



Proposal.....	1
Draft ordinance .....	2
Frequently asked questions.....	4
Timeline.....	6
Case studies.....	7



## Proposal – Executive Summary

Bring Your Own Glen-Ed is a growing coalition of citizens and community groups seeking to reduce the harm single-use plastics have on our health, the environment, and the local economy. This coalition engages and educates the community while also seeking out solutions and best practices from other cities across the U.S. and around the world. Bring Your Own Glen-Ed is committed to strategic, long-term solutions that make sense for Edwardsville and Glen Carbon.

- **Proposal** | A 10-cent fee on single-use bags distributed at all grocery/retail stores larger than 7,000 square feet, as well as all gas stations and convenience stores of any size, located in Edwardsville and Glen Carbon.
- **Why a fee?** | To encourage people to adopt an alternative habit of bringing reusable bags when they go shopping, numerous cities have successfully established fees or other restrictions on single-use bags. Even a small fee has resulted in consumer behavior change, resulting in dramatic reduction in disposable bag use as a result of such laws.
- **Use of fees** | Retailers keep 100 percent of the fees, which they can use for any legal purpose. Retailers could opt to donate the fees to a local charity or use the fees generated to purchase reusable bags for their customers.
- **Timeline** | Passage of the ordinance by both Edwardsville and Glen Carbon is targeted for February 1, 2019. To provide ample time to prepare for and broadly communicate the new ordinance, implementation of the ordinance is targeted for four (4) months later, June 1, 2019. If the passage of the ordinance requires more time from either municipality, the go-live date of implementation will be pushed back to ensure a 4-month period of preparation.
- **Enforcement** | Compliance would rely on retailers to self-regulate. Citizens could alert the City if they observe a retailer ignoring the fee. If the report was substantiated, the City could issue a warning for the first offense and a fine for any subsequent offenses.
- **Benefits** | This ordinance would further position Edwardsville and Glen Carbon as exemplars of sustainable communities that are achieving triple-bottom-line benefits – environmental, social, and economic – through practical solutions that improve quality of life for all:
  - ✓ Environmental – cleaner local lands and waters<sup>1</sup>, decreased emissions
  - ✓ Social – improved human health and well-being
  - ✓ Economic – decreased costs associated with processing plastic bags<sup>2</sup>, reduction in expenses for retailers, values-driven marketing message for retailers

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<sup>1</sup> Living Lands and Waters – a local conservation organization – collected 8,798 plastic bags in 2017 from the Mississippi River watershed, which encompasses 1/3 of the United States. Even when disposed of correctly, plastic bags routinely blow out of collection sites, ending up in our neighborhood trees, roadsides, sewers, and streams – costing communities real losses in the form of clean-up expenses, degraded habitats, turn-offs for new residents or new businesses, and loss of civic pride.

<sup>2</sup> Locally, Republic Services reports single-use plastic bags as one of the biggest contaminants, causing lost time and increased maintenance costs when the thin-film bags wrap around processing gears. Increased processing costs are one factor that affects contracts with municipalities. Across the country, it's a similar narrative. San Francisco calculates the cost at 17 cents per bag. New York City estimates that the 80 percent reduction they are seeking in plastic bag use would eliminate 10 million dollars in processing costs.



# DRAFT Ordinance to Promote Reusable Bags

in Edwardsville and Glen Carbon

## Purpose

It is in the best interests of the health, safety, and welfare of citizens and visitors of Edwardsville and Glen Carbon to (1) reduce the cost to each City of solid waste disposal; (2) protect our environment and our natural resources by reducing the waste caused by single-use carryout bags; and (3) incentivize the use of reusable bags at Stores, as defined in this Ordinance.

## Definitions

As used in this Ordinance the following terms have the following meanings:

- **Store.** Any grocery/retail store larger than 7,000 square feet, and gas stations and convenience stores of any size, located in Edwardsville and Glen Carbon.
- **Single-Use Carryout Bag.** Single-use carryout bag means a bag other than a Reusable bag provided at the check stand, cash register, point of sale, or other point of departure for the purpose of transporting food or merchandise out of the establishment. The term single-use carryout bag includes compostable and biodegradable bags (including paper) but does not include reusable bags, produce or product bags, or other bag types listed in **Exemptions**.
- The terms **Produce Bag** or **Product Bag** mean any bag without handles used exclusively to carry produce, meats, other food items or merchandise to the point of sale inside a store or to prevent such items from coming into direct contact with other purchased items.
- **Reusable Bag** means a bag that is: (a) Designed and manufactured to withstand repeated uses over a period of time; (b) Is machine washable or made from a material that can be cleaned and disinfected regularly; (c) That is at least 2.25 mil thick if made from plastic; (d) Has a minimum lifetime of 75 uses; and (e) Has the capability of carrying a minimum of 18 pounds.

## Single-Use Carryout Bag Regulation

- a) No Store shall provide a Single-Use Carryout Bag to a Customer at the check stand, cash register, point of sale, or other point of departure for the purpose of transporting food or merchandise out of the establishment except as provided in this Section.
- (b) A Store may make available for sale to a Customer a Single-Use Carryout Bag for a minimum charge of 10 cents (\$0.10).
- (c) All monies collected by a Store for Single-Use Carryout Bags can be used by the Store for any legal purpose. Stores could opt to donate the fees to a local charity or use the fee to make reusable bags available for their customers.
- (d) All Stores must provide and post signage clearly indicating the per bag charge for Single-Use Carryout Bags.

(e) No store may make available for sale a Single-Use Carryout Bag unless the amount of the sale of the Single-Use Carryout Bag is separately itemized on the sale receipt.

(f) No Store shall rebate or otherwise reimburse a customer or absorb any portion of the minimum charge required.

## **Exemptions**

- Plastic bags used within a store, such as produce, deli, meat, fish, flowers, or bulk food bags
- Restaurant take-out/take-home bags
- The small bags pharmacies use for medications
- Dry cleaner bags
- Newspaper bags
- Food pantries and other emergency food suppliers
- Temporary vendors at farmer's markets, festivals, or other special events
- A Store shall be exempt from the provisions of this Article in a situation deemed by the City Administrator to be an emergency for the immediate preservation of public health or safety.

## **Violations and enforcement**

Compliance with the ordinance relies on retailers to self-regulate. Citizens could alert the City if they observe a retailer ignoring the fee. If the report was substantiated, the City could issue a warning for the first offence and a fine for any subsequent offenses. Violations shall be punishable by fines as follows: (a) A fine not exceeding \$100 for the first violation in a one-year period; (b) A fine not exceeding \$250 for the second and each subsequent violation in a one-year period.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Why do we need to limit single-use plastic bags?

While plastic itself has transformed our world in so many beneficial ways, the day-to-day use of plastic in its cheap, ubiquitous form – the single-use plastic bag – is one of the greatest environmental challenges of our time.

The quantity of plastic bags we take home is staggering: the average family accumulates 60 bags in only four trips to the grocery store; the average American adult takes home close to 1,500 bags annually. Each year, an estimated 500 billion to 1 trillion plastic bags are consumed worldwide. That comes out to over one million per minute. In a landfill, or in the environment, plastic bags take up to 1,000 years to degrade. As they degrade, they eventually break apart into tiny particles which not only bio-accumulates in marine life, but as we now know from a growing body of research, ends up in our food chain as well, negatively affecting human health and wellness.

Dealing with this stream of single-use plastic is expensive. Single-use plastic bags are the bane of sewer districts and recycling centers, clogging up drains, equipment, and time. Even when disposed of correctly, plastic bags routinely blow out of collection sites, ending up in our neighborhood trees, roadsides, sewers, and streams – costing our communities real losses in the form of clean-up expenses, degraded habitats, turn-offs for new residents or new businesses, and loss of civic pride for those who live, work, learn, and play here.

### 2. Can't plastic bags be recycled?

Yes, but there are still issues that make Reduce/Reuse the more impactful solution. According to Waste Management, only one percent of plastic bags are returned for recycling.<sup>3</sup> Bags recycled in store collection bins must be empty, clean, and dry; and this system can't take every kind of bag. The plastic bag recycling programs at retail chains were set up by manufacturers that use "plastic film" material as feedstock for their products. This kind of collection is a resourceful partnership between an end-user of a hard-to-recycle material and companies that give out bags in the first place. You can absolutely recycle bags in these store bins, and the material will be used. But dealing with bags this way is far from the large-scale solution needed.

### 3. How would the "Bring Your Own" ordinance work?

Edwardsville and Glen Carbon would require retailers, at the time of check-out, to charge 10 cents for each single-use bag used, including both plastic and paper bags. Retailers would keep 100 percent of the fees, which they can use for any legal purpose. Retailers would be encouraged to donate the fees to local, non-profit organizations or use the fees to make reusable bags available for their customers. For stores with self-checkout systems, a prompt would be added to the check-out interface system asking the customer to enter the number of bags they are using, and the calculated fee would be added to their total purchase as a separate line item.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.wmnorthwest.com/guidelines/plasticvspaper.htm>

#### 4. Why are paper bags included?

While not as damaging as plastic, paper bags also have a significant environmental cost. Moreover, the goal is to encourage people to shop with reusable bags. If single-use paper bags remained free, people might not be motivated to change habits.

#### 5. Isn't a fee a form of taxation?

No. The city is not collecting the fees, the retailers are. The retailers keep 100 percent of the fees generated, which they can use for any legal purpose.

Regarding whether the 10-cent bag purchase itself gets added to a customer's pre-tax total, vs. as an after-tax line item, varies by city, county, and state and would need to be determined by both Edwardsville and Glen Carbon.

#### 6. Does the fee-based approach actually work?

Yes, remarkably well. Designed to encourage people to bring a reusable bag when they shop, this fee-based approach has proven effective in other communities. Multiple countries and cities around the U.S. have achieved between 60 percent to 90 percent reduction in single-use bags by requiring customers to pay a small fee per bag.<sup>4</sup>

#### 7. Would low-income households be affected?

Participating stores would be encouraged to make complimentary bags available for the first few weeks of the roll-out, as a way to communicate about the program while also providing bags to those who need them. As part of the roll-out of the program, "Share-a-Bag" receptacles would be set up at multiple, easy-to-access locations, including Goodwill, libraries, YMCA centers, and other sites. The long-term goal of the program is to shift behaviors of all people toward bringing their own reusable bags each time they shop.

#### SHOPPING BAGS, FROM WORST TO BEST

- ☹️ **FLAT-OUT BAD:** The worst environmental choice you can make at the store is a plastic bag that will never biodegrade. Reusing it a few times does little to lessen the impact.
- ☹️ **STILL NOT GOOD:** A paper bag will eventually decompose, but because of the environmental costs associated with making it, it's still not a good choice.
- 😞 **PROBLEMATIC:** Thick plastic-coated reusable bags are definitely more sturdy and lasting. But the plastic coating that has helped it endure makes it less than ideal.
- 😊 **GOOD:** Synthetic fabric bags are a major improvement. They're reusable, sturdy, and not coated with plastic. But they could be better.
- 😊 **EVEN BETTER:** Washable fabric bags that fold up into a tiny pouch; some even clip on to keychains for added convenience.
- ☺️ **BEST:** The ideal bag for your groceries is a reusable one made of sustainably grown cotton. It lasts, is washable, and you can feel good about the way it was made.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.kqed.org/news/11461251/are-plastic-bag-bans-good-for-the-environment>



## Timeline

### May-December 2017

- Group begins to meet regularly
- Creates a Facebook Group and Public Page
- Conducts research on similar initiatives in other cities, states, and countries
- Begins public outreach and engagement at local events and festivals

### January-August 2018

- Group decides to officially shorten name to *Bring Your Own Glen-Ed*
- Develops Executive Summary packet including background information, case studies, the proposed ordinance, and frequently asked questions
- Continues community outreach in the form of presentations, tabling at events, newsletter articles, and social media; reaches out to other groups at SIUE, schools, scout troops, etc.
- Collects signatures from local residents and businesses on Statements of Support

### September-December 2018

- Convenes Local Business Task Force and engages others in the business community to identify, address, and develop solutions with and for retailers
- Commits to pursuing ordinance in both Edwardsville and Glen Carbon, to go into effect simultaneously
- Begins process of working through local city councils and committees
- Collects data on current use of reusable bags among customers at select local stores
- Develops Communications Strategy & Plan for pre- and post-ordinance implementation

#### Business Task Force recommendations:

- ✓ Ordinance needs to be implemented in both Edwardsville and Glen Carbon simultaneously.
- ✓ Cities don't receive any portion of fees to avoid the perception of a tax.
- ✓ Messaging option: The 10-cent fee benefits local charities.

### 2019 – Pre-work before ordinance goes into effect

- Work with Edwardsville and Glen Carbon city councils to set target date for ordinance to go live in both cities
- Develop a timeline working backwards from that target date for execution of Communications Plan tactics

### 2019– Post-work after ordinance goes into effect

- "Share-A-Bag" receptacles will be located in multiple locations where people can give or pick up a bag.
- Collect post-ordinance data on change in reusable bag use – a major metric of success – via informal surveys and/or passive data collection
- Compile report on process, data, lessons learned, and best practices to share with other local communities



## Case Studies

### Oak Park, IL<sup>5</sup> | population 51,000

- Passed 10-cent single-use bag fee in 2018
- Applied to retail establishments greater than 5,000 square feet
- Retailers keep 5 cents, while the other 5 cents is remitted to the village's sustainability fund
- In first month, the village collected more than \$10K in first month of 10-cent bag fee, representing approximately 200,000 bags purchased.
- While the first month's revenues came in greater than expected, officials were quick to point out that the program is not intended to be a money-maker for the village. Notable quote: *"I think this is the one and only time, on behalf of the village of Oak Park, that I hope we get that revenue down to zero."* ~ Village Trustee Bob Tucker
- Village officials reported a "smooth" rollout, receiving very few complaints. A survey conducted prior to the fee ordinance showed that approximately 50 percent of residents reported already using reusable bags.
- Mindy Agnew, Oak Park's Sustainability Coordinator, reported that according to a retailer survey, 1.4 million bags were bought prior to the new law. After the law went into effect, this number dropped to 22,000 – a 98 percent decrease.

### Chicago, IL<sup>6</sup> | population 2.7 million

- Passed 7-cent single-use bag tax in 2017
- Before the tax went into effect Feb. 1, 2017, shoppers took home an average of 2.3 disposable bags every time they shopped at a big grocery store.
- In the first month, the bag tax resulted in 42 percent drop in use of plastic and paper bags.
- A central part of the City's 2017 spending plan, the tax on plastic and paper bags was estimated to add \$9.2 million to the city's coffers. The city gets a nickel from the sale of each bag, with the store owner getting the other two cents.
- Local organizers of the initiative credited store cashiers with the tax's success — by asking whether shoppers want to buy a bag, they are prompting everyone to consider their behavior.
- Notable quote: *"I am glad so many Chicagoans are choosing to forgo paper or plastic bags at checkout, and encourage others to help Chicago further reduce disposable bag use in the city. By decreasing our paper and plastic bag use, Chicago is making important progress in reducing our carbon footprint as well as reducing street litter and improving recycling operations."* ~ Mayor Rahm Emanuel

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/oak-park/news/ct-oak-single-use-bag-fees-tl-0315-20180313-story.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20170424/lincoln-square/were-using-42-percent-fewer-bags-since-7-cent-tax-started-city-study-says/>

### **Portland, ME<sup>7</sup> | population 67,000**

- Passed a 5-cent fee on single-use bags in 2014
- Before the ordinance went into effect on April 15, about 10 percent of customers came in with reusable bags. Afterwards, more than 80 percent do.
- Notable quote: “Reusable is in. It’s the norm now.” ~ City official Eric Blom
- Portland’s success sparked similar ordinances elsewhere in southern and midcoast Maine
- Statewide: With passed and proposed measures across the state, nearly 12 percent of Maine’s 1.3 million residents are poised to say goodbye to most plastic bags

### **Boulder, CO<sup>8</sup> | population 108,000**

- Passed single-use bag fee in 2013
- Boulder officials estimated 22 million disposable checkout bags had been used every year in their city alone before the fee was enacted
- New law has resulted in a 68 percent reduction in the use of plastic and paper bags.

### **San Jose, CA<sup>9</sup> | population 1 million**

- Passed a 10-cent fee for single-use bags in 2010; fee later increased to 25 cents
- Reusable bag use increased from about 4 percent to 62 percent and the number of people who chose to carry items by hand doubled.
- Litter surveys conducted a year after the ordinance passed showed showed an 89 percent decrease of bag litter in storm drain systems, 60 percent decrease in creeks and rivers, and 59 percent decrease in city streets and neighborhoods.

### **England, Great Britain<sup>10</sup> | population 53 million**

- Passed 5p single-use bag fee/levy in 2015
- Across the country, the number of single-use bags handed out dropped to 500m in first six months since charge, compared with 7bn the previous year
- The entire country’s plastic bag usage dropped 85% since fee introduced
- The charge has also triggered donations of more than £29m from retailers towards good causes including charities and community groups
- England was the last part of the UK to adopt the 5p levy, after successful initiatives in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.pressherald.com/2015/10/11/as-portland-goes-so-goes-maine/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.denverpost.com/2014/03/14/meyer-plastic-bag-bans-and-fees-work-so-whats-the-holdup-in-denver/>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www3.sanjoseca.gov/clerk/CommitteeAgenda/TE/20121203/TE20121203\\_d5.pdf](http://www3.sanjoseca.gov/clerk/CommitteeAgenda/TE/20121203/TE20121203_d5.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/jul/30/england-plastic-bag-usage-drops-85-per-cent-since-5p-charged-introduced>