



Legislation Text

File #: AR-19-200, **Version:** 1

TAMRMS#: B06

Single Use Items Workplan

Presented by: Olivia Kwok, Supervisor, Waste & Diversion Programs & Kate Polkovsky, Director, Utilities & Environment Department

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the May 27, 2019 Agenda Report titled "Single Use Items Workplan" be received as information.
2. That the project funding of \$96,000 be provided from the Stabilization Reserve to complete Phase One.
3. That Administration report the findings of Phase One of the Single Use Item Reduction Strategy back to Council by Q2 2021.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide an outline to Council of the workplan required for the successfully delivery of the Single Use Item Reduction Strategy (SUIRS). Single use items include items such as plastic bags, straws, coffee cups, Styrofoam and utensils.

ALIGNMENT TO PRIORITIES IN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

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.

This is also a priority within the Corporate Business Plan: 6.1 - Enhance waste minimization strategies with emphasis on reduce and reuse activities

ALIGNMENT TO LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

N/A

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

On January 14, 2019 GPFC passed 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 retail stores.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

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.

Due to the complicated nature of the project and the need to ensure that the appropriate work flow is implemented, this item has been identified as a component of the Corporate Business Plan (2019-2021): 6.1 - Enhance waste minimization strategies with emphasis on reduce and reuse activities.

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 and a reasonable plan to be executed during phase two of the implementation strategy.

During Phase One, some of the tasks include:

1. Research what single items are distributed, used and disposed of in St. Albert
 - 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.
 - Work with Administrative departments to optimize how the City can lead and be an example for the use and reduction of single use items.
2. Research business license fees, and if any municipalities charge a higher fee for large businesses that distribute single use items.
 3. Education and outreach:
 - Inform target audiences about single use items in St. Albert
 - 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?
 - How can the City of St. Albert reduce single use items? Explore option such as offering the option to use a 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.
 - Inform target audience about public participation opportunities such as surveys, World Cafes, and pop-up information booths
 4. Conduct public participation to engage with target audiences for feedback about reducing single use items in St. Albert
 - Done through surveys, World Café, pop-up information booths, etc.
 5. Collaborate with other municipalities in the Edmonton Region 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.
 6. Provide an assessment of any City infrastructure or services that would be required to be upgraded to support the reduction of single use items within Administrative offices.

A detailed Work Plan has been attached with more information, including specific goals, objectives and anticipated tactics. The completion of the work plan would position the City to contemplate specific reduction strategies, phase a reduction strategy and/or target certain items. Upon the completion of Phase One, Administration will have a better idea of any capital and/or operating costs required to support the implementation plan.

One of the intended outcomes is to optimize the implementation plan to facilitate residents in any program changes. The intension is to make any change as easy as possible for the community, both residents and businesses to adapt to and incorporate into their daily lifestyles.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholders of the SUIRS include internal and external groups. Internal groups include:

- Mayor and Councillors, including Advisory Boards
- City Departments such as Economic Development, Utilities & Environment, Public Works & Transit, Community Services, etc. who are directly involved with providing information, feedback or consultation
- City of St. Albert employees, including those who are residents

External groups include:

- City of St. Albert residents, businesses, community groups and associations
- Edmonton Region Waste Advisory Committee and municipalities in the Region
- Technical associations and organizations
- Local media

Different techniques to educate and consult with these stakeholders include education campaigns, surveys, World Cafes and information booths at pop-up events.

A detailed Work Plan has been attached with more information, including specific goals, objectives and tactics. It also has a list of the specific stakeholders that will be impacted or involved with this project.

This approach is similar to other communities, such as Vancouver who has been engaging with their stakeholders since 2016 to launch their strategy. The City of Calgary will be engaging with their stakeholders in 2019 and bringing forward a plan to reduce single use plastics in 2020. The estimated costs of engagement in Calgary is between \$250,000 and 300,000.

Three Steps to Public Engagement Templates (Decide, Plan, Report) are also attached.

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

Financial:

In order to complete Phase One of the SUIRS, additional funding of \$96,000 will be required. Basic education and outreach can be conducted with existing budgets however, funding is required to support the necessary data collection to provide recommendations for Phase Two.

Legal / Risk:

None at this time

Program or Service:

N/A

Organizational:

N/A

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

A single use bag ban can be implemented instead of, or in addition to the SUIRS Phase One approach. Extensive education and outreach will be required to implement the ban, including targeted information for residents, businesses and community groups and associations. A bylaw will need to be developed, along with processes and procedures for violation of the bylaw. Alternatives must be considered, such as placing a fee for paper bags, and determining where the money from the fee would go. Exemptions must also be considered (which is a lessons learned from other communities who have implemented these programs), for items such as produce, dry cleaning, newspaper delivery, etc.

There has been no baseline research conducted on single use bags in St. Albert, and no public participation and consultation has been completed for a single use bag ban. In other communities, such as Wetaskiwin, extensive consultation was completed before enacting the ban. A comprehensive change management program to make any changes to consumer habits easy should be incorporated into the consultation. This will facilitate a successful implementation. In Vancouver, various single use items were reviewed at the same time for their Single Use Item Reduction Strategy. It was determined to have different or staggered timelines to ban or reduce the single use items to allow stakeholders to adapt. This is the recommended approach for the City of St. Albert. Although the optimized implementation for single use item reduction would incorporate plastic bags as a component of the workplan it could be contemplated separately and ahead of the overall SUIRS workplan.

In order to complete this aggressive concurrent program to the delineated SUIRS workplan, additional resources will be required. Total funding to support this item ahead of the SUIRS workplan would be approximately \$75,000 (which equates to an allocation of a term staff to support the work and operational dollars to complete the necessary consultation process).

Report Date: May 27, 2019
Author: Olivia Kwok & Kate Polkovsky
Department: Utilities & Environment Department
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer: Kerry Hilts
Chief Administrative Officer: Kevin Scoble