

# SINGLE-USE ITEMS BUSINESS SURVEY SUMMARY

This report summarizes findings from The Regional Municipality of York's Single-Use Items Business Survey conducted February 21 to April 8, 2022.

## ABOUT THE SURVEY

York Region and its [local cities and towns](#) surveyed business communities to inform strategy development to help businesses reduce their reliance on single-use items like plastic cutlery and takeout cups. Reducing single-use items is an important aspect of the [SM4RT Living Plan](#), York Region's Waste Management Master Plan.

The purpose of the survey was to identify and understand:

- How businesses currently use and distribute single-use items
- What barriers businesses may have to reducing single-use items or allowing customers to use their own reusable items
- If businesses support voluntary programs to reduce single-use items
- What resources or method of public recognition would be most valuable to businesses

Survey results will help the Region and local cities and towns:

- Measure the level of interest and support from businesses to reduce single-use items
- Develop necessary tools to support and assist businesses in implementing an 'Ask First' or 'by-request'\* policy for items like plastic straws, bags, cutlery etc. and/or a 'bring your own' policy for items like reusable coffee mugs, bags and straws
- Establish a recognition program to showcase businesses that are successfully reducing or eliminating single-use items

Overall, the survey showed respondents are either taking action or support taking action to reduce single-use items; this includes allowing customers to use reusable alternatives.

The following are highlights from the survey. Detailed results can be provided upon request.

## SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

### Top three single-use items distributed:

1. Plastic bags
2. Disposable hot/cold drink cups like coffee cups or fountain drink cups
3. Disposable cutlery

### What businesses are currently doing to reduce single-use items:

- 32% have not yet taken action to reduce single-use items
- 31% are substituting single-use items with sustainable alternatives like reusable, recyclable or compostable options
- 17% only provide single-use items when requested by the customer

- 17% are encouraging customers to bring their own reusable items

## **Cost and policies around health and safety are the main barriers preventing businesses from reducing single-use items**

### **How businesses would like to be recognized for their efforts to reduce single-use items:**

- 60% of respondents support a window decal, special mention on a municipal website or a business recognition award
- 14% were not interested in any recognition

### **What businesses support to reduce single-use items:**

- 71% of businesses support customers using their own reusable items
- 54% of businesses support implementing an 'Ask-First' or 'by-request' program

Results from the Single-Use Items Business Survey will be used to inform future engagements and programming. Survey results include 77 respondents\*\* with the majority from restaurant and retail (22 and 17 respondents respectively). Other respondents were from grocery (6) and other (32) including offices, healthcare and construction. Nearly 70% of respondents were decision makers for their businesses (39 owners, 15 managers).

*\* 'Ask-first' or 'by-request' means providing single-use items to customers only when requested or required*

*\*\*Most survey questions were optional, so response rates varied slightly depending on the question. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number and may not equal 100%. Some questions permitted respondents to select more than one answer, therefore the percentages may exceed 100%.*

For more information about this survey, please contact [sm4rtliving@york.ca](mailto:sm4rtliving@york.ca)

To learn more about reducing single-use items please visit [york.ca/reducewaste](http://york.ca/reducewaste)

### **Waste Management**

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