



Bring Your Own Bag Ordinance Surveys

City of Tacoma | OEPS

Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee

February 5, 2020

ITEM #



BACKGROUND



- In July 2016, Tacoma City Council passed BYOB ordinance (TMC 12.09.215)
 - Went into effect July 12, 2017
- Main elements of the law:
 - Thin plastic checkout bags may no longer be distributed at any Tacoma retail establishments
 - Retail establishments must collect a minimum pass-through charge of five cents for each recycled paper or reusable checkout bag requested by customers
 - Those with EBT/WIC/TANF benefits do not have to pay the pass-through charge on paper bags



BACKGROUND



• Ordinance requirements:

Section 3. That the City Manager is directed to conduct a study to evaluate the impacts of TMC 12.09.215 on low-income populations and communities of color, to be completed within 18 months of implementation of TMC 12.09.215.

Customer Survey
(Completed in 2018)

Section 4. Commencing in 2018 and ending in 2020, the City Manager shall (1) aggregate the data received from the annual reports voluntarily submitted by retail establishments pursuant to TMC 12.09.215.C, annually report the aggregate totals to the City Council, and report the annual and cumulative percentage change in the number of recycled paper carryout bags distributed; (2) conduct an annual voluntary survey of retail establishments regarding the impact of TMC 12.09.215 on retail establishments, including the challenges of implementation, improvements that could be made, whether carryout bag practices have changed, and impacts to customer experiences; and (3) report the results of the survey to the City Council.

Retailer Survey
(Annual through 2020)

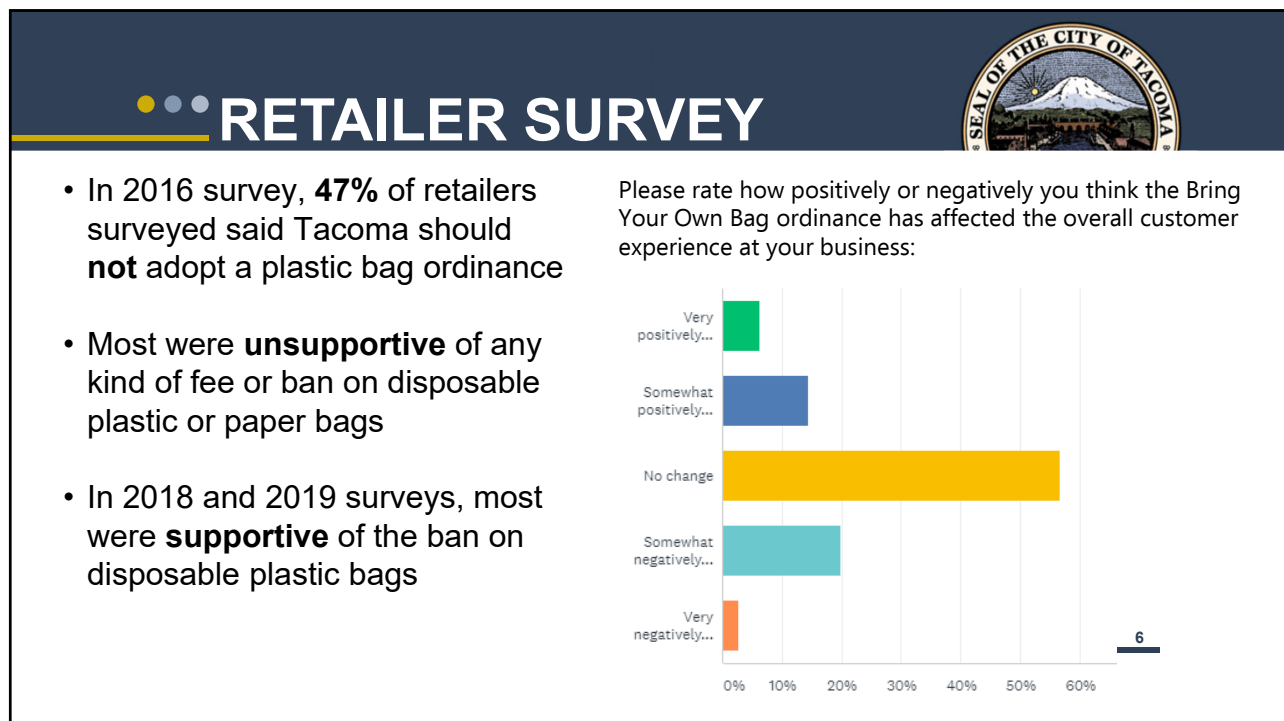
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RETAILER SURVEY



- Questions were designed based on ordinance requirements:
 - **Only required question:** How many paper bags did your business distribute between August 1, 2018 and July 31, 2019?
- Sent to 1800 retailers via mail, with an optional web link
- **454** total responses; **144** reported giving out paper bags
 - The **highest** number of reported bags distributed was **1,757,858**
 - The **average** number of reported bags distributed was **106,007**
- Total number of distributed bags reported: **3,074,194**

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RETAILER SURVEY



Please continue to expand and improve the reduction of single use plastic in our city. Please continue to make strides towards a more environmentally safe and more sustainable city.

It's been troublesome - but I approve wholeheartedly. Saving a few paper bags will not save the world, but it all helps. Thanks for doing this.

Awesome implementation!

I hope we can apply this concept to other items and continue to responsibly educate the public on environmental issues. Thank you!

I just started my business operating in Tacoma a year ago and this is the first time I have been made aware of the BYOB ordinance.

Customers do not like to pay for brown bags and most of the time they are not convinced that its a City ordinance, so we end up sometimes giving it to them at no charge to keep coming back.

The ban should be abolished. It has encouraged shoplifting in a big way. It was a BAD idea!

Please stop asking us to charge our customers. I'd be happy to pay the 5 cents to the city ourselves.

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ISSUES

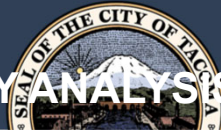


- **TacomaFIRST311** received **5 complaints** from January 2019 – December 2019:
 - Not charging customers for bags (3 complaints)
 - Charging EBT customers for bags (2 complaints)
- **29 complaints** from July 2017 – December 2017
- **12 complaints in 2018**
- Each complaint was resolved with a single educational visit or phone call



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●●● HEALTH, EQUITY & SUSTAINABILITY ANALYSIS



• Health

- In 2018, 58% of community members surveyed reported seeing fewer plastic bags as litter in Tacoma

• Equity

- All retail establishments are required to comply with the ordinance (with the exception of food service)
- EBT/WIC/TANF benefits do not have to pay the pass-through charge on paper bags

• Sustainability

- In 2015, Tacoma used an estimated 70-100 million disposable plastic bags each year
- Reduced impact on the solid waste / recycling system
- Positive impacts on wildlife, ecosystems



●●● CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS



- 20 Washington cities and 2 counties have a plastic bag ban
- State-wide bill for \$.08 bag charge was introduced in 2020 legislative session
- OEPS has had several inquiries from nearby municipalities regarding Tacoma's ordinance
- OEPS recommends that the city maintain enactment of TMC 12.09.215 at the current levels
- A waste characterization study will be completed this year
- Questions?



Office of
Environmental Policy
and
Sustainability