



HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Wednesday, October 25, 2023

3:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 021396

The Health and Environment Committee will hold a public meeting on Wednesday, October 25, 2023 from 3:00p.m. – 5:00p.m. to discuss, review, and evaluate the Zero Waste Master Plan and plan reports and updates, and to discuss possible ways to further reduce waste in Cambridge including exploring how the city might eliminate single-use plastics including but not limited to nips, bottled water, and utensils.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Patricia Nolan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Dennis J. Carlone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marc C. McGovern	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Quinton Zondervan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council's Health and Environment Committee was held on Wednesday, October 25, 2023. The meeting was Called to Order at 3:00 p.m. by the Chair, Councillor Nolan. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. This public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

At the request of the Chair, Deputy Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Carlone – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor McGovern – Present/Remote

Councillor Zondervan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Present – 4, Absent – 1. Quorum established.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan offered opening remarks and shared that the Call of the meeting was to discuss, review, and evaluate the Zero Waste Master Plan and plan reports and updates, and to discuss possible ways to further reduce waste in Cambridge including exploring how the City might eliminate single-use plastics including but not limited to nips, bottled water, and utensils. Councillor Nolan noted that John Nardone, Deputy Commissioner, John Fitzgerald, Environmental Services Manager, and Michael Orr, Recycling Director from the Department of Public Works (DPW) were present at the meeting. Councillor Toner also joined the meeting remotely.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan introduced Janet Domenitz from Environment Mass who offered comments on why single use plastics are a problem, reviewed pending select bills at the

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Oct 25, 2023 3:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Massachusetts Legislature to reduce plastic use, and highlighted the importance of why local action should be taken on reducing plastic.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan offered additional opening remarks (Attachment A) relative to the Zero Waste Master Plan.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan introduced John Nardone and the team from DPW who gave a presentation titled “Zero Waste Master Plan Update” which was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation provided an overview of the accomplishments of the Zero Waste Master Plan 1.0 and reviewed the timeline and future goals of the Zero Waste Master Plan 2.0.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan thanked DPW for their update and shared that she would like to have a brief discussion on the possible ban of miniature liquor bottles. Councillor Nolan offered comments on the proposed ban (Attachment B) and noted this was in relation to Policy Order 2023 #177. Councillor Nolan introduced C.A. Webb who is a Cambridge resident and former President of the Kendall Square Business Association and Ben Weiner who is a package store owner in Cambridge, former President of the Massachusetts Package Store Association, and Vice President of the Off Premise Businesses of the National Organization representing on and off premise small businesses across the country known as the alcohol beverage licensees to share comments related to miniature liquor bottles. C.A. Webb noted the public health and environmental affects caused by having empty bottles in the streets and urged the City, as well as business owners, to work together to create a better living space for children and residents. Ben Weiner shared that he looked forward to having conversations with the City on how small businesses and the City can work together and be transparent about the proposed ban on miniature liquor bottles. Ben Weiner submitted a letter to the Council which offered suggestions on ways to move forward (Attachment C).

The Chair, Councillor Nolan opened Public Comment.

Michael Weiner, 10 Sherman Terrace, Cambridge, MA, shared that as a business owner he would like to be part of the solution rather than contributing to the problem.

Harry Patel, 126 Morris Street, Revere, MA, shared concerns, and personal experiences with the ban on small miniature liquor bottles and how it has affected him as a former business owner.

Charles Marquardt, 10 Rogers Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments and suggestions regarding the ban of miniature liquor bottles, and noted the importance of everyone working together with transparency.

Rachel Wyon, 283 Sidney Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of having a ban on single use fossil fuel plastics and encouraged the use of plant-based plastics.

Amy Waltz, 12 Blakeslee Street, Cambridge, MA, noted the importance of the Zero Waste Master Plan in reducing waste.

Judy Nathans offered comments that were in favor of the Zero Waste Master Plan.

Jason Alves, Executive Director of the East Cambridge Business Association, shared that they were in favor of engaging the business community and solving problems together and offered comments on a possible ban of single use plastics.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan noted the presentation that was provided by Janet Domenitz, in error, was not shared during their time speaking. Councillor Nolan reviewed the slides for the Committee (Attachment D).

The Chair, Councillor Nolan had a follow up question for DPW regarding if there are any recycling facilities in Massachusetts that will recycle small liquor bottles. Michael Orr was

available to respond, noting that due to the size and shape of small liquor bottles, it can be difficult to categorize them as something that can be recycled.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Zondervan who noted the importance of having a straight answer on whether small liquor bottles are recyclable and working with businesses on what the best solution is going forward. Councillor Zondervan had a follow up question on the presentation from DPW regarding some of the data that was collected. John Nardone and Michael Orr were available to provide a detailed response. Councillor Zondervan shared concerns regarding why a ban on single use plastics has not been addressed sooner and asked what solutions DPW have moving forward. John Nardone reviewed goals for the Zero Waste Master Plan 2.0 and noted that they are in the process of reviewing consultants. John Nardone recognized the impact that a proposed ban would have on the small business community and noted the importance of working with the businesses as the City moves forward to discuss what options are available if a ban were to pass. Michael Orr provided additional information on the Zero Waste Master Plan 2.0, including exploring recycling carpets.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone who thanked DPW for their presentation and hard work. Councillor Carlone noted the importance of working with small businesses to find a reasonable solution. Councillor Carlone asked what Cambridge can do better as a community to reach the same goals as Seattle and other cities. Michael Orr shared that Seattle has a financial incentive for composting and that it is mandated. Councillor Carlone offered suggestions on how to help with composting for multi-family homes. John Nardone encouraged residents who live at large properties to reach out to DPW so that they can assist in a solution for recycling and composting.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor McGovern who agreed with Committee members regarding outreach and communication with the business community. Councillor McGovern asked for more information on educational outreach and working with schools on the environmental impact of single use plastics. John Nardone agreed that having more school outreach would be beneficial for the children and the community. Michael Orr provided additional information on what type of outreach is currently being done in the schools, and agreed that the more outreach and information that is shared the better. Councillor McGovern shared that he would support a public campaign on the importance of not littering.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Toner who noted the importance of engaging with the business community and offered suggestions on how the City can begin to notify businesses to get them involved in the conversation. Councillor Toner shared that he supports lowering the use of plastics but believes that it should be done in way that does not negatively impact small business owners.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Zondervan who made a motion that the City Manager be and hereby is requested to work with relevant departments to engage with various stakeholders including recycling advocates, package store owners, and business associations, and report back to the City Council with a list of recommendations to reduce the use of miniature liquor bottles.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Yes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to work with relevant departments to engage with various stakeholders including recycling advocates, package store owners, and business associations, and report back to the City Council with a list of recommendations to reduce the use of miniature liquor bottles.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Zondervan who made a motion that the City Manager be and hereby is requested to work with relevant departments to report back to the City Council with an update to the March 23, 2021 report on the process of the banning various single use plastics in line with the discussion during the Health and Environment Committee meeting and actions by the State and various municipalities.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Yes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to work with relevant departments to report back to the City Council with an update to the March 23, 2021 report on the process of the banning various single use plastics in line with the discussion during the Health and Environment Committee meeting and actions by the State and various municipalities.

The Chair, Councillor Nolan recognized Councillor Carlone who made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Deputy City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Carlone – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Yes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1. Meeting adjourned at 4:51p.m.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Opening remarks from Councillor Nolan relative to the Zero Waste Master Plan.

Attachment B – Remarks from Councillor Nolan on the proposed ban of miniature liquor bottles.

Attachment C – Letter from Ben Weiner to the City of Cambridge/City Council.

Attachment D – Presentation from Janet Domenitz.

Attachment E – Written communications received from the public.

Both motions were submitted as Policy Orders for the October 30, 2023 Regular City Council meeting, POR 2023 #194 and POR 2023 #195.

Clerk's Note: The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. This is a permanent record.

The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/605?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=ea14c3145d3647337dd50c4615f8f8da

A communication was received from Councillor Nolan, transmitting the Agenda for the October 25, 2023 Health and Environment Committee Meeting.

A communication was received from Recycling Director Michael Orr, transmitting a presentation titled Zero Waste Master Plan Update.

A communication was received from Councillor Nolan, transmitting a presentation regarding Select Bills to Reduce Plastics, Pending in the Massachusetts Legislature, 2023-2024.

PNolan Main Introduction:

I'm glad we're here today to talk about the zero waste plan - trash and recycling. I'm passionate about waste reduction and recycling since it has environmental impacts, public health impacts, and many other negative impacts on our city. As a city we have done a lot - and I celebrate what we have: 4 different curbside programs stop at my - and every - house to pick up trash, recycling, compost and yard waste. As an aside, I'm glad I don't have to use our backyard composter, which was likely a rodent magnet. And I'm excited about the work already done and the potential of the Zero Waste Master Plan. As an environmental advocate, I know how multi-faceted we have to be in our approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and greening our city. In terms of waste reduction, we need to think about the big steps and the small steps that we can take - tackling the difficult problems and the simpler ones at the same time.

Trash reduction is a large part of that - in the best case, our trash ends up in landfills and adds to carbon and methane emissions. In the worst case, our trash ends up in our streets, our parks, and in our waterways - clogging up drains, causing many problems - not to mention adding other public health ailments to our city. So this Zero Waste Master Plan update is essential to reducing our trash output, increasing our ratios of recycled and composted materials, and protecting the public health of our city. One part of that is in reducing single-use plastics, as the call of the meeting suggests. Single-use plastics are made primarily through fossil fuels and are designed to be disposed of as trash after use. These plastics then spend the rest of their lifespan decaying in landfills - adding to waste and as they decay over decades and decades, and often emit PFAS into our ecosystem. The myth that plastics can be or are recycled is one that has prevented programs to reduce plastic use. And it is largely a myth - funded by plastic manufacturers and fossil fuel companies.

By eliminating as many single-use plastics as possible, we can better protect our environment and our public health. We have had some success with our plastic bag ordinance and our ban of polystyrene takeout containers, but we need to continue: we can follow the example of state action to eliminate the purchase of plastic bottles by the city, we can limit the use of plastic utensils, and we can limit the sale of miniature liquor bottles. All these have the potential to minimize trash, reduce litter, and improve public health. We heard from Janet Domenitz today on the benefits of reducing single-use plastics, then we will hear the DPW presentation, then to two panelists who will discuss specifically the question of miniature liquor bottles, before public comment and council deliberation. We know this issue is important - this discussion has been ongoing for years - the city and council have discussed banning single use plastic many times. In 2019 a policy was put in place to reduce the purchase of bottled water by the city. In 2021 a report in response to the council asking for an ordinance to ban all single use plastic items suggested some steps to take - although it recommended at that time against an and this is not the last time we will be discussing any of these issues: this is the beginning of a discussion to update the Zero Waste Master Plan and how to reduce plastics in Cambridge.

PNolan Miniature Liquor Bottles Intro:

Before we go to public comment and to council discussion, I want to begin a conversation about miniature liquor bottles. This issue has been a topic of concern for a while - the CS BID has worked on it from a litter and public health and safety perspective. I have been working on this issue for over a year now, with my MSYEP intern researching the question. And I know others on the council and in the community have been considering banning nips. I filed a policy order to publicize the effort and to bring more folks to the table to discuss the issue publicly. I've reached out to folks from around the city and the state to ask for input and bring in stakeholders. I know that package store owners are interested - and I'm grateful some of them are here to give their perspective. We will have two speakers before moving to public comment - the first, C.A. Webb, a Cambridge resident and former president of the Kendall Square Association, will give her perspective as someone who lives in the community and someone who understands how to work with local businesses. The second, Ben Weiner, is a Cambridge business-owner and the former president of the New England Package Store Association, who will speak to his experience in Cambridge and in other cities that have considered banning the sale of miniatures. Then I'm sure we will have others speak to their experience in public comment.

I want to emphasize that this is the continuation - not the end of a discussion, not the end, and we need to understand the broader effects on waste reduction, recycling, and public health in order to make decisions, which is the impetus behind widely publicizing the effort and gathering a broad collection of stakeholders for this continued conversation. I can say from my own research and discussions that I am very excited to pursue this kind of action. The public health effects in Newton and in Chelsea seem to demonstrate that the impact of a ban on miniatures can be positive for public health, for many businesses, and can reduce litter significantly. We have an identifiable and quantifiable problem of waste in our streets and we need to solve it. It's negatively affecting the public health of the city. We want to partner with stakeholders and bring them to the table to do it in a way that ensures we address their concerns along the way, but it's action that I think we need to consider.

Benjamin Weiner
900 Lynnfield St. #35
Lynnfield, Massachusetts 09140
617-510-2655
BENW@SAVMORSPIRITS.COM

October 25, 2023

To: The Honorable City Council of Cambridge
Regarding: The Meeting of the Health and Environment Committee

Good day,

My name is Benjamin Weiner. My family has owned a package store in Cambridge, Sav-Mor Spirits, since December 1982. Over the past fifty years I have served twice as the President of the Massachusetts Package Stores Association and am presently vice president for off-premise businesses of the national organization representing on and off premise small businesses across the country known as the Alcohol Beverage Licensees. I am submitting this letter and other information to the council for your consideration. I hope I do not go over the 3 minute allotted time.

I thank the city council for allowing the off-premise businesses of Cambridge to present firsthand information as to the effects a ban on miniatures would impose. It is our hope that our dialogue today with the city can serve as the beginning of a better communication foundation, which would allow us, the small business owners, to discuss any issues concerning the retail sale of beverages containing alcohol.

The licensees both attending this meeting and unable to attend due to business demands are united in coming to a reasonable solution to any perceived problems with the city which are in our area for enactment. I am submitting a letter which encompasses possible actions to address litter and other issues.

AT

We are not chemical engineers, nor do we have the ability to solve the recycling of plastic issue. I've spoken with representatives at Sazerac who can confirm that the bottles are made of PET plastic, the caps are polypropylene, and the company is moving to wash-off labels thereby meaning that the mini bottles are made of 100% recyclable material.

If there is an issue with plastic recycling vendors not wanting to process plastic miniatures due to size, apparently the vendors don't seem to be having a problem with the empty plastic pill containers of equal size or used cosmetic plastic tubes. These items are already being disposed of in our blue recycling bins. This problem would need to be discussed further by parties with more knowledge than this bunch of liquor store owners possess.

In closing, I hope that the City of Cambridge and all its agencies would view the more than 20 alcohol beverage retailers as decent law abiding contributors to the community. We were designated "essential businesses" during the pandemic and were a source for responsible adults to gain a moment's respite from the Covid dilemma. We will continue to be vigilant and take our public charge of dispensing beverages of alcohol legally as our primary responsibility.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Benjamin Weiner

Recyclability of Mini Bottles

- The mini bottles are made of **fully recyclable material** (including the caps).
 - The bottles are PET, which is one of the most recyclable kinds of plastic
 - The caps are polypropylene which is 100% recyclable
 - They are switching to wash-off labels which increases the recyclability of the plastics in the bottles
 - The mini bottles are made of 100% recyclable material
- Mini bottles are not able to be recycled because the MERF machines (made by companies like TOMRA) used to sort recycled materials are not able to sort items that are as small as the 50ml and 100ml bottles.
- This doesn't just stop at mini bottles, however, this means that all small plastic containers (like pill bottles, travel-size containers, make-up and cosmetic containers, etc.) also can't be recycled due to their small sizes.
- The liquor industry has done their part---they've made the mini bottles entirely out of recyclable material.
- It's now up to the recycling industry to update their technology to be more effective at recycling small-size plastics because there are so many things are sold in small plastic bottles, not just the minis, that can't be recycled due to our limited recycling technology.
- Think about all the prescription bottles, toiletry bottles, cosmetic containers, and so forth.
- The recycling industry now needs to step up and do their part as well to make sure that all recyclable plastics can be recycled.

FROM SAZERAC'S REPRESENTATIVE

Bru Nemo

To the City of Cambridge:

We, a collective of local Cambridge liquor retailers, ask you to consider alternatives to an initiative being considered that would ban the sale of all 50ml and 100ml bottles of alcohol in Cambridge.

Should the city adopt this ban, it will cause considerable harm to our businesses. We rely on the sale of 50ml and 100ml containers as a large source of revenue and they impact our ability to hire and maintain employees in our stores. Should the ban be imposed, it will likely mean we can't afford to pay many of our employees. A ban could result in the loss of jobs in Cambridge.

A ban in our city could also result in other unintended consequences. Many of our customers use the mini bottles as a means of self-regulation given their small size. Eliminating the 50ml and 100ml bottle could lead to greater instances of alcohol abuse. Additionally, banning the bottles in Cambridge does not mean that people won't drive to Sommerville, Watertown, or Charleston to purchase them. What's to keep people from buying bottles in one town and littering them here? A ban likely won't address the problem of litter—it'll just hurt our local businesses that rely on the sale of minis to keep the lights on and people employed.

Additionally, there is a narrative out there that mini bottles aren't recyclable. This isn't true. They are PET bottles with wash-off labels which means they are made of entirely recyclable material. Recycling machines are so out of date that they can't sort small plastic containers including pill bottles, make up containers, ChapStick, travel-size toiletries, and so many other things you can find at CVS or Walgreens. It the machines used to sort recycling that are the issue here. The liquor industry has done its part—all our products are made of recyclable material, now it's time that we modernize our recycling technology as millions of pieces of plastic, like those I just listed, are being missed due to outdated sorting machines.

Outside of recycling, we also know that City Council is determined to address litter in Cambridge, though, and we are entirely in support of that effort and committed to helping it. However, litter is made up of so many different items—chip bags, Dunkin Donuts wrappers, soda cans, scratch tickets, straws, cups, and yes, the mini bottles, as well. Instead of selectively harming our local liquor retailers, however, we want to propose a few alternatives that could help contribute to a cleaner Cambridge without costing jobs and harming our businesses.

1. **A voluntary environmental fee.** Many localities, including Attleboro and New Bedford practice or are proposing a five-cent (\$0.05) fee to be collected on each 50ml or 100ml bottle sold to go directly to environmental and clean-up efforts in the town. We propose a similar practice in Cambridge. We could collect five cents on every bottle sold that is 100ml or smaller and return that money to the City of Cambridge for environmental stewardship and clean-up efforts. This would mean that for every mini bottle sold, the City could collect funds that would go directly to litter abatement efforts.
2. **Expansion of a State Bottle Bill.** Massachusetts has a state bottle bill that could be expanded to include mini bottles thereby making those bottles worth up to ten cents. This would incentivize litter clean up and recycling as it would make each mini bottle worth something and less likely to be disposed of inappropriately.

3. **Sponsorship of more public waste receptacles.** Local retailers and associated groups would be willing to donate funds for the purchase of additional waste receptacles around town to help with litter abatement. In providing a greater number of public trash and recycling cans, we can incentivize good public behavior toward helping to keep our city clean. Oftentimes, people want to be good stewards of their town, they just need the convenience of public waste receptacles to help them in that effort.
4. **Litter pick-up and community organizing efforts.** If we are to effectively address litter abatement in our community, we will need to get the community involved. This means organizing local litter pick-ups that happen a few times per year, community education, and community organizing efforts to help folks understand the impact of litter and how they can help work against it. This is a community problem, and we will need everyone involved to really solve it.

We propose the above items to show our willingness to collaborate and compromise with the City of Cambridge. We ask that, in return, the city understands the real-world impact a ban would have on us as people and the people who rely on us for jobs.

We look forward to the opportunity to discuss the suggestions above with you.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Ben Wern

Select Bills to Reduce Plastics. Pending in the Massachusetts Legislature, 2023-2024

Bill Title: An Act to Expand the Bottle Bill, S2014 & H3690 Lead Sponsors: Senator Cynthia Creem and Representative Marjorie Decker

Deposits are the single most successful tactic for recycling beverage containers. But the bottle bill has not been updated since it became law 40 years ago. This bill would expand the deposit to cover water bottles, nips, vitamin drinks and other containers---the vast majority of which end up as litter or waste. It also raises the deposit from 5 to 10 cents.

Bill Title: An Act Reducing Plastic Bag Pollution, H784 & S477 Lead Sponsors: Representative Mindy Domb and Senator James Eldridge

Nothing we use for an average of 6 minutes should pollute our environment for years. Plastic bags litter our parks and open space, choke marine animals, and waste millions of gallons of petroleum, one of their main ingredients. This bill would follow the 150 + cities and towns in our state, including Boston, which have already restricted single use plastic bags.

Bill Title: An Act to Save Recycling Costs in the Commonwealth, H779 & S572 Lead Sponsors: Representative Michael Day and Senator Michael Rush

This bill will reduce packaging waste and improve recycling by creating a "polluter pays" model of producer responsibility for packaging and other items, making producers responsible for funding collection and recovery of materials they use and sell.

Bill Title: An Act to Restrict the Use of Polystyrene, H3627 & S1328 Lead Sponsors: Representative Marjorie Decker and Senator Michael Barrett

For decades, we've known that one of the worst forms of plastic pollution is polystyrene foam---what most of us call Styrofoam. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that Americans throw away an estimated 25 billion polystyrene cups every year, or about 82 cups per person. Polystyrene doesn't degrade, is not recyclable, and as a result it clogs our landfills, litters our streets, and pollutes our environment. This bill prohibits the sale and use of most single-use polystyrene containers.

Recent spill highlights need to end plastic pellet pollution



Source: <https://pimg.org/updates/our-waters-shouldnt-be-dumping-grounds-for-plastic/>

Single-use Polystyrene Foam



Source: <https://pirg.org/take-action/ban-single-use-plastic-foam-items-in-your-state/>

Trash in America



Source: <https://pirg.org/resources/trash-in-america/>

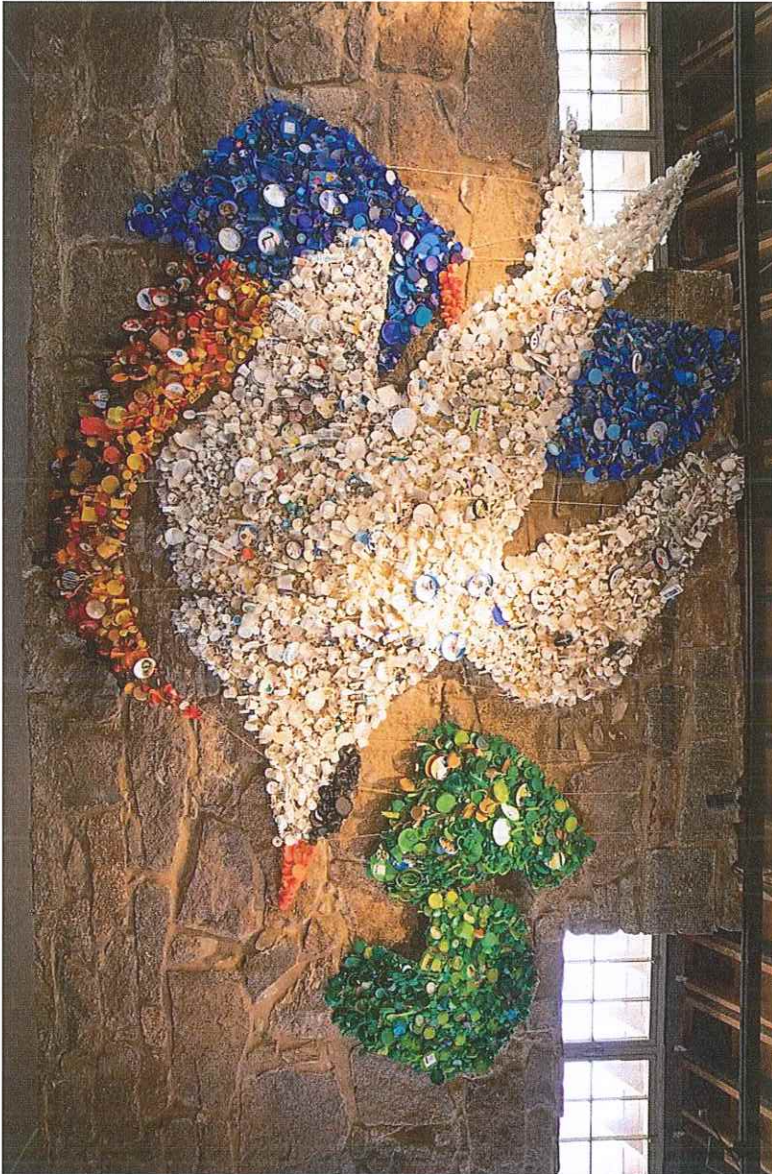
Single-use Plastic Packaging



Source: <https://environmentamerica.org/take-action/call-on-costco-to-move-beyond-single-use-plastic-packaging/>

MAGAZINE BEACH COMMUNITY TAPESTRY

“Say NO to single-use plastic and YES to art, community, and nature”



Source: <https://www.cecilymiller.org/copy-of-current-projects>

Erwin, Nicole

From: City Clerk
Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2023 8:19 AM
To: Erwin, Nicole
Subject: FW: ZWMP Recommendations

Paula M. Crane
 Deputy City Clerk
 City of Cambridge
 (617)349-4260

From: Amy Waltz <amyswaltz@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 3:16 PM
To: City Clerk <cityclerk@Cambridgema.gov>
Subject: ZWMP Recommendations

Updated ZWMP Timeline Goals is most important for success!

Reducing waste is urgent to significantly reduce the potent greenhouse gasses methane (80x more potent than CO2) and nitrous oxide (300x) as well as carbon dioxide. Waste is the third highest anthropogenic source of methane just behind Agriculture and Fossil Fuels! This is particularly urgent due to the fact that we need to reduce methane immediately to have a chance at 1.5 degrees (which will already be catastrophic). Composting all food waste, and reducing wasted food (about 30% in households) will significantly reduce our methane emissions.

Prioritizing an organics ban from trash collection will likely make the largest impact in Cambridge. Simultaneously incentivizing 80%-100% waste reduction could quickly diminish household waste!

In selecting a consultant for the ZWMP, it is likely most important that they can help us divert all organic waste from trash and reach our 80% waste reduction milestone in the next year or so (this is possible in most households now!), then plan for the 90% zero waste goal soon after. This is critical in both doing our part to reduce GHG and in influencing the region and nation. It will also be encouraging to global cities who are taking action. Actions in Cambridge have influence far beyond our borders.

Recycling:

We need greater access (10-24 hour/day would be nice), and multiple stations for some items currently collected at the recycle center - especially those that have no other easy drop sites. This should be something similar to the Clothing/Textile collection bins - but it would require fewer sites as there is likely less volume waste per capita (perhaps 2 - 6 sites across the city).

There is a desperate need for **scrap metal** collection bins since the Webster street facility is closed.

While we have multiple vender type bottle collection sites these tend to be tedious for large volumes and they don't accept all cans, so there is now a deficit in the area for **bottle/can collection** as well with the exit of E & C.

The **Danehy Park New Street** lot would be a great drop site to serve North/West Cambridge. A scrap metal drop bin would be ideal here to join the clothing, and compost bins. Perhaps also plastic bag / film drop, electronics, batteries, or whatever else could be accommodated here. Since the site will be under construction for a recreation building it is an ideal opportunity to consider expanding more permanent recycle drop site facility here as well! The park draws people from all areas of Cambridge. This makes for a convenient drop site that will significantly increase recycling rates and reduce trash.

Composting:

Food scrap composting needs to be available in every building and mandatory. This will significantly reduce Methane emissions from landfills, produce cleaner energy & soil amendments, help control rats, significantly reduce trash, save city funding etc. - win, win, win, win... Plus it is easy and convenient - a far better method of disposal than trash.

Waste Reduction:

Simultaneously with people starting composting we need to campaign for **90% reduction of waste** - Or simply aim for 0-2 lbs/person/week near the zero waste goal. This should be fairly easy for most people to attain at the household level once heavy food waste is separated into compost. Our personal trash (for 2 adults eating all meals at home) is now typically less than 2 lbs/ Month.

If we start charging for trash (and I am not sure this is a good idea yet) a low amount such as \$3/ bag is not really a deterrent. It should be closer to \$20/bag to have any impact or by weight to encourage continued reduction. There could be a low income rate as well.

As a city, we keep adding weekly collections (recycling, yard waste, compost).

We need to **start diminishing trash collection to every other week** (after composting is mandated) with future goals of monthly pick up and/or drop off locations. Some large buildings or special cases would likely need more frequent service. This will significantly reduce air pollution from the collection trucks and hauling trash hundreds of miles every week.

We need to make drastic trash reductions in educational institutions and businesses as well; and the most challenging reduction may be construction debris!

I would Not implement a policy for residents to pay for excess trash over what fits in our current trash bins since our trash bins are already much larger than current average trash use. Just paying for excess beyond the bin would have little effect in reducing trash and also send the message that the current trash volume is acceptable, when we still need Huge Reductions for environmental and climate reasons. Perhaps payment for trash in excess of the bin could work in combination with a reduced trash pick up schedule. We are already exporting trash to NH & Virginia... as well as incinerating it - which does not align with climate goals or climate justice.

Miscellaneous targets:

- Organics: pet waste solutions, cooking oil recapture, diaper solutions
- Acceptance of cartons in curbside again or at recycle center
- Reducing single use plastics: packaging, water bottles, cutlery, take out Encourage BYO and reusable items or a service like <https://www.recirclable.com/> for take out
- Increased accessibility: drop sites for some recycle center items & mobile recycle center in addition to current recycle center
- Solutions for move out waste & minor building repair scraps

Waste is the third highest percentage of anthropogenic methane emissions right after agriculture and fossil fuel! We could practically eliminate this source of methane by everyone composting - and reducing food waste would tremendously reduce agricultural waste as well!

If we ate less meat/dairy in addition to reducing food waste - that could reduce the highest agriculture portion of methane production by nearly half!

Thank you for your service in working to reduce waste in Cambridge!

Sincerely,

Amy Waltz

Concerned resident

Erwin, Nicole

From: City Clerk
Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2023 8:19 AM
To: Erwin, Nicole
Subject: FW: single use plastics

Paula M. Crane
 Deputy City Clerk
 City of Cambridge
 (617)349-4260

From: Rachel Wyon <r.wyon2010@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 2:44 PM
To: City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>
Cc: City Clerk <cityclerk@Cambridgema.gov>; City Manager <CityManager@CambridgeMA.GOV>
Subject: single use plastics

Dear Cambridge City Councillors,

I am writing with regard to the discussion today about the possibility of banning single use plastics.

As a mother, teacher, resident of Cambridge and a citizen of the world who is concerned about environmental justice, I encourage Cambridge to ban as many single-use fossil fuel plastics as possible and as quickly as possible.

Nanoparticles of fossil fuel plastic are present in our land and water. Toxic chemicals used to fabricate plastics are carcinogenic and pollute the air. Fish eat small pieces of plastic and we eat the fish, causing us to have plastic in our own bodies. There are islands of plastic in the ocean. A huge percentage of "recycled" plastic is not recycled, adding to our landfills and never to disappear.

We need to demand the production of plant-based biodegradable plastic now! Within a short time we need to end our use of all fossil fuel plastics.

I know Cambridge has been a leader in banning the flimsy supermarket plastic bags. -- I'm puzzled why the Dollar General Store on Cambridge St still uses them.

The fabrication of plastic materials in Louisiana causes cancer among the residents of the Baton Rouge area, which has become known as "cancer alley". In Welcome, La, a historically African American environmental justice community, residents organized to stop Formosa Plastics from building a new factory. According to the NYTimes article of Sept. 15, 2022,

"Louisiana activists battling to block an enormous plastics plant in a corridor so dense with industrial refineries it is known as Cancer Alley won a legal victory this week when a judge canceled the company's air permits." However, Formosa still plans to build it.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/15/climate/louisiana-judge-blocks-formosa-plant.html>

In addition, Formosa continues to emit carcinogenic pollution in other parts of Cancer Alley, La and in Point Comfort, Texas. This March 13 2023 article explains that Formosa exceeded limit with toxic vinyl chloride emission (carcinogenic).

https://www.victoriaadvocate.com/news/environment/formosa-exceeds-limit-with-toxic-vinyl-chloride-emission/article_b4a4efb8-c1d9-11ed-b78d-4b7106aed3ba.html

If Cambridge and many other cities and states ban single use plastics, there will be less demand for the plastics produced in places like Cancer Alley, La and Point Comfort, Tx. There may be hope for the youth of these cancer alley communities.

Please set up an ordinance to ban single-use fossil fuel plastics for certain items as a beginning now. In the future we need to work for a just transition to plant-based plastics as soon as possible and eventually a complete ban on fossil fuel plastics.

Sincerely,
 Rachel Wyon
 283 Sidney St. 02139
r.wyon2010@gmail.com
 member of Cambridge Mothers Out Front

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Oct 25, 2023 3:00 PM (Committee Reports)