

May 25, 2022

Matthew Green
Infrastructure and Environment Committee Secretariat
City of Toronto
Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen Street West, Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
Via email: iec@toronto.ca



Dear Members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee,

RE: IE30.17 “Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy - Voluntary Measures Program Launch”

We are writing to show our support to you to **adopt** this item and move forward on the Single Use and Takeaway Item (SUTI) Reduction Strategy.

By February 2020: 272¹ Toronto stores and restaurants were displaying a BYO decal indicating they allow(ed) customer-supplied containers, offer(ed) zero waste tools, and/or feature(d) other waste reduction initiatives.

In September 2021: the City of Toronto posted two PDFs - titled “Let’s choose to reduce single-use items” for residents and “Reduce single-use items in your business” - at toronto.ca/single-use/² > in the accordion folder called “Ways to Reduce Single Use Items”, ahead of the annual Waste Reduction Week across Canada in October 2021.

Currently: 40+ restaurants and cafes in 17+ neighbourhoods participate in stainless steel returnable reusable takeout container programs by Toronto initiatives (Muuse by Dream Zero; Inwit; and Suppli) already.³

Reusables are safe and doable.⁴

After the City adopted [IE22.6](#) (Spring 2021) and posted the 2 PDFs (September 2021) we were surprised and extremely disappointed to hear nothing further since has

¹ 272 businesses display BYO decal (Mar2020) <https://www.facebook.com/0wasteTO/posts/853630878393783>

² toronto.ca/single-use/ connects to this link <https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/recycling-organics-garbage/long-term-waste-strategy/reducing-single-use-takeaway-items/>

³ 40+ restaurants and cafes in 17+ neighbourhoods (Oct 2021) <https://twitter.com/0wasteTO/status/1452717385870368776> via: <http://muuse.ca/> by <https://www.dreamzero.ca/>; <https://inwit.ca/>; <https://www.mysuppli.ca/>

⁴ Reusables are safe and doable <https://www.canadareduces.ca/health>

transpired visibly to move the Voluntary Measures Program significantly forward and demonstrably reduce waste.

There was another City survey conducted in February-March 2022 we recall, and are shocked to learn that the results have not been brought forward yet for the City of TO to adopt to restrict and reduce unnecessary single use and takeaway items immediately.

The provincial and federal governments have failed to execute adequate measures so far. The City of Toronto must be a leader.

The single use waste seen littered in Toronto on a daily basis is astounding - frequently seen within a block of where it is sold - and desensitizing: the City has an opportunity to help Torontonians envision and hope to have a litter free view as they walk anywhere in Toronto on a daily basis - take swift, significant action, effective immediately, to change things and show the improvements that are possible.

The unnecessary extraction, production, transport and use of fossil fuel and forest products, including for single use and takeaway items, must be eliminated immediately.

The pollution, embedded emissions, climate impacts, and social and environmental justice violations upstream and downstream must end: they are beyond what we as a society, and Toronto as a C40 Cities member, can afford to allow to continue.

Macroplastics, microplastics, and the petrochemicals contained and toxins they leech, absorb and adsorb have contaminated our water, soil, food, bodies and air already.

Toronto must do all it can as fast as humanly possible to eliminate unnecessary single use and takeaway items and promote and support reusables to allow the City of TO to:

- realize and fulfill its Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy (2022.IE22.6) and Long Term Waste Management Strategy and aspirational goal of zero waste;
- uphold, retain and operate in alignment with its:
 - Bird Friendly City certification ongoing status with Nature Canada;
 - Declaration of The Right to a Healthy Environment ([2015.EX10.13](#));
 - Net Zero TransformTO;
- reduce the amount of money the City spends on necessary litter cleanup and

- respect and help maximize residents' and groups' volunteer productivity and impact by reducing the time spent on cleaning up unnecessary single use litter and allow them to focus their volunteer time more efficiently on other important aspects of zero waste and related local initiatives to help increase the impact of Toronto's work toward zero waste.

It must be noted, the City of TO has an opportunity to: increase people's equitable accessibility to meaningfully participate in waste reduction initiatives; be more in alignment with its own policies; and increase more people's openness to, support for and participation in waste reduction initiatives through trust in and enthusiasm for City messaging, by improving City credibility, including for waste reduction and zero waste:

- Ensure access to water

the City must ensure all water fountains and bottle refill stations are turned on and bathrooms open and working 24/7/365 and HTO to Go water trucks provided for all people in Toronto during the housing crisis

(reusable water bottles were ready to be provided through Sanctuary TO since 2020 to people who have found themselves unhoused, and the City had left it to residents to fund, transport and distribute 100,000+ single use water bottles instead)

(the place for human waste is appropriate bathroom facilities, and the City had left it so people evacuate in parks and other people clean it up - inefficient, unsafe, costly, and disrespecting the City's residents and workers);

- Cease destruction of goods

the City must cease destruction of the belongings of people (who it has allowed to be unhoused through policy choices)

(destruction of goods - people's tents, tiny homes and other belongings - violates peoples' rights and is contrary to waste reduction, the Long Term Waste Management Strategy, aspirational goal of zero waste - the official hierarchy for which necessitates the highest best use of goods⁵ - and circularity principles the City says it works toward);

- Create sufficient permanently deeply affordable adequate housing

the City must create 25,000 permanently deeply affordable adequate housing units each year for the next five years to clear the housing waitlist

⁵ Zero Waste Hierarchy of Highest and Best Use <https://zwia.org/zwih/>

(anything less takes away from peoples' right to housing and equitable access and capacity to meaningfully participate in waste reduction initiatives)

(all people must have homes to wash themselves, dishes and laundry, for example, so they may begin to have equitable access to meaningfully participate in waste reduction initiatives and contribute to circularity and the aspirational goal of zero waste);

- Create equitable access to reusables

all people who experience the lowest incomes must be provided with zero waste kits of reusables by Live Green Toronto similar to the 'Fair Fare' except for free offset by sliding scale sales online and at 5+ Live Green Toronto kiosks across Toronto;

- Cease inefficiency and wasting precious resources

the City must cease surveillance, evictions, and criminalizing of people who find themselves homeless, and the unnecessary installation of fencing around parks.

The above would make it extremely easier for people and groups to share, feel and show support for City messages, initiatives and aims about waste reduction - as if they are meaningful, worthwhile and the City is sincere - and create trust in City messaging, actions, and expenditures, as being in alignment, efficient, productive, and worthwhile.

The City must do much more immediately and ongoing to earn all residents' trust, favourability, openness and participation in waste reduction - it must heal and repair a lot of unnecessary emotional and physical damage, sincere suffering and heartache it has caused, and remedy where it has violated its own policies, goals, and peoples' rights it is required to uphold - issues that ring today still.

It's been a dismal, saddening, hurtful 2+ years in fundamental aspects in and by the City of Toronto that have not gone unnoticed and must be reconciled and repaired immediately in order to move forward - as inclusively and successfully as possible - and with the City's credibility restored, toward achieving as near to zero waste as possible.

Thank you,
Ms. A. Pope, Coordinator (Volunteer)
Toronto, ON M6J 0A8

Zero Waste Hub Toronto (est. 2018) is a grassroots not for profit organization, the founder and organizer of Toronto's first two zero waste fairs (May 2018 and 2019), and works with established local organizations and green groups to help promote waste reduction education, awareness and opportunities and create a zero waste future for Toronto.