

Town of Riverview

COUNCIL REPORT FORM



Presented to: Mayor and Council

Department: Corporate Services

Date: June 10, 2019

Subject: The reduction of single-use plastic bags

BACKGROUND

In October 2019, following direction of the tri-community Council, the Town of Riverview and the Cities of Dieppe, Moncton in partnership with Eco360 formed a working group to explore options for reducing the consumption of single-use plastic bags in our region and to bring forward recommendations to the tri-community Councils. The working group evaluated options to reduce the use of single use plastic bags and contacted several municipalities who had implemented a single use plastic bag distribution ban. In November 2018, two surveys were launched to determine the habits and opinions of consumers regarding single-use plastic bags, as well as the needs and perceptions of business owners. The surveys were promoted through local media and across the four partners' social media channels.

Over 1,700 responses were received for the resident's survey. Highlights include:

- When asked if they would agree to pay a fee for a single-use bag, 78% of respondents said yes, with 22% disagreeing. Nearly 750 open-ended comments were submitted with regards to this question.
- When asked about their level of concern about the environmental impact of plastic bags, 95% of participants indicated that they were either greatly or moderately concerned.
- Nearly 78% of participants were in favor of a single-use plastic bag ban, while 14% were against and 8% undecided.

Sixty businesses, including a wide range of industries, participated in the survey. Highlights include:

- Over half of respondents, at 53%, indicated that they currently offer typical plastic bags, while 15% use biodegradable or compostable plastic bags, 28% offer paper bags, and approximately 26% offer different types of reusable bags.
- Ninety-eight percent of respondents do not currently charge a fee to customers for a single-use bag.

- When asked what limitations exist for their business to offer reusable bags, 58% indicated cost, 12% selected 'store policy and procedures,' and 36% noted that there was no demand from their customers.
- When asked about their business' level of concern about the environmental impact of plastic bags, 91% of participants indicated that they were either greatly or moderately concerned.

The survey results were presented at the April 17, 2019 tri-community Council meeting. A draft single use plastic bag reduction by-law was also distributed for review. It was recommended by the working group that each Council discuss the by-law for adoption at their respective public Council meeting in June with the intent that the by-law be adopted by the three communities by the end of July 2019.

The proposed by-law for the reduction of single-use plastic bags in the Town of Riverview (By-Law 700-75) would restrict the distribution of single use plastic bags by any business. Certain types of plastic bags, including ones used to package loose bulk item such as fruit, vegetables or nuts, wrap flowers and potted plants, or protect clothing after dry-cleaning, would be exempted under the proposed by-law. The proposed by-law allows for the distribution of single use paper bags but requires businesses to charge a fee (the fee amount is not specified and would be determined by each business). The main objective is to promote the use of reusable bags and discourage the use of any type of single use bags. The by-law would come in effect on July 1, 2020 in order to allow time for local businesses to adapt and exhaust their supply of plastic bags.

CONSIDERATIONS

Legal:

The by-law was reviewed by the City of Moncton's solicitor to ensure it was valid and compliant with the relevant regulations.

Financial:

An educational and awareness campaign including promotional material should be developed and conducted over the next year, prior to July 2020. This campaign would be cost shared by the Town of Riverview, City of Moncton and City of Dieppe. The working group will develop a scope of work and obtain quotes from local service providers.

Stakeholders:

Greater Moncton consumers and retailers.

Strategic Plan:

Sustainability (consider the impact our decisions have for the long-term wellbeing of the community) is the first guiding principle of the Town's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan.

The reduction of plastic bags is a success indicator under the Waste Management pillar in the Town's ICSP. Along with the promotion of reusable shopping bags, it is highlighted as one of the ways Riverview can reduce the negative impact of waste in our community.

Interdepartmental Consultation:

The proposed by-law was drafted in collaboration with administration from the Town of Riverview, City of Moncton, City of Dieppe and Eco360.

Communication Plan:

The working group is developing an awareness campaign and communication strategy for the July 2019 - July 2020 period.

OPTIONS

Approval: First reading of By-Law 700-75 Reduction of Single-Use Plastic Bags.

Status Quo: Not adopt a by-law regulating the distribution of single use plastic bags.

RECOMMENDATION FROM STAFF

That Town Council give first reading of By-Law 700-75 Reduction of Single-Use Plastic Bags.