



Report to Council From the Office of Mayor Rob Vagramov

Date: September 16, 2020
Subject: Finally Banning Single-Use Plastics

Purpose

To restart, and complete, the initiative to ban single use plastics in Port Moody.

Recommendation

THAT staff report back with a bylaw to ban single use plastics as recommended in the report dated September 16, 2020 from Mayor Rob Vagramov regarding Finally Banning Single-Use Plastics;

AND THAT the report include the exploration of a transition period involving fees on single use plastics, and subsidies for local businesses that choose to switch early;

AND THAT a letter be written to the Province of British Columbia and Government of Canada to request a ban of single use plastic items and support affected small businesses.

Background

In 2017, conversations around banning plastic bags and other single use plastic items in Port Moody began at the Youth Focus Committee, ultimately culminating in a series of motions that made their way to the Lower Mainland LGA (Local Government Association), then the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, by way of City Council.

Since that time, the initiative was put on hold due to a successful court challenge by the Canadian Plastic Bag Association, which challenged the City of Victoria's proposed bag ban, as well as a potential regional approach to the regulation of this environmental menace.

Discussion

Recently, the Province of British Columbia announced a major breakthrough on the matter of single use plastics, with the Ministry of Environment approving a number of pending initiatives from Victoria, Vancouver, Richmond, Saanich, Tofino and Ucluelet. This has effectively created a framework for local governments to regulate single use plastics, and this report recommends throwing Port Moody's hat in the ring with a local transition away from these unsustainable items.

Given the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated economic devastation, this report recommends exploring a transition period as follows:

Stage 1 – Education distributed to local businesses informing them of the City’s timeline for ban

Stage 2 – Fee schedule where a consumer-facing upcharge could be charged to transactions involving single use plastics, then used to fund a subsidy to compliant local businesses (pending legal review, may not be possible)

Stage 3 – End of fees and subsidies (if possible), full ban comes into effect

Should a legal review render Stage 2 impossible, Staff would be expected to inform Council during their report, and instead report back on proceeding with a two-stage approach instead.

Financial Implications

Staff time in compiling a report.

Council Strategic Plan Objectives

The resolutions in this report are consistent with the following Strategic Plan points:

- Inspire environmental actions and advocacy
- Reduce the City’s impact on the planet
- Review and update existing environmental policies on a regular basis to find leadership opportunities
- Broaden the City’s sustainability programs
- Address global climate change with local actions

Attachment

1. Report dated October 30, 2017 from Councillor Rob Vagramov regarding A Call to End the Plastic Bag – Bring Your Own Bag Bylaw.