

Single-Use Items By-Law Update

Heather Connell, Manager of Technical Services, Solid Waste Resources

Nicole Davison, Waste Resources Policy Analyst, Solid Waste Resources

October 17, 2023

Recommendation 1:

The City continue to work with the AAC as this legislation develops.

The City's response to recommendation 1:

- Solid Waste Resources will continue to engage with the AAC as it relates to the Single-Use Items Reduction Strategy, where necessary.
- The federal government's Single-Use Plastics Prohibition Regulation is already enacted and received Royal Assent as published on June 22, 2022.

Recommendation 2:

The City work with subject matter experts to develop an education component to combat stigma for the Guelph community at large as well as local businesses and their employees, which includes:

- a. Information that the use of SUP straws is still permitted in certain circumstances
 - i. A person is not prevented from bringing SUP straws with them to a restaurant and providing them to others in a family or social group
 - ii. People may be seen in a public setting using a SUP straw however it may not be obvious that a person needs that straw. We would like to limit insensitive and damaging encounters for those individuals.
- b. Information on the importance of sensitivity training for employees and businesses that focuses on the use of respectful, inclusive communication and not requiring a person to disclose any information if using a SUP straw.

The City's response to recommendation 2:

- The following information regarding the federal ban on SUP straws was included in the media release on September 15, 2022, following Council's approval of the Single-Use Items By-law:
 - Businesses may sell packages of 20 or more SUP flexible straws for personal or family use, but retailers cannot display packages in stores;
 - A business cannot require a customer to disclose whether they have a disability or a need for a SUP flexible straw;
 - Restaurants cannot provide a SUP flexible straw to a customer, but a customer can bring a SUP flexible straw with them and can provide them to others in their social group at the restaurant; and
 - Care institutions may continue to purchase SUP flexible straws in packages of 20 or more and provide them to patients or residents.

The City's response continued:

- SWR will continue to incorporate this messaging into future communications related to the City's Single-Use Items Reduction Strategy, where possible.
- The SUP straw ban is federal legislation. Based on the City's communications guidelines, the City does not post content from other people or organizations as though it's our own.
- SWR is willing to provide some funding towards communication tactics regarding SUP flexible straws and paper bags with two handles that is developed and delivered by Guelph Barrier Free and/or the AAC with the assistance of the City's Accessibility staff.

Recommendation 3:

That Council consider a by-law that:

- a. includes information on the important of alternative bags (including paper bags) that have two reinforced handles, similar to plastic bags that are included in the ban
- b. requires businesses to provide alternative bags that have two reinforced handles for the accessibility reasons I listed earlier

The City's response to recommendation 3:

- Staff presented the limitations of including this requirement to Council in the September 14 report and Council passed the Single-Use Items By-law without amendment.
- To promote alternative bags with two handles, staff have completed the following:
 - The by-law requires that reusable shopping bags have two handles and can withstand 100 uses;
 - Businesses have been encouraged to supply alternative bags with two handles through promotion and education tactics, including:
 - information on the Single-Use Items Reduction Strategy webpage,
 - text and images on the suggested alternatives to single-use items poster available for businesses, and
 - text and images on the single-use items ban information poster and postcard distributed to businesses prior to the ban coming into effect.
- Sarah Cunneyworth, the City's Accessibility Coordinator, prepared a letter regarding the importance of businesses providing alternative shopping bags with two handles and provided the letter to local businesses.

Recommendation 4:

That the City explore the development of a program that:

- a. Offers free or subsidized single use plastic flexible straws to those who need them in order to offset the costs for people with disabilities who will need to purchase these single use plastic straws independently and that staff report back to City Council by Q2, 2023.

The City's response to recommendation 4 :

- Staff have confirmed with the federal government, that the Regulations do **not** allow a municipal government to sell (including to provide for free or subsidized) SUP flexible straws to its residents.
- City staff have included this advocacy in the letter to the federal government for recommendation #5.

Recommendation 5:

The City write a letter to the Federal Government that:

- a. Speaks to the importance of certain SUP items for people with disabilities
- b. Urges reconsideration for SUP straws to be exempt from restaurants so they can still be available for and provided to customers

The City's response to recommendation 5:

- City staff drafted a letter to the federal government regarding the importance of SUP straws being available in restaurants for people with disabilities based on the feedback received from the AAC.
- It's important to note that the federal government's Single-Use Plastics Prohibition Regulation is already enacted and received Royal Assent.

Questions or comments?

Recommended motion:

That the AAC receive the information presented regarding the City's Single Use Items By-law and that the AAC recommend the letter drafted by City staff be distributed to the Federal Government.