

Information Report



Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services
Date	Friday, December 6, 2019
Subject	Solid Waste Management Master Plan Update
Report Number	IDE-2019-128

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

This report provides an overview of the work completed to date on the Solid Waste Management Master Plan (SWMMP) including responses to Council resolutions regarding the investigation into strategies to reduce or eliminate single-use plastics..

Key Findings

The current work on the initial stages of the Solid Waste Management Master Plan include the formation of the Public Advisory Committee, the development of surveys for the municipal comparator review, engagement with the Downtown Advisory Committee to solicit ideas for membership on the Downtown Stakeholder Group for the master plan and the scheduling of the first open house.

The engagement and partnership with the University of Guelph Ideas Congress (ICON) for the 2019 fall semester is nearly complete. Findings will be shared with the Public Advisory Committee for review and incorporation into the final report.

Solid Waste Resources is engaging with internal departments to investigate opportunities related to the reduction and elimination of single-use plastics, and strategies related to current agreements that may present challenges. Some progressive actions have already been taken and are underway, including:

- Adoption of a Corporate Sustainability Waste Management Policy
- Water Wagon utilized at public events and expansion of water fountains and filling stations for reusable containers
- Elimination of plastic straws and switching from plastic bags in gift shops and retail operations
- Moving to larger reusable bulk containers for some fluids related to vehicle maintenance and operation, such as windshield washer and brake fluids
- Adoption of guiding principles in the Procurement By-law for consideration of Environmental Sustainability
- Provision in the Waste Management By-law, strengthening three-stream sorting that are intended to improve the capture of, among other recyclables, single-use plastics.

Civic Accelerator – The potential application of the Civic Accelerator is currently being explored. A decision to employ the Civic Accelerator will be determined following the completion of the ICON program.

Financial Implications

Funding for the Solid Waste Management Master Plan Review is included in the Council approved Solid Waste Resources capital budget.

Any recommendations and funding requirements for implementing strategies to reduce or eliminate single-use plastics across Guelph will be brought forward for Council's consideration as part of future budgets..

Report

Details

In July 2018 Council moved the following resolution:

“That staff, through the recommendations of the Solid Waste Management Master Plan 2018/2019, in particular recommendation number five [from the business service review], ensure the scope of activity includes investigating a strategy for the elimination of single-use plastic grocery bags in Guelph and report back to Council with this strategy by the end of Q2, 2019.”

At the May 27th 2019 Meeting of Council, staff reported back and recommended that due to the complexities and rapidly evolving nature of the single use plastics discussion, that this work be expanded from plastic bags to single use plastics and included in the planned Solid Waste Management Master Plan scope of work.

At that meeting Council also moved the additional resolutions:

“That staff partner with the University of Guelph Ideas Congress (ICON) Program to explore viable solutions to reduce single-use plastics across Guelph, and report back to Council with updates or further recommendations as part of Solid Waste Management Master Plan update.

That the following be referred to and considered as part of the Solid Waste Master Plan process and scope of activity:

a) That staff investigate any required changes to the current agreements between the City and/or vendors/leaseholders resulting from the sale of single-use plastics.

b) That staff facilitate further engagement internally on reducing or eliminating single-use plastics through the Solid Waste Management Master Plan process.

c) That staff explore the issue of single-use plastics and packaging as an opportunity to leverage the Civic Accelerator, to help realize further options to reduce waste in the City of Guelph.”

In response to Council's resolutions, staff included a task in the scope of the Solid Waste Management Master Plan Review to investigate strategies to reduce or eliminate single-use plastics across the community.

The Solid Waste Management Master Plan Review is now underway, following the selection of a consultant based on a Request for Proposals that was issued in late spring, 2019. Dillon Consulting was selected to perform the work and was officially engaged by the City in August. Work related to single-use plastics elimination was prioritized and initiated in August, followed immediately with the engagement of the ICON program.

The formal launch of the engagement program will occur in December 2019, coincident with the formation of the project Public Advisory Committee.

Solid Waste Management Master Plan - Activities Taken to Date

The Solid Waste Management Master Plan Review is now underway, following the selection of a consultant based on a Request for Proposals that was issued in late spring, 2019. Dillon Consulting was selected to perform the work and officially engaged by the City in August. Work related to single-use plastics elimination was prioritized and initiated in August, followed immediately with the engagement of the ICON program.

In addition, the Review includes a number of other concurrent tasks underway.

- Council has approved the Public Advisory Committee members with meetings beginning in the new year.
- The official launch of the community engagement program will be held on the evening of December 9, 2019, with a public address by Dr. Dianne Saxe at the River Run Centre. Attendees will be engaged as part of the session to share their thoughts on what is important to them with respect to the City's solid waste management program, and also on how they would like to be engaged through the process.
- Pre-engagement calls have been made to better understand the consultation needs of several community partners. Calls are being placed to representatives of social or business associations or organizations connected to various sectors in the Guelph community.
- Research has also begun to support sub-reports outlining the City's Current State, and also to project our Future State and Growth. In addition, a survey questionnaire has been developed and will be used to obtain benchmarking information from comparator municipalities.
- Interested businesses, institutions, and individuals have also been contacted from those that expressed interest in participating on the Downtown Stakeholder Group, which will inform the development of the Downtown Service Review report. The first meeting will be organized in January, 2020.
- In support of the IC&I Collection Service Standards report, a second survey questionnaire has been developed in order to obtain policy and service information from comparator municipalities. It is expected that this survey will be forwarded in Q4 2019 with follow up to occur in Q1 2020.

ICON

In accordance with Council's direction, the City's project team and the University of Guelph's ICON program group partnered to engage with students as part of the 2019 fall semester.

The City's project team attended two ICON sessions. In the first session, held in September 2019, the City project team provided a series of research questions to be undertaken by ICON students, under the supervision of the teaching team. The project team then attended an October meeting to answer questions arising from the original research areas, allowing the students to have developed follow-up questions and clarification requests. ICON students are supporting the following areas of inquiry:

- Best practice procurement policies and programs;
- Opportunities for collaboration with private sector with respect to alternatives to single-use plastics;
- Using on-campus examples as a model for broader application in the City of Guelph;
- Local business success stories;
- Current education efforts and engagement on the issue by local Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (ENGOS); and
- New technologies, innovations and products that may address the issue.

The project team received presentations from the ICON participants on November 22, 2019. The ICON engagement will conclude in late Fall 2019, with findings to be shared with the Public Advisory Committee, and incorporated into the Review's final report.

Required changes to current agreements resulting from the sale of products packaged in single-use plastics

Solid Waste Resources staff are collaborating with internal departments to fully understand the implications associated with current agreements resulting from the sale of products packaged in single-use plastic, and to track actions already taken to reduce or eliminate the use of single-use plastics.

The City has contractual implications related to the reduction or elimination of products packaged in single-use plastics. In particular, given the responsibilities of the City's Culture, Tourism, and Community Investment department for public facing facilities such as the Sleeman Centre and the Farmers Market, there are operational, revenue and sponsorship impacts related to single-use water bottles in particular. This department has already taken some progressive steps with respect to waste reduction and diversion, however, based on approaches taken in other municipalities, if a ban of single-use plastics is enacted, it may be prudent to provide an exemption period to allow for further development of options and actions that address contractual, revenue and sponsorship issues.

Internal engagement as part of the Solid Waste Management Master Plan

Solid Waste Resources and internal partners have developed an inventory of current activities related to single-use plastics to inform policy and operational recommendations, and to ensure the full spectrum of City corporate operations are considered and accommodated in the discussion.

The adoption of a corporate Sustainable Waste Management Policy, effective October 21, 2019, further supports efforts to promote operational and procurement efforts that minimize single-use items. On this subject, the Policy advises to:

- Give preferential consideration to reusable, recyclable, refillable, returnable and repairable products; and,
- Avoid single-use food and beverage items including coffee pods, plastic water bottles, disposable coffee cups and cutlery where possible.

The Policy provides a foundation on which individual City operations can build and considers not only single-use plastics but single-use items in general.

The reduction of single-use plastics internally has been implemented proactively. Actions are summarized below:

Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise

Environmental Services

- **Water Services:** At the direction of City Council's 2009 Public Promotion Action Plan for City Drinking Water Consumption, Water Services initiated a tap water provision service for large outdoor community events utilizing a water tanker filled with Guelph tap water. In 2013 the water tanker was replaced by the Guelph Water Wagon. The intent of these efforts help achieve the goals of promoting Guelph's safe, reliable municipal tap water and waste reduction targets of the 2008 Solid Waste Management Master Plan. Steadily growing in popularity since the start, 2019 saw the highest number of events attended by the Water Wagon – 31 community events – distributing 22,332 litres of water. This is the equivalent of 44,664 500ml water bottles in one year alone. Since 2013, the Water Wagon has provided a total of 156,204 litres of water, the equivalent of 312,408 500ml water bottles.
- Water Services has an annual budget for facility upgrades to expand access to municipal drinking water, where feasible, in public spaces through installation of tap water fountains and bottle filling stations. By doing so, the City is encouraging the "Bring, Fill, Drink" message, reducing Guelph's dependence on single-use plastics for drinking water.
- **Solid Waste Resources:** Solid Waste Resources recently updated the Waste Management By-law, strengthening provisions related to proper three-stream sorting that are intended to improve the capture of, among other recyclables, single-use plastics. Additionally, all City facilities are invited to reach out to Solid Waste staff to re-invigorate waste reduction and diversion programs at their facilities as part of the new corporate Sustainable Waste Management Policy

- The elimination of single use dishes and cutlery has been implemented across the department for in house events.

Public Services

Culture, Tourism and Community Investment

- Culture, Tourism, and Community Investment has decreased the use of plastics, where possible, for instance eliminating straws, and increased capture of plastics. They have also moved away from plastic bags in gift shops and retail operations, using paper instead, and continuously work with facility rentals to reduce single-use plastics being brought in from outside sources.

Parks and Recreation

- Parks and Recreation currently has five outdoor filling stations located at Riverside, Exhibition, Margaret Greene, Larry Pearson, and Eastview parks. Additional fountains will be installed where there is current infrastructure to support it and will be carried out through scheduled upgrades over the next three years. Recreation facilities have water filling stations located throughout their facilities and City camps have implemented a “one re-useable water bottle for each participant policy” in an attempt to eliminate plastic water bottles and aseptic drinking boxes. In addition, the Evergreen Seniors’ Centre Restaurant has taken steps to reduce and phase out single-use plastics.
- Through the Energize Guelph project, two reusable water bottle vending machines, along with floor decals marking a trail to nearby bottle filling stations, have been placed at the Victoria Road Recreation Centre and West End Community Centre. Initially funded through the Province’s Healthy Kids Community Challenge, one of the initiative’s objectives was to find meaningful ways to get kids to choose water over sugar sweetened drinks (e.g. juice, pop, energy drinks) and encourage healthy hydration. A related benefit has been the supply of over 3300 refillable bottles that now, on an ongoing basis, displace single-use plastic bottles. The program also aligns with the goals of promoting Guelph’s tap water and waste reduction.

Fire Services

- Fire Services have moved to larger reusable bulk containers for some fluids related to vehicle maintenance and operation, such as windshield washer and brake fluid.

Operations

- Operations have moved to larger reusable bulk containers for some fluids related to vehicle maintenance and operation, such as windshield washer and brake fluid.
- To reduce single use plastic bottles, Operations replaced their water fountain with one that could fill refillable water bottles.

Transit

- Transit has added two water fountains for their operators, and to date have eliminated the equivalent of 2050 disposable plastic bottles. Transit continues to work with Solid Waste Resources to improve sorting at both Transit facilities and in public-facing areas.

Corporate Services

Finance

- Finance has included guiding principles in the Procurement By-law that govern the City's procurement of Goods and Services to consider Environmental Sustainability and Environmentally Responsible Goods and/or Services, consisting of 15 characteristics, one of which is for durable and reusable products, in lieu of single-use or disposable products.

Civic Accelerator

Based on interactions with internal departments, the diverse nature of operations and services with each having very distinct business models and needs, suggests that a ban of single-use plastics represents a different assortment of packaging, products and actions for each internal group. As part of this process, departments have identified opportunities for which there is a need to find affordable and safe alternatives that meet the specific needs of the user department. Specific opportunities range from distribution of water in the field (heat waves, emergency services) to product-specific packaging applications such as parts used by Fleet, Operations and Transit. These types of requirements are also leading internal departments to seek procurement solutions that would allow them to explore options to reduce and/or eliminate single-use plastics.

The Civic Accelerator provides an opportunity for departments to explore novel solutions to their challenges, through open innovation with companies, as well as scoping of pilots that can lead to outcome-driven results. At this point, the Civic Accelerator will wait for the work of the ICON program to be completed before exploring the challenge further to ensure research efforts are not duplicated.

Outcomes from the Civic Accelerator approach could include:

- A better understanding for staff about possible alternatives and solutions to consider for future purchasing;
- Selection of a challenge that is released as a Request for Proposal that opens the door for alternative solutions emerging in the market; and
- Scoping a pilot with an emerging company.

A decision to begin exploring single-use plastics using the Civic Accelerator will be made no later than in Q1, 2020 following the completion of the ICON program.

Next Steps

The Single-use plastics issue is rapidly evolving and it is expected that there will be a need to evaluate and incorporate newer information prior to finalization of the final report.

The newly appointed Public Advisory Committee for the Solid Waste Management Master Plan will review findings from the ICON program, along with, up to date benchmarking information from leading jurisdictions to form the final recommendations for Council's consideration.

The final report will include policy from senior government in Canada and leading international jurisdictions, as well as, information from progressive municipalities and state jurisdictions throughout North America and the European Union, advanced producer reduction measures, emerging compostable single-use plastics, and plastic bag bans and fees.

Concurrently, the internal working group will continue to meet and update actions with respect to single-use plastics, as well as confirm the applicability and employment of the Civic Accelerator to further the process of reducing or eliminating single-use plastic.

Financial Implications

Funding for the Solid Waste Management Master Plan Review is included in the Council approved Solid Waste Resources capital budget.

Any recommendations and funding requirements for implementing strategies to reduce or eliminate single-use plastics across Guelph will be brought forward for Council's consideration as part of future budgets.

Consultations

Environmental Services

Culture Tourism & Investment

Parks and Recreation

Fire Services

Operations

Transit

Finance

Strategic Plan Alignment

Sustaining our future: Plan and design an increasingly sustainable city as Guelph grows.

Attachments

None

Departmental Approval

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