

**HUNTER COLLEGE
OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK (CUNY)
SINGLE-USE PLASTICS REDUCTION PLAN:**

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The Hunter College Plastics Reduction Taskforce is pleased to present for consideration, a working plan of new actions and initiatives to tackle single-use campus plastic waste.

Following signage by Governor Kathy Hochul of New York State' Legislation S.6815/A.7564, and passage of the CUNY Board of Trustees Single-Use Plastic Resolution, a Hunter plastics task force comprised of students, faculty, and staff was gathered and together strategized and developed ambitious and effectual goals, initiatives, opportunities, and metrics to reduce single-use plastics at Hunter College.

The harmful and lasting environmental impacts of single-use plastic waste is a growing concern; and undeterred, Hunter College is committed and responsive to stepping up, taking action, and fulfilling our part to create a greener, more sustainable New York. In the face of a climate crisis that demands actions now across all sectors, fields, and levels of operation, our Hunter campus community is resolute and ready to set deliberate goals to curtail our plastic waste. As a hub for learning, research & investigation, as well as interdisciplinary connections, Hunter College plays a pivotal role taking up the call and advancing sustainability and plastic waste reduction.

The targets within the Single-Use Plastic Reduction Plan address the ten (10) most common types of single-use plastics found at Hunter. The ten target categories identified were: Plastics Straws/Stirrers, Plastic Water/Beverage Bottles, Plastic Cups & Cups w/Plastic Lids, Plastic Bags, Plastic/Foam Take Out Containers, Plastic Utensils, Plastic Gloves, Plastic Wrap/Packaging, and Laboratory Plastics.

This working Reduction Plan sets ambitious and achievable milestones for Hunter College, and maintains our alignment with Hunter's Strategic Plan and CUNY Board reduction initiative. This document is a living starter guide expected to be enhanced and supplemented at later stages with more tactical language and details on recommended methods of implementation.

The Hunter Plastics Reduction Taskforce was comprised of a diverse set of student, faculty, and staff representatives. Collaboration with Hunter students was paramount in the development of a plastic reduction plan for the College, and throughout the entirety of the planning process students (as well as faculty and staff) were kept engaged at each stage.

The compilation of this Reduction Plan could not have been achieved without the extraordinary dedication and work from every taskforce member, and the indispensable executive support provided by Administration.

II. Plan Purpose and Background:

The NYS S.6815/A.7564 legislation calls for the adoption of policies that encourage the elimination of the use of certain single-use plastic items at SUNY and CUNY campuses. Building on this momentum, the CUNY Board of Trustees issued a January 2022 resolution mandating CUNY campuses, including Hunter College, to develop a single-use plastic waste plan within ninety (90) days.

The following is a working document of recommended actions and strategies to support Hunter College's reduction of single-use plastics. The intended objective of this Single-Use Plastics Reduction Plan is to assist Hunter College in identifying the most meaningful & relevant areas of opportunity to target the reduction of single-use plastics as a campus, provide a robust set of solutions and strategies to cultivate stakeholder buy-in & engagement, and encourage integration of reduction efforts that will deliver the biggest impact.

This Reduction Plan is a living guide. As more concrete actions are taken, it is expected for the Reduction Plan goals, initiatives and timeframes to be elaborated upon, modified with select stakeholders, and updated where necessary.

III. Plastics Reduction Committee Members:

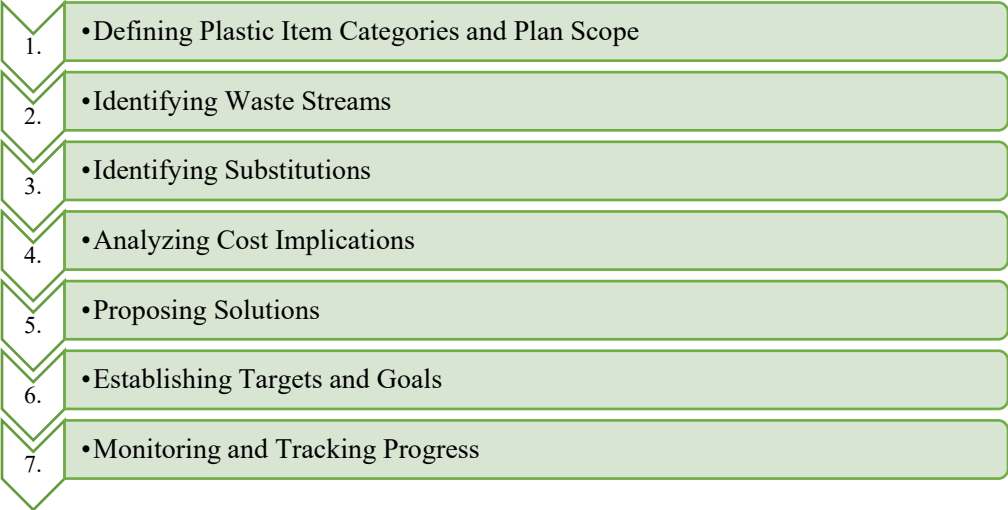
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IV. Plan Development Approach and Framework:

Following the CUNY Board Resolution, CUNY’s Office of Facilities Planning, Construction and Management commissioned its Sustainability and Energy Conservation Department (Sustainable CUNY) to work with Campus Sustainability Councils to develop plans and lead CUNY’s plastics reduction efforts. Sustainable CUNY prepared a preliminary reporting framework & format and shared amongst all campuses to streamline reporting and standardize the development of all campus’ plastic reduction draft plans.

The Hunter Plastics Reduction Taskforce considered and adapted the following reporting framework for the composition of Hunter College’s Single-Use Plastics Reduction Plan. This was done in order to align with the reporting outline and format crafted by Sustainable CUNY for all senior and community colleges, and importantly, to meet the April 2022 deadline charged by the CUNY Board of Trustees resolution. The framework outlines a seven (7)-step process and guideline to support the development of each campus’ plastic reduction plan. This multi-step process included:

Seven-Step Planning Process



A CUNY working group composed of Purchasing & Finance representatives from each college will assess and analyze the cost implications of each suggested type of single-use plastic substitutions and recommendations. Sustainable CUNY will manage and oversee this CUNY working group; which will be tasked with developing and sharing a final cost analysis report to all CUNY campuses.

V. Hunter College Plastic Waste Profile:

Hunter College has a building footprint of over two million square feet servicing more than a thousand employees, faculty, staff, and approximately twenty-four thousand students; including a multitude of daily visitors.

Assessing the distinguishing attributes unique to Hunter College as well as its collective bearing as an institution of higher education and research, a low-level waste query was conducted to identify most common sources of plastic waste and how each plastic waste stream is managed and processed.

The Hunter Plastics Reduction Taskforce identified the ten (10) most common types of single-use plastics on campus and deliberately defined the scope of our Reduction Plan to address the below specific items:

- Plastics Straws/Stirrers
- Plastic Water/Beverage Bottles
- Plastic Cups & Cups w/Plastic Lids
- Plastic Bags
- Plastic/Foam Take Out Containers
- Plastic Utensils
- Plastic Wrap/Packaging
- Plastic Gloves
- Laboratory Plastics

The primary contributors of Hunter College's single-use plastic waste are Facilities Management and Planning, food service/catering providers, and research and teaching laboratories. Other contributors include our campus vending systems, and community-based plastics stemming from neighboring food vendors, cafes, and restaurants and are otherwise purchased and utilized off-site, then disposed of when reaching campus.

The Office of Facilities Management and Planning oversees the daily collection of solid waste and recycling generated and disposed of on campus. This oversight applies campus-wide, except for waste & recycling generated at the Belfer Research Building and within the Hunter West 3rd Floor and 8th Floor Cafeteria at 68th. Recyclables – consisting of rigid plastics, metals, glass bottles and jars, beverage cartons, and mixed paper/cardboard – are collected and hauled by the New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY). At the campus level, these items are collected via a dual stream recycling system, with one color-coded bin for mixed paper and cardboard, and a second color-coded bin for metals, glass bottles and jars, beverage cartons, and rigid plastics. Recycling bins are situated commonplace throughout campus lobbies and corridors.

Single-use plastics not accepted for recycling by DSNY program standards (such as plastics bags and plastic wrap/film) are discarded as waste.

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Based on coordinated inquiries with Facilities & Planning, Finance & Business Office, and faculty researchers, in a standard month Hunter College generates approximately 40 cases of dining-related single-use plastic waste (encompassing straws, spoons, takeout containers, and cups with lids). Laboratories roughly spend at least \$1K per month on plastic items, and nearly 100 cases of plastic bags for the handling of waste/recycling are used each month through the Facilities Department.

Campus vending systems (Canteen/Pepsi) are controlled by a CUNY University contract.

VI. Single-Use Plastics Reduction Solutions by Category:

The following is a working table of recommended actions and strategies to support Hunter College’s reduction of single-use plastic. The reduction solutions (and the proposed timeframes for implementation) are broken down by the category items as defined in the Reduction Plan scope. However, there are several solutions recognized for their expanded potential. These reduction solutions and strategies are placed at the top of this list to express the impact and outcome they have in improving the quality and precision of reported data, as well as ability to address *multiple* plastic waste streams generated on campus.

General Strategies & Solutions

<u>Recommendation:</u>	Conduct a plastic waste audit
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	Data Quality + Reporting [Hunter will evaluate cost implications with the Office of Facilities Management to discuss scope, timing, and execution].
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	Fall 2023 (Level I) and Fall 2025 (Level II)

<u>Recommendation:</u>	Organize an ongoing promotional campaign to urge the Hunter College community to not use disposable plastic products: [Provide information about plastics reduction goals; reusable alternatives and where to get them; and information about where to properly dispose of plastics that are brought onto campus]
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	Behavioral/Changing habits [Hunter College will evaluate cost implications with Administration and Hunter Sustainability Council to discuss scope, timing, and implementation].
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	Starting Fall 2023; ongoing, updated with information as needed

Waste Stream: Plastic Straws/Stirrers

<u>Substitution(s):</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Paper straws ▪ Bamboo stirrers ▪ Metal straws
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<u>Recommendation:</u>	Organize a Hunter College giveaway of reusable items (i.e. mugs and straws) during Welcome Week
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	<p>Education + Engagement</p> <p>[Hunter College will evaluate cost implications with the CUNY working group and Hunter Student Services for substitutions and collaboration potential].</p>
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	Summer 2024

<u>Recommendation:</u>	Amend service contracts to replace the purchase of plastic straws and stirrers in food service and catering contracts with renewably-sourced materials
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	<p>Source Reduction</p> <p>[Hunter College will evaluate cost implications with the CUNY working group for substitutions and collaboration with food service vendor].</p>
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	Fall 2024

<u>Recommendation:</u>	Remove straws dispensers and make straws available upon request
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	<p>Behavioral/Changing habits</p> <p>[Hunter College will evaluate cost implications with the CUNY working group collaboration with food service vendor].</p>
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	Summer 2023

Waste Stream: Plastic Water/Beverage Bottles

<u>Substitution(s):</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aluminum cans and bottles ▪ Boxed water ▪ Reusable glassware ▪ Reusable water bottles
<u>Recommendation:</u>	Installation of water bottle filling stations
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	<p>Source Reduction</p> <p>[The Office of Facilities Management will install & replace new refrigerated Water Bottle-filing Stations in strategic areas of the campus with heavy foot traffic. Water Bottle-filing Stations provide community access points to clean drinking water and reduce the number of bottles the community purchases and disposes of daily.]</p> <p>[Hunter College will also evaluate cost implications with the CUNY working group for substitutions in Canteen vending machines and food service vendor].</p>
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	End of Spring 2024 semester

Waste Stream: Plastic Cups & Cups w/Plastic Lids

<u>Substitution(s):</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Paper cups ▪ Biodegradable or compostable cups
<u>Recommendation:</u>	Offer a discount to Hunter College students, faculty, and staff that bring their own mug for the café kiosks
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	<p>Source Reduction + Behavioral/Changing habits</p> <p>[Hunter College will evaluate cost implications with the CUNY working group for potential collaboration with food service vendor].</p>
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	End of Spring 2024 semester

Waste Stream: Plastic Utensils

<u>Substitution(s):</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biodegradable or compostable utensil ware ▪ Bamboo cutlery
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<u>Recommendation:</u>	Amend service contracts to require food service providers to provide compostable options of single-use serviceware
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	Source Reduction + Landfill/Waste Diversion [Hunter College will evaluate cost implications with the CUNY working group for substitutions and collaboration with food service vendor].
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	Spring 2024

<u>Recommendation:</u>	Find a service provider that can take compostable materials from campus to a facility with anaerobic digesters for composting food waste as well as "compostable" bioplastic replacements used in on-campus food service; arrange for corresponding location for compostable collection and pickup for this service
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	Landfill/Waste Diversion [Hunter College will evaluate cost implications with the CUNY working group for potential providers of this service.]
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	Fall 2024

<u>Recommendation:</u>	Offer a utensils return program and wash station in the Cafeteria (and provide single-use plastic ware only upon request)
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	Source Reduction + Landfill/Waste Diversion [Hunter College will evaluate cost implications with the CUNY working group and Hunter Facilities and Management for implementation and maintenance].
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	Fall 2024

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<u>Recommendation:</u>	Install dishwashers in the Cafeteria in order to switch from use of single-use cutlery to re-usable utensilware
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	Source Reduction + Landfill/Waste Diversion [Hunter College will evaluate cost implications with the CUNY working group for implementation and collaboration with vendor].
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	Spring 2025

Waste Stream: Plastic Bags

<u>Substitution(s):</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biodegradable or compostable bags
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<u>Recommendation:</u>	Remove plastic bag liners from within recycling bins solely designated for collecting mixed paper & cardboard
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	Source Reduction + Operational Cost Savings [Hunter College will evaluate cost implications with the Office of Facilities Management to calculate an estimate of expected savings].
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	End of Fall 2023 semester

<u>Recommendation:</u>	Reorganize the number of trash bins on each building floor
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	Source Reduction + Operational Cost Savings [The Office of Facilities Management would reduce where there are an excessive number of Waste Collection Stations in select hallways].
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	End of Fall 2023 semester

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<u>Recommendation:</u>	Remove personal trash bins from within offices [Hunter College will evaluate cost implications with the Office of Facilities Management to calculate an estimate of expected savings].
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	Source Reduction + Operational Cost Savings
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	End of Spring 2024 semester

<u>Recommendation:</u>	Introduce plastic film/bags recycling on campus
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	Landfill/Waste Diversion [Hunter College will evaluate cost implications with the CUNY working group for potential providers].
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	Summer 2024

<u>Recommendation:</u>	Organize an ongoing informational campaign to educate Hunter College community members about how to properly dispose of plastic bags/films including: what items can be recycled; what bins should be used; what to do with non-recyclable bags/films
<u>Impact:</u>	Behavioral/Changing habits [Hunter College will evaluate cost implications with Administration and Hunter Sustainability Council to discuss scope, timing, and implementation].
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	To commence with the introduction of bag/film recycling bins; ongoing campaign, updated as needed

Waste Stream: Plastic Wrap/Packaging

<u>Substitution(s):</u>	-----
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<u>Recommendation:</u>	Require vendors and suppliers to provide plastic packaging take-back option when goods and materials are delivered
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	Source Reduction [Hunter College will evaluate cost implications with the CUNY working group for potential collaboration with suppliers and vendors].
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	Summer 2024

Waste Stream: Plastic/Foam Take-Out Containers

<u>Substitution(s):</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compostable take-out containers
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<u>Recommendation:</u>	Incentivize Hunter College student, faculty, and staff to bring their own food storage containers when utilizing the cafeteria and/or café kiosks
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	Source Reduction + Behavioral/Changing habits [Hunter College will evaluate cost implications with the CUNY working group for potential collaboration with food service vendor].
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	End of Fall 2024 semester

Waste Stream: Plastic Gloves

<u>Substitution(s):</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compostable or biodegradable gloves
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<u>Recommendation:</u>	Procure compostable gloves
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	<p>Landfill/Waste Diversion</p> <p>[Hunter College will evaluate cost implications with the CUNY working group for substitutions].</p>
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	End of Spring 2024 semester

**Waste Stream: Laboratory Plastics
- Pipettes
- Pipette tips and wrappers
- Tubes (w/ Styrofoam base and extra plastic wrapping)**

<u>Substitution(s):</u>	-----
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<u>Recommendation:</u>	Modify ordering during a procurement to order select lab supplies (ie. Pipettes, aspirator tips, syringe wrappers, etc.) in bulk packages instead of smaller or individually wrapped packs
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	<p>Source Reduction</p> <p>[Hunter College will evaluate cost implications with the CUNY working group and Hunter Purchasing/Finance Office for modified practices].</p>
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	Spring 2024

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<u>Recommendation:</u>	Enroll 68th Street laboratories in the Cornell/Falcon plastic packaging recycling program
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	Landfill/Waste Diversion [Hunter College will evaluate cost implications with the Office of Facilities Management to calculate an estimate of expected savings].
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	Fall 2023

<u>Recommendation:</u>	Ensure plastics recycling bins are provided inside the Belfer-Hunter laboratories
<u>Impact & Cost Implications:</u>	Landfill/Waste Diversion [Hunter College will evaluate cost implications with Belfer-Weill Cornell Facilities for collaboration].
<u>Target Timeframe:</u>	Fall 2022

VII. Monitoring and Progress Tracking:

The following steps are recommended to track and maintain progress, as well as lend more accountability and engagement to Hunter College’s single-use plastic reduction efforts.

- Add single-use plastic reduction as a fixed agenda item to Sustainability Council meetings.
- Compile plastics expenditure reports on a semi-annual basis.
- Conduct and compile bulk inventory assessment reports on a semi-annual basis.
- Create a voluntary plastics tracking report that laboratories and campus food service providers can opt-in to.
- Develop a rewards or recognition initiative for labs and food providers that choose to opt-in to the tracking initiative.
- Share plastic waste reduction milestones on the campus screens and Hunter Green website dashboard at the end of each academic year (AY).
- Deliver an annual presentation to College Senior VP’s and/or Senate to present status and progress-to-date of Plastic Plan target goals.

VIII. Concluding Remarks

The Hunter College's Single-Use Plastic Reduction Plan will be a catalyst to elevating sustainability and promoting the principles of waste minimization and diversion. In laying the groundwork for this endeavor, Hunter College is primed and in position to turn the page and look ahead to more Sustainable CUNY collaborations and initiatives, and to take up the mantle encouraging a plastic-free campus.