

San José Bag Stakeholder Meeting
February 11, 2009

In attendance: Emy M.(City of San José Environmental Services Department –ESD), Paige Brodsky (Streetlight Records), Megan Fluke (Generation Engage), Ken Kelly (Salvation Army), Bob Truesdale (Rite Aid), Kathy Duong (Council District 4), Carolina Camarena (ESD – Marketing & Communications), Trish Mulvey (Clean South Bay), Brad Imamura (resident), Melody Tovar (ESD-Deputy Director), Gary Janson (resident), Eva Klinger (San Jose Redevelopment Agency), Andria Ventura (Clean Water Action), Tim James (California Grocers Association).

Via phone conference: Lisa Rose and Cliff Chew (Santa Clara County Waste Management), Darrell Costello (Roplast), Ryan Kenny (American Chemistry Council-ACC), Kent Regan (Eco-unit).

Agenda:

- History of San José Bag Stakeholder group (10min)
 - Direction from Transportation and Environment Committee (T&E) - (20min)
 - Feedback to County Commission (15min)
 - Future plans for this group (30min)
1. **History of San José Bag Stakeholder group:** Began meeting after January 2008, when Mayor, Councilmember Chu and Councilmember Campos introduced issue of plastic bags to Rules Committee. Also at Green Vision Study Session February 2008, plastic bags were discussed, and reusable bags were determined to be the superior choice. After these two meetings, stakeholders from grocers association, plastic bag industry and others, asked to meeting with Councilmember Chu. ESD staff were included in this process, and were given the task of working with the stakeholders to reduce plastic bag usage. The group met a number of times, and their conclusions were presented to T&E, and then City Council in May 2008.

After May 2008, the stakeholder group continued to meet, and began to include a number of City staff from other departments, and staff from nearby cities who were also considering this issue.

A parallel process was happening at the County, with the County's Recycling and Waste Reduction Commission (RWRC, the Recycling Commission, or the Commission), taking the lead. RWRC is an advisory group, not a legislative body. They have been championing a regional solution across all jurisdictions in Santa Clara County, with support from the Santa Clara County Cities Association.

The San Jose Bag Stakeholder group has been meeting since May 2008, every other Wednesday, with a core group of about 15 people attending regularly. The email list of stakeholders has been around 140 people. This core group developed the proposed ordinance language which the Recycling Commission has sent to the various jurisdictions. The Commission is asking all jurisdictions to provide feedback to them on the proposed ordinance language. San Jose held two public meetings in January to collect public input. February 2, 2009, the proposal and feedback from the public were presented to T&E.

Discussion occurred regarding:

- Include law enforcement in stakeholder group. Code enforcement and Silicon Valley Anti-Litter Campaign are aware of the activity of this group.
- Equipment at materials recovery facilities (MRFs) recently updated, but plastic bags still create problems. Consider tours of MRFs for this group.

2. **Direction from T&E:** [Click here to access the Feb. 2 T&E meeting agenda](#), the report and recommendations presented on bags, and minutes from the meeting which describe additional recommendations.

CSJ staff will be working on the various recommendations, with stakeholder input, in the coming weeks. Staff will also be meeting with the American Chemistry Council.

Discussion occurred regarding:

- Bag ban would affect different businesses in different ways.
 - Data on AB 2449 (recycling of plastic bags at large supermarkets and pharmacies) has not been made available. Rite Aid representative estimated approx. 1% of plastic bags collected for recycling.
 - Non-profit organization receives donations in plastic bags.
3. **Feedback to the County Recycling Commission:** The proposed ordinance is being reviewed by all the jurisdictions, with instructions from the Commission to provide feedback on a number of specific topics. San José held two public meetings in January where public comments were collected. A memo was written on February 10, 2009 and sent to the Commission with feedback as requested, including a summary of the public comments. This memo is attached here.

Discussion:

- Feedback from other jurisdictions, per County staff, reflects need for further study, though ACC attended all council meetings of jurisdictions and described some cities opposed to action.
4. **Future plans for this group:**
 - No specific plans were made for how the meetings will proceed in the future.
 - A suggestion was made to organize specific focus groups for the different types of businesses and organizations who may be impacted by a bag ordinance.
 - Skip will be meeting with Salvation Army and other non-profits to hear their challenges, suggestions and needs. Salvation Army opposes fee to consumers and retailers, and presented on their experience with recycling, and serving low-income communities.
 - Public and retailer education is essential, especially outreach about this issue, and the current proposal. Many consumers and small business owners are unaware that San Jose is considering an action on bags.
 - A suggestion was made to conduct this meeting in various locations in the city, with various organizations.
 - Issue of competition across jurisdictions discussed. If not all jurisdictions adopt some bag action, small businesses would be especially impacted.
 - Rite Aid representative feels fee is too high, difficult to administer, especially if different jurisdictions have different requirements.

Other meetings on this topic:

San Jose City Council, February 24. Is viewable online, live. Go to:

<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/clerk/agenda.asp> for more information.

County Commission, February 25, 5:15pm. [Click here to go to www.reducewaste.org and Recycling Commission](#) for more information.

Direct link to Recycling Commission:

<http://reducewaste.org/portal/site/iwm/agencychp?path=%2Fv7%2FIntegrated%20Waste%20Management%28DIV%29%2FRecycling%20Commission>

Next San Jose Bag Stakeholder meeting: Wednesday, Feb 25 City Hall, 10th floor Room 1047, 10am – 1130am.