

Single-Use Checkout Bags Reduction Program – Draft Bylaw Commentary and Update

Committee of the Whole meeting – Thursday December 14, 2017.



Purpose

- The purpose of this report is to provide Council with **feedback from retailers on the proposed draft regulatory framework** and implementation plan for single-use checkout bags, and
- the outline for the **engagement and education** approach proposed for 2018.



Background

- On October 26, 2017, Council endorsed a set of recommendations, which directed staff to:
- Engage with stakeholders on the draft Checkout Bag Regulation Bylaw and report back to Committee of the Whole on December 14, 2017 with the following information:
- Measure and report on the performance of the bag regulation program after one year in effect, using waste audits and retailer bag sales data, wherever possible, and analyze and review the complete program with improvement recommendations;
- Include the development of a Single-Use Materials Management Plan in the ongoing development of the City's Sustainable Waste Management Strategy.
- Work with the Province, RecycleBC and other institutions to develop a performance specification for the preferred sustainable reusable bag in order to help business and industry choose amongst options, and also influence bag design sustainability standards.
- ...and that Mayor and Council staff letters requesting comment from other municipalities, regional stakeholders, Province, and others.



The Problem

- **Problem:** too many plastic bags in landfills and as litter
- **Ideal Outcome:**
 - A wholesale shift to reusable bags
 - made and managed sustainably, reused well over 100 times
- **Challenge:**
 - Avoid unintended consequences
 - ie. rebound to excessive use of paper, reusable bags
- **Options on HOW to get there:**
 - **Education and Awareness** alone, may not deliver the behaviour shift and speed desired
 - **Bag fees** can be very effective
 - for some, do not address the wider implications of plastic waste and throw-away consumerism
 - **Bag bans** can also deliver big reductions
 - but are disruptive and can risk other unintended consequences



Hierarchy photo: <http://www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au/About-Us/waste-management-hierarchy>

Stakeholder Engagement

- Engagement Since Oct:
 - Retailer 'round table' discussion
 - Municipality meeting with staff
 - Emails, letters and one-on-one meetings
- Overall Themes:
 - Mandatory Bag Fees (Paper and Reusable)
 - Enforcement and Penalties
 - Bylaw Timings
 - Bag Specification



Proposed Bylaw Amendment Summary

- a. Mandatory Bag Costs:**
 - i. Set minimum checkout paper bag fee of 15 cents, increasing to 25 cents after July 1, 2019.
 - ii. Set minimum reusable checkout bag fee of one dollar, increasing to two dollars after July 1, 2019.
- b. Bag Design Specification:**
 - i. Modify reusable bag performance specification to state "designed and manufactured to be capable of at least 100 uses", until a more robust standard and industry test regime can be developed.
 - ii. Change the term "machine washable" to "washable"
- c. Implementation Timeline:**
 - i. Retain the bylaw implementation date of July 1, 2018.
 - ii. Retain the active enforcement timelines to commence after January 1, 2019.
- d. Enforcement Considerations** (penalties and timelines):
 - i. Introduce a minimum and maximum offence for an individual and corporation.
- e. Bag Exemptions:**
 - i. Add exemptions for live fish, small paper bags and very large plastic bags.
- f. Use of Remaining Bag Stock:** Make provision for bags purchased prior to the first bylaw reading, to be used by retailers, but not permitted after January 1, 2019.



Community Education Campaign

- Retailer and public awareness campaigns are central to the successful roll out of any bag bylaw regulation
- **Approach:**
 1. **Educate:** Make it easy for retail businesses to understand the new Bylaw regulations and make the shift away from single-use check-out bags.
 2. **Normalize:** Normalize the use of reusable shopping bags by residents and visitors to Victoria,
 3. **Promote:** Stimulate a shift away from single-use materials, and help raise awareness that “plastics are precious” and not to be wasted on items that quickly become waste after only a single or few uses.
- **Partner, Educate and Inform:**
 - **Retailers:** provide clear info, toolkit, and support.
 - **Residents:** CBSM / work with community to support change.
 - **Visitors:** partner and inform/educate.
- Strong communications and education action reduces the need for enforcement.



Options

- Options available to Council are summarized as follows:
 - Option 1: Proceed
 - Option 2: Alternative Strategy
 - Option 3: Education only
 - Option 4: No further action
 - Option 5: Combination
- Any combination of the above strategies could be explored further, that aim to address a mix of the following key components:
 - Regulation of single use plastic checkout bags,
 - Corresponding regulations to minimize any excessive paper or reusable bag use;
 - Timeline for implementation, and
 - Education, partnerships, petitioning, and continued waste management strategies.



Recommendations

Council direct staff to:

1. Implement the Checkout Bag Regulation Bylaw, effective July 1, 2018.
2. Deliver the proposed engagement and education program between January and December 2018, and
3. Include in the 2018 the financial plan an allocation of \$30,000 from 2017 surplus to complete the necessary engagement and education programs.



Single-Use Checkout Bag Reduction Program

Bring Your Own Bag

Eco-Friendly reusable bags are best!



Public Meeting – City Hall, October 18, 2017



QUESTIONS/COMMENTARY



Single-Use Plastic Bags



Bag Types: Different Benefits and Impacts

SINGLE USE



HDPE
(conventional
Bag)



PAPER



Biodegradable/
Compostable
etc



LDPE
(glossy, sturdier
Bag)

REUSABLE



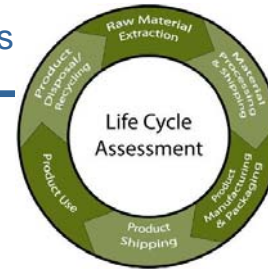
NWPP
(Synthetic Fabric)



Cotton
(Natural Fabric)



Other/Various



Overall Conclusions from Multiple Studies

- All bag types pose negative impacts
- Recycled content matters!
- Plastic bags pose more of a litter problem
- Biodegradable / compostable bags = trouble
- Even paper bags pose larger environmental impacts than plastic bags, in all categories except litter.
- Break Even Point: 1 HDPE GHG=
 - Paper used 3 times
 - LDPE 4 times
 - NWPP 11 times
 - Cotton Bag 131 times



Why are we here?

- **2017 Strategic Plan:**
 - “Develop and implement waste reduction strategies including a phased in ban on single use plastic bags”.



- This meeting is to provide opportunity for public input in advance of **any Council decision to regulate checkout bags**

Objective 11: Steward Water Systems and Waste Streams Responsibly



Next Steps

- Have your say: engage@Victoria.ca, and continued engagement
- October 26, 2017 - Council report on Single Use Checkout Bags
- *Fall 2017 - Draft Bylaw discussion/review/engagement
- *December 2017 – Next report to Council on Bylaw feedback and any recommended changes
- *2018 – Education and awareness campaigns
- *(TBD) - Bylaw implementation

• **Subject to Council decisions, direction and further public input.*



Single Use Plastic Bags – Review

- **Problem:** The need to reduce the volume of single use plastic retail bags
 - Improve wasteful consumer habits
 - reduce landfill and persistent plastic bag litter
- **Single-Use Plastic Retail Bags:**
 - Seen as a symbol of unchecked, wasteful consumer habits
 - Estimated 1-2% of the total landfill waste stream,
 - Per-capita usage rates estimated at 200 bags,
- **Reusable bags are the ideal solution if used a “sufficient” number of times**
 - Any reusable bag should be made from recycled materials, with minimal environmental impact, and then recycled after many re-uses.
 - Reusable bags should be designed for >100 uses



Life Cycle Assessments

Overall Conclusions

- Environmental impacts depend on production process/energy, materials, numbers of re-uses and end-of-life scenario
- Some bag types pose more significant impacts than others
 - Ex. Paper vs HDPE = 14x water pollution, 3x solid waste, 3x GHG
- Plastic bags pose more of a litter problem
- Free, lightweight HDPE bags are more likely to be littered than any reusable bag.
- Paper bags may pose more environmental impacts than plastic bags, in all categories except litter,
 - Due to pulp process energy use, generation of solid waste, and acid-slurry, water pollution impacts.
- **A reusable bag, used a "sufficient" number of times, poses the least environmental impact.**

