

City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability  
[www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/reduceplastics](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/reduceplastics)

Notes from Single-use Plastics Reduction Work Group Meeting #2

Meeting date: 2 August, 2018

Mayor Staff: Amy Rathfelder (Mayor's staff project lead)

BPS Staff: Pete Chism-Winfield - BPS Program Coordinator (BPS project lead)  
Bruce Walker - BPS, Solid Waste and Recycling Manager  
Christine Llobregat - BPS, Communications

Work Group: Charlie Plybon - Surfrider  
Pat Lydon - Legacy Health  
Katie Whitecar - Burgerville  
Jim Hall - Independent Restaurant Concepts  
Chris Hein - Old Spaghetti Factory  
Keith Lee - Chin's Imports  
Katherine Lam - Bambuza

Absent Work Group: Yulia Arakelyan - ADA Advocate  
Judy Craine - Holman's Bar and Grill  
Hillary Barbour, Tim Orlean - Burgerville

Advisors: Nickole Cheron - City of Portland, ADA Title II Manager  
Jeff Martin - Multnomah County Health

Absent advisors: Pam Neal - Prosper Portland

**Background**

Policy development information available here: [www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/reduceplastics](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/reduceplastics). You can sign up for email updates on this page at the bottom, so share with folks outside the work group you think are interested in following the project.

**Meeting Agenda**

City Hall, 1221 SW 4<sup>th</sup> Ave, Rose Room

9:30am – 9:40am Introductions

9:40am – 9:50am Review meeting minutes, meeting 1, July 17th, 2018

9:50am – 9:55am Review post cards for tier 2 engagement

9:55am – 10:50am Group exercise: three audiences and policy options that the Mayor should consider for each audience

10:50am – 11am Next steps: determine wrap up, continue via email, or third meeting

**Exercise Preview** - As a group we will discuss elements of filling out the table below. Please note that some businesses are primarily on-site consumption, and some are all off site consumption (fast food), but many are some variation of both elements (take-out and left overs). Also, SUD stands for single use disposables.

Category	Current SUD use	Potential for SUD reduction	Policy Mechanism for SUD Reduction
Retail food/drink intended for consumption on site	Varies – heavy straw potential, napkins, take out containers for left overs, takeout orders	By request straws  Durable dishes, cups utensils  Portion size  Meal sharing, small plates	Employees wait for customers to ask for straws, have some available upon request  Require durable dishware for all on site food consumption
Retail food/drink intended for consumption off site (take out - includes food carts)	Take out and site down all SUDs	More fitting packaging to product  Encourage sit down eating  Discourage to-go	Fees for to-go packaging  Straw elimination/sippy cup  Incent refillable drink containers
Institutions – (education, medical) intended for consumption mostly on site	Varies, some dishwashers, many SUDs	By request straws  Durable dishes, cups utensils  Portion size  Meal sharing, small plates	Employees wait for customers to ask for straws, have some available upon request  Require durable dishware for all on site food consumption

Welcoming workgroup members Keith Lee and Katherine Lam, representing a wholesale distributor and a local bubble tea business, Bambuza.

Introductions and discussion of meeting expectations.

Keith: It’s common for my customers to be unaware of City rules and regulations. My customers include many Asian-owned companies. It might be helpful to discuss how we could go about making sure the

customer base has access to resources that detail the City rules and regulations regarding plastic serviceware.

3<sup>rd</sup> Workgroup meeting will take place at Bambuza Restaurant and agenda will include finishing touches on draft policy.

Pete gave a recap of policy development to-date since June 2018 Council Resolution. After City staff creates draft policy that includes workgroup input, the draft will be available for public comment until a date is set for a Council vote. There will be a need for technical assistance to businesses and for public education campaign.

### Notes from group discussion

Pat: Comment about effects on human health from overuse of plastic is missing from new outreach postcard. (City of Portland staff will look at including this information on the website.)

Pete listed concerns we've heard so far:

- Sanitation concerns around reusable straws: What is proper method to clean them?
- Enforcement concerns
- Many liked a by-request policy option
- Cost considerations
- We heard clearly that some people w/ disabilities need plastic straws.

Pete introduced policy design chart, included at top of this document.

Charlie: Are straws regulated at all in Multco? (w/ respect to sanitation or distribution) Are businesses required to offer straws?

Jeff: Plastic straws are a single-use item that is monitored. Reusable straws are regulated like any other food prep equipment. Restaurants are not required to provide straws.

*Discussion of Retail food / drink for onsite consumption (Uses: Wide variety of takeout containers)*

Keith Lee: We sell Injection molded plastics in the form of multi-use plastic containers... many people will not put plastic in microwave, so they use glass.

Jeff: Federal food code prohibits take out containers from home but allows reusable cups.

Jim: I like SUDs (single-use disposables) term... It's about shifting away from disposables and public education (about choices). Our restaurants have shifted to compostables and paper... though compostables are not allowed in Portland's system.

When you have a busser come back w/ leftovers – we need to have that dialogue as a business action to reduce portion sizes --- we take note as dishes come back.

Consumers can bring own containers and scrape plate into those containers -- instead of asking for takeout – that's legal and key difference.

*Discussion of straws specifically*

Pete: So let's focus on straws, does everyone feel comfortable with straws upon request?

Chris > make straws upon request.

Jim> From my perspective, we've already moved to straws on request except for items like a slushie smoothie, where it's difficult to drink without a straw.

Pete > Have you looked back at inventory to log difference?

Jim Hill > We started this practice in April – waiting to compile more than 3 months of data.

Chris: When some customers refuse straws, other customers at table follow.

Katherine: We serve bubble tea, and straws are part of the experience.... So prohibiting straws takes that experience away.

Keith: Portland is at a disadvantage because we have limitations around what can be composted. We're seeing more manufacturers offering paper straws. Can you tell us how paper straws fit in to this policy process?

Pete: Aardvark is one supplier and they can't keep up with demand.

Charlie: There are environmental issues w/ paper straws too. Our strategy is a reduction in straws and we want to be sure that this policy includes reduction, not replacement.

Pete talks about impacts and different lenses: greenhouse gas, toxicity... the idea is to look for viable alternatives...but in all cases we want to reduce the volume of single-use disposables.

Keith: concern about carbon footprint of using durables.

Jim: How do you clean inside of straw efficiently?

Jeff: Dishwashers will need to pay special attention to cleaning out straws.

Charlie: Breweries clean straws in a very similar way as they clean plastic brewing tubes in a bucket of cleaning solution every night.

Pete: There's a NEED to work w/ health code inspectors to work with health code inspectors when considering alternatives about cleaning + health protocols

Discuss fine to start conversation w/ business – no city wants to issue fines.

Keith: Shows samples of different types of paper and compostable straws currently available as an import.

Pete: Lists policy mechanisms – if you have a restaurant w onsite consumption, what is your reaction to requiring durables?

Katie from Burgerville: Dishwashing / employee training is biggest concern. How can we afford to buy dishwashers for 42 locations?

Pat: Institutions like hospital would have a similar issue w/ dishwashing... current setup isn't scalable, and it's not that easy to retrofit. Space is an issue for clinical and food service side.

Chris Hines: For quickserve – there are challenges to using durables, particularly space.

Pete: Next starting point will be fast food. Would asking customers questions at POS about maybe items...

Katie from Burgerville: Asking do you need a straw?

Charlie: Salt and ketchup and salsa packages... how did loading takeout bags w/ condiment packages shift away?

Pete: What about pump stations? What about requiring pump stations?

Chris H: It's more cost effective to have pump stations... but how do you put a lid on it for travelers?

Katherine: With hot liquid products, plastic containers are necessary.

Pete: what kind of policy driver will help? Employee controlled?

Keith: How many people are guilty of taking more than we need.

DO YOU TAKE MORE THAN YOU NEED? \*\*\*

Airports have special issues.

Nicole: Let's remember how we all don't use as many towels now at hotels due to good public education w/ signs in rooms.

Pete: That's a good reminder for us to think about an education campaign that includes human health. <<everyone at table agrees>>

Amy: Last meeting we talked about mechanisms for moving forward w/ a policy direction ... fee, by request, etc. One of the objectives for us is to decide which policy direction is most supported.

Pat: Retail needs to be treated differently from clinical care side for healthcare industry. If the intent of the policy would be to include clinical care, our hospital system would need to take a different stance.

Amy: Last meeting it seemed like that the group supported a "by request" policy driver. Please be assured that we will address every individual community in this policy:

Charlie: We need a waste reduction target that can be measured. We also support including considerations for all communities involved.

Nickole: Does anyone NOT feel comfortable w/ a by-request policy?

Charlie: a by request policy doesn't meet our waste reduction goals.

Jim: Let's be clear – you don't want a policy that doesn't include waste reduction?

Charlie: Correct. We need to have measurable waste reduction component.

Jim: We haven't had a real discussion about how to measure waste reduction.

Pat: How do we establish a baseline of measurable data?

Pete: Keith: do you think wholesaler community wants to report their use of suds and report results?

Keith: Restaurants are changing inventories because of customer pressure.

Chris: as an operator, if I use fewer straws, I save money...same thing w/ recyclable and compostable, with foil pans... we ask if customers need utensils... when you start to build awareness with businesses, they respond to their clients accordingly.

Pete: I need to work more on methodology. Charlie, I would be happy to hear more from you about details around including measurable waste reduction.

Pete: Are restaurants at the table willing to track and report past and future use of Single Use Disposables?

Jim: You bet.

Charlie: Expressed concern that the policy discussion does not lead with waste reduction (vs. replacement with another material.)

Jim: We support reduction, not just shifting the mix of SUDs.

**Adjourn due to time:** It was determined that a 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting is necessary. City staff will follow up with time and date proposals.

###