



**TO:** Mayor Shaun Sipma  
Members of the City Council

**FROM:** Minot Environmental Policy Group

**DATE:** November 28, 2018

**SUBJECT: MINOT ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS  
REGARDING SINGLE-USE PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS**

**I. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

The Minot Environmental Policy Group would finally like to make the following recommendations to the City Council of Minot:

1. There appears to be an amount of public support of changes to the way that our community approaches single-use plastic shopping bags.
2. Of all the options mentioned in public comments, we believe that a small fee (5 or 10 cents per bag) to be the most effective first step for the community of Minot. An action like this would encourage individuals to change their habits without seriously affecting them if they forget or choose to use a single-use plastic bag.
3. An educational campaign, along with City or other organizations provided 1-2 reusable bags per household, could give the community the option to start changing their habit prior to having to pay for plastic.
4. Implementation would be difficult but possible. To help ensure retailer compliance, it would be wise to split the fee between the retailer and the city. We recommend 2 cents of every fee would stay with the city of Minot while 3 cents of every bag would be collected by the retailer. We would also recommend that the portion of the fee collected by the city not be added to the general fund but rather be used to fund environmental projects around the community, including municipal recycling, environmental education, green space development, Souris River clean-up efforts, and community wide clean-up efforts. A breakdown of different scenarios and considerations with this plan is located in Appendix C.
5. Special care should be given to the details of the fee. We recommend that the single-use plastic shopping bag fee not apply to individuals using WIC or similar nutrition assistance measure. We also recommend that the fee be waived for single-use plastic bags used to separate meats and chemicals. Likewise, produce plastic bags should remain exempt. Also, flower bags, dry cleaning bags, restaurant to-go bags, and small party-favor sized bags should be exempt. Not only is it difficult to uniformly apply a fee on these items, they also do not have easily replaceable alternatives.
6. While communities (and countries) around the world are moving to ban and impose strict penalties on single-use plastic bags, small and incremental steps would be best for a community like Minot that does not yet have widespread environmental education and policies in place. Instead of looking to headlines like Great Britain, Kenya, Seattle, and Washington D.C., it may be best to look to a community like Estevan, Saskatchewan; Avon, Colorado; or Brownsville, Texas where residents consistently utilize reusable shopping bags to avoid a 5-cent fee on single use plastic bags.
7. An example of a municipal ordinance of this nature can be found in Appendix D. The structure of this ordinance comes from the community of Avon, CO, population 6,447 and has been amended to represent the City of Minot.

## **II. CONTACT PERSONS**

The Minot Environmental Policy Group is made up of six individuals who live and work in Minot. Three members identify as male, three members identify as female. Individuals work in the field of banking, public education, human resources, non-profit management, and local government. They are single parent, single with no children, married with no children, and married with children families in our community.

Tim Baumann 715-307-2116

## **III. DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Background**

In February of 2018, a group of other like-minded individuals from Minot expressed frustration with the amount of single-use plastic bags stuck in trees, gutters, bushes, and fields in our community and wanted to do something about it. The name of the work group became the Minot Environmental Policy Group and the invitation was extended to members of the Minot community to share their thoughts, views, and experiences regarding single-use plastic bags in our community and what we could do to reduce waste and litter from this product. The period for public comment was open from the middle of May 2018 to July 31, 2018. Knowing that one-time public meetings or forums can be a hindrance to community members with unusual work hours, small children, or physical handicap, public comments were submitted via e-mail to the address [environmentminot@gmail.com](mailto:environmentminot@gmail.com). The end goal of the conversation was to create a framework or plan to recommend to the Minot City Council as to how we can reduce the consumption of single-use plastic bags in our community.

## **IV. IMPACT:**

### **A. Fiscal Impact:**

Any fiscal impact to the City would need to be further researched.

## **V. ALTERNATIVES**

The City Council can discuss the issue and decide whether or not to move forward with any action.

## **VI. TIME CONSTRAINTS**

There are no time constraints.

## **VII. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Minot Environmental Policy Group Recommendations regarding Single-Use Plastic Shopping Bags