

City of Coconut Creek InterOffice Memorandum

To: Karen Brooks, City Manager

Date: December 7, 2023

From: Linda Whitman, Sustainability Manager

Subject: **Plastics**

The Commission has asked on several occasions about the possibility of the City enacting policy or code to address plastic in our community. Most recently at the September 28th meeting, an ordinance was mentioned as an example. The language referenced and shared was a Gainesville, Florida ordinance. Gainesville is recognized as a leader in the Zero Waste effort.

In an effort to identify all the ordinances adopted by Gainesville as part of the Zero Waste Initiative and the efforts that led to those ordinances, staff reached out to Michael Heimbach, Sustainability Manager for Gainesville. Michael was helpful in directing staff to the City's webpage and answered various questions on the topic.

Below is a synopsis of Gainesville's Zero Waste Initiative, including the single-use plastics ban.

Gainesville Zero Waste Initiative: <https://www.gainesvillefl.gov/Government-Pages/Government/Departments/Public-Works/Garbage-Recycling/Zero-Waste-Initiative#section-1>

The City of Gainesville set a goal to go Zero Waste by 2040 by supporting policies that reduce waste dramatically and encourage citizens to rethink waste material flows. By analyzing the status of their waste reduction and recycling, the City of Gainesville is working on modifying existing policies, systems, programs, and infrastructure to reduce waste and improve diversion opportunities.

The city has enacted several ordinances designed to reduce consumption, increase recycling opportunities, and improve community aesthetics. Businesses are encouraged to review all Zero Waste Ordinances to ensure compliance and rethink their waste and recycling practices to divert materials from landfills.

Gainesville Ordinances:

- 180678 –Plastics Ban: This comprehensive plastics ban was rescinded in 2019 after a ruling that state law may preempt cities from banning polystyrene containers and single-use plastic bags.
- In June 2022, the Gainesville City Commission approved three new zero waste ordinances (200381, 210129, 210626), renewing the City's commitment to protecting the environment through sustainable practices, and to reaching its zero-waste goal by 2040. Included in Ordinance 210129 is code relating to single-use plastic food accessories such as plastic utensils, condiment packets and portion cups. The new ordinance limits dispensing these items unless specifically requested by the customer or are made available to the customers at

self-serve stations. Additional provisions include requiring recycle bins for the collection of bottles and cans, and placing recycle bins next to garbage containers. The new changes impact fast-food establishments, convenience stores, supermarkets, bars and restaurants. While discontinuation of all use of single-use plastic straws and stirrers is strongly encouraged, this ordinance does not specifically apply to persons with disabilities, prepackaged beverages with a single-use plastic straw (e.g., juice boxes), boxes of prepackaged single-use plastic straws or single-use plastic stirrers that are offered for retail sale to a consumer for personal use, or medical facilities, dental facilities, hospitals, nursing homes, or assisted living facilities.

- Any special event permittees or any vendor operating under a city permit will not be permitted to sell, use or provide single-use plastic straws and stirrers. The city may enforce this article by a civil citation of \$125.00 per occurrence or per day.
- This ordinance bans the distribution of prepackaged food or beverages in expanded polystyrene (foam containers) by a permit holder on City of Gainesville property or the City of Gainesville right-of-way.
- The new Gainesville ordinance also bans the intentional release of plastic balloons, consistent with a Florida statute designed to protect wildlife and marine animals. The city's ordinance includes a ban on the intentional release of plastic glitter and plastic confetti. Officials recommend the use of non-plastic alternatives such as paper confetti, and advise popping inflated balloons and disposing of them in the trash.
- Future solid waste changes from the three new ordinances are scheduled to become effective in 2023, 2024 and 2025 and are designed to divert excess food and food waste out of area landfills through residential and commercial composting and through donation to food banks, soup kitchens and shelters.

What Coconut Creek is currently doing relative to Single Use Plastics:

- Pass up Plastics (active and includes residents & businesses)– [Pass Up Plastics | Living Green | Sustainable Development \(coconutcreek.net\)](https://www.coconutcreek.net/living-green/sustainable-development)
- Good and Green (Upcoming - Parks and Rec sponsored events and individuals that rent space for events in our parks) - Finalizing language, will meet with City Manager's office on activating
- Green Event Checklist (active, Department use) – Each department has been directed to fill out the checklist to note what steps have been taken to reduce plastics in the workplace for an office event.

Other programs being evaluated for implementation:

- Resolution supporting a Zero Waste Initiative with timeline (Departments: Public Works/Sustainable Development/Legal)
- Resolution supporting the “ask for a straw” method for the community (Departments: Sustainable Development/Legal/Community Relations)
- Ordinance similar to Gainesville’s regarding single-use plastics (Departments: Public Works/Sustainable Development/Legal)
- Research/survey into what our local businesses are currently doing on the matter of single use plastics (Department: Sustainable Development)
- Ordinance requiring unused food to go to a food center (Departments: Sustainable Development/Public Works/Legal)
- Encourage the community to adopt the “Too Good To Go” app, allowing food to be sold as a reduced rate before being thrown away (App is a “for profit” company and must be a community-driven effort)
- Initiate composting in the community (Department: Public Works)

Staff regularly participates in regional and statewide forums to discuss these and other sustainability issues. These groups freely share information on various topics whether they are ordinances or simply the direction their commissioners and administrators are leaning. Further, staff has made themselves available to residents for discussions and sharing of information. Upon direction from the Commission, staff will prioritize any of the noted programs in this memo.