



Work and Communications Plan for the Single Use Item Reduction Strategy (SUIRS)

Phase One: Research, Education and Outreach and Public Participation

May 27, 2019



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Background

Single Use Item Reduction Strategy (SUIRS)

Since 2018, reducing single-use items have been in the media resulting in changes in consumer behaviours and businesses operations. Single use items such as plastic bags, straws, coffee cups, Styrofoam and utensils are not accepted in the City's Blue Recycling Bag program, making them designated as garbage for landfill.

Through the City's Curbside Waste Education Program, Administration has noticed single use items are one of the most commonly missorted items in the recycling, causing contamination.

Across Canada several municipalities have implemented, and other are currently exploring strategies to reduce single use items, such as a plastic bag ban.

On January 14, 2019, the Governance, Priorities and Finance Committee (GPFC) approved the following Motions:

AR-18-594

That Administration prepare a proposed work plan that would identify the next steps in establishing a single use items (as defined by the EAC) reduction strategy including research, education and outreach with public participation incorporated and that the work plan including applicable cost impacts be reported to Council by the end of Q2 2019.

That Administration investigate and report back on an increased business license fee for large businesses in which distribution of single-use items is pervasive, including grocery, fast-food, and retails stores.

The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) defined single use items as, but not limited to plastic bags, straws, coffee cups, Styrofoam, and plastic utensils.



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Data and Baseline Information

There is no data available on how many single use items are distributed, used and disposed of in St. Albert. The following methods are recommended to gather baseline information:

- Work with businesses to determine what items are being distributed? How many single use items are being used? Are there any alternatives being used? Are there any voluntary reduction programs in place?
- Work with City branches (Public Works and Environment) to determine if single use items are the most common items during litter clean up (by staff or community or neighbourhood groups)
- Conduct a curbside waste composition study. Determine exact composition of waste set out by households? What single use items are in the waste stream? Are they sorted in the correct waste stream?
- Continue the Curbside Waste Education Program to educate residents about proper waste sorting and set out – and track single use items that are mis-sorted in the recycling stream

This baseline information would offer fact base information to determine if single use items are a significant part of the waste stream and if reduction programs would be beneficial.

Collaboration with Edmonton Region Municipalities

The City is also working with regional partners to ensure single use item reduction strategies stay relatively consistent within the Edmonton Metropolitan Region.

This could include using the same strategy (e.g. ban, incentives, reduction goals, etc.), focusing on the same single use items, sharing key messages and having similar education and outreach tactics.

Recommendation

Administration recommends the SUIRS be executed in two phases. The first phase will focus on research, education and outreach and public participation. Through information gathering and receiving feedback from various stakeholders, Administration can deliver recommendations to be executed during phase two of the strategy.



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Goals for Phase One

1. Inform target audiences about single use items in St. Albert
 - a. What items can be included in the reduction strategy?
 - b. How single use items impact our environment?
 - c. How to reduce the use at home, school, work, City of St. Albert, etc. where possible or suggest alternatives?
 - i. City of St. Albert – Explore options such as: offering option to use box for curbside recycling collection, paper bag only program for curbside leaf collection, City facilities not selling single use items such as bottled water, etc.
2. Engage with target audiences for feedback about reducing single use items in St. Albert
 - a. Acknowledge some members of our community may need single use items such as straws due to accessibility needs
3. Empower residents to share knowledge by developing tools, resources and communication materials
4. Encourage proper sorting of single use items in the curbside collection program



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Objectives of Phase One

1. Meet the Environmental Master Plan (2014) Goal: “Reduce solid waste generation”
 - a. Reduce solid waste to 105 kg per person per year by 2020
 - b. Increase diversion rate to 75 per cent by 2020
2. Meet the Corporate Business Plan (2019 to 2021) - Council Strategic Priority #6: “Environmental Stewardship: Explore innovative environmental and conservation opportunities”.
 - Seek innovative practices to protect waterways and green spaces and reduce our environmental footprint, to ensure the vitality of our natural resources for future generations
 - Enhance waste minimization strategies with emphasis on reduce and reuse activities

Note: This Work Plan will focus on single use items. Reduce and reuse of other waste items will be in other plans and programs

3. Create new opportunities for collaboration in the community to further educate residents, businesses and community partners



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Strategic Considerations

Key Dates & Communications Timing

There are no key dates related to legislation regarding single use items. There are dates where communication efforts can begin to build awareness. Waste Reduction Week will be held from October 21 to 27 in 2019 and October 19 to 25 in 2020. Ongoing communication would occur to continue building buy-in and support for behaviour change.

Messaging

Messaging will be targeted to adults for most of this information campaign. This is deliberate as the adults do make most of the purchasing decisions in their homes and businesses. There will be messaging targeted to children and youth for education purposes and to foster environmental stewardship from a young age.

Variety of Audience & Understanding

The level of awareness and understanding among those on single use items will be varied, so different levels of communication will need to occur. As well, since the target audience covers a wide range of demographics, it will be important to use a wide variety of tools to ensure we are reaching the broadest audience possible.

Strategic Approach

Tone/Voice/Messaging

Communications will be information and factual. Information will be shared in a fun and friendly manner to encourage buy-in and support for the behaviour change.

It will be important to connect to existing branding such as the “Be WasteWise” brand and to direct residents to stalbert.ca/waste

Audiences

As our target audience include both general and specific audiences, it will be important to use a variety of tools that are both targeted and broad. This will help us reach as many people as possible in the most effective manner.



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Stakeholders

Internal

- Mayor and Councillors
 - Economic Development Advisory Board
 - Environmental Advisory Board
- Chief Administrative Officer, Executive Leadership Team and Leadership Team
- City departments
 - Economic Development
 - Partnerships with the business community, including the St. Albert Chamber of Commerce
 - Business Licensing
 - Utilities & Environment
 - Environment Branch
 - Partnerships with Environmental Advisory Committee, environmental associations, etc.
 - Spruce Up St. Albert and Clean and Green Riverfest
 - Community Services
 - Partnerships with non-profit organizations, marginalized groups (e.g. accessibility), etc.
 - Public Works & Transit
 - Public Works Branch
 - Responsible for litter clean-up in parks and open spaces in St. Albert
- City of St. Albert employees

External

- Residents in single family households and multi-residential households
- Businesses in St. Albert
- Community groups and associations – e.g. St. Albert Senior's Association, LoSeCa Foundation, St. Albert Food Bank, etc.
- Students and teachers in the St. Albert Public Schools and Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools
- Local media – St. Albert Gazette, CBC, Global, CTV Edmonton, etc.
- Edmonton Region Waste Advisory Committee and municipalities in the Region
- Technical associations and organizations – e.g. Alberta Health Services, Retail Council of Canada



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Spokespersons

- Olivia Kwok, Supervisor, Waste & Diversion Programs
- Kate Polkovsky, Director, Utilities & Environment

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Statistics
 - Attendance at education and outreach events
 - Results from public participation surveys, World Café, etc.
- Communications
 - Number of customer service phone calls, emails received
 - Number of visits to stalbert.ca/waste
 - Number of reminders, searches on the Be Waste Wise App
 - Number of questions and comments received via the City's Facebook and Twitter pages
 - Media coverage
 - Letters to the Editor and blog postings
 - Anecdotal feedback from interactions at information booths, etc.
 - Results from public participation surveys, World Café, etc.
- Environmental Master Plan Goals



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Tactics and Tools

1. Pre-SUIRS Education & Outreach Campaign

Goals & Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing “Oops! What Goes Where?” education and outreach campaign before the official launch of the SUIRS Remind residents on common sorting mistakes in the recycling Many of the items in the campaign are single use items (e.g. plastic bags, plastic trays, single use to-go cups, single serve cups and pouches, coffee pods, plastic cutlery, straws, and Styrofoam trays, etc.)
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> W&DP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide content and equipment Schedule the social media posts and Citylights posts Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist with design, advertising, updating websites and program materials if needed
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summer to Fall 2019 One post a week
Resources Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional costs – existing budget and staffing

2. Curbside Waste Education Program

Goals & Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing education and outreach program Remind residents on common sorting mistakes in the recycling Many of the items sorted incorrectly are single use items (e.g. plastic bags, plastic trays, single use to-go cups, single serve cups and pouches, coffee pods, plastic cutlery, straws, and Styrofoam trays, etc.)
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> W&DP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan, and execute the program Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist with design, advertising, updating websites and program materials if needed
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summer 2019, 2020, etc.
Resources Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional costs – existing budget and staffing Can add additional staff to conduct inspections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part time summer students, per hour



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3. SUIRS Preliminary Business Scan

Goals & Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine what single use items are distributed in St. Albert • How much is being used? E.g. plastic bags a day, straws a day, etc. • Are there businesses who are using alternatives? • Can be conducted as a survey • Research an increased business license fee for large businesses in which distribution of single-use items is pervasive, including grocery, fast-food, and retail stores
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W&DP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Develop survey content and working with survey company or complete internally • Economic Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Assist with developing survey content and connect with business community • Strategic Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Assist with developing survey content and working with survey company or complete internally • Business Licensing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Assist with research in regard to a higher business fee for large businesses that distribute single use items
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall 2019 to Winter 2020
Resources Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown – Completed by internal staff resources, Survey Monkey, or external survey company



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4. Litter Clean Up Preliminary Scan

Goals & Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much litter is collected by Public Works staff during Spring Clean Up? • How much litter is collected by community and neighbourhood events? • How many staff or volunteers used for litter clean up? • Determine if single use items are frequently seen in the litter • Completed as general survey, not scientifically accurate
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W&DP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Coordinate survey amongst internal staff ◦ Analyze data • Public Works <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Complete the Spring Clean up and report data to W&DP • Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Coordinate the Spruce Up St. Albert and Clean and Green Riverfest community clean up programs and report data to W&DP
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring to Fall 2019
Resources Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional costs – existing budget and staffing

5. Curbside Collection - Waste Composition Study

Goals & Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine exact composition of waste set out by households • Materials are sorted into various categories and weighed • What single use items are in the waste stream? Are they sorted in the correct waste stream? • Determine if there are seasonal changes (e.g. summer vs. winter) • Conduct audits over a few years to see if sorting habits have changed
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W&DP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Prepare Request for Proposal – work required, expectations, outcomes, etc. ◦ Manage Contractor • Purchasing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Assist with Purchasing process to award contract, etc.
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer 2020 to Winter 2020
Resources Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately \$50,000 for Contractor/Consultant to complete two audits in a year



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6. SUIRS World Café

Goals & Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with target audiences for feedback about reducing single use items in St. Albert <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge some members of our community may need single use items such as straws due to accessibility needs Participation will be similar to the Cannabis project method Conducted by a professional World Café company
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> W&DP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop World Café content and working with World Café company Strategic Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist with developing World Café content and working with World Café company
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spring to Fall 2020
Resources Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately \$10,000

7. SUIRS Survey

Goals & Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with target audiences for feedback about reducing single use items in St. Albert <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge some members of our community may need single use items such as straws due to accessibility needs Survey will be an open survey online – similar to the Cannabis project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open to the public to respond, along with mailouts to specific households to complete the survey Conducted by a professional survey company, e.g. Bannister
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> W&DP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop survey content and working with survey company Strategic Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist with developing survey content and working with survey company
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spring 2020 to Fall 2020
Resources Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately \$15,000



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8. SUIRS Education & Outreach Campaign

Goals & Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform target audiences about single use items in St. Albert <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What items can be included in the reduction strategy? ○ How single use items impact our environment? ○ How to reduce the use at home, school, work, etc. where possible or suggest alternatives? • Inform target audience about public participation opportunities • News release, media release to inform stakeholders • Website, social media, Citylights, St. Albert Gazette advertisements, Utilities e-bill attachment, Chamber of Commerce – Memberlink, pull up banners, etc.
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W&DP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide content and equipment for campaigns, photoshoots, etc. ○ Schedule the social media posts and Citylights posts • Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prepare news release and media release ○ Assist with website design and updates ○ Design and coordinate social media graphics, utility bill attachments, pull up banners, eight advertisements with the St. Albert Gazette (\$400 an ¼ page ad), etc.
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall 2019 to Winter 2020
Resources Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately \$6,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$3,200 for St. Albert Gazette ads ○ \$200 for three weeks for Chamber of Commerce Memberlink ○ \$2,400 for online advertising with Big Box, Facebook, Instagram



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9. SUIRS Education & Tips Videos

Goals & Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform target audiences about single use items in St. Albert <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What items can be included in the reduction strategy? ○ How single use items impact our environment? ○ How to reduce the use at home, school, work, etc. where possible or suggest alternatives? • Ten videos between 30 to 60 seconds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Animation or live action • Posted on social media, to compliment the Social Media and Citylights campaign
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W&DP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide content and equipment ○ Prepare Request for Quotation – work required, expectations, outcomes, etc. ○ Manage Contractor • Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assist W&DP – ensuring Contractor meets City branding standards and guidelines
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall 2019 to Winter 2020
Resources Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately \$15,000

10. SUIRS Information Booths and Pop-Up Events

Goals & Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with target audiences for feedback about reducing single use items in St. Albert <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have iPads available to complete the SUIRS survey • Have hands on examples of alternatives to single use items • Giveaway promotional items such as reusable straws, utensils, etc. • Set up at locations such as the Farmer's Market, Food Truck Event (Grain Elevator Park), Canada Day, St. Albert Place, Children's Festival, Clean and Green Riverfest, etc.
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W&DP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Plan, and execute the information booths and events
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall 2019 to Winter 2020
Resources Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No additional costs – existing budget and staffing • Can add additional staff to conduct engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Part time summer students, per hour



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The estimated budget total for Phase One of the Single Use Item Reduction Strategy (SUIRS) is approximately \$96,000 without the business scan survey estimate and additional staffing for support.

Once the information gathering and feedback from various stakeholders is complete, Administration can deliver recommendations to Council to execute Phase Two of the SUIRS.

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