

CITY OF KIRKLAND

Resident Opinions of Disposable Bag Ban

May 2013



ELWAY RESEARCH, INC.



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Disposable Bag Ban**

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INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the results of a telephone survey, conducted on behalf of the City of Kirkland, to assess Kirkland residents' attitudes about a potential ban of disposable shopping bags in Kirkland.

Some 407 Kirkland adults (age 18+) were selected at random and interviewed between May 21-23. Survey respondents were asked about:

- Current behavior with regard to the use of shopping bags;
- Potential support for a ban of, or fees on, paper and plastic disposable shopping bags in Kirkland; and
- Willingness to pay if a fee were imposed.

Demographic information was also collected so as to compare and contrast answers.

The survey was administered by Elway Research, Inc. The questionnaire was designed in collaboration with representatives of the Public Works Department of the City of Kirkland.

The report includes Key Findings, followed by annotated graphs summarizing the results to each question. The full questionnaire and a complete set of cross-tabulation tables is presented in the appendix.



METHODS

SAMPLE:	407 adult residents of Kirkland, WA
TECHNIQUE:	Telephone Survey. Address-based sample frame: Telephone numbers were looked up for addresses in the City of Kirkland. 10% of the interviews were conducted via cell phone.
FIELD DATES:	May 21-23, 2013
MARGIN OF ERROR:	±5% at the 95% confidence interval. That is, in theory, had all similarly qualified voters been interviewed, there is a 95% chance the results would be within ±5% of the results in this survey.
DATA COLLECTION:	Trained, professional interviewers under supervision conducted all interviews during weekday evenings. Up to four attempts were made to contact a head of household at each number in the sample. Questionnaires were edited for completeness, and a percentage of each interviewer's calls were re-called for verification.

It must be kept in mind that survey research cannot predict the future. Although great care and the most rigorous methods available were employed in the design, execution and analysis of this survey, these results can be interpreted only as representing the answers given by these respondents to these questions at the time they were interviewed.



RESPONDENT PROFILE

In interpreting these findings, it is important to keep in mind the characteristics of the people actually interviewed. This table presents a profile of the 407 respondents in the survey.

Note: Here and throughout this report, percentages may not add to 100%, due to rounding.

GENDER:	50%	Male
	50%	Female
AGE:	9%	18-35
	20%	36-50
	41%	51-64
	28%	65+
	2%	No Answer
EDUACTION LEVEL	12%	High School or less
	24%	Some College/Vocational
	42%	College Degree
	20%	Post Grad School
EMPLOYMENT:	14%	Self-employed/Owner
	30%	Private Business
	10%	Public Sector
	8%	Not Working
	34%	Retired
	3%	No Answer
HOUSEHOLD:	28%	Couple with children
	45%	Couple with no children
	4%	Single with children
	21%	Single with no children
	2%	No Answer
HOME TYPE	81%	Single Family House
	11%	Condominium
	6%	Apartment
	3%	Other / No answer
HOME OWNER	83%	Own
	13%	Rent
	4%	No Ans
INCOME:	13%	\$50,000 or less
	18%	\$50 to \$75,000
	12%	\$75 to \$100,000
	15%	\$100 to 150,000
	14%	Over \$150,000
	28%	No Answer



KEY FINDINGS

- ◆ **Most Kirkland residents surveyed are currently engaging in desired behavior with paper and plastic bags**
 - 8 in 10 recycle or re-use more than one type of bag
 - Nearly half (46%) currently bring their own bags to the grocery store, including 3 in 10 (29%) who always do so

- ◆ **Voluntary measures for reducing disposable bag use have greater support than mandatory measures, and much more support than fees.**

- ◆ **Measures aimed at stores had more support than measures aimed at consumers**
 - 85% supported requiring stores to have plastic bag recycling bins
 - 80% supported encouraging stores to voluntarily reduce their use of disposable bags
 - 67% opposed charging a fee to shoppers for plastic bags
 - 76% opposed charging for any disposable bag

- ◆ **There was little support for, and stubborn opposition to, banning disposable shopping bags**
 - 69% opposed banning plastic shopping bags
 - 25-30% consistently stated that there should not be a ban or a fee across all questions which posed that policy as a hypothetical. This was despite the fact that the “no fee” option was not read as a possible answer; they consistently volunteered it anyway.

- ◆ **Despite the consistent lack of support for fees, most would be willing to pay something if there were a fee for disposable bags**
 - 36% would be willing to pay 5¢ or more
 - 31% would be willing to pay “less than 5¢”
 - 33% would not be willing to pay anything (an option not offered).

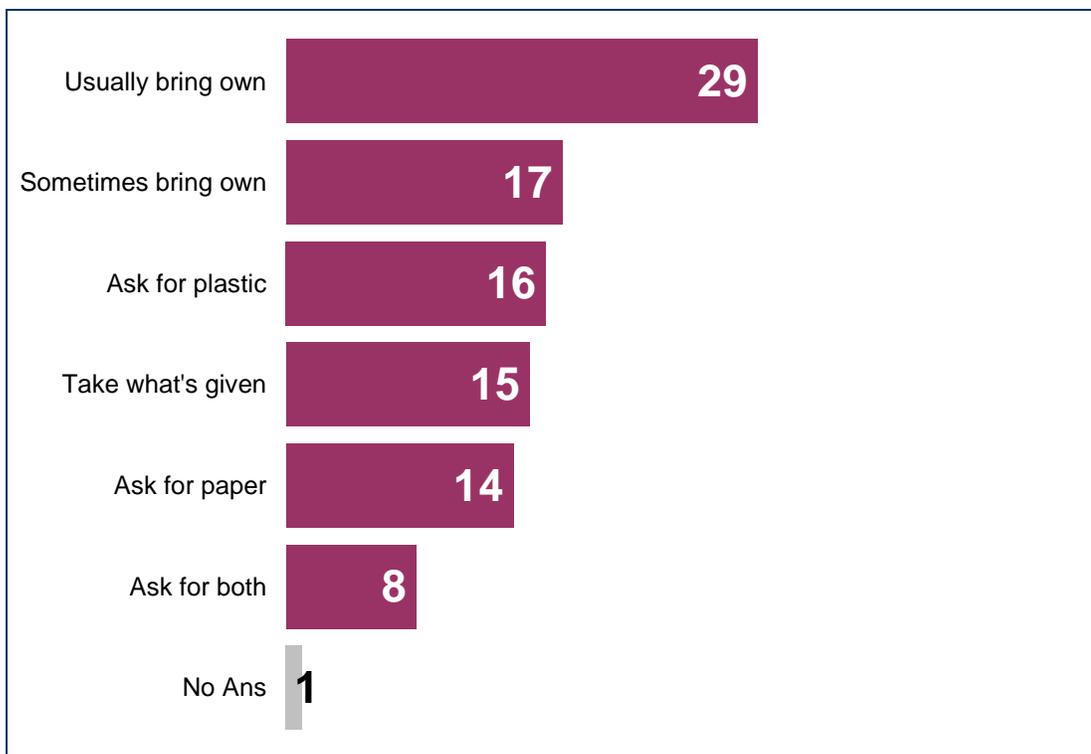


FINDINGS

Major findings are presented in the following section in the form of annotated graphs and bullets. The full results are appended in detailed cross-tabulations.



Nearly Half Bring Their Own Bags Grocery Shopping At Least Sometimes



Q2: When shopping for groceries, do you: 1) usually bring your own bags to carry them; 2) sometimes bring your own bags; 3) usually ask for plastic bags; 4) usually take what the clerk gives me; 5) usually ask for paper bags; 6) sometimes ask for plastic, sometimes for paper.

- **Education related to bringing own bags**

The only significant demographic predictor of whether or not someone brought their own bags to the grocery store (at least sometimes) was education level:

48% of those with a college degree did so, compared to 44% of those with some college and 26% of those with a high school education.

- **Other patterns, not statistically significant:**

- 50% of those between the ages of 36-64 brought their own bags, compared to 39% of those over 65 and 37% of those under 36;
- 49% of those in couples brought their own bags, compared to 37% of singles



Most Recycle / Re-Use Bags

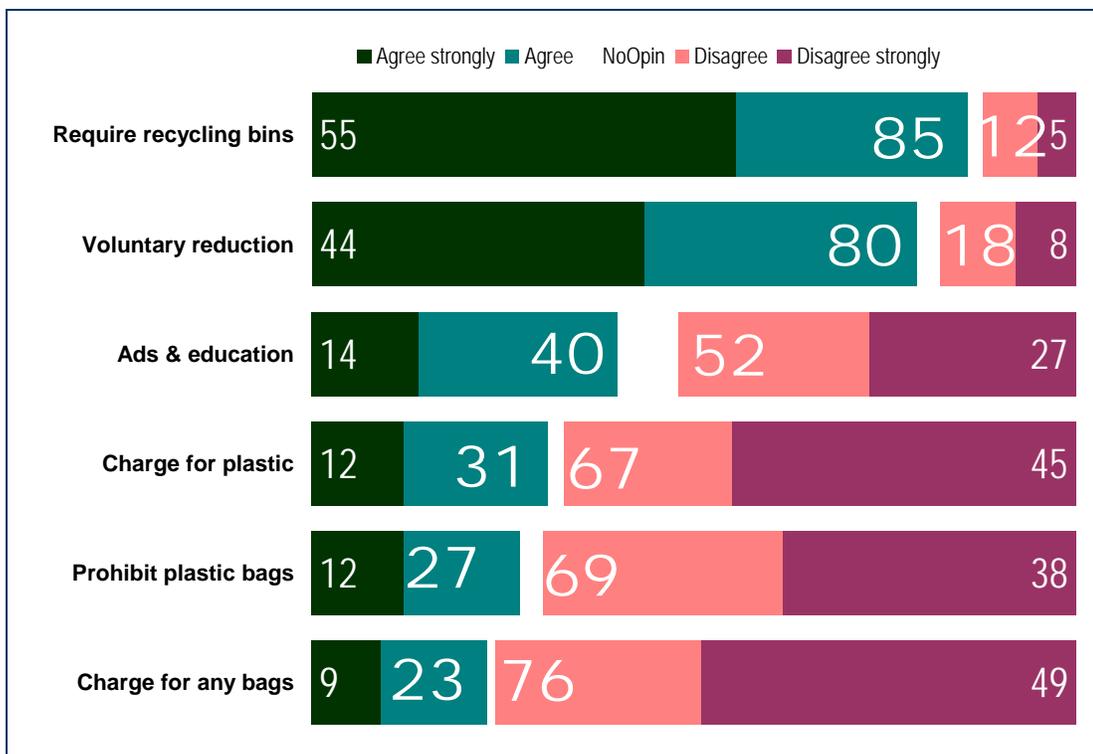


Q3 People do different things with used plastic bags. For each of following types of plastic bags, do you typically throw them in the garbage, recycle them, or re-use them? First, what do you typically do with...

- **Sizeable majorities recycled or re-used each of the type of bags they used**
 - 8 in 10 recycled or re-used more than one of these types of bags
- **Least likely to be recycled or re-used were**
 - Bread bags (39%) and
 - Packaging bags (36%)



7 in 10 Oppose Bans or Fees to Discourage Use of Disposable Bags



Q4 Some cities are taking measures to discourage the use of disposable shopping bags. By shopping bags, I mean the bags you get at the check stand – not the small bags for meat or vegetables. As I read some of these ideas, tell me whether you Agree, Agree Strongly, Disagree or Disagree Strongly that the City of Kirkland should do this. The first one is ...

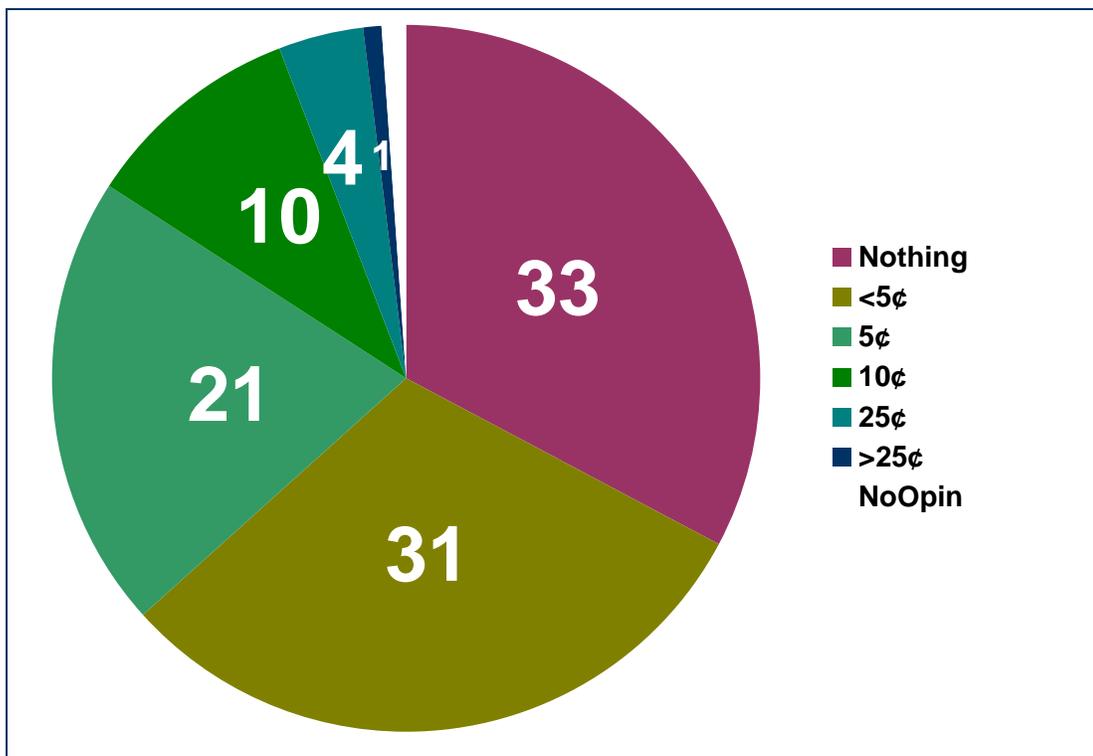
- Require stores that provide plastic shopping bags to recycle those bags by having bins where customers can return them.
- Encourage stores to voluntarily reduce their use of disposable plastic and paper shopping bags and promote reusable shopping bags.
- Use city utility money for advertising and public education to promote the use of reusable shopping bags.
- Charge a fee to shoppers for each plastic shopping bag they accept from a store at the checkout counter.
- Prohibit stores from giving out plastic shopping bags.
- Charge a fee to shoppers for any type of disposable shopping bag - including paper - that they accept from a store.

- **A majority even of those who bring their own bags**

- Favored encouraging voluntarily reduction of disposable bag use (90%)
- Favored mandatory recycling bins (87%)
- Opposed banning plastic bags (60%)
- Favored ads and education (52%)
- Opposed charging for plastic bags (51%)
- Opposed charging for all types of disposable bags (64%)



Two-thirds may be willing to pay for shopping bags

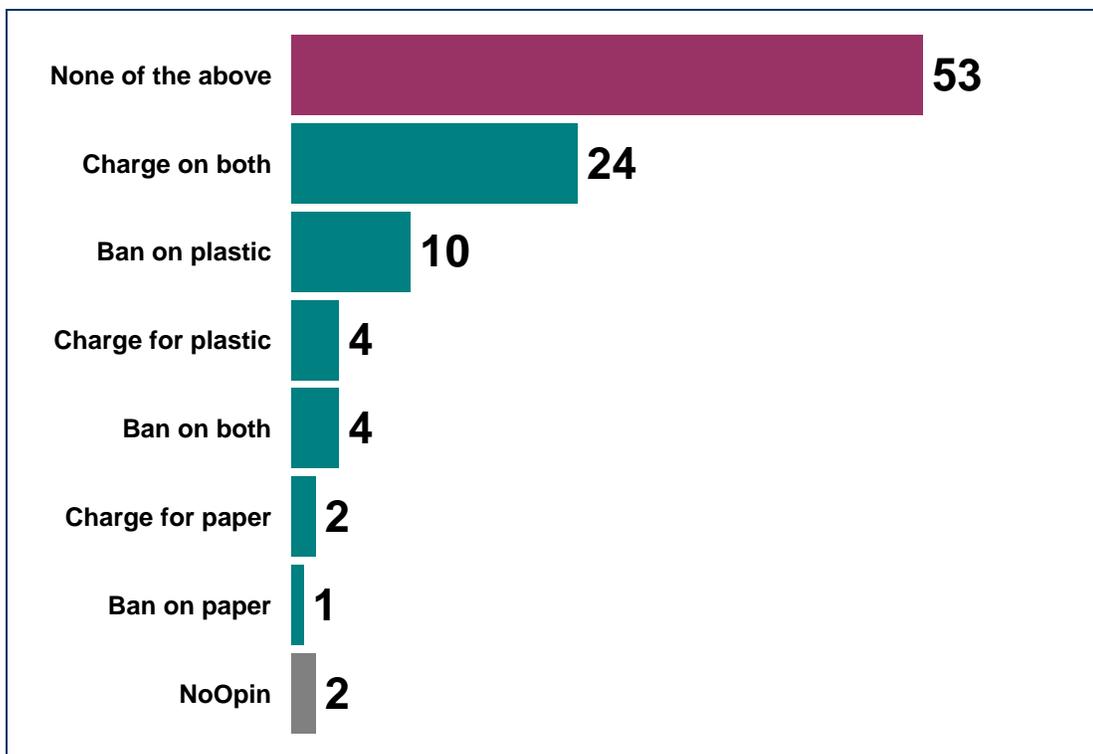


Q5 If there were a fee for paper and plastic shopping and grocery bags, how much would you personally be willing to pay for the convenience of getting plastic or paper bags to carry your purchases from the store?

- **Even most who oppose charging a fee for all bags would be willing to pay something if there were a fee:**
 - 24% would be willing to pay 5¢ or more
 - 36% would be willing to pay something less than 5¢
- **Most willing to pay something were:**
 - Age 36-50 (74%)
 - Those who bring their own bags shopping (73%)
 - Those with incomes over \$75,000 (73%).
- **Least willing to pay anything were:**
 - Seniors (41%)
 - Self employed (40% unwilling to pay)
 - Those who do not bring their own bags (38%)



Most Do Not Support Any Change to Existing Bags Policy

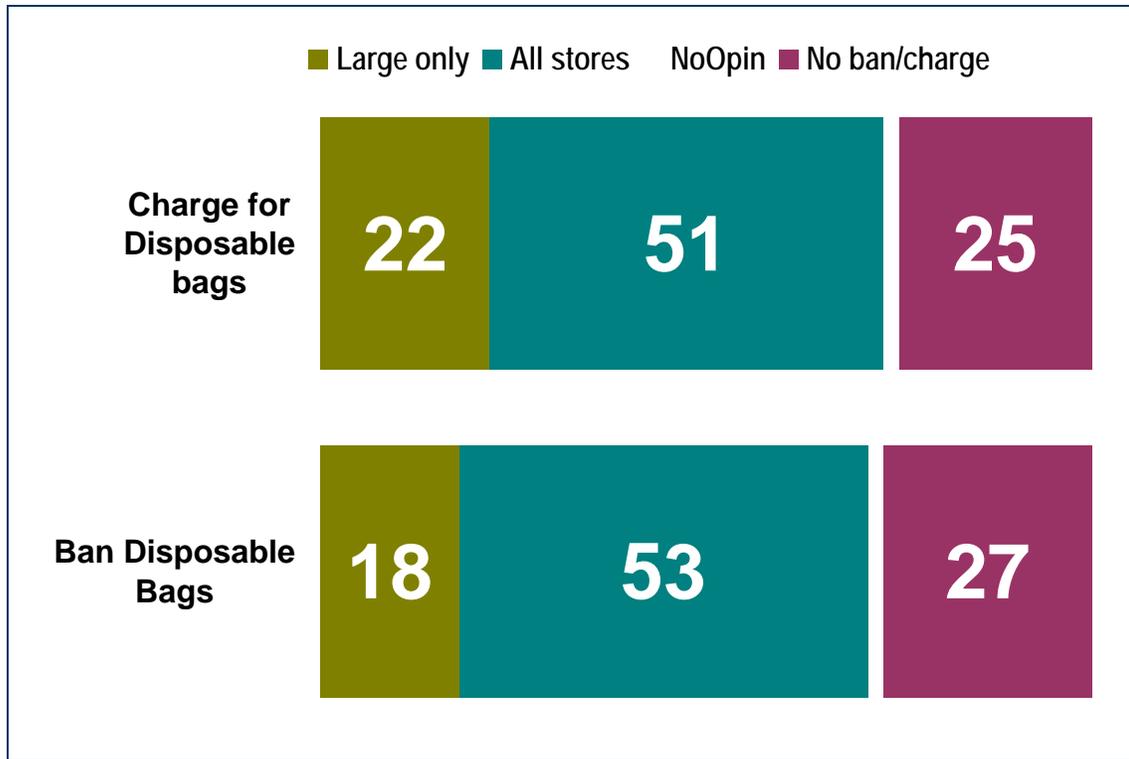


Q6 The amount energy used in the production of paper shopping bags, even those with recycled paper, is significantly greater than that for plastic bags. Given that fact, which of the following actions – if any – would you support in the City of Kirkland:

- **A 53% majority would not support either charging for bags nor banning them outright – regardless of type of bag.**
- **Charging was more acceptable than banning bags:**
 - 30% supported charging for paper, plastic or both types of bag; while
 - 15% supported any ban
- **Change acceptable to small majority (54%) of those under 65**
 - Unacceptable to 61% of seniors



Any Disposable Bag Ban or Fee Should Apply to All Types of Stores

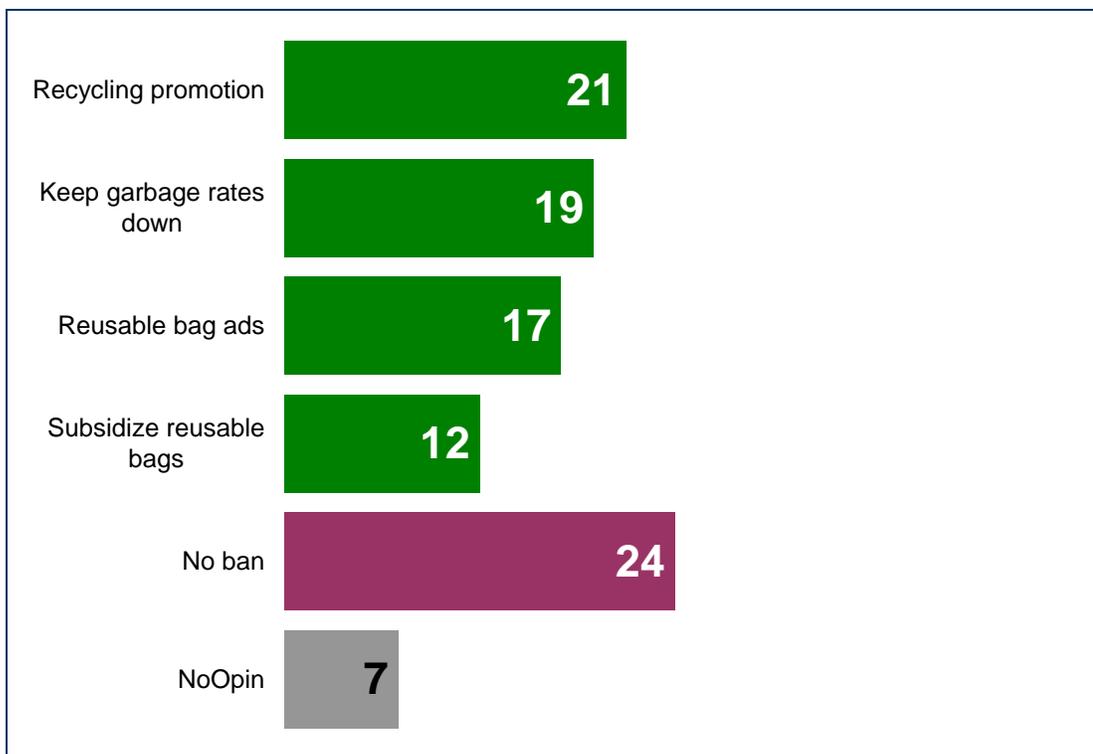


- Q7 If there were a charge per bag on disposable paper and plastic bags, should it apply to:
 Large grocery, drug and other chain stores only? Or
 All stores of any kind that provide disposable shopping bags - including grocery and drug stores, retail and convenience stores plus small "mom and pop" grocery stores?
- Q8 If there were a ban on the use of disposable plastic shopping bags, should it apply to:
 Large grocery, drug and other chain stores only? Or
 All stores of any kind that provide disposable shopping bags - including grocery and drug stores, retail and convenience stores plus small "mom and pop" grocery stores.

- **Just over half of all respondents said that any fee to disposable bags should apply to all types of stores, not just large chain stores**
- **The response was almost identical when the question was prohibiting disposable bags**
- **This pattern of response was consistent across all demographic categories.**



No Consensus on What to do With Bag Fee Proceeds



Q9 If the city charged a fee on each disposable shopping bag used by shoppers, how would you suggest the money be used?

- To pay for city promotion of waste prevention and recycling programs.
- To keep city garbage rates down, even though the effect might be small
- To pay for advertising & public education to promote the use of reusable bags.
- To subsidize stores for the price of reusable bags.

- **Three of four suggested uses for revenue from a bag fee each received equivalent support**

- Taken together, promotion and advertising to promote recycling and use of re-useable bags was supported by 38%
- One in five (19%) preferred to used the proceeds to keep garbage rates down

- **Reducing garbage rates most favored by**

- Those making less than \$50k/year (35%)
- Renters (29%) and apartment dwellers (30%)
- The young (24% of those under 35)



DISCUSSION

Most Kirkland residents interviewed for this survey report recycling plastic and paper bags and about half bring their own, reusable bags to the grocery store. The City of Kirkland also provides for the curbside collection of plastic bags and many retail stores offer on-site plastic bag recycling.

Perhaps because such high proportions of residents believe they, the City and many businesses are already “doing the right thing” with regard to bags, there is little support for banning or charging for disposable bags in the city.

Certainly the *mandatory* aspect of the proposals is unpopular. Support for encouraging voluntary behavior had far more support among these residents than did any of the proposals for mandatory actions. Even those who are already recycling and bringing their own bags do not support the idea of banning or charging for disposable bags.

Interestingly, however, about two-thirds of respondents were willing to pay something if a fee were imposed on disposal bags. This willingness to pay *something* suggests that real fee being contemplated is less than the amount people imagine, and that the fee in reality may not be as onerous as it is in the abstract.

Still, the overwhelming finding is this survey is the widespread opposition to banning or charging for disposable bags. Programs and policies to encourage voluntary reduction the use of disposable bags will likely be met with widespread support. Policies to mandate the same behavior will likely be met with widespread opposition.



QUESTIONNAIRE

with Data



TOPLINE DATA

SAMPLE	407 Kirkland Adults (age 18+)
MARGIN OF SAMPLING ERROR	±5% at the 95% level of confidence
FIELD DATES	May 21-23, 2013
GENDER	MALE... 50% FEMALE... 50%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The data are presented here in the same order the questions were asked in the interview • The figures in bold type are percentages of respondents who gave each answer. • Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. 	

1. How often, if at all, do you personally shop for groceries?

- 57 Several times a week
- 30 Once a week
- 7 A couple of times a month
- 2 Once a month
- 1 Less than once a month
- 3 Never
- 0 [DK/NA]

2. When shopping for groceries, do you...

- 16 Usually ask for plastic bags to carry them
- 14 Usually ask for paper bags to carry them
- 8 Sometimes ask for paper, sometimes for plastic
- 15 Usually take - what the clerk gives me
- 29 Usually bring your own bag to carry them
- 17 Sometimes bring your own bag to carry them
- 1 [DK/NA]

3. People do different things with used plastic bags. For each of following types of plastic bags, do you typically throw them in the garbage, recycle them, or re-use them.? First, what do you typically do with...

[1=GARBAGE...2=RECYCLE...3=RE-USE...4="DEPENDS" OR "ALL"...5=DON'T USE...6=DK/NA]

ROTATED	<u>GARB</u>	<u>RECYCLE</u>	<u>RE-USE</u>	<u>DEP</u>	<u>DONT USE</u>	<u>DK</u>
A. Plastic grocery bags.....	9.....	33.....	52.....	2.....	3.....	0
B. Bread bags	39.....	37.....	18.....	1.....	4.....	1
C. Dry cleaning bags.....	22.....	22.....	13.....	3.....	30.....	10
D. Plastic bags that come with packaging such as electronic equipment.	36.....	45.....	10.....	4.....	4.....	1
E. The bags the newspaper comes in	25.....	41.....	13.....	1.....	15.....	5

4. Some cities are taking measures to discourage the use of disposable shopping bags. By shopping bags, I mean the bags you get at the check stand – not the small bags for meat or vegetables. As I read some of these ideas, tell me whether you Agree, Agree Strongly, Disagree or Disagree Strongly that the City of Kirkland should do this. The first one is ...

ROTATED	AGSTR	AGREE	DISAG	D-STRG	DK
A. Encourage stores to voluntarily reduce their use of disposable plastic and paper shopping bags and promote reusable shopping bags.	44	36	10	8	3
B. Use city utility money for advertising and public education to promote the use of reusable shopping bags..	14	26	25	27	8
C. Prohibit stores from giving out plastic shopping bags..	12	15	31	38	3
D. Require stores that provide plastic shopping bags to recycle those bags by having bins where customers can return them	55	30	7	5	2
E. Charge a fee to shoppers for each plastic shopping bag they accept from a store at the checkout counter	12	19	22	45	2
F. Charge a fee to shoppers for <u>any</u> type of disposable shopping bag - including paper - that they accept from a store.	9	14	27	49	1

5. If there were a fee for paper and plastic shopping and grocery bags, how much would you personally be willing to pay for the convenience of getting plastic or paper bags to carry your purchases from the store?

33	Would not be willing to pay anything [NOT READ]
31	Less than 5 cents per bag
21	5 cents per bag
10	10 cents per bag
4	25 cents per bag
1	More than 25 cents per bag
1	[DK/NA]

6. The amount energy used in the production of paper shopping bags, even those with recycled paper, is significantly greater than that for plastic bags. Given that fact, which of the following actions – if any – would you support in the City of Kirkland:

4	A charge for each plastic bag
10	A ban on plastic bags
2	A charge for each paper bag
1	A ban on paper shopping bags
24	A charge on BOTH paper and plastic bags
4	A ban on both paper and plastic bags
53	Would not support any of these proposals
2	[DK/NA]

- 7.** If there were a charge per bag on disposable paper and plastic bags, should it apply to:
- 22 Large grocery, drug and other chain stores only?
 - 51 All stores of any kind that provide disposable shopping bags - including grocery and drug stores, retail and convenience stores plus small “mom and pop” grocery stores
 - 25 Should not be a charge [NOT READ]
 - 2 [DK/NA]
- 8.** If there were a ban on the use of disposable plastic shopping bags, should it apply to:
- 18 Large grocery, drug and other chain stores only?
 - 53 All stores of any kind that provide disposable shopping bags - including grocery and drug stores, retail and convenience stores plus small “mom and pop” grocery stores
 - 27 Should not be a charge [NOT READ]
 - 2 [DK/NA]
- 9.** If the city charged a fee on each disposable shopping bag used by shoppers, how would you suggest the money be used?
- 19 To keep city garbage rates down, even though the effect might be small
 - 17 To pay for advertising & public education to promote the use of reusable bags.
 - 21 To pay for city promotion of waste prevention and recycling programs.
 - 12 To subsidize stores for the price of reusable bags.
 - 24 Should not be a charge [NOT READ]
 - 7 [DK/NA]
- 10.** I have just a few last questions for our statistical analysis. How old are you?
- 9 18-35
 - 20 36-50
 - 41 51-34
 - 28 65+
 - 2 no ans
- 11.** Which of these best describes your household at this time:
- 28 Couple with Children at Home
 - 45 Couple with No Children at Home
 - 4 Single with Children at Home
 - 21 Single with No Children at Home
 - 2 [DK/NA]
- 12.** Do you own or rent the place in which you live?
- 83 OWN
 - 13 RENT
 - 4 [DK/NA]

13. Which of these best describes your home?

- 81 Single Family House
- 6 Apartment
- 11 Condominium
- 1 [OTHER]
- 2 [DK/NA]

14. What is the last year of schooling you completed?

- 12 HIGH SCHOOL
- 24 SOME COLLEGE OR VOCATIONAL SCHOOL
- 42 COLLEGE DEGREE
- 20 POST GRADUATE SCHOOL
- 1 DK/REF

15. Which of these the following best describes you at this time? Are you. . .

- 14 Self-Employed or Business Owner
- 30 Employed in Private Business
- 10 Employed in the **Public Sector**, Like a Govt Agency or Educ Institution
- 7 Not employed outside the home
- 1 Student
- 34 Retired
- 3 DK/NA

16. Finally, I am going to list four broad categories. Just stop me when I get to the category that best describes your approximate household income - before taxes - for this year.

- 13 \$50,000 or less
- 18 \$50 to 75,000
- 12 \$75 to 100,000
- 15 \$100 to 150,000
- 14 Over \$150,000
- 28 [DO NOT READ: NO ANSWER]