



# SINGLE-USE ITEM REDUCTION STRATEGY

## Phase 3 Consultation Summary Report: Priority Actions and Refined Options

2018

# Executive Summary



The City of Vancouver is developing a Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy to reduce waste from disposable hot and cold drink cups, plastic and paper shopping bags, plastic straws and utensils, and polystyrene foam and other take-out containers. This strategy is one of the early priorities under Zero Waste 2040, the City’s roadmap to becoming a zero waste community by 2040.

This report provides an overview of the comments, ideas and suggestions regarding the development of the City of Vancouver’s Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy that were received in the Phase 3 consultations with stakeholders and members of the public between March and April 2018.

Feedback collected has:

- Authenticated consultation findings during the Phase 2 consultation process;
- Highlighted unintended consequences for small business and priority groups;
- Informed City staff on research gaps and language access needs; and
- Validated direction of the Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy in preparation for going to Vancouver City Council on May 16, 2018.



70 people attended a public open house

More engagement by the numbers:

- 1,065 people participated through social media
- 43 stakeholders attended meetings with City staff
- 7 written responses from industry
- 189 responses to the online comment form
- 30 in-depth interviews with small businesses



35 people who came to the public open house wrote pledges to reduce their use of single-use items

In total, 1,449 individuals took part in the phase 3 consultation

## How input was used

Input received during Phase 3 was considered, along with other feedback from consultation, research and technical information, to develop the final Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy. The strategy is expected to be presented to Council on May 16, 2018.



## Overall Key Themes

From this last phase of consultation, the feedback highlighted (and reinforced from previous consultation) the following key themes, which have supported City staff in making revisions to the final strategy:

### **Education and Behaviour Change**

Across the three phases of consultation, the need for more public and business education and outreach was the most commonly supported action by both stakeholders and the public. City staff heard that there is a need to shift norms in society to help support lasting behaviour change and that education and outreach activities will build support, increase understanding of the issues around single-use item reduction and help enable the community to take action. Furthermore, the City received feedback from both the public and stakeholders around the importance of language access and social media to promote and connect with influencers, business owners and customers on consumer awareness, the costs associated with single-use items, and the need for everyone to use reusable items.

### **Reduce Burden to Small Business**

There was strong support from small businesses for the City to work alongside businesses and community organizations to explore buy-back programs, financial grants, group purchasing and re-usable container programs. As many small businesses are concerned around the possible increases in operating costs and how proposed by-laws will have business ramifications, the City has a role to play in exploring and convening these types of activities. Businesses would also like to see the City jointly educate the public about their concerns to help maintain customer satisfaction.

### **Language and Cultural Accessibility**

The need for the City to offer improved language-appropriate information and outreach for small businesses was important among stakeholders and the general public. As part of targeted small business engagement, the City heard that business owners requested more information in accessible languages about the reduction strategies, recyclable and compostable packaging, and how to source affordable alternatives. Since recent census (2016) reports that “visible minorities” represent more than half (51.6%) of Vancouver’s population, yet have very little interaction with the City, it was stressed that the City should continue to explore, customize and pilot methods for increasing language access and participation of these small ethnocultural businesses as a way to minimize unintended consequences and help build trust and local zero waste champions.

### **Support Business Community**

A key theme that emerged from business owners and organizations was that the City needs to provide more information about life-cycle analysis, product selection and availability research and the results of other cities that have implemented similar



actions like bans on bags, discounts versus fees, customer prompts, fees on take-out containers etc. There was a desire for businesses to work together with the City to share data, monitor and engage in dialogue about zero waste certification, but also for evidence-based and informed decision-making. Lastly, there were concerns around ensuring an even playing field and whether standardized fees can be implemented to reduce competition.

### **The Time is Now**

Another theme that emerged was a desire for the City to act quickly, especially in implementing actions like education and behaviour change and banning the use of single-use polystyrene foam cups and containers and straws. Members of the public were more vocal about encouraging the City to take leadership and wanted the City to be ambitious and aggressive in this strategy. However, this desire for action must be balanced with concerns expressed by industry representatives and small businesses that caution the negative impacts of a ban and expressed the need for more time to transition.



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

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. Since 2016, the City has undergone three phases of consultation to gather feedback, ideas and suggestions from residents, businesses and organizations within Vancouver. Listed below is a description of the three phases of consultation:

### **Phase 1: Zero Waste 2040 workshop on Single-Use Items**

Consultation for the draft 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 and ideas generated 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. Key engagement strategies for Phase 1 included a full-day workshop, and a web page with information and key facts about single-use item waste in Vancouver and around the world. Over 65 people participated in the workshop.

To view the Phase 1 draft Single-Use Item Strategy Workshop consultation summary, visit: [vancouver.ca/zerowaste](http://vancouver.ca/zerowaste)

### **Phase 2: In-depth stakeholder consultation & public engagement**

From June 2017 through February 2018, the City carried out an in-depth consultation and engagement process to connect with stakeholders and members of the public to better understand why single-use items are used, test support for various options under consideration and engage through in-person and online dialogue about the future of single-use items in Vancouver.

Key stakeholder consultation activities included a consultation paper that was available online and in print, 10 in-person roundtable discussions located in Toronto, Montreal and at various community centres in Vancouver, an online comment form, in-person meetings and a dedicated project email address.

Key public engagement activities included a pop-up engagement storefront at 511 West Broadway, online Talk Vancouver survey, a dedicated project email address, social media, a booth at the Vancouver School Board Student Sustainability Conference and attendance at the following five City of Vancouver's' Citizen Advisory Committee Meetings:

- Children, Youth and Families Advisory Committee
- Cultural Communities Advisory Committee
- Food Policy Council and Food Policy Council Sub-Committee Waste Working Group
- Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee
- Seniors' Advisory Committee

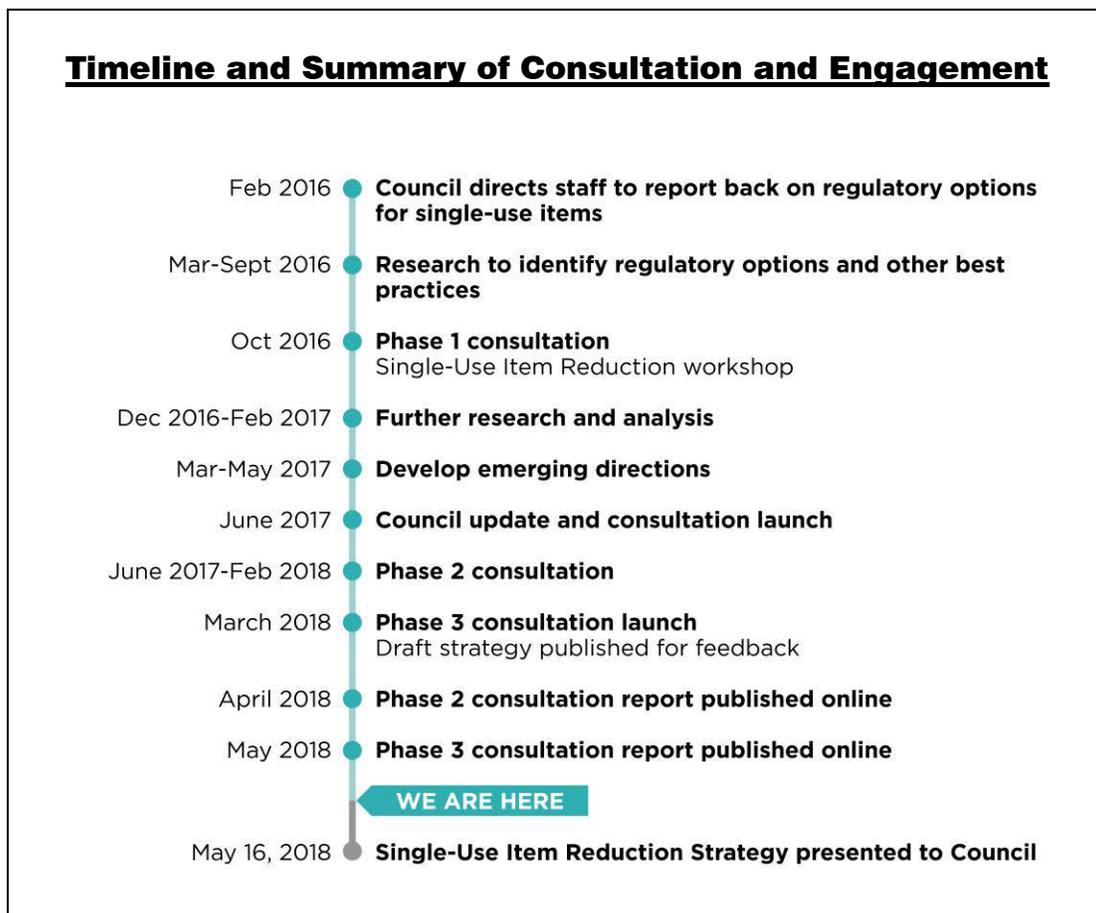
To view the Phase 2 Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy Consultation Summary, please visit [Vancouver.ca/zero\\_waste](http://Vancouver.ca/zero_waste).

### **Phase 3: Reporting back to stakeholders and the public on the Draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy and gathering feedback on emerging priority actions**

Following the commencement of the Phase 2 consultation process, the City reported back to stakeholders and the public, on the results of the consultations and sought feedback on the emerging priority actions outlined in the draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy. In addition, there was a specific focus during this phase of consultation to partner with local agencies to gather an initial understanding of culturally specific challenges and opportunities to reflect the diverse range of ethnocultural food businesses that would be affected by the draft strategy.

This summary report outlines the process and results from the Phase 3 stakeholder consultation and public engagement process. The results are being used to update and revise the development of the final Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy, planned for Vancouver City Council consideration on May 16<sup>th</sup> 2018.

The overall timeline and summary of consultation and engagement is shown in the following figure.



## 2.0 PHASE 3 CONSULTATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

### 2.1 Engagement Approach

In March and April 2018, the City reported back to stakeholders and the public on the results of Phase 2 consultation and sought feedback on the emerging priority actions outlined in the Draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy, which was published on March 29, 2018. During this third phase of consultation, the City made a targeted effort to reach out to smaller local businesses that had not participated during Phase 2 and would be affected by the emerging policy directions in the draft strategy. To do so, the City partnered with local agencies to gather an initial understanding of culturally-specific challenges and opportunities that reflect the diverse range of ethnocultural food businesses affected by the draft strategy.

Key stakeholder consultation activities included advanced information on the website, an online link to the draft strategy with an accompanying online comment form and two separate small-business oriented meetings held on April 11<sup>th</sup> at 511 W. Broadway. To ensure language accessibility, a dedicated feedback phone line was also provided with third-party translations in Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi and Vietnamese, as well as hand-delivered notification letters sent to restaurant owners in high traffic neighborhoods across the city. Key public engagement activities included emails to the project listserv with the web links to the draft strategy and accompanying online comment form, a dedicated project email address, social media and a public open house on April 10<sup>th</sup> at 511 W. Broadway.

## 2.2 Participation

The following table summarizes the stakeholder and public participation in this phase 3 consultation process.

<b>STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION</b>	<b># Meetings / Days</b>	<b># Participants</b>
Small Business Meetings	2	43
Interviews with Small Ethno-Cultural Businesses with Translation Services Through Consultants	-	31
Other Stakeholder Meetings	3	22
Calls to 3-1-1 on Dedicated Phone Line with Translation Services Available	-	3
Formal Letters from Stakeholders	-	7
Subtotal	5	106

<b>PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT</b>		
Open House	1	70
Online Comment Form	-	189
Comments Received Through Emails		18
Social Media Interactions (Likes/Shares/Comments/Retweets)		1,065
Subtotal		1,342

<b>TOTAL TOUCHPOINTS</b>	<b>1,448</b>
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## 2.3 Engagement Opportunities

To report back on emerging priority actions in the draft strategy and to get feedback on the refined scope, the City consulted with stakeholders, members of the public, and worked with local agencies to gather feedback from small businesses in Vancouver. Specifically, the following engagement methods were utilized to gather input:

### **Online Comment Form: March 29<sup>th</sup> - April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

To solicit feedback on the draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy, a digital copy was posted on the City of Vancouver's website on March 29<sup>th</sup> 2018 along with an online comment form designed for businesses and the public. The form asked stakeholders and members of the public for their general feedback and comments on the overall strategy and emerging priority action items. For business owners and organizations, the comment form asked some additional questions about how the proposed by-law amendments would affect them and how the City could offer support.

### **Public Open House: April 10<sup>th</sup> 6:00pm - 8:30pm**

To learn more about single-use item waste in Vancouver and provide feedback on the actions proposed in the draft strategy, both residents and City of Vancouver's Citizen Advisory Committees were invited to attend a public open house at 511 West Broadway.

### **Activities at the Public Open House:**

- **Zero Waste Business Directory: "Do They Reduce, Reuse, Recycle?"**  
To identify a directory of zero waste practices, participants were asked to geographically mark on an engagement board, using coloured sticky dots, businesses in Vancouver that offered them a discount, charged fees or provided in-store recycling or dishware.
- **Engagement Boards**  
Engagement boards were on display to present results from phase 2 consultation, emerging priority actions for reducing waste from disposable hot and cold drink cups, plastic and paper shopping bags, takeout food containers, including polystyrene foam and straws and utensils. The boards also highlighted litter data and interesting facts about single-use items.
- **Comment Cards**  
Feedback from participants was collected on double-sided comment cards that asked both open-ended and closed questions about the engagement process and the options being proposed as part of the strategy. Participants could also provide suggestions to the project team and sign up to be on the mailing list. In total, 26 comment cards were completed.
- **Single-Use Item Reduction Pledges**  
To inspire individual action, pledge cards were available to encourage participants to reduce their use of single-use items by committing to a reduction effort. Participants selected one of the four pledge cards available: 1) bags; 2) cups; 3) containers and 4) foam, and inscribed their pledge, along with their name. Once completed, all pledges were strung across the windows

of the pop-up space in a publicly accessible and high traffic area to encourage others to do their part in reducing waste from single-use items. 145 people wrote pledges to reduce their use of single-use items.

**Small Business Meetings: April 11<sup>th</sup> 9:00am -10:30am / 6:00pm -8:30pm**

To ensure that City staff heard from small businesses, a harder to reach group of stakeholders, two additional in-person consultation meetings were held at 511 West Broadway for owners of small businesses who distribute single-use items. The meetings were an opportunity to hear about the consultation process, learn more about the actions being proposed and to gather feedback on proposed by-law amendments.

To notify small businesses about the draft strategy, the online comment form and the in-person meetings, the following outreach tactics were used:

- **3<sup>rd</sup> Party Language Service Call Line**  
In a partnership with 311 and a third party translation service, a dedicated phone line was set up to encourage businesses to call and provide their feedback on the draft strategy, as well as, register for the in-person consultation meetings. The phone line offered translation services in Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi and Vietnamese and when a call came through the caller would be greeted in a their preferred language and entered into a three way call with a translator and 311 agent to collect the feedback.
- **Notification Letters**  
To notify small businesses about the draft strategy, the dedicated call line and upcoming consultation, a five page notification letter translated in English, simplified and traditional Chinese, Punjabi and Vietnamese was hand distributed to 486 businesses, located in the following neighbourhood districts:
  1. Chinatown (district)
  2. Commercial (Venables to Broadway)
  3. Davie Street (Beach to
  4. Denman (Davie to Robson)
  5. East Hastings (Victoria to Renfrew)
  6. Fraser Street (23<sup>rd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>)
  7. Fraser Street (43<sup>rd</sup> to 50<sup>th</sup>)
  8. Granville (62<sup>nd</sup> to 71<sup>st</sup>)
  9. Kingsway (19<sup>th</sup> to Knight)
  10. Kingsway (Rupert to Boundary)
  11. Kitsilano (Macdonald to Blenheim St)
  12. Kerrisdale (W. 41<sup>st</sup> avenue, Balsam st - Maple St)
  13. Main Street (10<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> )
  14. Robson St (Seymour to Hamilton)
  15. Victoria Drive (33<sup>rd</sup> - 44<sup>th</sup>)

**Expanded Small Business Engagement: March 24 - April 13, 2018**

Although extensive consultation occurred from June 2017 to February 2018, the ability to connect with small businesses was limited due to language accessibility, time commitments and the lack of business liaisons outside unincorporated BIA networks and member associations to support our work. To overcome this challenge and hear from those who were missed, the City partnered with the Hua Foundation and Masala

Consulting to conduct targeted ethnocultural small business engagement with a diverse range of restauranteurs in Vancouver. Both agencies undertook extensive consultation with small businesses and collected in-person feedback on the proposed actions for the draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy.

The Hua Foundation conducted 21 semi-structured interviews with predominately Chinese businesses, located in Chinatown and Crosstown neighbourhoods, whose operations focus primarily on food preparation and service (e.g. quick service restaurants, places that distribute disposable straws, cups and polystyrene take-out containers). The interviews consisted of a mixture of close and open-ended questions, and respondents had the option to participate with the interviewers in Mandarin or Cantonese.

A total of 21 businesses were interviewed:

1. Ba Le
2. Bali Thai
3. Bubble King
4. Canra Sri Lankan Plus
5. Charisma
6. Chinatown BBQ
7. Dollar Meats
8. Floata Seafood Restaurant
9. Gain Wah
10. Giant Panda Szechuan Cuisine
11. Jade Dynasty
12. Kent's Kitchen
13. Maxim Bakery & Cafe
14. Money BBQ
15. New Mitzie's
16. New Town Bakery
17. Rhinofish
18. Sun Fresh
19. V Taste
20. Wow Thai Food
21. Zhao Ma Bakery

Masala Consulting conducted 10 semi-structured interviews, in English, with restaurants whose operations include food preparation and delivery (e.g. quick-service restaurants, take-out containers, disposable cups etc). Restaurants were selected in consultation with City staff and focused on four areas in East Vancouver:

- Fraser St (23<sup>rd</sup>- 50<sup>th</sup> avenue)
- Kingsway and Main St to Knight St
- Victoria St (33<sup>rd</sup>- 44<sup>th</sup> Ave)
- Main St and Broadway (33<sup>rd</sup> Ave, 47<sup>th</sup>-53<sup>rd</sup> Ave)

A total of 10 businesses were interviewed:

1. El Caracol Mexican Café
2. Dosa Factory
3. Pabla's
4. Chutney Villa

5. Sal y Limon
6. Ba Le
7. Ms. Tiffin
8. All India
9. Chao Veggie Express
10. Hoang Yen

For a complete list of all businesses and organizations engaged, see appendix A. (page 24).

## **2.4 Promotion of Process**

Stakeholders and members of the public were notified about opportunities to participate in the consultation process, through the following channels:

- Between March 29 and April 13, the City’s website had 2,357 visits from approximately 1,800 unique visitors. 464 visitors came directly to the site by entering a URL, 456 came through social media channels and the remainder came from other city sites. The Draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy was downloaded 527 times.
- The following social media data was collected:

Reach Type	# of Posts	Likes/Reactions	Views/Impressions
Weibo Organic	5	16	28,305
WeChat Advertorial	1	N/A	1,476
Facebook Organic	7	150	24,535
Twitter Organic	16	217	77,156
Instagram Organic	3	682	N/A
Weibo Paid Ad	5	15	23,371
Facebook Paid Ad	3	2,595	138,584
Total	40	3,675	293,427

- Email notifications were sent to 2,039 food-service establishments in Vancouver, and 764 stakeholders through the project Listserv.
- Newspaper advertisements that ran in the following publications:
  - The Voice (2)

- Ming Pao (2)
- Sing Tao (2)
  
- Emails with information about upcoming consultation opportunities and sample messaging and graphics for email, website and social media were also sent to stakeholder organizations, with requests that they distribute the information to their networks. Organizations that received these packages included Restaurants Canada, Retail Council of Canada, BC Restaurant and Food Services Association, Small Business BC, Thriving Vancouver, the Vancouver Economic Commission, and Vancouver BIAs.
  
- 542 engagement cards and letters with information about the upcoming consultation opportunities were also hand-delivered to potentially impacted restaurants. Interviews were conducted with 31 of these restaurants in simplified and traditional Chinese, Punjabi and Vietnamese to obtain feedback.

## 3.0 RESULTS

### Analysis of Input

All feedback submitted was coded into categories, such as item-type (e.g. cups, bags, containers, foam, straws and utensils) using thematic analysis. For larger data sets, the use of NVivo Qualitative Data Analysis software was utilized to manage and code the feedback. The results presented in this report reflect the general concerns and feedback heard from stakeholders and members of the public during the consultation period.

### 3.1 Stakeholder Consultation: Small Business Meetings, Online Feedback Forms and Written Response Letters

Feedback from this section includes online comment forms, in-person comment cards, notes taken on flip charts at in-person stakeholder meetings and written response letters. The feedback was compiled and analyzed by a third-party consultant 27Shift and then summarized by City staff. In the original online comment form, respondents had the option of identifying as a 'resident'; 'business'; or 'other' and due to the small number of varied responses ascribed to the 'other' category these results have been considered as part of the 'resident' and 'business' responses.

#### General Feedback on the Draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy:

- **Support for Business Community:** Businesses are interested in the City taking actions to support them to reduce single-use items (e.g. through incentives and public education). Respondents would like to see a focus on public education, especially to support the reduction of single-use cups, straws and foam containers.
- **Support for Actions:** Strategies most likely to be supported by businesses include a foam ban, a take-out container sharing program, and a customer-prompt for straws. Businesses also support the use of single-use cups which are biodegradable, recyclable, or compostable.
- **Understanding Business Operations:** Respondents commented that the City needs to have a better understanding of the operational issues that restaurants and stores encounter with regards to dishwashing facilities, size configurations, procurement, training and hygiene considerations. It was also stressed that the City should have a plan for procurement contracts and how to support businesses with overstock.
- **Research:** Respondents who attended the in-person meetings and submitted formal written feedback indicated a desire for the City to conduct further research on product selection and life cycle analysis and make that information accessible as soon as possible. Respondents also wanted more research on the results of other cities reduction efforts (e.g. whether discounts are better than fees, if eliminating items had an impact, if customer prompts are effective).
- **Cost Implications:** Some respondents indicated that the strategy, as a whole, will impact their business, especially the proposed polystyrene foam and cup

actions. However, it was noted that some businesses will see little to no impact (including because some businesses have already adopted some of the recommended practices).

### **Feedback on Reduction Plan for Plastic and Paper Bags and Disposable Hot and Cold Drink Cups**

This priority action responds to stakeholder feedback received during Phase 2 of consultation. City staff heard from numerous businesses that they wanted flexibility and fairness to create their own reduction plans for disposable cups and plastic and paper shopping bags as it would help large businesses with more than one location meet requirements across multiple jurisdictions, while ensuring an even the playing field by including all businesses. The proposed recommendation was generally well received from stakeholders during Phase 3 consultation; however, there were concerns around an unspecified fee and how businesses would determine a rate that was consistent with their competitors as well as customer satisfaction.

Below is a sample of comments from respondents:

*“Without more focus on businesses to find reusable and truly more sustainable alternatives, companies will not prioritize reduction but rather focus on items being recyclable and finding alternative single-use items which do not address the root cause of the waste production problem.”*

*[We appreciate] “the approach of allowing each business the flexibility to determine how they can reduce single-use items in their particular business. However, what is missing is more information on the parameters of how this will work. For example, what measures will be used to determine reduction results? By the nature of their business some members will be more successful than others in reducing bag usage depending on their business model. It is important to maintain a level playing field but that may be difficult to accomplish as each business is different. Some members are concerned that no matter how successful they are in reaching their reduction targets, pressure will remain for the City to proceed with bag bans or fees as outlined in the report which our members oppose.”*

### **Feedback on Banning Polystyrene Cups and Take-Out Containers**

Businesses were generally supportive of a ban on polystyrene cups and take-out containers due to the widespread availability of alternatives and the inaccessibility of recycling options. However, not all stakeholders shared these views. City staff received opposing feedback from plastic industry representatives who advocated for improved collection and recycling processing of foam cups and containers to avoid a ban. Some restaurateurs, while understanding the environmental impacts, noted concerns around food safety and the increase in operating costs associated with purchasing non-foam cups and take-out containers. For some stakeholders, there was also an underlying belief that customers were not willing to pay additional money to help businesses recuperate the cost switching from foam alternative packaging.

### **Support for the Transition**

Through the online comment form and in-person interviews we heard the following ideas for helping businesses transitions away from polystyrene foam materials:

- Provide lists of acceptable materials that are compliant with City by-laws
- Offer some cost analysis around the different alternatives

- Work with community organizations to establish bulk-buying
- Offer grants and incentives for small businesses
- Support customer awareness through a social media campaign

A few comments from respondents:

*“Also the cost implication is something that cannot be ignored comparing to other possible alternative which could cost up to three times the price of the Styrofoam products. We are all for a better greener future but without a better cost effective alternative and without a change in the public habits, the sudden change would hurt lots of businesses and the consequently would affect the public.”*

*“Make sure you understand the cost of this on business. The cost of living in this city has become almost unbearable, and any additional costs will go to the consumer.”*

*“Before implementing a material ban on polystyrene cups and containers more information needs to be provided to small businesses in particular on cost effective alternatives that not only meet environmental goals, but also meet the sanitation and temperature holding qualities of polystyrene products. Members are also concerned that the price of alternative cups and containers (already several times more expensive than polystyrene foam) will further spike the price of these alternatives once polystyrene is banned.”*

### **Feedback on Customer Prompts for Straws and Utensils**

During Phase 3 of consultation, stakeholders were consulted more broadly on single-use straws and the potential for a customer prompt by-law that would require businesses to ask customers if they would like a straw. Out of all single-use items covered in the strategy, the reduction of straws was highly supported by stakeholder groups. In some instances, business owners reported that they had already begun to only provide straws when requested by customers. However, certain businesses that rely on a particular type of straw for their product (e.g. bubble tea shops) raised concerns about the impact on their business.

A few comments from respondents:

*“We tend not to provide straws nor plastic utensils unless the customer asks for them and by doing so we reduce the use of such items to almost 70%.”*

*“Many full service restaurants are already training staff to ask guests if they would like a straw and would likely be comfortable having that mandated. Some are also testing reusable and paper straws. However, this can be more challenging for certain quick service businesses. Some quick serve businesses also provide self-serve drink options where they have little control over whether the customer uses a straw or not which must be considered. As per the report there would have to be some exceptions to the proposal.”*

*“Rather than requiring businesses to offer straws instead of giving them automatically, we propose that businesses provide signage noting that people requiring a straw will be a provided a reusable one for eating in or a sustainably-derived compostable one for taking out. This shifts the interaction from want to need and enables establishments to meet the needs of persons with disabilities while not incentivizing use of needless single-use plastics.”*

### 3.2 Expanded Stakeholder Engagement - Ethnocultural Food and Beverage Industry Businesses

Key themes and feedback from this section was collected from qualitative interviews prepared by Hua Foundation and Masala Consulting.

#### **Key Concerns Regarding the Draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy:**

- **Language-Appropriate Information and Outreach:** Many small ethnocultural restaurants indicated the need for improved language-appropriate information and outreach. In particular, business owners requested more information about the reduction strategies, recyclable and compostable packaging, and how to source affordable alternatives. Since recent census (2016) reports that “visible minorities” represent more than half (51.6%) of Vancouver’s population, yet have very little interaction with the City, it was stressed that the City should continue to explore, customize and pilot methods for increasing language access and participation of these small ethnocultural businesses as a way to minimize unintended consequences and help build trust.
- **Support for Small Business:** Respondents indicated neutral to positive support for the strategy but emphasized the need for support from the City to help their transition from foam cups and take-out containers. Desired support from the City included collaboration with businesses and community organizations to explore buy-back programs, how to source affordable alternatives, financial grants; group purchasing and re-usable container programs. Small businesses stressed the need for information about the different prices of products in order to help with their transition and would like guidelines for best practices on product selection, training and assistance with reporting. There was also willingness, by some restaurateurs and small businesses to collaborate with the City to support a ‘zero waste certification’ program to recognize local businesses that are already zero waste champions or looking to help lead the cause.
- **Education and Awareness:** Many businesses indicated that they would like an innovative social media and education awareness campaign to be synchronized with any future recommendations and by-law changes to support restaurants through the transition of foam to recyclable and compostable products. There was also a desire for clearly established policies and materials to help educate customers about government policies and additional fees for single-use items. Small business owners were also very concerned around customer loyalty and would like the City to remind residents and visitors to bring their own reusable items and address concerns around perceived cleanliness and hygiene associated with reusable dishware and container exchange programs.
- **Cost:** Small businesses are concerned around the increases in operating costs associated with transitioning from polystyrene foam cups and take-out containers to recyclable and compostable alternatives. Some respondents feared that their business revenues could not continue to bear additional costs, especially if they were required to invest in a dishwasher that would require additional staff time for washing.

## Feedback on Banning Polystyrene Cups and Take-Out Containers

Out of all the proposed priorities, the businesses who use polystyrene foam cups and take-out containers comment that it will affect their operations substantially. Many small businesses cited cost as the main reason, as purchasing foam cups and take-out containers is much cheaper than recyclable and compostable alternatives. For many of these business owners, their food requires the use of multiple containers, per order, so the impact is much greater. To support this transition, business owners would like to see the City aid in reducing barriers to cost and procurement.

Some comments received:

*“It would affect us. We need better sourcing. Bulk buy purchasing is important. 3 times price for plastic, 5c for bio products.”*

*“We offer customers two different curries, salad and roti or rice. Usually this is then 3 or 4 containers per order that is 5600 containers per month. We have to buy in bulk or ask the City to help us do this for other options. We would switch to plastic if there was a cheap eco-option we would use that. When we looked at eco-friendly containers it was 28 cents per containers, 10 cents for plastic. Styrofoam is much cheaper, especially since we’re small business.”*

*“I agree with the environmental concerns, but the City of Vancouver needs to consider the business ramifications.”*

## Feedback on Reduction Plans for Plastic and Paper Bags

Small businesses expressed concerns around an even playing field and ensuring that a universal bag fee is established in food establishments. From a business owner’s perspective, a set fee would reduce competition; encourage clarity and a sense of fairness amongst all affected businesses. It would also help businesses manage their reputation and customers’ expectations.

Some comments received:

*“It would affect us, but we would easily comply and charge for other options. If everyone is doing it and everyone knows, its okay as it will make it easier for us restaurants to transition.”*

*“We are so used to seeing and using plastic bags. We need information on eco-distributors..*

*“The City can go ahead and make bans but they also need to provide information to business for alternatives.”*

## Feedback on Reduction Plans for Disposable Hot and Cold Beverage Cups

Many small businesses were supportive of having customers provide their own reusable mugs and beverage containers. It was noted by business owners that not many restaurants do take-out order for cups, but those that do, are concerned about asking their customers to pay extra as it is not common practice. In addition, businesses are concerned about sensitivities around charging those with accessibility needs.

One respondent commented:

*“Very few of our orders have take-out cups. But it would affect us, we would need an alternative.”*

### **Feedback on Customer Prompts for Straws and Utensils**

For most of the businesses interviewed, the reduction of straws was the most easily accepted by business owners. Many were open to asking customers if they required straws and some respondents indicated that they are already doing so. Some businesses expressed concerns around managing customers who want straws and utensils for hygienic and accessibility reasons, and cited that certain businesses like Bubble Tea shops require straws for their product.

Some comments received:

*“It shouldn’t be a problem. We prompt if customers request utensils.”*

*“Would be very easy to prompt customers. I remember the No Straw campaign when we went to Cancun at the bars - it was a great idea. We should do the same.”*

### **3.3 Public Engagement: Open House, Comment Forms, and Online Feedback Forms**

Feedback from this section was prepared by a third-party consultant *27 Shift*, using NVivo Qualitative Data Analysis software, and is based on the online comment form data, open house comment cards and flip chart notes.

#### **General Feedback on the Draft Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy:**

- **Take Immediate Action:** Respondents expressed that the City needs to move faster to demonstrate leadership through ambitious action towards reducing waste. Through the online comment forms and at the public open house, the public expressed strong support for a ban on single-use polystyrene foam and wanted to see it implemented quickly. There was also support for the City to be a municipal leader and to work with other levels of government on this initiative.
- **Encourage Reusables:** Respondents would like to see better communication from Recycle BC and the City to encourage residents and visitors to bring their own reusable items. It was mentioned that bringing your own reusable containers, mugs and bags is not only more affordable but it is making strides towards reducing waste.
- **Social Media:** The City received feedback from the public around the importance of providing public education, especially through social media to market and connect with influencers, business owners and residents around

waste, consumer awareness, the costs associated with single-use items, as well as, the need to bring your own reusable items.

### **Feedback on Reduction Plans for Plastic and Paper Bags**

Residents expressed support for a ban on single-use bags (especially plastic bags) and/or a fee at point of sale (for paper or plastic). Many respondents who support a fee indicated an interest in a fee high enough (e.g. 25 cents - \$5), to support a behaviour change as opposed to other reasons for a fee like raising funds for related initiatives. Respondents had suggestions for City actions, including a focus on public education and increased recycling options.

A few comments from respondents:

*“While I appreciate the steps that this plan lays out, they are not enough. The only solution is to ban all plastic and paper bags outright.”*

*“Plastic bags to have a tax. Promote customers to use their own bag. Tax shopping bags.”*

*“I’m fine paying a modest fee, but don’t normally carry reusable bags with me.”*

### **Feedback on Banning Polystyrene Cups and Take-Out Containers**

Of the proposed priority actions, respondents expressed the clearest support for a ban on single-use polystyrene foam cups and containers. Respondents described support for the ban because of the availability of alternatives, including biodegradable, recyclable, or compostable alternatives, or the ability for people to bring their own containers. Other reasons for supporting the ban include the environmental impact of polystyrene foam, and because recycling options for polystyrene foam are not understood or easily accessible.

A few comments from respondents:

*“Work with businesses to develop cost-effective containers that are fully compostable.”*

*“I am surprised to see them still being offered given the range of options now available.”*

*“Stick to your guns and don’t water this down. Make a big impact for our future!”*

### **Feedback on Reduction Plans Disposable Hot and Cold Drink Cups**

Respondents expressed support for the continued availability of single-use cups, as long as the cups are biodegradable, recyclable, or compostable; however there was also some support for a ban and an interest in people bringing their own cups. Respondents also expressed support for a high fee on single-use cups citing a range of from 25 cents to \$1. Respondents had a number of suggestions for businesses to be able to reduce use of single-use cups, including offering or prompting for non-single-use alternatives, including for when people stay to drink at the business. Respondents would also like the City to focus on public education.

A few comments from respondents:

*“I support banning single use cups, unless they can be composted or easily recycled.”*

*“BYOC - bring your own cup. It's not hard, it's just too easy to get cups right now.”*

*“Encourage actual change by having a significant increase in price for a paper cup.”*

### **Feedback on Take-Out Containers**

Respondents expressed support for continued use of single-use takeout containers, as long as the containers are biodegradable, recyclable, or compostable. Respondents are interested in reusable alternatives, whether from home or as part of a sharing program. There is more interest for a fee than a ban.

A few comments from respondents:

*“Similar to cup exchanges, new enterprises for take-out containers can be supported, e.g. a service that provides take-out containers to restaurants and picks them up to be cleaned.”*

*“All take out containers should be biodegradable or at the very least, recyclable in the container bins. Again, I would be happy to pay slightly more to see this happens.”*

*“Encourage the use of whatever containers are easiest and best to recycle.”*

### **Feedback on Customer Prompts for Straws and Utensils**

Respondents expressed support for continued use of single-use straws and utensils, as long as they are biodegradable, recyclable, or compostable. Respondents also expressed support for a ban on these items, especially plastic straws. Reduction strategies frequently suggested include only offering these items when asked for, offering reusable alternatives (e.g. when eating in), or encouraging people to bring their own.

A few comments from respondents:

*“Straws - unless used for accessibility reasons, plastic straws should never be given.”*

*“Give a price discount for not using utensils, or charge a fee for using plastic utensils.”*

*“Ideally, just like with coffee cups and straws, we all adapt to returning to using only metal utensils that are not thrown away.”*

## 4.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND NEXT STEPS

We all have a role to play in helping to shape a made-in-Vancouver solution that reduces waste from single-use items, enables innovation and drives further waste reduction progress, and the City would like to extend thanks to all who have participated in this consultation process. Over the last two months, the City has heard from 1,449 residents and stakeholders who have passionately shared their ideas and suggestions on how to move the dial in achieving zero waste in Vancouver.

We can't get there alone and we need your continued support.

### **Next Steps:**

The strategy is expected to be presented to Council on May 16, 2018.

Following the results of that presentation, City staff will continue to consult with small businesses, stakeholders and members of the public on the recommendations and any potential by-law amendments.

In the meantime, we encourage residents, business owners and organizations to do their part in reducing single-use item waste and become a zero waste champion.

## APPENDIX A.

The following is a list of the businesses and organizations that were directly engaged through the consultation process before it closed on April 13<sup>th</sup> 2018:

- All India
- Ba Le Sandwich Shop
- Ba-Le Deli & Bakery
- Bali Thai
- BC Bottle & Recycling Depot Association
- Binner's Project
- Boteco Brasil
- BSIbio Packaging Solutions
- Bubble King
- Canadian Beverage Association
- Canadian Plastics Industry Association
- Cartems Donuts
- Canra Sri Lankan Plus
- Charisma
- Chao Veggie Express
- Chinatown BBQ
- Chutney Villa
- CKF Inc.
- Commercial Street Cafe
- Dart Container Corporation
- Dollar Meats
- Dosa factory
- Downtown Vancouver BIA
- The Drive Coffee Bar
- EcoGuardian
- Eddie's Hang-Up Display Ltd.
- Eight ½ Restaurant
- El Caracol Mexican Café
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Floata Seafood Restaurant
- Gain Wah
- G.E.N Trading Ltd
- Giant Panda Szechuan Cuisine
- Greenpeace Canada
- Helder Ventures
- Hoang Yen
- Jade Dynasty
- JJ Bean
- J Rush Agency
- Kent's Kitchen
- Laughing Bean Coffee
- Leverage Lab
- London Drugs
- Lululemon
- Marquis Wines

- Maxim Bakery & Café
- Money BBQ
- Ms Tiffin
- New Mitzie's
- New Town Bakery
- Nusa Coffee
- Pabla's
- Pride Enterprises Ltd.
- Provence Restaurant
- Restaurants Canada
- Retail Council of Canada
- Rhinofish
- Sal y Limon
- Sun Fresh
- Vancouver Civic Theatres
- V Taste
- Wow Thai Food
- Zero Waste Canada
- Zero Waste Vancouver Meetup
- Zhao Ma Bakery
- 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel Coffee Roasters