

Community & Economic Development Committee (CEDC) Discussion Draft  
Subject: Shopping Cart Containment and Municipal Disposal Policy – Concept Introduction  
Prepared by: Assembly Member George Martinez  
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## **Purpose of Discussion**

This item is intended to open a policy discussion regarding abandoned shopping carts in Anchorage. No ordinance has been introduced at this time. The goal is to gather initial feedback from committee members before drafting legislation.

## **Framing Questions for Committee Discussion**

### **1. Scope of the Issue**

- Are abandoned shopping carts a sufficiently widespread concern to warrant municipal legislation?
- In which areas of Anchorage is the issue most pronounced?
- Are current enforcement tools adequate, or is there a regulatory gap?

### **2. Retailer Responsibility**

- To what extent should retailers be responsible for preventing shopping carts from leaving their property?
- Should the Municipality consider requiring specific containment technology, such as wheel-locking systems?
- If containment requirements were considered, should they apply to all retailers or only those above a certain size threshold?
- How should “major retailer” be defined, if at all?
- Should geographic or zoning differences influence regulatory requirements?

### **3. Containment Strategies**

- Should the Municipality mandate a specific technology standard, or allow flexibility in how retailers prevent cart removal?
- Would requiring retailers to submit a containment or retrieval plan be beneficial?
- Should proactive cart retrieval expectations be defined, or left to business discretion?

### **4. Municipal Authority**

- Should the Municipality have explicit authority to retrieve abandoned carts from public property without prior notice?
- Should retrieved carts be stored, returned, recycled, or immediately disposed of?
- Is there value in creating a municipal impound or “cart holding” program, or would that create unnecessary administrative burden?

## **5. Cost Recovery**

- Should retailers bear the cost when the Municipality retrieves or disposes of abandoned carts?
- Would a per-cart fine be the appropriate mechanism for cost recovery?
- Should fines be fixed, escalating, or tied to actual recovery costs?
- How should repeat violations be handled?

## **6. Reporting and Accountability**

- Should larger retailers be required to report lost or recovered cart data to the Municipality?
- Would quarterly reporting provide useful accountability, or would it create unnecessary administrative burden?
- What metrics would meaningfully inform policy effectiveness?

## **7. Social and Human Considerations**

- How should the Municipality handle situations where carts contain personal belongings?
- What coordination should occur with outreach providers when carts are associated with individuals experiencing homelessness?
- How can policy avoid criminalizing poverty while still addressing public safety and nuisance concerns?

## **8. Financial and Operational Impacts**

- What level of staffing or operational adjustment would enforcement require?
- Would this policy be revenue-neutral, cost-recovery focused, or deterrence-driven?
- Are there unintended fiscal consequences that should be evaluated before proceeding?

## **9. Policy Direction**

- Does the Committee believe this topic warrants formal ordinance development?
- What guiding principles should shape any future legislation?
- Are there alternative approaches the Committee would prefer to explore?