Recycling & Waste Reduction Commission of Santa Clara County
Technical Advisory Committee
Source Reduction and Recycling Subcommittee

Date: August 20, 2008

To: Recycling and Waste Reduction Commission

From: TAC Source Reduction & Recycling Subcommittee

Re: Restrictions on Single-Use Carryout Bags

Based on the Commission's interest in this topic along with the Santa Clara County Cities Association and the actions of several local cities, the TAC Source Reduction & Recycling (SRR) Subcommittee has been addressing the topic of single-use carryout bag restrictions for much of the year. The purpose of this report is to provide the Commission with an update on TAC activities and propose a timeline for further action.

What are our interests in this area?
There is little question that plastic bags are commonly found in roadside litter and are known pollutants of the marine environment. While plastic bags create these litter problems and are difficult to properly recycle, it is reported that paper bags require more energy to manufacture and are more expensive to distribute. In contrast, reusable bags are typically not found in litter and reduce both waste produced and energy consumed when considering their long life. Therefore, our major policy interest is to reduce litter, energy consumption, and waste production through the widespread use of reusable shopping bags.

What is the status of local efforts?
The City of Palo Alto is considering further actions to restrict the distribution of plastic bags and promote reusable bags. A series of Reusable Bag Task Group meetings have just been completed to help formulate a Comprehensive Reusable Bag Program. That Program will be presented to the Palo Alto City Council on September 22 at an informational Study Session with formal action to follow at subsequent Council meetings. A comparison of options by objective, as prepared by Palo Alto staff, is attached.

The City of San Jose has engaged local stakeholders for the past several months to provide input into their policy evaluation. While a final staff proposal has not been developed, the staff's current thinking is to suggest the following approach:

a. Direct the Administration and the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance to ban all plastic and paper single-use carry out bags given at point-of-sale. Retailers would be allowed to opt for continued use of banned bags with a fee from 20 to 30 cents. The ordinance would apply to all single-use carryout bags at all retail establishments, including supermarkets, most stores with food and beverage sales or pharmacies, and chain convenience stores. Limited exemptions from the ban and fee system would apply for very small businesses and non-profit organizations. Implementation of the ordinance would take effect on the same day for all businesses. The ordinance will also require all retail establishments covered by AB 2449 to accept plastic film from the public for recycling.

b. Work with stakeholders to significantly reduce both plastic and paper carryout bag use in the City, including comprehensive efforts by industry and the City to increase the use of reusable bags;

c. Promote City residents taking their plastic bags and other film back to retail stores for recycling; discontinue plastic film as an approved recyclable material in the City's residential Recycle Plus program customer outreach;

San Jose staff currently intends to make their final recommendation to the Council Transportation and Environment Committee in fall 2008.

What other noteworthy activities are occurring?
Legislation currently pending could dramatically alter the regulatory system and powers that local governments have in this policy area. Lobbyists have informed staff that many background conversations are occurring and final decisions are still to be made. Given the complex current legislative environment, no specific information is reportable at this time.

In addition to the notable effort of San Francisco (San Francisco requires that large grocery stores and pharmacies use only reusable bags, recyclable paper bags made with recycled paper, or compostable bags,) several jurisdictions have adopted, or considered adopting, bag restrictions. One of these communities, Santa Monica, has prepared the attached analysis which discusses other regulatory efforts from the United States and International communities.

Are their issues that the subcommittee has reached agreement on?
Currently, the Subcommittee has reached agreement on the following issues:

- Compostable plastic bags should be treated identically to their noncompostable counterparts
- This initial effort is to focus solely on the carryout bags typically provided to customers at checkout. Other bags like produce bags, meat bags, dry cleaner bags, and newspaper bags would not be included at this time.
- Restrictions should affect a broad range of retailers – certainly not just large supermarkets

What is the intended plan for moving forward in Santa Clara County?
Given the interest expressed by both the Commission and the Cities Association, the SRR Subcommittee intends to further refine its policy recommendations in the upcoming months. Specifically, the following four options will be considered:

- Ban plastic and charge fees for paper;
- Ban plastic and paper, with the option to have plastic and paper available with fees;
- Fees on all bags
- Ban plastic only

The SRR Subcommittee meets again on August 28th and September 25th. It is the Subcommittee's intention to present a draft recommendation to TAC on September 11th, revise the recommendation per TAC's input on September 25th and present the final recommendation to TAC for adoption on October 9th. This will enable TAC to return a recommendation to the RWRC on October 22nd. Once RWRC acts on the proposal, which understandably may require more than one meeting, the final recommendation can by recommended to the Board of Supervisors, Cities Association, and cities throughout the County.

PLASTIC BAG REDUCTION/REUSABLES ENHANCEMENT OBJECTIVES ANALYSIS BY PALO ALTO STAFF

		PRIME OBJECTIVES		CONSEQUENCES		
		Reduce Plastic Bag Distribution	Maximize Conversion to Reusable Bags	Minimize Conversion to Paper	Avoid Increased Costs to Stores	Avoid Increased Costs to Consumers
I.	PROMOTE REUSABLES ONLY					
II.	TRY MORE PROMOTION FIRST					
III.	FEES FOR ALL BAGS NOW					
IV.	BAN PLASTIC NOW					
V.	BAN PLASTIC, PAPER FEES NOW					
VI.	BAN PLASTIC & PAPER NOW					

Key: Best → to → Worst

City of Santa Monica Analysis

City Council Meeting: February 12, 2008

Agenda Item: _____

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Craig Perkins, Director - Environmental and Public Works Management

Subject: Recommendations Regarding a Ban on Plastic Bags for Commercial Establishments in Santa Monica

Recommended Action

Staff recommends that City Council:

1) direct the City Attorney to draft an ordinance banning the free distribution to customers of single use plastic (including biodegradable plastic) carryout bags at stores within Santa Monica; and
2) provide staff with direction on a proposal to require retailers to charge a fee on single use paper bags in addition to the ban on plastic bags.

Executive Summary

This report presents the results of a staff analysis, requested by City Council on October 9, 2007, to generate recommendations to develop an effective ban on single use plastic carryout bags in Santa Monica. The analysis determined that plastic bags are responsible for significant negative environmental impacts and that preferable alternatives are readily available and currently in use. Because California Assembly Bill 2449, which went into effect on July 1, 2007, specifically prohibits local governments from imposing a fee on plastic carryout bags, it was determined that the most effective way to reduce the environmental impacts related to plastic bags (including biodegradable plastic) is to ban their use in Santa Monica and promote the use of reusable carryout bags. Single use paper carryout bags should be allowed as an alternative to plastic bags, but should be required to meet certain requirements to minimize the environmental impacts related to their manufacture and transportation. It is recommended that the ordinance provide at least six months prior to taking effect following Council adoption to allow stores to transition. Staff seeks direction from Council on a proposal from the Task Force on the Environment that would require stores to impose a fee on single use paper bags in addition to the ban on plastic bags. The intent of this proposal would be to accelerate a shift away from single use bags towards reusable bags. Budgetary impacts from the adoption of a ban would include costs to prepare and distribute outreach materials for use by stores affected by the ordinance, and staffing costs for implementation and enforcement. Staff estimates that approximately $60,000 per year in supplies and materials and a .5 FTE Administrative Analyst position will be needed to assist stores with compliance prior to the ordinance taking affect, and to develop an ongoing outreach campaign to encourage shoppers to bring their own reusable bags.

Background

On July 16, 2007, the City's Task Force on the Environment unanimously approved a motion requesting that City Council consider banning plastic bags, citing concerns that plastic bags create significant litter problems; that they pollute the beach and marine environments; because they are expensive and difficult to recycle; and because they contaminate other recyclable and compostable material that is collected by the City. On October 9, 2007, City Council directed staff to perform an analysis and generate recommendations to develop an effective ban on plastic bags for commercial establishments in Santa Monica. This report transmits the results of that analysis and recommended actions.

Environmental Issues Associated with Plastic Bags

Plastic carryout bags were first introduced by retail stores in the United States in 1975 and began to be distributed to customers at the point of sale in supermarkets in 1977. Today these bags are ubiquitous in the marketplace because they are light-weight, strong, inexpensive and convenient.

Plastic carryout bags are made in a number of different sizes and thicknesses and are typically manufactured from either high density polyethylene (HDPE - recycling symbol #2) or from low density polyethylene (LDPE - recycling symbol #4). The LDPE bags are thicker and are generally used by department stores and other commercial retail outlets. The HDPE bags are typically thinner, cheaper and are used much more widely by supermarkets, pharmacies, convenience stores and restaurants. These bags are termed "single-use" bags because they are intended for one time use for customers to carry their purchases from the store, followed by disposal or recycling. The thin, light duty plastic that the bags are made from is not durable enough for them to be repeatedly used for carryout. The California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) estimates that Californians use approximately 19 billion of the light weight HDPE bags each year[1], with approximately 6 billion of these being consumed within Los Angeles County. A survey conducted by City Solid Waste Management division staff in December 2005 solicited plastic bag information from 25 Santa Monica grocery stores and food markets. The survey concluded that these 25 businesses use approximately 23 million plastic bags each year.

Plastic bags are a significant component of litter in the environment primarily due to their durability and light weight. Even when disposed of properly, plastic bags are often blown out of trash receptacles and are easily carried by wind and water to become entangled in vegetation, clog stormdrains and contribute to free floating plastic debris in the marine environment. A waste characterization study conducted by the City of Los Angeles in June 2004 found that plastic bags made up 25% by weight (and 19% by volume) of litter found in 30 storm drain catch basins[2]. Recently the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (LARWQCB) established a Zero Trash TMDL (total maximum daily load) for the Ballona Creek Watershed. This TMDL requires a 10% annual reduction of trash entering the water body until zero trash is reached by 2014. Santa Monica, as one of the agencies within the Ballona Creek watershed, can be held jointly liable for failing to meet these targets and will likely have to spend increasing amounts of money to comply with these requirements in the coming years.

Plastic bags are a significant source of marine debris and are hazardous to birds and marine animals. The California Coastal Commission estimates that 60% to 80% of all marine debris, and 90% of all floating debris is plastic. Plastic bags do not biodegrade in the environment, but they do break into smaller pieces that are often mistaken for food by birds and marine animals[3]. Studies have estimated that more than 1 million sea birds, 100,000 marine mammals and countless fish die annually through ingestion of and entanglement in marine debris, including plastic bags[4].

Plastic bags are recyclable, however very few are actually recycled. Research conducted by the County of Los Angeles in 2007 found that this is largely due to the logistics of sorting, high contamination rates that reduce the quality of the recycled resin produced, the low quality of plastic used in the bags, and the lack of cost efficiency due to lack of suitable markets for the recycled resin. Various estimates suggest that only 1% to 5% of the 19 billion bags used annually in California are being recycled in any way[5]. A recent survey by the County of Los

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[1] California Integrated Waste Management Board, Resolution, Agenda Item 14, June 12, 2007 Board Meeting

[2] "An Overview of Carryout Bags in Los Angeles County", staff report to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, August 2007

[3] C. Moore, "Pelagic Plastics", Algalita Marine Research Foundation,www.algalita.org/pelagic_plastic.html

[4] N. Wallace. "Debris Entanglement in the Marine Environment: A Review" pp 259-277 in Proceedings of the Workshop on the Fate and Impact of Marine Debris, U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA Technical Memorandum, 1985

[5] Californians Against Waste http://www.cawrecycles.org/issues/plastic_campaign/plastic_bags : and US EPA 2005 Characterization of Municipal Solid Waste, Table 7

Angeles found that only 25 of the 89 jurisdictions within the County offer residential curbside collection for plastic bag recycling. The City of Santa Monica does provide curbside collection of plastic bags, but does not encourage it because the bags are often contaminated by the time they reach the City's transfer station, and because the bags create litter and handling issues at the transfer station. A Los Angeles County survey of recycling and material recovery facilities found that over 90% of the plastic carryout bags taken to these facilities were not recycled but instead taken to landfills for disposal. Reasons cited include high contamination rates, the tendency of the bags to jam the screens used to separate materials, and the lack of suitable markets for the recycled material.

Plastic Bag Costs and Alternatives

The primary alternatives to HDPE plastic carryout bags are single use paper carryout bags, biodegradable (starch-based) plastic carryout bags, and reusable carryout bags made from cloth or durable plastic. All of these options are widely available in the marketplace and are currently being used throughout the region and the state at grocery stores, restaurants and other retail stores. The approximate costs of plastic bags and various alternatives (based on current prices obtained from a variety of bag suppliers in December 2007) are listed below in Table 1.

Table 1

Type of carryout bag	Approximate cost per bag	Approximate annual usage per person
HDPE plastic	1 to 5 cents	500 - 600
Paper	5 to 25 cents	500 - 600
Biodegradable	10 to 21 cents	500 - 600
Reuseable (cloth or plastic)	99 cents to $10	2 - 4

Environmental Issues Associated with Alternatives to Plastic Bags

The primary environmental impacts of carryout bags fall in to two areas: 1) the impacts related to the manufacture, transportation and consumption of the bags, and 2) the end of use impacts related to the disposal of the bags, recycling and recyclability, and litter.

A study published by the Australian Department of the Environment and Heritage in 2002[6] evaluated the life cycle environmental impacts of plastic carryout bags and alternatives. The study found that reusable bags made of polypropylene have the least overall environmental impact, largely due to the small number of bags consumed per year. The study found that single use plastic bags have a lower embodied energy content than both biodegradable bags and paper bags, due to their light weight which facilitates transportation, and lower material use in manufacture. However the end of use impacts related to plastic bags are significant, as described in detail above. The end of use impacts of paper bags are much lower than for plastic bags because 1) paper bags are less likely to be littered due to heavier weight, 2) they are readily recyclable and universally collected in curbside recycling programs, and 3) they will biodegrade in the marine environment, minimizing negative environmental impacts. The end of use impacts for biodegradable plastic bags is mixed. These bags can be composted, along with green waste, at the commercial composting facility used by the City of Santa Monica; however, they do have the potential to contaminate plastic recycling programs because they are easily mistaken for plastic bags unless clearly identified as biodegradable. And like plastic bags, they are designed for

[6] Australian Department of the Environment and Heritage Plastic Shopping Bags – Analysis of Levies and Environmental Impacts Final Report, prepared by Nolan-ITU, December 2002

single use and have similar characteristics that contribute to their likelihood to become littered and end up in the marine environment. While they may partially biodegrade in the marine environment over the course of several months, they still have the potential to negatively impact marine life.

On balance, the Australian study found that the greatest environmental benefits when evaluating manufacture, transportation, use and disposal of carryout bags are achieved when replacing single use disposable bags with reusable bags. Of the single use bags, paper bags have a much lower impact on the marine environment than plastic or biodegradable bags; however, they require more resources to manufacture and transport. Paper bags containing high levels of post-consumer recycled content would lessen the resource load of these bags.

Regulation of Plastic Bags in other Jurisdictions

Internationally there have been many bans or other regulation on single-use plastic carryout bags, primarily in response to litter and marine pollution issues. The countries of Taiwan, Kenya, Rwanda, Bangladesh, Germany and Sweden, as well as thirty towns in Alaska, have all banned the use of plastic carryout bags in recent years. In January 2008 the Chinese government announced a nationwide ban on the free distribution of single-use plastic carryout bags which will take effect on June 1, 2008. Ireland, Denmark and Switzerland have all instituted a "tax" on plastic carryout bags to encourage the use of alternatives. The program in Ireland, which imposed a fee of 20 cents (Euro) on each plastic carryout bag consumed, resulted in a 95% reduction in the use of the plastic bags since the fee was imposed in March 2002[7]. Follow up studies of this policy in Ireland indicate that it has been very effective at changing consumer behavior and the use of reusable bags by consumers in Ireland is now commonplace.

In 2002, the Australian federal government began a voluntary initiative to reduce the consumption of HDPE plastic carryout bags by 50% and plastic bag litter by 75% by December 2005. Follow-up studies found that the voluntary efforts resulted in significant reductions in plastic bag consumption (up to 45%) but that they did not appear to have had a noticeable impact on litter with the levels remaining approximately the same[8]. A report by Australian retailers indicated that plastic bag recycling rates increased to 14%, but noted that the retailers spent $50 million on public education efforts over two years and that "the majority of consumers have yet to alter their behavior." [9] In January 2008 the Australian federal government announced that it plans to completely phase out the use of plastic carryout bags by the end of 2008, in part because the voluntary program has not achieved the desired results.

Within California, the cities of San Francisco and Oakland have recently banned the distribution of non-biodegradable plastic carryout bags in response to negative environmental impacts, litter problems and recycling issues related to plastic bags. San Francisco adopted its ordinance on March 22, 2007, banning the distribution of non-biodegradable plastic carryout bags. This followed the failure by supermarkets in the City to meet agreed upon targets for reducing plastic bag consumption by consumers under a voluntary program. The San Francisco ordinance requires all supermarkets (with gross annual sales of more than $2 million) and all retail pharmacy chains with at least 5 stores under the same ownership within the City to provide their customers with one or more of the following: 1) biodegradable carryout bags (that include the words "green cart compostable" and "reusable" and display a solid green line encircling the bag; 2) paper carryout bags (that do not contain old growth fiber, are 100% recyclable and contain at least 40% post consumer recycled content); 3) reusable bags made from cloth or from durable plastic greater than 2.25 mils thick. The ordinance went into effect on November 20, 2007. The City of Oakland adopted a similar ban on July 17, 2007, which was scheduled to take effect on January 17, 2008. Oakland's ordinance applies to all stores generating $1 million or

[7] http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/Waste/PlasticBags/News/MainBody,3199,en.htm, May 2007

[8] "Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement: Investigation of Options to Reduce the Environmental Impact of Plastic Bags", Environment Protection and Heritage Council, January 2007

[9] http://www.ephc.gov.au/pdf/Plastic_Bags/ANRA_Report_to_EPHC_Chair_22_May_2006.pdf

more in annual sales with the exception of restaurants. In August 2007, the City of Oakland was sued by the Coalition to Support Plastic Bag Recycling which argued that the City failed to complete an environmental impact report as required by CEQA before adopting its ordinance. In response to the lawsuit, the City of Oakland has agreed not to enforce its ordinance until the suit is resolved. A hearing is scheduled for January 29, 2008.

Within Southern California, the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors voted on January 22, 2008 to ban the free distribution of single use plastic carry out bags in unincorporated areas of the County if voluntary programs by retailers in those areas to reduce plastic bag use do not result in decreases of at least 30% by July 2010 and 65% by July 2013.

Assembly Bill 2449

On September 30, 2006, Governor Schwarzenegger signed into law AB 2449 which regulates plastic carryout bags statewide. The new law went into effect on July 1, 2007, and requires the operators of supermarkets and retail businesses greater than 10,000 square feet with a licensed pharmacy to establish an in-store recycling program that provides an opportunity for a customer of the store to return clean plastic carryout bags to that store. The law requires a plastic carryout bag provided by a store to have specified information printed or displayed on the bag, and requires the placement of a plastic carryout bag collection bin in each store greater than 10,000 square feet that is visible and easily accessible to the consumer. The regulated stores must send these collected bags for recycling. The law also requires the operator of a store to make reusable bags made from cloth, fabric or plastic with a thickness of 2.25 mils or greater available to customers for purchase. The law requires manufacturers of plastic carryout bags to develop educational materials to encourage the reducing, reusing, and recycling of the bags and to make the materials available to stores. The law did not establish at-store recycling or consumption goals; however, in June, 2007, the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) adopted emergency regulations establishing reporting requirements to aid in evaluating the effectiveness of the law[10].

AB 2449 specifically prohibits a city, county, or other public agency from adopting, implementing, or enforcing an ordinance, resolution, regulation, or rule that requires a store to collect, transport, or recycle plastic carryout bags or conduct additional auditing or reporting, or imposing a plastic carryout bag fee upon a store. The law does not prohibit a public agency from banning plastic bags outright. The law will remain in effect through January 1, 2013, when it is scheduled to sunset.

Discussion

Based on the research reviewed and summarized above, single use plastic carryout bags generate significant negative environmental impacts because:

- they are consumed in extremely high volumes
- they are produced from non-renewable resources
- they are designed to be disposable (rather than reusable)
- they are difficult to recycle
- they are a significant and very visible component of litter
- they do not biodegrade in the environment
- they represent a significant hazard to marine animals and birds

Single use alternatives to plastic carryout bags include paper bags and biodegradable plastic bags. Of these, paper bags are the best alternative from a marine environment and litter perspective. They are made from

[10] California Integrated Waste Management Board, Resolution, Agenda Item 14, June 12, 2007 Board Meeting

renewable resources, are readily recyclable, are widely available and are currently used in most retail stores throughout Santa Monica and the region. However, they are more expensive than plastic bags and require more resources to manufacture and transport than plastic bags. Biodegradable bags present many of the same environmental litter and marine environment problems as plastic bags, and they can contaminate plastic recycling waste streams. While they are compostable and are made from renewable resources, they are relatively expensive and are somewhat resource intensive in their manufacture. From an overall environmental and economic perspective, the best alternative to single use plastic carryout bags is a major shift to reusable bags.

As noted above, government agencies worldwide have taken numerous actions to address the significant problems with plastic bags in recent years. These actions fall into three main categories:

1. Voluntary programs (on the part of retailers) to reduce bag use and increase recycling of bags
2. Plastic bag fees or "taxes"
3. Plastic bag bans

Of these actions, voluntary programs are demonstrably the least effective at reducing the use of plastic bags. A voluntary program in San Francisco in 2006 was not effective in reaching City-mandated reduction targets, and led the City to adopt a ban in March 2007. A nationwide voluntary program in Australia begun in 2002 resulted in moderately increased recycling rates of plastic bags but had no effect on reducing litter and had little positive influence on consumer behavior despite an expenditure of over $50 million for public outreach on the program.

Both voluntary and mandatory plastic bag fees and taxes have proven to be very effective at significantly reducing the amount of plastic bags consumed, provided that the fees are high enough to provide an incentive for consumers to alter their behavior. A voluntary fee program implemented by a supermarket in Byron Bay, Australia beginning in 2002 resulted in an 83% reduction in plastic bag use[11]. A voluntary bag fee program begun by the retail company IKEA in Australia in 2002 and in England in 2006 resulted in 95% to 97% reduction in plastic bag consumption[12]. IKEA began a similar program at its stores in the United States in March 2007. None of these voluntary initiatives resulted in decreases in sales at the stores where they were implemented. And as noted above, the mandatory plastic bag fee initiated in Ireland in March 2002 resulted in a 95% reduction in plastic bag consumption.

Based on the negative environmental impacts related to single use plastic bags, staff recommends that City Council direct the City Attorney to draft an ordinance banning the free distribution to customers of single use plastic carryout bags at stores within Santa Monica. The ordinance would only apply to bags distributed at the point of sale and would not apply to plastic bags used for produce and other bulk items in stores. Staff recommends that single use biodegradable plastic bags be included in this ban because they present many of the same environmental litter and marine environment problems as plastic bags, and they can contaminate plastic recycling waste streams. The ordinance should specify that single use paper carryout bags are acceptable alternatives provided they do not contain old growth fiber, are 100% recyclable, and contain a minimum of 40% post consumer recycled content. In order to minimize the use of single use bags, the ordinance should require all affected stores to provide reusable carryout bags for sale and, with assistance from the City, promote their sale and use. The ordinance should provide at least 6 months prior to taking effect following Council adoption to allow stores to transition.

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[11] Australian Department of the Environment and Heritage Plastic Shopping Bags – Analysis of Levies and Environmental Impacts Final Report, prepared by Nolan-ITU, December 2002

[12] http://www.treehugger.com/files/2007/02/ikea_us_to_bag.php

Because alternatives to single use plastic carryout bags are readily available, staff recommends that the ban apply to all retail businesses in the city, including restaurants and food service establishments, regardless of size or sales volume. Staff believes that this is the most equitable and effective way of reducing the environmental impacts related to single use plastic bags. The ordinance should include a hardship provision that would exempt any business from complying with the ordinance that demonstrates that compliance will create significant economic hardship.

Staff also requests that City Council provide direction on a recommendation unanimously adopted by the Task Force on the Environment on December 17, 2007. The Task Force recommends that in addition to banning single use plastic carryout bags, the ordinance should require stores to impose a fee on single use paper bags, which would be collected and retained by the store. The intent of the fee would be to discourage the use of single use bags and accelerate a switch by consumers to reusable bags. Staff believes that such a fee would be allowed under the terms of AB 2449 and, if it was set at a sufficient level, would likely be effective at influencing a significant shift in consumer behavior away from single use bags in favor of reusable bags.

Policy Alternatives

Alternatives to the recommended actions include 1) impose a ban on single use plastic carryout bags only if certain plastic bag recycling targets are not reached by stores in Santa Monica by a certain date; and 2) take no action. Based on review of plastic bag diversion and recycling programs implemented by the stores distributing the bags, these types of programs are not effective at significantly increasing recycling rates or reducing litter, even with large, well funded campaigns. It is not likely that this option would be successful in significantly reducing the environmental impacts of single use disposable plastic bags. Option 2 would require the City to rely on the existing AB2449 legislation, which doesn't include any targets for diversion or recycling of single use disposable plastic bags. Approving this option would likely have little to no impact on reducing environmental impacts of plastic bags in Santa Monica.

Financial Impacts & Budget Actions

The primary budgetary impacts from adoption of the recommended ordinance would include costs to prepare and distribute outreach materials for use by stores affected by the ordinance, and staffing costs for implementation and enforcement. Staff estimates that approximately $60,000 per year in supplies and materials and a .5 FTE Administrative Analyst position will be needed on a permanent, ongoing basis to assist stores with compliance prior to the ordinance taking effect, and to develop an ongoing outreach campaign to encourage shoppers to bring their own reusable bags. The estimated annual cost, including benefits, for the half-time Administrative Analyst position is $52,053 for FY 2008-09. If Council directs staff to prepare an ordinance, a final fiscal impact analysis and recommendations will be presented to Council for review and action at the meeting for the first reading of a proposed ordinance. This will include additional detail regarding the costs and staffing impact of enacting ban on single use disposable plastic carryout bags. All efforts would be made to combine enforcement activities with existing on-site inspections currently conducted by City staff.

Prepared by: Dean Kubani, Environmental Programs Manager

Approved:	**Forwarded to Council:**
Craig Perkins Director- Environmental and Public Works Management Department	P. Lamont Ewell City Manager