

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

3. Repealing Vancouver's Single-Use Beverage Cup Fee

Submitted by: Councillor Bligh

WHEREAS

1. On January 1, 2022, the minimum fee of \$0.25 for each single-use beverage cup distributed under the City's By-laws came into effect (i.e., License By-law No. 4450 and Ticket Offences By-law No. 9360);
2. In the days following the January 1, 2022, implementation of the \$0.25 fee on single-use beverage cups, numerous unintended consequences and publicly-identified concerns became apparent almost immediately and were widely reported in the media and on social media. Not the least of these were the equity impacts that the new fee was having on the most vulnerable persons in our community;
3. On January 25, 2022, in the wake of the single-use beverage cup fee implementation on January 1, 2022, Council unanimously directed staff to report back – on an urgent basis – by or before March 15, 2022, in order to provide Council with a better understanding of the known facts and experiences to date relative to the \$0.25 single-use beverage cup fee;
4. At the March 2, 2022, Standing Committee of Council on Policy and Strategic Priorities, staff reported back to Council (i.e., Agenda Item 1: *Revisiting the City's Single-Use Beverage Cup Fee Policy*), with a number of recommendations including exempting drinks “provided at no cost to the customer from the cup fee requirement,” such as free drink vouchers and monetary gift vouchers, developing low barrier cup-share programs that can be accessed by people experiencing poverty or living with low incomes, and approving, in principle, by-law amendments that require food vendors to accept a customer's reusable cup for in-store orders;
5. The ongoing experience and feedback regarding the City's \$0.25 single-use beverage cup fee clearly indicates that the policy has not been effective in accomplishing its intended objectives (i.e., to change consumer behaviour, reduce the use of single-use beverage cups that ultimately end up in the landfill, and encourage people to switch to reusable cups);
6. Single-use beverage cups are recyclable and they are included in residential blue bin programs, including the City of Vancouver's blue bin program. Once the recycled cups arrive at an end processor, they are shredded and washed and the plastic component separated from the fibre component. The recaptured fibre is a valuable resource;

7. The City has a Vancouver Zero Waste Centre located at 8588 Yukon Street that accepts Printed paper, Paper packaging, Cardboard boxes, Plastic containers, Metal containers, Cartons and paper cups, Glass bottles and jars, Foam packaging, Plastic bags and overwrap, Other Flexible Plastic Packaging;
8. Likewise, Recycle BC has a network of depots across BC where residents can drop off packaging and paper free of charge. Most depots accept all materials including paper, packaging, cardboard boxes, plastic containers, metal containers, cartons and paper cups, non-deposit glass bottles and jars, foam packaging, plastic bags and overwrap, and other flexible plastic packaging;
9. Subsequent to the implementation of the City's \$0.25 fee on single-use beverage cups, Return-It and several companies such as Tim Hortons and Starbucks (with involvement by City) initiated a pilot project to reduce single-use cup waste – see: *Reusable and Single-Use Cup Recycling Pilot* (<https://www.return-it.ca/cups>);
10. Similarly, the Binners' Project, as an example, hosts an annual *Coffee Cup Revolution* event to demonstrate what a coffee cup refund system could achieve, as well as to open the dialogue around how binning can support green communities, and vice versa. *Coffee Cup Revolution* participants exchange tens of thousands of cups during the event for a 10¢ refund. Since the start of the Coffee Cup Revolution, binners in Vancouver have reportedly collected nearly 400,000 coffee cups by way of these annual events;
11. The City remains committed to reducing waste and litter from single-use items as we work toward becoming a zero waste community by 2040, including reducing the use of single-use beverage cups that otherwise end up in the landfill as well as encouraging people to switch to reusable cups as an alternative;
12. Given the overwhelmingly clear, unambiguous evidence that has accumulated over the past year since the introduction of the City's \$0.25 single-use beverage cup fee, notably its failure to change consumer behaviour in the manner intended, it is incumbent upon Council to explore other policy options and pathways in order to achieve the desired and intended waste reduction outcomes.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council instruct the Director of Legal Services to prepare amendments to the License By-law No. 4450 and the Ticket Offences By-law No. 9360 to repeal those sections enacted by Council on January 21, 2020, relating to single-use beverage cups, including any relevant by-law amendments enacted concurrently and/or subsequently, at the earliest possible date but no later than June 1, 2023;

FURTHER THAT staff be directed to report back to Council by 2023 Q4 with policy recommendations and alternative pathways that can effectively, efficiently, and measurably achieve the waste reduction and behaviour change outcomes

anticipated in the implementation of the \$0.25 single-use beverage cup fee, including recycling options and initiatives.

AND FURTHER THAT Council resolve to work with provincial and federal counterparts to facilitate and enable prompt, coordinated action on single-use items toward comprehensive regional, provincial, and national strategies and actions.

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