

San Jose Bag Stakeholder Meeting Notes

January 20, 2010

Present:

Jerry Denny-Flea Market, Mariya Kisina-District 1, Kara Noe-Safeway, Mack Johansen-Blackford NAC, Rich De La Rosa – San Jose/Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce and Latin-American Imports, City staff Emy Mendoza, Arleen Arimura, Jennifer Mitchell.

Joining by phone: Allison Chan-Save The Bay, Skip Lacaze – City of San Jose, Patrick Rita - Paper Bag Council, Bryan Early – Californians Against Waste, Christine Dindade - Catholic Diocese of San Jose.

1. Outreach Plan-Arlene Arimura, City of San Jose, ESD Communications team –
 - a. Arlene presented visual timeline for the next 18 months of outreach plans the City is developing. These plans are described on post-its as various pieces of the outreach could be moved to a different timeframe if needed.
 - i. Stakeholder input: The City is changing its stakeholder input emphasis from the current 2x/month stakeholder meetings to more targeted presentations for small and ethnic retailers.
 - ii. New schedule for stakeholder meeting: meet every other month, i.e. January, March, May and July.
 - iii. Publicly-noticed Citywide meetings to be held during Spring and Summer of 2010 in advance of ordinance, as required by Community Engagement Policy.
 - iv. Ethnic Press Conferences, media events to be held in Spanish and Vietnamese to raise awareness of Bring Your Own Bag for ethnic communities and ethnic retailers.
 - v. Regional outreach will continue -BayROC, Keep CA Beautiful, and County Public Education process.
 - vi. Neighborhood Outreach, Web Updates, Free Media
 - vii. Develop Outreach Campaign for Ordinance – targeted for August 2010
 1. Retailer Tool Kit, In Store Advertising, Bus shelters, mall advertising, bill insert.

Arleen asked for comments and input on this plan:

- Rich De La Rosa: Outreach to Spanish merchants is needed. There is no awareness among Hispanic community about this issue. Need to use Spanish-language media: newspapers (5 newspapers exist), Spanish radio. Retailers distribute the magazines/newspapers.
- The City and Rich are not currently aware of any Spanish retailer business association.

- Safeway is unable to give input at this time as ordinance language has not yet been finalized. Safeway does have experience working with checkers from implementing bag bans in San Francisco and Palo Alto. Safeway also recommends addressing paper bags as well as plastic bags.
- Jerry Denny: The future ordinance is easy to implement with stores and store-employees. The real question is how do we train the public to remember their bags? The price of the reusable bag matters. Walmart is charging .15 cents, which is a minimal amount. At the flea market, shoppers like the large reusable big bag to carry things.
- Some discussion occurred regarding targeted outreach at the flea market. Currently no signage exists for consumers. The parking lot, on the parking receipt might be a good opportunity to remind shoppers “Bring your own bag”.
- Some discussion occurred regarding banning bags at all retail stores. In SF, plastic bags are still being used since the ban only applies to large grocery stores and pharmacies. Stakeholders felt that San Jose’s proposal to ban plastic bags at all retailers is a better policy.

2. EIR Timeline

- a. Website-link to EIR Process from City’s Planning Department ([See bottom of San Jose Reusable Bags website to link to EIR processing timeline](#))
- b. Per Planning Department timeline, once the Administrative Draft EIR (ADEIR) is received from the consultant, a typical EIR can take 16 weeks for internal revisions and processing before a first Draft EIR is made available to the public.

3. Discussion on ordinance definitions

- a. Skip presented Definitions of the draft ordinance.
 - i. Alison-Is it appropriate to distribute this before an ordinance is in place? Won’t it impact the EIR?
 - ii. Skip-Chicken and egg problem. We need a starting point of definitions to accomplish a general understanding of the project.

Discussion points on definitions:

- Safeway: The requirement for stores to charge for paper bags should apply to all retailers, not just large volume retailers. If a store charge is established, the amount should be specified in the ordinance so that it is the same for all stores.
- Question regarding paper bags made of 40% post-consumer recycled (pcr) content – What do those bags cost to retailers? From Skip: Difficult to know as stores are reluctant to give us this info. They can be purchased at Sam’s Clubs for approximately 7cents per bag. 40% pcr is industry standard. We’ve been told by paper industry that 50% pcr is not feasible as not enough manufacturers produce bags with this rate.
- What is the percent of plastic will be eliminated if plastic carryout bags are banned? From Skip: we estimate that retail carryout bags are 50% of all carryout bags. Approx. 50% of all carryout would be eliminated.

- Question on exemption: Fast food is a big contributor, why are they exempt? Skip-Restaurants and fast food establishments were not within the original project scope given to us by council at the beginning of this process. The City has a Zero Waste goal and new regulations for storm water will require a decrease in litter of 40%. Foam packaging often used at restaurants and fast food has been identified as next goal. It will be a separate project from plastic bags.

Question regarding Small Business Development Commission recommendation for economic study on this ordinance:

No resolution at this time. IWM believes costs of implementing plastic bag ban to be low for retailers and consumers. Credits on reusable bags offered by retailers offset and pay for the purchases of reusable bags. With cash credit for using a reusable bag, over one year, there should be no out of pocket expenses for consumer. Staff report will summarize economic impact to businesses and consumers. Outside economic study is likely not viable due to recent financial restrictions on the city.

Some have expressed concern about businesses losing sales as a result of consumers going to the next town to shop, but there is no data to support this statement. SF has a ban, but businesses have not reported loss of business. There are some up-front costs to businesses to switch from plastic to inventorying more paper bags. We believe neighboring cities will follow San Jose's lead on this issue.

Next meeting March 10th 10am.