

LAREDO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Plastic Shopping Bag Survey

The Citizens Environmental Advisory Committee of the city of Laredo has proposed an ordinance to ban/restrict the use of plastic shopping bags by local retailers. Although, a final version of the proposed ordinance has yet to be drafted, preliminary discussion has ranged from complete elimination of all plastic and paper bags to restriction of plastic bags for “large” retailers only.

The Laredo Chamber of Commerce decided to conduct a survey to gauge its membership’s response in regard to the proposed ordinance. The survey was conducted electronically with the use of services by *constantcontact.com*. A total of 1,412 e-mail addresses were contacted via the survey. 193 responses were recorded -- a 13.7% response level. The results are nonscientific. (The instrument used for the survey does not permit an e-mail address to submit more than 1 response.)

The survey form consisted of seven statements. Respondents were asked to rate each statement on a scale from 1 to 4 (1 denoting “Strongly Agree” and 4 denoting “Strongly Disagree”). A fifth option offered respondents a “No Comment” alternative. Following is a breakdown of responses.

CONCLUSIONS

Results of the survey, in general terms, indicate that whereas respondents do feel that plastic bags create a trash nuisance and are bad for the environment, they disagree with the passing of an ordinance to ban all types of bags – including paper. The majority of respondents also disagreed with the concept of having shoppers “buy” non disposable bags. The majority of respondents favor a community-wide campaign, other than a ban, to control the disposal of bags.

Responses by item:

1) Shopping plastic bags create a trash nuisance and are bad for the environment.

The majority of respondents clearly agreed with the statement.

1	2	3	4	5
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO COMMENT
39%	32%	17%	11%	2%

2) I support efforts by the City to control the use of shopping plastic bags.

A majority of respondents agreed with the statement (58%). 40% voiced disagreement.

1	2	3	4	5
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO COMMENT
29%	29%	17%	23%	2%

(cont.)

3) I think an ordinance to stop the use of shopping bags should include a ban on all types of bags including paper sacks.

Respondents in a strong majority (82%) disagreed with the concept of a ban on all types of shopping bags.

1	2	3	4	5
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO COMMENT
6%	9%	38%	44%	5%

4) I am in favor of a ban on shopping plastic bags but I do not think it is proper that consumers should have to “buy” non-disposable bags.

The number of responses expressing agreement matched the number of responses expressing disagreement – a total of 46% for each.

(Note: The statement may be confusing in the way it was worded. It actually includes two statements within the same sentence. Respondents may have been confused in reading it, while they may have agreed with the first part they may have disagreed with the second part, or vice versa.)

1	2	3	4	5
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO COMMENT
23%	23%	20%	26%	8%

5) Rather than a ban on shopping bags, I would support a community-wide campaign to control the disposal of bags – e.g., recycling efforts.

Responses heavily favored a community-wide campaign as opposed to a ban on shopping bags. 71% of respondents expressed agreement.

1	2	3	4	5
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO COMMENT
45%	26%	17%	7%	5%

**6) I am in favor of an ordinance to ban the use of shopping plastic bags –
a) by all retail stores in Laredo.**

60% of respondents disagreed with a proposal for a ban on the use of shopping bags by all retail stores.

1	2	3	4	5
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO COMMENT
23%	13%	27%	33%	4%

b) ...only in grocery stores.

Again, the majority of respondents disagreed with a proposal to ban plastic bags – even in grocery stores only. 58% expressed disagreement vs. 39% expressing agreement.

1	2	3	4	5
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO COMMENT
21%	18%	20%	38%	3%