

Reusable Bag Ordinance



**City of Cupertino
Resident PowerPoint
Updated July 3, 2013**



What is a Reusable Bag Ordinance?



- No more disposable, thin plastic carryout bags.
- 40% post-consumer recycled content paper bags can be purchased for 10 cents.
- Washable cloth or canvas reusable shopping bags are encouraged.
- Protective bags , without handles, used to transport and segregate produce, meat, prescriptions and greeting cards allowed at no additional charge.

Proposed Ordinance Details

Exempt Stores & Customers

- Dry Cleaners
- Public Eating Establishments
(*restaurants, fast food, or any establishment that generates 90% or more revenue from prepared food or drink*).
- Cafés
- Non-profit or charitable organizations
(*Ex: Goodwill*)

Categories of Stores Affected

- Grocery Stores
- Liquor Stores
- Pharmacy/Drug Stores
- Hardware Stores
- Electronic Stores
- Bookstores
- Clothing Stores
- “Any commercial establishment that sells perishable or non-perishable goods including but not limited to clothing, food and personal items directly to the customer.” (Exempting restaurants and non-profits)

Environmental Impacts in Cupertino



*Photo by: City Staff
Of Calabazas &
Stevens Creek 2010*



St. Joseph's School volunteers told City staff that plastic bags are among the top 3 most commonly-found types of litter during annual 6th grade clean up events in Cupertino's Calabazas & Regnart Creeks.

Bags from Stevens & Calabazas Creek Cleanups, in Cupertino



August 16, 2011 - Stevens Creek –
Cupertino Hot Spot Cleanup Event with
Volunteers



September 17, 2011 - Calabazas Creek -
Coastal Cleanup Day Event in Cupertino

The Regional Municipal Stormwater Permit issued by the Regional Water Board in October 2009, requires municipalities to **reduce trash loads** in their waterways by **40 percent by 2014, 70 percent by 2017, and 100 percent by 2022**. The Regional Water Board staff has acknowledged that plastic bags are prevalent and persistent components of the trash load, and stated that restrictions on their use will likely result in substantial trash load reductions

Plastic Bags & Creeks in Cupertino

- Plastic bags are especially difficult and problematic to extract in creeks because after being left in the sun and the water, they “photodegrade,” shred into tiny pieces, too small to contain, but just the right size for fish to consume (which may also pose a health risk to those higher up in the food chain).
- Since they are plastic, these bags persist in the environment for many years and are among debris that is observed in the open ocean (e.g. Northwest Pacific Gyre).
- Much of the litter in Cupertino is washed downstream during storms, into the creeks of its neighbors, Sunnyvale and Mountain View. Both of those cities have adopted bag ordinances.

Outreach Efforts

Proposed Ordinance

- Webpage cupertino.org/reusebags
- Letter & Comment card to impacted retailers (translated into Chinese)
- Retailer & Consumer informational meetings with Mandarin interpreter
- Newspaper ads in Cupertino Courier , World Journal & Sing Tao
- Press Release

Post Approved Ordinance

- Translation of some outreach materials into Chinese.
- Field visits to stores included in the ordinance.
- City staff attendance at community events.
- Retailer & Resident Toolkit
- Social media – Facebook & Twitter

Why a Proposed Ordinance?

Tax Dollars:
CA spends \$25 million annually in plastic bag litter clean up costs



Wildlife Impacts:
267 species are affected by plastic bag litter

(Laist, D.W., 1997)



Resources:
14 billion trees, water and energy are used annually to produce paper bags.



CUPERTINO



Fossil Fuel Use:
12 billion barrels of oil is used annually to make plastic bags in U.S.

(ABC News, 2007)



California
Integrated Waste
Management
Board

Bag Myth v. Facts

Myth - Recycling plastic bags is the best solution to addressing the litter problem.

Facts:

- Despite a 15-year statewide effort in California to promote recycling plastic bags, less than 5% are recycled.
- Lack of market, recyclers report a 17 cent handling fee per plastic bag.
(California Integrated Waste Management Board)

Myth - A Reusable Bag Ordinance will negatively affect the economically disadvantaged.

Facts:

- City Hall will distribute reusable bags free of charge to Cupertino residents (1 bag per visit).
- Reusable bags have become one of the most popular free giveaway items.
- Shoppers would have until October 1, 2013 to acquire a supply of free reusable bags.

Myth - Education over regulation is the best method.

Facts:

- Post ordinance: Washington D.C. saw 50-80% reduction in use of single-use bags.
- Post ordinance: City of San Jose has seen a 50% decrease in plastic bag litter, & 60% increase in reusable bags (City of San Jose, 2012).
- Post ordinance: Ireland saw a 90% decrease in plastic bag usage and litter.
(San Jose Single-Use Carryout Bag Environmental Impact Report, 2010, p.67).



Frequently Asked Questions

- **When will the ordinance become effective?**
The ordinance's effective date is October 1, 2013. You'll have time to prepare.
- **Who would keep the ten cent charge?**
Retailers would keep the charge to use in transitioning to new requirements.
- **Will people stop shopping in Cupertino if an ordinance is adopted?**
Adjacent cities with similar ordinances in place for a year or 6 mos. have not experienced this.
- **What about bags used for meat and produce. Are those still allowed?**
Yes, plastic or paper "produce" bags, without handles intended to protect and segregate items may be distributed at no charge.
- **Where can I get a reusable bag?**
Many grocery, pet, clothing stores, etc. sell reusable bags at a variety of prices & designs.
- **What will I line my trash can with?**
Purchase trash bags, use paper bags, or reuse restaurant carryout bags. Wrap wet food items (e.g. vegetables, fruit, eggshells) in newspaper or paper bags and place in the yardwaste bin for composting.
- **How will I remember my reusable bags?**
Parking lot signs and removable car window decals will be prepared to prompt you to remember your bags. Visit Cupertino City Hall for a free reusable bag (1 per visit, per person).

What will I use to clean up after my pet?



Muffin/bread bags



Produce bags

Pasta bags



Newspaper bags



There are many options available still free of charge. Many parks in Cupertino & surrounding cities offer a complimentary pet bag.

Questions & Comments

- Visit www.Cupertino.org/reusebags
- Email environmental@cupertino.org
- Call (408) 777-3241

