

Single-Use Items: New Date for Enforcing Shopping Bag and Beverage Cup By-laws Due to COVID-19 Pandemic

City of Vancouver Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities
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Overview

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Approved Single-use Item By-laws



Foam cups and foam take-out containers

Jan 1, 2020: ban for business licence holders



Plastic straws

Apr 22, 2020: accessibility requirements and ban on plastic and compostable plastic straws



Disposable utensils

Apr 22, 2020: by-request requirement



Disposable cups

Jan 1, 2021: \$0.25 fee on cups, and requirement to report cups distributed (reporting is waived for locations participating in cupshare programs)



Shopping bags

Jan 1, 2021: ban on plastic and compostable plastic shopping bags, and minimum fees on paper and reusable shopping bags (\$0.15 and \$1.00 in 2021, increasing to \$0.25 and \$2.00 in 2022)

City Response to COVID-19

March-April 2020

- City operations shifted to providing essential services
- Foam, straw and utensil by-laws - paused education, outreach and enforcement
- Cup and shopping bag by-laws - paused preparations for education and outreach
- Updated website
 - Information about all single-use item by-law requirements
 - Notification that education, outreach and enforcement had been paused
- Monitored provincial health requirements to ensure City's single-use item by-laws align

Since Summer 2020

- Continuing to monitor provincial health requirements for single-use and reusable items
- Working with Vancouver Coastal Health on safe procedures for reusable cups
- Updating campaign for foam, straws and utensils to reflect COVID-19 requirements
- Resuming development of campaign for cup and shopping bag by-laws

City Response to COVID-19, continued

Since October 2020, the City has communicated that:

- Outreach and education will restart soon to help businesses, non-profits and other organizations comply with the single-use item by-laws
- Due to COVID-19, the City is using discretion on when and where to enforce the single-use item by-laws:
 - Businesses are expected to comply or begin working to comply as soon as it is possible for them
 - Charitable food services may continue to distribute single-use items with food or meals during COVID-19, but are expected to begin working towards compliance as soon as it is possible for them

Feedback from Business Community

- City's intention to use discretion with enforcement for cup and shopping bag by-laws is appreciated, but greater certainty is needed on when it may occur
 - Staff have not heard these concerns for foam, straw and utensil by-laws
- Food and retail sectors are experiencing significant economic strain due to pandemic
 - Concerned about their ability survive this winter with this second wave of COVID-19
 - Adapting to changing Provincial Health Officer orders due to the pandemic can be costly and time-consuming for businesses
 - Although businesses support the single-use item by-laws, they have limited resources and capacity to prepare for them now

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommendation:

- That Council amend the cup and shopping bag by-laws to state the City will not take action to enforce the by-laws until Jan 1, 2022

This means:

- Cup and shopping bag by-laws will still come into effect Jan 1, 2021
- All other by-law requirements will remain the same
- Enforcement for cup and shopping bag by-laws will begin no earlier than Jan 1, 2022

Rationale for Adding Enforcement Date to Cup and Shopping Bag By-laws

- Supports businesses
 - Allows businesses to focus on responding to the pandemic
 - Gives businesses certainty on when enforcement begins
 - Gives businesses an additional year to comply with these by-laws
 - Allows more time for City to work with businesses and help them be well-positioned for compliance

Enforcing the Cup and Shopping Bag By-laws

- If approved by Council, enforcement will begin Jan 1, 2022
- Initial actions will focus on continued education and support
- Escalating enforcement will be reserved for cases of deliberate and harmful non-compliance after all education and outreach efforts have been exhausted

Next Steps: Education and Outreach

- Education and outreach for all by-laws will resume Jan 2021
- City will launch campaign for businesses and general public that builds awareness of:
 - The single-use item by-laws
 - New enforcement date for cup and shopping bag by-laws (subject to Council approval)
 - Cleaning and safety protocols for reusable cups and shopping bags
 - Desired behaviour change
 - City's commitment to reduce plastic waste and single-use items

Questions?



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