

## **The Markham Declaration for Immediate Action on Single-Use Plastics & Litter**

**WHEREAS** all Canadians have the right to live in clean, healthy and resilient communities, free of litter and single-use plastic-related pollution; and

**WHEREAS** decades of over-consumption of single-use plastics have led to a global environmental crisis with millions of tonnes of single-use plastics annually polluting our communities and waterways; and

**WHEREAS** most litter found during Canadian shoreline clean-ups include plastic bottles and caps, beverage cups and lids, shopping bags, straws, stir sticks, cutlery, take-out containers, etc.; and

**WHEREAS** single-use plastics are problematic because they slowly breakdown in the environment and are consumed by wildlife and marine life with profoundly negative impacts to our food chain and ultimately human health; and

**WHEREAS** the majority of single-use plastics originate from retail stores, food premises such as restaurants and grocery stores, convenience shops, beer & liquor outlets, temporary event vendors, etc.; and

**WHEREAS** businesses that supply or offer single-use plastics do not factor in the total life-cycle environmental costs of these items, such as litter clean-up and disposal, as well as their toxic impact on humans, wildlife, marine life, soil, and water; and

**WHEREAS** in a recent national poll conducted by Friends of the Earth, 80 percent of Canadians support a ban on the production and use of single-use disposable plastic containers and packaging; and

**WHEREAS** the Canadian and Ontario governments have announced their intentions to address single-use plastics, but have taken no immediate concrete action; and

**WHEREAS** local governments like the City of Markham have taken a leadership role to mitigate pollution with bold action on textiles, waste diversion, air quality, and pesticide reduction; and

**WHEREAS** Markham, its residents and innovative business leaders are committed to taking immediate action to reduce single-use plastics; and

**WHEREAS** the cost of inaction is dramatically greater than the cost of action and, as a community, there is recognition that we are all in this together; therefore,

### **BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

1. Markham Council declares that, within three months of the adoption of this declaration the following single-use plastics must not be used by businesses serving consumers in Markham:
  - a) **Plastic film retail shopping bags.** If a retail shopping bag is necessary, it would be permissible to substitute a non-plastic alternative to be provided on request. Charging a fee for such a product would also be permissible,

- b) **Plastic straws, plastic stir sticks, plastic drink stoppers and other similar products.** The exception would be for medical and accessibility purposes. If such products are necessary, it would be permissible to substitute a non-plastic alternative to be provided on request,
  - c) **Plastic, plastic-coated, or polystyrene take-out containers and lids.** For example, coffee cups and restaurant take-home food containers. Non plastic or non plastic-coated alternatives would be permitted,
  - d) **Plastic six-pack rings or similar items used for carrying pop, beer and other products.** Substituting them with non-plastic alternatives would be permitted,
  - e) **Single-portion condiments and single-use plastic utensils.** They may be supplied to consumers on request.
2. That this declaration applies all to retail stores, food premises such as restaurants and grocery stores, convenience shops, beer & liquor outlets, temporary event vendors, etc. across the City. Markham will monitor for non-compliance and use its enforcement powers to achieve compliance, and
3. That this declaration be forwarded to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Premiers and Ministers of the Environment in each of the provinces and territories, party leaders in the 14 jurisdictions, all municipalities in Canada, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, all provincial and municipal associations, and all impacted Markham businesses.

**Dated:**

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Frank Scarpitti, Mayor

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Don Hamilton, Deputy Mayor

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Jack Heath, Regional Councillor  
(Chair, Waste Diversion Committee)

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Joe Li, Regional Councillor

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Jim Jones, Regional Councillor

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Keith Irish, Ward 1 Councillor

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Alan Ho, Ward 2 Councillor

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Reid McAlpine, Ward 3 Councillor

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Karen Rea, Ward 4 Councillor

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Andrew Keyes, Ward 5 Councillor

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Amanda Collucci, Ward 6 Councillor

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Khalid Usman, Ward 7 Councillor

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Isa Lee, Ward 8 Councillor

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## FACT SHEET

### WHAT WE PRODUCE

- Globally, more than 8 billion tonnes of plastic has been produced. Nearly half of that plastic was made in the last 15 years.<sup>i</sup>
- In 2015, more than 381 million tonnes of plastic was produced worldwide. That's more plastic than the weight of the entire human population!<sup>ii</sup>
- Every minute, 1 million plastic bags are used globally. On average, these bags are used for just 12 to 15 minutes before being thrown away.<sup>iii</sup>
- Canadians are some of the highest consumers of single use plastics, with 15 billion plastic bags used every year and 57 million plastic straws daily.<sup>iv</sup>

### WHAT WE THROW AWAY

- Approximately 60% of all plastic ever made is now in landfills or in the environment.<sup>v</sup>
- Approximately 40% of the plastic produced each year is packaging, used once and thrown away.<sup>vi</sup>
- Only nine per cent of the 3.2 million tonnes of plastic waste Canadians produce each year is recycled.<sup>vii</sup>
- The top plastic items found during shoreline clean-ups across Canada include food wrappers, plastic bottles and caps, beverage cups and lids, shopping bags, straws, stir sticks, cutlery and take out containers<sup>viii</sup>;

### WHERE MOST OF IT ENDS UP

- An estimated 8 million tonnes of plastic ends up in our oceans each year<sup>ix</sup> and 10,000 tonnes in the Great Lakes.<sup>x</sup>
- The vast majority (89 per cent) of plastic waste found at the bottom of the ocean is single-use (think beverage bottles, food wrappers and plastic bags).<sup>xi</sup>
- By 2050, it's estimated there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish, by weight.<sup>xii</sup>

### WHAT OTHER JURISDICTIONS ARE DOING

- The European Union has pledged to:
  - Ban [single-use](#) plastic items such as plastic cutlery (chopsticks, forks, knives and spoons), single-use plastic plates, plastic straws, cotton bud sticks made of plastic, oxo-degradable plastics and food containers and expanded polystyrene cups, and plastic balloon sticks by 2021
  - Member States are required to achieve a 90 percent collection target for plastic bottles by 2029 and 77 percent by 2025
  - Requirement for plastic bottles to contain at least 30 percent recycled content by 2030 and 25 percent recycled content by 2025.
  - Extending producer responsibility laws to litter and putting more pressure on manufacturers of tobacco filters, fishing gear and other common littered products to bear environmental responsibility.
  - All beverage containers up to 3 litres will be required to have tethered caps and lids.
- According to the United Nations, over 60 countries have introduced bans and levies to curb single-use plastic waste and many more at subnational levels. This includes many measures taken in Canada and the United States at both the local and state level of government.

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- <sup>i</sup> 10,000 Changes, *Plastic Facts and Stats*. [www.10000changes.ca](http://www.10000changes.ca).
- <sup>ii</sup> 10,000 Changes, *Plastic Facts and Stats*. [www.10000changes.ca](http://www.10000changes.ca).
- <sup>iii</sup> 10,000 Changes, *Plastic Facts and Stats*. [www.10000changes.ca](http://www.10000changes.ca).
- <sup>iv</sup> Government of Canada, *Canada to ban harmful single-use plastics and hold companies responsible for plastic waste* (10 June 2019).
- <sup>v</sup> 10,000 Changes, *Plastic Facts and Stats*. [www.10000changes.ca](http://www.10000changes.ca).
- <sup>vi</sup> 10,000 Changes, *Plastic Facts and Stats*. [www.10000changes.ca](http://www.10000changes.ca).
- <sup>vii</sup> 10,000 Changes, *Plastic Facts and Stats*. [www.10000changes.ca](http://www.10000changes.ca).
- <sup>viii</sup> CBC, *Nestlé, Tim Hortons named Canada's top plastic polluters* (11 October 2018).
- <sup>ix</sup> J. R. Jambeck et al., *Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean* (Science, 13 February 2015).
- <sup>x</sup> M. J. Hoffman and E. Hittinger, *Inventory and transport of plastic debris in the Laurentian Great Lakes* (Marine Pollution Bulletin, Vol 115, 15 February 2017).
- <sup>xi</sup> 10,000 Changes, *Plastic Facts and Stats*. [www.10000changes.ca](http://www.10000changes.ca).
- <sup>xii</sup> World Economic Forum and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, *New Plastics Economy: Rethinking the future of plastics* (19 January 2016).