To: Members of the Administration and Public Works Committee

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

Subject: Disposable Plastic Shopping Bag Issues

Date: May 13, 2014

Recommended Action:
It is recommended that City Council consider the attached information regarding efforts to reduce the environmental impacts of plastic shopping bags in Evanston and provide direction on next steps.

Summary:
The City of Chicago passed a partial ban on the distribution of disposable plastic shopping bags on April 30, 2014. The ordinance applies to retail establishments that sell perishable or non-perishable goods but does not apply to dine-in or carry-out restaurants. Only retail establishments that are chain stores (three or more stores under common ownership) or stores that are part of a franchise are subject to the ordinance. The ordinance will be implemented in two phases. Phase 1 would apply to retailers 10,000 square feet and greater starting August 1, 2015. In Phase 2, retailers with less than 10,000 square feet will be subject to the ordinance starting August 1, 2016. A copy of Chicago’s ordinance is provided as Attachment 1.

The City of Evanston previously considered creating an ordinance targeting disposable shopping bags with the goal of reducing their environmental impact. Addressing disposable shopping bags was a recommendation of the 2008 Evanston Climate Action Plan and past discussions were held at City Council Meetings in the spring and fall of 2011. A summary of the legislative history is provided at the end of this memo. The agenda items from the June 13 and October 24, 2011 meetings are provided as an attachment.

Staff presented the Evanston Environment Board with an update on the City of Chicago’s ordinance at the Board’s May 8, 2014 meeting. The Environment Board voted unanimously in support of bringing this issue before the Administration and Public Works Committee for discussion and consideration.
Based on Evanston’s past interest in addressing the environmental impact of shopping bags, staff would like to hold a public meeting to re-engage the community on this issue. The meeting would include an updated presentation on issues and opportunities related to shopping bags, review the provisions of the City of Chicago’s ordinance and seek feedback from the community and stakeholders. Staff proposes holding the community meeting on Thursday, June 5th at 7:00 pm at the Ecology Center. Feedback from the community and recommended next steps would be presented to the Administration and Public Works Committee at the June 9th meeting.

Legislative History:
April 25, 2011 Staff presents overview of options to address disposable shopping bags and Ordinance 67-O-10 proposing a $0.05 tax per bag; Ordinance 76-O-10 amended by Committee to be a bag ban; Staff was directed to gain community input.

June 13, 2011 Presentation by Staff to Administration and Public Works Committee on community feedback; Ordinance 76-O-10 as amended was referred to Evanston Environment Board for review and recommendation.

October 24, 2011 Presentation and Recommendation by Evanston Environment Board on enacting a $0.05 tax per bag on disposable shopping bags.

Attachment:
City of Chicago Approved Ordinance SO2014-1521

Link to Item APW1 from June 13, 2011 City Council Meeting: http://www.cityofevanston.org/assets/APW1%20Disposable%20Bag%20Discussion%20final%206-13.pdf

Link to Item SP1 from October 24, 2011 City Council Meeting http://www.cityofevanston.org/assets/SP1%20Disposable%20Bag%20Presentation%20final%2010-24.pdf