



## City Council

### Briefing on the Use of Plastic Bags

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**Agenda Item:**

Briefing on the Use of Plastic Bags

**Issue:**

Thurston County is considering efforts to reduce single-use plastic bags in conjunction with Olympia, Lacey, and Tumwater.

**Committee Recommendation:**

Council requested that this topic be approached on a regional basis through the Thurston County Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC).

**City Manager's Recommendation:**

Briefing Only. Thurston County's Education & Outreach Supervisor will brief the Council on their plan to educate stakeholders and identify possible solutions to reduce single-use plastic bags.

**Staff Contact:**

Ron Jones, Public Works, 360.753.8509

**Presenter(s):**

Ron Jones, Public Works Waste ReSources  
Terri Thomas, Education & Outreach Supervisor, Thurston County Solid Waste

**Background and Analysis:**

Single-use plastic bags can end up as litter either in the City or the natural environment. Unfortunately, they cannot be included in the City's curbside recycling program because they get tangled in the machinery during processing. Waste studies show that over 5% of Olympia and Thurston County's garbage is made up of plastic bags.

In the fall of 2011, Council was approached by Robb Krehbiel of Environment Washington with the issue of single-use plastic bags and the environmental concerns they may cause. At that time, there was a request and push from concerned citizens for the City to consider banning single-use plastic bags. Although other cities within the State were taking on plastic bag bans themselves, the City Council thought this should be discussed regionally. The Council directed staff to discuss the idea of a regional approach with the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC). City staff from Waste ReSources took the topic to the November meeting. During this meeting, SWAC made a unanimous decision to have County staff move this issue forward to the County Commissioners.

Staff from Thurston County Solid Waste is now actively working with the community to discuss the issues related to plastic bag use and gathering on possible solutions to the growing problem of single-use shopping bags.

**Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

A series of community meetings is set to take place in cities located within Thurston County, including Olympia scheduled for September 19, 2012, from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. here in the Council chambers.

**Options:**

None at this time.

**Financial Impact:**

None known at this time.