

DRAFT SINGLE-USE ITEM REDUCTION STRATEGY 2018-2025

A Priority Action in Zero Waste 2040

March 29, 2018



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every week, 2.6 million disposable cups and 2 million plastic bags are thrown in the garbage in Vancouver. Cups and take-out containers make up about 50% of all items collected in public waste bins and are a significant portion of litter on Vancouver streets. Despite their convenience, it costs Vancouver taxpayers \$2.5 million a year to collect these items from public waste bins and to clean up when they become litter. Perhaps not surprisingly, 86% of Vancouver residents see the importance of reducing single-use items.

Over the last year, the City has worked with residents and businesses to create a made-in-Vancouver strategy for reducing the use of single-use items. The results of consultation have been integrated into the development of this draft strategy. The strategy proposed includes bold actions to reduce use of disposable cups, plastic and paper bags, and take-out containers. It includes a recommendation to ban the use of expanded polystyrene foam cups and containers by food vendors.

Key priority actions proposed in the draft strategy include:

- Introduce a requirement for businesses that use disposable cups and plastic/paper shopping bags to develop reduction plans for these items, with options to:
 - Distribute no disposable cups or plastic/paper shopping bags,
 - Distribute no free disposable cups or free plastic/paper shopping bags (and inform the customer of the cost),
 - Other mechanism that ensures a level of reduction that will be proposed and finalized through consultation.
- A ban on the distribution of polystyrene foam cups and take-out containers from food vendors.
- Restrictions on automatically providing disposable straws and a requirement for food vendors to ask if customers would like a straw. Scope and phasing to be determined through consultation.
- A recommendation to investigate options for the City to recover the costs of collecting disposable cups and take-out containers in public waste bins and as litter through an appropriate mechanism from businesses that generate this waste.
- Introduce a requirement for single-use cups and containers to be recyclable or compostable.
- A future action to require businesses to recycle single-use items, contingent on development of recycling markets.

These key priority actions would be supplemented by supportive actions such as education for businesses and consumers, pilot programs, and potential additions to infrastructure and services. These additional actions would provide, enable, and grow the systems, capacity, innovation, and incentives needed to support Vancouver residents, businesses, and community organizations in reducing their use of single-use items and recycling or composting what remains.

During the consultation process the business community showed willingness and enthusiasm for participating in the implementation of programs to reduce the disposal of single-use items. A key aspect of the draft strategy is that it allows businesses to develop an approach that works for their unique business practices and facility layout while still requiring them to take action. As much as possible, the draft strategy is designed to place all businesses on a level playing field, not overly penalize small businesses, work with businesses and the community on implementation, and support the transition. It has also been designed to provide flexibility and choice for businesses in order to make the transition manageable and proposes a number of secondary actions that focus on education and outreach. The draft strategy also recommends support for moving toward greater standardisation of waste reduction policies, such as providing support for Metro Vancouver's work to develop a Regional Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy.

Table 1 – Summary of Actions by Start Date

Start Date	Action	Cross-Cutting Actions	Bags 	Foam 	Cups 	Take-out food containers 	Cutlery and straws 
2018	Evaluate opportunities to recover street cleaning costs from businesses that distribute them				●	●	
	Influence Support Metro Vancouver’s work to develop a regional SUI reduction strategy		●	●	●	●	●
	Work with the Province to pursue EPR for SUIs from all sectors ¹		●		●	●	●
	Expand streetscape recycling ²				●	●	
	Launch pilot programs (e.g. BYOC pilot with VCH)	●					
	Support Promote and amplify education and behavior change campaigns led by others	●					
	Provide educational resources for public and businesses on City website	●					
	Include content on reducing SUIs in Zero Waste school programs	●					
Provide grants to community groups to engage others on reducing SUIs	●						
2019 to 2020	Ban distribution of foam materials from food vendors			●	●	●	
	Influence Reduction plan by-law for bags and cups		●		●		
	Customer prompt by-law for straws						●
	Work with Metro Vancouver to introduce regional disposal bans ³			●	●	●	
	Develop a volunteer network of community Zero Waste ambassadors	●					
	Develop a Zero Waste recognition program for businesses	●					
	Support Explore opportunities to support programs for reusables, such as sharing schemes	●					
	Develop a platform for continued dialogue with businesses and others	●					
	Help develop standards for compostable plastics and processing facilities		●		●	●	●
	Lead by Example Develop Corporate Zero Waste Operating Plans	●					
	Introduce a Zero Waste Procurement standard	●					
	Cultivate a Corporate Zero Waste ambassadors programs	●					
	Measure Select performance metrics that reflect best available data	●					
Work to overcome data limitations related to distribution, disposal and recovery	●						
2021 to 2025	Introduce mandatory recyclability/compostability⁴				●	●	●
	Introduce mandatory in-store recycling and composting⁵				●	●	●
	Introduce mandatory recycling and composting in offices⁶		●		●	●	
	Influence Evaluate need for distribution bans on additional materials⁷		●				●
	Consider need for reduction by-law for containers					●	
	Evaluate need to pursue Charter Authority to set specific fees on SUIs		●		●	●	●
	Consider need for deposit-refund EPR for cups				●		
	Develop targets and report back to Council for adoption within three years	●					
	Measure Measure and report performance metrics every five years	●					
Review availability of any new data to use in performance metrics every five years	●						

Note: Bolded text indicates an action related to developing a City by-law

¹ For SUIs generated by the industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) sector, compostable plastics, and both recyclable and compostable straws and utensils

² Subject to quality of collected material

³ I.e. For foam cups and containers, all disposable cups, food-soiled paper, and compostable plastics

⁴ Subject to a certified compostable packaging standard, and evaluation of end market stability

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ For paper and plastic bags, and non-compostable straws and utensils, subject to performance of other reduction initiatives for these materials

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1.0 SETTING THE STAGE

Introduction

In support of the goal to become a zero waste community, the City of Vancouver has created this draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy to support a reduction of waste from:

- Plastic and paper shopping bags
- Disposable hot and cold drink cups
- Take-out food containers
- Disposable straws and utensils

This draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy was created with the input of over 5,000 people between October 2016 and February 2018. It sets out how the City of Vancouver, stakeholders, and the public can work together to implement a made-in-Vancouver solution — one that dramatically reduces single-use items, supports convenient, affordable and accessible alternatives, and could be adopted by other communities as we all work towards achieving zero waste.

An Action Plan to 2025

The draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy includes actions focussed from now until the year 2025. With growing awareness of environmental issues associated with single-use items and a groundswell of focussed activity in the business community, we expect the coming years will be a time of rapid change in business practices, consumer behaviour, and technology.

The strategy should be reviewed and refreshed in 2025 to ensure it is adjusted to accommodate the changes that occur over time.

A Priority in the upcoming Zero Waste 2040 Strategic Plan

The City is in the process of developing a plan focussed on transitioning Vancouver into a zero waste community by 2040. This draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy is recommended as one of the early priorities in the developing **Zero Waste 2040 plan**.

Why a Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy

Single-use items are not a new phenomenon and the challenges we face now have been decades in the making. Single-use item waste is generated in staggering amounts, is highly visible in the public realm, and is a significant component of street and shoreline litter.

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 recycled or composted,
- 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 to make,

In Vancouver, 86% of residents see the importance of reducing single-use items.

PLASTIC & PAPER BAGS		
	Origin:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plastic bags were introduced to grocery stores in the late 1970's.
	Now:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 million plastic bags are thrown in the garbage in Vancouver per week (63% are reused as garbage bags). Plastic bags make up 3% of shoreline litter and 2% of large litter items in Vancouver streets, parks and public spaces. Paper bags make up 1% of large street litter items. The production of paper bags can have a higher environmental impact when compared to plastic bags in Global Warming Potential, non-renewable energy and water use.
FOAM CUPS & TAKE-OUT CONTAINERS		
	Origin:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foam cups were first introduced in the 1960's.
	Now:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When littered, foam packaging breaks up into small pieces and becomes widely dispersed by wind and water. Small foam pieces made up 9% of items collected in Vancouver through shoreline cleanups in 2016.
CUPS		
	Origin:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of single-use paper cups started in 1907 with the invention of the "Health Kup", later known as a Dixie Cup.
	Now:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.6 million polycoat (plastic-lined) paper cups (e.g. coffee) are thrown in the trash in Vancouver every week, plus unknown amounts of plastic cups. 22% of large litter in Vancouver on Vancouver's streets, parks and public spaces is from cups, lids and sleeves.
TAKE-OUT CONTAINERS		
	Origin:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first disposable dishware — the paper plate — was invented in 1904.
	Now:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19% of street litter in Vancouver is take-out packaging. 50% of all material collected in public waste bins is take-out containers and disposable cups.
STRAWS & UTENSILS		
	Origin:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper straws were invented in the 1880's. Disposable plastic utensils and straws were popularized in the 1960's.
	Now:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canadians throw out approximately 57 million plastic straws a day.⁸ Plastic straws and stir sticks make up about 2% of shoreline litter in Vancouver.

Plastic Pollution

Plastic pollution in the ocean is a major global issue and there is increasing focus on how to reduce plastic pollution in the marine environment. The Province of BC, Metro Vancouver, and the City have taken a number of steps to reduce plastic pollution through programs such as the Recycle BC residential recycling program, Encorp deposit return system, City's recycling depots and disposal bans on some items. The Vancouver Aquarium is the headquarter of the global Ocean Wise® initiative, through which groundbreaking research is conducted on how plastics affect marine life — including the effects of fragments of single-use plastic items like coffee cup lids, coffee cup liners, and plastic bags.

⁸ Assuming the same usage rate in Canada as estimated for the US. <https://www.ecocycle.org/bestrawfree/>

Clearly, as a coastal city, the quality of the ocean, beaches and natural surroundings are of central importance to Vancouver, and we will continue to have a responsibility to prevent plastics from polluting the ocean through litter.

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 B.C. 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 residential recycling program.
- Plastic shopping bags and foam cups and containers at 13 drop-off locations 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 at their place of work. The extent of these programs, and their success (particularly the 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 locations in the West End, Second Beach in Stanley Park, and on Cambie Street 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. And another 18 recycling stations are being installed on Davie and Robson Streets in March/April 2018. Results are encouraging, however, contamination of the recycling stream with garbage and non-recyclables remains a concern.

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 neighbourhood cleanup volunteers, and grants to non-profit organizations to provide micro-cleaning (manual litter collection) in high demand areas.

Policy Context

In Canada there is a mix of regulatory authority over the use of single-use items and the waste stemming from them. Each level of government has a role to play in the future management of single-use item waste.

City of Vancouver

Local governments are generally responsible for delivering collection services to residents. This includes garbage collection, green bin collection, and until recently also included recycling collection which is now the responsibility of Recycle BC province wide. The City, through the Vancouver Charter, can regulate some aspects of the management of waste within Vancouver, but there are some things, such as imposing a deposit-refund system, or specifying a specific fee on products, which are outside of the City's authority.

Regional Planning

The Metro Vancouver Regional District is responsible for regional solid waste planning, managing a network of solid waste transfer and disposal facilities, and permitting and licensing recycling and compost facilities. Metro also implements disposal bans within the overall regional system. There are areas when dealing with single-use items that can benefit from regional initiatives to provide consistency in approach across the region, rather than having different approaches in different communities.

Province of British Columbia

The Province of British Columbia governs waste management throughout the province under the Environmental Management Act. The Ministry of Environment and Climate Strategy is committed to waste reduction and zero waste and oversees the provincial product stewardship programs, in particular Recycle BC's initiatives to maximize the recovery of recyclable materials across the province. There are key areas of addressing the single-use items issue that are more appropriately undertaken at the provincial level, particularly where deposit or stewardship programs are concerned.

The Ministry of Health via Vancouver Coastal Health administers the Food Premises Regulation under the Public Health Act, which includes sanitary requirements for take-out food containers. Vancouver Coastal Health develops guidelines and its environmental health officers ensure all vendors operate in compliance with their food safety and sanitation plans required by the regulation.

The Government of Canada

The Federal Government is responsible for the cross border movement of waste materials and supports the development of standards and guidelines through the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment. Recently, the Canadian Minister of Environment and Climate Change has signalled that the federal government is considering developing a national zero-plastics-waste charter and is encouraging other G7 countries to adopt ambitious goals for plastics recycling and waste reduction.

Partners

Any strategy to dramatically reduce these single-use items 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 that serves food or beverages in disposable food ware and every business that gives out shopping bags. The recycling industry and manufacturers and distributors of these products will also be affected.

Throughout the consultation process participants commented that all sectors of society have a role to play in addressing single-use items. Collective effort is needed to implement a sustainable strategy that reduces waste from single-use items, works locally, and could be adopted by other communities as we all work towards achieving zero waste. The most valuable results of consultation were the conversations about how the City of Vancouver and stakeholders can work together to tackle this problem. There was clear recognition that the City can't do it alone.

The City will need to continue to partner with the business community, academia, non-profit organizations, schools, labour unions, neighbourhood and community groups, faith groups, surrounding municipalities, other levels of government, public agencies, and the public at large to ensure the success of the Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy.

Momentum is Building

There is growing momentum to take action on single-use items among zero waste pioneers in businesses both locally and internationally, universities, advocacy groups, and multiple levels of government. Many local organizations and businesses have taken bold steps towards eliminating single-use items, including several pilot projects currently underway with the City of Vancouver.

Internationally, numerous other governments and multi-national businesses are implementing policies to drastically reduce the resources consumed and waste created by single-use items. Increasingly, there is more recognition of the need to address the societal issues associated with demand for single-use items. In particular, there is a building momentum amongst grassroots organizations and a focus on marine pollution. A summary of some of the many activities underway is provided below.

Local Community Actions

	The Soap Dispensary has a policy of asking customers if they are “ok without a bag” and for any bags used they charge a \$0.25 fee that is donated to environmental charities.
	The University of British Columbia’s (UBC) student sustainability organization, Common Energy, has partnered with two cafes on campus to launch a MugShare program. Eternal Abundance — a juice bar, quick-serve restaurant, and market — serves all drinks in reusable jars and has reusable dishes and cutlery. Clayton Bites Canteen in Surrey educates customers on sustainable options, using a loyalty program to reward customers for bringing their own reusable items. They also charge \$0.25 for single-use cups.
	Luppi Cafe only serves their food with reusable plates, cups, cutlery, and linens. They have their own reusable container exchange system for take-out and don’t offer straws. UBC and Simon Fraser University have introduced reusable take-out container options at select food service locations on their campuses.
	The Vancouver Aquarium’s Ocean Wise program launched the #BePlasticWise campaign to raise awareness around the growing crisis of plastic waste entering marine ecosystems and food chains. Boomerang Bags is a global network of local community groups (including a local Vancouver group) where volunteers get together to make re-usable bags from recycled materials.

City of Vancouver and Park Board Actions

	Expansion of on-street recycling bins in 2016 - 2018 on Granville, Davie, and Robson Streets, and in the West End. Support for the Binnars’ Project “Coffee Cup Revolution” to demonstrate the effectiveness of deposits for coffee cups.
	A pilot in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health around using reusable containers brought by customers.
	The Park Board is updating procurement practices for concession stands and will be expanding public-facing recycling in 2018.

Canadian and International Actions

	<p>The cities of Montreal and Victoria have approved single-use plastic bag bans. Many other jurisdictions — including Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Portland and Austin — have implemented single-use bag fees and/or bans to limit their use.</p> <p>Ireland’s plastic bag tax, which is now €0.22 (\$0.34 Canadian), has reduced plastic shopping bags by 96% since 2002. In the UK, a 5-pence fee (\$0.09 Canadian) has reduced plastic bag use by 83% since 2015.</p> <p>France has passed legislation requiring all plastic cups, cutlery, and plates to be compostable and made from renewable materials by 2020.</p>
	<p>Over 100 other cities in the US, including San Francisco, have banned the use of polystyrene foam cups and containers.</p> <p>McDonald’s intends to offer recycling in 100% of its restaurants by 2025 and to eliminate polystyrene foam by the end of 2018.</p>
	<p>Seattle, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Davis, and Washington DC require all food service packaging to be compostable or recyclable.</p> <p>Reusable cup exchange programs have emerged in New York City and in Germany.</p> <p>In the UK, intentions have been announced to phase-out avoidable plastics within 25 years.</p> <p>A&W locations in Canada have eliminated use of polystyrene foam packaging and serve dine-in orders of drinks in glass and ceramic mugs in their freestanding locations.</p> <p>Starbucks has announced it will start working with partners to develop fully recyclable and compostable cups through a new research grant program and intends to make the technology open-source.</p> <p>Coca-Cola is aiming to recycle the equivalent of 100% of its packaging and to use 50% recycled content in its bottles by 2030.</p>
	<p>Some food courts in Montreal and Toronto have created programs providing reusable dishes and centralized dishwashing.</p> <p>GO Box, a company dedicated to offering reusable take-out containers that are shared by several restaurants, is now operating in Portland and San Francisco.</p> <p>New York City’s health code allows customers to bring their own reusable containers to approved quick service restaurants that have operating procedures to manage the containers in a way that prevents cross-contamination.</p>
	<p>Taiwan is restricting many single-use items: beginning next year, fast food chains must cease providing single-use plastic straws, with plans to ban straws completely by 2030. Other single-use items such as shopping bags, utensils, cups, and food containers will be increasingly restricted with fees and bans leading up to 2030.</p>

Consultation and Engagement

Phase 1: Research & Zero Waste 2040 workshop on Single-Use Items

Consultation for the Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy began on October 28, 2016, when 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.

The information gathered at this initial meeting supported a local call for a Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy and informed staff in developing potential approaches to address single-use item waste in Vancouver.

To view the Phase 1 Single-Use Item Strategy Workshop Consultation Summary, please visit vancouver.ca/zerowaste.

Phase 2: In-depth stakeholder consultation & public engagement

In 2017, the City began deeper engagement with stakeholders to uncover more detailed information on the issues and potential options available to tackle single-use items. A consultation paper was released in fall 2017 to key business organizations, trade associations, and individual organizations for review and forwarding to their members. This was followed by a number of business focussed engagement sessions, public focussed sessions, an online questionnaire and feedback form, written submissions, a public open house, a Talk Vancouver survey, a telephone opinion survey, and individual comment sheets.

Over 5,000 individuals, businesses, and organizations provided input on the information provided in the consultation paper.

The consultation uncovered the following key themes that guided the development of the draft strategy:

- **Equitability** – any actions should be designed to provide a level playing field and not penalise one sector over another.
- **Flexibility** – the business community is engaged, involved and wanting to participate in solutions and they need the opportunity to adapt to their unique business and facility requirements and challenges.
- **Affordability** – Vancouver is expensive and interventions should not result in a significant economic burden to businesses and the community.
- **Integration** – there is recognition that a suite of measures will be needed, as there is no one-size fits all approach.
- **Collaboration** – businesses, institutions, non-profits, and community groups should be involved to make change as there is recognition that all sectors need to be involved.
- **Inclusivity** – actions or interventions should not create barriers based on unique issues in some areas of society such as accessibility, economic conditions or health related challenges.
- **Allow time** – so that the transition is successful and avoids unintended consequences as much as possible.
- **Support** – stakeholders will need support with the transition including educational materials
- **Harmonize** – policies should be similar across jurisdictions to avoid inter-municipal differences.
- **Align** – approaches for various items need to align with market availability, collection, and processing systems.
- **Commit to continuous improvement** – reassess in three years to see if stronger regulatory measures are needed.

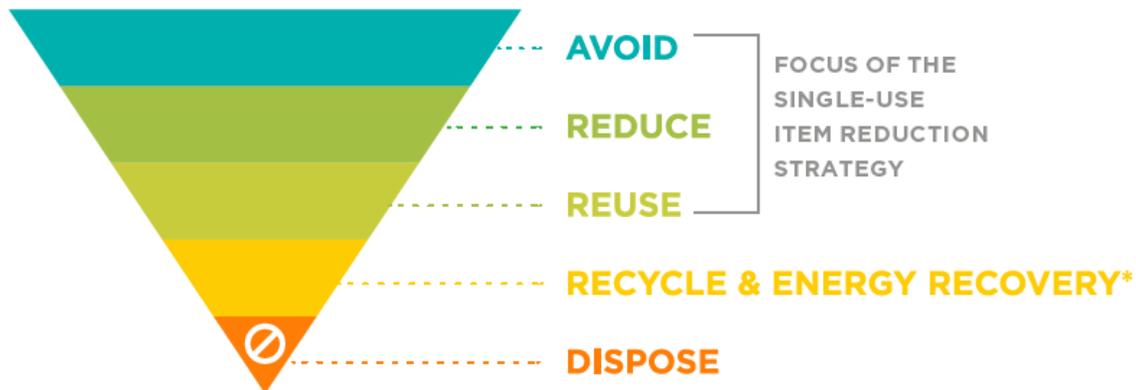
2.0 STRATEGIC APPROACH

Zero Waste Hierarchy

The draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy supports the recognized Zero Waste Hierarchy and promotes cultural changes through actions that:

- prioritize avoiding and reducing single-use items
- substitute single-use items with reusable alternatives wherever possible
- ensure single-use items are used only when necessary, and then recycled or composted
- minimize litter and garbage resulting from single-use items

THE ZERO WASTE HIERARCHY



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

The actions in this draft strategy generally fall into two categories:

- **Influencing actions:** Generally focused on City policies, programs and regulations designed to stimulate change. The types of influencing actions undertaken need to consider the City's regulatory authority, the availability of alternatives, the readiness of the industry to comply with any regulations, any unintended consequences that result in either no change or impact one sector of society to an unreasonable degree.
- **Supportive actions:** Focus on enabling others, through collaboration and engagement, education and communication working with other levels of government, facilitating dialogue and leading by example.

Influencing Actions

Enabling Regulations

During the second phase of consultation, the majority of stakeholders indicated a willingness to work towards waste reduction, and acknowledged the need for enabling regulation to spur this change and create a level playing field. In all cases, stakeholders felt that rather than restrictive requirements that become difficult to apply equally across the board, a regulatory structure that required them to reduce materials while allowing them the flexibility to choose a path that best suits their organizations was the most innovative and welcomed approach.

The City has used this approach successfully with green bin organic diversion from businesses and multi-residential buildings by requiring them to have a plan to divert organics, but allowing the flexibility to adapt the plan for their unique locations.

Distribution Bans

A distribution ban prohibits businesses from selling or providing a product to customers. Some jurisdictions have implemented distribution bans for single-use items such as single-use (thin) plastic bags. Bag bans can be used to show the willingness of government to take a strong hand in driving change, but can have unintended consequences such as driving retailers to switch to thicker plastic shopping bags. In the case of bags, the imposition of a fee has an immediate and significant effect on the number of bags disposed. Immediate reduction levels of 60-80% can be achieved through a fee accompanied by a customer. For materials where more appropriate alternatives exist a distribution ban may be an appropriate intervention.

Customer Prompts

Single-use items are often distributed by businesses as the default option, which puts responsibility on the customer to advise when they do not want these items to be given to them. Using customer prompts helps to reset the default behaviour to avoidance of single-use items, particularly when there is an accompanying fee. When asked, 71% of Vancouver residents believe they would reduce their use of single-use items if they were asked if they wanted them when making a purchase, instead of automatically receiving them.

Infrastructure and Programs

With changes in the provincial recycling regulations and the responsibility for recycling programs resting with Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program stewards, there will be less need for the City to take on the role of developing the infrastructure to support recycling.

Vancouver has the opportunity to be a world-leading innovation hub for business models based on reusable alternatives that allow for convenience without waste. The City could facilitate connections between organizations, develop and scale business models that promote greater circularity of materials, and launch pilots to increase access to reusable options for residents and visitors. Undertakings that fall outside of existing recycling initiatives such as a Bring Your Own Container Pilot to take-out food from select restaurants, which is underway with Vancouver Coastal Health, pilots for citywide sharing networks for travel mugs, take-out containers, and shopping bags and options for expanding recycling in the public realm are areas of potential future focus.

Business Recycling and Compost collection

The City could require businesses that distribute single-use items as part of their service and have these items disposed on site to provide an in-store program for recovering these materials for recycling or composting. Many retail businesses have already implemented programs for dropping off materials, particularly shopping bags, at their business locations, and some quick-serve food establishments have customer facing recycling for cups and containers. This type of action relies on availability of markets for the materials collected, communications efforts and working with waste collection companies to promote program development. A more effective approach would be for the Provincial Government to include commercial establishments in the Provincial EPR program for printed paper and packaging, which currently only covers residential properties.

Office Recycling and Compost Collection

Many disposable cups and take-out containers are disposed in either a public litter container or at the workplace. The City could require that offices and commercial buildings add single-use items to their existing in-house recycling programs. This type of action relies on availability of markets for the materials collected, communications efforts and working with waste collection companies to promote program development. A more effective approach would be for the provincial government to include commercial establishments in the Provincial EPR program for printed paper and packaging, which currently only covers residential properties.

Recovering Litter Collection Costs

Currently, it costs the City of Vancouver approximately \$2.5 million per year to collect single-use items from public waste bins and clean up these materials as litter from streets, parks and public spaces. The City could develop a program to recover collection costs for single-use items from businesses that distribute these items.

Linking to the Regional Initiatives

In addition to efforts by the City, reducing single-use items such as coffee cups and grocery bags is an important opportunity to help achieve the waste reduction goals of Metro Vancouver's *Integrated Solid Waste and Resource Management Plan*.

There are initiatives that make more sense when considered on a regional level. Fees, bans on distribution or disposal, or initiatives targeting specific products will be more equitable and sustainable when implemented region-wide rather than city by city. In October 2017, Metro Vancouver's Board of Directors⁹ reviewed the City of Vancouver's consultation paper on possible actions to reduce single-use items and directed its staff to identify and develop actions that would be best done across the regional district for reasons of efficiency, consistency, and municipal equity among the residents, retailers, and restaurants throughout the region.

City staff are participating in Metro's process and Metro Vancouver staff anticipate reporting back to their Board on a regional strategy for consideration in late 2018 or early 2019.

Seeking Provincial Support

Areas under provincial control include the implementation and expansion of EPR programs, including those which involve deposit-refund systems.

Vancouver is fortunate to be in a province with EPR as a guiding policy. British Columbia is recognized as the leading jurisdiction in North America in EPR.

The current EPR regulations for printed paper and packaging focus on residential sources of materials and don't include commercial facilities. Recognizing that the majority of single-use items are disposed in the workplace expanding the EPR program for printed paper and packaging to include commercial establishments could go a long way to recovering materials that currently end up in the waste stream and eventually leading to longer term changes. While the regulation does not distinguish between recyclable or compostable packaging, the current EPR program focuses on recyclable packaging.

⁹ Formally referred to as the Greater Vancouver Sewerage and Drainage District Board of Directors

There is also an opportunity to ensure EPR is in place for compostable packaging to require compostable packaging producers to bear end-of-life responsibility for their packaging, and stimulate investment and innovation in compost systems that can process their packaging. (Similar to how the Recycle BC program stimulated investment and innovation in local packaging collection and processing, and supported local end-markets.

Further, deposit-refund systems, another form of EPR, have been shown to significantly reduce litter and achieve high recovery rates (in B.C., the Brewers program achieves over 90%). Authority to implement a deposit return system for the products identified in this draft strategy rests with the Province and would likely require a change to the B.C. Recycling Regulation.

Supportive Actions

Education and Outreach

Throughout the consultation process it became obvious that there is a gap in information both in the public and the private sector that needs to be addressed. In order to make sustainable changes, ongoing communication and education focussed on behaviour changes will be needed. Fundamental issues such as the recyclability or compostability of cups and containers are not well understood and individuals need a better understanding of how their actions can contribute to solutions.

Standardizing Recyclable or Compostable Single-Use Items

There are no consistent established standards for what constitutes a recyclable or compostable cup or take-out container. Some businesses have done significant research and selected what they believe is a compostable product only to find that it is not actually being composted within local facilities. Items can be called compostable, recyclable, or biodegradable without any standards to measure the claims against. Organizations such as the Biodegradable Products Institute outline the process and requirements for certification as a compostable product, however there are no specific requirements that products identified as compostable need to be certified. There is a role for the City to play in providing information to residents and businesses around the types of products that fit within existing programs as well as working with other levels of government to develop suitable province-wide standards.

Convene Dialogues

Overcoming the challenges and realizing the opportunities facing Vancouver in the pursuit of zero waste requires dialogue and collaboration with industry, residents, academia, community organizations, and all levels of government.

The City can play an instrumental role in convening, facilitating, and participating in collaborations aimed at tackling key zero waste challenges in Vancouver, while also contributing to the dialogue about zero waste beyond Vancouver. Opportunities also exist for the City to provide support and recognition for businesses, institutions, social enterprises, and non-profits that are taking action and showing leadership in the reduction and recycling/composting of single-use items.

3.0 PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR SINGLE-USE ITEMS

Considering the current status of programs focussed on single-use items and the potential City roles in influencing and/or supporting change, the following priority actions have been identified.

Plastic & Paper Bags



Current situation

90% of Vancouver residents surveyed indicated that they already use reusable bags at least some of the time in order to curb their use of single-use items. In Vancouver, 63% of all single-use bags found in the garbage are already being used for garbage or dog waste. Many grocery stores and some drug stores charge fees on plastic and paper bags or offer discounts for using reusable ones and others are considering it. Some stores have even stopped offering bags altogether and some have programs in place to accept drop off of bags and other items for recycling. Recycle BC in association with the Retail Council of Canada has developed a best practices guide for reducing and recovering plastic bags from retailers.

There is significant positive activity towards reducing and eventually eliminating single-use bags and the industry continues to show forward progress. During the consultation, stakeholders and residents showed less support for plastic bag bans than fees, and only 59% of Vancouver residents support a plastic bag ban compared to 73% that support for fees. In addition, the positive activity is focused on all types of bags rather than just plastic bags as focusing on plastic bags only can shift the problem to paper bags which have significantly more environmental impacts during production.

Proposed City Actions

The City does not need to take a strong regulatory approach such as banning plastic or paper bags. Rather, based on current action within the industry and the strong commitment indicated by the business community in working towards a solution, the City will begin by introducing by-law amendments to require businesses to have a reduction plan for plastic and paper bags. The by-law amendment will require plans that are capable of dramatically reducing plastic and paper bags to levels achieved through best practices around the world, and will give businesses the flexibility to choose an approach (such as charging fees for bags, distributing no disposable bags, or another option that achieves significant reduction) that is best suited to their operations.

Rationale

The proposed approach applies equally to all businesses using bags, which provides a level of equity. Communities that have implemented plastic bag bans have had challenges maintaining them. Bag bans have resulted in legal challenges, conflict between different levels of government (primarily in the US), lack of uniformity between municipal by-laws, unintended consequences and can result in a lack of overall reduction in plastic disposed as residents move to other types of plastic bags, which are often thicker, for use as garbage bags. The dialogue around bag bans tends to focus on the ban rather than what can be achieved. Communities that have supported a fee based program with customer prompts have seen immediate and significant results. For example, the government of England reports that its nation-wide 5-pence fee has reduced plastic bag use by over 80% since 2015. Ireland's €0.25 plastic bag tax has reduced plastic bag use by almost 95%.

Follow on work

Additional support will include education around alternatives, behavior change focused communication programs, dialogues with industry, and contributing to standardization of reusable, recyclable and compostable bags. It also includes exploring opportunities to support new business models and infrastructure for reusable bag sharing networks, like the “boomerang bag” concept emerging in Australia for times when people forget to bring their own bag.

The City will need to monitor progress and if reduction is not achieved additional action could be required. The City could:

- Proceed with a full disposable bag ban,
- Request that the Province amend the Vancouver Charter so that City of Vancouver has the authority to require businesses to charge a set fee on plastic and paper bags.

Given that B.C. already has legislation that includes plastic and paper bags generated by residents as part of the Provincial EPR program for printed paper and packaging, the City will engage the Province and producers in a dialogue to expand coverage to include more collection opportunities and addressing bags from work places.

INFLUENCING ACTIONS

City Authority

START		
2019 to 2020	B.1	Reduction Plans
	B.1.1	Introduce a flexible by-law requiring businesses to have reduction plans for plastic and paper shopping bags.
2021 to 2025	B.2	Recycling and Compost Collection in Offices
	B.2.1	Require office buildings to provide collection of plastic bags (once guidelines for acceptable materials have been established and recycling and composting end markets have stabilized).
	B.3	Distribution Bans
	B.3.1	Evaluate need for the City to introduce a distribution ban on plastic and paper bags, depending on reduction achieved and amounts in garbage and litter.

Regional Authority

START		
2018	B.4	Regional Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy
	B.4.1	Support Metro Vancouver’s work to develop a Regional Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy, including actions for plastic and paper bags.

Provincial Authority

START		
2018	B.5	Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)
	B.5.1	Engage producers and the B.C. Ministry of Environment and Climate Strategy in a dialogue to require EPR for compostable plastic bags, and all bags generated on industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) property.

2021 to 2025	B.6	Vancouver Charter Authority to Require Specified Fees
	B.6.1	Depending on results achieved within three years of implementation of this strategy, evaluate the need to submit a request to the Province for authority under the Vancouver Charter for the City to require set fees to be charged on plastic and paper bags.

Foam Cups & Take-out Containers



Current Situation

Expanded Polystyrene foam cups and take-out containers are technically recyclable — but to do so, they must be clean. This means they can’t be contaminated with leftover food or mixed with other materials like paper, plastics, glass, or grit.

The need to keep foam clean means it must first be cleaned and then collected separately. The issue with separate collection is that foam plastic is so light and bulky that it’s too expensive to collect as a separate stream in household recycling programs. This means the only option for recycling foam cups and containers in Vancouver is for residents to drop them off at depots or stores. However, only 6% of Vancouver residents say they will take foam containers to a recycling depot. Clearly this creates a significant challenge in recovering this material for beneficial use.

Proposed City Actions

The City is proposing to ban the distribution of expanded polystyrene foam cups and containers.

Rationale

Without a viable program for recovering and recycling expanded polystyrene cups and take-out containers or the willingness of residents to clean it and deliver it to depots for recycling there are few alternatives available.

Seventy-three per cent (73%) of Vancouver residents agree with banning foam cups and containers. Eighty-two per cent (82%) would be willing to pay more for recyclable take-out containers if a ban on foam containers were to take place.

Follow on Work

The City will consult on implementation details like how much time is needed to phase in the ban, and what, if any, exemptions may apply where polystyrene is needed (e.g. in health care). The City will support businesses, institutions, and non-profits with this transition by providing in-depth education and outreach programs described in Section 2 and in the Supportive Actions table in Section 3.

Should the industry come forward with a viable program for recovery and recycling of the material in the future, alternatives could be considered.

INFLUENCING ACTIONS

City Authority

START		
2018	F.1	Distribution Ban
	F.1.1	Introduce by-law amendments to ban polystyrene foam cups and take-out containers.

Regional Authority

START		
2018	F.2	Regional Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy
	F.2.1	Support Metro Vancouver’s work to develop a Regional Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy, including actions to address foam cups and containers.
2019 to 2020	F.3	Regional Disposal Ban
	F.3.1	Work with Metro Vancouver to expand regional disposal bans to foam cups and take-out containers.

Disposable Cups



Current situation

Cups and take-out food containers make up 50% of waste in public litter bins and in street litter. It costs the City approximately \$2.5 million a year to clean up these items as litter from bins, Vancouver’s streets, parks and public spaces.

Currently, 60% of Vancouver residents already use reusable cups or travel mugs as a step to reduce their use of single-use items. Many food service vendors already offer a discount for reusable travel mugs and some charge a fee for disposables. However, many coffee shops and fast food vendors still default to serving beverages in disposable cups even when they’re consumed on-site.

Paper and plastic cups can be recycled through the residential and on-street recycling programs operated by Recycle BC in Vancouver. The material collected is currently sent to special recycling facilities in South Korea. Unfortunately, recycling is not a perfect solution for paper cups. The paper is lined with a plastic coating to protect it from the liquids. The plastic must be separated from the paper portion of these “polycoat” cups in order for them to be recyclable. Coloured coffee cups can be challenging to recycle because the inks have to be removed through a special process at deinking plants. Additionally, recyclable cups can be contaminated by food or napkins stuffed inside, making them unsuitable for recycling.

Some businesses are moving to compostable plastic (PLA) cups, but these can contaminate other plastic items when collected mixed in the same container, and may not fully break down in local compost facilities. Similarly, compost can become contaminated when non-compostable plastic or paper cups are thrown in the compost stream.

Cups aren’t accepted in many business recycling programs because the companies that collect them don’t have access to stable recycling markets.

Proposed City Actions

Any program to reduce the number of single-use beverage cups needs to focus on long term changes, as there is no immediate action that can be taken to realistically eliminate the use of single-use cups. The City is therefore recommending a by-law requirement focussed on businesses having a program in place to reduce the number of single-use cups. The by-law amendment would require plans that are capable of significantly reducing the use of disposable cups, and will give businesses the flexibility to choose an approach (such as charging fees for cups, distributing no disposable cups, or another option that achieves significant reduction) that is best suited to their operations.

The City will also investigate opportunities to recover costs for collecting cups and take-out containers from public waste bins and litter through an appropriate financial mechanism.

Rationale

Businesses and the business community in general are supportive of taking action to reduce the overall number of cups disposed and to expand opportunities for recovery, but they are challenged with the reality of changing a situation that has developed over many decades. The take-out drink is ubiquitous in western society and is driven by our fast paced grab-and-go lifestyle. It will be important to work with industry to develop sustainable initiatives for cup reduction.

That said, there are many business practices which can reduce the number of disposable cups being used, such as providing reusable cups for in-store use, loyalty programs for using reusable cups, and fees on disposables. The by-law requirement for a reduction plan would drive overall reduction, while still providing flexibility for businesses to develop a reduction plan that works for them.

Follow on Work

The City will need to continue focussing on making reusable cups the norm—both for beverages consumed on-site and on-the-go—so that single-use cups are used only when necessary. Opportunities will exist for the City to enable the development of infrastructure that would support this, such as a city-wide mug share program providing a network of locations where sanitized travel mugs could be shared. Based on early pilot program at UBC, centralized dishwashing services (similar to linen washing services) could be helpful in this regard.

When single-use cups do need to be used, we need to ensure they're recyclable or compostable, with convenient collection provided on-site, and recycled or composted in local systems. This will require participating in dialogues with industry, certification bodies, and regulators to standardize cup designs and recycling and composting systems, and reduce confusion between recyclable and compostable cups.

The City will also engage the Province and producers in a dialogue on expanding EPR to all cups, including compostable cups, and cups generated on industrial, commercial and institutional property, so that industry is responsible for costs and stimulates investment in end-markets that are compatible with their packaging design.

The City will need to monitor progress and depending on results, determine if stronger regulatory interventions are needed. If so, the City could request amendments to the Vancouver Charter to require vendors to charge specified fees on cups. If recycling rates are low and the amount of cups in litter is still high, the City may engage stakeholders in a dialogue around requiring a deposit-refund system for single-use cups like other beverage containers.

INFLUENCING ACTIONS

City Authority

START		
2018	C.1	Recover Litter Collection Costs
	C.1.1	Investigate options for the City to recover the costs of collecting disposable cups in public waste bins and as litter through an appropriate mechanism from businesses that generate this waste.
2019 to 2020	C.2	Reduction Plans
	C.2.1	Introduce a flexible by-law requiring reduction plans for single-use cups.
2021 to 2025	C.3	Recyclable or Compostable Single-Use Items
	C.3.1	Evaluate need for by-law amendments to require single-use cups to be recyclable or compostable, with clear guidelines for acceptable materials that can be processed in local recycling and composting facilities.
	C.4	In-Store Recycling and Compost Collection
	C.4.1	Require in-store collection of recyclable and compostable cups (once guidelines for acceptable materials have been established and recycling and composting end markets have stabilized).
	C.5	Recycling and Compost Collection in Offices
C.5.1	Require office buildings to provide collection of recyclable and compostable cups (once guidelines for acceptable materials have been established and recycling and composting end markets have stabilized).	

Regional Authority

START		
2018	C.6	Regional Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy
	C.6.1	Support Metro Vancouver's work to develop a Regional Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy, including actions for disposable cups.
2019 to 2020	C.7	Regional Disposal Ban
	C.7.1	Work with Metro Vancouver to expand regional disposal bans to all disposable cups.

Provincial Authority

START		
2018	C.8	Extended Producer Responsibility
	C.8.1	Engage producers and the B.C. Ministry of Environment and Climate Strategy in a dialogue to require EPR for compostable cups, and all cups generated on industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) property.
2021 to 2025	C.9	Vancouver Charter Authority to Require Specified Fees
	C.9.1	Evaluate the need to submit a request to the Province of British Columbia for authority under the Vancouver Charter for the City to require organizations to charge set fees on disposable cups.
	C.10	Deposit-Refund
C.10.1	Depending on results evaluate need to advocate for cup deposit-refund program.	

Take-out Containers



Current Situation

Reduction and reuse alternatives for take-out containers are not well developed. Quick-serve and take-out restaurants generally serve meals in disposable containers, even for meals consumed on-site. Smaller storefronts and a focus on take-out packaging mean that many of these restaurants don't have space for commercial dishwashers or storage for dishes. Health codes currently prevent restaurants from filling take-out orders in containers brought in by customers, unless they sanitize them in their commercial dishwashers first. These barriers will take time to overcome. Independent of the challenges, our consultation results show:

- 91% of Vancouver residents support on-site recycling in restaurants and offices,
- 84% feel that quick-serve restaurants or cafes should provide reusable dishware for eating in,
- 62% say they would be likely to bring their own take-out container for food if they were allowed to do so.

Proposed City Actions

Step one of the draft strategy around take-out containers focusses on work to standardize take-out containers so that they can be recyclable and/or compostable in local systems. This level of standardization is beyond Vancouver's authority and control, and will require engagement and dialogue with packaging producers, Metro Vancouver (through their Regional Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy), and the Province to expand EPR to ICI and compostable packaging.

Once packaging is aligned with recycling and compost systems, the City can introduce by-law amendments to require that packaging is recyclable or compostable through local systems and require restaurants and office buildings to have on-site programs to recover take-out containers.

Follow on Work

The City will also start to lay the groundwork for re-useable containers. Action is already underway with Vancouver Coastal Health to pilot a Bring Your Own Container program that would allow approved restaurants to fill take-out orders in containers brought in by customers in a safe and sanitary manner, modelled after New York City's health code. Container exchange networks like Portland's GO Box and reusable take-out containers offered by local universities are also promising, and the City will explore how to support the development of this infrastructure. The City will also explore how to support the use of more reusable dishes for eating in.

Once policies, infrastructure, and practices are in place to support reuse, the City and its partners can consider introducing a reduction plan by-law for take-out containers. By 2025, the City will determine if stronger regulatory measures are needed, like submitting a request to the Province to amend the Vancouver Charter to give the City the authority to require businesses to charge specified fees on take-out containers in order to reduce their use.

INFLUENCING ACTIONS

City Authority

START

2018	T.1	Recover Litter Collection Costs
	T.1.1	Investigate options for the City to recover the costs of collecting take-out containers in public waste bins and as litter through an appropriate mechanism from businesses that generate this waste.
2021 to 2025	T.2	Recyclable or Compostable Single-Use Items
	T.2.1	Evaluate need for by-law amendments to require take-out containers to be recyclable or compostable, with clear guidelines for acceptable materials that can be processed in local recycling and composting facilities.
	T.3	In-Store Recycling and Compost Collection
	T.3.1	Require in-store collection of recyclable and compostable take-out containers (once guidelines for acceptable materials have been established and recycling and composting end markets have stabilized).
	T.4	Recycling and Compost Collection in Offices
	T.4.1	Require office buildings to provide collection of recyclable and compostable take-out containers (once guidelines for acceptable materials have been established and recycling and composting end markets have stabilized).
	T.5	Reduction Plans
	T.5.1	Evaluate need for flexible by-law requiring reduction plans for take-out containers once sufficient reusable alternatives and infrastructure have been established.

Regional Authority

START

2018	T.6	Regional Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy
	T.6.1	Support Metro Vancouver's work to develop a Regional Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy, including actions for take-out containers.
2019 to 2020	T.7	Regional Disposal Ban
	T.7.1	Work with Metro Vancouver to expand regional disposal bans to single-use items that aren't already covered, including foam, polycoat paper, and compostable take-out containers, and food-soiled paper (once stable recycling and compost end-markets are in place).

Provincial Authority

START

2018	T.8	Extended Producer Responsibility
	T.8.1	Engage producers and the B.C. Ministry of Environment and Climate Strategy in a dialogue about requiring EPR for compostable take-out containers and all take-out containers generated on ICI property.
2021 to 2025	T.9	Vancouver Charter authority to require specified fees
	T.9.1	Depending on results evaluate the need to submit a request to the Province for authority under the Vancouver Charter for the City to require organizations to charge set fees on take-out containers.

Straws & Utensils



Current Situation

Straws and utensils have been included in this draft strategy at the suggestion of stakeholders and residents during the second phase of public consultation, during which the City received a petition from over 110 businesses asking the City to take action to reduce plastic straws.

Plastic straws and utensils are not readily recycled because they fall through screens on recycling sorting lines that are designed to remove contaminants. They can also contaminate compost if they're thrown away with food. Compostable plastic straws and utensils may not be readily composted in local systems. When they become litter, straws and utensils can be ingested and harm turtles, birds and other sea life.

These environmental concerns must be balanced with health care needs. Durable straws are an important accessibility tool for some persons with disabilities and in oral health care and paper straws may not meet these needs. For this reason, the proposed strategy for straws takes a phased approach rather than beginning with a ban.

Proposed City Actions

To encourage reduction, the City will start by introducing a by-law amendment to require food vendors to ask if customers would like a straw (85% of Vancouver residents say they would support prompts for single-use items). This requirement recognizes the challenges with accessibility if straws are fully restricted. The requirement may be phased in by type of establishment over time to ensure that those that could be most affected are taken into account. Consultation would be conducted on the phasing and types of food vendors that this by-law requirement would apply to.

Follow on Work

There may be opportunities in the future to recycle or compost straws but work is required to standardize materials and create systems to support recovery. EPR programs for straws and utensils could be a partial solution and the City will work with the Province on the possibility of having them added to existing programs. The long term focus will be on eliminating plastic straws and utensils and replacing them with a more robust option that addresses accessibility needs and can be composted.

Charging a fee for straws could also be a future option. If required in the future the City can submit a request to the Province asking for an amendment to the Vancouver Charter to give the City the authority to require food vendors to charge set specified fees on straws and utensils in order to further reduce their use.

INFLUENCING ACTIONS

City Authority

START		
2019 to 2020	S.1	Customer Prompts for Straws
	S.1.1	Introduce by-law amendments to require food vendors to ask if customers would like a straw, potentially phased in by type of establishment (scope and phasing to be determined through consultation).
2021 to 2025	S.2	Recyclable or Compostable Single-Use Items
	S.2.1	Evaluate need for by-law amendments to require single-use straws and utensils to be recyclable or compostable, with clear guidelines for acceptable materials that can be processed in local recycling and composting facilities.
	S.3	In-Store Recycling and Compost Collection
	S.3.1	Require in-store collection of recyclable and compostable straws and utensils where distributed (once guidelines for acceptable materials have been established, and recycling and composting end markets are established).
	S.4	Distribution Bans
S.4.1	Evaluate need for the City to introduce a distribution ban on non-compostable straws and utensils, subject to development of standards and policy for compostable materials, processing facilities, and compost quality.	

Regional Authority

START		
2018	S.5	Regional Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy
	S.5.1	Support Metro Vancouver's work to develop a Regional Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy, including actions for straws and utensils.

Provincial Authority

START		
2018	S.6	Extended Producer Responsibility
	S.6.1	Engage producers and the B.C. Ministry of Environment and Climate Strategy in a dialogue about requiring EPR for straws and utensils, both recyclable and compostable, from all types of properties (residential, ICI, streets, parks and public spaces).
2021 to 2025	S.7	Vancouver Charter authority to require specified fees
	S.7.1	Depending on results, evaluate the need to submit a request to the Province for authority under the Vancouver Charter for the City to require organizations to charge set fees on straws and utensils.

Supportive Actions for All Single-Use Items

The supportive actions described below will help to move the dial towards reduction of all types of single-use items. These actions provide, enable, and grow the systems, capacity, innovation, and incentives needed to support Vancouver residents, businesses, and community organizations in reducing their use of single-use items and recycling or composting what remains.



SUPPORTIVE ACTIONS

START		
2018	A.1	Education and Outreach
	A.1.1	Promote and amplify education and behaviour change campaigns led by industry organizations, non-profits, and community groups. ¹⁰
	A.1.2	Provide educational tools and resources on the City's website for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The public, including materials to support peer-to-peer outreach and education. b. Businesses, non-profits, institutions, festivals, and events.
	A.1.3	Build on existing efforts to deliver zero waste educational programs to primary and secondary schools by including content on reducing single-use items.
	A.1.4	Provide grants to community groups to engage businesses, institutions, and non-profits on reducing single-use items.
	A.2	Infrastructure and Programs
	A2.1	Expand streetscape recycling.
	A.2.2	Launch pilot programs such as the Bring Your Own Container pilot in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health.
2019 to 2020	A.1	Education and Outreach
	A.1.5	Develop and support a volunteer network of zero waste ambassadors in the community.
	A.1.6	Develop a recognition program for businesses pursuing zero waste activities, including profiling initiatives that target single-use items.
	A.2	Infrastructure and Programs
	A.2.3	Explore opportunities to support the development of programs for reusable items such as sharing schemes for bags, cups, and take-out containers.
	A.3	Collaboration and Dialogue
	A.3.1	Develop a platform for continued dialogue with businesses and other like-minded groups about strategies for reducing and recovering single-use items, including opportunities for knowledge-sharing between businesses.
A.4	Standardize Materials for Recovery	
A.4.1	Contribute to the development of standards and policy for compost facilities, compost quality, and compostable items including bags, cups, take-out containers, straws, and utensils.	

¹⁰ Subject to assessment by the City to ensure campaigns align with objectives of the Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy.

City Internal Actions - Leading by Example

Current Situation

While Vancouver pursues the goal of zero waste and reduces single-use items, it is crucial that the City 'walk the talk' within its own operations. By doing so, the City will not only reduce its contribution to the overall amount of waste generated in Vancouver; it will also gain firsthand experience of the challenges associated with overcoming the barriers that need to be addressed in order to transition away from single-use items.

In recent years the City has achieved enormous success in reducing the amount of waste disposed. Following the introduction of a green operations policy and rolling out 'zero waste stations' in nearly every City facility, the City now recycles or composts over 80% of materials generated in its facilities (primarily paper, plastics, and organic material), which is comparable to many leading zero waste organizations.

City Zero Waste staff have been working with Park Board staff to review opportunities to support changes at concessions to purchase cups, take-out containers, straws, and utensils that are more recyclable and compostable, and to reduce the use of disposables.

Proposed City Actions

Additional efforts to reduce single-use items include actions focussed on eliminating single-use items in City meetings and at City events and further adapting the City's purchasing policies to select items that are reusable or recoverable through existing recycling and composting programs.

Follow on Work

Continue growing Corporate Zero Waste Operating Plans to include initiatives to reduce single-use items, such as:

- a. Policy and infrastructure to promote reusable dishware.
- b. Procurement policies and guidelines for reusable dishware, and compostable and recyclable single-use items.
- c. Potential pilot projects to test sharing programs for travel mugs, take-out containers, and shopping bags in City facilities.

4.0 DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

Consultation on Implementation

The draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy provides a foundation for action. As we move forward with implementation we will need to continue engaging stakeholders on the details and timing of implementation of City actions. In particular, we will want to learn more about what is required to support businesses and the community in adapting to new regulatory requirements and during the transition away from single-use items. Financial and resource requirements will be developed for consideration by City Council as part of the annual budgeting process.

Measuring Performance

Current Situation

The draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy aligns with the Zero Waste Hierarchy.

Table 1 – Alignment between Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy and Zero Waste Hierarchy

Zero Waste Hierarchy	Draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy Objectives
Avoid/Reduce	Prioritize avoiding and reducing single-use items.
Reuse	Substitute single-use items with reusable alternatives wherever possible.
Recycle	Ensure single-use items are used only when necessary, and then recycled or composted.
Dispose	Minimize street litter resulting from single-use items. Minimize garbage resulting from single-use items.

Tracking performance metrics that align with these objectives will be challenging given that the only place the City can actually measure changes in the waste stream is at the point of disposal or in some cases collection for disposal. In order to assess progress and adjust our policies and approach in the future it will be important for the City to:

- Monitor progress towards achieving strategy objectives.
- Identify trends in the distribution, disposal and recovery of single-use items.
- Communicate progress on implementing actions.

There is a recognized lack of data (or reliable data) and transparency pertaining to the generation and management of all types of waste materials within Vancouver.¹¹ In order to track progress, evaluate priorities for action and set targets, there is a need for access to more data about the amount of single-use items distributed, disposed of, and recovered in Vancouver.

In order to develop appropriate tracking systems and metrics, cooperation of stakeholders (including Recycle BC and the Province) will be important. In addition to finding ways to support the transitions, engaging stakeholders in the development of tracking metrics and measuring progress will be an important part of future City activities. Jointly identifying and overcoming the challenges with pursuing the goal of single-use item reduction will reduce conflict, align all parties towards the goal, and lead to sustainable long term change.

Challenges to overcome include:

- Businesses that distribute single-use items report the estimated amount of material that residents take home to Recycle BC under EPR program requirements, but this data is not released to municipal governments or the public.
- Single-use items have not always been categorized separately in regional and Vancouver waste composition studies. Disposal trends cannot be identified when specific single-use items are grouped in broader material categories.

¹¹ Zero Waste 2040 includes City roles for addressing data and information gaps that are pervasive across Vancouver. These actions will improve the accuracy and reliability of all Vancouver's waste stream measurements, including single-use items.

- Vancouver’s waste is managed as part of a regional system for collecting, disposing and recovering waste. Quantitative data about waste collected by private haulers and through EPR programs is aggregated with regional totals making it difficult to separate out.

Our approach to overcoming data limitations aims to increase the availability of metrics about distribution, disposal, and recovery of single-use items, but this will require the participation of others. A key component of EPR programs in B.C. is to report progress towards recovery targets. The shift towards EPR includes enhanced transparency of distribution and recovery data, though not necessarily at the level of an individual municipality or type of packaging. Current EPR programs have their limitations being focused solely on residential materials and as a result don’t cover all of the materials in all sectors.

There is the opportunity to include requirements for businesses to provide data on the amount of single-use items they distribute, though this places all of the responsibility for managing and interpreting the data on the City. The mechanism by which this data collection occurs needs to be discussed with stakeholders as part of transition planning to ensure the processes are practical, workable, and provide good information.

Proposed City Actions

Actions proposed below require further discussion with stakeholders with an aim to increase the availability of metrics about distribution, disposal, and recovery of single-use items.

1. Select performance metrics that reflect best available data.
2. Work to overcome data limitations related to distribution, disposal and recovery. This action may include:
 - Distribution: Include a by-law requirement that includes data reporting for the amount of single-use items distributed by businesses.
 - Disposal: Work with Metro Vancouver to include measurement of single-use items in regional waste composition studies in future (underway).
 - Disposal: Measure single-use items as a separate category in future solid waste and litter composition studies completed by the City.
 - Recovery: Work with Recycle BC and the Ministry of Environment to support the development of reduction and recycling targets for single-use items covered by EPR programs, and reporting progress on those targets.
 - Recovery: Work together with Recycle BC, stakeholders and regional processors to determine what kind of recovery data can be tracked for single-use items by municipality.
 - Review: work with stakeholders to evaluate data availability for single-use items over time and identify opportunities for improvement.

Given the rapid changes occurring in systems and processes, the strategy should be refreshed in five years including reviewing progress and opportunities to better track data on disposal, distribution, and recovery of single-use items.

Targets

Setting specific and measurable targets will inspire action and ensure accountability. Benchmarks are available for plastic bags based on success in other areas; however, there are no benchmarks for the other single-use items under consideration. The ultimate target is alignment with the City’s zero waste goal of eliminating the disposal of single-use items to landfill and incinerator by 2040. Interim disposal targets are under development for inclusion in future regulatory requirements. Developing effective

targets in the absence of good data is challenging. In order to determine the timeline and amount of reduction and recovery that can be achieved through the Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy, the City needs to work with stakeholders to:

- Identify the baseline amount of single-use items that are distributed and how much is being recovered.
 - The primary sources of this data is with product producers and we will seek their cooperation in identifying the details.
- Determine whether processors can successfully recover single-use items made from all types of compostable materials.
 - The majority of recovery efforts for single-use items to date have focused on recycling. As recycling markets are global, quality restrictions on material that China will accept has created significant challenges in developing and expanding recycling opportunities for single-use items. Local processors have indicated challenges with handling the current types and amounts of single-use items recovered and their ability to handle more material may be limited at least in the short term.
- Understand how much time businesses require to adjust to the changes in requirements around single-use items.

The City will gain understanding of these through the actions to overcome data limitations and through consultation with stakeholders on the implementation of strategy actions. Appropriate targets along with progress to date will be reported back to Council within three years.

Proposed City Actions

1. Develop targets and timelines for achieving them.

Implementation Plan

The draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy is focussed on actions to be taken between now and 2025. With growing awareness of environmental issues associated single-use items, we expect the coming years will be a time of rapid change in business practices, consumer behaviour, and technology.

Further consultation with stakeholders is needed to implement the actions outlined in this draft strategy. The City will need to monitor changes and may need to adjust actions in future. The strategy should be refreshed in 2025 based on implementation over the next seven years, and potentially expand the scope to other types of single-use items.

The table on the following page presents the proposed timing of actions, in summary and by type of single-use item.

Table 1 – Summary of Actions by Start Date (repeated from Executive Summary)

Start Date	Action	Cross-Cutting Actions	Bags 	Foam 	Cups 	Take-out food containers 	Cutlery and straws 
2018	Evaluate opportunities to recover street cleaning costs from businesses that distribute them				●	●	
	Influence Support Metro Vancouver’s work to develop a regional SUI reduction strategy		●	●	●	●	●
	Work with the Province to pursue EPR for SUIs from all sectors ¹²		●		●	●	●
	Expand streetscape recycling ¹³				●	●	
	Support Launch pilot programs (e.g. BYOC pilot with VCH)	●					
	Promote and amplify education and behavior change campaigns led by others	●					
	Provide educational resources for public and businesses on City website	●					
	Include content on reducing SUIs in Zero Waste school programs	●					
Provide grants to community groups to engage others on reducing SUIs	●						
2019 to 2020	Ban distribution of foam materials from food vendors			●	●	●	
	Influence Reduction plan by-law for bags and cups		●		●		
	Customer prompt by-law for straws						●
	Work with Metro Vancouver to introduce regional disposal bans ¹⁴			●	●	●	
	Support Develop a volunteer network of community Zero Waste ambassadors	●					
	Develop a Zero Waste recognition program for businesses	●					
	Explore opportunities to support programs for reusables, such as sharing schemes	●					
	Develop a platform for continued dialogue with businesses and others	●					
	Help develop standards for compostable plastics and processing facilities		●		●	●	●
	Lead by Example Develop Corporate Zero Waste Operating Plans	●					
	Introduce a Zero Waste Procurement standard	●					
	Cultivate a Corporate Zero Waste ambassadors programs	●					
	Measure Select performance metrics that reflect best available data	●					
	Work to overcome data limitations related to distribution, disposal and recovery	●					
2021 to 2025	Introduce mandatory recyclability/compostability¹⁵				●	●	●
	Introduce mandatory in-store recycling and composting¹⁶				●	●	●
	Introduce mandatory recycling and composting in offices¹⁷				●	●	●
	Influence Evaluate need for distribution bans on additional materials¹⁸		●		●		●
	Consider need for reduction by-law for containers					●	
	Evaluate need to pursue Charter Authority to set specific fees on SUIs		●		●	●	●
	Consider need for deposit-refund EPR for cups				●		
	Measure Develop targets and report back to Council for adoption within three years	●					
	Measure and report performance metrics every five years	●					
	Review availability of any new data to use in performance metrics every five years	●					

Note: Bolded text indicates an action related to developing a City by-law.

¹² For SUIs generated by the industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) sector, compostable plastics, and both recyclable and compostable straws and utensils

¹³ Subject to quality of collected material

¹⁴ I.e. For foam cups and containers, all disposable cups, food-soiled paper, and compostable plastics

¹⁵ Subject to a certified compostable packaging standard, and evaluation of end market stability

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ For paper and plastic bags, and non-compostable straws and utensils, subject to performance of other reduction initiatives for these materials