



For Immediate Release: 06.04.2019

## **City Council pushes forward on Regulating Plastic Straws & Disposable Food Service Ware Accessories in Restaurants**

The City Council provided direction to staff at the May 28<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting to prepare and implement a local ordinance regulating plastic straws and other single-use disposable food service ware. Prior to adoption of the Ordinance, the City will visit 200 Union City restaurants to discuss the proposed ordinance and how best to meet the needs of disabled customers. The proposed ordinance will:

1. Prohibit restaurants and food vendors from providing single-use plastic straws. Compostable straws will be provided when customers request a straw.
2. Require restaurants to provide Disposable Food Ware Accessories only when the customer specifically requests these items. Examples of accessories are single-use utensils, napkins, cup lids, condiment packages and portion cups. Many restaurants already practice this provision by providing service counters with food-ware. Customers select the food-ware items needed. Drive-in restaurants would be exempt from providing food-ware accessories upon request.

### **Background**

Plastic straws do not biodegrade in the environment and create a maintenance problem in Union City drains. Littered micro-plastics persist in the environment causing harm to human and wildlife health.

City Staff presented information to the City Council last fall regarding a new state law that prohibits full-service (dine-in) restaurants from providing single-use plastic straws to customers unless requested by the customer. At that time, the City Council agreed that the City should go beyond the State's "straws upon request" law and consider a City ordinance with additional requirements regulating single-use plastics and expanding on the types of food vendors that must comply.

Staff will come back to the City Council and propose the amendment to the Food Ware Ordinance on September 24, 2019. If the City Council adopts the Ordinance, the effective date would be January 1, 2020, which would include the execution of a comprehensive outreach plan and enforcement starting July 1, 2020. Enforcement against restaurants will be complaint based. The intent of the ordinance is to work with restaurants to provide compostable straws to customers and food-ware accessories upon request.

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