

Bring Your Own Bag Ordinance



Why are we taking action at this time?

In June of 2017, the State Legislature passed a bill that preempts Minnesota cities from prohibiting bags made from any particular material types. This means that in order to enforce 2016's Bring Your Own Bag ordinance, it must be amended. A proposed amendment was tabled by the City Council in 2017, leaving this ordinance unenforceable.

Additionally, the ordinance has been modified to address concerns from stakeholders and enforcement staff on how the ordinance will be enforced and to simplify the language to meet the City's value of "business made simple".

What problems are we looking to solve?

LITTER

- In 2002, 50 to 80 million bags ended up as litter in the US
- Once plastic enters the environment, it never leaves – just becomes smaller and smaller pieces of plastic
- In a recent river cleanup, 1 mile of the Mississippi River over 2.5 hours generated 5 tons of trash

WASTE

- Minnesotans throw away 87,000 tons of plastic bags every year
- In Minneapolis, most plastic bags end up in the downtown garbage burner
- Less than 5% of plastic bags are recycled in the US; more than 49% of paper bags are recycled

LIFECYCLE IMPACTS

- All bags require energy, create waste, and cause greenhouse gas emissions and air and water pollution
- Single-use paper bags create 64 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions and 31 pounds of water pollution per 10,000 uses
- Single-use plastic bags create 9 pounds of solid waste, 18 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions and 2 pounds of water pollution per 10,000 uses

PLASTIC BAGS NEGATIVELY IMPACT SINGLE-SORT RECYCLING FACILITIES

- Plastic bags wrap around sorting machines, requiring the sorting line to be shut down several times each day
- Plastic bags that end up in recycling facilities are not recycled

Proposed Solution

To incent Minneapolis customers to bring our own bags when we shop, we propose a fee on single-use disposable bags:

- Proposed minimum fee amount: \$.05 per bag, kept by retailer.
- Retail establishments are not required to collect the fee from anyone with a voucher or electronic benefits card issued under the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) support programs, or the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also known as Basic Food), or a recognized Minnesota food assistance program.

EXEMPTIONS

- Bags without handles used by customers to package bulk food, greeting cards, jewelry, etc., or small hardware items such as nails and bolts, or to wrap flowers.
- Bags used in dine-in or carryout restaurants, food trucks or temporary event food vendors.
- Farmers markets.

OTHER JURISDICTIONS

- Many communities across the country and the world have adopted laws to address the problems created by carryout bags. More than 160 U.S. cities have enacted carryout bag bans and/or fees, including Aspen, Colorado; Austin, Texas; Cambridge, Massachusetts; Chicago, Illinois; Dallas, Texas; Portland, Oregon; Richmond, Virginia; Santa Fe, New Mexico; and Seattle, Washington. The District of Columbia and the States of California and Hawaii have also enacted carryout bag regulations. Many countries – including Bangladesh, Botswana, China, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Somalia – have banned plastic bags, and many more countries including Ireland have carryout bag fees. The European Union recently voted to prohibit multiple types of single-use plastics, including single-use carryout bags.

IMPLEMENTATION NEXT STEPS

- Passage of ordinance in early 2019
- Effective date of April 22, 2020
- Complaint driven enforcement: 311 routed to Business Licensing
 - Receipt shall indicate the number of bags provided and the total amount of the pass through charge
 - Retail establishments must provide reports upon request