

February 10, 2022

Canadian Federation of University Women – Markham/Unionville
Galsworthy Post Office
P.O. Box 54071
Markham, Ontario
L3P 7Y4

RE: Single-Use Plastics and Packaging

Dear Ms. Choy & Ms. Esaw,

Please see the response below on behalf of the Mayor's Office in reference to your letter dated January 24, 2022.

Thank you for your kind words regarding Markham's waste diversion programs. Markham has led the way on a number of environmental issues, including textile diversion and addressing packing Styrofoam generated from increased home delivery. We agree that single-use plastics and non-recyclable plastic packaging are problematic materials that require government action.

Federal intervention is the most impactful government action that can be taken against harmful plastics. On December 21, 2021, the Canadian federal government released their draft *Single-Use Plastics Prohibition Regulations* for public comment. The proposed regulation would prohibit manufacture, import and sale of six categories of single-use plastics: checkout bags, cutlery, foodservice ware, ring carriers, stir sticks, and straws. Prohibition on manufacture and import are anticipated to come into force in 2023, while prohibition on sale/provision is anticipated to come into force in 2024. In its current form, the regulation is comprehensive and will affect significant change, as businesses will be required to source substitutes for the plastics they currently provide to consumers.

Additionally, new provincial Blue Box regulations were filed under the *Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act* last summer, requiring for significant expansion of the materials accepted in Ontario's Blue Box program starting in 2023. The expanded Blue Box materials list includes problematic plastic items like chip bags, candy wrappers, Styrofoam, and plastic retail bags.

While Markham is pleased with the steps taken at the federal and provincial levels, the City remains committed at the local level to continue public education regarding plastic waste and to encourage individual behaviour change. The City is also committed to "walking-the-walk", by ensuring all municipal buildings and facilities are single-use plastic free. In 2020, Markham Council approved "*The Best of the Best #2*", the City's new waste diversion plan, which includes revisions to the City's corporate *Zero Waste*

Policy and outlines initiatives to eliminate single-use plastic provision by all City-approved vendors.

Prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, an audit of all single-use plastic items provided by City-approved vendors was performed. Once these vendors re-open in the near future, they will be required to comply with the updated policy. Furthermore, Markham's *Zero Waste Policy* already prohibits staff-level procurement and distribution of single-use plastics.

Coordinated efforts at all levels of government are needed to combat the harmful impacts of single-use plastics and plastic waste. Markham remains a committed leader in waste diversion and a willing participant in the fight for a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment for our residents.

Sincerely,



Claudia Marsales
Senior Manager, Waste & Environmental Management
City of Markham – Environmental Services

c.c. Stuart Cumner, Markham Environmental Advisory Committee

The Office of Mayor Frank Scarpitti

Joe Li, Regional Councillor, City of Markham

Graham Seaman, Director of Sustainability and Asset Management, City of Markham