

Single-Use Items Reduction Strategy

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Community Development Committee recommends that Council:

1. Approve the Single-Use Items Reduction Strategy as set out in Attachment 2 of the 2022 September 27 Operational Services report CD2022-0985;
2. Direct Administration to publicly advertise the proposed Bylaw; and
3. Direct Administration to bring the proposed Bylaw to Council for Public Hearing and three readings no later than Q1 2023.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Single-use items are designed to be used only once before being thrown away. They are often unnecessary and frequently provided for convenience (e.g. shopping bags, utensils, straws, napkins). Single-use items result in negative environmental impacts at all stages of their life cycle. The City of Calgary has developed a single-use items reduction strategy to prevent and reduce waste from single-use items regardless of material. It enables Calgarians to waste less and conserve more resources with a focus on shifting how we think about these items, eliminating the use of unnecessary items, and replacing needed items with reusable options where possible. While the Government of Canada will prohibit six categories of single-use plastics, without a focus on reduction, widespread substitution of single-use plastic items with those made from other materials will likely occur. We have used input from Calgarians to develop, shape and refine our approach. As a result, the proposed strategy builds on what residents and businesses are already doing. It is a made for Calgary solution that meets Calgarians where they are at. Reducing consumption of single-use items has environmental benefits and directly supports the 2021 Environment Strategy as well as the waste reduction Program Pathway outlined in the 2022 Calgary Climate Strategy.
- **What does this mean to Calgarians?** Calgarians can have a positive impact by refusing unnecessary single-use items, choosing reusable ones when possible, and properly disposing of the single-use items that they do use. When making purchases, Calgarians can refuse a shopping bag when it's not needed, bring a reusable shopping bag, or pay a fee for a bag. The fees charged will be retained by businesses and will help to offset costs of alternative materials. Foodware accessory items such as napkins, stir sticks, and condiment packets will still be available but only provided upon request.
- **Why does this matter?** The extraction of raw materials for single-use items uses valuable natural resources, and their production, packaging and distribution uses energy and results in greenhouse gas emissions. When littered or leaked into the natural environment, single-use items threaten the health of our wildlife, ecosystems, and water bodies. Reducing our reliance on single-use items mitigates these impacts and takes a proactive approach to climate change mitigation by reducing the amount of waste that is created in the first place. The proposed strategy encourages waste reduction practices and supports businesses by creating a level playing field and reducing their costs.
- Administration is recommending a proposed Bylaw to reduce waste from single-use shopping bags and foodware accessories. The City of Calgary Charter authorizes bylaws relating to the well-being of the environment, including waste reduction and diversion. As a complement to the bylaw, The City will encourage voluntary reduction measures for single-use cups and takeout containers.

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- The City will conduct engagement, develop support tools for businesses and citizens, undertake education and awareness campaigns, and work to mitigate unintended consequences for equity-seeking groups.
- Strategic Alignment to Council's Citizen Priorities: A healthy and green city
- Previous Council Direction is included as Attachment 1.

DISCUSSION

In 2019, Council directed Administration to develop a single-use items reduction strategy and implementation plan and explore reduction in single-use items for City hosted events where practical to do so (see Attachment 2: Appendix D for details).



In developing the strategy, Administration engaged businesses and residents, aligned with federal regulations for single-use plastics, conducted a jurisdictional scan of current and proposed approaches being developed in Alberta and nationally, consulted with other Canadian municipalities, and evaluated regulatory options using a framework that considered social, economic, and environmental considerations. Input from The City of Calgary's Advisory Committee for Accessibility, Social Wellbeing Advisory Committee, Business Advisory Committee, Business Improvement Areas, and Bylaw and Law departments helped to shape the recommended strategy.

Context

Approximately 3.5 million plastic grocery bags, 6.4 million plastic utensils, 2.4 million takeout containers and 2.4 million disposable cups are thrown away in the residential and commercial garbage streams in Calgary every week¹, with millions more discarded in public garbage bins or as litter. While the Government of Canada has published regulations that will prohibit the manufacture, import and sale of six categories of single-use plastics by the end of 2023, simply substituting single-use plastic items with those made from other materials (e.g. paper, wood, bio-plastics) will not solve the problem of how much waste is created. In fact, some substitutes may have higher environmental impacts or cause problems for City waste diversion programs.

The focus of the single-use items reduction strategy is on reducing waste from single-use items regardless of material – not simply replacing single-use plastic items with single-use items made from other materials (even if they are recyclable or compostable). Eliminating the use of unnecessary single-use items and replacing needed single-use items with reusable options is the fundamental goal.

The table below summarizes Administration's proposed bylaws.

Single-use Item	Bylaws
 Shopping Bags	Mandatory minimum fee on paper shopping bags and new reusable shopping bags
 Foodware accessories (utensils, straws, stir sticks, pre-packaged condiments and napkins)	Customer request required for single-use accessories made from any material

¹ 2019 Multi-Sector Waste Composition Study

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Further details on the proposed approach are provided in Attachment 2 – Single-Use Items Reduction Strategy along with key success measures; a jurisdictional scan; an overview of engagement; a risk assessment; and information related to single-use items reduction at City-hosted events.

The proposed Bylaw is provided as Attachment 3.

Next steps

If the strategy is approved by CDC and Council in 2022, we anticipate Bylaw [insert #] will be approved by Q1 2023 and come into force in Q1 2024. During the transition period before the bylaw comes into force, Administration will conduct additional engagement with businesses, develop support tools and resources to help both businesses and citizens, develop a communication plan, and launch education and outreach initiatives. Engagement and supports will continue as long as needed.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION (EXTERNAL)

- Public Engagement was undertaken
- Public Communication or Engagement was not required
- Public/Stakeholders were informed
- Stakeholder dialogue/relations were undertaken

Administration:

- Conducted preliminary engagement in 2018 with more than 3,400 Calgarians using the online engagement portal.
- Met with local businesses to better understand practices they had adopted to manage waste from single-use items and key challenges they face in reducing single-use items.
- Conducted an online survey with a representative sample of 1,031 adult Calgarians in 2021/2022 to gauge knowledge, behaviours, and attitudes regarding waste reduction, including specific questions on single-use items.
- In 2022, conducted engagement with several stakeholder groups including retail, restaurants, post-secondary institutions, food delivery companies, industry associations, Waste & Recycling Service's Industrial Commercial and Institutional (ICI) Working group, City Committees and other Canadian municipalities.

These inputs were used to shape and refine strategy development and provided an understanding of the types of education and support that would be beneficial for both businesses and residents. While support was strong and no significant barriers were raised, the importance of raising awareness, continued engagement, support tools, and clear and consistent messaging were highlighted.

An overview of completed and planned engagement is provided in Attachment 2: Appendix B.

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IMPLICATIONS

Social

There could be unintended consequences of minimum mandatory fees on shopping bags and/or a 'by request' approach for foodware accessories. Input from The City's Advisory Committee on Accessibility and Social Wellbeing Advisory Committee provided guidance for the strategy, and Administration will continue to consider ways to mitigate impacts of the bylaw on equity-seeking groups.

Reducing waste from single-use items makes Calgary a more attractive place to live and increases Calgary's reputation as an environmentally friendly city.

Environmental

The single-use items reduction strategy helps mitigate life cycle environmental impacts of single-use items. Producing and distributing single-use items consumes natural resources, uses energy, and leads to greenhouse gas emissions. When littered or leaked into the natural environment, single-use items threaten the health of our wildlife, ecosystems, and water bodies. Further, when organic single-use items (such as paper or wood) break down in landfills, they produce methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

Economic

The strategy benefits businesses by minimizing or reducing their costs. Businesses would retain revenues from the mandatory minimum fee on single-use and new reusable shopping bags, offsetting costs they might incur for purchasing non-plastic alternatives. A 'by request' policy for foodware accessories may also reduce costs for businesses because they will need to purchase and dispose of fewer of these items.

The strategy may contribute to opportunities for innovation and new businesses (e.g. deposit return systems for reusable takeout containers, cups, or reusable totes/containers for grocery delivery).

Service and Financial Implications

Existing operating funding - base

Up to \$200,000

Operating costs are related to awareness campaigns and support programs for businesses and citizens, as well as additional engagement if needed. This has been planned and can be managed within Waste & Recycling Services' current operating budget, drawing on existing staff and consulting budgets.

RISK

Social, reputational, compliance and environmental risks with minor impact have been identified. See Attachment 2: Appendix C for risks associated with the recommendations

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Community Development Committee
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ATTACHMENTS

1. Previous Council Direction, Background
2. Single-Use Items Reduction Strategy
3. Proposed Wording for a Bylaw to regulate Single-Use Items in the City of Calgary
4. Presentation

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Julie Radke, Director	Waste & Recycling Services	Approve
Doug Morgan, GM	Operational Services	Approve
Carolyn Bowen, Director	Climate and Environment	Inform
Maggie Burlington, Shawn Swinn	Law	Consult
Damian Cole	Bylaw	Consult