



Watertown City Council

Committee on Rules and Ordinances Meeting
Wednesday, February 11, 2026 at 7:00 PM
Revised Start Time 7:00 PM

Agenda

ACCESS INFORMATION:

- A. This meeting will be held on February 11, 2026 at 7:00 P.M. Location: Lower Hearing Room
 - B. The Public may join the virtual meeting online: <https://watertown-ma.zoom.us/j/89707047441>
 - C. Public may join the virtual meeting audio only by phone: (877) 853-5257 or (888) 475-4499 (Toll Free) and enter Webinar ID: 897 7074 7441
 - D. Public may comment through email: jgannon@watertown-ma.gov
-

- 1. Call to Order
- 2. Discussion
 - A. Continued Discussion on a Draft Ordinance Relative to Food and Beverage Single-Use Items - "Skip the Stuff"
- 3. Adjournment

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Nicole Gardner,
Chair

Lisa J. Feltner,
Vice Chair

John G. Gannon,
Secretary

WHEREAS Implementing Watertown’s “Resilient Watertown” Climate Plan is a top priority of the City Council and the Community; and,

WHEREAS A part of the effort to improve the environment is to reduce trash; and,

WHEREAS Single use plastics have a significant impact on the environment through their carbon footprint and contribution to excess waste; and,

WHEREAS the reduction of single use plastics in circumstances where they are not necessary is a valid and effective waste reduction strategy; and,

WHEREAS substitution of non-recyclable single-use plastics will also reduce waste.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of Watertown that a new Title X, Chapter 117 be added to the of the Watertown Code of Ordinances, as follows:

Chapter 117

SKIP THE STUFF ORDINANCE

117.01 Purpose

This purpose of this chapter is to reduce the overall environmental impact of the City of Watertown, its residents, and its businesses. Single use plastic has a significant impact on the environment through its carbon footprint, and impact on waste systems. The provisions of this ordinance will reduce the amount of single use plastic used throughout the City.

117.02 Definitions

For the purpose of this Section 117, the following definitions apply:

- A. **Condiment:** A single-use packet containing relishes, spices, sauces, confections, or seasonings, that requires no additional preparation, and that is used on food or beverages, including, but not limited to, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, soy sauce, sauerkraut, salsa, syrup, jam, jelly, salad dressings, salt, sugar, sugar substitutes, pepper, and chili pepper.
- B. **Foam polystyrene:** A non-biodegradable petrochemical thermoplastic made from aerated forms of polystyrene and includes several methods of manufacture. Expanded polystyrene (EPS) or extruded polystyrene (XPS) are forms of polystyrene.
- C. **Food Establishment:** A retail establishment that stores, prepares, services, vends, or otherwise provides food for human consumption, as defined by the Watertown Zoning Ordinance, Table of Uses.
- D. **Full-Service Food Establishment:** A food establishment where customers are seated at a table either by waitstaff or themselves, and where orders are taken and served by waitstaff at the tables.

- E. **Online Food Ordering Platform:** The digital technology provided on a website or mobile application through which a consumer can place an order for pick-up or delivery of Prepared Food. Such platforms include those operated directly by Food Establishments, by companies that provide delivery of prepared meals to consumers, and by online food ordering systems that connect consumers to Food Establishments directly.
- F. **Prepared Food:** Food or beverages serviced, packaged, cooked, chopped, sliced, mixed, brewed, frozen, squeezed, poured, or otherwise prepared (collectively “prepared”) for individual customers or consumers. Prepared Food does not include raw eggs or raw, butchered meats, fish, and/or poultry sold from a butcher case, a refrigerator case, or similar retail appliance.
- G. **Single-Use:** Items designed to be used once and then discarded and not designed for repeated use and sanitizing.
- H. **Single-Use Foodware Accessory:** Single-use items provided alongside Prepared Food served in single-use plates, containers, or cups, including but not limited to utensils, tongs, chopsticks, **napkins**, straws, stirrers, splash sticks, cocktail sticks, and toothpicks, cup lids, cup sleeves, cup trays, and food trays.
- I. **Utensil:** Forks, spoons, knives, sporks, chopsticks, or other instruments used to serve food or to eat food.
- J. **Reusable Food and Beverage Serviceware:** Containers, bowls, plates, trays, cups, glasses, forks, spoons, knives, takeout containers, and other items used to contain and consume beverages and prepared food that are manufactured and designed to be washed and sanitized and used repeatedly over an extended period of time.

117.03 Prohibited use and distribution of single-use food and beverage serviceware

Food Establishments are prohibited from providing Single-use Accessories, including in takeout and delivery orders, whether orders are placed online, via phone, or in person, except as follows:

- A. Single-use Accessories may be provided specifically upon the request of the consumer:
 - 1. By asking directly;
 - 2. By selecting the items in an online food ordering platform; or,
 - 3. In response to an inquiry by the food establishment.
- B. Food Establishments may have Single-use Accessories available at self-service stations. The self-service station may include a Single Item Dispenser. These stations must comply with the Massachusetts Retail Food Code (105 CMR 590.00)

117.04 Options with Online Food Ordering Platforms

Online Food Ordering Platforms must provide Food Establishments with a method to list each Single-Use Accessory and Condiment that is offered by the Food Establishment, such that customers can specifically request the Single-Use Accessories and Condiments that they wish to have included with their order.

117.05 Restricted Packaging

- A. Single-use Accessories, including plastic forks, spoons and knives, may not be wrapped in plastic or offered as bundled sets.
- B. To ensure that single use food containers and packaging materials are recyclable, retail establishments are prohibited from selling or distributing single use food containers and packing materials made in whole or in part from:
 - 1. Foam polystyrene;
 - 2. Plastic that is completely or substantially black in color; ~~or,~~
 - 3. ~~Lined with polyethylene or other petroleum-based plastics.~~
- C. A retail or food establishment may establish if a specific item is allowable under Section 117.05B by providing written documentation to the Director of Public Health that the items is recyclable from their city-permitted waste/recycling hauler and associated MRF, or compostable from their commercial organics hauler and associated compost end site.
- D. If the Director of Public Health determines that compliance with Section 117.05B is not feasible due to industry-wide unavailability of compliant items, the Director may suspend enforcement of this provision for all food and retail establishments until the Director determines that the supply of compliant items has been sufficiently restored.

117.06 Restrictions on Full Service Food

Full Service Food Establishments must utilize only Reusable Food and Beverage Serviceware for dine-in customers.

117.07 Exemptions

A food establishment may seek an exemption from the requirements of this ordinance as follows:

- A. The food establishment must file a request for an exemption in writing with the Director of Public Health.
- B. The request must state specifically which section and products they are seeking an exemption from and state reasons why application of the specific requirement would cause undue hardship.
- C. The Director may waive any specific requirement of this ordinance for a period of not more than six months, but, upon subsequent applications, may extend exemptions for additional six-month period.
- D. The Director will issue a final decision in writing within 30 days of receipt of a request for an exemption.

117.08 Enforcement

The Director of Public Health and/or his/her designee shall have the authority to administer and enforce this ordinance.

117.09 Effective Date

This ordinance will take effect six months after passage to allow time for the City Administration to conduct an education campaign focused on food establishments and consumers

117.99 Penalty

- A. Any person who violates any provision of this chapter shall be issued a verbal warning for the first offense, then fined as follows:
 - 1. \$100 for the second offense
 - 2. \$200 for the third offense
 - 3. \$300 for the fourth offense and each subsequent offense
- B. Each day the violation continues may constitute a separate offense.
- C. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to limit the use of other lawful methods of abating violations of this section, including but not limited to application for equitable relief from a court of law.

ORDINANCE # [REDACTED]

2025 – O – [REDACTED]

WHEREAS Implementing Watertown’s “Resilient Watertown” Climate Plan is a top priority of the City Council and the Community; and,

WHEREAS A part of the effort to improve the environment is to reduce trash; and,

WHEREAS Single use plastics have a significant impact on the environment through their carbon footprint and contribution to excess waste; and,

WHEREAS the reduction of single use plastics in circumstances where they are not necessary is a valid and effective waste reduction strategy; and,

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- H. **Single-Use Foodware Accessory:** Single-use items provided alongside Prepared Food served in single-use plates, containers, or cups, including but not limited to utensils, tongs, chopsticks, napkins, straws, stirrers, splash sticks, cocktail sticks, and toothpicks, cup lids, cup sleeves, cup trays, and food trays.
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Full Service Food Establishments must utilize only Reusable Food and Beverage Serviceware or non-plastic compostable serviceware for dine-in customers.

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A food establishment may seek an exemption from the requirements of this ordinance as follows:

- A. The food establishment must file a request for an exemption in writing with the Director of Public Health.
- B. The request must state specifically which section and products they are seeking an exemption from and state reasons why application of the specific requirement would cause undue hardship.
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117.08 Enforcement

The Director of Public Health and the Code Enforcement Officer and/or his/her designees shall have the authority to administer and enforce this ordinance.

117.09 Effective Date

This ordinance will take effect six months after passage to allow time for the City Administration to conduct an education campaign focused on food establishments and consumers

117.99 Penalty

- A. Any person who violates any provision of this chapter shall be issued a verbal warning for the first offense, then fined as follows:
 - 1. \$100 for the second offense

2. \$200 for the third offense
 3. \$300 for the fourth offense and each subsequent offense
- B. Each day the violation continues may constitute a separate offense.
- C. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to limit the use of other lawful methods of abating violations of this section, including but not limited to application for equitable relief from a court of law.

Order Confirmation

Brendan McCarthy
 Watertown City Council
 149 Main Street
 Watertown, MA 02472

Thank you for placing your Legal Notice in The Boston Globe.

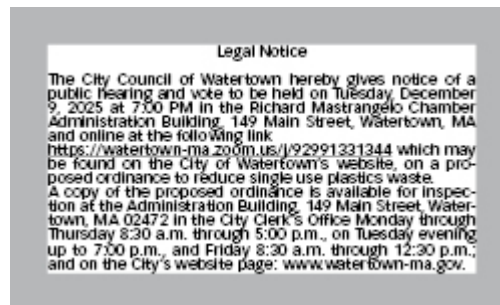
Your order information and a preview of your notice are displayed below for your review. If there are any changes or questions, please contact the Classified Department at 617-929-1314 or email legals@globe.com.

Any and all proposed edits, revisions, and/or other changes to the notice must be communicated to us in writing prior to the deadline specified in the Advertising Specs + Deadlines page located at <https://www.bostonglobemedia.com/specs-deadlines>.

Thank you,
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Publication	Boston Globe	Number of dates	1
First Run Date	11/27/2025	Last Run Date	11/27/2025
Payment Type			

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Watertown City Council

Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Phone: 617-972-6470

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mark S. Sideris,
Council President

Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.,
Vice President &
District C Councilor

John M. Airasian,
Councilor At Large

Caroline Bays,
Councilor At Large

John G. Gannon,
Councilor At Large

Anthony Palomba,
Councilor At Large

Nicole Gardner,
District A Councilor

Lisa J. Feltner,
District B Councilor

Emily Izzo,
District D Councilor

Committee on Rules and Ordinances

Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, October 7, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.
Richard E. Mastrangelo Chamber, 2nd Floor, with hybrid participation

Present: John Gannon, chair; John M. Airasian, vice chair; and Lisa Feltner, secretary.

Also present: Laurel Schwab, Sustainability Program Manager; Steve Magoon, Asst. City Manager for Community Development and Planning (6:50); Councilor Nicole Gardner (6:10); and via Zoom: Councilor Bays, Dean Martino, and Greg Reibman of the Charles River Regional Chamber.

AGENDA: Discuss a draft ordinance relative to food and beverage single-use items.

Chair Gannon called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. for the Dept. of Community Development and Planning to present support for a new ordinance that particularly focuses on reducing single-use plastic utensils, per City Council referral. Sustainability Program Manager Laurel Schwab shared a presentation (see attached) showing how a draft ordinance aligns with our Climate Action Plan. DCDP staff consulted model legislation, including the nationwide “Skip the Stuff” campaign by waste reduction advocates, and they reviewed some efforts and newly adopted policies by neighboring municipalities, such as Newton, Needham and Wellesley. State legislators have also been working on bills to reduce plastic waste, including prohibiting a retailer from providing customer with disposable food service ware unless requested by the customer, while allowing for self-service, or if requested, access to non-bundled, single-use food service ware not made from black plastic.

The discussion included questions about: Online ordering platforms use, availability, and potential additional costs, particularly for small local and beverage businesses (approx. 85 restaurants); our Health Dept. enforcement goals and suggested level of fines; Approaches to educating the community; Allowing discretion in enforcement and on exemptions, with a “quiet warning” period for successful compliance; Asked for examples of suggested signage/flyers for locations to inform customers and employees about the “Skip the Stuff” campaign (attached); What stakeholders had been contacted, including businesses at Arsenal Yards. A survey and its results, conducted by our economic development planner Erin Rathe, will be forwarded for the committee report (attached). Reducing single-use plastic items has been a topic in our region, but the staff will actively work with businesses so that these requirements won’t be onerous for compliance, and they will be sensitive to current inventory/overstock items and businesses’ purchasing strategies. The overall intention of the draft ordinance is to reduce the number of single-use items.

Some dine-in restaurants have increased their online business, given impacts of the pandemic and changes in consumer preferences, but the committee feels we should be cautious about affecting small restaurants that may not have a dishwasher or that experience a breakdown in equipment or staffing constraints. Restaurants in other communities have embraced the efforts because it has saved them money and been fairly easy to satisfy.

We continued deliberations to understand the implications of each section, including Definitions in the proposed ordinance, that prohibit non-plastic items (napkins, wood chopsticks), and how they could impact casual restaurants that sometimes combine waitstaff and self-service operations. Discussion also focused on section B of 117.05 Restricted Packaging. Ms. Schwab clarified that Needham and Wellesley policies are narrow in scope and don’t include Restricted Packaging at all. Mr. Reibman shared concerns about items included in section B with restricted packaging parameters that can lead to additional costs, given limited alternative materials that food businesses feel are commercially viable; he will email feedback based on his experiences in the Regional Chamber and include examples of community communication materials for Skip the Stuff (attached). Chair Gannon read some language from City of Newton’s effort that is part of a larger sustainability ordinance and broader in scope concerning packaging materials. Ms. Schwab offered to reach out to Newton officials to learn about their results over the last year (full implementation was expected July 1, 2024). We don’t want customers to blame businesses for materials that can easily leak or equate Skip the Stuff objectives with inferior customer service; it was decided that providing napkins feels like a common courtesy, so we agreed to strike “napkins” as an accessory item in 117.02 H. The committee acknowledged limits in

recycling due to size and/or materials; although the small 4oz “sauce” cups aren’t currently recycled regardless of color, the committee agreed to keep the prohibition on black plastic for all packaging given its ongoing association with health and environmental concerns.

After reviewing the draft Skip the Stuff Ordinance (see attached markup), with motions by Airasian and seconded by Feltner, the **committee voted on amendments to 117.02 Definitions in D. Full-Service Food Establishment (2-1 Gannon), and in H. Single-Use Foodware Accessory (3-0); and in 117.05 Restricted Packaging, entirely strike 3. of section B. (3-0).**

Action Item: Councilor Airasian made a motion, seconded by Councilor Feltner, to recommend the amended draft Skip the Stuff Ordinance, with additional supporting materials from DCDP staff to City Council for consideration and adoption. Voted 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Lisa Feltner

Attached: Marked up draft Skip the Stuff Ordinance;
DCDP Staff/Laurel Schwab presentation with supporting materials;
Email from Barbara Ruskin; and from the Charles River Regional Chamber with its supporting materials.

From: Barbara Ruskin <ruskinb00@icloud.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 30, 2025 6:43 PM
To: Gannon, John <jgannon@watertown-ma.gov>; Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>; John Airasian <jairasian@watertown-ma.gov>
Subject: Rules on single use plastics

Hi, Committee Members,

Thank you for taking up this important issue. We hope you will limit plastic take out plates/bowls/utensils/lids for food. Don Levy at the New Towne Diner has used compostable bowls and I’ve seen them elsewhere. They are strong and a serious alternative. I hope you can work on this; we need it. Plastic bottles could possibly be limited as well.

Sincerely,
Barbara and Jeremy Ruskin
140 Spring

From: Greg Reibman <greibman@charlesriverchamber.com>
Sent: Friday, October 10, 2025 6:16 PM
To: Gannon, John <jgannon@watertown-ma.gov>; John Airasian <jairasian@watertown-ma.gov>; Feltner, Lisa <lfeltner@watertown-ma.gov>
Cc: City Council <citycouncil@newtonma.gov>; Schwab, Laurel <lschwab@watertown-ma.gov>; Rathe, Erin <erathe@watertown-ma.gov>; Max Woolf <mwoolf@charlesriverchamber.com>
Subject: Proposed Skip the Stuff ordinance

Chair John Gannon
Committee on Rules and Ordinances
Watertown City Council
Watertown City Hall
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472

Oct. 10, 2025

Dear Chair Gannon

Thanks for the opportunity to speak with the committee on Oct. 7 regarding the proposed Skip the Stuff ordinance currently under consideration.

As I told the committee, the chamber and our restaurant members support Skip the Stuff because it not only benefits the planet but saves restaurants money by eliminating the need to provide utensils and other items unless expressly requested and needed by the customer.

Based on our experience with Skip the Stuff ordinances in Newton, Needham and Wellesley, it is critical that the municipality share the responsibility of educating the public about the new requirement. This will prevent customers from getting angry at the restaurant for not providing items they’ve become accustomed to receiving for many years. We’ve found that uniform signage is very valuable, along with social media, newsletters, and other communication methods. Included with this letter are examples of materials created by Needham, which were adapted from Newton, and are available to Watertown for this purpose.

However, as I also discussed, we have concerns with 117.02.C, related to restricted packaging.

Every business owner I've spoken to across our four chamber communities understands the need to prohibit the sale and distribution of foam polystyrene. There are mixed feelings, however, about black plastic food containers, with both restaurateurs and one distributor telling me that white or clear plastic is often but not always more costly, depending on the supply chain.

Meanwhile, every business owner I've spoken with has concerns about 117.02.C.3, the proposed prohibition of "containers lined with polyethylene or other petroleum-based plastics."

Lined paper products (used for take-out coffee, hot beverages, ice cream, and other liquid or potentially liquid products) are necessary because, without them, you risk leakage issues.

Products lined with palm leaf are the only alternative I'm aware of. However, between tariffs and bans on certain imports, palm leaf availability is challenging. Generally, compostable products can cost 5X as much, or more, for a product that often ends up in the trash and is not composted.

In summary: Our restaurants tell us they support Skip the Stuff but have mixed concerns about black plastic. However, we strongly urge the committee to remove the prohibition of containers lined with polyethylene or other petroleum-based plastics from the ordinance, at least until suitable, affordable products become generally available.

I'm grateful for the committee's consideration and happy to answer questions.

Greg Reibman (he/him) | President & CEO
Charles River Regional Chamber



A DRAFT ORDINANCE **RELATIVE TO FOOD AND BEVERAGE SINGLE-USE ITEMS**

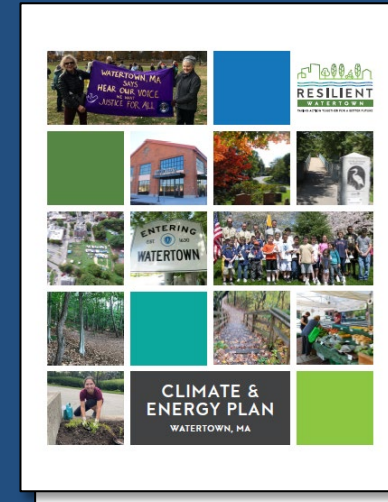
CITY OF WATERTOWN
COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ORDINANCES
OCTOBER 7, 2025

BACKGROUND

CONTEXT: RESILIENT WATERTOWN CLIMATE AND ENERGY PLAN INFRASTRUCTURE & WASTE CHAPTER

Goal 1: By 2050, Watertown has achieved a net zero waste community status

Action IW 1.5: Investigate opportunities to pursue a circular economy in Watertown or within the Metro Boston region (e.g., **plastic item bans**, grey water recycling, pay-per-bag program, additions to recyclable items)



- Council communicated interest in developing a **"Skip the Stuff"** ordinance
- Watertown's draft was developed by consulting model legislation as well as adopted policies from neighboring municipalities (Newton, Needham, and Wellesley).

117.01 PURPOSE

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Ordinance Scope:

1. Prohibits automatic inclusion of single-use items in takeout and delivery meals
2. Prohibits single-use meal containers made from certain materials
3. Prohibits single-use or non-compostable items for dine-in meals
4. Exemption and penalty provisions

117.02 DEFINITIONS

- A. Condiment:** A single-use packet containing relishes, spices, sauces, confections, or seasonings, that requires no additional preparation, and that is used on food or beverages, including, but not limited to, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, soy sauce, sauerkraut, salsa, syrup, jam, jelly, salad dressings, salt, sugar, sugar substitutes, pepper, and chili pepper.
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117.02 DEFINITIONS, CONTD.

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117.03 PROHIBITED USE AND DISTRIBUTION OF SINGLE-USE FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICEWARE

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- A. Single-use Accessories may be provided specifically **upon the request** of the consumer:
 - 1. By asking directly;
 - 2. By selecting the items in an online food ordering platform; or,
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117.04 OPTIONS WITH ONLINE FOOD ORDERING PLATFORMS

Online Food Ordering Platforms must provide Food Establishments with a method to list each Single-Use Accessory and Condiment that is offered by the Food Establishment, such that **customers can specifically request** the Single-Use Accessories and Condiments that they wish to have included with their order.

117.06 RESTRICTIONS ON FULL SERVICE FOOD

Full Service Food Establishments must utilize only Reusable Food and Beverage Serviceware or non-plastic compostable serviceware for **dine-in customers**.

117.05 RESTRICTED PACKAGING

- A. Single-use Accessories, including plastic forks, spoons and knives, may not be wrapped in plastic or offered as bundled sets.
- B. To ensure that single use food containers and packaging materials are recyclable, retail establishments are prohibited from selling or distributing single use food containers and packing materials made in whole or in part from:

- 1. **Foam polystyrene;**

- 2. Plastic that is completely or substantially **black** in color; or,

- 3. Lined with **polyethylene** or other petroleum-based plastics.



- C. A retail or food establishment may establish if a specific item is allowable under Section 117.05B by providing written documentation to the Director of Public Health that the items is recyclable from their city-permitted waste/recycling hauler and associated MRF, or compostable from their commercial organics hauler and associated compost end site.
- D. If the Director of Public Health determines that compliance with Section 117.05B is not feasible due to industry-wide unavailability of compliant items, the Director may suspend enforcement of this provision for all food and retail establishments until the Director determines that the supply of compliant items has been sufficiently restored.

117.02 EXEMPTIONS

A food establishment may seek an exemption from the requirements of this ordinance as follows:

- A. The food establishment must file a request for an exemption in writing with the Director of Public Health.
- B. The request must state specifically which section and products they are seeking an exemption from and state reasons why application of the specific requirement would cause **undue hardship**.
- C. The Director may waive any specific requirement of this ordinance for a period of not more than six months, but, upon subsequent applications, may extend exemptions for additional six-month period.
- D. The Director will issue a final decision in writing within 30 days of receipt of a request for an exemption.

117.08 ENFORCEMENT

The **Director of Public Health** and the **Code Enforcement Officer** and/or his/her designees shall have the authority to administer and enforce this ordinance.

117.09 EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance will take effect **six months after passage** to allow time for the City Administration to conduct an education campaign focused on food establishments and consumers.

117.99 PENALTY

- A. Any person who violates any provision of this chapter shall be issued a verbal warning for the first offense, then fined as follows:
 - 1. \$100 for the second offense
 - 2. \$200 for the third offense
 - 3. \$300 for the fourth offense and each subsequent offense
- B. Each day the violation continues may constitute a separate offense.
- C. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to limit the use of other lawful methods of abating violations of this section, including but not limited to application for equitable relief from a court of law.

WHEREAS Implementing Watertown’s “Resilient Watertown” Climate Plan is a top priority of the City Council and the Community; and,

WHEREAS A part of the effort to improve the environment is to reduce trash; and,

WHEREAS Single use plastics have a significant impact on the environment through their carbon footprint and contribution to excess waste; and,

WHEREAS the reduction of single use plastics in circumstances where they are not necessary is a valid and effective waste reduction strategy; and,

WHEREAS substitution of non-recyclable single-use plastics will also reduce waste.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of Watertown that a new Title X, Chapter 117 be added to the of the Watertown Code of Ordinances, as follows:

Chapter 117

SKIP THE STUFF ORDINANCE

117.01 Purpose

This purpose of this chapter is to reduce the overall environmental impact of the City of Watertown, its residents, and its businesses. Single use plastic has a significant impact on the environment through its carbon footprint, and impact on waste systems. The provisions of this ordinance will reduce the amount of single use plastic used throughout the City.

117.02 Definitions

For the purpose of this Section 117, the following definitions apply:

- A. **Condiment:** A single-use packet containing relishes, spices, sauces, confections, or seasonings, that requires no additional preparation, and that is used on food or beverages, including, but not limited to, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, soy sauce, sauerkraut, salsa, syrup, jam, jelly, salad dressings, salt, sugar, sugar substitutes, pepper, and chili pepper.
- B. **Foam polystyrene:** A non-biodegradable petrochemical thermoplastic made from aerated forms of polystyrene and includes several methods of manufacture. Expanded polystyrene (EPS) or extruded polystyrene (XPS) are forms of polystyrene.
- C. **Food Establishment:** A retail establishment that stores, prepares, services, vends, or otherwise provides food for human consumption, as defined by the Watertown Zoning Ordinance, Table of Uses.
- D. **Full-Service Food Establishment:** A food establishment where customers are seated at a table either by waitstaff or themselves, and where orders are taken and served by waitstaff at the tables.

- E. **Online Food Ordering Platform:** The digital technology provided on a website or mobile application through which a consumer can place an order for pick-up or delivery of Prepared Food. Such platforms include those operated directly by Food Establishments, by companies that provide delivery of prepared meals to consumers, and by online food ordering systems that connect consumers to Food Establishments directly.
- F. **Prepared Food:** Food or beverages serviced, packaged, cooked, chopped, sliced, mixed, brewed, frozen, squeezed, poured, or otherwise prepared (collectively “prepared”) for individual customers or consumers. Prepared Food does not include raw eggs or raw, butchered meats, fish, and/or poultry sold from a butcher case, a refrigerator case, or similar retail appliance.
- G. **Single-Use:** Items designed to be used once and then discarded and not designed for repeated use and sanitizing.
- H. **Single-Use Foodware Accessory:** Single-use items provided alongside Prepared Food served in single-use plates, containers, or cups, including but not limited to utensils, tongs, chopsticks, napkins, straws, stirrers, splash sticks, cocktail sticks, and toothpicks, cup lids, cup sleeves, cup trays, and food trays.
- I. **Utensil:** Forks, spoons, knives, sporks, chopsticks, or other instruments used to serve food or to eat food.
- J. **Reusable Food and Beverage Serviceware:** Containers, bowls, plates, trays, cups, glasses, forks, spoons, knives, takeout containers, and other items used to contain and consume beverages and prepared food that are manufactured and designed to be washed and sanitized and used repeatedly over an extended period of time.

117.03 Prohibited use and distribution of single-use food and beverage serviceware

Food Establishments are prohibited from providing Single-use Accessories, including in takeout and delivery orders, whether orders are placed online, via phone, or in person, except as follows:

- A. Single-use Accessories may be provided specifically upon the request of the consumer:
 - 1. By asking directly;
 - 2. By selecting the items in an online food ordering platform; or,
 - 3. In response to an inquiry by the food establishment.
- B. Food Establishments may have Single-use Accessories available at self-service stations. The self-service station may include a Single Item Dispenser. These stations must comply with the Massachusetts Retail Food Code (105 CMR 590.00)

117.04 Options with Online Food Ordering Platforms

Online Food Ordering Platforms must provide Food Establishments with a method to list each Single-Use Accessory and Condiment that is offered by the Food Establishment, such that customers can specifically request the Single-Use Accessories and Condiments that they wish to have included with their order.

117.05 Restricted Packaging

- A. Single-use Accessories, including plastic forks, spoons and knives, may not be wrapped in plastic or offered as bundled sets.
- B. To ensure that single use food containers and packaging materials are recyclable, retail establishments are prohibited from selling or distributing single use food containers and packing materials made in whole or in part from:
 - 1. Foam polystyrene;
 - 2. Plastic that is completely or substantially black in color; or,
 - 3. ~~Lined with polyethylene or other petroleum-based plastics.~~
- C. A retail or food establishment may establish if a specific item is allowable under Section 117.05B by providing written documentation to the Director of Public Health that the items is recyclable from their city-permitted waste/recycling hauler and associated MRF, or compostable from their commercial organics hauler and associated compost end site.
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117.06 Restrictions on Full Service Food

Full Service Food Establishments must utilize only Reusable Food and Beverage Serviceware for dine-in customers.

117.07 Exemptions

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- A. The food establishment must file a request for an exemption in writing with the Director of Public Health.
- B. The request must state specifically which section and products they are seeking an exemption from and state reasons why application of the specific requirement would cause undue hardship.
- C. The Director may waive any specific requirement of this ordinance for a period of not more than six months, but, upon subsequent applications, may extend exemptions for additional six-month period.
- D. The Director will issue a final decision in writing within 30 days of receipt of a request for an exemption.

117.08 Enforcement

The Director of Public Health and/or his/her designee shall have the authority to administer and enforce this ordinance.

117.09 Effective Date

This ordinance will take effect six months after passage to allow time for the City Administration to conduct an education campaign focused on food establishments and consumers

117.99 Penalty

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Committee on Rules and Ordinances
Watertown City Council
Watertown City Hall
149 Main Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Oct. 10, 2025

Lined paper products is really a problem because without it you have all kinds of leakage issues or are forced to purchase a compostable product that's much more costly and most cases will end up in a trash bin anyway

Ice cream to go, coffee, tea all a probl

Dunkins uses a cup that, according to a franchisee who owns a couple stores, are lined with something but he's not sure what

. The plastic lining is the most challenging one, most paper products that hold food have it because otherwise any liquid melts the paper pretty rapidly. I also don't know if there's much available that doesn't have it. Newton really hasn't enforced any of the regulations to my knowledge so we've just been using them. Sorry for the delay, and hope this helps.

ORDINANCE # [redacted]

2025 – O – [redacted]

WHEREAS Implementing Watertown's "Resilient Watertown" Climate Plan is a top priority of the City Council and the Community; and,

WHEREAS A part of the effort to improve the environment is to reduce trash; and,

WHEREAS Single use plastics have a significant impact on the environment through their carbon footprint and contribution to excess waste; and,

WHEREAS the reduction of single use plastics in circumstances where they are not necessary is a valid and effective waste reduction strategy; and,

WHEREAS elimination of non-recyclable single-use plastics will also reduce waste.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of Watertown that a new Title X, Chapter 117 be added to the of the Watertown Code of Ordinances, as follows:

Chapter 117

SKIP THE STUFF ORDINANCE

117.01 Purpose

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- H. **Single-Use Foodware Accessory:** Single-use items provided alongside Prepared Food served in single-use plates, containers, or cups, including but not limited to utensils, tongs, chopsticks, **napkins**, straws, stirrers, splash sticks, cocktail sticks, and toothpicks, cup lids, cup sleeves, cup trays, and food trays.
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- C. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to limit the use of other lawful methods of abating violations of this section, including but not limited to application for equitable relief from a court of law.

2025 Restaurant Survey Results

Emailed directly to 30 restaurants; posted on WED socials (2 times), newsletter; WBC and CRRC included in newsletters, and CRRC sent their own direct email to their Watertown restaurant list.

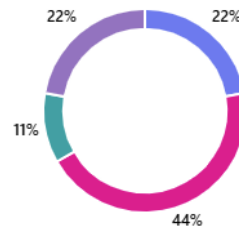
9 responses out of roughly 90 restaurants in Watertown

Takeout Business Questions

5. How much of your business comes from take-out versus customers eating in your restaurant?

[More details](#)

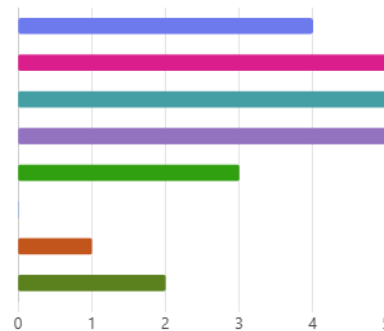
● Less than 20%	2
● 20-40%	4
● 40-60%	1
● 60-80%	2
● 80-100%	0



6. Can your customers order take-out using any third-party apps? (Choose the ones you are on.)

[More details](#)

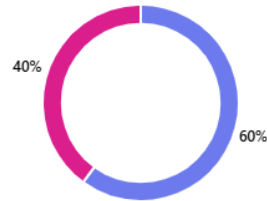
● We do not use third-party ordering apps	4
● DoorDash	5
● Grub Hub	5
● Uber Eats	5
● Postmates	3
● Slice	0
● ChowNow	1
● Other	2



7. Have you heard of "Skip the Stuff" campaigns - initiatives that restrict putting utensils and condiments in take-out orders unless the customer requests them?

[More details](#)

- Yes 6
- No 4

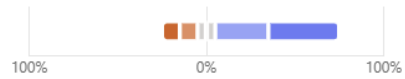


8. What's your initial reaction to "Skip the Stuff"?

[More details](#)

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- No Opinion
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

I think it's a good idea.



Summary: Generally positive attitude toward "Skip the Stuff" campaigns and majority were familiar with them already. Interesting to note that 6 out of 9 respondents receive 40% or less of their business from takeout.

Outdoor Dining Questions

10. Does your location include private outdoor space that could be used for outdoor dining (patio, sidewalk, etc.)?

Note: This does **not** include public space, like parking spaces or the public part of the sidewalk.

[More details](#)

If you have space but aren't using it currently for outdoor dining, please still answer "Yes." The next question will ask about how you use it.

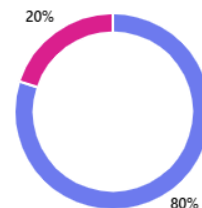
- Yes 5
- No 5



11. Do you currently offer outdoor dining to your customers?

[More details](#)

- Yes 8
- No 2





EMPLOYEE INFORMATION SHEET

REMEMBER

Only provide single-use service ware and single-use condiments upon request.



ASK

What single-use service ware and single-use condiments they need and how much.



THANK YOU

For meeting the requirements of the Skip the Stuff Program!



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What items are considered single-use condiments?

Single-use condiment means a single-serving packet, such as:

- Sauces (ketchup, relish, mayo, mustard, soy sauce, salad dressing, hot sauce)
- Seasonings (salt, pepper, parmesan cheese, red pepper flakes)
- Spreads (cream cheese, jelly, butter)

What items are considered single-use service ware?

Single-use service ware are all items that are designed to be used once and then discarded. This includes:

- chopsticks
- condiment cups and packets
- napkins
- utensils
- straws
- splash guards

Are self-serve stations permitted?

Yes. You may provide an area for customers to help themselves to single-use items. Please encourage them to take only what they need.

Can I offer customers single-use items?

Yes, but please be specific and do not offer all items at once. For example, "Do you need a fork or ketchup packet with your meal?"



#SkipTheStuff



Needham Public Health Division
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Page 36 of 44



Need utensils or condiments with your order? Please ask.



Single-use condiments and service ware (utensils, straws, napkins, etc.) provided only upon request, per Town of Needham regulations.



Need utensils or condiments with your order? Please take only what you need



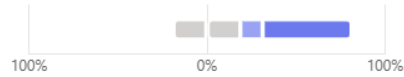
Single-use condiments and service ware (straws, stirrers, lids, spill plugs, etc.)
provided only upon request or self serve by customer, per Town of Needham bylaw.

12. Please indicate how much you agree/disagree with the statement:

[More details](#)

● Strongly disagree ● Disagree ● Neutral ● Agree ● Strongly agree

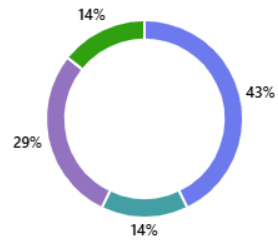
Outdoor dining has been a good option for my business.



13. Why do you not offer outdoor dining? (Check all that apply)

[More details](#)

- No available space 3
- I don't know what the process is for getting a permit 0
- Not worth it / Not interested 1
- Seems unsafe / unsanitary 2
- Other 1



Summary: Most are already offering outdoor dining in some fashion and believe it's good for their business. Of those who don't offer it, the main obstacle is lack of space, followed by a feeling that it's unsafe/unsanitary.

Live Entertainment Questions

15. Please indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements:

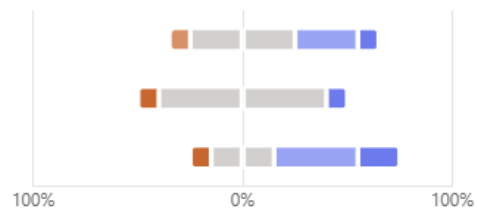
[More details](#)

● Strongly Disagree ● Disagree ● Neutral ● Agree ● Strongly Agree

I understand how to get an entertainment license.

I would like to bring in entertainment other than what the City's license currently allows.

I believe having live entertainment draws in more patrons.



Summary: Strong agreement that live entertainment is beneficial, but split on whether what is currently allowed (limits on number of performers and types of instruments, amplification).

WHEREAS, ~~i~~Implementing Watertown’s “Resilient Watertown” Climate Plan is a top priority of the City Council and the Community; and,

WHEREAS, ~~a~~A part of the effort to improve the environment is to reduce ~~trash~~waste; and,

WHEREAS, ~~s~~Single use plastics have a significant impact on the environment through their carbon footprint and contribution to excess waste; and,

WHEREAS, the reduction of single use plastics in circumstances where they are not necessary is a valid and effective waste reduction strategy; and,

WHEREAS, substitution of reusable materials for non-recyclable single-use plastics will also reduce waste.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Watertown that the Watertown Code of Ordinances is hereby amended by adding a new Title X, Chapter 117, entitled “Skip the Stuff”~~be added to the of the Watertown Code of Ordinances,~~ as follows:

Chapter 117

SKIP THE STUFF ~~ORDINANCE~~

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~~This~~The purpose of this ~~chapter~~Ordinance is to reduce the overall environmental impact of the City of Watertown, its residents, and its businesses. Single use plastic has a significant impact on the environment through its carbon footprint, and impact on waste systems. The provisions of this ~~O~~rdinance will reduce the amount of single use plastic used throughout the City.

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 2. Plastic that is completely or substantially black in color; ~~or,~~
 3. ~~Lined with polyethylene or other petroleum-based plastics.~~
- C. A retail or food establishment may establish if a specific item is allowable under Section 117.05B by providing written documentation to the Director of Public Health that the items ~~is-are~~ recyclable from ~~their-a~~ City-permitted waste/recycling hauler and associated Materials Recovery Facility (“MRF”), or compostable from their commercial organics hauler and associated compost end site.
- D. If the Director of Public Health determines that compliance with Section 117.05B is not feasible due to industry-wide unavailability of compliant items, the Director may suspend enforcement of this provision for all food and retail establishments until the Director determines that the supply of compliant items has been sufficiently restored.

117.6 Restrictions on Full Service Food

Full Service Food Establishments must utilize only Reusable Food and Beverage Serviceware for dine-in customers.

117.7 Exemptions

A Food Establishment may seek an exemption from the requirements of this Ordinance as follows:

- A. The Food Establishment must file a request for an exemption in writing with the Director of Public Health.
- B. The request must state specifically which section and products they are seeking an exemption from and state reasons why application of the specific requirement would cause undue hardship.
- C. The Director may waive any specific requirement of this Ordinance for a period of not more than six months, but, upon subsequent applications, may extend exemptions for an additional six-month period.
- D. The Director will issue a final decision in writing within 30 days of receipt of a written request for an exemption.

117.8 Enforcement

The Director of Public Health and/or his/her designee shall have the authority to administer and enforce this Ordinance. This Ordinance and any resulting rules and regulations may be enforced through any lawful means in law or in equity, including, but not limited to, non-criminal disposition in accordance with the provisions of G.L. c. 40, §21D pursuant to Chapter 35, § 35.05 of the City Code of Ordinances.

117.9 Effective Date

This Ordinance will take effect six months after passage to allow time for the City Administration to conduct an education campaign focused on food establishments and consumers

117.99 Penalty

- A. Any person who violates any provision of this ~~chapter~~ Ordinance shall be issued a verbal warning for the first offense, then fined as follows:
 - 1. \$100 for the second offense
 - 2. \$200 for the third offense
 - 3. \$300 for the fourth offense and each subsequent offense
- B. Each day the violation continues may constitute a separate offense.
- C. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to limit the use of other lawful methods of abating violations of this section, including but not limited to application for equitable relief from a court of law.