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Council sets goal for plastic bag reductions

Austin Business Journal

The Austin City Council adopted a plan to reduce the number of plastic bags entering the city solid waste system by 50 percent in the next year.

The plan is a voluntary pilot program by participating local retailers and plastic bag users. The City Council passed the original resolution for plastic bag use reduction in April 2007 and stakeholders met over the last year to agree on a target reduction goal.

Under the pilot program, the Texas Retailers Association will collect biannual data on plastic bag use. City Council Member Lee Leffingwell says the city will evaluate the plan's overall success in July 2009. The city's solid waste services department will begin a concurrent pilot project to recycle plastic bags at 5,000 homes across Austin.

Earlier this month Keep Austin Beautiful launched a marketing campaign "Austin's Got a Brand New Bag" and introduced its branded reusable bag. Last year, amid talks with the city about reducing plastic bag use, Whole Foods Market [NASDAQ: WFMI] announced it would discontinue plastic bag use at all of its stores worldwide.

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