

## BOROUGH COUNCIL ISSUE BRIEFING

COUNCIL / COMMITTEE: Public Works Committee

DEPARTMENT MANAGER: OB Laing

DATE: February 7, 2019

### I. Action to Be Considered by the Borough Council

Discuss the possibility of adding a ban on plastic straws to the previously approved ban on single-use HDPE plastic bags.

### II. Rationale for Borough Council Consideration

Eliminating the use of plastic straws is one of the fastest and most productive ways to slow plastics from contaminating our environment. Over 500 million plastic straws are used each day in the US. Many of these straws, even when recycled, end up in the garbage because they are too lightweight and fall through sorting screens.

A group of dedicated Borough residents have visited restaurants throughout the Borough over the past six months, urging them to provide plastic straws on an ask-only basis. Many restaurants eagerly agreed, however many of these restaurants have fallen back into old habits without stronger regulation and programming.

Prior to the ban there would be a transition period for restaurants and customers. Educational materials about the harm of plastics on the environment, in addition to a case study on the Borough restaurants that have embraced a straw free environment, will be provided to all restaurants. Those restaurants that have a previously purchased inventory of plastic straws will be permitted to exhaust what they currently have in stock.

Adding a ban on straws to the bag ban ordinance would be a simple addition and would not cause delay in preparing the ordinance.

The ban on plastic straws falls under the Mayor's initiative for a Clean & Green West Chester.

Coupled with the ban on single-use HDPE plastic bags, West Chester Borough can be an example to other towns on combating the issue of plastics.

### III. Current Policy of Practice

Borough Council will need to add a ban on single-use plastic straws to the previously approved ban on single-use HDPE plastic bags.

### IV. Other Background Information

Many towns and cities across the country such as Narberth (PA), Miami Beach and Fort Myers (FL), Monmouth Beach (NJ), Malibu & Berkeley (CA) and Seattle (WA) have banned plastic straws.

<https://www.fastcompany.com/40580132/here-are-the-u-s-cities-that-have-banned-plastic-straws-so-far>

<https://www.strawlessocean.org/faq/>