



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: April 26, 2016

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Environmental Services Division, Finance Department

SUBJECT: Two-Year Review Of Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receive a presentation from staff on the effectiveness of the Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance in reducing the number of plastic and paper bags used within the City.

DISCUSSION:

On October 15, 2013, Council adopted the Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance. The Ordinance prohibits certain stores from providing single-use plastic bags to customers at the point of sale, and requires a 10-cent charge for each paper bag to customers. The Ordinance defines two types of stores: Tier 1 stores are larger supermarkets and stores greater than 10,000 square feet and that include a pharmacy (17 stores). Tier 2 stores are defined as smaller grocery stores, drug stores, pharmacies, convenience stores and food marts that are less than 10,000 square feet (66 stores).

Section Two of the Ordinance requires that within two years of the ordinance effective date, staff report on the effectiveness of the Ordinance to reduce the number of plastic and paper bags distributed within the City. Staff observed that most stores easily transitioned into compliance with the Ordinance; discontinuing the use of plastic bags charging the appropriate fee for paper bags; and submitting the annual report on time. Only one store was found to be out of compliance and did not submit its annual report. Staff has notified the store of the regulations and is working with store management to come into compliance. No administrative enforcement actions have been initiated against any store to date.

In 2013, the Final EIR for the Ordinance estimated that approximately 47.3 million single-use plastic bags were distributed in the City. The table below compares the actual distribution of all carry-out bags as reported by regulated stores to the assumptions stated in the Final EIR:

	Total Plastic Bags Used Annually 2013	Reusable Bags (switch to reusable bag or no bag)	Paper Bags (switch to paper)	Plastic Bags (from non-regulated stores)
Actual Results	47,302,542	42,258,175	2,679,240	2,365,127
Final EIR Estimates	47,302,542	30,746,664	14,190,763	2,365,127

From this table, the following conclusions can be made:

- The Ordinance was effective, reducing the number of single-use bags distributed in the City from 47.3 million to only 5.04 million (plastic bags from non-regulated stores + paper bags); and,
- Most single use bags were replaced by reusable bags or patrons did not use a bag. Note that the actual number of single-use paper bags distributed following the adoption of the Ordinance is dramatically lower than anticipated by the Final EIR.

Data Gaps

While working with stores to verify compliance and collect annual reports, it became clear to staff that large grocery stores and pharmacies were much better equipped to collect accurate data, as their registers have the ability to track and report paper bag sales over an entire year. Conversely, staff found that registers in smaller stores, such as mini-marts, were not as sophisticated, requiring store staff to manually record bag sales at the close of each business day. This discrepancy in technology may have caused variances in data quality among large and small stores. While this discrepancy may have caused the sales of paper bags to be under reported by some smaller stores, it would not have impacted the overall reduction in single-use plastic bags.

PREPARED BY: Matt Fore, Environmental Services Manager

SUBMITTED BY: Robert Samario, Finance Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office



CITY TRASH AND RECYCLING

TWO-YEAR REVIEW OF SINGLE-USE CARRYOUT BAG ORDINANCE

City Council Meeting
April 26, 2016



BACKGROUND

October 2013: City Council Adopted Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance:

- Banned single-use plastic bags and required stores to charge a \$.10 fee on single-use paper bags
- Required stores to only provide recyclable paper bags or reusable bags
- Allows stores to use revenue from the fee on paper bags to comply with the ordinance



BACKGROUND

Ordinance Provisions

- Requires stores to report annually on the number of paper bags distributed, monies collected, and any educational efforts undertaken by the store
- Requires stores to provide free reusable or recyclable paper bags (or both) to participants of the CA Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children, or the Supplemental Food Program
- Staff to report to Council two years following adoption with evaluation of the effectiveness of the Ordinance



BACKGROUND

Who Is Regulated?

- **Tier 1 Stores:** At least 10,000 square feet and sells a line of dry grocery items, canned goods, and/or non-food items, or that has a pharmacy (17 stores)
- **Tier 2 Stores:** A drug store, pharmacy, supermarket, grocery store, convenience food store, food mart, or other retail store that sells a limited line of grocery items such as milk, bread, soda, and snack foods (66 stores)



BACKGROUND

Milestones

Tier 1 Stores:

- Compliance Date: May 2014
- Annual Report Due: August 2015

Tier 2 Stores:

- Compliance Date: November 2014
- Annual Report Due: February 2016



TWO-YEAR REVIEW

Staff Findings

Most stores easily complied with the Ordinance

- Discontinued use of plastic bags
- Charged \$.10 fee on paper bags
- Submitted annual reports on time

Only one store was found to be out of compliance and has remedied the violation



TWO-YEAR REVIEW

Comparison of Results to EIR Estimates

EIR assumptions:

- Shift from plastic bags to paper and reusable bags
- Reusable bags would be used once a week for one year, then discarded
- Current paper bag users would continue to purchase paper bags
- All recyclable paper bags purchased would be landfilled by the consumer



TWO-YEAR REVIEW

Comparison of Results to EIR Estimates

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Actual Results	47,302,542	42,258,175	2,679,240	2,365,127
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TWO-YEAR REVIEW

Potential Data Gaps

Large grocery stores and pharmacies most likely provided better data than smaller stores on paper bags sold:

- Large Stores: programmable cash registers tracking annual sales
- Small Stores: compiled 365 daily sales records that were manually recorded by store staff



TWO-YEAR REVIEW

Staff Conclusions

The Single-Use Carryout Bag Ordinance was successful in dramatically reducing the number of single use plastic bags distributed in the City:

- 47 million plastic bags reduced to 5 million plastic + paper bags
- Fewer single-use paper bags were sold than assumed by the EIR



Questions?