

Plastic bag ordinance for Weston

- **Sustainability impact of plastic bags**

Many retail establishments in our town and other towns provide single-use plastic bags free of charge at the point of sale. Examples are the bags given out at grocery stores, pharmacies, and other retailers. Such bags often end up in the environment. According to the US EPA, as many as 1 trillion plastic bags are used worldwide each year and less than 5% are recycled. Plastic bags have many environmental impacts, from being mistaken for food by fish, birds and other animals, to polluting our waterways and oceans, and defacing our beautiful town with litter. Also, many communities spend significant funds to clean up plastic bags. There are no good reasons to keep using them other than convenience.

- **Weston plastic bag ordinance**

Sustainable Weston has proposed an Ordinance Regarding Retail Checkout Bags modeled on similar ordinances in neighboring towns. The ordinance prohibits retailers from providing single-use plastic bags. Instead, only reusable bags or recyclable paper bags can be provided. Stores will charge a fee of at least 10 cents for such bags, to cover their cost and to encourage customers to bring their own reusable bags.

- **What bags will no longer be available**

Plastic bags that are single-use will no longer be available at checkout. Paper bags or reusable bags (made of durable materials) can be provided for the minimum 10 cents fee per bag. Dry cleaner bags and small bags to carry e.g. produce are still allowed.

- **What bags are recommended**

Sustainable Weston is working with the sustainability team at Weston High School to sell an attractive, Weston-branded reusable grocery bag. Any other reusable bag will also do.

- **Where to recycle plastic shopping bags**

The Town of Weston is planning to provide a dedicated, publicly accessible recycling storage container for recycling plastic bags. Plastic bags can also be recycled at area retailers including Stop & Shop and Caraluzzi's.

Learn more:

M. Anderson, Confronting Plastic Pollution One Bag at a Time, The EPA Blog
<https://blog.epa.gov/blog/tag/plastic-bags/>

Environmental Impacts, NT EPA (Australia) <https://ntepa.nt.gov.au/waste-pollution/plastic-bag-ban/environmental-impacts>