

City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/reduceplastics

Notes from Single-use Plastics Reduction Work Group Meeting #3

Meeting date: 22 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:

Yulia Arakelyan - ADA Advocate
Judy Craine - Holman's Bar and Grill
Hillary Barbour, Tim Morgan - Burgerville
Pat Lydon - Legacy Health
Jim Hall - Independent Restaurant Concepts
Keith Lee - Chin's Imports
Nancy Nordman, Surfrider

Absent Work Group:

Katie Whitecar - Burgerville
Charlie Plybon - Surfrider
Katherine Lam - Bambuza
Chris Hein - Old Spaghetti Factory

Advisor

Jeff Martin - Multnomah County Health
Pam Neal - Prosper Portland

Absent advisors: Nickole Cheron - City of Portland, ADA Title II Manager

Background

Link to community survey and policy development information available here:
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

Produce Row Cafe, 204 SE Oak St, Portland, OR 97214

10:30 – Welcome and Introductions – Pete Chism-Winfield

10:35 – Project updates – Pete/Amy Rathfelder

10:40 – Best practices – Nancy Nordman

10:50 – Policy Draft Overview – Amy

11:00 – Policy Draft Discussion – All

12:00 – Lunch Break

12:45 – Wrap up and Work Group Conclusion

1:15 – End Meeting

Group Discussion Notes

Intro by Pete

Today's goal is to focus on the viable elements of the draft policy to prepare for sept. 26 Council date.

Community Survey summary to come.

Amy: There have been 2 positive meetings with Mayor Wheeler

Hillary: What is process for refining / finalizing ordinance language?

Pete: Sept 26 is a first reading, with opportunity for public testimony. Based on Council response, 2nd reading date is uncertain, but likely to happen a week later.

Keith and Burgerville concerned about translations.

Bruce: Extend survey timeline. Order translations.

Nancy: Widmer wants to try a straw on request policy. Surfrider did a test pilot. Widmer avoided 1000 straws in one month. Good first pilot. 106 restaurants in Portland participating in pilot. What worked well: Paper or metal straws on request. Restaurants adding this item to their inventory. Interpretive signage and customer education has been key. Storing straws behind counters have been key.

Pete to Nancy: have you noticed whether restaurants have been discussing other types of one-use plastics?

Nancy: No hard data, but broader conversations w/ over 100 restaurants are occurring.

Keith: McMenamins / Agilyx. Agilyx is working w/ McMenamins to find more materials to recycle.

Jim Hall: The amount of volunteerism among restaurants is high. I see a lot of straw by request signs and compostable straws. There is momentum. We pulled data from our 12 months prior to compare quarterly purchasing.

Amy: Introduces DRAFT Policy. I've received feedback from some of you and are committed to incorporate Main policy driver is by request plastic straws.

Pat Legacy; Wants to confirm type of plastic used in straws. Lots of good stories regarding health / plastics.

Amy: Does anyone have any flags on pp 1-2?

Jim: Viable solution language is too terse. Please add detail.

Pete: All mixed recyclables cannot go into mixed recycling at curbside. Good suggestion.

Keith: I object to using the word recycling.

Pete: Recyclable materials need to have a market and must be able to be separated.

Hillary: Has the recycling industry been included in this workgroup?

Pat Legacy: Legacy has a separate plastic recycling process.

Bruce: The DEQ is working on this... these materials not being accepted in carts are being landfilled.

Nancy: from the marine perspective, we appreciate that you're calling out compostable plastic straws as an unviable solution

Jim: Compostable is no better than regular plastic – that was a learning lesson for me. We need to follow the hierarchy RRR. We need to educate. The consumer needs to know what they should do and why.

Pete: The entire issue w/ the export restrictions has allowed us to remind people about what goes in blue carts.

Amy: Compostable w/in our City Policy are not an alternative.

Hillary: last para on page 2: transition from final para to list of items.

Amy: We added language to address reusable requirement for sit-down establishments – that's the most aggressive element of the policy.

Jim Hall: You're singling out sit-down restaurants. I have a concern (and Burgerville) about requiring durable dishware at sit-down requirements.

Holman: ADA was specific about not using metal straws.

Paul: Default would be reusable dishware, not takeout. Takeout containers by request.

Tim: Have we reached out to affected businesses to determine financial impact of buying equipment and dishware?

Amy: (continues reading draft policy) Exemption for individuals with health issues and clinical care...Enforcement will be last resort. Lead with education of businesses and customers. If we do have to do enforcement, we discussed a fine as the enforcement tool.

Pat Legacy: I had suggested modification of #3, and that has been done. Only other thing I would add. My biggest concern is timeline for implementation. I don't know if 2 years is practical.

Amy: What I want to raise is the potential addition of technical assistance.

Holman's; It's not the technical assistance it's the financial assistance.

Pete: Go Box is a reusable clamshell container service. Working with New Seasons.

Keith: Go Box charges businesses. Problem is the collection locations. 70% of food at takeout restaurants is takeout, 30% dine-in. This policy will be a hardship for small businesses.... There was an economic filter / exemption.

Bruce: Key point is cost element to small businesses.

Keith: the smallest room in a restaurant is a storage room. Huge economic impact.

Martin: Unintended consequence of plumbing permits triggering grease trap requirements.

Hillary: Some places property is owned, other is leased. For us, we looked at each individual prohibited item...and to shift to compliance this quickly is a challenge. The more aggressive approach feels onerous right now.

Tim adds: it would be a complete transformation for us and the timeline for implementation is a problem for us. The list of items is much broader than anticipated.

Tim: 4 million shakes annually go in plastic cups. We can't even get paper straws until 2019 – suppliers are backlogged.

Keith: What is this workgroup thinking about condiments?

Group response: Any additive ingredient –

Pat Legacy: Different size eating areas may not all be feasible for reusables. Smaller café areas could be challenging.

Pete: We heard from Council that they want to policy to go beyond straws.

Hillary: We need a more detailed list of specific items

Pete: If you go 1:1 paper for plastic, that increases greenhouse gas emissions. Replace and Request reduces materials used.

Nancy: Want to see consistency in terms of utensils listed. W/ the reusable dine-in dishware doesn't include straws...

Hillary: We need a specific chart that shows what's included and what's not.

Amy: We went w/ service ware for the draft, but we can define it in a more detailed fashion. For ADA folks there would be a plastic option available.

Holman's: It seems to me that I will have to have plastic straws available for ADA customers.

Jim Hall: Realistically I think plastic straws will be a reasonable accommodation for ADA.

Amy: I will clarify that straws are a by-request option and allowed in storage.

Hillary: What does the group think about making a distinction under dine-in – that dine in is by request only and that take out – employees must ask. Can we make it consistent that employees offer to each customer? We'll move straws behind counter, but I'm requesting consistency.

Amy: That's interesting – I think the nature of the drive-through experience –

Hillary: Quick service establishments have a high turnover rate. Retraining is doable but having consistency in customer education and employee scripts is very important.

Keith: Have you talked to PPS? I used to sell Styrofoam to PPS, but are they exempt for straws? This needs to be clear in the language.

Pete: PPS sustainability coordinator has not seen policy, but it is my understanding that PPS is trying to phase reusable dishware back in. Implementation timeline will be key.

Amy: I've been in touch w/ PPS nutritional about straw component – they've already phased it out.

Holman: 2 questions: Bulk dispensers – how do I give takeout customers ketchup?

Pete: Takeout requires a question.

Holman: then I can provide a single-use packet?

Pete: Yes.

Holman: Compliance options / Records of purchasing single-use items must be made available.

Amy: I agree – more detailed is needed.

Pete; If there's a question about compliance, biz should be able to show purchasing records.

Holman: Showing records is a huge impact to small businesses. I don't have any of those records on site.

Pete: Maybe we don't include this element in the policy. We have a phone and plastic ban bag.

Bruce: We have collected very few fines. Once notified 99% of businesses to change practices. Our goal is to not enforcement.

Amy: Good to keep in mind that a big part of this is the social construct: education, awareness and expanding the conversation.

Jim Hall: I think you've already won the public education ware.

Pat Legacy: I still see lots of straws at lots of places.

Hillary: Question about last bullet under exemptions – items manufactured outside of Portland.

Tim Morgan: We'd be willing to run a pilot project to inform future policy if there was a phased rollout. Then Burgerville could experiment w/ on request and document results to inform future policy drafts.

Holman: This would also be helpful to inform best practices for other businesses.

Hillary: Could we add a review trigger to ordinance language?

Amy: Yes, that is possible – a follow-up review is a common policy component.

Pam: Call out resources and technical assistance in ordinance language.

Hillary: We should engage Switchboard. Which creates an online forum for members to post questions.

Pete: An Educational Campaign will be a primary component.

Pete: How long would it take to make that adjustment for Burgerville – 2024 possible?

Tim Morgan That timeframe would work, a date before that *might* work.

Holman: Big corporations have resources that small independents don't have.

Hillary: Amy is coming to lunch at Burgerville this Friday... to see the number of disposables that we use.

Martin: multi-year timeline is needed for some businesses.

Amy: Topics to conclude: Translation... need to amend ... determine financial impact... reset timeline

Pete: Everyone feels good about plastic straws by-request; do questions by employees have support?

Holman's: Labor is my biggest cost. If I have a table tent. I don't want my servers to make double trips. I'm concerned about the practicality of my operations. I'm sure that I'm not alone. I used to have 3 servers, now I have 1 due to cost of doing business.

Pete: Plastic Straws by Request idea is a customer-initiated process, vs Employee initiated...

Nancy: From talking w/ servers, signs have been very successful.

Amy: Do your servers wear aprons? What if you started out having server carry straws out of site?

Next Steps:

- 1) BPS will move forward with translations of surveys into 5 languages.
- 2) BPS will extend survey response deadline to September 15.

###