

To: Economic and Development Services Committee

From: Warren Munro, HBA, MCIP, RPP, Commissioner,
Economic and Development Services Department

Report Number: ED-23-188

Date of Report: October 11, 2023

Date of Meeting: October 16, 2023

Subject: Mind Your Plastic - Potential Adoption of a Plastic Free Event
Policy in Oshawa for Single Use Plastics

Ward: All Wards

File: 12-05 3554

1.0 Purpose

On September 11, 2023, the Economic and Development Services Committee considered Report ED-23-173 (previously OEAC-23-34) from the Oshawa Environmental Advisory Committee ("O.E.A.C.") and referred it to staff for a report.

Report ED-23-173 is O.E.A.C.'s response to Correspondence ED-23-108 from Mind Your Plastic ("M.Y.P."), requesting that the Economic and Development Services Committee of the City of Oshawa consider the adoption of a plastic-free event policy.

The purpose of this Report is to provide information and a recommendation concerning a potential plastic-free event policy for the City of Oshawa.

Attachment 1 is a copy of Correspondence OEAC-23-25 (previously ED-23-108) dated June 6, 2023 from M.Y.P. requesting that the Economic and Development Services Committee consider the adoption of a plastic-free event policy for the City of Oshawa.

Attachment 2 is a copy of Report ED-23-173 submitted by O.E.A.C. to the Economic and Development Services Committee in response to Correspondence ED-23-108 from M.Y.P.

Attachment 3 is a copy of Report DS-19-101 dated May 22, 2019 regarding the Blue Communities Project and potential impacts on banning the sale of bottled water at City events and facilities. Owing to its length, a copy of DS-19-101 is not attached but can be viewed at the following link:

https://app.oshawa.ca/agendas/Development_Services/2019/05-27/REPORT_DS-19-101.pdf.

2.0 Recommendation

That the Economic and Development Services Committee recommend to City Council:

1. That Mind Your Plastic be requested to make a presentation to the Oshawa Environmental Advisory Committee on the outcome of the Town of Ajax Plastic Reduction and Awareness Toolkit and Opportunities to implement a similar toolkit in Oshawa.
2. That Mind Your Plastic be requested to make a presentation by the end of the 2nd Quarter of 2024.
3. That the Oshawa Environmental Advisory Committee be directed to report to the Economic and Development Services Committee on the results of the presentation.

3.0 Executive Summary

Not applicable.

4.0 Input From Other Sources

The following have been consulted in the preparation of this Report:

- Chief Administrative Officer
- Commissioner, Corporate and Finance Services
- City Solicitor

4.1 Oshawa Environmental Advisory Committee

The O.E.A.C. assists City Council, staff and the community with respect to the protection, enhancement, restoration, management and appreciation of the natural and built environments. O.E.A.C. activities help to advance the goals of the Oshawa Strategic Plan.

On May 8, 2023, the Economic and Development Services Committee referred Correspondence ED-23-108 from M.Y.P. to O.E.A.C. for consideration and comment, regarding the potential adoption of a plastic-free events policy by the City of Oshawa.

On June 6, 2023, O.E.A.C. considered Correspondence ED-23-108 and formed a working group to review and provide comments on the subject matter for consideration by the Economic and Development Services Committee.

On September 5, 2023, O.E.A.C.'s working group submitted their comments via Report OEAC-23-34 (see Attachment 2) and O.E.A.C. made the following recommendation to the Economic and Development Services Committee:

“That Report OEAC-23-34 be submitted as the Oshawa Environmental Advisory Committee’s comments and input concerning Correspondence ED-23-108 regarding a Policy banning single-use plastics.”

On September 11, 2023, the Economic and Development Services Committee referred OEAC-23-34 (now ED-23-173) to staff for a report.

5.0 Analysis

5.1 Mind Your Plastic

M.Y.P. is a not-for-profit, registered Canadian charity that started in 2016 with a mission to eliminate plastic pollution in Canada. M.Y.P. collaborates with municipal governments to implement policies that better regulate materials used in our economy, and works alongside Canadian businesses to give consumers better plastic-free choices.

M.Y.P. focuses on eliminating plastic waste in Canadian cities and towns by introducing single-use plastic-free event policies. According to M.Y.P., plastic-free policies can provide guidelines for event holders looking to hold events in their municipality. Municipalities who choose to adopt a plastic-free event policy could request a plan from event holders that demonstrates how the event will be planned to prevent the use of single-use plastics and emphasize reusables, particularly for food and beverage.

M.Y.P. is currently working to deliver an event planning toolkit and educational resources for businesses and residents that outline the benefits of reusable alternatives. M.Y.P. is 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.

5.2 Regulatory Framework

5.2.1 Environment and Climate Change Canada

In October 2020, Environment and Climate Change Canada (“E.C.C.C.”) released a Science Assessment of Plastic Pollution, which revealed that plastic is polluting our rivers, lakes and oceans, harming wildlife, and generating microplastics in the water we use and drink.

In addition, the E.C.C.C. announced proposed next steps to achieve the goal of zero plastic waste by 2030. One element of the approach was the proposal to ban or restrict the use of certain single-use plastics where there is evidence that they are found in the environment, are often not recycled, and have readily available and viable alternatives.

On June 22, 2022, E.C.C.C. published the Single-Use Plastics Prohibition Regulations in the Canada Gazette, Part II, which officially prohibits the manufacture, import and sale of the following six (6) single-use plastic items:

- Checkout bags;
- Cutlery;
- Foodservice ware;
- Ring carriers;
- Stir sticks; and,
- Straws.

Staff note that the Single-Use Plastics Prohibition Regulations did not include a prohibition on plastic bottles.

To enable the industry to adapt to the changes, the regulations will be implemented on a staggered timeline as outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Single-Use Plastic Prohibitions Coming Into Force

Item	Manufacture and Import for Sale in Canada	Sale	Manufacture, Import and Sale for Export
Checkout bags, cutlery, foodservice ware, stir sticks, straws	December 20, 2022	December 20, 2023	December 20, 2025
Ring Carriers	June 20, 2023	June 20, 2024	December 20, 2025
Flexible straws packaged with beverage containers	Not applicable.	June 20, 2024	December 20, 2025

5.2.2 Province of Ontario

The Province of Ontario regulates and oversees waste management in Ontario, including recycling programs. The Made in Ontario Environment Plan aims to shift the responsibility to the producers of products and packaging related to single-use plastics and other items, making them fully responsible for managing the life cycle of their products.

This approach is referred to as Extended Producer Responsibility (“E.P.R.”). E.P.R. defines the responsibility that manufacturers, importers, and brand owners have to reduce the environmental impacts generated by their products as well as their packaging.

Under the E.P.R. model, the Provincial government is shifting responsibility to the producer to manage the life cycle of their products by making the producer set up free collection networks across the Province and to ensure that materials collected are reused and/or correctly recycled. In addition work is being undertaken to transition the cost of the blue box program away from municipal taxpayers and to make producers of these products fully responsible for collecting single-use items.

On June 3, 2021, the Province finalized the blue box regulations that will make producers responsible for blue box materials under the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016.

This model aims to improve recycling across the Province by:

- Standardizing what can be recycled;

- Accepting single-use and packaging products such as paper and plastic cups, foils, trays, bags and boxes sold for home use;
- Collecting single-use items that are distributed or sold together food and beverage products, like stir sticks, straws, cutlery and plates;
- Expanding blue box collection to all homes, apartments, schools and specified long-term care and retirement facilities; and,
- Expanding collection to more parks, playgrounds and transit stations so there are more opportunities to recycle on the go.

The regulations also aim to remove the cost burden from municipalities. The E.P.R. came into effect on July 1, 2023 and will be fully transitioned by January 1, 2026.

5.2.3 Region of Durham

On April 1, 2019, the Region of Durham initiated a process to take steps necessary to eliminate single-use plastics at Regional Headquarters, resulting in the following outcomes:

- Bottled water (with the exception of carbonated water) is no longer being sold;
- Take out containers from the deli area and hot table in the cafeteria are now compostable; and,
- Plastic straws have been replaced with compostable paper straws.

However, other bottled beverages (i.e. pop, juice, etc.) continue to be sold at Regional Headquarters at this time.

The Region of Durham has also approved the 2022 to 2040 Long-Term Waste Management Plan and the associated 2022 to 2026 Action Plan. These plans focus on maximizing the diversion of all waste, including single-use plastics, by identifying ways in which waste can be used as a resource in today's economy, establishing enhanced community education and outreach opportunities and working directly with E.P.R. participants to establish more sustainable alternatives.

5.2.4 City of Oshawa

On June 10, 2019, City Council considered Report DS-19-101 concerning the Blue Communities Project (see Attachment 3).

The Blue Community Project is a joint initiative by the Council of Canadians, the Blue Planet Project and the Canadian Union of Public Employees aimed at protecting and promoting public water resources. Furthermore, the project encourages municipalities to become a Blue Community by implementing the following three actions:

1. Recognizing water and sanitation as human rights;
2. Banning or phasing out the sale of bottled water in municipal facilities and at municipal events; and,

3. Promoting publicly financed, owned, and operated water and wastewater services.

Ultimately, Report DS-19-101 was received for information by City Council, in consideration of the impacts identified by staff in the event bottled water were to be banned at City facilities and events, including financial impacts as a result of existing vendor contracts in place at a variety of City facilities.

It is important to note, however, that the City has already taken the following steps to eliminate the single-use of plastic bottled water at all meetings of Council, Committees and Standing Committees:

- Single-use plastic water bottles are no longer purchased and provided at Council or Committee meetings;
- Water jugs and glasses are now available at all Council and Committee meetings; and,
- A fully accessible water fountain is located outside Council Chambers and is equipped with a spout for refilling reusable water bottles.

Additional City initiatives to promote the use of municipal water instead of single-use plastics include:

- Most floors in City Hall now include staff access to a filtered drinking water tap that is designed and sized to facilitate the filling of reusable water bottles and containers.
- The reference document entitled “Sustainable Meeting Guidelines for City Staff” is available on iConnect and identifies sustainable options related to food and beverage consumption (i.e. using water jugs and glasses for staff meetings as an alternative to single-use plastic bottles).
- Water fountains or fillable stations are available at various City facilities.

Further, on April 23, 2019, Council endorsed comments contained in Report CS-19-52 dated April 17, 2019 on the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks’ discussion paper entitled “Reducing Litter and Waste in Our Communities”. Report CS-19-52 included the following comments related to single-use plastics:

- The Province should eliminate single-use items;
- A strategy that initiates a cultural shift to reduce litter is required, including a review of take-out, single-use items and over-packaging; and,
- The Province should consider fees which would be collected when purchasing take-out or single-use items.

5.3 Position on Mind Your Plastic’s Proposal

In addition to considering Council’s position established pursuant to Reports DS-19-101 and CS-19-52 in 2019, City staff have reviewed and considered M.Y.P.’s recent request in relation to the prohibition contemplated by the E.C.C.C. Accordingly, it would be

appropriate to review the new legislation with the lens of M.Y.P. applied. This is best accomplished by requesting M.Y.P. to co-host a webinar series with O.E.A.C.

6.0 Financial Implications

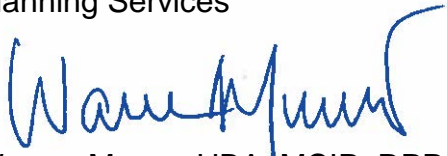
There are no financial implications associated with the recommendation in this Report.

7.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan

The recommendation in this Report advances the Accountable Leadership and Environmental Responsibility goals of the Oshawa Strategic Plan.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Goodeve', with a stylized, flowing script.

Tom Goodeve, M.Sc.Pl., MCIP, RPP, Director,
Planning Services

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Warren Munro', with a stylized, flowing script.

Warren Munro, HBA, MCIP, RPP, Commissioner,
Economic and Development Services Department



To the Economic and Development Services Committee,

Item: ED-23-188
Attachment 1

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

**Oshawa Environmental Advisory Committee (OEAC):
Report from the Mind Your Plastic Working Group
September 5, 2023**

**Item: ED-23-188
Attachment 2**

Members: Emily Posteraro (Chair), Valerie Bowler, Robert Mullins

Recommendations Implications:

- That the committee adopt the following comments for submission to the City of Oshawa in response to the Mind Your Plastic Correspondence Referral from the Economic and Development Services Committee on behalf of the Oshawa Environmental Advisory Committee

Budget Implications:

None.

Overview

Mind Your Plastic is a federal not-for-profit organization established in 2016. Their correspondence with the City of Oshawa Economic and Development Services Committee, which inquired if the City would adopt a Policy Banning Single-Use Plastics, and was referred to the OEAC for comment at the June 2023 OEAC meeting.

The proposed *Plastic-Free Events Policy* is one of three campaigns led by Mind Your Plastic. The goal of the policy is to reduce waste, introduce benefits of using reusable packaging at municipal events, and for the group to build partnerships with municipalities. As the organization stated in their correspondence with the Economic and Development Services Committee, “events are a great opportunity to adopt reusable materials and infrastructure, as [they] typically take place in one centralized location, which allows reusables to be easily tracked and returned throughout an event.” Oshawa has a number of large public events throughout the summer where this policy could be implemented, such as the Peony Festival, Fiesta Week, Canada Day, and the Oshawa Rotary Ribfest to name a few.

Within Durham Region, Mind Your Plastic has worked with the Town of Ajax to create a *Plastic Awareness and Reduction Toolkit*. The document offers information for both individuals and businesses to reduce their usage of single-use plastics (SUPs) at events and large gatherings. The Town of Ajax has *not* adopted the *Plastic-Free Events Policy*, which is what is being proposed to the City of Oshawa.

General Comments:

1. The Working Group supports Mind Your Plastic in the presentation of their letter to the Economic and Development Services Committee.
2. The City of Oshawa already has water bottle filling stations and water fountains at Lakeview Park for the Canada Day event. This is a good first step towards reducing waste, beginning with plastic bottles, which are a ubiquitous form of SUPs. The City could go above and beyond by introducing a *Plastic-Free Events Policy*, for example by partnering with a company that provides reusable items (like plates, cups and cutlery) for large public events (examples of this can be found on page 12 of the Town of Ajax's *Plastic Awareness and Reduction Toolkit*). This policy would make Oshawa stand out as a leader on sustainability within Durham Region, lessen the burden on our municipal waste system, and set an example for residents to follow in their everyday lives.
3. The Working Group suggests that the City perform a waste audit of SUPs for its events over the course of one calendar year and present the results to the OEAC, as a step towards further reducing SUPs.
4. Drawing on the data from the waste audit, we recommend that the City works with Mind Your Plastic to implement a *Plastic-Free Events Policy*.