RECOMMENDATION:

That Council direct staff to promote tips for reducing plastic straws and single-use plastics on the City’s social media page, website and newsletter, while educating on the need for limited use of plastic straws particularly for the disabled.

BACKGROUND:

On March 1st, the Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (ACDI) met and discussed an article regarding the use of plastic straws titled "Strawgate: the Ableism Behind Exclusionary Activism" (Appendix A). The article highlights that big cities are banning plastic straws but possibly without the consideration for people with disabilities or elderly that require them daily to eat.

The ACDI discussed the use of paper and metal straws as an alternative to plastic, but felt that both are not useful for consuming hot liquids as they disintegrate or get too hot for the user. They did not want to see a complete ban on plastic straws due to the impact on the disabled or elderly. While the ACDI recognize the use of plastic straws are harming the environment and that there is a need to reduce the use, the need for plastic straws for people with disabilities is great too.

After the discussion, it was moved and seconded:

That the Advisory Committee on Disability Issues recommend to Council;

That Council direct staff to research an initiative to reduce the use of plastic straws in the City of Duncan.

CARRIED

ANALYSIS:

The use of plastic straws is overwhelming worldwide, and proven to harm the environment. Big cities around the world have already banned the use of plastic straws, without possible consideration of the impact on the disabled and elderly. The ACDI recognize that the City can encourage people to reduce the use of plastic straws, while still giving citizens the choice to use them if needed.

Staff support the idea to reduce the use of plastic straws and have briefly looked into initiatives. The federal government has committed to producing an "action plan" to beat plastic pollution by Summer 2019. In the interim, staff believe that to reduce the use of individual plastic straws more public awareness and education is required rather than outright bans. Staff recommend that the City promote tips on ways to reduce the use of plastic straws on the City’s social media page, website, and newsletter.
Awareness can focus on:

a) Citizens making a personal commitment:
   - Saying ŕno thank youô whenever ordering a drink, or politely requesting ŕno straw pleaseô and encouraging friends and family to take a pledge too;
   - Carry your own paper, glass, biodegradable, bamboo or stainless steel straw instead.

b) Eateries:
   - Only serve plastic straws upon request,
   - Only use paper, glass, biodegradable, bamboo straws and have plastic on hand by request,
   - Promote your business with how many plastic straws you no longer use.

Council may also consider directing staff to encourage the reduction in single-use plastics overall, by sharing helpful tips from the Plastic Pollution Coalition website (www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org/).

**IMPLICATIONS:**

| Financial: | N/A |
| Policy/Legislation: | The federal government has committed to producing an ŕaction planô to beat plastic pollution by Summer 2019. |
| Strategic Priority: | Goal 5: Responsible Stewardship of the Environment |
| Sustainability: | N/A |
| Communication: | Cityô social media page, website and newsletter(s) to promote the reduction of plastic straws and single-use plastics. |
| Staffing Implications: | Corporate Services manages the Cityô social media page, website, and newsletter, updating and posting regularly. |

**ALTERNATE RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council refer the topic of Plastic Straw Reduction to the Environment and Sustainability Committee for further discussion.

**APPENDICES:**

Appendix A: Strawgate: The Ableism Behind Exclusionary Activism