ZERO WASTE
ARLINGTON

***'No Plastic, Please!'* Campaign Reduces Plastic Waste**
Zero Waste Arlington initiative eliminates excess restaurant waste

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In this single-use plastics environmental crisis era, Zero Waste Arlington is taking a leadership role by partnering with local restaurants to reduce excess waste with their '*No Plastic, Please!'* initiative. Through this program, restaurants provide reusable tableware for in-house dining and takeout utensils, straws, napkins, and condiment packages only to customers who request them.

"How many of us have a stash of takeout utensils, napkins and ketchup packets that we hold onto, hoping to use someday? Sometimes these items are needed, but more often, they are thrown away, wasted" remarked Zero Waste Arlington committee member Emily Dertz. "Restaurants are starting to change their default takeout model so that consumers now have to ask for these items. The results are mutually beneficial to both consumers and restaurants: reduce excess waste and save money."

The group's objective is to bring individuals and restaurants together to support each other in the shared goal of reducing waste. So far, six local eateries have taken the active step to be certified as '*No Plastic, Please!'* restaurants: Roasted Granola, Szechuan's Dumpling, The Heights Pub, Punjab, Noodle Market, and Za. Qualifying restaurants pledge to:

1. Dine in: provide reusable plates, utensils, and drinkware; provide straws, single-use condiments packets only by customer request.
2. Takeout or delivery: only add single-use items (utensils, straws, napkins, condiment packets, chopsticks) if specifically requested.

"The MassDEP's goal is to reduce waste by 30% by 2030 and 90% by 2050" commented Charlotte Milan, Town of Arlington Recycling Coordinator. "These are aggressive goals and Zero Waste Arlington's active leadership is crucial to meeting these targets."

The focus on reducing unnecessary restaurant waste is the first of many steps needed to reduce the pervasive use of single-use plastics in our community. When residents take ownership and make thoughtful choices in their daily lives by refusing unnecessary waste and supporting businesses who are making an effort, everyone wins.

“We are thrilled to participate in Zero Waste Arlington’s program”, remarked Sarah Short, co-owner of The Roasted Granola. “When we opened the cafe five years ago, we made a very conscious choice to minimize our waste and we take pride in being an ultra low waste cafe”.

The ‘*No Plastic, Please!*’ campaign is the latest of many of Zero Waste Arlington’s efforts to reduce plastic waste in the Arlington community. Other accomplishments include the 2022 single-use water bottle ban and establishment of the ‘Arlington on Tap’ initiative, and the 2019 polystyrene ban. The Town Committee is also actively working to reduce textile and organic waste in Arlington. Learn more at www.zerowastearlington.org or find them on Facebook and Vimeo.