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## Culver City to Pursue Regulation Banning Plastic Bags

The Culver City City Council has directed staff to draft an Ordinance to ban single-use plastic bags and charge a fee for single-use paper bags.

By [Blake Morris](#) | [Email the author](#) | December 11, 2012

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In a meeting that lasted until late Monday night, the Culver City City Council unanimously decided to pursue regulating single-use carryout bags.

The City Council directed staff to draft a City Ordinance that bans the distribution of single-use plastic bags and requires retailers to charge customers for every single-use paper bag they use.

The Ordinance will be based on Los Angeles County's Ordinance, which also bans plastic bags, but will include a few minor modifications that could be accommodated within a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report to the already existing Los Angeles County EIR.

The City Council also directed staff to craft an in depth plan to educate all businesses that will be impacted by the Ordinance as well a plan to educate the community and make the transition as smooth as possible. Once the Ordinance draft is complete the Culver City Sustainability Sub-Committee will review it and it will then go back to the City Council for final approval.

Following the meeting, Mayor Andy Weissman told Patch, "I would hope that an ordinance will make its way back to council by March [2013].

Once the council made its decision Weissman told the assembled crowd Monday night, "It's unanimous. It was more a matter of when and never a matter of if, as far as I was concerned. "We have reached the point where we are in a position to be environmentally responsible and sensitive to competitiveness by joining with neighboring jurisdictions and adopting the County model."

More than 30 people spoke during public comment urging the council to ban plastic bags, including representatives from environmental advocacy organizations such as Heal The Bay and Environment California.

"Californians use 12 billion plastic bags a year and despite efforts to expand recycling programs, the statewide recycling rate remains around 5 percent," said Kathryn Benz of Heal The Bay. "Plastic bags, even if they are used once or twice for other purposes end up as litter or in our landfills...[it] ends up creating unhealthy watersheds and unhealthy neighborhoods by trashing our beaches, parks and streets where they harm marine life."

"It isn't all that convenient to change your approach," said Culver City resident and Transition Culver City member Carlyne Grey Anderson. "I think it's probably been four years since I took any kind of single-use bag, paper or plastic, from any of the businesses I patronize and it's been easy because there are so many alternatives."

Gary Robinson was the lone speaker that opposed a ban saying, "Food is the thing that spills out and contaminates thing. If you don't have plastic you're going to contaminate things. Are you going to ban sandwich bags? If I have a choice between going to a grocery store I'm going to go to one where I don't have to buy a bag."

The decision to ban single-use plastic bags in Culver City has been in the works for some time, going back to at least November 2010, when the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved a plastic bag ban in unincorporated areas. At that time, then Culver City Mayor Chris Armenta, backed by the Culver City City Council, sent a letter to the board of supervisors strongly supporting the ban.

Since then the movement to ban single-use plastic bags has been growing in Culver City and Councilmember Meghan Sahli-Wells was pleased with the Council's decision.

"I've been advocating for this ban since at least 2010," she said at the meeting. "In fact, I belong to many of the groups who are represented here, proudly so. So I guess I'd be preaching to the choir, to the 99 percent, to go over all the various reasons why we need to support the ban. I think we all get it."

*What do you think of the council's decision? Tell us in the comments, below.*

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