

July 7, 2022

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



Dear Members of the Infrastructure and Environment Committee,

RE: [IE31.15](#) “Update on Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy - Reducing Single-Use (formerly Voluntary Measures) Program Launch”

We are writing to show our support for you to **amend and adopt** this item. We recommend and request IEC kindly incorporate the following 3 points as amendments:

1. ask Solid Waste Management Services to update and use the Circular Economy directory sign-ups it started to receive pre-covid. Reason: to include existing businesses and initiatives participating in waste reduction in Toronto already among the new ones that SWMS proposes to receive, list, map and promote via #ReduceWasteTO now.

Existing Toronto businesses and organizations that have led the way in waste reduction and reuse in Toronto, and created Toronto’s zero waste community, deserve to be respected and honoured by being included in the City’s proposed #ReduceWasteTO directory, map and promotions first (in addition to new sign ups the City receives).

For example such as: Karma Co-Op, Anarres Apothecary, The Furniture Bank, Habitat for Humanity ReStore, Material Exchange, Toronto Tool Library, Repair Café Toronto, Really Really Free Market, Secondhand Sunday, Free Geek Toronto, Creative Reuse Toronto, Feed it Forward, Lift Bra Project, Second Harvest, Spent Goods, The New Mom Project, Tiny Toy Co., Toronto Clothing Repairathon, Withrow Farmers Market, long time eco stores (Ecotique, EcoExistence, and more) and various bulk stores, consignment, secondhand and vintage shops, Leslieville and Parkdale flea markets, and many others. Some submitted listings already.

We as an organization encouraged and/or reminded many if not most of the orgs that signed up for that listing to sign up, contributing to the Circular Economy Case Studies the City compiled¹, and the proposed unpublished(?) directory: require SWMS to start with, use and promote the existing data and businesses taking part already, also please.

¹<https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/recycling-organics-garbage/long-term-waste-strategy/working-toward-a-circular-economy/businesses-supporting-torontos-circular-economy/>

2. expand the restricted items list.

(Have all councillors seen the photo of a single use takeout cup's intact plastic liner found in Lake Ontario by Chelsea Rochman, of Rochman Lab at U of T, already?²)

Top items in litter include single use takeout cups/lids/sleeves, bottles, bottle caps and other food packaging (among other items), and are not included in the City or federal government's respective restrictions yet; the City of Toronto must be a leader.

The Reuse Revolution is in Toronto showing businesses and people are ready:

- 55+ local restaurants and cafes in 17+ neighbourhoods participate in stainless steel reusable takeout container programs by Toronto-based initiatives [Muuse.ca](https://muuse.ca) (by [DreamZero.ca](https://dreamzero.ca)), [Inwit.ca](https://inwit.ca), and, [MySuppli.ca](https://mysuppli.ca), and 23 others offer plastic reusable containers from Toronto-based [Reego.ca](https://reego.ca) and Guelph-based [Friendlier.ca](https://friendlier.ca), for a total of 81 businesses;
- Lourdes Coffee³ stopped carrying single use takeout containers in February; and Craque de Creme⁴ (gourmet creme brulée) has reusable mini mason jars;
- meal kit delivery exclusively in reusables has been available from Toronto-based [CrisperKits.ca](https://crisperkits.ca) since their launch in January 2021 to excellent reviews; and,
- a combined total of 272 stores and restaurants displayed their local Reduces' waste groups' stickers as of February 2020⁵.

Reusables are safe and doable.⁶

The single use waste seen littered in Toronto on a daily basis is astounding - often within a block of where it is sold - and mind numbingly desensitizing;

the City has an opportunity to help Torontonians visualize and believe they get to have a litter free view as they walk anywhere in Toronto on a daily basis, by taking swift action, effective immediately, for significant improvements and to show the most possibilities.

Toronto can more greatly and quickly reduce the embedded pollution, emissions, climate impacts, environmental and social justice violations upstream and downstream, and extraction, production, transport and use of fossil fuel and forest products, from its

² <https://twitter.com/ChelseaRochman/status/1332374906462466049>

³ <https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/toronto-coffee-shop-ditches-to-go-cups-for-good-here-s-why-1.5787768>

⁴ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/science/zero-waste-takeout-1.4867042>

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/RoncyReduces/posts/618223472060759>

⁶ Reusables are safe and doable <https://www.canadareduces.ca/health>

use of unnecessary single use items; they are beyond the limit of what we as a society - and Toronto as a C40 Cities member - can afford, or allow to continue.

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

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

- fulfill its Single-Use and Takeaway Items Reduction Strategy (2022.IE22.6⁷), Long Term Waste Management Strategy and aspirational zero waste goal⁸;

- uphold, retain and function in alignment with its:

- Bird Friendly City certification⁹ ongoing status with Nature Canada;

- Declaration of The Right to a Healthy Environment ([2015.EX10.13](#)); and,

- Net Zero TransformTO;

- reduce the budget it spends on necessary litter cleanup; and

- respect and help maximize residents' and groups' right to reasonable enjoyment of the city, and volunteer productivity and impact, by reducing the time spent on cleaning up unnecessary single use litter, allowing a focus of volunteer time more efficiently and productively on other important aspects of zero waste and related local initiatives to help increase the impact of Toronto's efforts toward zero waste.

3. It must be noted - the City of Toronto has an opportunity to

- increase people's equitable access to meaningfully participate in waste reduction,
- be more in alignment with its own policies, and
- increase people's openness to, trust in, enthusiasm for and engagement with City messaging and support for and participation in waste reduction initiatives, by

improving its credibility, including for waste reduction.

⁷ <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.IE22.6>

⁸ <http://toronto.ca/wastestrategy>

⁹ <https://naturecanada.ca/defend-nature/how-you-help-us-take-action/bfc/>

a.) Ensure access to adequate 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 starting with residents who are experiencing being unhoused

(reusable water bottles were ready to be provided via Toronto Drop in Network since 2020 to people experiencing being unhoused, and the City left it to residents to fund, transport and distribute 500,000+ single use water bottles instead via Sanctuary TO and Project Food Chain)

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

b.) Cease destruction of goods:

the City must cease the destruction of the belongings of people who are unhoused

(the 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 and aspirational goal of zero waste, the official hierarchy of which necessitates the highest best use of goods¹⁰, and circularity principles the City works toward);

c.) Create sufficient permanently deeply affordable adequate housing:

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

(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 zero waste goal);

d.) Create equitable access to reusables:

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

¹⁰ Zero Waste Hierarchy of Highest and Best Use <https://zwia.org/zw/h/>

e.) Cease inefficiency and wasting resources:

the City must cease surveillance, evictions, and criminalizing people who are experiencing being unhoused, and the unnecessary installation of fencing around parks.

f.) Eliminate Toronto sewage releases into Lake Ontario.¹¹

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

In conclusion: 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 large amount of unnecessary emotional and physical damage, sincere suffering and heartache it has caused, and correct course 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 Toronto's zero waste goal.

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

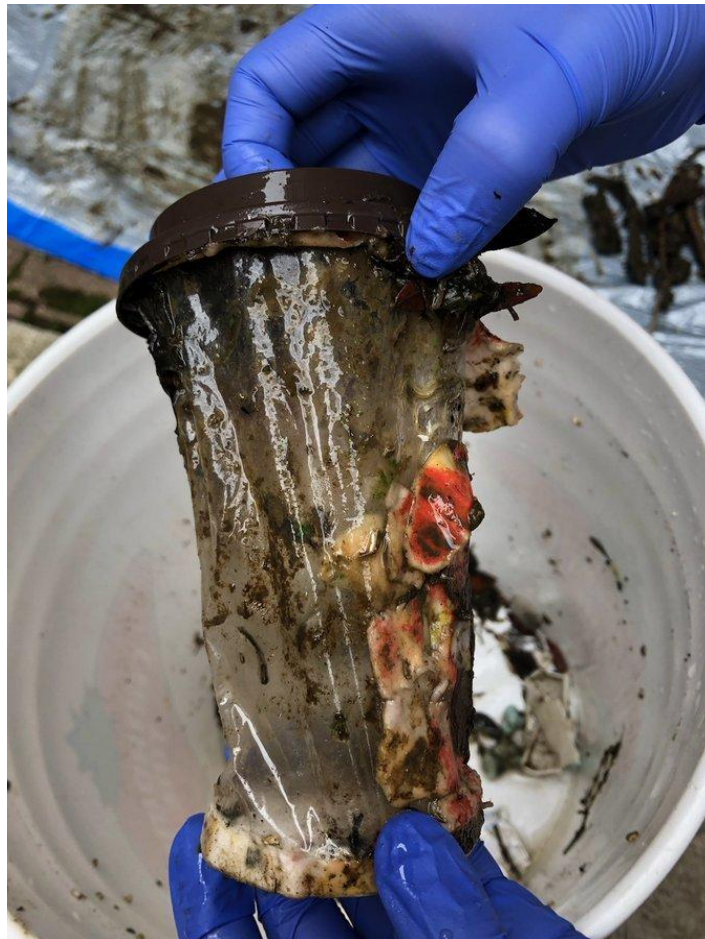
Encl.

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.

¹¹ <https://www.swimdrinkfish.ca/blog/celebrating-world-oceans-day-coast-to-coast-to-coast>

“Ever wonder why a paper coffee cup is considered #SingleUsePlastic? THIS PICTURE, of a Tim Horton's cup that landed in one of our Seabins within the @GLPCleanup, IS WORTH 1000 WORDS!!!! @UofTTrashTeam”

(posted by @ChelseaRochman, of Rochman Lab at U of T, November 27, 2020.)¹²



¹² <https://twitter.com/ChelseaRochman/status/1332374906462466049>