

## Belmont to Join County in Banning the Bag

Public outreach will begin before the ban goes into effect.

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In a 5-0 vote Tuesday night, the [Belmont City Council](#) adopted a resolution to join [San Mateo County](#) in banning plastic and other single use bags at the point of sale.

The resolution confirms the city as a participating agency in the EIR (environmental impact report) process for the county bag ordinance.

In October of last year, the city received a letter from the county board of supervisors regarding interest in a potential single-use carryout bag ordinance consistently applied throughout the county. Since that time, the [San Mateo County Health Department](#) (SMCHD) has ramped up efforts to serve as the lead agency in preparation for the county-wide ordinance and the associated environmental review.

SMCHD has requested that each city in the county commit to be added as a participating agency by the end of February. By being part of a larger, county-wide effort, consumers and businesses will have clear expectations on the implementation and regulations throughout the county.

Councilmembers agreed there was strong merit in beginning outreach now in preparation for the bag ban. Councilmember Christine Wozniak suggested the city begin to encourage consumers and businesses to voluntarily stop using plastic bags even before the ordinance is enacted.

Mike Swire, a member of [Belmont's Green Advisory Committee](#) spoke on behalf of the ordinance. "Recycling efforts are ineffective; the only answer is to ban plastic bags altogether."

In a presentation to city council last May, Swire noted that Belmont residents use roughly 13 million bags per year, and the useful life of a plastic bag is approximately

15 minutes, whereas the actual life of a plastic bag is 15+ years.

Other Bay Area municipalities have adopted single-use ordinances. They include: the City and County of San Francisco, Santa Clara County, Marin County, and the cities of Millbrae, Palo Alto, San Jose, Fairfax and Morgan Hill.