

RESOLUTION NO. 20080410-048

WHEREAS, on April 19, 2007, the City Council unanimously approved Resolution No. 20070419-026 directing the City Manager to evaluate and recommend strategies for limiting the use of non-compostable plastic bags by stores located in the City, and promoting the use of compostable plastic bags, recyclable paper bags, or reusable checkout bags, and

WHEREAS, plastic shopping bags are a petroleum product, the production of which contributes to global warming and disposable bags present a unique and pernicious problem for citizens, the environment and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, the successful reduction of plastic bags entering the city's solid waste stream, along with the integration of reusable bags and the increase in recycling and composting of plastic bags, will help the city achieve its goal of "Zero Waste" by the year 2040, and

WHEREAS, a group that includes local grocers, retailers, plastic bag manufacturers, Keep Austin Beautiful and city officials has met since passage of the resolution to determine policies for improving environmental health and addressing needs of individual stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, the group has advised that an ordinance banning plastic bags is not, at present, the most appropriate action for meeting all of the city's goals, **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

That the City Council adopts the following plan for reducing by half (50 percent) from present levels the number of plastic bags entering the City's solid waste stream by June 30, 2009:

- Retailers who are registered for participation with the Texas Retailers Association (participating retailers) agree, upon passage of this resolution, to reduce the pounds of plastic purchased for use as bags in their stores;
- Participating Retailers will:
 1. make available recycling bins/canisters located in a highly visible area and, in most store locations, at the front of the store near the entrance;
 2. redevelop messaging formats on the bins/canisters, including language that encourages shoppers to "reduce, reuse, and recycle"; and
 3. *make available reusable bags at affordable prices in every store.*
- Participating Retailers will, on a biannual basis, file a report with the Texas Retailers Association which includes their pounds of plastic purchased and pounds of plastic recycled and a notarized statement signed by their own auditors attesting to the accuracy and authenticity of the data submitted.

- The Texas Retailers Association will compile the reported data and statements and submit them to the City of Austin's Solid Waste Services Department (The Solid Waste Services Department).
- The Solid Waste Services Department will analyze the reported data and the Office of the City Auditor will review the analysis and check the Texas Retailers Association's data for reasonableness. Depending on the results of the analysis done by the Solid Waste Services Department and the City Auditor, the City Auditor may request supplemental information on a company-by-company basis;
- The Solid Waste Services Department will begin a pilot program to offer customers the opportunity to recycle plastic bags at curbside and report results of that program and possible expansion within 180 days;
- The Solid Waste Services Department will conduct periodic reviews of plastic bag use in stores and plastic bags entering the City solid waste stream.
- "Keep Austin Beautiful" will coordinate an effort entitled "Austin's Got A Brand New Bag" which will include print, television, radio, and Internet advertising; public events; school programs; and other marketing efforts aimed at convincing Austin residents to shop with reusable bags. The Solid Waste Services Department will also purchase

5,000 reusable bags produced by "Keep Austin Beautiful" for distribution across the city; and

- The City Manager will report to City Council by August 2009 the status of the pilot program and the analysis of the data submitted by the Texas Retailers Association for consideration by City Council as to whether the plan's goals have been met. In the event the goals have not been met, *City Council will revisit other options for reducing plastic bags entering the city's solid waste stream.*

ADOPTED: April 10, 2008

ATTEST:


Shirley A. Gentry
City Clerk