

Summary of Preliminary Stakeholder Engagement





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1. Introduction

This document contains a summary of:

- Preliminary online engagement conducted in 2018.
- Interviews with four businesses in Calgary that have already undertaken initiatives to reduce waste from single-use items.

2. Preliminary Online Engagement

Waste & Recycling Services (WRS) conducted preliminary engagement of Calgarians using the City of Calgary online engagement portal. The online engagement ran from 30 October 2018 to 13 November 2018. The survey asked respondents:

- Do you believe The City of Calgary should take action to reduce garbage from single-use items? Why or why not?
- Which single-use items do you think The City of Calgary should take action to reduce?
- Which single-use items do you use most frequently?
- Which single-use items do you think you could live without?

The results are not considered statistically representative. A detailed copy of the “What We Heard Report” is available at <https://engage.calgary.ca/single-use>.

Summary of Responses

3,431 responses were received via the online engagement portal. The majority of contributors shared that they **would** like The City of Calgary to take action to reduce waste from single-use items. The following themes emerged from contributors who want The City to take action:

- Protect people and the environment.
- Enhance climate resilience.
- Too much waste is ending up in landfills.
- The City of Calgary should be a leader in reducing waste generated by single-use items.
- Single-use items are too readily available.
- More options / material alternatives for single-use items are needed / should be available.
- Consider the needs of those individuals for whom single-use items are still needed.
- Businesses and individuals should be active participants in reducing garbage from single-use items.

A few contributors shared that they **would not** like The City of Calgary to take action to reduce waste from single-use items. The following themes emerged from contributors who would not like The City to take action regarding single-use items:

- The City of Calgary should be focusing resources elsewhere. A single-use items waste reduction strategy should not be a priority.

- A reduction strategy will not have an impact and government should not be directing people what they can and cannot use.
- There is already enough happening to reduce waste from single-use items and more work is not needed.

Items to be Considered for a Single-Use Items Waste Reduction Strategy

The survey included a list of items that could be included in a single-use items waste reduction strategy and asked respondents to identify the ones they think The City should take action to reduce. Responses are shown in Figure 1. Other suggestions were also provided and are listed in the “What We Heard Report”.

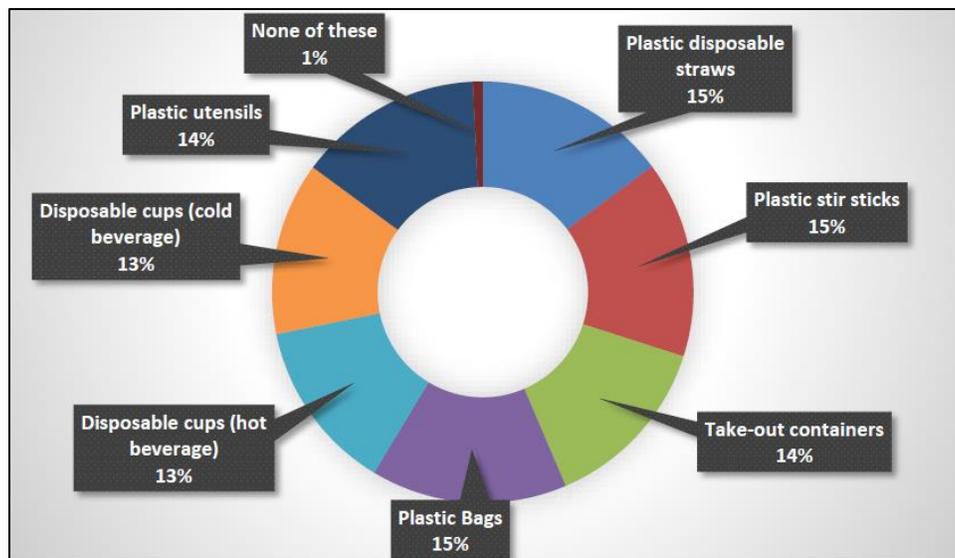


Figure 1. Online survey responses to “Which single-use items do you think The City of Calgary should take action to reduce?”

Items Used Most Frequently

Contributors also provided information on single-use items they use most frequently. Responses are shown in Figure 2. Other suggestions were also provided and are listed in the “What We Heard Report”.

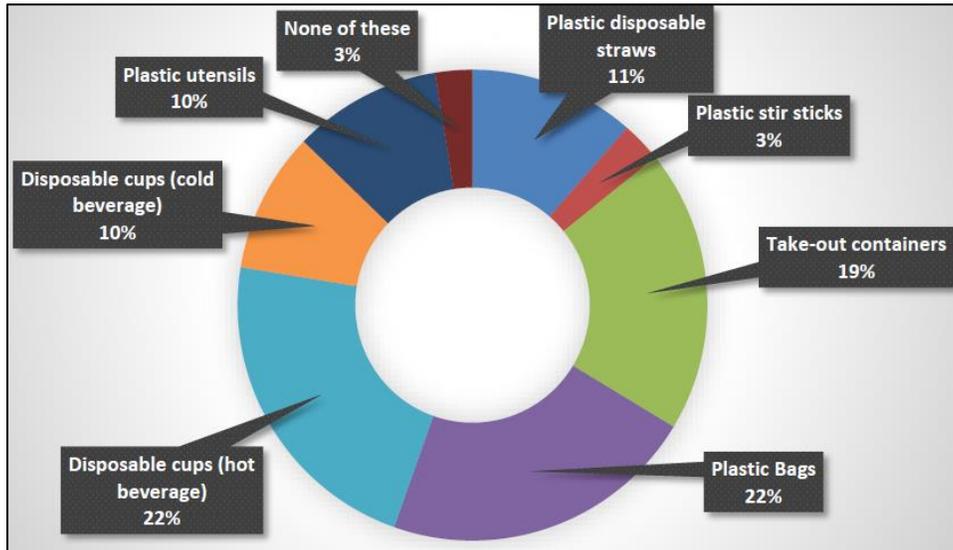


Figure 2. Online survey responses to “Which single-use items do you use most frequently?”

Items Contributors Can Live Without

Contributors also indicated which items they could live without. Responses are shown in Figure 3. Other suggestions were also provided and are listed in the “What We Heard Report”. Some respondents indicated that they could not live without any of the listed items.

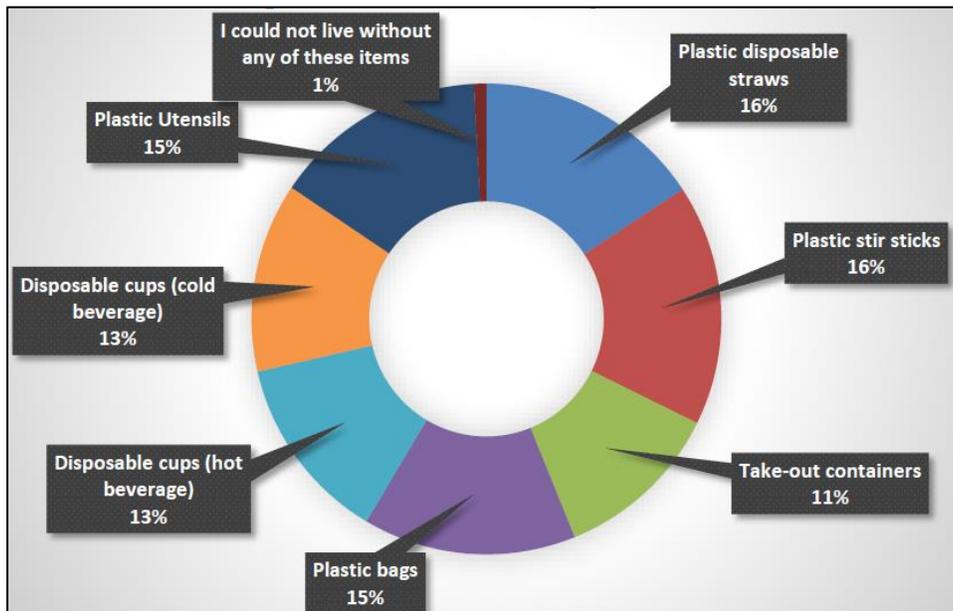


Figure 3. Online survey responses to “Which single-use items do you think you could live without?”

3. Case Studies of Calgary Businesses

Many businesses in Calgary have already taken action to reduce waste from single-use items. WRS spoke to four businesses that have strategies in place to reduce waste from single-use items to better understand practices they have adopted to manage waste from single-use items, motivations for adopting these practices, and key challenges they face in reducing single-use items.

The businesses interviewed represent some of the sectors that will be impacted by a single-use items waste reduction strategy. Businesses included in this report are:

- A & W: Canadian fast-food chain with more than 50 locations in Calgary.
- Boogie's Burgers: Calgary-based full-service restaurant with two locations in the city.
- Rosso Coffee Roasters: Calgary-based business with cafés in seven locations across the city.
- SPUD.CA and Blush Lane Organic Market: Western Canadian partnership between an online grocer with local delivery and a retail grocer with four locations in Calgary.

3.1 Waste Reduction Initiatives

A & W

A & W launched initiatives to reduce waste from single-use items in 2010. Waste reduction initiatives include:

- Using reusable mugs, plates and cutlery for dine-in customers.
- Eliminating foil items and using compostable burger packaging.
- Eliminating plastic straws in its restaurants.

Boogie's Burgers

Boogie's Burgers waste reduction initiatives include:

- Using reusable dishes, cutlery and glasses for dine-in customers.
- Providing straws and milk-shake lids to customers on-demand.
- Using compostable bags for take-out orders and compostable single-use cups.
- Providing plastic cutlery, condiment packets, and napkins to customers for take-out orders only on-demand.
- Planning to switch to compostable cutlery once it uses up its current inventory of plastics.

Rosso Coffee Roasters

Rosso Coffee Roasters waste reduction initiatives include:

- Using reusable cups and glassware for dine-in customers.
- Using compostable coffee cups, stir-sticks and salad containers.
- Using recyclable coffee lids.

- Using re-usable containers and utensils for catering orders.
- Using paper bags instead of plastic bags for purchases.
- Offering discounts to customers who bring in their own cup and who bring in previously used coffee bean jars for coffee bean purchases.
- Planning to switch to paper straws once the current inventory of plastic straws is used up.

SPUD.CA and Blush Lane Organic Market

SPUD.CA and Blush Lane Organic Market waste reduction initiatives include:

- In-store: Using paper bags instead of plastic bags for purchases. Paper bags are only provided on-demand.
- In-store: Switching to paper straws.
- In-store: Allowing customers to bring in reusable containers for bulk items.
- Grocery delivery service: Using reusable bins, freezer jackets and cold packs.
- Using compostable trays for pre-made meals.
- Introducing the “Pink Bag Takeback Program”, which allows customers to return Be Fresh (SPUD’s private label) stand up plastic pouches for recycling as these items are not currently accepted in The City’s recycling stream.

The company also plans to switch to compostable plastic bags for produce.

3.2 Key Considerations

Experiences of the businesses profiled may not be representative of others in their industry. However, there are valuable learnings that can be used to inform a potential single-use items reduction strategy.

Availability and Cost of Alternatives

Costs for compostable take-out containers and straws are similar to conventional ones. Other single-use items with compostable alternatives may cost two to five times as much because there are limited recyclable or compostable options for some of these items. This may create a barrier for some businesses. Increased demand for sustainable alternatives, however, may result in more manufacturers making such options available which could lead to lower prices. Another consideration is that not all materials labelled as recyclable or compostable can be processed at existing recycling or composting facilities in the Calgary region.

Customer Expectations and Behaviours

Not all customers are well informed about the impact of single-use items. This can reduce the acceptance of initiatives implemented by some of these businesses. For example, customers may have difficulty sorting waste properly, ask for plastic straws when they don’t need one, complain about paper straws, or complain that burgers not wrapped in foil are not warm enough. Customer education to understand the importance of reducing waste from these items and a



better understanding of waste diversion options available in Calgary will make it easier for businesses to implement waste reduction strategies from these items.

Effectiveness of Voluntary Reduction Efforts

Most businesses are cost conscious and are unlikely to make changes unless required, due to the effort and in some instances, cost associated with implementing single-use waste reduction policies. Therefore, voluntary reduction efforts are unlikely to be effective. Businesses that have implemented action to reduce waste from single-use items have either been driven by the passion of business owners or, in the case of corporate organizations, their environmental policies. By creating policies to reduce waste and requiring businesses to implement these policies, The City creates a level playing field for all businesses.

Lessons Learned from Vancouver

Vancouver has undertaken an extensive consultation process, including research and engagement, with both businesses and citizens. Businesses agree that Vancouver has done a very good job and that their strategy is sound and adaptable. Leveraging the model adopted by Vancouver may be beneficial to Calgary.