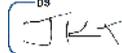




**Environmental Services**  
222 Laporte Ave.  
PO Box 580  
Fort Collins, CO 80522  
**970.221.6600**  
[fcgov.com/environmental\\_services](http://fcgov.com/environmental_services)

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** January 15, 2021  
**To:** Mayor Troxell and City Councilmembers  
**Thru:** Darin Atteberry, City Manager   
Jacqueline Kozak Thiel, Chief Sustainability Officer   
Lucinda Smith, Environmental Services Director   
**From:** Molly Saylor, Senior Specialist, Environmental Sustainability

**Re: January 12, 2021 Work Session Summary: Single Use Plastics Ballot Item Discussion**

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Attendees: All Councilmembers were present.

Staff presented options for Council to consider as part of a potential future ordinance on single-use plastic and paper bags for referral to the April 2021 ballot.

### Key discussion points

- Some Councilmembers expressed preferences for
  - Fort Collins to lead and not wait for potential legislation from the State
  - Support for referring a City ordinance to ballot (with ability for future Councils to adjust in response to future circumstances), and let voters decide
  - If referred to ballot, importance of making sure voters understand what they are voting on
  - Noted a majority of public survey responses to-date support a bag ordinance
  - If ballot item passes, support for 2021 City resources to begin outreach in advance of ordinance taking effect in 2022
  - Bag fee starting at the low end of proposed range
  - Support for proposed elements identified in the fee-funded plastic pollution mitigation and solid waste reduction program to be administered by the City
- Some Councilmembers shared
  - Concerns about impact to low-income families and question on whether the proposed paper bag fee exemption goes far enough; suggestion to explore ways to reach more people
  - Preference that City not proceed now, and instead wait for state legislation to address plastic bags
  - An interest in addressing plastic pollution through innovation and circular economy strategies
  - Request to remain vigilant about potential unintended consequences

### Additional Information on Income-Qualified Exemption

The proposed ordinance exempts grocery store customers from the paper bag fee if they present any benefit card associated with a federal, state or county income-qualified assistance programs, not only "food" assistance programs such as SNAP and WIC. This includes programs such as Medicaid, Veterans Services, and Bureau of Indian Affairs. Staff anticipates that the vast majority of customers who present a benefit card will use SNAP or WIC as these pertain to food purchases. However, the broader language leaves the door open to future income-qualified programs that may issue benefit cards. In addition, when developing a reusable bag distribution plan, the City or grocer fee revenue could provide grocers with reusable bags to be distributed at their discretion, to address individuals who are not able to cover the paper bag fee or have other barriers not addressed in the ordinance.



Next steps:

- Ensure community plastic bag survey is available from the fcgov.com homepage again. Survey will end Jan. 31
- Continue to monitor State legislation pertaining to plastic pollution
- Continue to explore longer-term approaches with regard to circular economy
- **Feb 2-** First reading of the plastic pollution ordinance and funding ordinance

Bag ordinance to refer to ballot:

- Ban plastic bags and charge a \$0.12 fee on paper bags at large grocers
- Split fee revenue 50:50 between grocer and the City
- Ordinance takes effect May 1, 2022

Funding Ordinance to provide implementation resources in 2021 if votes pass ballot item

- Request for \$87,500 in 2021 to fund an FTE to roll out the ordinance, an outreach and engagement campaign to help transition the community, and the purchase of reusable bags for distribution to low-income households.
- **Feb 16** – Second reading of plastic pollution ordinance and funding ordinance, *and* resolution to refer the ordinance to the ballot as a referendum.