



Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bag Ordinance

Council Briefing – 2/9/12

Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bags

Austin City Council Resolutions

April 19, 2007

- Directs staff to evaluate and recommend strategies for limiting the use of plastic bags

June 24, 2010

- Directs staff to determine the cost to Austin taxpayers of processing plastics bags

Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bags

Austin City Council Resolution

August 4, 2011

Directs staff to develop a city ordinance providing a “comprehensive phase-out of single-use plastic bags offered at retail checkouts”

- Requested by Council to expand the public discussion to include paper bags and market drivers such as fees

Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bags

Litter and Environmental Impacts



Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bags

Austin Zero Waste Policies

21.3 Single-Use Products and Packaging Ordinances

- The goal of this initiative is to **reduce single-use and non-recyclable products and packaging**.
- The City will consider developing ordinances with the goal of reducing or eliminating consumption and generation of the following products: **Single-use bags...**

3.5 Highest and Best Use Principles

- Highest and Best Use: **Reduce, Reuse**
- Mid-Level Best Use: Recycling and Composting
- Lowest Least Desirable: Landfilling and Incineration

Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bags

Process

- City Council Resolution – 8/4/11
- Stakeholder Discussions – Sept-Jan
- SWAC - Public Comments – 10/5/11
- Public Forum – 10/24/11
- SWAC - Public Comments – 11/9/11
- SWAC - Draft #1 Discussion – 12/14/11

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Process

- Stakeholder Discussions – Continuing
- SWAC – Draft #2 Discussion – 1/11/12
- Environmental Board – 1/18/12
- Public Focus Group – 1/30/12
- SWAC – Draft #3 Discussion – 2/8/12
- City Council Briefing – 2/9/12
- City Council Public Hearing – 3/1/12

Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bags

Ordinance Purpose

- Replaces Retail Carry-out Single-Use Bags with defined Reusable/Recyclable Bags

Exemptions (< 10% of all plastic bags)

- Dry Cleaner Bags and Yard Waste Bags
- Produce, Meat, and Frozen Foods Bags
- Door-hanger Bags and Newspaper Bags
- Prescription Drug Carry-Out Bags
- Beer, Wine and Spirits Carry-out Bags
- Restaurant Carry-out Bags

Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bags

Permitted Reusable Bags

- Reusable Carry-out Bags – 3 choices
 - Cloth, washable fabric, or other durable materials
 - Recyclable paper with min weight, certification & handle
 - Recyclable plastic, 4 mil thickness (durability) & handle

Implementation Timeline

- Phase 1: Education: March 1, 2012 – February 28, 2013
- Phase 2: Transition: March 1, 2013 – February 28, 2014
 - Transition away from Retail Checkout Single Use Bags
 - 10 cents per Single-Use Bag or \$1 per transaction
 - Retailers and Customers Transition to Reusable Bags
- Phase 3: March 1, 2014 - No Retail Checkout Single-Use Bags⁹

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Hardship Variance

- Customers with **Lone Star Card** exempt from temporary surcharge
- Retailers may petition for **Hardship Variance**

Other Elements

- Retailer **Signage** Requirements
- Customer **Education** at Point of Purchase
- Temporary Surcharge to fund **Public Education**
- City dedicated fund – restricted use of revenues
- Prohibits carryout bags at all City facilities

Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bags

Issues Raised

➤ Paper Bags

- Option A: Current Draft Ordinance
- Option B: Do not include Paper Bags in Ordinance
- Option C: Staff Recommendation: Paper Bags defined by certification and handles: no weight requirement

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Issues Raised

➤ Exemptions

- Citizen comments indicate too many exemptions
- Staff Recommendation: Remove Exemption for “Beer, Wine and Spirits Carry-out Bags”
- Future: staff to explore potential replacements to other exemptions (e.g. dry cleaner bags, newspaper bags)

➤ Temporary Surcharge

- Temporary Surcharge creates implementation challenges
- Staff Recommendation: Transition from Education Phase to Full Implementation without Surcharge – Adjust dates

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Issues Raised

➤ Metrics

- Lack of Access to Bag Distribution Count
- Recycling Accountability Issues
- Staff Recommendation: Proposed contract with UT to develop metrics, analyze data, and provide reports

➤ Reuse / Recycling Options

- Purpose of Ordinance to Promote Reuse
- Litter Abatement vs. Litter Control
- Staff Recommendation: Develop Comprehensive Bag Recycling Program (only if single-use bags are phased out)

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Recent Council Actions

Jan 26th Council Set Public Hearing Notice
Feb 9th Staff Briefing to Council

Next Steps

March 1st 4:00 pm Public Hearing to consider
the proposed ordinance

* motion sheets for various options will be provided

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