

Legislation Text

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THE PROPOSED BAN OF SINGLE USE PLASTICS AS IT RELATES TO ACCESSIBILITY

Katherine Siren, Waste Reduction Coordinator provided an update regarding the proposed ban of single use plastics program. Ms. Siren advised that Council directed staff to develop a program to encourage local businesses to discontinue the use of single use plastic as well as implement a voluntary ban of single use plastics at City facilities and City special events.

Ms. Siren explained that a pilot program will focus on three types of single use plastics which include stir sticks, straws and cutlery. She mentioned that the first action of the plan will be to implement the pilot program at select city facilities but locations have not been determined. Ms. Siren described that the single use plastics pilot program will consist of an ask first policy which means that selected single use plastics items will not be provided unless they are requested by the purchaser. Ms. Siren explained that the length of the pilot program has not been determined and the program would allow staff to identify some of the challenges and determine the effectiveness of the policy prior to be expanded to other City facilities.

She described that the second action of the plan would be a pledge program for businesses in the Community to commit enacting the same type of ask first policy similar to the City and those businesses would be recognized for reducing waste.

Ms. Siren advised that the policy is not a complete ban on single use plastics. She explained that City is focusing on a circular economy in terms of waste management which means changing peoples behaviors to reduce the amount of waste that is generated in the municipality.

Cheryl Dillon, Diversity Management and Accessibility Specialist advised that she received a concern from the member of public regarding the ban on single use plastics because of a media story. Ms. Dillon explained that the member of public is a person living with a disability and based on their disability they use single use plastic straws because they are unable to use their hands. She mentioned that the member of the public was concerned that if there is a complete ban on single use plastics, that this would have an impact on their independence.

Katherine Siren explained that the pilot program for single use plastics and communications related to the plan are still being finalized.

Sandra Brunet, Manager of Business Performance and Environmental Sustainability explained that part of the rollout will be to communicate with vendors concerning the pilot program regarding single-use plastics and to ensure whether or not the purchaser has a disability or not, plastic items may be obtained if requested by the public.

The Members of Committee asked a number of questions of Ms. Siren and Ms. Brunet and received responses.