

## **Energy City Insights – Reducing Your Plastic Waste**

With the New Year comes a new opportunity to create some new environmentally-friendly habits! Reducing waste is an ongoing challenge and there's always ways to improve. Have you considered the amount of plastic waste (even recyclable items) you're producing? Single-use plastic items are seemingly everywhere and often hard to avoid. Some plastic items are recyclable, but others are not. Considering these things and making different decisions will ultimately help reduce your use and waste related to plastics.

### **Simple Steps:**

- Recycle what you can! Many plastic items can be recycled curbside including water, juice and soda bottles, dish soap containers, shampoo, lotion and soap bottles, and detergent jugs – rinse items and keep the lids/caps on.
- Invest in a reusable shopping bag and bring it to the grocery store. Start with one and make it a habit to have on hand when shopping, even if you end up using additional bags at the store.
- Avoid single use water bottles. We all have a few water bottles or cups at home, use them instead!

### **Intermediate Steps:**

- Stop using disposable utensil, plates, and cups. When ordering takeout, opt to not have those items included in your order if possible.
- Switch to reusable straws! Plastic straws cannot be recycled and cause litter issues due to their small size. Metal and silicone reusable straws are a great alternative, even better if you remember to bring them to the local coffee shop or restaurant with you.
- Consider purchasing reusable plastic sandwich and snack bags to replace those single-use zipper/resealable bags. They make for durable alternatives, and most are dishwasher safe.

### **Advanced Steps:**

- [Recycle your plastic bags](#) by dropping them off at either of the Elk River Liquor Stores. We accept plastic bags, salt and ice bags, bubble wrap and other plastic film material. We then have the material picked up directly from a plastic film recycler.
- Avoid purchasing individually wrapped items like snacks, this additional plastic and packaging adds up quickly.
- Make your own cleaning products or laundry detergent to reduce the amount of plastic you're purchasing, then store products in glass bottles.