



CITY OF PALO ALTO SINGLE-USE PLASTICS POLICY

The purpose of this Policy is to reduce pollution, solid waste and greenhouse gas emissions associated with City purchases of plastic products. In addition, the intent of this policy is to demonstrate leadership by going beyond the requirements imposed via City Ordinance which apply to City of Palo Alto retailers and food service establishments.

The City recognizes that single-use plastics including plastic bags, single-use plastic water bottles, and expanded plastic foam food and beverage containers, ice chests and packaging materials are high-volume components of plastic litter found in local creeks and San Francisco Bay which harm wildlife and water quality, and which contribute to the City's solid waste stream. If plastic is released to the environment by wind or improper disposal, it does not biodegrade and removal from the environment is difficult, expensive and has limited success. Plastic foam products cannot be recycled in Palo Alto's recycling program.

Single-use plastic water bottles and plastic foam are included because of their frequent occurrence in ecosystem litter and readily available alternatives. Eliminating single-use plastics:

1. Aligns with the City's policy to achieve Zero Waste by 2021;
2. Aids compliance with the Municipal Regional Permit which requires "no adverse impact" from stormdrain sources of litter in local creeks by 2022; and
3. Conforms with the City's Sustainability/Climate Action Plan goal to reduce Greenhouse gas emissions associated with the manufacture, transport and disposal of products purchased by the City.

The following items shall be phased out of City Operations by the dates indicated:

1. Single-use plastic bags shall not be purchased or distributed, effective September 18, 2009;
2. Plastic foam ice chests, packaging materials and food and beverage containers as defined by Palo Alto's Plastic Foam Ordinance 5371 shall not be purchased, used or distributed at City sponsored events after December 31, 2009;
3. Single-use plastic water containers shall not be purchased, distributed or sold after December 31, 2009;
4. The City will require its vendors and contractors to eliminate the use of plastic foam used for primary, secondary and shipping packaging in goods by January 1, 2017 unless individual contract specifications list an earlier date. Contract specifications and terms and conditions will include language requiring that:

- a. All primary, secondary and shipping (tertiary) packaging be minimized to the maximum extent feasible while balancing the need to protect the product being shipped;
- b. Expanded foam plastics (e.g., foam or cushion blocks, trays, packing “peanuts”), such as but not limited to polystyrene (aka Styrofoam™), polypropylene, or polyurethane shall not be used as primary, secondary or tertiary/shipping packaging with the following exceptions:
 - i. Primary packaging made from these materials may be used if the vendor, manufacturer, contractor individually or collaboratively does one of the following:
 1. Takes the material back at the City’s convenience and at no cost to the City, or
 2. Pays the City’s costs for handling and disposal.
- c. Bioplastics that meet ASTM D6400 standards for compostability may be accepted with approval from the City’s Environmental Services Division subject to local municipal compost facility requirements;
- d. If approved by the City’s Environmental Services Division, a packaging requirement may be waived if no other viable packaging alternative exists; and
- e. The City will include the above standards when relevant in City contract specifications, Purchase Order Terms and Conditions, and policies related to cash handling and procurement card use.

Applicability of this Policy

This Policy shall apply to all City operations, with the exception of emergency response actions as needed. City contractors, lessees and vendors shall also adhere to the Policy when providing a service or attending City-sponsored events, meetings or other gatherings. All events sponsored or co-sponsored by the City shall also be in compliance with the Policy. This Policy will also be included in the Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Chapter of the Palo Alto Purchasing Manual and shall be implemented via contracts, purchase orders and agreements.

Procedures

City staff, vendors, lessees and event managers shall all be responsible for adherence to the Policy and ensuring that non-conforming plastic containers are not distributed at City facilities or City sponsored (or co-sponsored) events. Purchasing staff shall also assist in ensuring that non-conforming plastic containers are not purchased. Changes to this Policy must be coordinated through the City Manager’s Office. Questions and/or clarifications of this Policy should be directed to the Public Works Department.

Definitions:

1. **Primary packaging** designates the layer of packaging in immediate contact with the product;

2. **Secondary Packaging** protects the product and the primary packaging, which often is the packaging most visible to the consumer in retail displays such as cardboard cartons, cardboard boxes and cardboard/plastic crates.
3. **Tertiary or Shipping Packaging:** Shipping containers used for transport of products that may be wrapped in primary and/or secondary packaging.

Recommended:



Public Work Director

9/22/16
Date

Approved:



City Manager

9.30.16
Date