

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM
City of Palo Alto
Department of Planning and Community Environment

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. PROJECT TITLE

Reusable Bag Ordinance

2. LEAD AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS

City of Palo Alto
Department of Public Works
2501 Embarcadero Way
Palo Alto, CA 94303

3. CONTACT PERSON AND PHONE NUMBER

Clare Campbell
Planner, City of Palo Alto
(650) 329-3191

4. PROJECT SPONSOR'S NAME AND ADDRESS

Public Works Department
City of Palo Alto
2501 Embarcadero Way
Palo Alto, CA 94303

5. PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed project would be applicable to all affected stores within the City of Palo Alto. The affected stores are Supermarkets and Large Pharmacies. Supermarkets are full service grocery stores with gross annual sales of two million dollars (\$2,000,000) or more. Large Pharmacies are pharmacies with over 10,000 square feet of store space.

6. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DESIGNATION

The citywide project is consistent with the Palo Alto 1998-2010 Comprehensive Plan. The policies most directly supporting are N-21 and N-34. Policy N-21 is to reduce non-point source pollution to waterways. Policy N-34 is to reduce the amount of waste disposed in the City's landfill.

7. ZONING

The citywide project does not conflict with existing zoning development standards and allowable uses.

8. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project is a proposed Ordinance which would reduce the use of Polyethylene (PE) plastic bags in Palo Alto thereby reducing the number of them that are released to the natural environment and the number that are disposed of in Palo Alto's landfill. The Ordinance would prohibit Supermarkets and Large Pharmacies from making PE bags available at checkout stands. (Supermarkets are full service grocery stores with gross annual sales of two million dollars (\$2,000,000) or more. Large Pharmacies are pharmacies with over 10,000 square feet of store space.) PE bags would still be allowed in the produce and meat departments of supermarkets. The restrictions would be effective 6 months from the date of adoption.

9. OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES

- County of Santa Clara, Office of the County Clerk-Recorder

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST AND DISCUSSION OF IMPACTS

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

- 1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. [A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e. g. the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e. g. the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).]
- 2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
- 3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
- 4) "(Mitigated) Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from Section 17, "Earlier Analysis," may be cross-referenced).
- 5) Earlier analysis may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063 (C)(3) (D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
 - a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.

- b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
 - c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are “Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated,” describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
- 6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g. general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
- 7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
- 8) The explanation of each issue should identify:
- a) The significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
 - b) The mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

DISCUSSION OF IMPACTS

The following Environmental Checklist was used to identify environmental impacts, which could occur if the proposed project is implemented. The left-hand column in the checklist lists the source(s) for the answer to each question. The sources cited are identified at the end of the checklist. Discussions of the basis for each answer and a discussion of mitigation measures that are proposed to reduce potential significant impacts are included.

A. AESTHETICS

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5,6, 7, 8, 9, 10,15, 17			X	
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on a public view or view corridor?	1,2,3, 4.5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,15, 17			X	
c) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	17				X
d) Violate existing Comprehensive Plan policies regarding visual resources?	17				X
e) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	17				X
f) Substantially shadow public open space (other than public streets and adjacent	17				X

Issues and Supporting Information Resources	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project: sidewalks) between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. from September 21 to March 21?					

DISCUSSION:

A “Reusable Bag Ordinance” is being proposed by the City of Palo Alto because polyethylene (PE) plastic bags have been found in litter on land and in the marine environment and therefore have a significant existing negative aesthetic impact. By proposing an ordinance that seeks to promote reusable carryout bags and ban certain PE plastic carryout bags, the City of Palo Alto seeks to create a regulation that will reduce an existing negative environmental impact. Plastic litter collection for beaches, state highways, cities and counties costs the State of California \$303.2 million each year. This not only creates an unsightly environment, but has been found to be harmful to marine life. PE plastic carryout bags have captured global concern because a portion then migrate to the ocean environment. The City of Palo Alto can be a source of this Ocean contamination because its creeks and sloughs ultimately flow to the Ocean.

The governors of California, Oregon and Washington signed a Resolution, dated February 9, 2007, entitled: “Resolution of the California Ocean Protection Council on Reducing and Preventing Marine Debris”. This resolution states that “60 to 80 percent of all marine debris and 90 percent of floating debris is plastic; and comes from land-based sources...plastic and other debris litters our beaches, and represents a threat to California’s \$46 billion ocean-dependant, tourism-oriented economy and in certain instances may pose a public health threat...” The governors have asked that we “Reduce the sources of plastic marine debris...” The City of Palo Alto’s proposed Ordinance is an initial step to reduce the source of plastic bags in the natural environment including the marine environment.

While the intent of the Ordinance is to effect a transition to reusable bags, some switching to paper and/or compostable plastic bags will occur before full conversion to reusable bags occurs. However the litter situation will still be improving because these bags will degrade more quickly in the natural environment than PE plastic bags. Therefore, the Ordinance will improve, not degrade, the visual character of Palo Alto.

Mitigation Measures:

None Required.

B. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland.

Issues and Supporting Information Resources	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared	17				X

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?					
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	17, 18-Map L9				X
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?	17				X

DISCUSSION:

Palo Alto is not located in a “Prime Farmland”, “Unique Farmland”, or “Farmland of Statewide Importance” area, as shown on the maps prepared for the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency. The proposed Ordinance will not cause the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use.

Mitigation Measures:

None Required.

C. AIR QUALITY

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct with implementation of the applicable air quality plan (1982 Bay Area Air Quality Plan & 2000 Clean Air Plan)?	17				X
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation indicated by the following:					
i. Direct and/or indirect operational emissions that exceed the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) criteria air pollutants of 80 pounds per day and/or 15 tons per year for nitrogen oxides (NO), reactive organic gases (ROG), and fine particulate matter of less than 10 microns in diameter (PM ₁₀);	6,7,9,11,12,13, 17			X	
ii. Contribute to carbon monoxide (CO) concentrations exceeding the State Ambient Air Quality Standard of nine parts per million (ppm) averaged over eight hours or 20 ppm for one hour(as demonstrated by CALINE4 modeling, which would be performed when a) project CO emissions exceed 550 pounds per day or 100 tons per year; or b) project traffic would impact intersections or roadway links	6,7,11,12,13, 14, 17			X	

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
operating at Level of Service (LOS) D, E or F or would cause LOS to decline to D, E or F; or c) project would increase traffic volumes on nearby roadways by 10% or more)?					
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	12,13, 17			X	
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial levels of toxic air contaminants?	17				X
i. Probability of contracting cancer for the Maximally Exposed Individual (MEI) exceeds 10 in one million	17				X
ii. Ground-level concentrations of non-carcinogenic TACs would result in a hazard index greater than one (1) for the MEI	17				X
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	17				X
f) Not implement all applicable construction emission control measures recommended in the <i>Bay Area Air Quality Management District CEQA Guidelines</i> ?	17				X
g) Alter the air movement, moisture, or temperature, or cause any change in climate?	12, 17			X	

DISCUSSION:

The City of Palo Alto uses the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's (BAAQMD) thresholds of significance for air quality impacts.

Long Term Impacts:

In the long term, the Ordinance is anticipated to convert the use of certain PE plastic bags to reusable bags at approximately 12 stores in Palo Alto (large groceries and pharmacies). Ultimately, this will result in less air emissions both within Palo Alto and outside Palo Alto. This is true because reusable bags take less energy to produce per bag-use and would need to be hauled to Palo Alto stores in smaller amounts once reusables are fully implemented. Thus, both emissions at the point of manufacturing and on the streets of Palo Alto would be reduced. This reduction would occur for the pollutants listed in (b) and (c) above and for carbon dioxide (CO₂), a greenhouse gas.

Short Term Impacts:

During the transition to reusable bags, it is anticipated that there will be some conversion to paper (from PE plastic), and possibly some conversion to compostable plastic (although none of the affected stores currently offer compostable plastic). The City of San Francisco's implementation results to date (with respect to a similar ordinance) suggest that conversion to reusable bags will be substantial, conversion to paper will be the dominate short term response, and that conversion to compostable plastic will be small.

The exact short term conversion that will occur is not known. However, City of Palo Alto Staff have prepared a most likely scenario of this conversion based on a survey of currently Palo Alto uses and the experience of the City of San Francisco’s recent implementation of similar restrictions. Immediately following the effective date of the Ordinance, Staff estimates the following use percentages at Palo Alto’s affected stores (large groceries and pharmacies):

TABLE 1

Type of Carryout Bag	Percent of Patrons (who take a bag)
Reusable	30%
Paper	70%
Compostable Plastic	Negligible

The City of Palo Alto has conducted education campaigns promoting reusable bags, including the distribution of reusable bags, since the 1990’s. Palo Alto is coordinating a local BYOBAG campaign and is collaborating in a Bay Area regional education campaign in April 2008. This campaign (with the addition of the proposed Ordinance) is expected to increase Palo Alto shoppers short term usage of reusable bags by 20% to a total of 30%. This estimate is also based on the fact that the City of San Francisco found that 30% of their grocery shoppers were using reusable bags immediately following implementation of their Ordinance.

Associated air emissions within Palo Alto primarily come from motor vehicles from the shipping of bags to Palo Alto stores. If the proposed Palo Alto Ordinance is adopted, the current practice of shipping carryout bags into Palo Alto via truck would not change. Presently, carryout bags, whether they are PE plastic, compostable plastic, paper or reusable are shipped by distributors via truck to Palo Alto’s stores. (Compostable plastic bags are not currently offered by the affected stores in Palo Alto.) The air emissions within the City of Palo Alto associated with the short term conversion are negligible, being on the order of 1 trip per day distributed throughout the City.

Somewhat larger emission levels would occur outside the City limits as the bags arrive from manufacturing locations. Other emissions would occur from the manufacturing process itself.

Palo Alto staff have estimated the total CO₂ emissions associated with the short term conversion from PE plastic bags to the alternatives shown in Table 1. The estimates are contained in Table 2 below.

Table 2

CO₂ Equivalent Emissions from Short-Term Conversion [Metric Tons/Year of CO₂ for all Palo Alto Households]			
	Current CO₂ Emissions	Future CO₂ Emissions	Change in CO₂ Emissions
Reusable	10	30	+20
PE Bags	159	0	-159
Paper Bags	225	416	+191
Compostable Bags	0	0	0
Total	394	446	52

The change in CO₂ emissions (+52 tons/year) is negligible when compared to the total City of Palo Alto emissions of 793,621 Metric Tons, representing only 0.0066% of the total. The Palo Alto Climate Protection Plan is designed to achieve substantially greater reductions which would offset an increase of that amount. More importantly, the estimated increases are only temporary and would be reduced over time as reusable bags gain acceptance.

The other air emissions associated with the short term conversion are also negligible and would not result in a deterioration of air quality, or new exceedances of standards.

Palo Alto is conducting an intensive awareness campaign to promote the usage of reusable bags for Palo Alto shoppers. This will result in greater use of reusable bags and decrease the use of all types of single-use bags. Palo Alto is also implementing its Climate Protection Plan, which will result in greater CO₂ reductions than the anticipated short term increase associated with the Ordinance.

Mitigation Measures:

None Required.

D. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	1,2,3,4,5 6,7,8,10, 15, 17			X	
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, including federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	1,2,3,4,5 6,7,8,10, 15, 17			X	
c) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	17				X
d) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or as defined by the City of Palo Alto's Tree Preservation Ordinance (Municipal Code Section 8.10)?	17				X
e) Conflict with any applicable Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	17				X

DISCUSSION:

A “Reusable Bag Ordinance” is being proposed by the City of Palo Alto because plastic bags have been found by the thousands in litter on land and in the marine environment and are therefore a significant existing negative impact. By proposing an ordinance that seeks to promote reusable retail carryout bags and ban plastic bags at specified stores within its jurisdiction, the City of Palo Alto seeks to create a regulation that will reduce an existing negative impact on wildlife.

The Governors of California, Oregon and Washington signed a Resolution, dated February 9, 2007, entitled: “Resolution of the California Ocean Protection Council on Reducing and Preventing Marine Debris.” This resolution states that “60 to 80 percent of all marine debris and 90 percent of floating debris is plastic; and comes from land-based sources...plastic and other debris litters our beaches, and represents a threat to California’s \$46 billion ocean-dependant, tourism-oriented economy and in certain instances may pose a public health threat...” The governors have asked that we “Reduce the sources of plastic marine debris...” The City of Palo Alto’s proposed Ordinance will reduce PE plastic bags in the marine environment.

Paper carryout bags, an alternative carryout bag, break down in the environment. Certified compostable bags, another alternative, would break down somewhat more rapidly than PE plastic in the natural environment.¹⁵ Therefore, the proposed project will not have significant impacts on biological resources.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

E. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Directly or indirectly destroy a local cultural resource that is recognized by City Council resolution?	17, 18-Map L8				X
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to 15064.5?	17, 18-Map L8				X
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	17, 18-Map L8				X
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	17, 18-Map L8				X
e) Adversely affect a historic resource listed or eligible for listing on the National and/or California Register, or listed on the City’s Historic Inventory?	17, 18-Map L7				X
f) Eliminate important examples of major periods of California history or prehistory?	17				X

DISCUSSION:

The proposed project would have no impact in the category of cultural resources as it involves no construction work or physical changes.

Mitigation Measures:

None Required.

F. GEOLOGY, SOILS AND SEISMICITY

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:					
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	17				X
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	17				X
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	17				X
iv) Landslides?	17				X
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	17				X
c) Result in substantial siltation?	17				X
d) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	17				X
e) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	17				X
f) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	17				X
g) Expose people or property to major geologic hazards that cannot be mitigated through the use of standard engineering design and seismic safety techniques?	17				X

DISCUSSION:

The proposed project would not have an impact on the City of Palo Alto’s geology, soils and seismicity as it involves no construction work or physical changes.

Mitigation Measures:

None Required.

G. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routing transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	17				X
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	17				X
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	17				X
d) Construct a school on a property that is subject to hazards from hazardous materials contamination, emissions or accidental release?	17				X
e) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	17				X
f) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	17				X
g) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working the project area?	17				X
h) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	17				X
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wild land fires, including where wild lands are adjacent	17				X

to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wild lands?					
k) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment from existing hazardous materials contamination by exposing future occupants or users of the site to contamination in excess of soil and ground water cleanup goals developed for the site?	17				X

DISCUSSION:

The proposed project will not involve or affect the handling, transportation, use, disposal, or emission of hazardous materials.

Mitigation Measures:

None required.

H. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	17				X
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	17				X
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	17				X
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	17				X
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	17				X
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	17				X

g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	17				X
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	17				X
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involve flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam or being located within a 100-year flood hazard area?	17				X
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	17				X
k) Result in stream bank instability?	17				X

DISCUSSION:

The proposed project will not negatively impact hydrology or water quality.

Mitigation Measures:

None Required.

I. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?	17				X
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	17				X
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	17				X
d) Substantially adversely change the type or intensity of existing or planned land use in the area?	17				X
e) Be incompatible with adjacent land uses or with the general character of the surrounding area, including density and building height?	17				X
f) Conflict with established residential, recreational, educational, religious, or scientific uses of an area?	17				X
g) Convert prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of statewide importance (farmland) to non-agricultural use?	17				X

DISCUSSION:

The proposed project is consistent with existing City code and policies and enhances the City’s sustainability polices in its reduction of the use of plastic bags and the promotion of reusable bags.

Mitigation Measures:

None Required.

J. MINERAL RESOURCES

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	17				X
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	17				X

DISCUSSION:

The proposed project would have no impact on mineral resources in Palo Alto.

Mitigation Measures:

None Required.

K. NOISE

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	17				X
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive ground borne vibrations or ground borne noise levels?	17				X
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	17				X
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	17				X

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	17				X
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	17				X
g) Cause the average 24 hour noise level (Ldn) to increase by 5.0 decibels (dB) or more in an existing residential area, even if the Ldn would remain below 60 dB?	17				X
h) Cause the Ldn to increase by 3.0 dB or more in an existing residential area, thereby causing the Ldn in the area to exceed 60 dB?	17				X
i) Cause an increase of 3.0 dB or more in an existing residential area where the Ldn currently exceeds 60 dB?	17				X
j) Result in indoor noise levels for residential development to exceed an Ldn of 45 dB?	17				X
k) Result in instantaneous noise levels of greater than 50 dB in bedrooms or 55 dB in other rooms in areas with an exterior Ldn of 60 dB or greater?	17				X
l) Generate construction noise exceeding the daytime background Leq at sensitive receptors by 10 dBA or more?	17				X

DISCUSSION:

The proposed project would have no effect on the noise levels in the community.

Mitigation Measures:

None Required.

L. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	17				X
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing	17				X

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?					
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	17				X
d) Create a substantial imbalance between employed residents and jobs?	17				X
e) Cumulatively exceed regional or local population projections?	17				X

DISCUSSION:

The proposed Ordinance would not add population or induce population growth, nor will it displace housing or people. The proposed Ordinance will result in no impact on population or housing.

Mitigation Measures:

None Required.

M. PUBLIC SERVICES

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services: Fire protection? Police protection? Schools? Parks? Other public facilities?	17				X X X X X

DISCUSSION:

The proposed project would have no impact on public services.

Mitigation Measures:

None Required.

N. RECREATION

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	17				X
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	17				X

DISCUSSION:

The proposed project would have no effect on the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities and does not include construction or expansion of recreational facilities.

Mitigation Measures:

None Required.

O. TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	12,13,14, 17			X	
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for	17				X

Issues and Supporting Information Resources	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
designated roads or highways?					
c) Result in change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	17				X
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	17				X
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	17				X
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	12,13,14, 17			X	
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., pedestrian, transit & bicycle facilities)?	17				X
h) Cause a local (City of Palo Alto) intersection to deteriorate below Level of Service (LOS) D and cause an increase in the average stopped delay for the critical movements by four seconds or more and the critical volume/capacity ratio (V/C) value to increase by 0.01 or more?	17				X
i) Cause a local intersection already operating at LOS E or F to deteriorate in the average stopped delay for the critical movements by four seconds or more?	17				X
j) Cause a regional intersection to deteriorate from an LOS E or better to LOS F or cause critical movement delay at such an intersection already operating at LOS F to increase by four seconds or more and the critical V/C value to increase by 0.01 or more?	17				X
k) Cause a freeway segment to operate at LOS F or contribute traffic in excess of 1% of segment capacity to a freeway segment already operating at LOS F?	17				X
l) Cause any change in traffic that would increase the Traffic Infusion on Residential Environment (TIRE) index by 0.1 or more?	17				X
m) Cause queuing impacts based on a comparative analysis between the design queue length and the available queue storage capacity? Queuing impacts include, but are not limited to, spillback queues at project access locations; queues at turn lanes at intersections that block through traffic; queues at lane drops; queues at one intersection that extend back to impact other intersections, and spillback queues on ramps.	17				X

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
n) Impede the development or function of planned pedestrian or bicycle facilities?	17				X
o) Impede the operation of a transit system as a result of congestion?	17				X
p) Create an operational safety hazard?	17				X

DISCUSSION:

If the proposed Palo Alto “Reusable Bag Ordinance” is adopted, the current practice of shipping carryout bags into Palo Alto via truck would not change. Presently, retail carryout bags, whether they be plastic, paper or reusable, are shipped by distributors via truck to Palo Alto’s retail stores. As discussed above under “Air Quality”, a short term impact of the proposed Ordinance would be the conversion of some PE plastic bag use to other types of bags. This conversion may result in a slight increase in truck traffic in Palo Alto, but would be on the order of one trip per day within Palo Alto and would not be significant.

Palo Alto is conducting an intensive awareness campaign to promote the usage of reusable bags for Palo Alto shoppers. This will reduce the conversion to other single use bags and lessen the impact noted above.

Mitigation Measures:

None Required.

P. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	17				X
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	17				X
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	17				X
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	17				X
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has inadequate capacity to serve the project’s projected	17				X

Issues and Supporting Information Resources	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?					
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	17				X
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	17				X
h) Result in a substantial physical deterioration of a public facility due to increased use as a result of the project?	17				X

DISCUSSION:

The proposed project would not significantly increase the demand on existing utilities and service systems, or use resources in a wasteful or inefficient manner.

Mitigation Measures:

None Required.

Q. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Issues and Supporting Information Resources	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Would the project:					
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	17				X
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	1,2,3,4,5,6,7 8,9,10,11, 12,13,14,15, 17			X	
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	1,2,3,4,5,6,7 8,9,10,11, 12,13,14,15, 17			X	

Issues and Supporting Information Resources Would the project:	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact

DISCUSSION:

The proposed Ordinance involves no construction or physical changes and will not impact wildlife. The proposal Ordinance is not part of a series of past or future actions which would have cumulative impacts. The anticipated environment impacts are positive: fewer PE plastic bags would be released to the environment.

Palo Alto’s companion program of promoting reusable bags will lead to a conversion from PE plastic to reusable bags, saving resources and reducing plastic litter. Some conversion to paper and/or compostable plastic bags will occur in the interim. However paper is more readily recycled, and both degrade more quickly than PE plastic in the natural environment.

SOURCE REFERENCES

1. AB 2449, Chapter 845, Statutes of 2006, an act to add and repeal Chapter 5.1 (commencing with Section 42250 to Part 3 of Division 30 of the Public Resources Code.
2. California Integrated Waste Management Board, (Updated 11-17-07) “Recycle Plastic Grocery Bags”,<http://www.zerowaste.ca.gov/PlasticBags/default.htm> Retrieved 02/17/08
3. Brown, Vance & Associates, Inc. & MGM Management (05/18/07); The City of San Francisco STREETS LITTER AUDIT 2007, p.33
4. Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program; (September 2007) Trash BMP Tool Box “Proportion of Trash Pieces, by category, observed during Rapid Trash Assessments of San Francisco Bay Creeks” Section 2, Figure 2-2;
<http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/rwqcb2/swamp/swamptrashreport.pdf>
5. California Regional Water Quality Control Board – Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program; (April 2007)A Rapid Trash Assessment Method Applied to Waters of the San Francisco Bay Region: Trash Measurement in Streams
6. City of Palo Alto City Manager Report:158:08 (March 2007)
7. City of Palo Alto Water Quality Department, (March 2007) Analysis of the Issues Regarding Single-Use Retail Carryout Bags (Attachment A to CMR 158:08)
8. Resolution of the California Ocean Protection Council on Reducing and Preventing Marine Debris, (February 8, 2007) <http://resources.ca.gov/copc/>
9. Resolution 2007-139(Revised), California Integrated Waste Board, Agenda Item 14, attachment 3, Board Meeting, June 12, 2007

10. The Marine Debris Team, Columbia University, (Summer 2005) Marine Debris Research, Prevention and Reduction Act: A Policy Analysis. New York, New York
11. City of Palo Alto Community Profile, (July 2005) In 2000, there were 25,216 households in the City of Palo Alto; <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/>
12. Eggleston, Brad; (March 12, 2007) Memorandum to Phil Bobel, City of Palo Alto “Short Term CO2 Emissions Impact of Restricting Polyethylene Plastic Carryout Bags” (Available from the City of Palo Alto)
13. Schidlowski, R., Public Works City of San Francisco, Personal Communication February 13, 2008
14. City of Palo Alto Staff Surveys and Discussions with Grocery Store Owners and Pharmacy Staff (February and March, 2008)
15. Barron, Tom (March 3, 2007) Memorandum to Phil Bobel, City of Palo Alto “Comparison of Compostable and HDPE Shopping Bags” (Available from the City of Palo Alto)
16. City of Palo Alto (December 3, 2007) Palo Alto Climate Protection Plan, p. 25
17. Project Manager’s knowledge of the project: Phil Bobel, Manager of Environmental Compliance, Public Works
18. Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan, 1998-2010

DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

<p>I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.</p>	<p>X</p>
<p>I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.</p>	
<p>I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.</p>	
<p>I find that the proposed project MAY have a “potentially significant impact” or “potentially significant unless mitigated” impact on the environment, but at least one effect: 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.</p>	
<p>I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.</p>	

Planner

Date

**Director of Planning and Community Environment
 City of Palo Alto**

Date