



# Decatur Single-Use Plastics Survey Results

January 2020



# Introduction

In September 2019, the Decatur Environmental Sustainability Board (ESB) released an online survey to gauge the community's attitudes towards single-use plastics and other single-use items. The ESB hopes to use the findings from the survey to inform the discussion of possible measures to reduce the quantity and types of single-use plastics in the City of Decatur.

Through the close of the survey in early January 2020, 922 individuals that live, work, and/or shop in Decatur had responded. The survey was disseminated to the public through:

- Decatur Focus Magazine
- City of Decatur Social Media
- Nextdoor and Decatur Neighborhood Associations
- Outreach at Decatur Farmer's Market and Truckin' Tuesday Events

The following pages summarize the responses to the survey questions with tables and figures. Note that not all questions had equal numbers of responses, and the total number is included where appropriate.

**922**

NUMBER OF  
RESPONDENTS

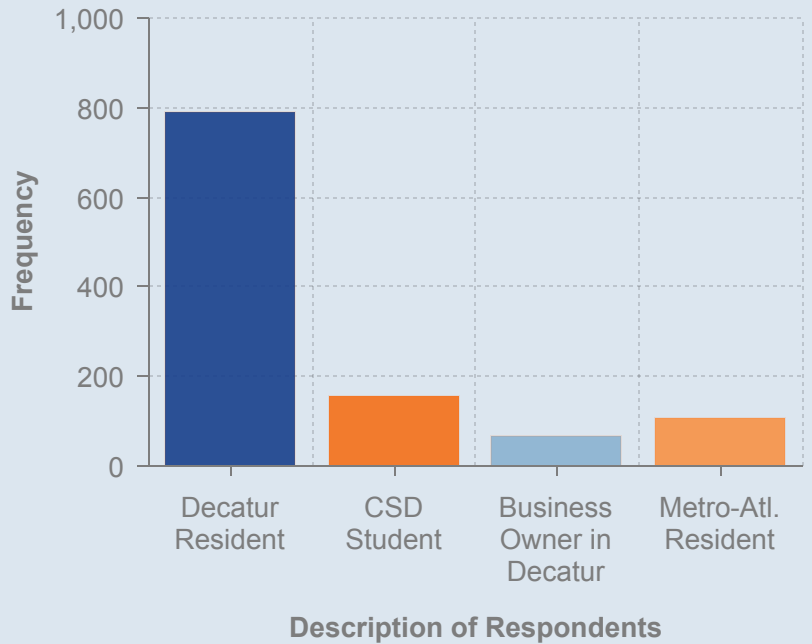
**SEPT. 2019 -  
JAN. 2020**  
SURVEY OPEN

# Question 1 : Which of the following describe you (check all that apply)?

**Table 1. Description of Respondents to Decatur Single-Use Plastic Survey**

ANSWER CHOICES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Decatur Resident	791	85.8
City Schools of Decatur Student	155	16.8
Business Owner in Decatur	66	7.2
Metro-Atlanta Resident	107	11.6

**Figure 1. Description of Respondents to Decatur Single-Use Plastic Survey**

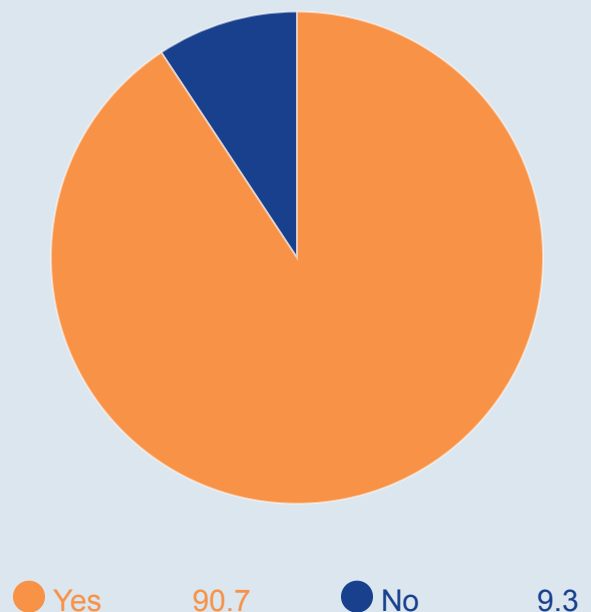


# Question 2: Do you use reusable bags?

**Table 2. Respondents' Use of Reusable Bags**

ANSWER CHOICES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Yes	836	90.7
No	86	7.3
Total	922	100

**Figure 2. Use of Reusable Bags Percent of Responses**



## Question 3: How often do you use reusable bags for the following occasions?

**Table 3. Respondents' Use of Reusable Bags by Activity**

ANSWER CHOICES	NEVER (%)	RARELY (%)	SOMETIMES (%)	ALWAYS (%)
Grocery Shopping	1.5	3.5	33.1	61.9
Retail Shopping	15.1	24.9	46.3	13.7
Transporting Belongings	1.8	2.2	22.7	73.3
Other	12.1	7.4	50.7	29.8

## Question 4: What prevents you from using reusable bags (check any that apply)?

**Table 4. Respondents' Reasons for not Using Reusable Bags**

ANSWER CHOICES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Forget to Bring Them	681	78.2
Too Expensive	15	1.7
Prefer Plastic Bags	11	1.3
Prefer Paper Bags	15	1.7
Want Paper or Plastic Bags to Use for Other Purposes	163	18.7
Unsure	2.9	25
Nothing: I Always Use Them	135	15.5
Other	81	9.3

## Question 5: What would encourage you to reduce your use of single-use plastic bags?

**Table 5. Respondents' Support for Single-Use Plastic Bags Reduction Strategies**

ANSWER CHOICES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Cashier asks if you would like a bag	101	11.6
Paying a small fee (up to 10 cents) per paper or plastic bag	325	37.3
Paper bags offered first	221	25.4
My use is likely to decrease only if no plastic bags are available	157	18.0
Other	67	7.7

## Question 6: What do you consider to be the biggest problem associated with single-use plastics?

**Table 6. Respondents' Views on Problems Associated with Single-Use Plastics**

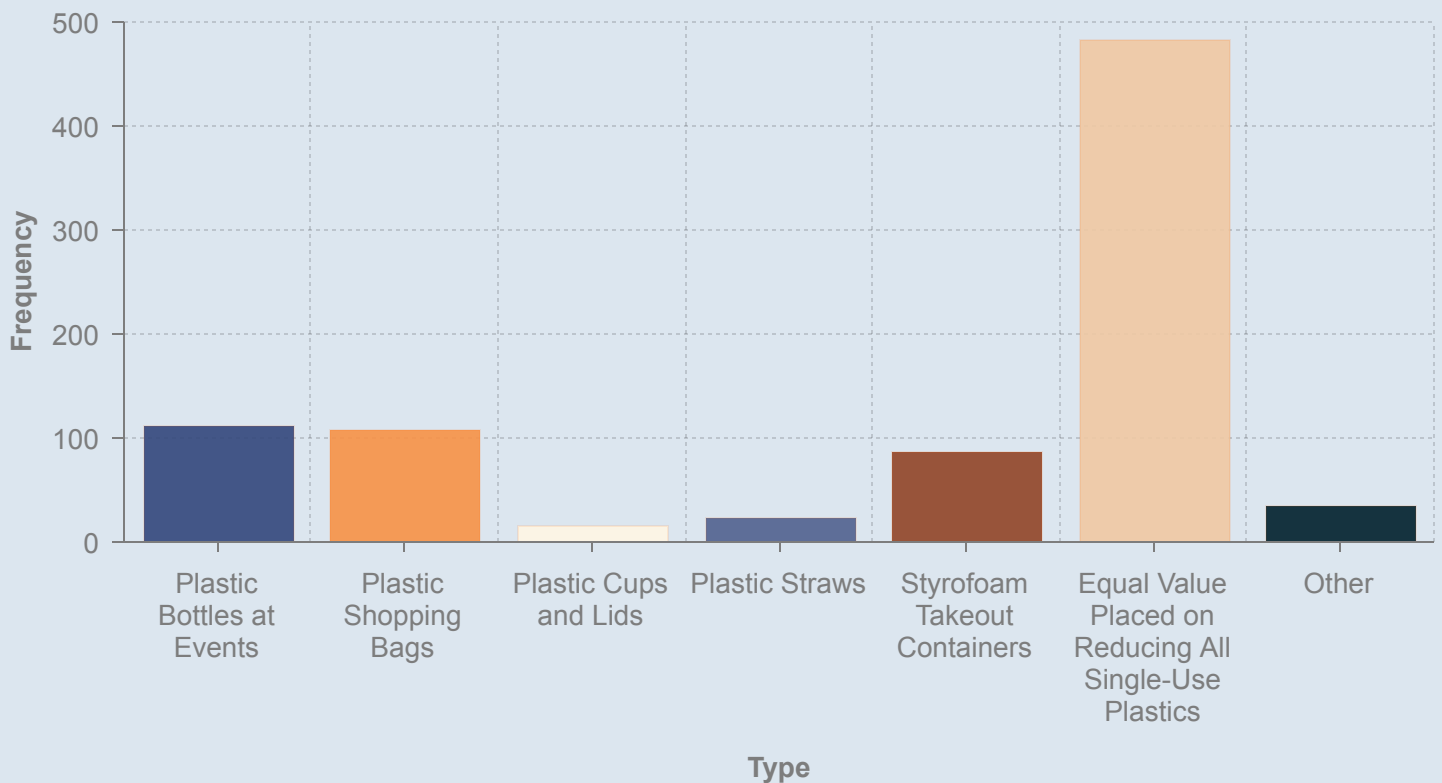
ANSWER CHOICES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Long Time to Decompose	335	38.3
Microplastics in Waterways	308	35.2
Litter in Community	28	3.2
Increased Waste in Landfill	106	12.11
I Don't Consider it to be a Problem	28	3.2
Other	70	8.0

# Question 7: Of the following single-use plastics, which do you think your community should take steps towards reducing in our local economy and waste stream?

**Table 7. Respondents' Priorities in Reduction of Single-Use Plastics**

ANSWER CHOICES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Plastic Bottles at Events	112	13.0
Plastic Shopping Bags	108	12.5
Plastic Cups and Lids	15	1.7
Plastic Straws	24	2.8
Styrofoam Take-Out Containers	88	10.2
I Place Equal Value on Reducing All Single Use Plastics	483	55.8
Other	35	4.1
Total	865	100

**Figure 3. Respondents' Priorities in Reducing Single-Use Plastics in Decatur**



**Question 8: Do you support a consumer-paid fee (10 cents or less) for using plastic or paper shopping bags at businesses in Decatur?**

**Question 9: Do you support an ordinance prohibiting a business from providing a single-use plastic shopping bag to customers?**

**Question 10 : Do you support an ordinance requiring a business to only provide biodegradable plastic bags or paper bags containing at least 40 percent recycled material to customers?**

**Table 8. Respondents' Support for Single-Use Plastic Bag Reduction Strategies**

<b>OPTION</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>UNSURE</b>	<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>
Consumer-Paid Fee	656 (75.6%)	115 (13.3%)	95 (10.97%)	866
Prohibiting Businesses from Providing Plastic Bags	571 (66.0%)	152 (17.6%)	143 (16.5)	866
Requiring Businesses to Provide Biodegradable or Recycled Bags	684 (78.8%)	86 (9.9%)	98 (11.3%)	868

## Question 11: Do you support an ordinance restricting the distribution of plastic straws at ... (check any that apply)?

**Table 9. Respondents' Support for Ordinance Restricting Distribution of Plastic Straws at Various Locations**

ANSWER CHOICES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Businesses in Decatur	608	72.2
City Government Offices	624	74.4
City-related Activities (e.g. Festivals)	637	75.7
Unsure	74	8.8
Other	125	14.9

## Question 12: Do you support an ordinance restricting the distribution of all plastic to-go cups, takeout containers, and silverware at ... (check any that apply)?

**Table 10. Respondents' Support for Ordinance Restricting Distribution of Plastic Foodware at Various Locations**

ANSWER CHOICES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Businesses in Decatur	537	64.2
City Government Offices	580	69.3
City-related Activities (e.g. Festivals)	558	66.7
Unsure	136	16.3
Other	95	11.4

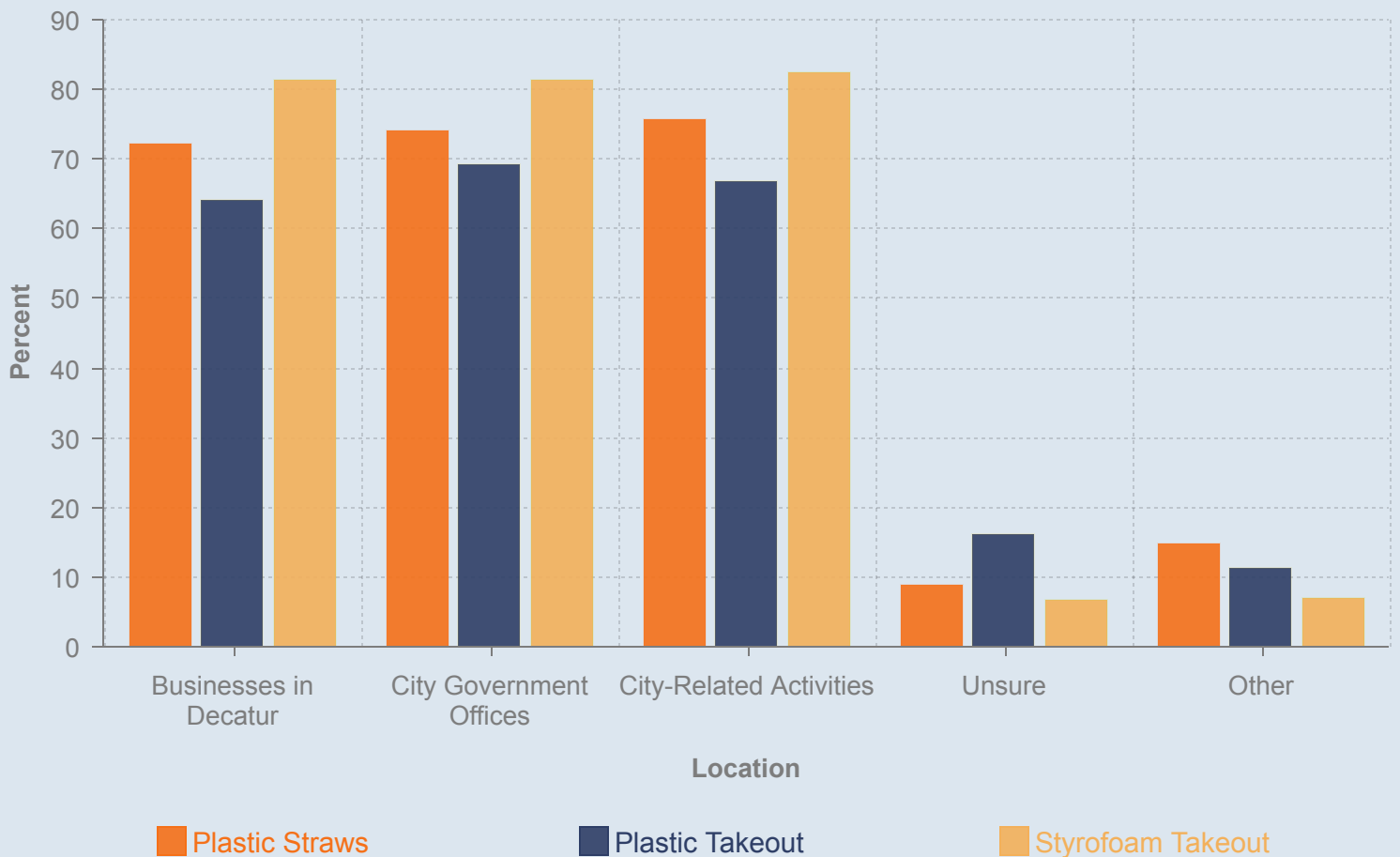


# Question 13: Do you support an ordinance restricting the distribution of all styrofoam takeout containers at ... (check any that apply)?

**Table 11. Respondents' Support for Ordinance Restricting Distribution of Styrofoam at Various Locations**

ANSWER CHOICES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Businesses in Decatur	683	81.3
City Government Offices	683	81.3
City-related Activities (e.g. Festivals)	693	82.5
Unsure	57	6.8
Other	59	7.0

**Figure 5. Percent of Survey Respondents Supporting Ordinance Restricting Distribution of Various Plastic Items**



**Question 14: When choosing a restaurant for take-out food or taking leftovers home, how often do you think about the packaging used?**

**Table 12. Respondents' Consideration of Packaging for Takeout Food**

<b>ANSWER CHOICES</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
Always	243	28.6
Usually	183	21.6
Sometimes	187	22.0
Rarely	153	18.0
Never	83	9.8
Total	849	100

**Question 15: Does a local business's commitment to environmental stewardship affect your decision to support that business?**

**Table 13. Respondents' Consideration of Business's Environmental Stewardship**

<b>ANSWER CHOICES</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
Yes, I definitely choose based on this	249	29.3
Sometimes I make a choice based on this	456	53.7
Unlikely to make choices based on this	107	12.6
Not a consideration	38	4.5
Total	850	100

## Question 16: Are you a business owner in Decatur?

**Table 12. Description of Respondents to Decatur Single-Use Plastic Survey, Business Owners vs. Non-Business Owners**

ANSWER CHOICES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Yes	75	8.8
No	780	91.2
Total	855	100

## Question 17: Does your business use any of the following single-use materials (check all that apply)?

**Table 13. Use of Single-Use Materials in Surveyed Businesses**

ANSWER CHOICES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Plastic Bags	8	11.0
Plastic Straws/Coffee Stirrers	6	8.22
Styrofoam To-Go Food Containers	4	5.5
Plastic To-Go Utensils	4	5.5
Non-paper Compostable Cups	2	2.7
Compostable Utensils	1	1.4
Paper Bags	6	8.2
Paper Straws/Wood Coffee Stirrers	3	4.1
Plastic Cups and Food Containers	8	11.0
Paper Cups and Food Containers	7	9.6
My business does not need these items	50	68.5
Other	7	9.6