



**General Committee  
Monday May 4, 2020**

**Single Use Plastics  
Reduction Strategy –  
Phase 1**



# 1. Purpose of Report

- ✓ Provide an overview of the Single-use Plastic (SUP) issue
- ✓ Review how other governments are addressing the problem
- ✓ Provide options and recommendations for a phased approach that demonstrates leadership in the reduction of SUPs at the local level.





## 2. Environmental Impact of SUP's

SUPs are plastic items that are used only once before being discarded.

Common single-use plastics:

- Beverage/party cups and lids
- Coffee/hot beverage stoppers
- Straws, stir sticks, cutlery
- Styrofoam packaging and take-out food containers
- Grocery/produce bags

Top reasons these items are particularly problematic:

1. Inherently designed to be discarded immediately after one use
2. Have limited reuse, recyclability or compost options
3. End up as litter on roads, parks, trails and in creeks

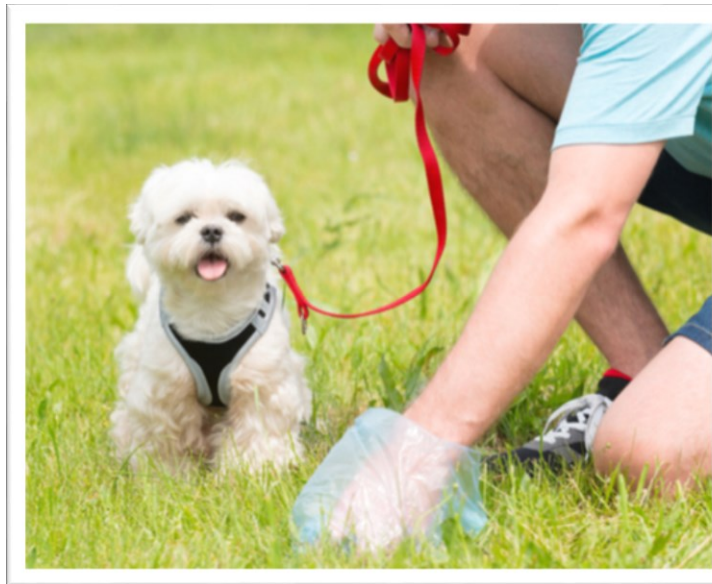




### 3. Exclusions

Targeted list of SUPs does not include:

- Dog waste bags are compostable in Markham's Green Bin
- Water/pop bottles are recyclable in all municipal Blue Box systems
  - In 2008, Council endorsed a Zero Waste policy, which encourages refillables and restricts the use of single use bottled water when potable water is available.





## 4. Government Approach to SUP

Federal Government announced a ban on harmful single-use plastics as early as 2021 under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

- Provincial Government released a discussion paper on reducing litter and waste, which included recognition of the need to reduce plastic waste:
  - Reducing plastic waste
  - Reducing and diverting food and organic waste
  - Reducing litter
  - Increasing waste reduction efforts - Potentially invoking measures that include deposit return systems and bans or other restrictions on specific types of SUPs
- Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland & Labrador have enacted province-wide bans on the free distribution of plastic shopping bags



## 5. Municipal Approach to SUP

Municipalities across Canada have implemented or are in the process of implementing programs to reduce the prevalence of SUPs in their communities.

Controls on plastic bags and other forms of SUP's are currently being considered by Toronto and Edmonton.

Vancouver is putting in place strong controls on many forms of SUPs including straws, take-out food containers, cups, cutlery and bags.



Most municipal controls that have been introduced are in the form of bans on the free distribution of plastic shopping bags.



## 6. Options for Markham to Reduce Single Use Plastics

**Facilities  
& Public  
Events**

**Promotion  
&  
Education**

**Curbside  
Ban of  
Packaging  
Styrofoam**





## A. Facilities

- Significant reduction or complete elimination of SUPs from Markham facilities would:
  - Publicly demonstrate the importance the City places on environmental stewardship and leadership
  - Contribute to the success of the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan: Building Markham's Future Together in protection of the natural environment.

### Staff Recommendations:

- Review all municipal processes and policies that generate the use of non-essential SUP products on municipal property
- Identify opportunities to work with the appropriate departments to reduce, remove or eliminate SUP products
- Replace SUP items with viable paper based options including plastic cups, stir sticks, straws, cutlery, food plates and plastic bags.





## B. Public Education

- City undertake a public education program to raise awareness of the importance and benefits of SUP reduction in our community. This program would also be used to prepare residents for the potential regulations being brought forward at the federal level and provincial levels.
- Public education via the City's website and through social media channels.
- Information would be provided to City employees via online training, incentives and other means to raise awareness of the SUP reduction objectives of the City and how employees can reduce SUPs during their workday.





## C. Curbside Ban of Packaging Styrofoam

Markham's Waste Diversion Strategies:

- In 2013 banned electronic materials from curbside collection.
- In 2017 banned household textiles from curbside collection resulting in 17 million pounds of diverted textile material.

A ban on the curbside collection of packaging Styrofoam is a bold step that would help raise awareness on the recyclability of this material.

Packaging Styrofoam - Large pieces that encase electronic equipment, furniture, and appliances; *not* food packaging such as meat trays or take-out containers.

- Styrofoam is not accepted in the York Region's blue box system.
- Residents are encouraged to take this material to Recycling Depots or place in clear bag garbage.

### Staff Recommendations:

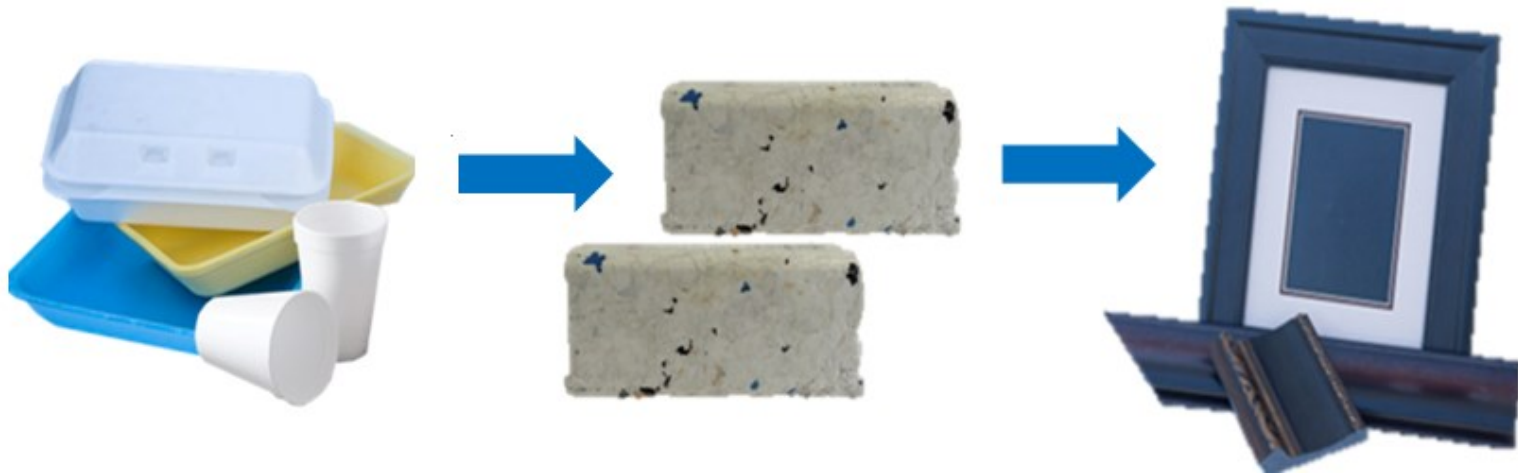
- Introduce a packaging Styrofoam ban effective Tuesday October 19, 2020 - the first collection day during Canada's annual Waste Reduction Week.
- Launch an extensive promotion & education program over the summer of 2020





## 7. Markham's Polystyrene Foam Densifier

- ✓ Densifier is located at the rear of 8100 Warden Ave.
- ✓ Markham was the first Ontario community to establish a densification program for residential polystyrene
- ✓ Clean polystyrene (Styrofoam) is collected at all Markham Recycling Depots and compacted into bricks for transportation
- ✓ Recycled into building material, such as picture frames, crown moulding, plastic lumber and baseboards
- ✓ Has capacity to process additional material





## 8. Markham's Polystyrene Foam Densifier Video

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/sl8pvhozcdy6hrt/Markham%20Polystyrene%20Recycling%20Program%202012.mp4?dl=0>



## 9. CONCLUSION

- While senior levels of government have announced their intention to implement measures to reduce SUP material, Ontario municipalities are actively considering how best to proceed with local level programs and initiatives.
- It is important to recognize that many local businesses and organizations are already leading by example. Early adopters of plastic reduction initiatives like A&W Restaurants, Whole Foods, the LCBO, Sobeys and many others have either taken steps to substitute SUPs with other types of materials or provide products that can be reused.

Through these recommended actions, Markham has an opportunity to not only become part of this movement, but to be recognized as a leader in community action to reduce SUPs in the environment.





## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) **THAT** the report entitled “Single Use Plastic Reduction Strategy – Phase 1” be received;
- 2) **AND THAT** the Waste and Environmental Management Department undertake a review of all municipal facilities for opportunities to eliminate or reduce non-essential single use plastic (“SUP”) products and collaborate with the appropriate staff to source alternative products;
- 3) **AND THAT** a community-wide education program be implemented to raise awareness of the SUP issue and provide options for SUP reduction;
- 4) **AND THAT** effective October 20, 2020 (Waste Reduction Week) packaging Styrofoam be banned from curbside collection;
- 5) **AND THAT** staff report back on the results of Phase 1 actions and outline Phase 2 recommendations regarding the implementation of a potential municipal by-law or other methods to reduce plastic retail shopping bags and polystyrene convenience food containers from distribution in Markham including the estimated financial impact and legal implications associated with the implementation and enforcement of a by-law.
- 6) **AND THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to York Region and the local municipalities for their information;
- 7) **AND FURTHER THAT** Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.