Evanston Environment Board  
Thursday, May 8, 2014  
7:00 pm – 8:30 pm  
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Room 2200

AGENDA

I. Call to Order/Declaration of Quorum

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes from April (attachments)

III. Citizen Comment/Follow-Up (Please sign-in) (10 mins.)

IV. Staff Updates (S. Robinson, C. Hurley) (attachments) (5 mins.)

V. Plastic Bag Ordinance (C. Hurley) (attachments) (10 mins.)

VI. Environmental Justice Strategy (C. Hurley) (10 mins.)

VII. Bike Parking for Private Development – For Discussion (H. Bartling) (attachments) (15 mins.)

VIII. EEB Responsibilities/Transportation Input (10 mins.)

IX. Solid Waste Survey for Commercial Franchise (S. Robinson) (10 mins.)

X. Roundtable (10 mins.)

XI. Adjournment

Next Meeting: June 12, 2014
Next Meeting: June 12, 2014
MEETING NOTES-DRAFT

Evanston Environment Board
Thursday, April 10, 2014
7:00 p.m.
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge, Room #2200

Members Present: Todd Schwier, Linda Young, Tom Clark, Hugh Bowleg, Jamal Hedwig, Samuel Headd, Kevin Glynn

Members Absent: Ellen King, Husayn Allmart

Staff: Catherine Hurley, Sustainable Programs Coordinator, Suzette Robinson, Director of Public Works, Kenya Evans, Executive Secretary, Paulina Albazi, Special Projects Assistant

Presiding Member/s: Todd Schweier

I. CALL TO ORDER – Todd Schwier called meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. APPROVAL of MINUTES from March. Minutes approved.
T. Schwier made a MOTION to approve. T. Clark SECONDED. All in favor.

III. CITIZEN COMMENT
There were no citizens to discuss issues or concerns and board moved to next item on the agenda. However, S. Robinson followed up a citizen complaint regarding the fire trucks and stated that fire trucks are in the process of being upgraded electronically and truck operators will be given training at headquarters. Staff will provide additional details as the situation develops.

IV. STAFF UPDATES
S. Robinson directed the board’s attention and new board staff member Kenya Evans was introduced and each member of the board was reiterated. S. Robinson talked about the Commercial Waste Franchise presentation. She stated that the franchise garnered revenue upwards of $700,000 and franchise project participation increased to 35% or more in year one and in year five it was over 50%. S. Robinson asked for the board to consider more opportunities or incentives to bolster recycling even more. Residents participated when told they must participate but there are still hold outs. S. Robinson states that the contract is due to expire next year, so there is a need for an RFP to ensure as much participation as possible.
Second item raised for discussion was the state of the sycamore trees. S. Robinson reported that 63 trees were damaged due to the extreme cold and as a consequence, had severe splitting. All but two of the 63 trees were removed as a resident objected to the removal of those two trees. A meeting will occur regarding the two trees at a later date. S. Robinson informed the board that decaying trees are a serious hazard and all available options were vetted before removing the trees. S. Robinson will see if there any further issues and inform the board of her findings.

H. Bartling supported a census for trees in the area which would include details regarding species and health status. S. Robinson stated that information regarding all trees in the area including species, health of the trees and other information is already collected by the city and inventory is used to layer any existing information in databases. T. Clark raised the issue of how the board could move to promote healthier trees with the public and C. Hurley reiterated the importance of events such as “I Heart Trees,” “Earth Day,” and resident voting for an honorary “Earth Tree,” to engage the public in creating an environment for healthier trees. Jamal B. then raised a concern regarding tree replacement. S. Robinson stated that even on private property, the city has regulations and requirements, including no planting in parkway, as well as what kinds can be planted due to trees like Ash and others falling prey to disease. S. Robinson reiterates the board’s continued commitment to trees and plant life as she stated that the board’s main focus was originally trees and ecology before expanding to other environmental issues.

V. Discussion of Environment Board Activities, Accomplishments

- **Review of Bylaws/Mission:**
  T. Schwier directed the board’s attention to the board’s bylaws and mission. T. Schwier supported bylaws that reflect an emphasis on environmental issues and not policies. He reflected on the Green Street Project and how the focus on codifying environmental issues should move to action and resolution. T. Schwier also stated that there should be more public engagement and citizen input activities. H. Bartling stated that time restraints could hinder board activities and that the board could be forum focused. T. Schwier suggested that the board could be split into subcommittees to address the lack of community engagement. K. Glynn supported T. Schwier’s suggestion. S. Robinson raised a concern that individual concerns of residents be balanced with concerns of residents as a whole due to possible disconnect regarding issues that segments of residents may or may not face. C. Hurley supported S. Robinson’s position and stated that unity and compromise would be an ongoing focus of the board.

- **Board Chair and Co-Chair Selection:**
  S. Robinson directed the board’s attention to the both the Chair and Co-Chair position selections. T. Schwier asked to the board if there were any interested parties, and reiterated his interest in the chair position. C. Hurley stated that there would be meeting processes and agenda preparation to
adequately inform both the prospective chair and co-chair of their respective duties. Kevin Glynn then expressed interest in co-chair position. C. Hurley informed the board that the two positions would be interim until an official election next year in June. H. Bartling MOTIONED for T. Schwier and K. Glenn as chair and co-chair respectively. T. Clark SECONDED the motion. ALL IN FAVOR.

VI. RESEARCH OF BIKE PARKING FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS-FOR DISCUSSION (H. BARTLING)

T. Schwier and C. Hurley stated that there needed to be clarification on best practices for bike parking, including proximity, number of spaces and other details. H. Bartling will research ordinances and policies that exist in other cities regarding bike parking, including height and construction of bike rack structures. T. Clark raised a concern regarding ordinance enforced bike parking vs. incentivizing. K. Glynn stated that striking a balance between ordinance and choice is paramount and T. Schwier supported this point. S. Robinson stated that ordinances are useful and very much needed though it should be taken into account the concerns of citizens including safety. Places not deemed safe for bikers and their bikes often lead to citizens improperly securing their bikes onto places like trees and posts. S. Robinson suggested a public meeting to help develop input from community. Board also discussed the importance of parking vs. bike parking to accommodate residents. C. Hurley commented that racks are needed for both residents and visitors so that racks are not completely booked. S. Robinson raised concerns about space needed for both car parking and bike parking. S. Robinson stated that other concerns with bike parking included sidewalk impediment and bike theft, though bike theft is higher with unlocked bikes. T. Clark voiced concerns about if these issues would be addressed before council and if board should come up with other recommendations. C. Hurley stated that these issues are being considered and S. Robinson stated that council is also researching into other solutions. Board then moved to discuss this matter further during the next meeting on May 8th, 2014.

VII. TOPICS AND QUESTIONS FOR EARTH DAY/ARBOR DAY EVENT

C. Hurley informed the board that the “Earth Day,” event would be at Fleetwood/Jourdain Community Center located on 1655 Foster Street on April 26, 2014 from 11:30a.m. to 2:30p.m. She stated that companies such as ComEd and Nicor Gas would be in attendance and residents could learn about efficient energy use. Food will be served and C. Hurley suggested the board could get a table or come and participate with outreach efforts.

VIII. SOLID WASTE SURVEY FOR COMMERCIAL FRANCHISE

Board moved to discuss questions for commercial entities during the next meeting on May 8th, 2014.

IX. REVIEW OF BOARD MEET TIMES
L. Young stated that meeting time and date worked for her and would be in favor of board moving start time earlier rather than later or keeping the time the same. S. Robinson stated that moving meetings from Thursdays to another day of the week would not be practical due to room constraint and other civic center activities. T. Schwier and K. Glynn both supported an earlier meet time of 6:30pm, though T. Clark and J. Bowleg stated that 6:00pm would be better for their schedules. Board moved to discuss this at a later date.

X. ROUND TABLE
There were no further comments or concerns regarding issues by the board.

XI. ADJOURNMENT
T. Schwier made a MOTION to adjourn. K. Glenn SECONDED. ALL IN FAVOR
The meeting was concluded at 8:45pm.

NEXT MEETING – May 8th, 2014
To: Todd Schwier, Interim Chairman
Members of the Evanston Environment Board

From: Suzette Robinson, Public Works Director
Catherine Hurley, Sustainable Programs Coordinator

Subject: Staff Update

Date: May 6, 2014

Staff would like to provide the Evanston Environment Board with the following staff update for the meeting of May 8, 2014.

**Evanston Livability Plan Recommending Next Climate Action Goal to be Presented to City Council on May 19th**
The City of Evanston Office of Sustainability and Sustain Evanston will be presenting the Evanston Liability Plan to the Evanston City Council on May 19th. The ELP includes a recommendation for a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emission to build upon the City’s successful achievement its first climate action goal of 13% reduction by 2012. Representatives from environmental groups in Evanston are invited to attend the presentation and show support for the Evanston Livability Plan and its recommendation. More information about the groups which are a part of Sustain Evanston can be found on Evanston Green Buzz: evanstongreenbuzz.org.

**Green Ball to Celebrate 40th Birthday of Evanston Ecology Center**
The Evanston Environmental Association and the City of Evanston invite the community to celebrate the 40th birthday of the Evanston Ecology Center and attend the 2014 Evanston Green Ball. This year’s ball will be held on May 30 from 7 to 10pm at the Levy Center. Learn more about the Ecology Center’s history in the Center’s 40th Birthday. Tickets for the Green Ball are on sale now and cost $75 from May 3 to May 28. Purchase Tickets Online now or go to the Evanston Ecology Center at 2024 McCormick Blvd. For more ticket information, email greenball@evastonenvironment.org or call (847) 448-8256.

Admission to the Ball includes:
- Live entertainment by the fabulous Gizzae reggae band
- “Taste of Evanston” appetizers by best local restaurants & food providers
• Eco fashions by talented local designers
• Sustainably made Green Line Pale Ale Beer by Goose Island Brewing Company
• Fantastic raffle prizes and more…
• Purchase organic wines by the glass from Sips on Sherman
• Come in festive casual attire

This event will benefit the Evanston Ecology Center. For more details about the Ball, go to evanstonenvironment.org/greenball.html.

Earth Day and Arbor Day Celebration A Success!
On Saturday April 26th, the City of Evanston hosted a community celebration to commemorate Earth Day and Arbor Day 2014. Over 150 people joined in a clean-up of City parks and neighborhoods, collecting a total of 130 bags of trash and 105 of recycling. Following the clean-up, participants met at the Fleetwood-Jourdain Community Center at 11:30 am to plant a Gingko Tree as the Honorary Arbor Day Tree Planting. Several hundred community members attended the festivities at Fleetwood-Jourdain to participate in activities, crafts and learn more about green living.

Sheridan Road Project:
The city has selected Christopher Burke Engineering as the consultant that will oversee the design of the resurfacing of Sheridan Road and Chicago Ave., biking improvement and sustainable parkway and streetscape. The consultant will begin this month heading the community through an alternative evaluation of the various biking improvements along the corridors. Design will be completed by the end of the year with construction commencing in spring 2015.

Bike Plan Update 2014:
The city held its 2nd and Final Public Workshop on Saturday, May 3rd from 8:30a.m. until noon at Rotary International. Participants evaluated and voted on their preference of route design, education and awareness programs, policies, and map configurations.

Civic Center Parking Lot:
The city is finalizing designs for a sustainable Civic Center parking lot. The project is being funded by MWRD and the city, and will include permeable asphalt and concrete, rain garden, bio-swales and education display boards.

Newspaper Boxes:
See attached presentation
Supplemental Information for Bike Parking for Private Development

Model Bicycle Parking Ordinance:

Bicycle Parking Ordinances: Examples from the United States:

Bicycle Parking in Madison:

Link to Bicycle Parking Zoning Modifications:

City of Cambridge Bicycle Parking Guide:
http://www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/projects/planning/~/media/33BF6DA6808F47D388C9BB748139EBB4.ashx

Ordinances Regarding Bike Parking in Fort Worth, Texas:
Memorandum

To: Evanston Environment Board
From: Catherine Hurley, Sustainable Programs Coordinator
Subject: Background on Bag Reduction Ordinance
Date: May 6, 2014

Introduction:
The City of Chicago recently passed a ban on the distribution of plastic carryout bags at retailers 10,000 square feet and greater. The City of Evanston previously considered creating an ordinance targeting carryout bags and will discuss Evanston’s next steps at the May 8th Evanston Environment Board Meeting. Below is a summary of Evanston’s recent efforts on this topic. Staff is working to obtain a copy of the approved City of Chicago plastic carryout bag ordinance.

Background:
The environmental impact of disposable shopping bags has been an on-going concern for the Evanston community and recommendations to reduce this impact date back to the Evanston Climate Action Plan. In 2011 the City of Evanston initiated community conversations, sought input from the Evanston Environment Board, and considered local legislation in an effort to reduce the environmental impact from disposable shopping bags. Reference documents and materials on this topic are provided at the end of this memo.

Legislative History:
On June 13, 2011 city staff presented the Administration and Public Works Committee with information on options for reducing the environmental impacts of shopping bags in Evanston. The information included meeting notes from a public meeting held on May 24, 2011 attended by more than 100 community members, a white paper summarizing research related to the environmental impacts of shopping bags and options to help reduce environmental impacts related to their use, and a copy of Ordinance 67-O-10 enacting a $0.05 tax on disposable shopping bags in Evanston. Ordinance 67-O-10 was amended to be a bag ban at the Administration and Public Works Committee held on April 25, 2011.
At the recommendation of Alderman Burrus at the June 13th Administration and Public Works Committee meeting, this issue was brought to the Evanston Environment Board for their review and recommendation. The Administration and Public Works Committee asked that the Environment Board provide their recommendation in October. Attachment 1 is a copy of the Evanston Environment Board’s recommendation for a bag reduction ordinance for consideration by City Council.

On October 24, 2011 the Evanston Environment board provided their recommendation to the Evanston City Council for a 5 cents fee on carryout bags (both paper and plastic) to be enacted for all retail establishments in Evanston. Following discussion by City Council, more questions were raised for additional research and investigation but no formal request for next steps was made.

Evanston Reference Materials:
City of Evanston’s web page on shopping bag reduction strategies

Staff White Paper on Shopping Bags in Evanston and Options for Reducing Environmental Impact

Evanston Climate Action Plan
http://www.cityofevanston.org/pdf/ECAP.pdf

Attachment:
Attachment 1 – Item SP1 - Evanston Environment Board Proposed Bag Reduction Ordinance Recommendation
Attachment 2 – Item APW1 from June 13, 2011 City Council Meeting
NEWSPAPER BOXES
Discussion
Existing Locations Map

2014 Newspaper Box Locations & Counts

This map is provided "as is" without warranties of any kind. See www.cityofevanston.org/map DISCLAIMER.html for more information.
## Existing Locations

### Business District/Shopping Areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Evanston</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Street</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago/Dempster</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noyes Street</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard &amp; Chicago</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evanston Plaza</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Street</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Areas</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Citywide Total

- 2012 - 298 boxes at 59 locations
- 2014 - 223 boxes at 46 locations

75 less than 2012 - 25% decrease (vendor removed, City removed for safety, walkability or streetscape project)
## Publications

- Apartments Guide
- Chicago Social
- Chicago Tribune Apartments
- Chicago Tribune New Homes
- Christian Science
- Daily Northwestern
- Employment Guide
- Homes & Farms
- Illinois Entertainer
- Modern Luxury
- Round Table
- Shop Local
- Todays Chicago Women
- Tribune Local
- **USA Today**
- Yellowbook.com

- Apartments 4 Rent
- **Chicago Tribune**
- Chicago Tribune Cars
- **Chicago Sun-Times**
- Chicago Sports Weekly
- Deals Under 10K
- Free Press
- Hoy
- Mindful Metropolis
- Pioneer Press
- Red Eye
- The Onion
- The Employment Source
- UR Chicago Magazine
- Windy City Wheels
Existing
Existing
Consolidation

Benefits:

- Walkable/Accessible
- Uniformity
- Reduce Clutter
- Aesthetics
- Maintenance

Proposed Consolidation Locations:

- 17 (down from 46 locations)
Proposed Locations
Newspaper Corral

Cost of 4 boxes – 2 coin operated and 2 free

$1,400

$1,500
Placement Criteria

• Consolidate newspaper boxes in close proximity
• Near transit stops
• Minimum 6 foot clear walkable area
• Minimum 2 feet from curb
• Maintain clear bus access
• Away from crosswalks, intersections & driveways
• Away from disabled parking spaces & fire hydrants
QUESTIONS
Memorandum

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
   Members of the Administration and Public Works Committee

From: Catherine Hurley, Sustainable Programs Coordinator

Subject: Shopping Bag Options

Date: June 8, 2011

Recommended Action:
It is recommended that City Council consider the attached information and feedback gathered on strategies to reduce the environmental impacts of shopping bags in Evanston.

Summary:
On April 25, 2011 the Administration and Public Works Committee was presented with Ordinance 67-O-10 enacting a $0.05 tax on disposable shopping bags. During the meeting, the ordinance was amended to be a ban on disposable shopping bags. At that time, the Administration and Public Works Committee asked that Staff hold a community meeting to obtain input from residents and the business community on options to reduce the environmental impact of shopping bags in Evanston.

On May 24, 2011 a public meeting was held from 7:00 to 9:00 pm which was attended by nearly 100 people including residents, the local business community and other stakeholders in the shopping bag industry. The meeting included a presentation by Sustainable Programs Coordinator Catherine Hurley, a question and answer session on the presentation, and a round-table discussion. Each table presented a summary from their discussion, which is included as Attachment 1 to this memo. A copy of the presentation given at the meeting is included at Attachment 2.

In preparation for the public meeting, staff conducted research and gathered information related to the environmental impacts of shopping bags and investigated a variety of options to help reduce environmental impacts related to their use. Staff developed a white paper to summarize the research, which is included as Attachment 3 to this memo.

A copy of Ordinance 67-O-10 enacting a $0.05 tax on disposable shopping bags is provided as Attachment 4 for reference. Staff is seeking input from the Administration and Public Works Committee on next steps related to this ordinance.
Attachment:
Attachment 1 – Summary of Discussion Summary of Small Group Discussion from Public Meeting
Attachment 2 – Presentation – Community Meeting on Shopping Bag Ban
Attachment 3 – White Paper – An Overview of Shopping Bags in Evanston
Attachment 4 - Draft Ordinance 67-O-10 as presented on April 18, 2011

Please use the following links for additional information.

Link to full version of white paper with all attachments on City website:

Link to Sustainability page on disposable bag reduction efforts:
Attendees at the May 24, 2011 public meeting held on the proposed shopping bag ban for the City of Evanston provided the following response to four questions posed at the end of the presentation made by the City’s Office of Sustainability.

What are the positive and negative affects of Evanston banning shopping bags?

*Positive Affects of Bag Ban:*
- Reduce waste from the current baseline
- Reduce environmental impacts such as pollution from manufacturing process
- Improves beautification by decreasing litter, making a cleaner environment and Evanston neighborhood and eliminating bags on trees;
- Improves quality of life and promotes sustainability;
- Creates opportunity for education and beautification,
- Prestige coming from being the first community in Illinois to do this and Evanston acting as a leader and model to other communities
- Reduces costs of operations for cleanup of city infrastructure.
- Reduces cost of small businesses that do not have to buy bags; helps small business marketing.
- Increased business as some consumers would go to green businesses and would shop in Evanston because of the community being green.
- Long term there would be benefits even if short term there may be negative aspects; over time people would look at it in a positive light as in DC and Ireland
- Change social norm of walking out of a store and around town with a disposable shopping bag.
- To learn more about the positives, recommend watching the Movie “Bagit”

*Negative Affects of Bag Ban:*
- Taking away consumer and business owner choice
- Lost business due to people who will not shop in Evanston anymore
- Increase in taxes due to decreased business revenue
- Loss of businesses that would not come to Evanston or businesses who would relocate away from Evanston
- Ban is too drastic and is over reaching in nature
- Difficult to enforce
- What other inexpensive options are there to address the problem?
- Lack of reduction in greenhouse gas emissions or savings of energy
- Short term aspects would be mostly negative aspects
- Negatives of Bag ban – loss of taxes, dollars and loss of shoppers.
- Increase in water use if only reusable bags were used because they have to be washed
- Limits shoppers to the amount of goods they can fit into their own bags; afraid people will just purchase less goods
What are the positive and negative affects of Evanston taxing shopping bags?

Positive Affects of Bag Tax:
- Similar environmental benefits as a ban including reduction of pollution from manufacturing process, improved beautification by decreasing litter, making a cleaner environment and Evanston neighborhood
- Reduce waste from the current baseline
- Decrease economic impact on businesses to provide bags
- Lower chemicals due to not producing the bags.
- Bag tax has been successful in other communities

Negative Affects of Bag Tax:
- People can still have a choice to use the plastic bags
- Costly for businesses to administer and enforce
- Would lead to loss revenue for businesses - We should not underestimate the lengths that people will go to if they are upset by something
- Difficult to enforce
- People are already paying a lot of taxes

What key components would you like to see in an ordinance to help reduce the environmental impact of shopping bags?
- Ordinance should require that both paper and plastic have the same requirement since neither of them have no impacts.
- Ordinance should be consistently applied to cover all stores
- City should reward and provide incentives businesses; stores would receive a reward if they voluntary participate in the program. We could give incentive for businesses.
- Educational efforts should be a key component to help to modify behavior over time, with focus on the front end.
- Expand the ordinance over time after seeing how it is working
- Bags should be allowed to remain which are made from 100% recyclable materials, compostable and 100% recyclable
- For a bag tax, it should be very transparent as to where the money would go
- Post consumer recycled content should be pushed to 60% with the goal of getting to almost 100% post consumer.
- Best ordinance would be no ordinance at all.

How do you believe the City should approach reducing shopping bag waste?
- Ordinance and other efforts should be a compromise and look to roll something out.
- Educate the public to the advantage to eliminating bags and encourage reusable bags
- City should require recycling of bags at all stores.
- Phased in approach is a good option and gradual shift is a good approach.
- Provide reusable bags to those who cannot afford them.
• The window is closing and landfills are getting closer to their capacity; now is the time to do something radical.
• City should focus on rewarding businesses rather than punishing them
• Before we get started we should put together a program that does not appear negative. We should not do things on our own. We need to provide a carrot not a hammer.
• Banning plastic bags would get us a lot of publicity and help put us on the right track; City should consider banning “t-shirt” bags and make requirement of plastic bags to be 2.5 mils, which would make them more durable.
• We need to roll this out in a smart way to make sure everyone understands the reason for this effort.
• Begin banning of all plastic except biodegradable and require paper bags to be 99% post consumer recycled content.
• Did agree that education and incentives as the best practice to help address the problem with the “Carrot” for both the consumer and the business.
• In the area of education – to be conscious that the education is meant to speak to people who both are angry and who welcome the change to reusable bags.
• Changing consumption behaviors is part of this bag discussion. Also guided by the values that we hold as a community.

Following the small group discussions, representatives from stakeholder groups made comments on behalf of their organizations. Below is a summary of the speakers and the organizations they represented:

Eve Doi                  Evanston Chamber of Commerce
Alixandra Hallen        Bagless NU
Tanya Triche            Illinois Retail Merchants Association
Todd Ruppeutha          Central Street Business Association
Ron Fleckman            Citizens Greener Evanston
Erlene Howard           Collective Resource
Mike Sullivan           Hilex Poly
Patrick Rita            Orion Advocates

Representatives from Vogue Fabrics, Whole Foods, Starbucks Coffee, Chicago Dempster Merchants Association, Walgreen’s, and Illinois Food Retailers Association were in attendance as well but did not make a comment.
Community Meeting

Carryout Bag Ban

and other strategies to reduce environmental impact of carryout bags

Updated 5.26.11

Agenda

• Presentation
  – Shopping Bag Overview, Impacts and Reduction Options
• Questions on presentation
• Small Group Discussion
• Group Discussion Report-out
• Comments from Organizations
**Introduction**

- Paper Bags - Patented in the United States in 1852.
- Bags serve the purpose of packaging and carrying goods.

[Images of bags and groceries]

http://www.freeencyclopediafoodandstuff.com/images/C%20Anoncere%20bag%20full.jpg

**Shopping Bag Statistics**

100 billion plastic bags and 10 billion paper bags used each year in the United States!

Evanston Residents each use ~ 25 Million Plastic Bags each year

Equivalent to carbon sequestered by almost 700 tree seedlings grown for 10 years!
Plastic Shopping Bags

- 12 million barrels of oil each year
- Equivalent to annual emissions from 878,541 passenger vehicles
- Evanston residents share is equivalent to annual emissions from 256 passenger vehicles

Plastic bags are one of the most abundant sources of marine litter. One example can be seen around the coasts of Spain, France and Italy where 93% of the plastic litter were plastic bags. – Green Peace International & The United Nations Environmental Programme

Paper Shopping Bags

- Famous for branding and advertising products and services
- Industry moving toward 100% recycled content
  - Still ~ 14 million trees are destroyed in their production
- Require 3 x as much energy to be produced when compared to plastic bags
- Evanston residents destroy 3,550 trees through paper bag consumption

Paper bag made from 100% recycled Kraft paper, 99.5% of which is post-consumer and the remaining 0.5% is post-commercial
Shopping Bag Recycling

- 81,400 tons of grocery and merchandise bags are consumed in Illinois annually.
  - Only 1.5% (1,200 tons) of plastic bags are recycled.
  - Paper bag recycling rates are higher at 37% being recycled.

Recycling requires energy!
- 17 BTU’s are required to recycle one plastic bag
- 1,400 BTU’s are required to recycle one paper bag

We need to close the loop on bag recycling, especially plastic!

Cost of Shopping Bags

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Bag</th>
<th>Annual Evanston Individual Consumption Rate</th>
<th>Average Cost Per Bag</th>
<th>Annual Cost to Evanston Consumer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plastic</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>$0.03</td>
<td>$12.84 (Hidden Cost)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>$0.10</td>
<td>$4.30 (Hidden Cost)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$17.14 (Hidden Cost)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shopping Bags are not free
- Stores purchase bags and costs are hidden in cost of services and products
- Annually, Evanston residents pay approximately $17 in hidden costs stemming from these bags.
# Site Visit Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Select Evanston Stores Visited</th>
<th>Type of Bag Available at Checkout</th>
<th>Are Reusable Bags Available for Purchase?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plastic Bags</td>
<td>Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Eleven 817 Sherman</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Eleven 817 Emerson</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVS 1711 Sherman</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominic's 2748 Green Bay</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominic's 1910 Dempster</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewel Osco 1128 Chicago</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walgreens 2100 Green Bay</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole Foods 1111 Chicago</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole Foods 1640 Chicago</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

## Reusable Bags

- **Reusable Grocery Bags**
  - Prices range depending on quality, material and durability, starting at $1.00
  - Not inconvenient to carry around for other shopping
  - Can be prone to breakage after repeated use
    - Whole Foods offering $0.99 bag with warranty
- **Collapsible Multi-use Bags**
  - Prices starting at $4 to $6
  - Made from a variety of materials and more durable
  - Designed to be stored in a purse or your pocket

*Buy Smart! Check material, durability, washability, source and disposal.*
Disposable Bag Reduction Options

- **Bag Fees**
  - Charging consumers for every disposable bag received
  - Popular U.S. bag fee program is found in Washington, D.C.
    - $0.05 tax on each plastic bag
    - The money was used to fund the beautification of the Anacostia River, which was a widely publicized environmental issue.

Bag Fee popular in many countries including Ireland, Denmark, Germany, New Zealand.

Disposable Bag Reduction Options

- **Bag Bans**
  - Aim to eliminate the distribution of plastic bags.
  - Most ordinances also place required percentages of post-consumer content (40%-100%) on paper bags.

- **Select Ban Examples:**
  - **San Francisco, CA** – Stores with annual sales of +$2M must provide only recyclable paper bags, compostable plastic bags, or reusable bags.
  - **Malibu, CA** – Retail establishments cannot provide plastic bags at checkout. Paper bags must be at least 40% post-consumer content
  - **Outer Banks, NC** – Plastic bags are not to be distributed at stores unless they are defined as reusable in the bill. Paper bags must be made from 100% post-consumer recycled content.
  - **Brownsville, TX** – All businesses are prohibited from providing plastic bags at checkout. A $1.00 fee is required to be paid by the customer if a non-reusable bag is requested. All money collected under this ban are to be used for environmental programs and initiatives.
Disposable Bag Reduction Options

• Bag Recycling Requirements
  – Requiring retailers and/or bag manufacturers to provide bag recycling.
  – Madison, WI passed a recycling requirement in 2009.
    • Penalties for non-compliance ranged from $100 for first offense, $200 for the second offense, and $400 for subsequent violations.
    • Enforcement concerns are associated with this type of system.
  – Illinois is looking into recycling requirements with the Plastic Bag and Film Recycling Act.
    • Act would require bag manufacturers to provide a recycling plan and would dictate a minimum requirement of post-consumer recycled content.

Disposable Bag Reduction Options

• Education and Outreach
  – Programs and information to help raise awareness and encourage customers to bring re-usable bags
  – Can be used as main strategy to reduce bag use or in conjunction with a bag tax or ban
  – Typically includes several key elements
    • Logo/slogan, website content, posters/signs at stores, collaboration between businesses and local government, education event, distribution and/or sale of reusable bags
Bay Area Regional Outreach Coalition

“Don’t forget your reusable bag. Bring it along whenever you shop. Make it a Habit and Grab It.”

“I love going shopping with you.”

Evanston Disposable Bag Reduction Efforts

- Many citizens bringing reusable bags for shopping
- Many stores prominently displaying reusable bags for sale, signage to remind customers to bring their own bags, and providing incentives for reusable bag use
- Citizen driven education and outreach efforts
  - Citizens’ Greener Evanston Advocacy Task Force actively educating the local community on issue and solutions
- Student driven education and outreach efforts
  - Northwestern University Roosevelt Institute and ECO formed Bagless NU which is working to eliminate plastic bags on NU’s campus.

How can increase our efforts to reduce the environmental impacts of shopping bags?
City of Evanston Proposed Ordinances

- Introduced at Administration & Public Works Committee as shopping bag tax
  - $0.05 tax on carryout bag provided to customers at point of sale
  - Applicable to both plastic and Kraft paper bags
  - Monies collected to benefit the Ecology Center with minimum of 50% used for education and outreach for bag reduction efforts

City of Evanston Proposed Ordinances

- Amended at Administration & Public Works Committee to be shopping bag ban
  - Ban of shopping bags provided at point of sale
  - Applicable to both plastic and Kraft paper bags
City of Evanston Proposed Ordinances

• Common elements to City of Evanston ordinances
  – Applies to bag at point of sale and does not include bags for bulk items (nuts, candy, fruit, etc.), bags to contain frozen foods or meats, bags sold in packages, bags provided by pharmacists to contain prescriptions
  – Applies to the following types of stores as defined by Section 6-18-3 of City Code:
    • Food Store Establishment, Convenience Store, Retail Goods Establishment, Type 2 Restaurant; Wholesale Goods Establishment, Resale Establishment, Open Sales Lot.

Main Components of Bag Ordinances

• Type of Bag
  – Consider addressing plastic, paper or both
  – Can allow bags that meet specific requirements for bag materials such as percentage of recycled content

• Type of Store
  – Consider the type of goods sold as well as the size of the store affected
    • Examples include grocery, convenience, pharmacy, wholesale, hardware, retail
    • Size thresholds can be set based on annual revenue
Main Components of Bag Ordinances

- Enforcement
  - Enforcement completed by routine City inspection or inspections triggered by citizen request

- Options for implementation
  - Effective date at 6, 9 or 12 months in the future to allow for education and outreach
  - Phased approach to target certain bags and/or store categories/sizes initially and verify impacts prior to next phase
  - Education and outreach should begin immediately and continue throughout

Implementation Options

- Education & Outreach
  - Develop material to educate residents on the importance of reducing bag consumption
    - Work with public to customize messages for Evanston community
  - Work with businesses to promote reusable bag options
  - Recognize and promote businesses who go above and beyond
  - Support and reinforce reusable bag use
    - Make affordable reusable bags available to Evanston residents and provide bags at no-cost to qualified households
    - Partner with others to develop an affordable bag program.

http://greenbagco.com
Summary

- City of Evanston goal to “The Green City”
- Climate Action Plan recommended investigating a tax or ban on plastic bags
- Shopping bags have an environmental impact that we can reduce
- We are looking to stretch ourselves and make a significant impact in this area
- We need your input, feedback and support

Agenda

- Presentation
  - Shopping Bag Overview, Impacts and Reduction Options
- Questions on presentation
- Small Group Discussion
- Group Discussion Report-out
- Comments from Organizations
Next Step: Small Group Discussion

- Break into small groups
- Identify a note recorder
- Identify a spokesperson
- Discuss questions in small group and report to larger group

Discussion Questions

1. What are the positive and negative affects of Evanston banning shopping bags?
2. What are the positive and negative affects of Evanston taxing shopping bags?
3. What key components would you like to see in an ordinance to help reduce the environmental impact of shopping bags?
4. Based on your above responses, how do you believe the City should approach reducing shopping bag waste?
Agenda

- Presentation
  - Shopping Bag Overview, Impacts and Reduction Options
- Questions on presentation
- Small Group Discussion
- Group Discussion Report-out
- Comments from Organizations
An Overview of Shopping Bags in Evanston

Developed by:
City of Evanston, Office of Sustainability

May 16, 2011
Revised June 6, 2011
Overview Shopping Bag Introduction
The City of Evanston Strategic Plan (Plan) states that the City’s Natural Resources Vision is to be known as the “Green City” and commits the City to embracing the best ecological practices and policies in government, services and infrastructure. Goal number 5 of the Plan is to “protect and optimize the City’s natural resources and built environment, leading by example through sustainable practices and behaviors” with a specific objective set forth to “identify and utilize new practices that will improve the quality of life and enhance the City’s suitability.”

Following the adoption of the Plan, the City developed the Evanston Climate Action Plan (ECAP) to further identify strategies for the City to implement with the goal of reducing the community’s greenhouse gas emissions by 13% by the year 2022. The ECAP identified waste reduction and recycling as one of the nine focus areas to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the City of Evanston. Included in the ECAP are three strategies to reduce waste from single-use products such as shopping bags and plastic bottles. Each strategy is listed below.

- Encourage retailers to offer incentives to customers that bring their own shopping bags
- Investigate a tax or ban on single-use plastic bottles and plastic bags in order to discourage use
- Support voluntary efforts to reduce single-use plastic bottle and bag use

The following document provides an overview of the current use, impacts and recycling options for disposable shopping bags across the State of Illinois and in Evanston, and outlines programs and policy options that the City can use to address shopping bags in our community and support the goals of the Strategic Plan and the ECAP.
Shopping Bag Introduction
The modern shopping bag of today, such as those provided by grocery stores, convenient stores, and other retailers was originally designed to help customers purchase more goods by making the goods easier to transport.

In 1852 Francis Wolle patented in the United States, and later in France and England, a machine that he devised for making paper bags. It was the first of its kind, and covers the fundamental principle of the many similar machines that are now used.1 These paper shopping bags were originally sold to customers for a small fee but as manufacturing of bags became less expensive, the bags were eventually given away free to encourage shoppers to purchase more goods.

In 1978, the Smithsonian’s Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York City created an exhibit showcasing more than 125 bags-as-art, each the result of relatively recent marketing advances. “The bag with a handle attached cheaply and easily by machine has existed only since 1933,” wrote curator Richard Oliver. “By the late 1930’s the paper bag...was sufficiently inexpensive to produce so that a store could view such an item as a ‘giveaway.’”2

Today many paper bags are still made from sturdy kraft paper (the word “kraft” comes from the German for “strong”), which can be created from recycled paper. White kraft paper is the next most popular material for paper bags, which also come in a variety of colors and matte or gloss treatments.

Plastic shopping bags were first introduced into the market place in 1974.3 At this time Montgomery Ward, Sears, and J.C. Penny all switched their shopping bags to plastic. By 1977, supermarkets began offering plastic bags to shoppers and asking the question, “Paper or Plastic?”

While shopping bags, both paper and plastic, were originally invented with the sole purpose of packaging and carrying goods at the point of sale, they now serve many other purposes including advertising and branding for specific goods, services, stores or produce providers. They are still available for purchase but the disposable bags are most often provided without direct charge to customers, sometimes even without a purchase. Even on-line stores and establishments that do not sell goods are using bags as a promotional product.

1 http://www.ideafinder.com/history/inventions/paperbag.htm
2 http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/object-dec06.html?id=xzgL1LvwoDnR
Shopping Bag Impacts
Shopping bags are convenient but they are not without environmental and financial impacts. Shopping bags, both paper and plastic, use significant energy and resources to create, recycle and dispose of and are costly to the consumer and to retailers.

It is estimated that about 100 billion plastic shopping bags and 10 billion paper shopping bags are used each year in the United States. Plastic bags are made from fossil fuels and their production requires the energy equivalent of burning 12 million barrels of oil each year. Evanston residents are estimated to be responsible for the equivalent of 3,043 barrels of petroleum being consumed annually to produce these bags which results in 1,308 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions. This amount of emissions is equivalent to the emissions generated annually from 256 passenger vehicles.

Paper bags are made from a renewable resource and can be made from post consumer recycled materials but require three times the energy over their life cycle as compared with plastic bags. It is estimated that each year approximately 14 million trees are destroyed to produce paper bags for consumers. This means that Evanston is contributing to the destruction of 3,550 trees in an effort to supply consumers with paper bags.

Shopping bags also have a negative impact on our environment and are taking up space in our municipal landfills where they will remain for many years. According to the 2009 Illinois Commodity/Waste Generation Study, Illinois generates 2,452,290 tons of Uncoated Old Corrugated Containers (OCC) and kraft paper (which includes paper bags) and 81,400 tons of plastic grocery and merchandise bags. Based on the numbers presented in this study, uncoated OCC and kraft paper represent approximately 10% of our municipal solid waste and plastic shopping and merchandise bags represents approximately 0.5% of our municipal solid waste.

Plastic bags are also a contributor to marine litter and according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), there are large, floating garbage patches in the ocean that are difficult to quantify due to sample size issues. However, one study performed by Greenpeace International in association with the United Nations revealed that 77% of the marine litter observed around the coasts of Spain, France and Italy was of plastic origin, and 92.8% of that was comprised of plastic bags.

---

4 Washington Post

http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/story?id=2935417&page=1

5 25,358,091*(12,000,000/100,000,000,000) = 3,043 -- The EPA’s estimated number of barrels of petroleum used to produce plastic bags annually (12,000,000) divided by the EPA’s estimate of plastic bags consumed annually (100 Billion) times the estimated plastic bag usage by Evanston shoppers (25,358,091).

6 3,043 barrels * .43 metric tons CO$_2$/barrel = 1,308 metric tons of carbon emissions.

8 http://www.plasticsindustry.org/AboutPlastics/content.cfm?ItemNumber=788&navItemNumber=1280

9 http://www.dep.state.fl.us/mainpage/tips/default.htm

10 http://www2.illinois.gov/green/Documents/Waste%20Study.pdf
Shopping Bag Recycling

Both paper and plastic bags are recyclable and it is estimated that 17 BTU’s are required to recycle each plastic bag and 1444 BTU’s are required to recycle each paper bag.\(^{11}\) Paper bags can be recycled as part of most community curb-side recycling programs, as in the City of Evanston. Evanston residents must rely on store supported recycling programs, such as those provided for Dominick’s, Jewel-Osco, and Whole Foods in order to recycle their plastic bags. Available data shows that recycling rates are lower for these products than that of other recyclable products such as glass and aluminum. According to the 2009 Illinois Commodity/Waste Generation Study, only 1.5% or 1,200 tons of plastic shopping and merchandise bags are recycled in Illinois.\(^ {12}\) Recycling rates are higher for paper bags with approximately 37% of Uncoated Old Corrugated Containers (OCC) and kraft paper being recycled, which would include paper bags. The higher recycling rates for paper as compared to plastic may be due to the fact that curb-side recycling programs have made paper bag recycling more convenient than taking plastic bags back to participating stores for recycling.

Recycled shopping bags can be turned into new shopping bags or other products of the same material. In the case of recycled plastic bags and film, the material is used for a variety of products including composite building materials (outdoor decking, fences and door and window components), shopping bags and other plastic products. Many large retail chains contract directly with companies who turn the plastic bags and film into these types of products. This is the case for the Jewel-Osco stores in Evanston which collect approximately 17,000 pounds of plastic bags and film per store each month and sell the material to Trex\(^ {13}\) who turns the material into a composite decking and trim material.

Hilex Poly\(^ {14}\) is a large manufacturer of plastic bag and film products and they have a plastic bag and film recycling plant in North Vernon, Indiana where new plastic bags are made from recycled plastic bags and film. Hilex Poly partners with retail stores and municipalities to provide recycling programs for plastic bags and film.

Recycling paper and plastic bags is considered by some to be sufficient to address concerns about the environmental impact of these products. The American Chemistry Council (ACC) argues that recycling plastic bags is the best option to offset the use of these single-use bags. The ACC cites that there are already 20,000 drop-off locations for plastic bags available in all 50 states, and that there is high demand for this plastic film. In Illinois, the 2009 Study which cites a 1.5% recycling rate for plastic grocery and merchandise bags indicates there is an opportunity to increase in effectiveness of the current system.\(^ {15}\)

---

\(^{11}\) 1989 Plastic Recycling Directory, Society of Plastics Industry


\(^{13}\) [http://www.trex.com/](http://www.trex.com/)


\(^{15}\) American Chemistry Council’s “Stop The Bag Police” campaign [http://www.stopthebagpolice.com/](http://www.stopthebagpolice.com/)
Shopping Bag Cost and Economics
In addition to the environmental impact or “cost” associated with shopping bags, there is also a hidden cost that is being paid for by the businesses. While these bags may appear free to consumers, the shopping bags are purchased by the retailer and affect the bottom line of the business. In some cases, the cost may be ultimately transferred to the customer in the overall cost of products and services sold by the provider. The average hidden cost to Evanston residents for paper and plastic bags is shown below in Table 1. A recent article in the Chicago Sun-times stated that baggers at Jewel-Osco Grocery Stores are being asked to help reduce the company’s cost by eliminating the practice of double bagging. This article is included as Attachment 1.

Table 1 – Estimated Annual Cost of Bags to Evanston Consumers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Bag</th>
<th>Annual Evanston Individual Consumption Rate</th>
<th>Average Cost Per Bag</th>
<th>Annual Cost to Evanston Consumer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plastic</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>$0.03</td>
<td>$12.84 (Hidden Cost)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>$0.10</td>
<td>$4.30 (Hidden Cost)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$17.14 (Hidden Cost)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The recycling of shopping bags is part of a larger recycling industry that does serve as a positive economic engine for the State of Illinois. According to the Illinois Recycling Association’s Report on Recycling Economic Information Study, the recycling industry in Illinois employed an estimated 40,000 people in 2009 and provided $1.5 billion dollars in annual payroll. A total of 2,173 establishments are involved in recycling or the use of recycled materials in Illinois.16

In the case of plastic bags, demand has risen for recycled resin because it is less expensive to use recycled plastic resin than virgin resins. Plastic bag recyclers can earn 15-20 cents per each pound of plastic bags recovered.17

Shopping Bag Availability and Use in Evanston
A staff survey was performed regarding shopping bag distribution and recycling at retailers in Evanston during May of 2011 and the results are presented in Table 2 below. This survey focused on a selection of the City’s large supermarkets and pharmacies because it is estimated that these two types of retail stores make up at least 90% of the plastic bag generation and 50% of the paper bag generation.18

---

16 2010 Illinois Recycling Association Recycling Economic Information Study
17 Food Marketing Institute. Plastic Grocery Bags – Challenges and Opportunities, September 2008
18 According to MSNBC.Com article published on 3/14/2008, the plastic industry and paper industry report that 92 billion plastic bags and 5 billion paper bags are generated each year from grocery stores and pharmacies.
Table 2 – Summary of Shopping Bag Availability and Use in Evanston (Selected Stores)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Select Evanston Stores Visited</th>
<th>Plastic Bags</th>
<th>Paper</th>
<th>Reusable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visible</td>
<td>Visible</td>
<td>Well Displayed and Visible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Eleven 817 Sherman</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Eleven 817 Emerson</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVS 1711 Sherman</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominick’s 2748 Green Bay</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominick’s 1910 Dempster</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewel Osco 1128 Chicago</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walgreens 2100 Green Bay</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole Foods 1111 Chicago</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole Foods 1640 Chicago</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Select stores visited on May 11, 2011.

After reviewing the disposable bags from these stores, each were found to include language which reminded customers to return bags to a participating store to be recycled. All of the bags were High Density Polyethylene Plastic Number 2 which is 100% recyclable. The paper bag from Whole Foods is made from 100% recycled paper and is completely recyclable. All of the grocery stores and pharmacies sold some type of reusable bags, but the display and promotion of the reusable bags varied by store. The two 7 Eleven convenience stores did not have reusable bags available. However, their staff reported that they only provide a bag upon request and most customers do not ask for a bag.

The price for a typical reusable grocery bag available at the stores visited is between $1.00 and $2.00 with the best buy being a $1.00 Whole Foods grocery bag that is made from 80% post consumer recycled materials and is completely recyclable. This reusable Whole Foods bag is guaranteed to be reusable and the store will replace a bag if it tears or is broken.
Paper versus Plastic
Many different variables can be assessed to determine which bag has less of an environmental impact when comparing paper and plastic bags. A study was conducted by Franklin Associates, Ltd. for the Institute for Lifecycle Environmental Assessment in 1990 to evaluate the life-cycle energy usage of plastic and paper bags. The study found that using energy and pollutants from all stages of a bag’s life, plastic bags have a lower life-cycle energy usage than paper bags.

Reusable Shopping Bag Options and Costs
Reusable bags can be used to eliminate the need for disposable bags to be given out for customers to carry away their goods in most cases. With reusable bags, one of the decisions that shoppers will have to make is choosing which type of bag they want to purchase. Then customers must remember to bring the bags with them to the store. It is also helpful to carry a reusable bag in a purse, backpack, or car as part of a regular habit to eliminate the need to use a disposable one. There are reusable bags that are for sale which cost around $1.00, which is affordable for most shoppers. These bags have become more durable as their popularity has increased and are typically designed to carry groceries and often have a square bottom for more efficient packing of purchased items. Their durability and form does cause them to be inconvenient to carry around when you are not planning to shop at a grocery store. In the past, because these bags are cheap, they are generally more prone to breakage after repeated use. In response to this, some stores have instilled warranty programs that replace a broken bag with a new bag.

The other main variety of reusable bags is the collapsible variety that is designed to be easily stored in a purse or a pocket, making them more convenient to shop with in a variety of settings. Because of their versatile applications, these bags are made with more care, making breakage less of a concern. These bags are more expensive, ranging from $4.00 to $6.00. However, they have a longer useful life and a typical shopper would probably only need to carry around one of these bags.

In either case, consumers should consider many factors when purchasing reusable bags including durability, washability, and what will happen after the bag is worn out. The ideal condition is that the bag can be easily and practically recycled or composted. There are even reusable bags that can be used to replace the produce bags you get at the grocery store, sandwich bags, and dry cleaning bags.

Recent concern has been raised about the dangers of reusable bags including the potential for reusable bags to be prone to infection with harmful bacteria and contamination of chemicals in the manufacturing process. A study conducted jointly by the Department of Soil, Water and Environmental Science at the University of Arizona, Tucson and the School of Public Health at Loma Linda University showed that

20 Assessment of the Potential for Cross Contamination of Food Products by Reusable Shopping Bags, June 9, 2009; http://uanees.org/pdfs/GerbsWilliamsSinclair_BagContamination.pdf
out of 84 bags randomly collected, 12% of them contained harmful bacteria, largely due to the fact that 97% of the consumers had not cleaned their bags after previous usage.

In addition to contamination concerns, opponents have cited studies, such as the one released by TEI Analytical21, which discovered the presence of harmful chemicals being used in the production of reusable bags. In response to these findings, reusable bag suppliers such as Whole Foods22 and ChicoBag23 have released studies and statements showing that their bags do not use harmful chemicals during the manufacturing process.

**Carbon Footprint of Shopping Bags**

Until recently, the primary debate has been over paper versus plastic shopping bags. With the increase in popularity over bags which are designed to be reusable, the next question people are asking is: “What is the relative carbon footprint of paper, plastic, and re-usable bags.” The UK government’s Environment Agency released a long-awaited report in February that says single-use polyethylene grocery bags have a lower carbon footprint than alternative paper or reusable bags unless the alternatives are reused multiple times.

“Lightweight single-use carrier bags have the lowest carbon footprint per bag based primarily on resource use and production,” the agency said. “Paper, heavyweight plastic and cotton bags all use more resources and energy in their production. A key issue, however, is how many times bags are reused.”

In order to equal an HDPE bag used just once, the report states that: a paper bag would need to be reused three times; a low density PE “bag-for-life” would need to be reused four times; a non-woven polypropylene bag would need to be reused 11 times; while a cotton bag would need to be reused 131 times.

The report was delayed in its original release because the agency said the report was under peer review. The report has since been removed from the agency’s website and the following message is posted on their website24 in place of the report “We have received a legal query regarding the Report on the Life Cycle Assessment of Carrier Bags and have removed the Report and the associated webpage temporarily whilst we investigate this.”

**Disposable Bag Reduction Options**

State and Local Governments around the United States and the world have been working to reduce shopping bag production, use, and waste.

Staff reviewed available information from U.S. and international bag reduction case studies and categorize the main reduction strategies as one of the following: bag fee,

---

bag ban, recycling requirement, and education. Each strategy is described in more
detail in the following sections.

Bag Fee
Charging a fee for each disposable bag is one way to encourage shoppers to bring their
own bag. This approach has had recent success in Washington, DC where they began
applying a $0.05 fee on disposable shopping bags in 2010. A year later, approximately
$2 million in revenue has been generated from this policy as well as reducing the
number of disposable bags distributed from almost 270 million down to approximately
55 million. This program worked well for Washington, D.C. because the fees collected
through this program were directed towards cleaning up the Anacostia River where
there was a widely acknowledged environmental issue. Montgomery County, Maryland
is currently considering a Plastic Bag Tax similar to Washington, D.C. which would
impose a $0.05 tax on plastic bags and minimum requirements for percentage of post
consumer recycled materials and labeling on paper bags.

Since the passing of Washington DC’s bag fee program, Beacon Hill Institute has
conducted an economic impact study which has attributed the elimination of 101 local
jobs to the bag tax. In addition to the loss of jobs, there has also been a reduction of
$18 in annual wages per worker.25 Conversely, a 2011 survey of business owners in
Washington, DC reveals that only 12% of those surveyed saw a negative effect from the
bag tax and 58% saw no change, while an additional 20% actually observed a positive
effect on business after the bag ordinance’s passing.26

Bag Ban
Another approach is a total ban of disposable bags. Table 3 provides a summary of
communities in the United States that have enacted a bag ban. These bag bans focus
primarily on banning disposable plastic carryout bags but also include requirements for
paper bags such as required percentage of recycled content, which ranges from 40 to
100%. The enacted legislation for each of these communities is provided as
Attachment 2.

Opponents to a bag ban have raised health concerns of the reusable bags that would
replace the banned single-use bags. One of these studies showed that of 84 randomly
collected bags, 12% of them contained harmful bacteria. This bacterial buildup was
largely due to the fact that 97% the consumers had admitted to simply not cleaning their
bags after previous usage.27

25 Beacon Hill Institute’s economic impact study of the Washington, DC bag tax
26 Alice Ferguson Foundation
%20FINAL.pdf
27 University of Arizona’s reusable bag cleanliness study
http://uanews.org/pdfs/GerbaWilliamsSinclair_BagContamination.pdf
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>California</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>All stores, defined as a full-line supermarket with annual sales of $2M or more or a retail pharmacy with at least five locations in San Francisco, shall provide only recyclable paper bags, compostable plastic bags acceptable for the “Green Cart” Composting program or reusable bags.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malibu</td>
<td>No retail establishment, restaurant, vendor or non-profit vendor shall provide plastic bags or compostable plastic bags to customers at the point of sale for the purpose of carrying goods away. Recyclable paper bags (100% recyclable and 40% post-consumer recycled content) are allowed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Fairfax</td>
<td>All stores, shops, eating places, food vendors and retail food vendors shall provide only recyclable paper bags (100% recyclable and 40% post-consumer recycled content) or reusable bags as checkout bags. NOTE: this ordinance was approved by the Voters of the Town of Fairfax thus a Environmental Impact Report was not needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palo Alto</td>
<td>All supermarkets are only allowed to provide reusable bags or recyclable paper bags as checkout bags. Other retail establishments shall provide paper only or provide an option of paper or plastic. NOTE: Save the Plastic Bag Coalition sued &amp; the City of Palo Alto agreed not to expand the ban to any more stores until the City completes an Environmental Impact Report. Bag Bans have been passed by the following communities but are not yet in effect: City of Calabasas, Marin County, City of San Jose, Santa Clara County, City of Santa Monica, and Los Angeles County.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maryland</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>Bill prohibits any retail food dealer from providing purchasers of any product with a plastic bag for use as a carry out bag. Does not apply to establishments that voluntary join program. All other retailers are required to provide signage that says they only provide a bag if requested by customers. Plastic Bag program includes bag labels, collection bins, reusable bags for sale, signage and reporting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chesapeake Bay</td>
<td>Bill prohibits a store from providing disposable carryout bags unless it is made of 100% recyclable material. A disposable paper bag must be made of minimum 40% post consumer recycled content. A disposable plastic bag must be made of HDPE or LDPE. A store shall charge and collect $0.05 for each disposable carryout bag the store provides.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chestertown</td>
<td>No establishment shall provide customers with plastic checkout bags less than 2.40 mils thick with the exception of restaurants involved in take-out business. Paper bags can be used to replace plastic bags at no cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hawaii</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kauai</td>
<td>Ordinance passed that prohibits businesses from providing plastic bags to their customers at the point of sale for the purpose of transporting groceries or other goods. Ordinance does not preclude a business from making reusable bags or recyclable paper bags available for sale or without charge to customers at the point of sale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maui</td>
<td>Ordinance passed that requires all retail establishments to provide only the following as check-out bags to customers: recyclable paper bags, biodegradable bags, and/or reusable bags. Ordinance does not prohibit stores from selling check-out bags to customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North Carolina</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer Banks</td>
<td>Prohibits retailers from providing customers with plastic bags at checkout unless the bag is a reusable bag as defined in the bill. Paper bags can be provided to customers if the retailer provides a recycled paper bag (100% recycled content).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Texas</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownsville</td>
<td>Ban on plastic bags starting on January 5, 2011 with a voluntary ban for the 12 months proceeding. All businesses are prohibited from providing plastic checkout bags and are only allowed to provide reusable bags, with or without charge with some exception. A $1.00 fee is required to be paid by the customer to the business if a plastic or non-reusable bag is requested. Monies are collected by the City and used for environmental programs and initiatives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TEI Analytical focused on the chemical makeup of reusable bags and discovered the presence of harmful chemicals. These findings have led to some organizations such as Whole Foods and ChicoBag to release studies and statements showing that their bags do not use harmful chemicals during the manufacturing process.

Recycling Requirement
Both paper and plastic bags can be recycled and one strategy to reducing the environmental impacts of paper and plastic bags is requiring recycling for both types of bags. Some communities and states require retailers and/or bag manufacturers to provide bag recycling. This is more applicable to plastic bags because paper bag recycling is already available through curb-side recycling programs. These recycling requirements can be stand-alone programs or can be coupled with a bag ban or fee to increase the effectiveness of these disposable bag reduction options. The Illinois Senate Bill 102 titled “The Plastic Bag and Film Recycling Act” would require plastic bag manufacturers to provide an EPA approved recycling plan and would dictate a minimum requirement of post-consumer recycled content.

Plastic bag recycling has increased in recent years and in 2006 alone, 812 million pounds of post-consumer film, including plastic bags, were recovered for recycling, which is a 24% increase over the previous year. Opponents to bag bans and fees such as the American Chemistry Council feel that these requirements are enough to solve the issue, stating that there are over 20,000 drop-off locations (Wal-Mart, Target and Lowe’s) for plastic bags in all 50 states.

Successful plastic film and page recycling programs have been implemented in the Twin Cities, MN, Santa Cruz County, CA, and Phoenix, AZ which provide a convenient way for local businesses and residents to recycle plastic film and bags. In each of these programs, education and outreach to stakeholders was an important part of the program’s success.

Madison, WI passed a recycling requirement in 2009 which provides City sponsored drop-off facilities for residents to recycle their plastic bags and film. In addition, the City has partnered with local businesses to promote additional locations where residents can drop-off plastic bags and film for recycling. The program also prohibits residents from disposing plastic bags in the municipal waste program and applies penalties to residents that do not comply. While there is concern around issues of enforcement, this program has provided dramatically more opportunities for the community to recycle plastic bags and film and keep these items out of the landfill unless they are being used as garbage bags.

---

28 TEI Analytical
29 Statements of manufacturing safety Whole Foods & ChicoBag
30 http://www.plasticbagrecycling.org/plasticbag/ss_inthebag.html
31 http://www.plasticbagrecycling.org/plasticbag/ss_greybears.html
32 http://www.plasticbagrecycling.org/plasticbag/ss_bagcentralstation.html
In Illinois, the estimated 1.5% recycling rate for plastic grocery and merchandise bags and 37% of Uncoated Old Corrugated Containers (OCC) and kraft paper (including paper bags) indicates there is an opportunity to increase the effectiveness of the current system.

In California, California State Law AB2449 requires large grocery stores and pharmacies to create in-store recycling programs for collecting and recycling plastic “carry out” bags, display educational materials to inform customers about the recycling program, and offer reusable cloth bags for purchase. The bill also declares that certain matters regarding plastic carryout bags are matters of statewide interest and concern and prohibits public agencies from adopting, implementing, or enforcing an ordinance or regulation, or rule that requires a store to collect, transport, or recycle plastic carryout bags or conduct additional auditing or reporting, or imposing a plastic carryout bag fee upon a store, except as specified. Many communities have turned to a plastic bag ban as a way to address bag reduction in California without conflicting with the state law.

Education and Positive Reinforcement Programs
Education and Positive Reinforcement Programs can be used to drive customer behavior by raising the level of awareness and understanding of the environmental and economic impacts of disposable bags and positively reinforce customers when they use reusable bags instead. Certain stores like Whole Foods and Target already give a small discount off of purchases when consumers use reusable bags. These programs also include educational message campaigns and slogans to help people remember to “grab you bag” when you go shopping and reminders to recycle both paper and plastic bags.

Evanston Disposable Bag Reduction Efforts
Several efforts are underway within the City of Evanston by citizen and student groups to help address the issue of disposable bag use. The Public Advocacy Sector of Citizens’ Greener Evanston has been actively educating the local community and is in favor of an ordinance to enact a disposable bag fee in Evanston. The Evanston Environment Board has discussed the disposable bag fee at several meetings over the past year and published a memorandum stating that they are in favor of efforts aimed at reducing shopping bag use.

At Northwestern University (NU), the University’s Chapter of the Roosevelt Institute and the Northwestern Environmental Campus Outreach (ECO) group created an initiative called “Bagless NU” which is working to eliminate plastic bags on NU’s campus. They are currently reaching out to local stores in Evanston to increase the implementation and promotion of reusable products.
Several options exist for programs and policies that can address the impact of shopping bags in Evanston. These strategies can be individually approached or used in parallel and can be customized to help reduce disposable bags over a period of time.

- Make disposable bag recycling available throughout Evanston – Working with retailers to make recycling available to consumers will provide immediate benefits of keeping the bags out of the landfill and helping to limit the virgin materials used for bag production.

- Help residents obtain reusable bags – Providing residents access to reusable bags is an important step to eliminating the need for the disposable bags. The City can work to make reusable bags more accessible by making them readily available for purchase at stores throughout Evanston and by helping to provide discounted or no-cost reusable bags to residents who are not able to afford reusable ones. Some existing grant dollars can be used to help purchase reusable bags and staff can also pursue sponsorship of additional bags.

As stated previously, the market for reusable bags has significantly grown over the last few years. The price range for reusable bags depends on the quality of the bag, material, and other features; however, good quality, durable reusable bag can be purchased for as little at $2.00. Based on census data, approximately 230,000 reusable bags would be needed in order for every Evanston household to have a supply for routine shopping needs at a cost of approximately $456,050.\(^3^3\) Another approach could be for the City to only provide bags to income qualified households or to partner with businesses to offset the cost of the bags through advertisement. In addition to an initial investment, the City would also need to allocate additional resources for the ongoing support of reusable bags in the community.

- Promote education and positive reinforcement - Educating the public on the ease and simplicity of transitioning to reusable bags and informing the public about the impacts of disposable bags is a key to this program’s success. Evanston residents are environmentally conscious and can rise to the challenge of making more sustainable consumer choices when presented with information and options. Additional programming at the Ecology Center can be used to help bring awareness and education to the community on the problem with disposable bags and solutions to the problem.

- Implement a shopping bag tax – A ordinance to enact a $0.05 tax on all shopping bags was introduced to the Administration and Public Works Committee of the City Council on Monday April 25, 2011. The ordinance would affect all carry-out bags of any material, most commonly plastic film or kraft paper which are designed for one-time use to carry customer purchases from a store. The

---

\(^{33}\) According to the most recent census, there are approximately 32,575 households in Evanston following 2009 growth trends. If each household needed on average 7 reusable bags at $2.00 a piece, the total cost of providing 32,575 homes with 7 reusable bags would be $456,050.
Committee recommended the ordinance be modified to consist of a ban of these bags.

- Implement a shopping bag ban - The Administration and Public Works Committee of the City Council recommended to staff that the draft ordinance presented on Monday April 25, 2011 be updated to be a ban on all disposable shopping bags provided by retailers in Evanston.
Jewel changing way it bags your groceries

Jewel-Osco baggers are being trained to stop double-bagging, refrain from bagging an item with a handle, and never ask, "Paper or plastic?"

The rules are aimed at saving money — to the tune of $4 million to $6 million yearly — with each 2-cent plastic and 5-cent paper bag left unused at the checkout counter.

Every cent counts for Jewel-Osco's parent company, Supervalu of Eden Prairie, Minn., whose Jewel, Acme and Albertsons stores collectively use 1.5 billion plastic and paper bags a year. Supervalu has suffered 11 straight quarters of falling sales as shoppers defected to discount grocers during the recession.

Sandra Guy
Attachment 2 – Enacted US Bag Ban Legislation

Please follow this link to full version of white paper with all attachments on City website: http://www.cityofevanston.org/sustainability/waste_reduction_recycling/White%20Paper%206.11.pdf
67-0-10
AN ORDINANCE
Enacting a Tax on Disposable Plastic-Shopping Carryout Bags

WHEREAS, the City of Evanston (“the City”) Strategic Plan (“the Plan”), adopted pursuant to Resolution 27-R-06, states that the City’s Natural Resources Vision is to be known as “the Green City” and commits the City to embracing the best ecological practices and policies in government, services and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, Goal number 5 of the Plan is to “protect and optimize the City’s natural resources and built environment, leading by example through sustainable practices and behaviors” and specific objective “B” of Goal number 5 is to “identify and utilize new practices that will improve the quality of life and enhance the City’s sustainability;” and

WHEREAS, the production, use, and disposal of disposable plastic shopping carryout bags have significant adverse impacts on the environment; and

WHEREAS, disposable plastic shopping carryout bags frequently become litter and thereby a source visual blight; and

WHEREAS, to discourage and decrease the use of disposable plastic shopping carryout bags within the City, it is necessary to regulate such use; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the health, safety and welfare of the residents of the City that such regulation include a tax on disposable plastic shopping carryout bags, in order to discourage their use and thereby reducing their adverse impacts on the environment and the City,
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF
THE CITY OF EVANSTON, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS:

SECTION 1: That the foregoing recitals are found as fact and
incorporated herein by reference.

SECTION 2: That the Evanston City Code of 1979, as amended, is
hereby further amended by the enactment of a new Title 3, Chapter 36 thereof, “Plastic
Shopping Disposable Carryout Bag Tax,” to read as follows:

3-36-1: TITLE:

This Chapter shall be titled and referred to as the “Plastic Shopping Disposable Carryout
Bag Tax.”

3-36-2: PURPOSE AND INTENT:

The purpose of this Chapter is to discourage the generation of waste in the form of
Disposable Plastic Shopping Carryout Bags by creating an economic incentive for
shoppers to use reusable shopping bags.

3-36-3: DEFINITIONS:

For the purposes of this Chapter, the words and terms listed shall have the meanings
ascribed to them in this Section:

PLASTIC SHOPPING DISPOSABLE CARRYOUT BAG: A bag of any material, most
commonly plastic film or Kraft Paper, designed for one-time use to carry customer
purchases from a store. "Plastic Shopping Disposable Carryout Bag" shall not include
the following: bags used by customers inside stores to package bulk items such as fruit,
vegetables, nuts, grains, candy, or small hardware items, such as nails and bolts; bags
used to contain or wrap frozen foods, meat or fish, whether pre-packaged or not,
flowers or potted plants, or other items where dampness may be a problem; bags used
to protect prepared foods or bakery goods; bags provided by pharmacists to contain
prescription drugs; or newspaper bags, door-hanger bags, laundry-dry cleaning bags, or
bags sold in packages containing multiple bags intended for use as food storage,
garbage, pet waste, or yard waste bags.

STORE: Any of the following Uses, whether principal, accessory, and/or temporary, as
defined in Section 6-18-3 of this Code, as amended: Convenience Store; Food Store
Establishment; Open Sales Lot; Resale Establishment; Retail Goods Establishment;
Type 2 Restaurant; and/or Wholesale Goods Establishment.
3-36-4: TAX IMPOSED:

Effective January 1, 2012, a tax of twenty-five cents ($0.25) is imposed on each Plastic Shopping Disposable Carryout Bag used by customers of any Store in the City of Evanston. The ultimate incidence of and liability for payment of said tax shall be borne by customers for the receipt and use of such Plastic Shopping Disposable Carryout Bags.

3-36-5: COLLECTION AND REMITTANCE OF TAX:

(A) **Collection**: Store operators in the City shall collect the tax authorized by this Chapter from their customers at the time of sale. Store operators shall not, in any way, reimburse any customer for any portion of said tax. Store operators shall indicate on each customer's transaction receipt the number of Plastic Shopping Disposable Carryout Bags provided and the total amount of tax charged.

(B) **Remittance**: Every Store operator shall, on a quarterly basis, remit the taxes collected to the City and file with the City a return in a form prescribed by the City Manager or his/her designee. The return and accompanying remittance shall be due on or before the last day of the month following the end of the quarter during which the tax is collected or is required to be collected pursuant to this Chapter (*i.e.*, every April 30, July 31, October 31, and January 31).

3-36-6: ENFORCEMENT:

Whenever any Store operator fails to collect and/or remit the tax imposed by the terms of this Chapter, the City Manager or his/her designee may issue or cause to be issued a notice of violation or citation to said Store operator, to be heard in the City’s Division of Administrative Hearings pursuant to the terms of Title 11 of the City Code, as amended, or a court of competent jurisdiction. Nothing in this Section shall prevent the City from seeking to enforce the terms of this Chapter in any manner provided by law.

3-36-7: PENALTIES:

(A) **Fines**: Each day any Store operator is found liable for violating this Chapter shall constitute a separate offense that is subject to a daily fine of two hundred dollars ($200.00). Any such fine shall not relieve, reduce, or discharge the Store operator’s liability for the full amount of taxes not collected and/or remitted.

(B) **License Suspension/Revocation**: If a Store operator is found liable for failing to collect and/or remit the tax imposed by the terms of this Chapter, the City Manager may suspend and/or revoke any and all City licenses held by said Store operator related to his/her Store. Any suspension or revocation shall not relieve, reduce, or discharge the Store operator’s liability for the full amount of taxes not collected and/or remitted. The City shall not reinstate or renew any license of
any Store operator found liable for such a violation until he/she remits the taxes owed and pays any associated fine in full.

3-36-8: DISPOSITION OF MONEYS:

All moneys that the City collects pursuant to the terms of this Chapter shall be paid into the General Fund of the City Treasury to the City for deposit into the Ecology Center Fund. No less than fifty percent (50%) of the moneys collected pursuant to the terms of this Chapter shall be spent for the purposes of education and outreach related to Disposable Carryout Bags.

SECTION 3: That if any provision of this ordinance or application thereof to any person or circumstance is ruled unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this ordinance that can be given effect without the invalid application or provision, and each invalid provision or invalid application of this ordinance is severable.

SECTION 4: That all ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

SECTION 5: That this ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage, approval, and publication in the manner provided by law.

Introduced: ________________, 2011

Approved:

Adopted: ________________, 2011

_________________________, 2011

Elizabeth B. Tisdahl, Mayor

Attest:

Approved as to form:

__________________________

Rodney Greene, City Clerk

W. Grant Farrar, City Attorney
Memorandum

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Catherine Hurley, Sustainable Programs Coordinator
Subject: Evanston Environment Board Recommendation for Bag Reduction Ordinance
Date: October 19, 2011

Recommended Action:
It is recommended that City Council consider the attached memorandum and presentation from the Evanston Environment Board on a proposed bag reduction ordinance.

Summary:
On June 13, 2011 city staff presented the Administration and Public Works Committee with information on options for reducing the environmental impacts of shopping bags in Evanston. At the recommendation of Alderman Burrus, this issue was referred to the Evanston Environment Board for their review and recommendation. The Administration and Public Works Committee asked that the Environment Board provide their recommendation in October. Attachment 1 is a copy of the Evanston Environment Board’s recommendation for a bag reduction ordinance for consideration by City Council.

Attachment:
Attachment 1 – Evanston Environment Board Proposed Bag Reduction Ordinance Recommendation
MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor Tisdahl and Members of the City Council
FROM: Evanston Environment Board
CC: Wally Bobkiewicz, City Manager
SUBJECT: Proposed bag reduction ordinance recommendation
DATE: October 17, 2011

We are writing to recommend action to reduce disposable bag usage in Evanston. We have reviewed the City's white paper, "An Overview of Shopping Bags in Evanston" (June 2011), public comments from the May 24, 2011 meeting, and the Bagless NU memorandum. We have met with local businesspeople, and corresponded with bag association representatives and recyclers, and heard comments from the Illinois Retail Merchants Association. We have reviewed ordinances of other U.S. cities and have discussed the benefits and challenges to various bag reduction options. We believe that now is the time for Evanston to help reduce U.S. dependence on petroleum and reduce environmental degradation.

Recommendation

1. Implement a 5-cent fee for carryout bags (plastic and paper) at all retail establishments in Evanston. Retailers retain 2 cents of every bag sold. The remaining 3 cents go to the Ecology Center to fund education programs including bag reduction education. Implementation would begin 6 months after the ordinance is enacted.
2. Disseminate free reusable bags (fold-up, responsibly-made) to residents. Invite local organizations and businesses, and Northwestern University to sponsor the bag giveaway.
3. Exempt the following from the bag fee: bulk items, produce, meat, prescriptions, alcohol, and restaurant left-overs.
4. Ordinance will automatically renew every two years from day of enactment unless altered, amended, or modified.

Implementation

1. Invite stakeholders to discuss and suggest amendments. Stakeholder groups include all Evanston merchant associations, Evanston Chamber of Commerce, Business Alliance for a Sustainable Evanston (BASE), neighborhood groups.

Rationale

1. Reducing shopping bags supports Evanston's environmental goals as stated in the Strategic Plan and the Climate Action Plan. Local concern for the environment is high. At least 12% of the Evanston150 ideas submitted by residents focus on environmental sustainability, and there are several active environmental groups in the community.
2. This recommendation is a middle-of-the-road solution similar to those successfully implemented in other communities. Many U.S. municipalities have successfully passed bag legislation. Legislation options include bans, fees, and recycling requirements. Fees range from $0.02 to $1.
3. A bag fee allows consumer choice not provided by a ban. Consumers may choose to avoid the fee by bringing a bag or to acquire a bag by paying the fee.
4. Plastic and paper bags are not free. Manufacturing them imposes significant environmental impact on fossil fuels, energy, and trees.
5. Plastic bags pollute public lands, waterways, and oceans and harm marine animals.
6. Plastic and paper bags are not free to retailers or consumers. Retailers purchase carryout bags and may pass some cost along to consumers.
7. A six-month grace period allows merchants to use up bag stock and allows the City to conduct an education campaign.