



# Memorandum

**TO:** Kevin J. Jackson, Village Manager  
Ahmad Zayyad, Deputy Village Manager

**FROM:** Marcella Bondie Keenan, Chief Sustainability Officer  
Abby Zielinski, Sustainability Coordinator

**FOR:** Environment & Energy Commission

**DATE:** May 8, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Summary of Single-Use Plastics Community Survey

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## Background

The Office of Sustainability and Resilience has distributed and received results from the Single-Use Plastics survey. The survey was posted on *EngageOakPark.com*, and it opened on February 15, 2023. The data in this report is as of May 5, 2023. The survey included questions tailored for community members, restaurant owners, and retail store owners larger than 5,000 square feet.

The survey was disseminated in multiple ways. The Village promoted the survey to community members through its social media and digital channels. To notify impacted businesses, the Village sent direct emails requesting completion of the survey, and inviting them to attend the March meeting of the Environment & Energy Commission. Local business organizations, including the Oak Park River Forest Chamber of Commerce, also partnered to promote the survey. Finally, postcards with information about the survey and the Engage Oak Park resources were mailed to all 120 Oak Park restaurants on April 21, 2023.

## Summary of Data

There were a total of 295 survey responses received, primarily Oak Park community members. 17 (14%) Oak Park restaurant owner/operators responded, and 1 owner/operator of an Oak Park retail store larger than 5,000 square feet responded. The responses to the survey questions are summarized below.

Questions posed to **community members** and their responses:

- *Limiting single-use plastics would change my customer experience:*
  - 71% Positively
  - 20% No Change
  - 9% Negatively

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- *How important is it for you to be able to use single-use plastics at restaurants or stores instead of other alternative products?*
  - 77% Not important at all
  - 11% A little important
  - 5% Somewhat important
  - 7% Very important
- *A sample sign was included in the survey, and participants were asked: If this sign was displayed at a restaurant, do you feel it would be difficult to request single-use plastic foodware when ordering takeout or delivery?*
  - 8% Yes
  - 92% No
- *How much would you be willing to spend, per purchase, to help local small business owners offset the cost of switching to non-plastic foodware, packaging, and bags?*
  - The responses ranged from \$0 to \$100. Excluding the \$100 response as an outlier, the median is \$0.50 and the average is \$0.65.

Questions posed to **restaurant** and their responses:

- *Approximately how much of your business is takeout or delivery?*
  - The responses ranged from 15% to 100%, with a median response of 66% and an average response of 64%.
- *Do you currently use polystyrene (Styrofoam) food packaging at your restaurant?*
  - 47% Yes
  - 53% No
- *Do you currently utilize single-use plastic foodware, such as utensils, at your restaurant?*
  - 94% Yes
  - 6% No

Questions posed to **restaurant and store owners** and their responses:

- *Do you feel it would be difficult for your restaurant to shift from automatically providing single-use plastic foodware to an “upon request only” model for takeout and delivery orders?*
  - 28% Yes
  - 72% No
- *Do you feel it would be difficult for your restaurant to stop using polystyrene (Styrofoam) products by January 2025?*
  - 22% Yes
  - 78% No
- The survey included questions to store owners about single-use plastic bags. One response was received, and as such, the data will not be summarized.

Additional information gathered from all respondents:

30% of the survey responses included open-ended comments. The comments were categorized into seven general themes. Of those who provided an open-ended comment, a summary of the themes is listed below:

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	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>% of Total Responses</b>	<b>Comment Type</b>
	42	14%	Expressed support for this initiative and/or CROP
	9	3%	Expressed support for eliminating single use plastic containers and/or using compostable containers
	6	2%	Expressed support for additional ordinances or requirements beyond single use plastics
	7	2%	Expressed that this initiative is a poor use of Village time or that it won't make an impact
	6	2%	Expressed that this initiative is a burden on restaurant owners
	13	4%	Provided a suggestion for policy details or implementation
	5	2%	Other
	207	70%	No Comment
<b>Total</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Additional information was collected from optional survey questions, including interest in community or business services, demographic information, and contact information for further information on sustainable business programs.

In summary, the majority of community members surveyed have a positive response to reducing single-use plastics in restaurants. The majority of restaurant owners surveyed use polystyrene food packaging and/or single-use plastic foodware. The majority of restaurant owners surveyed do not feel it would be difficult to shift to an “upon request only” model for single-use plastic foodware, and the majority do not feel it would be difficult to stop using polystyrene food packaging by January 2025. Note, the survey was distributed before the Environment & Energy Commission voted to modify the compliance date to January 2024.

Please contact Marcella Bondie Keenan, Chief Sustainability Officer, at [mbondie@oak-park.us](mailto:mbondie@oak-park.us) or 708-358-5785; or Abby Zielinski, Sustainability Coordinator, at [azielinski@oak-park.us](mailto:azielinski@oak-park.us) or 708-358-5786 with any questions.

**Attachments:** Price Summary Table and Chart

**Q7: How much money would you be willing to spend, per purchase, to help local small business owners offset the cost of switching to non-plastic foodware, packaging and bags?**

Count	276
Min	\$0.00
Max	\$10.00
Mode	\$0.50
Median	\$0.50
Average	\$0.65

