

# EUGENE CITY COUNCIL

## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



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### Work Session: Update on Ordinance 20498 - Encouraging the Use of Reusable Bags by Banning Single-Use Plastic Bags

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Meeting Date: November 13, 2013  
Department: Planning and Development  
[www.eugene-or.gov](http://www.eugene-or.gov)

Agenda Item Number: B  
Staff Contact: Stephanie Scafa  
Contact Telephone Number: (541) 682-5652

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#### ISSUE STATEMENT

The purpose of this work session is to provide the Eugene City Council an update on the implementation of Ordinance, No. 20498: encouraging the use of reusable bags by banning single-use plastic carryout bags and requiring a five-cent fee for carry-out paper bags.

#### PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION

The City Council adopted Ordinance No. 20498 on October 22, 2012, and it went into effect on May 1, 2013. During City Council deliberations of the ordinance, the Mayor and council requested a six-month implementation update in November 2013.

On July 8, 2013, the council discussed further the effect of the five-cent paper bag fee. A motion to suspend the five-cent charge during the evaluation period failed. No further action was taken.

#### Update

##### Outreach Efforts

To assist Eugene retailers with the new ordinance, City staff developed the *Bring Your Bag* outreach and education campaign. The objective of the campaign was to raise awareness of the purpose and function of the ordinance, provide information to the public about where to obtain low-cost or free reusable bags, and provide engagement resources for businesses. Campaign activities included:

- An informational webpage, [www.eugene-or.gov/plasticbags](http://www.eugene-or.gov/plasticbags), was created and includes copies of the ordinance, rules, frequently asked questions, staff reports, links to reusable bag resources, and *Bring Your Bag* campaign signage for retailers. Select materials were produced in English and Spanish versions to increase awareness.
- In April 2013, staff sent letters to all retail businesses in Eugene as a reminder of the new ordinance and an invitation to attend one of two scheduled informational sessions focused on business implementation.
- *Bring Your Bag* informational ads ran on LTD buses for eight weeks from mid-March to mid-May.

##### Implementation Activities

In an effort to reduce the burden to small businesses of implementation, the ordinance allows for a one-year hardship exemption. Staff received 17 one-year hardship exemption requests and

approved all. Enforcement of the ordinance is on a complaint-based approach. To date, the City has received only one formal complaint which, when reviewed, was found to have no basis as the business was complying with the law.

### Implementation Impacts

City staff are gathering three points of data related to the implementation of the ordinance: solid waste service residential customers, business surveys, and consumer intercept surveys.

As part of the triennial Eugene solid waste customer satisfaction survey, a new question was added regarding the reusable bag ordinance this year. The question asked, "Since the City's ban on plastic bags took effect, when you shop do you purchase a bag: zero percent of the time, 1-25 percent of the time, 26-50 percent of the time, 51-75 percent of the time, 76-99 percent of the time or 100 percent of the time?" The most prominent responses were:

- half of shoppers never purchase a bag;
- one-third purchase a bag 25 percent of the time or less;
- only two percent of people purchase a bag all of the time; and
- seniors, those with no children, and those with two in the household are more likely than others to never purchase a bag.

City staff is in the process of gathering additional information on the impacts of the ordinance from businesses and consumers. Information is being obtained through telephone surveys to 200 Eugene businesses and conducting intercept surveys at eight retail locations throughout Eugene with consumers; results of these efforts will be presented during the work session.

### **RELATED CITY POLICIES**

Ordinance, No. 20498: encouraging the use of reusable bags by banning single-use plastic carryout bags.

### **COUNCIL OPTIONS**

This is an informational work session.

### **SUGGESTED MOTION**

No recommended motion at this time.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

None.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Staff Contact: Stephanie Scafa  
Telephone: 541-682-5652  
Staff E-Mail: [stephanie.scafa@ci.eugene.or.us](mailto:stephanie.scafa@ci.eugene.or.us)