



To the Economic and Development Services Committee,

Mind Your Plastic is a registered Canadian charity that started in 2016 with a mission to eliminate plastic pollution in Canada.

We collaborate with municipal governments to implement policies that better regulate materials used in our economy, work alongside Canadian businesses to give consumers better plastic-free choices, and provide direct action programming through our Circular Economy Ambassador Program for youth. As an organization, we are moving towards a plastic pollution-free future for #PlasticFreeLandAndSeas.

In our work with municipalities, we focus on eliminating plastic waste in Canadian cities and towns by introducing single-use plastic (SUP) free event policies. Plastic-free policies can provide guidelines for event holders looking to hold events in their municipality. Working with event holders, municipalities can use the policy to request a plan that demonstrates how the event will be planned to prevent the use of single-use plastic and emphasize reusables, particularly for food and beverage. Mind Your Plastic is working with municipalities to develop policy that makes SUP-free events the norm in your community. This is a beneficial opportunity for municipalities to demonstrate their commitment to going plastic-free and work with local stakeholders to encourage plastic waste reduction at the events hosted in their communities.

The Plastic Waste Problem at Community Events

Local events such as food festivals, outdoor concerts, and other community gatherings are significant contributors to plastic waste. Outdoor music festivals, and food events like ribfest or beerfest create thousands of pieces of single-use plastic waste— from cups to water bottles to plates and cutlery, each interaction someone has with a vendor results in waste.

Large municipalities can host upwards of 100 community events during the outdoor summer event season with thousands to millions of attendees. Most local events take place on public streets and parks where permits are required, which is a great opportunity for municipalities to be gatekeepers and prevent large amounts of plastic waste. Events can generate more than 20,000 tonnes of waste annually per municipality. A larger municipality the size of Montreal hosts over 5.9 million people every summer and can even produce upwards of 45,000 tonnes of waste in just one event season. This is a staggering amount of waste created during our community events and celebrations. Most of this waste produced at community events is made from single-use materials, which often get landfilled or end up in the environment as pollution.

The Reuse Solution

A single-use plastic reduction strategy is largely ineffective if the bylaw does not mandate the correct alternatives. The consequence of many single-use plastic bans has been a shift towards



other single-use, paper, or compostable solutions. These alternatives do not reduce the amount of waste we produce, and are not circular solutions for our single-use plastic problem. The ultimate goal of Mind Your Plastic's work and advocacy is to prioritize reduction of single-use waste by emphasizing the necessity of reusable materials and packaging.

Events are a great opportunity to adopt reusable materials and infrastructure, as local events typically take place in one centralized location, which allows reusables to be easily tracked and returned throughout an event. Reuse is also a great option for accessibility purposes, as most people can easily bring their own cup or mug to use at an event. There are so many fantastic reuse models and services available that are not only better for the environment, but also present a beneficial business case for vendors.

Mind Your Plastic's Work

Currently, we are working with the Town of Ajax, Ontario to assist in implementing their [Corporate Ban on Single-Use Plastics](#), which has a particular emphasis on reduction at events hosted at municipal properties. Mind Your Plastic is working to deliver an event planning toolkit and educational resources for businesses and residents that outline the benefits of reusable alternatives. Through this educational and outreach work, we are also hosting a webinar series with the Town of Ajax to further discuss plastic waste reduction and pollution issues with businesses and residents in the community.

While the bylaw adopted by Ajax is not identical to the plastic-free event policy proposed by Mind Your Plastic, both are largely focused on reducing plastic waste in our municipalities. We believe that through a plastic-free event policy, municipalities can take a first step to address a large source of single-use waste, while implementing better alternatives. This type of policy also allows for the freedom to find innovative solutions and reusable alternatives that are appropriate for the event size, its vendors, and the attendees.

Mind Your Plastic is presenting this letter to the Economic and Development Services Committee with the intention of inquiring about whether this is a policy the Committee would be interested in adopting in Oshawa. We believe it would be a great opportunity to meaningfully reduce the plastic waste generated at events in your municipality.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Michelle Brake, Environmental Policy Analyst
Mind Your Plastic
michelle@mindyourplastic.ca