignment between the City's proposed mandatory measures and the Government of Canada's *Single-Use Plastics Prohibition Regulations*;

- Next steps in planning for additional items to address through Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy – Stage 2, and;

- A review of options to incentivize businesses in Toronto to reduce single-use and takeaway items such as partnership opportunities, financial incentives and grant programs.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: City of Toronto Staff Comments to the Government of Canada's *Single-Use Plastics Prohibition Regulations* - March 4, 2022

Attachment 2: Toronto Public Health Guidance on the Use of Reusable Containers in Food Premises