



# CREATING A SINGLE-USE ITEM REDUCTION STRATEGY

FOR DISPOSABLE CUPS, TAKE-OUT CONTAINERS AND SHOPPING BAGS

Consultation Paper | September 12, 2017



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## INTRODUCTION



*Volunteers with the City's Keep Vancouver Spectacular Program join together to keep their community vibrant and clean by picking up litter at John Hendry Park.*

Cities around the globe are taking action to address single-use item waste. On June 27, 2017, in support of our Greenest City Action Plan and Zero Waste goal, Vancouver City Council directed staff to launch a stakeholder consultation and public engagement program on options to reduce the amount of waste generated from single-use items, including:

- Disposable beverage cups
- Take-out containers
- Plastic and paper shopping bags

As staff develop a Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy, consultation on potential approaches and targets is crucial. Collective effort is needed to create a sustainable strategy that reduces waste from single-use items, works locally and could be adopted by other communities as we all work towards zero waste. Our intention is to spark a conversation on how the City of Vancouver and stakeholders can work together to tackle this problem. We can't do it alone.

The purpose of this consultation paper is to provide information and seek stakeholder feedback on potential approaches and targets under consideration for the City of Vancouver's Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy.

### **In this consultation paper you will find:**

- A "current state" of single-use item waste in Vancouver;
- Background information on the current collection system;
- Key research findings, including local, national and international actions underway;
- A review of regulatory and non-regulatory tools within the City's ability to support;
- Potential approaches, and;
- Discussion of potential two, five and 10 year targets.

## POTENTIAL APPROACHES

The potential approaches presented in this paper, shown in tables 1-3, are intended to prioritize “reduce and reuse” over “recycle and dispose,” as shown in the Zero Waste Hierarchy. This aligns with the City’s commitment to become a zero waste community by 2040.

### THE ZERO WASTE HIERARCHY



\* Recovering energy from organic materials such as food and, in the case of single-use items, compostable packaging.

## TARGETS

Input received through this consultation paper, will inform the development of achievable and measurable two, five and 10-year targets to be included in the strategy. At this time, the City is seeking feedback on the proposed five-year targets included in this paper, as well as input from respondents to develop two-year and 10-year targets.

### Two-Year Target(s):

To be determined through consultation

### Five-Year Targets:

1. Reduce the amount of disposable cups and take-out containers to landfill/incinerator by 50%
2. Reduce the distribution of plastic and paper shopping bags by 70%

### Ten-Year Target(s):

To be determined through consultation

## YOUR TURN

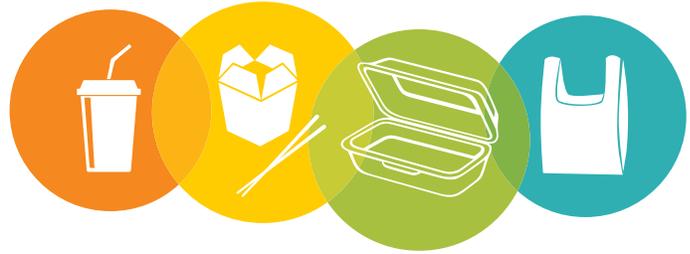
Comments and input are encouraged on all aspects of the consultation paper, particularly on the potential approaches and targets. As you read through this consultation paper, please consider the following questions:

- What action is your organization taking to reduce single-use items? What results have you achieved?
- Which approaches should be included in the strategy, and how should they be phased in?
- What opportunities do you see for collaboration with the City and other stakeholders?
- Are there any approaches you cannot support, and why?
- Are there any approaches we’ve missed?
- What approaches will make the most progress towards the targets?
- What are the barriers to adopting the potential approaches, and how can we work together to overcome them?
- What is your feedback on the proposed five-year targets and what suggestions do you have for two-year and ten-year targets?
- How can stakeholders and the City work together to share data and track performance?

Your input and ideas will be used to help develop a draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy that is expected to be presented to City Council in early 2018. **Comments will be received until Friday, December 15, 2017.**

## WHY A SINGLE-USE ITEM REDUCTION STRATEGY?

Our Greenest City Action Plan includes a zero waste target to reduce waste disposed to landfill and incinerator by 50% from 2008 levels by 2020. While significant progress has been made towards this target, more work is needed. Addressing waste from single-use items continues to be an area of focus to help deal with litter and environmental challenges. This includes:



- **Disposable beverage cups**
- **Take-out food containers<sup>1</sup>**
- **Plastic and paper shopping bags**

Our current single-use, throwaway culture has been decades in the making and has been driven by a number of factors, including: convenience, limited free time, food safety and security, and marketing and branding. Despite these factors, there is growing recognition that single-use items have a lasting impact on our environment, require a significant amount of resources for their production and create an immense amount of waste. In Vancouver alone, 2.6 million polycarbonate paper cups<sup>2</sup> and 2 million<sup>3</sup> plastic shopping bags are thrown in the garbage each week.

Disposable cups and take-out containers make up about 50% (by volume) of all items collected in public waste bins and 41% of large litter<sup>4</sup> items on Vancouver streets. Plastic bags make up 3% of shoreline litter and 2% of large street litter in Vancouver. Recycling opportunities for polystyrene foam cups and containers exist, but are limited. When littered, foam packaging can break up into small pieces that become widely dispersed by wind and water, ending up in waterways and the ocean.

### Despite their convenience, these single-use items:

- **Cost Vancouver taxpayers about \$2.5 million per year to collect from public waste bins and to clean up as litter in our parks, streets and green spaces.**
- **Are not often reused or recycled**
- **Take up valuable space in our landfill**
- **Have a lasting impact on our environment long after their short use**
- **Require a significant amount of resources from our planet**

It's time to shift our thinking about waste, prioritize options that reduce and reuse, and take action to reduce single-use. We want to work with stakeholders and residents to create a made-in-Vancouver solution that dramatically reduces single-use items, supports convenient, affordable and accessible alternatives, and could be adopted by other communities as we all work towards zero waste.

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper, "take-out food containers" includes all disposable dishware used by quick service food establishments (restaurants, cafeterias, food trucks) as well as disposable dishware by full service restaurants for take-out food. It includes all disposable containers, plates, bowls, wrappers, etc. that may be used on-site, carried away, or for delivery.

<sup>2</sup> Paper cups lined with a plastic coating on the inside for hot drinks like coffee, and also the outside for cold drinks like pop.

<sup>3</sup> 63% of these plastic bags are reused for garbage and pet waste.

<sup>4</sup> Large litter items are those that are greater than four square inches.

## CURRENT STATE OF SINGLE-USE ITEM WASTE IN VANCOUVER

Single-use, disposable items, such as hot and cold beverage cups, paper and plastic carry bags, and take-out food packaging are commonplace in our fast-paced, on-the-go society. With the launch of the Recycle BC (formerly Multi-Material BC) residential recycling program on May 19, 2014, Vancouver’s recycling program expanded to include many of these single-use disposable items. Disposable coffee cups can be recycled through the residential collection program, while plastic bags and expanded polystyrene packaging can be recycled at depots. Some retailers have also developed take-back programs for some single-use items. Nevertheless, outside of the home a significant amount of these recyclable materials are disposed as garbage or end up as litter.

### CUP WASTE

An estimated 2.6 million hot and cold paper beverage cups are disposed as garbage each week in Vancouver. The pie chart to the right represents the amount of paper cup waste from single family homes, multi-family homes, and the industrial, commercial and institutional sector.

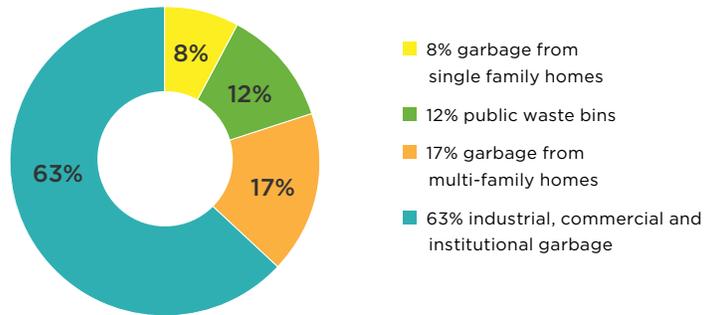


Figure 1: cup waste divided by source of disposal.

### PLASTIC BAG WASTE

It’s estimated that over 2 million plastic shopping bags are disposed in the garbage each week in Vancouver.<sup>5</sup> The pie chart to the right represents the amount of plastic bag waste from single family homes, multi-family homes, and the industrial, commercial and institutional sector.

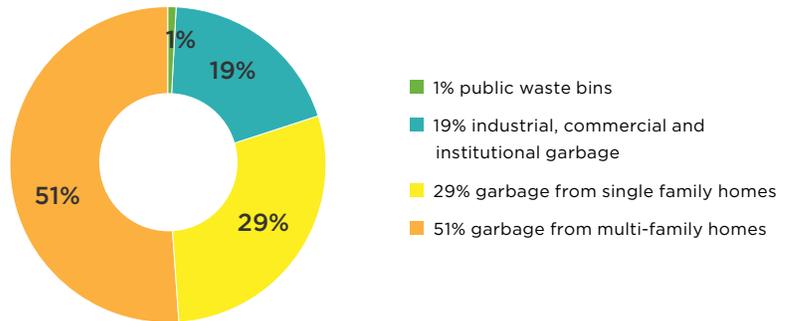


Figure 2: plastic bag waste divided by source of disposal.

### LITTER FROM SINGLE-USE ITEMS

Waste from single-use items can have a significant impact on our city and the surrounding marine environment as litter. In Vancouver, 44% of large litter is comprised of these single-use items. The pie chart to the right shows what percentage of different single-use items appear as litter on Vancouver streets.

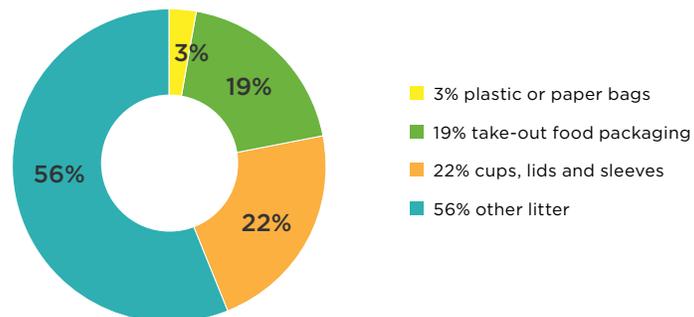


Figure 3: breakdown of litter from single-use items.

<sup>5</sup> About 63% of plastic shopping bags in garbage were reused as garbage bags.

## ABOUT THIS CONSULTATION PAPER

Any strategy to dramatically reduce plastic and paper shopping bags, disposable cups, and take-out food containers will affect almost all consumers and over 10,000 businesses and organizations in Vancouver. This includes almost every business, organization, and social service agency in Vancouver serving food or beverages in disposable foodware, and every business that gives out shopping bags. The recycling industry, and manufacturers and distributors of these products will also be affected.

Balancing convenience versus waste, and changing how single-use items are used, perceived, and managed pose significant challenges. Given the broad nature of the issues and the competing interests of stakeholders, it is critical for the City to consult on long term sustainable solutions.

This consultation paper has been designed for businesses, industry representatives, social service agencies, advocacy groups, local governments, and other government agencies that have an interest or role to play in reducing single-use items.

The aim of this consultation paper is to stimulate discussion around the issues and solutions. Your input will help to provide a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities we will all face and identify how the City can work together with stakeholders and residents to successfully reduce single-use item waste.

### OUR PROCESS

This consultation paper is part of a stakeholder consultation process that will also include stakeholder meetings in September and October. These meetings will review information contained in this consultation paper.

Alongside stakeholder consultation, the City is engaging the public through the City's citizen advisory committees, schools, Pop-Up City Hall, community events, and a Talk Vancouver survey.

City staff expect to present a draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy to Council in early 2018.

### HOW FEEDBACK WILL BE CONSIDERED

The results of the stakeholder consultation and the public engagement process will be used to formulate a draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy that is expected to be presented to Council in early 2018.

### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Your input and suggestions are important to us. Please submit your comments by **Friday, December 15, 2017** in one of the following ways:

- By Email: [singleuse.consultationpaper@vancouver.ca](mailto:singleuse.consultationpaper@vancouver.ca)
- Online comment form:  
[vancouver.fluidsurveys.com/surveys/covengage/single-use-item-reduction-consultation-paper/](http://vancouver.fluidsurveys.com/surveys/covengage/single-use-item-reduction-consultation-paper/)
- By Mail: City of Vancouver – Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy Consultation  
453 West 12th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

### CONSULTATION TIMELINE

Our process and anticipated milestones



## THE COLLECTION SYSTEM TODAY

### RESIDENTIAL

Recycling collection for Vancouver residents is provided by Recycle BC, a non-profit organization responsible for residential packaging and printed paper recycling in British Columbia. The program is funded by over 1,200 businesses, including retailers, manufacturers and restaurants.

Recycle BC provides recycling services for various types of packaging and paper including:

- Polycoat paper cups, plastic cups, take-out containers (plastic, metal, polycoated paper) and paper shopping bags in the curbside and multi-family recycling program
- Plastic shopping bags and foam cups and containers at 12 drop off locations provided by Recycle BC throughout Vancouver

### BUSINESS, INSTITUTIONAL, AND NON-PROFIT

Some businesses voluntarily provide customer-facing recycling programs in-store for cups, containers and plastic shopping bags. Many organizations also provide recycling programs for employees. The extent of these programs, and their success, particularly customer-facing programs, is not well known.

### ON-STREET RECYCLING AND LITTER COLLECTION

In August 2016, the City and Recycle BC launched an on-street recycling pilot project that includes 32 on-street locations in the West End, Second Beach in Stanley Park, and on Cambie at Broadway. In summer 2017, the City expanded on-street recycling with another 15 stations installed on Granville Street and at the Vancouver Art Gallery plaza.

The City has a robust street-cleaning and litter collection program, which includes street sweeping and flushing, abandoned waste collection, and daily emptying of approximately 3,000 litter cans. These efforts are supplemented by community clean-ups by about 23,000 Keep Vancouver Spectacular volunteers, and grants to non-profit organizations to provide micro-cleaning (manual litter collection) in high demand areas.



## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED SO FAR

In February 2016, City Council directed staff to review and report back on regulatory options for addressing the distribution, use, and recycling of commonly used single-use items, such as shopping bags, disposable cups and take-out food containers. Staff conducted an extensive review of regulatory and non-regulatory options that have been undertaken in other areas, and held some initial consultations with stakeholders, beginning with a consultation session on single-use items as part of a Zero Waste 2040 workshop consultation series in October 2016.

### KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

- No single approach will result in the changes needed; a suite of options is required.
- Strong regulatory approaches may have unintended consequences or may not move the dial.
- There is confusion among food service establishments and consumers as to what type of packaging is recyclable and/or compostable.
- Some types of compostable packaging may not be compostable in local facilities.
- Food residue can interfere with recycling of single-use cups and containers.
- Single-use plastic bag bans can greatly reduce the number of thin plastic bags used but, unless there is a fee on alternative types of bags, may drive retailers and consumers to switch to paper bags or thicker plastic bags.
- Paper bags have been shown in several life cycle studies to have higher global warming potential and non-renewable energy and water use than plastic bags.
- Deposit-refund systems can achieve high recycling rates, reduce single-use items in public litter bins, and reduce litter from streets and beaches.
- Many existing quick service food businesses may have challenges in increasing the use of reusable dishware due to space restrictions.
- Education/social marketing and communications focused on how we change our behaviour will be a key part of successfully implementing any future strategies considered.

### SINGLE-USE ITEM REDUCTION STRATEGY WORKSHOP

On October 28, 2016, the City hosted a workshop with residents, businesses, non-profit organizations and other levels of government to gather input on single-use foam food packaging, disposable cups, plastic and paper shopping bags, and take-out containers.

Six key themes emerged from the workshop:

1. Take a collaborative, systems-wide approach
2. Foster a zero waste culture
3. Transition to a strong circular economy
4. Foster innovation
5. Support infrastructure and technology
6. Develop supportive and enabling policy and regulation

These themes, along with feedback and research conducted to date, support a local call for a Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy and have informed staff in developing potential approaches to address single-use item waste in Vancouver.

To view the Single-Use Item Strategy Workshop Consultation Summary, please visit [vancouver.ca/zerowaste](http://vancouver.ca/zerowaste).

## CURRENT ACTIONS UNDERWAY

### COMMUNITY ACTIONS

There are many programs and initiatives already in place or under development here in Vancouver that focus on reducing, reusing, and recovering single-use items for recycling. Examples include:

#### Disposable cups and take-out food containers

- Residents can drop off polystyrene foam cups and containers for recycling at Recycle BC depots and participating retailers such as London Drugs.
- Several food establishments have voluntarily phased out foam cups and take-out containers.
- Some food service establishments offer reusable dishware for eating in, charge fees for disposable dishware, or offer discounts for using a reusable alternative.
- The University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University have introduced reusable take-out container options at some campus locations.
- Residents can recycle disposable cups and many types of take-out food containers through Recycle BC's curbside and multi-family residential recycling program.

#### Plastic and paper shopping bags

- Some retailers have chosen not to provide single-use bags. They provide reminder signage and verbal prompts for customers to use reusable bags or boxes.
- A number of retailers now charge for plastic and/or paper bags, and also sell reusable alternatives.
- Based on waste composition studies, about 63% of plastic shopping bags in the garbage have been reused as garbage bags. Residents also reuse plastic bags as lunch bags or general carry bags.
- Residents can recycle paper bags through Recycle BC's curbside and multi-family residential recycling program.
- Residents can line their kitchen food scraps containers with paper shopping bags for composting in the City's Green Bin program.
- Residents can drop off plastic bags at Recycle BC depots and participating retailers.

### CITY ACTIONS

The City has a number of initiatives that support our zero waste goal, including:

- Expansion of on-street recycling in 2017.
- A review of internal practices and procurement policies to lead by example at City and Parks Board operated facilities.
- A pilot in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health where restaurants and retailers can fill orders in reusable containers brought by customers, modelled after a program offered in New York City.
- A Keep Vancouver Spectacular program, which supports volunteer-led cleanups that help to clean up litter and divert recyclables from the landfill.
- Support for the Binners' Project "Coffee Cup Revolution" to demonstrate the effectiveness of deposits for coffee cups.



## CURRENT ACTIONS UNDERWAY

### CANADIAN AND INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS

Around the world, other governments and businesses are taking action to reduce the use and disposal of single-use items.

#### Disposable cups and take-out food containers

- Over 100 cities in the US — including Portland, Seattle and San Francisco — have banned the use of polystyrene foam containers by restaurants, food vendors, and in some cases grocers and other retailers.
- Reusable cup exchange programs are emerging in Germany and New York, and a company that operates in Portland and San Francisco has recently launched a container-share program called “Go-Box”.
- Several cities — such as Seattle, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Davis, and Washington, DC — require that take-out food packaging is compostable or recyclable.
- Seattle, San Francisco and Minneapolis have put requirements in place for mandatory in-store collection of recyclable and compostable disposable food containers.
- New York City revised its health code to allow customers to bring their own containers to approved quick service restaurants with operating procedures that prevent cross contamination and the spread of food-borne illnesses.

#### Plastic and paper shopping bags

- The City of Montreal has approved a single-use plastic shopping bag ban for 2018 and the City of Victoria is currently consulting stakeholders on options to reduce single-use plastic bag use.
- Plastic bag bans, and fees for the distribution of single-use shopping bags, are the two most common regulatory approaches to addressing bag use.
- Many jurisdictions — including Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Portland, Austin, Dublin, and England — have implemented plastic bag bans or fees on plastic and/or paper bags, or a combination of bag bans and fees, to limit their use.



#### Questions - Current Actions Underway

We are interested in learning more about best practices and local actions underway.

- a) What steps has your organization taken to reduce disposable beverage cups and take-out food containers made from polystyrene foam or other materials, and plastic and paper shopping bags?
- b) What results have you achieved?
- c) What inspired you to make the change?
- d) Are there any other best practices you'd like the City to know about?

## OUR TOOLS: REGULATORY AND NON-REGULATORY SUPPORT

### REGULATORY SUPPORT

Vancouver City Council has considerable legislative authority to support the reduction and increase recycling of single-use items. The Vancouver Charter authorizes City Council to regulate businesses through by-law and to establish and maintain a solid waste disposal system. This authority is sufficient to:

- Prohibit businesses from distributing single-use packaging like shopping bags, disposable cups and take-out containers.
- Require customer prompts prior to distributing single-use items (for example, businesses could be required to ask customers at the point of sale if their food and beverages are to stay or go, and only provide single-use items upon request).
- Prohibit single-use packaging from being disposed in the solid waste system.
- Vary business license fees by type of businesses and/or amount or type of single-use items generated.
- Require businesses to ensure their single-use packaging is recyclable or compostable.
- Require businesses/organizations to provide on-site recycling programs for customers.
- Require that specified single-use items (e.g. bags) be made of a specified amount of recycled content.

City Council does not currently have the clear legislative authority to require businesses to charge a fee, provide a discount, or require refundable deposits on single-use packaging. This authority lies with the provincial government. However, the City could seek this authority through a request to the provincial government for an amendment to the Vancouver Charter, or request that the Province of BC either exercise that authority on a provincial level or delegate it to regional governments.

### NON-REGULATORY SUPPORT

The City can also provide non-regulatory support in the form of:

- Education programs, for example providing templates, tips, or sharing industry best practices.
- Partnering on behavior change programs.
- Business development. The Vancouver Economic Commission (VEC) works to support innovative, creative and sustainable business development in Vancouver.
- Exploring opportunities to remove barriers to using reusable items (e.g. working with Vancouver Coastal Health to potentially allow customers to bring their own reusable containers for take-out foods).



# WHAT WE'RE CONSIDERING: EMERGING DIRECTIONS

## POTENTIAL APPROACHES AND PHASING

Recognizing there is no one-size-fits-all approach, and that the economic and social realities of Vancouver are unique, the City aims to address how single-use items are distributed and managed from all angles. Affordability and accessibility for residents, businesses and other organizations will also need to be considered. Some nuance will be required in the strategy.

Table 1 on the following page shows potential approaches the City is considering for polystyrene foam, disposable cups, take-out containers, and plastic and paper shopping bags, subject to consultation and Council approval. The various potential approaches need to be considered in the context of opportunities, barriers, and unintended consequences.

The City's preference is to prioritize approaches in alignment with the zero waste hierarchy, shown below. The Single-Use Item Strategy will focus on the avoid, reduce, and reuse portions of the hierarchy.

The City may or may not include some or all of these options in the strategy. At this time we are seeking input from stakeholders to better understand the challenges, opportunities, and potential phasing of these options. We are also hoping to hear new ideas—above and beyond the options listed in the tables on the following pages - through the course of this stakeholder consultation process.

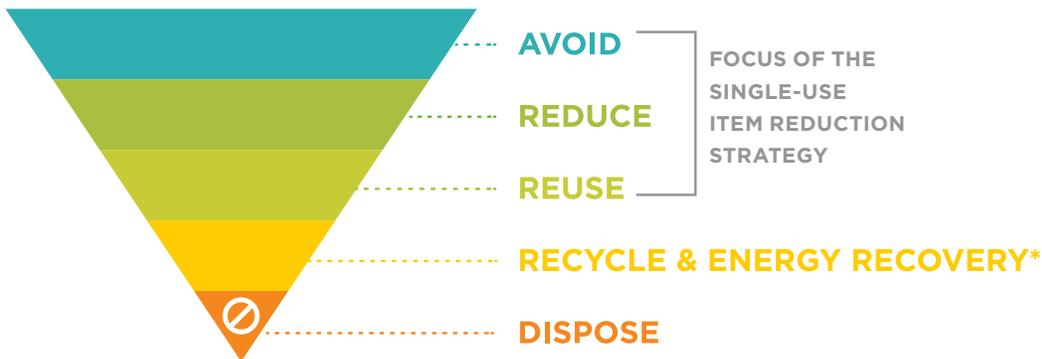


### Questions - Potential Approaches and Phasing

We are interested in receiving comments on the potential approaches outlined in Tables 1, 2 and 3.

- a) Which approaches do you think will make the most progress in reducing single-use items?
- b) Which have significant barriers?
- c) How could the City and stakeholders work together to overcome any barriers?
- d) Which approaches should be included in the strategy, and how should they be phased in?
- e) Are there any approaches you cannot support, and why?
- f) What opportunities do you see for collaboration with the City and other stakeholders?
- g) Are there any approaches we've missed?

### THE ZERO WASTE HIERARCHY



\* Recovering energy from organic materials such as food and, in the case of single-use items, compostable packaging.

**TABLE 1. DISPOSABLE CUPS - POTENTIAL APPROACHES**

	SHORT TERM (within 5 years)	LONGER TERM (5+ years)	
REDUCE/ REUSE	<p><b>Polystyrene foam restrictions.</b> Prohibit the use and sale of polystyrene foam cups at food service establishments and retailers.</p> <p><b>Fees on cups (voluntary or regulated).</b> Work with businesses to adopt voluntary fees on single-use cups, or request and provide support for the Province to regulate fees at the provincial or municipal level.</p> <p><b>Require reusable cups.</b> Consider adopting requirements for food service establishments with customer seating to provide reusable cups for in-store use as an option for their customers.</p> <p><b>Disposable cups provided only upon request (voluntary).</b> Work with businesses to voluntarily provide reusable cups and provide single-use cups only upon request.</p> <p><b>Education/behavior change programs.</b> Collaborate with partners (e.g. businesses and other governments) to provide education and social marketing programs to increase the use of reusable cups in-store and travel mugs.</p> <p><b>Cup exchange.</b> Explore opportunities to encourage the development of a city-wide cup exchange program.</p> <p><b>Proportional billing for City street-cleaning and litter collection.</b> Explore the opportunity to recover some street cleaning/litter collection costs proportional to the number of cups distributed (e.g. through business licence fees or other mechanisms).</p>	<p>Depending on results achieved in first 5 years, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Use restrictions.</b> Prohibit the use of all disposable cups at food service establishments.</li> <li>• <b>Disposable cups provided only upon request (regulated).</b> Require businesses to only provide disposable cups upon request.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Deposits.</b> Request and show support for a province-wide deposit system for cups.</p> <p><b>Extended Producer Responsibility.</b> Request and show support for a provincial regulation requiring producers to be responsible for cups disposed at industrial, commercial, and institutional locations.</p> <p><b>Recyclable/compostable cups.</b> Require any disposable cups to be recyclable/ compostable in residential (curbside and multi-family) blue box or organics recycling programs.</p> <p><b>Mandatory recycling.</b> Require organizations that distribute single-use cups to provide recycling/composting receptacles at the point of entry/exit for their customers. Support this by providing education materials with best practices.</p> <p><b>Disposal ban.</b> Work with Metro Vancouver to consider banning the disposal of polycoat cups as garbage at City and regional disposal facilities.</p> <p><b>Expand on-street recycling.</b> In consultation with Recycle BC, continue expanding public space recycling options for the public.</p> <p><b>Enhance compostability.</b> Work with organizations like NZWC<sup>6</sup> and Metro Vancouver to develop policies that support innovation in the packaging and composting industries, reduce contamination in the compostable waste stream, improve labeling, and expand opportunities to compost certified compostable packaging locally.</p>		
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<sup>6</sup>NZWC - National Zero Waste Council

**TABLE 2. TAKE-OUT CONTAINERS - POTENTIAL APPROACHES**

	SHORT TERM (within 5 years)	LONGER TERM (5+ years)
REDUCE/ REUSE	<b>Polystyrene foam restrictions.</b> Prohibit the use and sale of polystyrene foam take-out containers at food service establishments and retailers.	<b>Expand polystyrene foam restrictions.</b> Consider prohibiting the use of foam meat and produce trays.
	<b>Provide disposable take-out containers only upon request (voluntary).</b> Encourage businesses to provide reusable containers for in-store use and provide disposables only on request.	Depending on results achieved in first 5 years for non-foam take-out containers, consider:
	<b>“Bring Your Own Container” guidelines.</b> Support Vancouver Coastal Health in developing a reusable container guideline (subject to proof of concept through successful pilot(s)), which would allow organizations to accept customers’ containers for take-out food.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fees.</b> Work with businesses to adopt voluntary fees on single-use take-out containers or request and show support for regulated fees at provincial, regional or municipal level. Explore this once health guidelines allow restaurants to accept customers’ containers, and/or there is a strong network of reusables provided for in-store use.</li> </ul>
	<b>Reusable dishware.</b> Explore opportunities to increase the provision and use of reusable dishware as an option for customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reusable dishware requirement.</b> Require food service establishments with customer seating to provide reusable dishware as an option for customers.</li> </ul>
	<b>Container exchange.</b> Explore opportunities to encourage the development of a city-wide reusable container exchange program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Disposable containers provided only upon request.</b> Require businesses to only provide disposable containers on request.</li> </ul>
	<b>Education/behavior change programs.</b> Collaborate with partners (e.g. businesses and other governments) to provide education/ social marketing programs to increase use of reusable take-out containers once more alternatives are in place.	
RECYCLE/ COMPOST	<b>Proportional billing for City street-cleaning and litter collection.</b> Explore the opportunity to recover some street cleaning/litter collection costs proportional to the number of disposable containers distributed (e.g. through business licence fees or other mechanisms).	
	<b>Extended producer responsibility.</b> Request and show support for a provincial regulation requiring producers to be responsible for all take-out containers disposed at industrial, commercial and institutional locations.	<b>Disposal ban.</b> Work with Metro Vancouver to explore banning food-soiled paper from disposal as garbage at City and regional disposal facilities.
	<b>Recyclable/compostable containers.</b> Require all take-out containers to be recyclable/compostable in residential (curbside and multi-family) blue box or organics recycling programs.	
	<b>Mandatory recycling.</b> Require organizations that distribute single-use containers to provide recycling/composting receptacles at the point of entry/exit for their customers. Support by providing education materials with best practices.	
	<b>Expand on-street recycling.</b> In consultation with Recycle BC, continue expanding public space recycling options for the public.	
<b>Enhance Compostability.</b> Work with organizations like the NZWC <sup>7</sup> and Metro Vancouver to develop local government policies that support innovation in the packaging and composting industries, reduce contamination in the compostable waste stream, improve labeling, and expand opportunities to compost certified compostable packaging locally.		

<sup>7</sup>NZWC – National Zero Waste Council

**TABLE 3. PLASTIC AND PAPER BAGS - POTENTIAL APPROACHES**

	SHORT TERM (within 5 years)	LONGER TERM (5+ years)
REDUCE/ REUSE	<b>Fees at point of sale (voluntary or regulated).</b> Work with businesses to adopt voluntary fees on single-use paper and plastic shopping bags or request and show support for regulated fees at the provincial, regional, or municipal level.	Depending on results achieved in first 5 years, consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Use restrictions.</b> Prohibit the use of plastic shopping bags at retailers and food establishments.</li> <li>• <b>Target other single-use bags.</b> Consider adopting fees, education and behavior change programs aimed at reducing other single-use bags such as produce, bulk food, umbrella, and dry cleaning bags.</li> </ul>
	<b>Shopping bags provided only upon request (voluntary or regulated).</b> Work with businesses to voluntarily ask customers if they want a bag before distributing one, or consider adopting an “upon request” requirement where disposable shopping bags cannot be distributed unless a customer has first been asked if they want a bag.	
	<b>Education/behavior change programs.</b> Collaborate with partners (e.g. businesses and other governments) to provide education/ social marketing programs to increase the use of reusable shopping bags.	
RECYCLE/ COMPOST	<b>Extended producer responsibility.</b> Request and show support for a provincial regulation requiring producers to be responsible for plastic and paper shopping bag waste disposed at industrial, commercial and institutional locations.	
	<b>Mandatory recycling.</b> Require organizations to provide in-store customer-facing shopping bag recycling if they distribute single-use plastic or paper shopping bags.	
	<b>Required minimum recycled content.</b> Introduce a requirement for minimum recycled content in plastic and paper shopping bags.	

## TARGETS

An effective Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy will require targets to focus efforts, give a clear sense of where to aim, and provide benchmarks for tracking progress.

To be able to set SMART targets (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound) the City will need to work with stakeholders to share data, especially in cases where additional data is needed or access to data is currently not within the City's regulatory scope. We'd like to explore opportunities to work with stakeholders on sharing data in order to measure the success of the Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy.

Setting realistic targets should also take into consideration the maturity of existing programs, and the availability of alternatives. For example, successful programs for plastic bags have achieved high reduction rates, while disposable cups and take-out containers are much harder to address. We recognize that stakeholders have been working to reduce these items, and it would be helpful to know how much stakeholders have already reduced and what barriers need to be overcome to achieve further reduction.

Our Greenest City Action Plan (GCAP) sets an overall zero waste target of 50% less waste disposed in landfill and incinerators by 2020, based on 2008 levels. As of 2016, we have achieved a 27% decrease. In the absence of data, we propose to adopt similar targets for single-use items that tie in with our Greenest City target and achieve as much reduction as quickly as possible.

We would like to discuss potential targets directed at two years (to align with the GCAP 2020 milestone, assuming the final Strategy is adopted by Council in 2018), five years, and 10 years. For the purposes of discussion we are proposing the following as a starting point:

### Within five years of Vancouver City Council adopting a Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy:

1. Reduce the amount of disposable cups and take-out containers to landfill/incinerator by 50%
2. Reduce the distribution of plastic and paper shopping bags by 70%

For cups and containers, the proposed target is mirrored after the 50% Greenest City reduction target, which focuses on reducing waste to landfill and incinerator. Our expectation is that this will occur through a variety of activities including improved recycling, reduction, and reuse.

For shopping bags, which have a more mature recycling infrastructure and well developed reusable alternatives, the proposed target is more aggressive and focusses on reduced distribution.



#### Questions - Potential Targets:

We are interested in receiving comments on possible targets.

- a) What is your feedback on the proposed **five-year targets**:
  - Reduce the amount of disposable cups and take-out containers to landfill/incinerator by 50%
  - Reduce the distribution of plastic and paper shopping bags by 70%
- b) What suggestions do you have for possible **two-year targets** for:
  - Disposable cups and take-out containers?
  - Plastic and paper shopping bags?
- c) What suggestions do you have for possible **ten-year targets** for:
  - Disposable cups and take-out containers?
  - Plastic and paper shopping bags?
- d) What actions would be required to achieve these targets?
- e) What do you see as barriers to achieving these targets, and how can the City work with stakeholders to overcome them?
- f) How can the City work with stakeholders to coordinate data sharing and track performance?

## HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR FEEDBACK

### YOUR INPUT AND SUGGESTIONS ARE IMPORTANT TO US.

Please submit your comments by **Friday, December 15, 2017** in one of the following ways:

- By Email: [singleuse.consultationpaper@vancouver.ca](mailto:singleuse.consultationpaper@vancouver.ca)
- By online comment form:  
<http://vancouver.fluidsurveys.com/surveys/covengage/single-use-item-reduction-consultation-paper/>
- By Mail: City of Vancouver – Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy Consultation  
453 West 12th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4



### CONFIDENTIALITY

All submissions and comments received on this paper will be treated confidentially by City staff and contractors. Submissions will be compiled and summarized, without specific attribution, in a consultation summary report that will be presented to Council and posted on the City's website along with the draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy. Please note, however, that comments you provide and information that identifies you as the source of those comments may be made publicly available if an Access to Information request is made under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

If you have any questions about the collection or use of this information, please contact the Director, Access to Information and Privacy, City Clerk's Department, 3rd Floor, City Hall, 453 – West 12th Avenue, Vancouver V5Y 1V4 or by email: [privacy@vancouver.ca](mailto:privacy@vancouver.ca).

### ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION OPPORTUNITIES

#### Roundtable discussions

The City will host a series of roundtable discussions in the fall with interested stakeholders. These meetings will review the information contained in this consultation paper. If you are interested in participating in a meeting, please email the City at: [singleuse.consultationpaper@vancouver.ca](mailto:singleuse.consultationpaper@vancouver.ca)



#### Stay involved and informed

For updates on the Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy and consultation process, please send an email to: [reducesingleuse@vancouver.ca](mailto:reducesingleuse@vancouver.ca) to join our mailing list.

#### Questions?

If you have any questions or comments about this consultation paper, please email: [singleuse.consultationpaper@vancouver.ca](mailto:singleuse.consultationpaper@vancouver.ca)

Thank you for participating. We look forward to receiving your feedback.

## APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF NON-REGULATORY AND REGULATORY OPTIONS

APPROACH UNDER CONSIDERATION	DISPOSABLE CUPS	TAKE-OUT CONTAINERS	PLASTIC & PAPER BAGS
<b>NON-REGULATORY SUPPORT &amp; VOLUNTARY INITIATIVES</b>			
Voluntary fees	•	•	•
Disposables distributed only upon request (voluntary)	•	•	•
Education/Behavior change	•	•	•
Encourage use of reusable dishware	•	•	
Cup and take-out container exchange programs	•	•	
Expand on-street recycling	•	•	
Enhance compostability	•	•	
<b>REGULATORY SUPPORT</b>			
<b>City regulation</b>			
Prohibit use and sale	•	• (foam)	• (plastic)
Disposables distributed only upon request (requirement)	•	•	•
Must be recyclable/compostable in curbside and multi-family programs	•	•	
Must contain recycled content			•
Mandatory recycling/ composting receptacles	•	•	•
Require reusable dishware	•	•	
City fees proportional to distribution of items	•	•	
<b>Regional regulation (City request/support)</b>			
Ban disposal as garbage (Metro Vancouver)	•	• (food soiled paper)	
<b>Provincial regulation (City request/support)</b>			
Fees	•	•	•
Deposits	•		
Extended producer responsibility at industrial, commercial, and institutional locations	•	•	•
Health guidelines to allow reusable containers		•	

## APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY

**Circular economy:** An alternative to a traditional linear economy (make → use → dispose). The circular economy keeps resources in use for as long as possible, extracts the maximum value from them while in use, then recovers and regenerates products and materials at the end of their service life.

**Deposit-refund:** A deposit-refund system is a surcharge on a purchased product or package that is refunded when the product or package is returned.

**Extended Producer Responsibility:** A management system based on industry and consumers taking life-cycle responsibility for the products they produce and use. Referred to as “product stewardship” under the BC Recycling Regulation.

**Food-soiled paper:** Paper products and packaging that have been soiled with food. This includes but is not limited to paper napkins, plates, wrappers, take-out containers, cardboard pizza boxes, etc.

**Greenest City Action Plan:** A plan launched by the City of Vancouver in 2011 to meet environmental sustainability related targets in 10 goal areas, including achieving a target of reducing solid waste going to the landfill and incinerator by 50% by 2020 as compared to 2008 levels.

**Polycoat cups and containers:** Paper cups and containers that are coated with a polyethylene plastic lining on the inside, and sometimes the outside, which acts as a moisture barrier. Coffee cups are typically polycoat cups.

**Quick service restaurant:** A quick service restaurant, also known fast food restaurant, is a type of restaurant that typically serves fast food cuisine and has minimal table service.

**Take-out containers:** In this paper, “take-out food containers” includes all disposable dishware used by quick service food establishments (restaurants, cafeterias, food trucks) as well as disposable dishware by full service restaurants for takeout food. It includes all disposable containers, plates, bowls, wrappers, etc. that may be used on-site, carried away, or for delivery.

**Zero Waste:** As both a philosophy and a goal, aims to reduce and ultimately eliminate garbage.