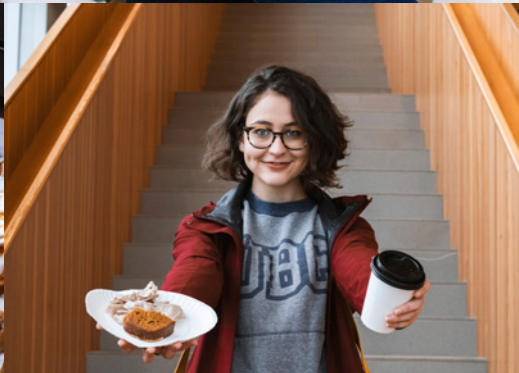


ZERO WASTE FOOD WARE STRATEGY

UBC's Strategy for Single Use Items

UBC Vancouver Campus

UPDATED 26 JANUARY 2022



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that the Vancouver campus is situated on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people.

... sʔi:łqəy̓ qeqən (Double-Headed Serpent Post)"
Brent Sparrow Jr., Musqueam

... **PHOTOGRAPHER:** UBC BRAND & MARKETING
/HOVER COLLECTIVE



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Main Mall looking south
PHOTOGRAPHER: HOVER COLLECTIVE

1. Background and Purpose

The Zero Waste Food Ware Strategy is an addendum to the UBC Zero Waste Action Plan, directly addressing targets and actions within the plan:

- Divert 80% of all waste from landfill by 2020;
- Steadily decrease waste disposal to landfill each year; and
- Reduce the generation of waste, primarily through procurement changes and reuse systems.

SCOPE

This strategy applies to all food and beverage businesses and outlets that sell or provide to the public including students, staff and faculty, and are based on the UBC Point Grey academic campus. This includes catering businesses based on campus.

The Strategy supports UBC's Climate Action Plan, in achieving greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions from materials and waste. It aims to help protect land and marine environments from risks posed by single use items, including the emerging issue of ocean plastics pollution. And importantly, it will address UBC's operational and downstream costs incurred in dealing with single use item waste. All of these elements support the goals set out in UBC's 20 Year Sustainability Strategy. Given UBC's unique role and size, purchasing leadership can also help to transform the market.

For additional background on why action is necessary on single use items, refer to the introductory presentation document on the Food Ware Strategy web page here:

<https://planning.ubc.ca/vancouver/sustainability-operations/recycling-and-waste/zero-waste-food-ware-strategy>

2. Principles and Objectives

The Strategy incorporates the following foundational principles and objectives:

- Factor in total costs, including downstream waste management costs, into procurement and supply decisions.
- Separate the cost of single use packaging from the cost of the food and beverage product for the consumer.
- Support the strategy with campus-wide communications, and active communication and staff training within outlets. This communicates that packaging has real costs; helps to interrupt the habitual reliance on single use items by consumers; provides a financial incentive to shift to reusable items; and can help to ensure that businesses can afford to use more sustainable products.
- Help facilitate the acquisition of sustainable alternative solutions.
- Strive for consistency across campus through policy implementation, and provide pathways for businesses to transition away from single use items.
- Allow for periodic updates based on changes in the market and input from businesses and stakeholders.
- Align with actions being taken by the City of Vancouver and Metro Vancouver wherever possible, recognizing UBC's unique context, and lead by example where possible.

3. Goals and Targets

UBC and food businesses across campus have a unique opportunity to lead in the fostering of the circular economy, and UBC has already made significant changes in its food services operations in this direction. Targets for this strategy are:

Transition from single use to reusable food ware, resulting in reductions of single use items:

1. Reduce single use cups by 50% by end of year 2 (2023) and 80% by 2030.
2. Reduce single use food containers and cutlery, targets to be developed in 2022.

For remaining single use items:

3. Transition to more sustainable materials that can be better managed at all stages of their life cycle, with 100% of single use items conforming to UBC's guideline¹ by end of year 1 (2022).
4. Increase recycling² of remaining single use items toward a target of zero landfilling by 2030.

¹ The updated UBC Food Service Ware Procurement Guideline includes all the requirements in this strategy that need to be met by businesses, for targets 1-3 above.

² The Recycling Guidelines for UBC Businesses includes the requirements within this strategy addressing target 4.



4. Requirements and Options for Food Businesses

4.1 PATHWAY TOWARDS ELIMINATING SINGLE USE ITEMS

The following table summarizes the required and optional actions to **reduce** single use items (first two columns), and the main requirements for **procurement** of single use item (last two columns).

“Bans” for specific items or materials are shown in the last (red) column. The UBC Food Ware Procurement Guideline provides more detail and definitions, as well as examples of specific products that satisfy the requirements.

Optional, additional actions (second column) may be undertaken by businesses that are interested in going beyond the minimum.

Table 1: Pathway towards eliminating single use items

	ACTIONS TO REDUCE SINGLE USE ITEMS		REQUIREMENTS FOR SINGLE USE ITEMS	
	MINIMUM REQUIRED ACTIONS	OPTIONAL, ADDITIONAL ACTIONS	ACCEPTED SINGLE USE ITEMS	NOT ACCEPTED SINGLE USE ITEMS
All single use drink cups including coffee cups	Option 1 - Eliminate single use cups Option 2 - Charge customers a minimum fee for single use coffee/hot drink cups, with active communication to customers (see description below this table) AND No self-serve single use cups (Year 1) Minimum Fees: Year 1 (2022) - \$0.25/cup Year 2 (2023) - To be determined with consultation Option 3 - by implementing other actions, clearly demonstrate that the reduction target is being met	Increase fee beyond minimum Fee may be combined with a reusable cup discount ⁴ Offer reusable cups for use in-house or for sale Participate in a mugshare program if available Offer express line or priority for clients with reusable mugs	Conventional recyclable cups (i.e., paper with plastic lining)	Styrofoam cups, compostable plastic ⁵ cups Self-serve single use cups

⁴ If a discount is offered it must be separate from the fee, and the fee must meet the minimum amount in the implementation table. An example is a \$0.25 reusable cup discount plus a \$0.25 single use cup fee for a total “incentive” of \$0.50 relative to business-as-usual with no fees or discounts.

⁵ Solid compostable plastic. Paper cups with compostable plastic coatings are accepted, though conventional paper cups are preferred.

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	MINIMUM REQUIRED ACTIONS	OPTIONAL, ADDITIONAL ACTIONS	ACCEPTED SINGLE USE ITEMS	NOT ACCEPTED SINGLE USE ITEMS
Single use cutlery	<p>Option 1 – Don't provide single use cutlery</p> <p>Option 2 – only provide cutlery on request, and fees as per schedule below: Year 1 (2022) – No fee required Year 2 (2023) – Fee of min. \$0.10 per piece with active communication</p>	<p>Offer reusable cutlery for use in-house and/or for sale</p> <p>Participate in cutlery reuse program, if available</p>	Wood or plant fibre based compostable cutlery	Plastic cutlery of any kind including compostable plastic
Single use plastic straws	Do not offer plastic straws ⁷	<p>Offer accepted straws only on request⁶</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>Sell reusable straws</p>	Paper or other non-plastic ⁶	Plastic single use straws ⁷
Single use food containers	<p>Year 1 (2022) – No fee required</p> <p>Year 2 (2023) – Fee for single use food container, minimum \$0.50 with active communication</p>	<p>Charge a fee in Year 1 of at least \$0.50 for single use food containers with active communication</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>Operate or participate in a reusable container exchange program</p> <p>Provide reusable plates and containers for use in-house</p>	Compostable fibre-based containers ⁸	Most single use plastic food containers, except for dry items like sandwiches ⁹
Single use bags	<p>Option 1 – don't give out single use carry bags</p> <p>Option 2 – Charge fees for single use carry (shopping) bags (any material) of at least \$0.15 with active communication (Year 1)</p>	Offer reusable bags for sale and market to customers	Paper and/or reusable bags	Plastic single use bags (including compostable plastic)
Recycling bins and signage	<p>Back-of-house and front-of-house recycling bins and signage to align with UBC Recycling Guideline, as appropriate for the business</p> <p>Provide mandatory training to all staff members on recycling, single use item policies, and waste sorting procedures</p>	<p>Incorporate visual displays of waste items (i.e., 3D displays) to help customers sort waste properly</p> <p>Provide assistance to customers to aid in proper waste sorting at high-traffic events (e.g., via additional signage, volunteers at recycling stations)</p>		Stand-alone garbage cans

⁶ It is strongly recommended that bendable straws be provided to customers who need them as an adaptive aid for accessibility.

⁷ Bubble Tea straws must conform once alternative solutions are available.

⁸ Conventional, recyclable plastic lids may be used if compostable fibre lids are not available.

⁹ For “grab and go” pre-packaged food items, these may be plastic if alternatives are not feasible. Refer to the Food Ware Procurement Guideline for more information.

4.2 ACTIVE COMMUNICATION OF FEES

For any fee charged for single use items above, **front line staff must communicate the fee** to each customer before providing the single use item - for example, asking if the customer would like to buy a single use cup, prior to providing one. This will require integration within staff on-boarding and ongoing training. An example in some existing retailers is a grocery store cashier asking the customer if they would like to buy plastic bags, before providing any.

Businesses must also post fees on signage at point of sale.

4.3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Further rationale for the requirements in the above table is summarized below. Refer to the more detailed Food Ware Procurement Guideline for additional detail on alternative products.

Recyclable Cups (rather than compostable)

- Compostable cups and conventional recyclable cups (which are contaminants in composting) look similar and cannot be easily distinguished by compost facility operators.
- A simplified sorting system would entail only two waste bins that are very intuitive for customers: one recycling bin for drink cups, bottles and cans; and a second bin for food waste including compostable food ware. Compostable cups are inconsistent with this simple system, and many customers will place the cup plus plastic lid (either compostable or conventional plastic) together into the food scraps bin, causing plastic contamination.

Single Use Cup Fees

- The extra cost and/or having to ask for single use cups creates a dis-incentive for single use cups and helps to break the habitual pattern of relying on a single use cup for every purchase.
- For fees and rebates to be effective, they must be actively marketed to the customer on an ongoing basis and staff need to be trained appropriately.
- Fees and rebates can also be structured to be cost-neutral to the business and/or the customer – for example, the coffee (without cup) price could be adjusted downward; and/or the fees could be used to recover costs for using more expensive materials for other single use items such as wood cutlery.
- Alternatives to single use cups are currently available.
 - Reusable “bring your own” cups (most established, particularly for hot drinks), of varying designs and price points;
 - “For here” (e.g., ceramic mugs for hot drinks);
 - “Mugshare” (not well established yet, being piloted).

Single Use Cutlery

- Plastic cutlery is generally non-recyclable and is also a major contaminant in food scraps composting. “Biodegradable” plastic and compostable solid plastic cutlery does not break down in the UBC composting system and is also not accepted in some other regional composting systems.
- **Alternatives** to single use plastic cutlery are currently wood, bamboo or other fibre composite, provided they are certified compostable. The higher costs of these products may be potentially be recovered by fees for single use cutlery or cups.

Plastic Straws

- Plastic straws are generally non-recyclable and are a contaminant in food scraps composting.
- **Alternatives** include paper or cardboard straws (including bendable) and reusable “bring your own” straws.

Plastic Food Containers

- Plastic (non-compostable or compostable plastic) single use food containers, and paper containers with conventional, non-compostable plastic coating, are a major source of contamination in food scraps composting.
- **Alternatives:** single use food containers made of fibre, some with certified compostable plastic coatings for water/grease resistance, are readily available and well established. Some businesses may be able to offer reusable food containers that customers can return and exchange for a clean container. This is an established program within UBC dining halls.

Plastic Bags

- Plastic bags escape into the environment easily and are a major source of ocean pollution, and are a major contaminant in compost.
- **Alternatives** include reusable bags and paper bags.
- A number of other jurisdictions have already banned plastic bags or announced bans.

Recycling Bins & Signage

- Consistent recycling and composting categories and signage are needed across campus to enable customer sorting of waste and prevent food scraps contamination.
- Where bins are owned and operated by the food outlet, bin type and design can be flexible, but correct signage is essential, along with staff training

5. UBC Supporting Actions

UBC, led by Sustainability & Engineering (SE) within Campus & Community Planning (unless otherwise noted), will undertake the following actions to support food outlets as part of this strategy.

5.1 SINGLE USE ITEM REDUCTION AND PROCUREMENT

1. Wherever possible and of value, seek bulk pricing for food outlets on campus with the goal of reducing costs of preferred single use items.
 - a. Food businesses to identify single use items of highest interest in terms of bulk pricing.
 - b. Facilitate discussions with UBC procurement representatives and preferred suppliers toward bulk pricing.
 - c. Communicate results out to food businesses.
2. Provide clear guidance for procurement of single use items and reusable items through documentation and advisory support.
 - a. Update and publish the Food Ware Procurement Guideline online, and communicate this to food businesses.
 - b. In collaboration with UBC food stakeholders and the SEEDS program, continue to research alternative products that better meet business and customer needs and incorporate into future online standard versions as appropriate.
 - c. E staff, e.g., the Zero Waste Coordinator will be available to answer questions and support food businesses in making recommendations for specific single use item choices.
3. With partners, continue to explore implementation of a mugshare cup exchange program to support cafes. This may be extended to include exploration of a larger container exchange program or other similar circular economy initiatives.
 - a. A SEEDS mugshare research project was completed and a pilot project is in progress, and potential mugshare opportunities are being explored by the City of Vancouver.
 - b. UBC Food Services currently operates a food container exchange program.
4. Encourage “to stay” café spaces with seating for customers. Strategies for this will need to be developed in consultation with food business stakeholders.

5.2 RECYCLING OF SINGLE USE ITEMS

1. Provide guidance and training tools, recycling bin sign artwork and educational posters for food outlets.
2. Provide advisory support to food businesses for setting up recycling bins signage setups.
3. Develop a better understanding of the UBC’s costs to manage single use items, and potential options to recover those costs.

5.3 OVERALL ACTIONS

1. Develop and deliver a communications program for the Zero Waste Food Ware strategy, with a primary goal of educating food outlet customers on campus.
 - a. Launch a campus-wide effort to educate, communicate, and promote the Strategy to campus users.
 - b. Provide communications and marketing tools for food outlets.
 - c. Promote procurement of catering that conforms to this strategy, and to on-campus catering.
2. Develop training and marketing tools and make these available to food outlets.
 - a. A guideline published online for staff training and marketing that includes key messages, staff responsibilities relative to SUI reduction and recycling, and guidelines for setup of recycling bins.
 - b. Provision of artwork (files or prints) for signage, including signage promoting UBC's Zero Waste Food Ware program, recycling bin signage, and waste sorting guide. Other artwork resources may potentially be developed to meet needs of multiple outlets.
3. Explore the development of a recognition and/or certification program for food outlets and on-campus catering businesses addressing the Zero Waste Food Ware strategy.
4. Continue to build on "campus as a living lab" through partnerships including staff and students, to contribute to UBC's local and global sustainability leadership.

6. Policy Framework and Implementation

- This strategy is an addendum to the Zero Waste Action Plan referenced in UBC's sustainability policy and will help ensure the applicability of the strategy across campus, providing a playing field that is as level as possible.
- UBC (Sustainability & Engineering) will work with food business lessors and stakeholders to operationalize the requirements, supporting the initial transition over a six month period. Implementation could potentially include updates to leases over a longer time period. See the next section for example draft lease language.

Figure 1: Target milestones for implementation of the Zero Waste Food Ware Strategy



6.1 MONITORING AND FUTURE UPDATES

Success of the strategy toward goals and targets will be monitored through:

- Periodically monitoring individual food outlet products and practices in the field;
- Collecting input from food business stakeholders and campus users (e.g., via surveys or consultation events);
- Seeking readily available data quantifying single use item purchases and waste quantities on campus. This may include reporting data from businesses who wish to demonstrate they are meeting targets through customized actions (Option 3 in requirements table for single use cups).
- Where available, utilizing waste tracking or auditing data collected by UBC.
- The monitoring method will evolve as experience is gained following launch. Through these methods, interim results will be assessed by the end of year 1, and potential changes will be considered for post-year 2 implementation of the strategy.

6.2. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: EXAMPLE LEASE TERMS

Lease terms to support strategy implementation should be embedded in future leases with the food business tenants located within the UBC academic campus to ensure that the key requirements are binding. The terms below are recommended for inclusion within future leases.

1. UBC is a recognized leader in sustainability and has in place a Zero Waste Action Plan, which includes a target of 80% waste diversion by 2020 and steadily decreasing disposal of waste to the landfill. Metro Vancouver has also implemented an Organics Disposal Ban. Food service operations play a critical role in achieving these targets and conforming to regulations.
2. As part of the Zero Waste Action Plan, the Zero Waste Food Ware Strategy (the Strategy) policy document requires the following actions to be taken by the lessee, with specifics provided in the Strategy:
 - a. Implement actions to reduce the quantity of single use food and beverage items, including cups, food containers, cutlery, straws, and bags.
 - b. Actively communicate reduction actions, including fees and discounts, to customers.
 - c. Single use items provided to customers must be recyclable or compostable within the UBC waste management system.
 - i. UBC Food Ware Procurement Guideline will provide details.
 - ii. Note that product claims by suppliers of single use items often do not conform to UBC and regional requirements.
 - d. With any changes to the above policy documents, a minimum six month transition period will be provided between issuing the update and requiring conformance to the documents.
 - e. If waste is generated within the lessee's operation, the lessee must take steps to provide appropriate recycling receptacles and signage. Where UBC collects the waste, receptacles and signage must conform to UBC recycling guidelines.
 - f. Ensure staff are trained on correct waste sorting as per UBC guidelines.
3. UBC will provide guidance and resources to support the above waste reduction and recycling actions.

For more information: zero.waste@ubc.ca

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