



Legislation Text

File #: 1815-2024, **Version:** 1

BACKGROUND:

Every day in Columbus, over 500,000 single-use coffee cups are thrown away (a conservative estimate). Reducing this waste requires creative, circular economic systems and solutions. The Central Ohio Reuse Coalition (CORC) is proposing to launch an open-loop reuse coffee shop project with the goal of reducing disposable coffee cup waste. Open loop refers to a system where reusable cups are managed in a manner like a library. Customers "borrow" reusable cups when they order coffee and are responsible for returning the reusable cup to the coffee shop. The reusable cup provider typically charges the coffee shop a fee to stock the cups, system usage charges, and a deposit fee to encourage return. CORC's vision is to have at least one participating coffee shop by mid-2024 and have a network of participating shops by the end of the year. CORC has assessed three reusable cup platform providers with existing networks of coffee shops. While the materials and costs vary among the three, each share the same concept - an open-loop circular economy solution where customers purchase take-out drinks in reusable containers. The Coffee Shop Reuse Project targets two constituencies: coffee shop owners (along with their managers and staff) and coffee consumers. There are two overlapping areas of concern shared by both business owners and consumers: (1) the environment (waste reduction) and (2) health (not drinking from a disposable cup lined with plastic, which can leach into the beverage).

Outcome 1: Building a Coffee Shop Reuse Network

CORC has identified over 80 independent coffee shops in the City of Columbus and has spoken with several shop owners who have expressed interest in participating in the Coffee Shop Reuse Pilot. In a network of participating coffee shops, a customer can order coffee or tea in one shop and return the coffee mug to a participating coffee shop and receive their order in a clean cup or simply return the cup and redeem their deposit fee. If they forget their borrowed cup and still want coffee, they simply borrow a second cup and then return both cups at a later time.

Outcome 2: Waste Reduction

Assuming each shop serves 100 takeout orders per day, if only ten percent of takeout orders in the five participating Reuse Pilot coffee shops are served in reusable cups, the pilot will cumulatively divert over 18,000 disposable cups from the landfill each year. By reducing disposable foodware from the waste stream, the city can reduce the amount it spends cleaning up litter, hauling trash to the dump, and tipping fees at the dump.

Outcome 3: Positive Public Relations for the City of Columbus as a Green Hub Leader

From a public relations standpoint, the pilot marks the city's first independent circular economy initiative. There are currently only a few cities nationwide that have a reusable coffee cup network. It also demonstrates to the public that reuse is a viable way to significantly reduce the amount of single use foodware entering the waste stream. The pilot will be a valuable experience that can be used to grow the network, potentially expanding to food boxes and other forms of to-go orders over time.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This ordinance authorizes the appropriation and expenditure of \$7,500.00 in the Neighborhood Initiatives subfund, subfund 100018.

To authorize the City Clerk to enter into a grant agreement with Plastic Reduction Project dba Central Ohio Reuse Coalition in support of their Coffee Shop Reuse Project; and to authorize an appropriation and expenditure within the

Neighborhood Initiatives subfund. (\$7,500.00)

WHEREAS, The City of Columbus has established ambitious goals in its Climate Action Plan to reduce the City's carbon emissions, including those resulting from waste and landfill use; and

WHEREAS, Creating a circular economy for coffee shops will keep reusable coffee cups in use over time while simultaneously reducing the need for single-use coffee cups, an approach that the United States Environmental Protection Agency has deemed "an important part of slowing climate change;" and

WHEREAS, The Coffee Shop Reuse Project has the potential to be scaled up to include more coffee shops, or even other industries, and will provide Columbus with invaluable data to determine whether establishing more circular economies can help the City effectively meet its climate goals; **NOW THEREFORE**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That the City Clerk is hereby authorized to enter into a grant agreement with Plastic Reduction Project dba Central Ohio Reuse Coalition in support of the organization's Coffee Shop Reuse Program.

SECTION 2. That the City Auditor is hereby authorized and directed to appropriate \$7,500.00 in the Neighborhood Initiatives subfund, subfund 100018, to the City Clerk per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 3. That the expenditure of \$7,500.00 or so much thereof as may be needed pursuant to the action authorized in SECTION 1 of this ordinance is hereby authorized in the Neighborhood Initiatives subfund, fund 1000, subfund 100018 per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 4. That the funds necessary to carry out the purpose of this ordinance are hereby deemed appropriated, and the City Auditor shall establish such accounting codes as necessary.

SECTION 5. That the City Auditor is authorized to make any accounting changes to revise the funding source for all contracts or contract modifications associated with this ordinance.

SECTION 6. That this Ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.