House of Dim Sum is located in San Francisco’s iconic Chinatown and specializes in dim sum. Before working with SF Environment and ReThink Disposable, Ying Huang, the owner, spent thousands of dollars each week on disposable foodware to serve dine-in customers. After a visit from SF Environment’s outreach team, she learned that the ReThink Disposable program provides funds to switch from disposables to reusables for on-site dining. Huang joined the program — resulting in the elimination of unnecessary landfill waste and produced tremendous cost savings, which further supports House of Dim Sum as a cultural point of significance and source of nourishment for San Franciscans and Chinatown visitors.

**BUSINESS PROFILE**

**Name:** House of Dim Sum  
**Location:** San Francisco, CA  
**On-site dining:** 84  
**Take-out:** 50%  
**Warewashing:** 3-sink system  
**Employees:** 8

Changes to serviceware for less waste and more savings:

- Napkins automatically included with all orders → Napkins only upon request
- Open stack of napkins → Dispenser
- Disposable hot cups → Stainless steel double-walled cups
- Individually wrapped creamer → Carafe for bulk creamer
- Plastic forks and spoons → Stainless steel utensils and teaspoons for stirrers
- 3 sizes of plastic clamshells, paper boats, and deli containers → Durable baskets and reusable plates

**BEFORE and AFTER:** House of Dim Sum switched to reusable foodware.

**THE BOTTOM LINE**

- $429 upfront investment in reusable foodware
- $33,561 in total annual net cost savings
- 2.2 million disposable items reduced per year
- 7.2 tons of annual waste reduction (equivalent to the weight of a San Francisco cable car)

“I encourage other businesses to work with ReThink Disposable and the City for the cost savings and to eliminate disposable items.”

— Ying Huang, Owner
## RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disposable Product Replaced or Minimized</th>
<th>Recommendation Implemented</th>
<th>Percent Disposable Reduction (%)</th>
<th>Annual Quantity of Disposable Product Reduced</th>
<th>Annual Waste Reduction (lbs.)</th>
<th>Payback Period (months)</th>
<th>Annual NET* Cost Savings After Payback Period ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-PLY paper napkins</td>
<td>Napkin dispenser and only available upon request</td>
<td>97.1</td>
<td>2,024,881</td>
<td>8,100</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>$9,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic fork</td>
<td>Stainless steel fork</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>17,381</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>$170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic spoon</td>
<td>Stainless steel spoon</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>24,333</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>$238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8” clear clamshell container</td>
<td>Plates</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>17,033</td>
<td>2,121</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>$4,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6” clear clamshell</td>
<td>Plates</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>19,771</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>$2,056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5” clear clamshell</td>
<td>Basket</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>22,943</td>
<td>891</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>$2,626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 oz plastic deli container w/lid</td>
<td>Reusable bowl</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>52,560</td>
<td>2,190</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>$6,787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 oz brown hot cup</td>
<td>Stainless steel cup</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>27,375</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>$7,665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2,206,277 pieces</strong></td>
<td><strong>14,502 lbs. (7.2 tons)</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.7 weeks (average)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$33,561</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Net Cost Savings considers upfront and ongoing costs tied to the purchase and care of reusable items, capital improvements needed to carry out ReThink Disposable’s recommendations, and discontinued disposable foodware purchases.

This case study was made possible through a partnership with the San Francisco Environment Department and their outreach team.

ReThink Disposable is a program of Clean Water Action and Clean Water Fund conducted in partnership with local organizations, businesses, and government agencies. Generous support is provided by a changing list of public and private funders. To learn more about the program, its partners, and funders, visit: www.rethinkdisposable.org.