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To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
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Date: 11/26/2019 1:29:03 PM
Subject: Responses to Single Use Strategy Questions

Greetings Mayor and Council,

Please see the staff responses below regarding Councillors' questions on the Single Use Strategy –

1. In consulting on accessibility concerns, do we know why there were only 17 participants out of 40 invited?

The consultation for people with disabilities was open to anyone who wanted to participate.

- We promoted the process through non-profit organizations and members of the Persons With Disabilities Advisory Committee who forward invitations to their networks, the Connectra Abilities Expo and Job Fair, and social media (including directly reaching out to individuals active on social media). To accommodate individual needs, participants could choose to do a workshop, an in-person or telephone interview, or send written comments to a questionnaire.
- Our initial target was 40 participants, with a focus mostly through workshops, during the outreach we found that one on one interviews were preferred by the majority.
- We then adapted the process to extend the consultation process by 1 month and focus on direct contact and interviews, supplemented with 1 workshop. A total of 17 individuals/organizations responded to the outreach and participated directly in the consultation. Given the significant outreach efforts undertaken a large number of individuals and organizations were contacted. We cannot comment on why others chose not to participate.

Staff engaged with the 15 members of the Persons With Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC) throughout the process and presented the consultation findings and proposed by-law details to them in June. On Sept 19, 2019b PDAC passed a **resolution** to formally support staff's recommended plastic straw ban by-law with accessibility requirements.

Is there a list available of people/groups who were consulted?

The MODUS report appended to the Council report lists participating organizations. These include BCITS Technology for the Living, Canadian Institute for the Blind, Cerebral Palsy Association, Connectra, Disability Alliance of BC, Disability Foundation, members of the City of Vancouver Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee, GF Strong, MS Society, Spinal Cord Injury BC, The Voice of the Cerebral Palsied of Greater Vancouver, and disability advocates.

And is there a summary of the feedback and concerns raised during that session?

The Council report and MODUS report summarize findings and concerns raised during the consultation with people with disabilities:

- Many businesses have already stopped stocking plastic straws as a way to communicate environmental values, making it more difficult for people who rely on plastic straws for accessibility to access them
- Bendable plastic straws individually wrapped in paper meet the widest range of accessibility needs
- Individuals that request an accessible straw should not be required to share medical information or demonstrate why they need one
- Best practice is for businesses to post clearly visible information to let customers know that accessible straws are available by-request (e.g. on menus and websites).
- Businesses want standardized signage they can use, and educational materials they can use to train staff on the need for accessible straws and how to provide them to customers appropriately are needed.
- A communications campaign is needed to raise public awareness about the need for plastic straws for accessibility, and businesses should be provided with educational resources to help them train staff on best practices for giving out accessible straws

These findings are addressed in the recommended by-law and implementation plan.

2. Have we done a review or gathered information on best practice around ensuring accessibility concerns are addressed when straw bans are implemented? Are there examples of where this has been done well /successfully?

- To staff's knowledge, Vancouver's proposed by-law sets the highest standard for accessibility by:
 - Specifying that accessible straws must be a bendable plastic straw individually wrapped in paper, which meets the widest range of accessibility needs
 - Not allowing compostable plastic straws due to the risk of allergens
 - Requiring businesses to keep paper-wrapped bendable plastic straws in stock and provide them upon request. Without this, business owners could still choose not to offer plastic straws at all.
- Other jurisdictions that have enacted accessibility requirements for plastic straws are as follows:
 - San Francisco banned plastic straws effective July 1, 2019, and allows, but doesn't require-- businesses to give plastic straws by-request, and indicates that businesses should wait for a person to request one first
 - Portland Maine has adopted similar requirements as San Francisco, but this won't come into effect until January 1, 2021
 - Richmond City Council also approved similar requirements as San Francisco, and their by-law is currently before the Ministry of Environment for approval following a process outlined in the Community Charter
- Squamish is developing a ban on plastic straws with direction from Council to require bendable plastic straws be given out by request for accessibility, similar to Vancouver. However, they do not specify the straws to be individually wrapped in paper.

3. I am hearing concerns that the .by request option is still stigmatizing, and also that people's experience is that staff don't know where the accessible straws are, they run out, etc. Having worked at coffee shops /restaurants, these seem like valid concerns to me. Is there anything beyond what's written in the report that might reassure people who have these concerns?

- Individuals that request an accessible straw will not be required to share medical information or

demonstrate why they need one

- Raising awareness about the need for accessible straws and best practice for making accessible straws available to customers will be included in communications materials developed for stakeholders and the public

4. Do we have any numbers on the size/weight of plastic straw waste in Vancouver, relative to other plastic waste?

- Based on the latest available data, staff estimate that 26-30 million plastic straws are disposed annually in Vancouver
- This estimate does not include the number of plastic straws that are littered to the environment. E.g. plastic straws are one of the most common items found in shoreline litter.

5. Pending these answers and the discussion in Council, if I wanted to just vote against the plastic straw portion of the report (but support the rest), would I just ask to sever out A.i., to be voted on separately?

- Yes, and you would need to ask to sever and vote separately.

Best,
Sadhu

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Pronouns: he, him, his



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.