



<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>June 25, 2018</b>
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Single-Use Bag Ban</b>
<b>Issued to</b>	<b>City Council</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Jacqueline Pelechytik, Deputy City Clerk</b>

## Highlights & Summary

Single-use bags, specifically non-biodegradable plastic bags, pose an environmental risk to wildlife and marine life. They also adversely affect community aesthetic when bags are not disposed properly. Furthermore, the lifespan of a plastic bag is hundreds of thousands of years and will not readily degrade in landfills; as they eventually degrade plastic bags release hazardous chemicals and micro plastics into their environment which show up in the stomachs of wild animals.

To curb the issue of plastic bag pollution, municipalities in Canada have opted for bag bans that overall ban plastic bags, and sometime biodegradable plastic bags under 50 microns thick. Some municipalities have also opted to ban paper bags as well. In other countries, bag bans and bag levies exist. Plastic bag levies will impose a mandatory ‘tax’ on plastic bags or other single-use bags in an effort to alter consumer behavior. Plastic produce bags or other hygienic bags are typically not targeted in bans or levies, France is the only country to ban plastic produce bags, but allows for paper bags as an alternative.

All Canadian municipalities with bag bans have enacted bans through bylaws. Some municipalities engaged in public consultation before the ban while other launched awareness campaigns after the passing of the bag ban. Furthermore, most Canadian municipalities, as well as foreign orders of government with bag bans, have allowed for transition periods between the passing of the bylaw and the date the ban comes into effect.

### Primary Materials of Single-Use Bags:

1. Plastic bags: Made from polyethylene, plastic bags are fabricated by modifying natural gas or as a bi-product of making crude oil into gasoline. Polyethylene is not readily biodegradable and will not breakdown in a landfill. Plastic bags are may be reused in other fashions such as a garbage bag, lunch

bags, or dog poo bags. If a plastic bag is recycled, it can only be down-cycled, meaning that after the polyethylene is recycled into another product, that product can no longer be recycled. The Canadian Plastics Industry Association estimates that 61% of Canadians can recycle plastics bags in their local municipal recycling programs, however, that does not mean that all 61% do recycle their bags. It also leaves the remaining 39% of Canadians without access in a position where they are not recycling their bags.

2. Biodegradable plastic bags: Made from bioplastics (derived from starch, cellulose, or lactic acid) or from petrochemicals containing a biodegradable additive. It is not always intuitive for individuals to tell the difference between a biodegradable plastic bag and a regular bag and so biodegradable bags will often clog up recycling facilities. Some biodegradable bags degrade very quickly, while others take years.
3. Paper bags: Typically made from virgin pulp, as such recycled bags may not be as strong as new paper bags. There are some companies now that make their paper bags from 100% recycled content. Paper bags are not reused as garbage bags as plastic bags are. These bags are compostable but they cost more to produce and to recycle than plastic bags. Most single-use bag bans or levies do not extend to paper bags but will include them as an alternative to plastic bags.

## Summary of Bag Bans in Canada:

Community	Plastic bags	Bio-degradable plastic bags	Paper bags	Produce and hygienic bags	Other types of bags	Engaged in Public Engagement
Montréal	✓	✓				✓
Huntingdon	✓					
Brossard	✓	✓				✓
Leaf Rapids	✓					
Thompson	✓	✓				✓
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Vancouver  *has so far initiated a strategy for the elimination of various single-use items.	✓					✓
Victoria	✓	✓	*Set fees for the purchase of paper bags and reusable bags			✓

## Single-Use Bag Bans:

The list of Canadian municipalities with a single-use bag ban (bylaw) includes:

1. Montreal, QC

- a. Announced early in the New Year that retailers had until June 5, 2018 to cease giving out biodegradable and non-biodegradable plastic bags.

- b. The ban does not apply to bakery bags, produce bags, dry cleaning bags, or bags for medications, or for any other hygienic purpose.
  - c. The City assembled a team of staff to research a potential bag ban. This team conducted public consultations and then reported the findings and their recommendations to the Executive Committee prior to adopting the ban.
2. Huntingdon, QC
- a. Passed in November 2007, one month after a motion made by the Mayor to look into banning plastic bags, and the ban entered into force January 2008.
  - b. Ban extends to plastic bags, and biodegradable plastic bags are permitted.
3. Brossard, QC
- a. Came into effect September 2016 and the ban extends to plastic bags and biodegradable plastic bags.
  - b. Municipality gave businesses a 7 month adjustment period.
  - c. Sent a letter to businesses explaining the changes.
  - d. Brossard adopted an environmental action plan and an environmental policy.
    - i. Their Advisory Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development and council gave a mandate to the urban planning department to evaluate the possibility of a ban. The city also conducted a survey in which they found 63% of residents to be in favour of banning plastic bags.
    - ii. After the bylaw was passed, they engaged in an awareness campaign to help educate business owners.
4. Leaf Rapids, MB
- a. In April 2007 they became the first Canadian municipality to impose a ban that extends to plastic bags.

5. Thompson, MB

- a. The second municipality in Canada to ban plastic bags in December 2010.
- b. The ban extends to plastic bags and biodegradable plastic bags.
- c. Order of Events:
  - i. Formed a committee of staff who researched the possibility of a plastic bag ban. Prior to passing the bylaw, Administration met with retailers in the community to gather their input and to develop a plan of action for implementation.
  - ii. So far no enforcement has been required, when first time infractions occur Administration meets with the retailer and the retailer comes into compliance.
- d. Thompson paired the ban with an updated recycling program.

6. Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, AB

- a. In September 2010 they banned plastic bags, biodegradable plastic bags, paper bags, door hanger bags used for flyers or coupons, and certain gift bags.
- b. Order of Events:
  - i. In 2007 administration was directed to look into the possibility of exploring a ban and they recommended public education as opposed to an outright ban.
  - ii. In 2008 received a delegation from a resident regarding plastic bag bans.
  - iii. Held a public hearing on November 24, 2009 prior to passing the bylaw. Bylaw came into effect September 2010.
  - iv. Campaign to residents started in 2010.
  - v. In 2011 had a consultant do an evaluation of the ban.
  - vi. In 2012 passed an updated plastic bag ban bylaw.

## 7. Victoria, BC

- a. Banned plastic and biodegradable plastic bags to be purchased or given out at checkout and made exemptions for small paper or plastic bags for hygienic purposes, dry cleaning, produce, and small hardware bags.
- b. Set out minimum fees to be charged for the sale of reusable bags and paper bags at checkout at \$1 and \$0.15 respectively.
- c. Bylaw to come into effect July 1, 2018 and fees for buying paper bags and reusable bags to increase from \$0.15 to \$0.25 and \$1 to \$2 respectively on January 1, 2019.
- d. November 5, 2015 Council directed staff to investigate and report on implementing a plastic bag ban. Starting in March 2017 administration met with different municipal stakeholders to understand their position on plastic bag reduction programs.

## 8. Vancouver, BC

- a. Approved the Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy in May 2018 which seeks to introduce a ban on the distribution of foam cups, containers, and plastic drinking straws.
- b. Engaged in three phases of stakeholder engagement ranging from workshops (stage 1) to roundtables and surveys (phase 2) to public input on draft strategy (phase 3).
- c. Introduced reduction plan for disposable cups and single-use shopping bags. Retailers may choose their reduction strategy by either eliminating them completely, introducing a fee, or a different option finalized through consultation. Vancouver has plans to implement a full ban on bags and cups if the target reduction is not reached by 2021.
- d. Has not yet passed any bylaws banning straws, Styrofoam, or bags. The soonest bylaw amendments will happen in November 1, 2019.
- e. Further consultation with stakeholders to take place on the implementation of the plan.

Summary of actions taken to eliminate plastic bags in other countries:

Country	Ban			Levy		
	Plastic	Paper	Produce Bags	Plastic	Paper	Produce Bags
France	✓		✓			
Ireland				✓		
Australia	✓					
United States of America	✓			✓	✓	

Other Countries:

9. France

- a. Implemented a ban on single-use plastic bags July 2016 and banned plastic produce bags July 2017 but allows for compostable, biodegradable, or paper produce and shopping bags.
- b. Other single-use shopping bags that are not banned are still available for free or for a fee at retailers.

10. Ireland

- a. Implemented a Plastic bag levy in 2002 where retailers had to charge a minimum of €0.15 per bag and the Irish government increased the levy to €0.22 per bag in 2007 when the effectiveness of the levy decreased.
- b. The levy does not extend to plastic produce bags or other hygienic bags.

11. Australia

- a. Western Australia (July 2018), Australian Capital Territory (November 2011), Northern Territory (September 2018), South Australia (May 2009), and Tasmania State (November 2013) governments have banned single use shopping bags.

- b. Their bans do not extend to plastic produce bags or other hygienic bags.

## 12. USA

- a. The states of California (August 2014), Hawaii (2015) banned single-use plastic bags as well as the municipalities of Austin (March 2013), Boston (December 2018), Los Angeles (January 2014), San Francisco (2007), Portland (October 2013), and Seattle (July 2012).
- b. Washington DC (2010), Chicago (August 2015), Boulder (November 2012), Brownsville (April 2017), Montgomery County (January 2012), and New York City (October 2016) have implemented bag fees for retailers that all target single-use plastic bags, and some target paper bags.

## 13. European Union

- a. On April 25, 2015 the EU released a directive to member states that they shall take measures to limit the consumption rate of plastic bags, and to ensure that bags are not provided for free by retailers, and to engage in public education on the environmental impacts of plastic bags.