

Disposable Bags Ordinance

Public Informational Meeting

July 30, 2014

Fossil Ridge High School Auditorium

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Background

November, 2012 worksession - range of options to restrict disposable bags

- Triple Bottom Line analysis of both paper & plastic bags
- Groceries are the source of 60% disposable bags

March, 2013 Council hearing - vote (3-3) on ordinance

- grocers charge 10 cents/bags; City would share revenue

May 13, 2014 worksession - staff asked to rewrite ordinance

July 1, 2014 Council hearing – 5-2 vote for ordinance, but second reading postponed to August 19

- grocers charge 10 cents/bags; keep revenue and use half to pay for reusable bags for customers

Basics of Fort Collins Ordinance

Grocers charge 10 cents per bag at register

- Carry out bags only; not produce bags, plastic liners to prevent meat from leaking, etc.

Grocers submit data to City on bag usage

Revenue retained by grocery store

- Half to be spent on purchase of reusable bags
- Stores distribute free reusable bags to customers at their discretion

Start implementation January, 2015

50 Million Disposable Bags / Year Used in Fort Collins

- 60% are from grocery stores (205/person/year)
- 220 tons/year plastic buried in landfills
- 772 metric tons of carbon emissions
- Contributes to litter
- Causes break-downs at recycling plants
- Plastic particles from bags that break down in sunlight / weather can pollute soil and waterways

Over 133 US City/County Bag Ordinances

Local ordinances result in 80-90% reduction in bags

- Some ban all disposable bags, or
- Require charge on all bags, or
- Ban plastic bags + charge for paper bags

Other results were investigated at request of City Council to respond to frequently asked questions (fcgov.com/recycling/pdf/plastic-bags-FAQ.pdf)

Survey of Other Communities

City	Public health issues	Impacts to low income residents	Shoppers go outside city	Increases in shoplifting
Austin, TX	No direct situations have ever been found	No reports. Gave away 1,000s of bags to low income residents	Haven't seen anything drastic happen	Not being brought to City's attention
Los Angeles, CA	Since January start date, haven't received a single complaint on health issues	Not an issue. Stores required to give free bags to residents on state assistance programs.	None. Most cities near LA have similar ordinances	No instances have been reported
Port Townsend, WA	No reports of any health issues	Very few issues; people have become used to the change	Sales tax revenues have held steady	No reports of shoplifting reported

City	Public health issues	Impacts to low income residents	Shoppers go outside city	Increases in shoplifting
San Jose, CA	No instances have been reported	Haven't seen any impacts to low-income residents	No loss in revenue	No instances have been brought to City's attention
WA DC	No issues have occurred. DC staff recommends folks wash bags 1Xweek	Worked with non-profits to target low-income families and gave out 100,000 bags	Recent survey showed people are not leaving the District to shop.	2-3 complaints from liquor stores
Seattle, WA	City has never seen any documented issues with public health	None documented; ordinance exempts people in state and federal assistance programs	Chain-stores have reflected a 5 % reduction	Smaller retailers reported a few more instances than normal



Economic Impacts – Fort Collins

~ \$20/year for shoppers if they don't switch to reusable bags

For very low income residents: stores may elect to not charge customers for bags if they are on federal assistance

Lower litter cleanup costs for community, better operations at our recycling facilities

Income for grocery stores from sale of bags...but typically declines 50% each year as customers learn to bring bags

2015 \$1.6 M

(50% spent on bags = \$805,000)

2016 \$820,000

(50% spent on bags = \$410,000)

Outcomes of Bag Restrictions

Local progress at waste reduction and reuse

- Financial motivation for people to adopt reuse habits, which may lead to further reuse habits

Less trash in landfills & greenhouse gas emissions

Reduces life-cycle impacts of single-use bags
(material extraction, production, disposal, etc.)

Reduces litter and pollution

Discussion / Questions

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