

Schedule 1 to the Minutes of the  
Public Works and Transportation  
Committee meeting of Richmond  
City Council held on Wednesday,  
January 22, 2025.

## Works and Transportation Committee

By Councillor Michael Wolfe

**Referral motion:** to accelerate the reduction of plastic pollution, by directing staff to research the feasibility of implementing the use of reusable food containers at restaurants and large events.

### Reasoning:

The City of Richmond already focuses on recycling programs, as per the provincial roadmap, but this is at a slow pace for change.

The City of Richmond hosts many large public events, like the annual Salmon Festival, and many private functions year-round.

Even though we can't see obvious plastic pollution around us, we are not safe from it. There is growing evidence that microplastics and chemical additives have been found in all organs of the human body, because of its presence in the air, water and food we eat. As only an average of 9% of plastic waste is recycled, the rest accumulates in the environment. In fact, plastic can only be recycled a limited number of times before it ends up as waste. Also, some of the collected recyclable plastic is eventually exported to developing nations, perpetuating their plastic waste problems. The production of plastic is growing exponentially and will become a significant contributor to global warming as well.

There is disproportionate environmental degradation and health impacts in global south and developing nations. Organizations in these nations have started to develop the framework for concepts such as reusable containers at large events and restaurants.

Clearly the best solution to slow down the plastic pollution crisis is to reduce the use and production of plastic, specifically single use plastics.

Here are some links highlighting various facts about Plastic Pollution:

1. Nice visual describing the amount of plastic produced worldwide, and specifically that single use plastics make up 50% of new plastic production

<https://www.unep.org/interactives/beat-plastic-pollution/>

[Visual Feature | Beat Plastic  
Pollution](#)

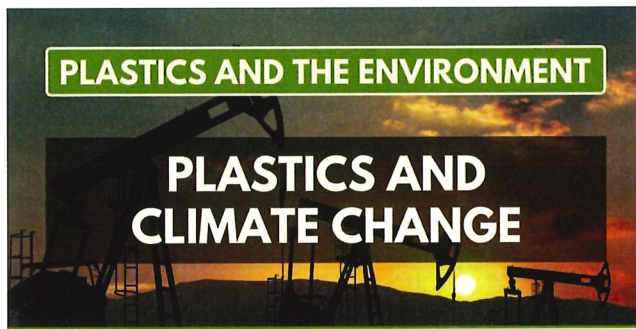
Around the world, one million plastic drinking bottles are purchased every minute, while 500

billion single-use plastic bags are used worldwide every year. In total, half of all plastic produced is designed to be used only once — and then thrown away.

[www.unep.org](http://www.unep.org)

2. Plastic contributes to global warming along its entire life cycle. By 2050, GHG emissions from plastic alone will amount to 13% of all emissions.

<https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/resources/updates/plastics-and-climate/>



Online resources provided to you by the Geneva Environment Network and its partners  
[www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/resources/updates/plastics-and-the-environment](http://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/resources/updates/plastics-and-the-environment)



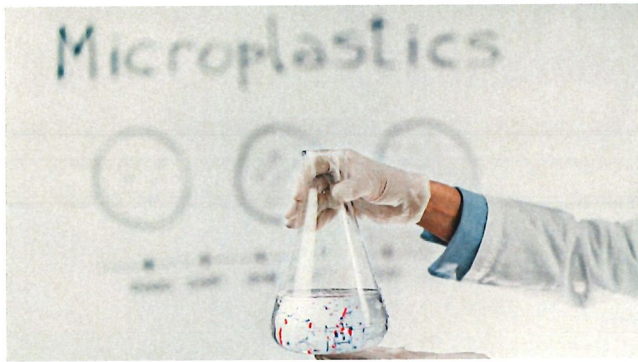
### [Plastics and Climate Change - Geneva Environment Network](https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/resources/updates/plastics-and-climate/)

As 99% of plastics are made from fossil feedstocks, plastic pollution is indubitably linked with climate change. This page is part of our Plastics and the Environment series, a set of online resources on the plastics crisis, its impact on people and the environment, and international cooperation to address this global problem. They include resources and news from organizations in Geneva and ...

[www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org](http://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org)

3. The health impacts from microplastics and chemicals in plastics are summarized in this article. The links within the article describe various studies done.

<https://www.aamc.org/news/microplastics-are-inside-us-all-what-does-mean-our-health>



[Microplastics are inside us all. What does that mean for our health?](#)

When Jaime Ross, PhD, a neuroscientist and assistant professor at the University of Rhode Island College of Pharmacy, decided to study how contaminating the drinking water of mice with tiny fragments of plastic might affect their cognitive function, she didn't expect the experiment to yield much.  
[www.aamc.org](http://www.aamc.org)

4. Recycle BC annual report states 98% of plastics collected are sent to recycling end market in BC. This is great, BUT the recovery rate is disappointing:
- Plastic Recovery Rate 43% (2023); Target 50% by 2025
  - Rigid Plastic Recovery Rate 56% (2023); Target 73% by 2025
  - Flexible Plastic Recovery Rate 20% (2023); Target 22% by 2022

Also, Recycle BC only accounts for residential plastic collection. I could not find data for the end market for industrial, institutional plastic waste, which is more important to know to advocate for the reusable container concept in restaurants and city events.

5. [https://recyclebc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Recycle-BC Annual-Report 2023 F.pdf](https://recyclebc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Recycle-BC%20Annual-Report%202023%20F.pdf)

In fact, plastic can only be recycled a limited number of times and “Recycling” might actually be “Downcycling”.

6. The next 2 links are organizations involved with implementing re-use systems. Perpetual is working with Galveston, Texas which has a population of 150,000.

<https://www.perpetualuse.org/approach>

### Approach — Perpetual

Our Process. Perpetual partners with local nonprofits and community organizations to establish city-scale reusable foodware systems. Once a local partner(s) is confirmed, we conduct an Ecosystem Mapping to identify key characteristics of a city/county, understand the local geography, tourism flows, climate and weather, key languages, and more.

[www.perpetualuse.org](http://www.perpetualuse.org)

<https://www.pressenza.com/2024/11/asias-reuse-revolution-a-blueprint-for-tackling-plastic-pollution/>



### Asia's Reuse Revolution: A Blueprint for Tackling Plastic Pollution

“Unpacking Reuse in Asia”: A New Report Highlighting Regional Solutions to Combat Plastic Pollution . Busan, South Korea — 27 November 2024 – Plastic pollution has reached a critical tipping point, but

Asia is leading the charge with innovative reuse and refill systems that prove we can move beyond single-use plastics. With the fifth round of negotiations of the Intergovernmental ...  
[www.pressenza.com](http://www.pressenza.com)

## The Real Solution to is to Turn Off the Plastic Tap!



Image courtesy of artist [Ben Von Wong](#).

**This was a major objective of the Global Plastics Treaty, still to be finalized in 2025 - summarized in this Oceana post:**

<https://oceana.ca/en/blog/global-plastics-treaty-key-takeaways-inc-5/>



## [INC-5 Wrap-up: What's Next for the Global Plastics Treaty](#)

The fifth, and what was supposed to be the final, round of negotiations for a Global Plastics Treaty at the United Nations Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5) just concluded in Busan, South Korea on December 1, 2025. The result? After over a year of hard work from delegates across the world, there is still no finalized Global Plastics Treaty, which means more negotiations are to come.

[oceana.ca](https://oceana.ca)

7. Plastic People is a 2024 documentary that is making the rounds. A group of Richmond physicians are watching a screening of it this week.

<https://plasticpeopledoc.com>

End.