



# **Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bag Ordinance**

**ZWAC Briefing – 2/8/12**

# **Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bags**

## **Austin City Council Resolutions**

**April 19, 2007**

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

**June 24, 2010**

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

# Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bags

## Austin City Council Resolution

**August 4, 2011**

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

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

# Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bags

## Litter and Environmental Impacts



# Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bags

## Austin Zero Waste Policies

### 21.3 Single-Use Products and Packaging Ordinances

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

### 3.5 Highest and Best Use Principles

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

# Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bags

## Process

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

# Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bags

## Process

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

# Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bags

## Ordinance Purpose

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

## Exemptions (< 10% of all plastic bags)

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

# Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bags

## Permitted Reusable Bags

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

## Implementation Timeline

- Phase 1: Education: March 1, 2012 – February 28, 2013
- Phase 2: Transition: March 1, 2013 – February 28, 2014
  - Transition away from Retail Checkout Single Use Bags
  - 10 cents per Single-Use Bag or \$1 per transaction
  - Retailers and Customers Transition to Reusable Bags
- Phase 3: March 1, 2014 - No Retail Checkout Single-Use Bags<sup>9</sup>

# Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bags

## Hardship Variance

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

## Other Elements

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

# Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bags

## Issues Raised

### ➤ Metrics

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

### ➤ Reuse / Recycling Options

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

# **Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bags**

## **Next Steps**

**Feb 9<sup>th</sup>**      Staff Briefing to Council

**Mar 1<sup>st</sup> 4:00 pm**    Council Public Hearing &  
Potential Adoption of Ordinance

# Single-Use Retail Carry-out Bags

