



Green Needham

## **FAQ about the Proposed Needham Plastic Bag Ban**

### **What types of plastic bags does this apply to?**

- This bylaw would ban all thin and thick, plastic, single-use, check-out bags. Check-out bags are provided to a customer at the point of sale.
- The following bags are still allowed: produce bags, dry cleaning bags, newspaper sleeves/bags, bags containing live animals sold in pet or bait stores (fish, crickets, etc.).

### **What is a Reusable Bag?**

- A reusable bag is a sewn bag with handles that are stitched and not heat fused.
- Reusable bags are specifically designed and manufactured for at least 175 uses and that can carry 25 pounds over a distance of 300 feet.
- Reusable bags can be made of either natural fibers (such as cotton, hemp, linen) or durable, non-toxic plastic (not polyethylene or polyvinyl chloride)
- They must be machine washable.

### **What does the new bylaw say about paper bags?**

- Paper bags must be labeled to show that the bag is 100 percent recyclable and is made of 40 percent recycled material.

### **When would the new bylaw take effect?**

- For stores 3,500 square feet or larger, the bylaw will take effect on January 1, 2024.
- For stores smaller than 3,500 square feet, the bylaw takes effect on July 1, 2024.

### **How will the bylaw be enforced?**

The Needham Public Health Department will enforce the bylaw. Businesses not in compliance will initially receive a written warning notice, followed by a \$100 fine for a second offense, a \$200 fine for a third violation and a \$300 fine for any subsequent violations.

### **Why does Needham need a new bylaw for shopping bags?**

Plastic bags harm the environment and are not accepted at the Needham Transfer Station. In fact, most single-use plastic shopping bags are not recyclable. Instead, they will either be buried in a landfill, burned in an incinerator, or scattered throughout the environment. The purpose of this Bylaw is to protect the Town's unique natural beauty and reduce the Town's plastic waste. The Bylaw will end the use of single-use plastic checkout bags that are being distributed, used, discarded and littered, and promote the use of reusable checkout bags in the Town of Needham. Reusable bags are the best solution for our environment.