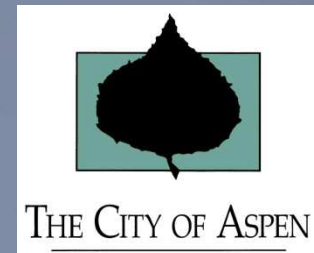


Addressing Single Use Items in a World of Convenience

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Right?

Single use items have become a way of life in the United States. Throw away items are convenient and highly marketed in today's society.



THE CITY OF ASPEN



Why do we care?

- Single use items are popular in all sectors of society.
 - Shopping
 - Packaging
 - Restaurants
 - Medical/Dentistry
 - Schools
 - Government
 - Offices
 - Athletics



= 4.5 pounds of trash per person each day, up from 2.7 in 1960, a 66% increase.



Some Examples of Single Use Items



Bag Consumption

- Plastic bags first became available in grocery stores in 1977.
- By 1996, 4 out of 5 bags used at checkout were plastic.



- Colorado uses 2 billion plastic bags per year, more than 400 per person.



Disposable Coffee Cup Consumption

- Americans drink 400 million cups of coffee per day.
- Choosing a paper cup leads to 23 billion paper cups used in the U.S. each year or 63 million each day.
- Most paper cups are made with virgin paper



Photo: Brittany Hardin



Plastic Water Bottles

- Single serving bottled water is the fastest growing beverage choice of Americans.
- Plastics make up 12% of the waste stream in 2010 compared to 1% in 1960.
- 29% of plastic bottles recycled out of 28 billion/yr.
- Processing and transportation costs are huge

State'09 Bottle Water Spending

Minnesota \$475,000

Maryland \$200,000

Colorado \$154,000

Oregon \$90,200

New Mexico \$78,000





More on Bottled H₂O

- For each 1 gallon of water that is bottled, an additional 2 gallons are used for processing.
- Making enough plastic bottles to meet America's demand for bottled water requires 17 million barrels/yr
- To visualize the entire energy costs of the lifecycle of bottled water, imagine filling up $\frac{1}{4}$ of that 12 ounce bottled with oil.
- 40% of bottled water is drawn from municipal sources.





Disposables Have a Role, but Not Everywhere

- Readily available alternatives exist
- Pollution, resource use and waste are unnecessary in many cases
- Disposables have become a habit, but are not a necessity.



"I was going to wake you up, but then I remembered you saying that bottled water is a stupid idea."



21 Days to Less Waste

- 21 days to change a behavior. This leads to support and engagement in future, larger projects.
- Although these are small items, the larger impact of reducing single use items is huge. People have a strong desire to be seen as consistent by others. When individuals agree to small requests or begin small new behaviors, it alters the way they perceive themselves.



**What has Aspen done to
address single use items?**

Reusable Cup Challenge



- Monday-Saturday for one week
- Gave away 500 reusable coffee cups in the EH office
- Tallied 1900 cups at 8 participating coffee shops
- Increase throughout week, as customers learned
- Honor system for tallies
- Community demand to bring it back again

**Participant:
ASPEN ZGREEN
Cup Challenge**



3 Reasons People Choose Bottled Water

- * Don't have a bottle that is convenient to use
 - Sold or gave away 4000 bottles
- * Can't find a location to fill a bottle
 - Installed 3 bottled filling stations in downtown area
- * Don't know that Aspen's tap water is safe and clean
 - Created an education campaign

Results = Positive

- Used over 200 gallons at each stations, 400 at one.
- Local and national press
- Community request for more fill stations



Policy Approach: Bag Ordinance

- 3 years of voluntary programs for bags, no measureable change
- Policy Options:
 - Ban on paper and plastic
 - Fee on both
 - Combination of fee and ban
 - Ban or fee on one





Considerations

- Both paper and plastic are unsustainable and have environmental effects. Addressing only one type of bag increases the use of the other type.
- The majority of bags come from grocers, but retail stores, liquor stores and pharmacies also add to the problem. What sector to target?
- How to address the additional cost to the business?
- Community reaction. Make a plan.



Lessons Learned

- Voluntary programs are always a good place to start. They generally don't create lasting change on a large scale.
- Arguments come in all shapes and sizes. Choose your battles.
- Choose giveaways wisely.
- It is hard to find a strong argument for single use items except that "it's convenient" or "it's what I've always done".
- It is important to remind community members that single use items haven't always been in our lives.



Resources

- Tappedthemovie.com
- Bagitmovie.com
- Think Outside the Bottle
- PlasticBagLaws.org
- WasteFreeRoaringFork.org

- Contact Me:

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