



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**COMMUNICATION
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY BOARD**

Tower 101, Suite 1100

101 NE 3rd Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

April 27, 2026 – 6:00 PM

Cumulative Attendance					
1/2026 through 12/2026					
	Members	Appt by	Attendance	Present	Absent
1	Robert Daoust	II	P	2	2
2	Kelly Charles	IV	P	4	0
3	David Blattner, Chair	I	P	4	0
4	Suzee Bailey	C	P	3	1
5	Idan Straus, Vice Chair	M	P	4	0
6	Vacant	III	-	-	-
7	Fabiana Ahumada	M	A	2	1
8	Sara Rahmankhah	IV	P	4	0
9	Aida Nesimi	I	P	1	0
10	Vacant	III	-	-	-
11	Vacant	II	-	-	-
12	Parker Jacobson-Bertanzetti, Non-Voting Youth Chair	C	A	3	1

Staff Present

Glen Hadwen, Sustainability Manager

Silvia Duque Anez, Sustainability Coordinator

Dr. Nancy Gassman, Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation / Chief Resilience Officer

Melissa Doyle, Division Manager, Public Works (via Zoom)

Enrique Sanchez, Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation

K. Cruitt, Recording Clerk, Prototype, Inc.

Guests

Mary Herring, Rio Vista

Stacey Miscisin, Croissant Park

Jane Kish, River Oaks Civic Association

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. Roll was called, and it was noted that a quorum was present.

Communication to the City Commission

Fort Lauderdale's identity as the "Venice of America" and much of its economy depends on beaches, waterways, and reefs that support marine recreation. However, these natural assets are increasingly threatened by pollution from single-use plastics, glass, and expanded polystyrene (EPS), which contribute to marine debris, harm wildlife and degrade public spaces.

Staff conducted research on this topic at the request of the City Manager's Office, including a review of applicable state legislation and preemptions, analysis of actions taken by other municipalities in Florida, and consideration of the City's sustainability priorities. This work resulted in nine (9) recommended strategies, including six (6) amendments to the City Code and three (3) operational or policy actions intended to reduce plastic pollution and protect Fort Lauderdale's waterways, beaches, and natural environment.

The Sustainability Advisory Board discussed this topic across its 2026 meetings, allowing members to better understand the regulatory context and explore potential options for Fort Lauderdale.

Based on this review and discussion, the Sustainability Advisory Board urges the City Commission to implement the three operational and policy recommendations and strongly recommends the adoption of the six amendments to City Code (see attached).

Motion made by Ms. Rahmankhah, seconded by Mr. Daoust, to adopt the communication as revised. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Attachments

Executive Summary – Single Use Plastics Research

Exhibit 1. Plastics Research Briefing

Draft Minutes from Sustainability Advisory Board April Meeting

To: City Manager's Office

From: Sustainability and Special Projects Division, Parks and Recreation Department

Date: November 26, 2025

Subject: Executive Summary - Strategies to Address Single-Use Plastics at City Properties, Facilities, and Special Events

Introduction

Single-use plastics at City events and in City operations contribute to plastic pollution in Fort Lauderdale's natural environment, waterways, beaches and marine ecosystems. This briefing document provides an overview of current policies and ordinances related to single use plastics in the City of Fort Lauderdale as well as information on how other municipalities address these concerns. While the initial focus was on strategies to reduce single-use plastics at City events, the research revealed broader opportunities to strengthen sustainability across City operations. Accordingly, the recommendations extend beyond event-related plastic regulation to include actions applicable to all City-managed facilities, properties, and vendors. The briefing also supports consideration of complementary measures, including raising awareness of glass restrictions in City parks and beaches, adding polystyrene (EPS) regulations for City docks and waterfront structures, expanding the existing plastic straw policy to include single-use plastic stirrers and prohibiting the intentional outdoor release of plastic confetti, glitter and balloons. More detailed analysis is provided in *Exhibit 1: Research Briefing: Strategies for Reduction of Single-Use Plastics at City Properties, Facilities, and Special Events*.

Background & Context

Fort Lauderdale's identity as the "Venice of America" and much of its economy depends on beaches, waterways, and reefs that support marine recreation. However, these natural assets are increasingly threatened by pollution from single-use plastics, glass and expanded polystyrene (EPS), which contribute to marine debris, harm wildlife and degrade public spaces. Plastics and EPS break down into microplastics that accumulate in the sand, sediments and marine food chains, while broken glass on beaches poses safety hazards to humans and wildlife and can impair critical nesting habitat for sea turtles and shorebirds. Proactive measures to reduce plastics in the environment will help protect the natural resources that support Fort Lauderdale's tourism and recreation economy.

Fort Lauderdale already has a strong foundation on which to build. The City has existing ordinances that prohibit plastic straws Citywide (Code of Ordinances Section 16-140) and that restrict polystyrene use on City property and in City operations (Section 16-153). In addition, the City has operational policies and code provisions that govern temporary

concessions, mooring structures, littering and public assemblies which can be modified to further reduce plastics pollution (see Exhibit 1, Table 1.) These codes and policies support plans such as the *Advance Fort Lauderdale 2040 Comprehensive Plan* which call for waste reduction and protection of coastal and marine environments. Although the State of Florida preempts citywide restrictions on many single-use plastics, the City retains meaningful authority to regulate certain materials on City property, in City facilities, and through its contracts, procurement standards, and event agreements. Together, these elements serve as the foundation for nine recommended strategies via six amendments to the Code of Ordinances and three operational or policy initiatives.

Summary of recommended code and policy opportunities for consideration:

Six opportunities for code amendments and three policy strategies to reduce plastic pollution in the City are summarized below.

Recommended code amendments

1. Establish a new article within Chapter 16 regulating single-use plastic food service products (such as plastic straws, cups, bags, utensils, bottles, lids, trays, and similar disposable food or beverage containers) used by contractors, vendors and special event permittees on City property and in City facilities and requiring compostable, biodegradable or reusable alternatives. Acceptable alternatives include items made from paper, sugarcane, bamboo or other non-plastic natural materials.
2. Prohibit the use of unencapsulated expanded polystyrene (EPS) in floating docks, platforms and buoys at City properties and facilities including those installed, maintained or operated by contractors, special event permittees, individuals or temporary vendors.
3. Codify Parks rules that memorialize the prohibition of glass containers on the sandy portion of public beaches and beach access areas.
4. Strengthen the City’s plastic straw ordinance by explicitly including single-use plastic stirrers and establishing a hardship waiver process that allows small, independent businesses to request exemption if they can demonstrate financial hardship.
5. Reinforce the existing polystyrene prohibition by adding documentation requirements and consequences in the ordinance for City vendors and highlighting the restriction in event and concessionaire agreements, with phased enforcement for events as outlined in Article V. Outdoor Events Section 15-182(e) and implementing consistent public signage to clearly communicate the restriction.

6. Expand local litter and solid waste provisions to prohibit the intentional outdoor release of balloons, plastic confetti and glitter, with phased enforcement for events as outlined in Article V. Outdoor Events Section 15-182(e).

Recommended operational and policy strategies:

7. Update the Sustainable “Green Purchasing” Policy to explicitly align City procurement with existing and future Code provisions on plastic straws and polystyrene products and to further reduce purchases of other single use plastics including plastic bags and food service wares.
8. Renew and expand educational outreach, including employee orientation content, messaging to existing staff, community-facing campaigns, and updated beach signage, to support compliance and behavioral change.
9. Amend key City agreements such as outdoor event agreements, temporary beach license agreements, and mobile food concessionaire agreements, to explicitly reference existing City Code of Ordinances provisions related to the prohibition of plastic straws and polystyrene products. In addition, agreements may be amended to restrict use of other single use plastics. Should any of the previously recommended code amendments be advanced, these agreements should also be updated to (a) include language allowing the City to revoke vendor agreements in cases of non-compliance and (b) require periodic review to ensure continued alignment with current regulations, operational needs and industry best practices.

Implementation Strategy

Implementation of these strategies will rely on a phased, education-first approach, coordinated updates to contracts and permitting processes and standardized compliance tools such as affidavits, vendor lists and tiered security deposits. While compostable and reusable alternatives may carry higher per-unit costs in the near term, national purchasing guidance indicates that overall program costs can be managed through strategic procurement, product standardization and reduced waste-hauling volumes over time.

The nine strategies outlined in this briefing provide Fort Lauderdale with a practical and enforceable pathway to reduce single-use plastics at City events, extend those protections across City-managed properties and operations, and address related glass and EPS pollution. This framework fosters protection of the City’s waterways and beaches, supports a resilient tourism economy and demonstrates leadership in coastal environmental stewardship.

Conclusion

Protecting Fort Lauderdale's waterways, beaches, and marine habitats is essential to the City's economy, safety and identity. The recommendations in this briefing present a set of tools including updates to the City's Code of Ordinances, strengthened event and vendor agreements and operational improvements that the City may adopt individually or as a coordinated package. These options are designed to reduce the environmental and public-safety impacts of single-use plastics, EPS and glass, while operating within existing state constraints. Advancing any combination of these actions will meaningfully strengthen the City's stewardship of its coastal environment.

Attachments

- Exhibit 1: Plastics Research Briefing
- Exhibit 2: Review of Other Jurisdictions' Regulations

Exhibit 1:

**Research Briefing: Strategies for Addressing Single-Use Plastics at City Properties,
Facilities, and Special Events**

Prepared for:

City Manager's Office

Prepared by:

Sustainability and Special Projects Division

Parks and Recreation Department

November 2025

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Research Briefing: Strategies to Address Single-Use Plastics at City Properties, Facilities and Special Events

Objective

This briefing is intended to provide policy and regulatory options to decrease the usage of single-use plastics at City events and in City operations, thereby decreasing plastic pollution in Fort Lauderdale's natural environment, waterways, beaches, and marine ecosystems. As the "Venice of America," maintaining the health and beauty of our natural systems is central to the City's economy, tourism industry, and our overall quality of life. This research briefing seeks to build upon the City's existing ordinances and initiatives and to align with efforts from other jurisdictions across Florida to respond to the growing environmental impacts of plastic pollution in urban and coastal ecosystems.

Scope

While this briefing was initiated to explore strategies for reducing single-use plastics at City events, the research identified broader opportunities to enhance plastics reduction across City operations. The recommendations in this document extend beyond events to include actions applicable to City-managed facilities, properties and vendors. It also addresses complementary measures, including memorializing glass restrictions on beaches, modifying expanded polystyrene (EPS) regulations for docks and waterfront structures and prohibitions on the intentional outdoor release of plastic confetti, glitter, and balloons.

Impacts of Plastic, Glass, and Expanded Polystyrene Pollution

Fort Lauderdale's identity and economy are tied to its beaches, waterways and marine ecosystem. These assets are increasingly impacted by the presence of single-use plastics, glass, and expanded polystyrene (EPS, commonly known as Styrofoam™). Southeast Florida's reefs and coastal waters receive debris from land-based sources such as streets, parks, stormwater systems and marinas, as well as from boating, fishing and tourism activities. A [study](#) by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and partner agencies identified marine debris, particularly single-use plastics and EPS, as a persistent threat to wildlife, human health, tourism and local economies. Addressing the widespread problem of marine debris and plastic pollution necessitates action at the local and regional levels to limit potential for pollution from materials used in City facilities, events, vendor operations and docks critical to protecting Fort Lauderdale's environmental and economic base.

[Florida State Parks](#), a division of FDEP, report that more than 90% of seabirds and 30% of sea turtles have plastics in their stomachs. [Global research](#) by the [Ocean Conservancy](#) further confirms that hard and soft plastics pose heightened mortality risks to marine species as ingested plastic accumulates. The impact on wildlife is devastating.

When single-use plastics and EPS end up as litter in the environment, they can persist for a long time and may eventually degrade into microplastics as they are exposed to elements such as heat,

sunlight, wind erosion and physical abrasion from sand. The [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) (NOAA) identifies microplastics, small plastic pieces less than five millimeters long, as the most prevalent type of marine debris found in our oceans. In Florida, microplastics are increasingly documented in coastal sediments and researchers at [Florida Atlantic University](#) emphasize their implications for local conservation and resource management. These microplastics absorb toxic chemicals and metals and when ingested by marine animals, impact reproduction, survival and overall population health. This affects ecosystems and fishery productivity but also poses risks to people as microplastics move through the human food chain.

Glass contamination presents another challenge for coastal cities. Broken glass on beaches poses a physical hazard for people and wildlife as it is extremely difficult to detect and remove glass shards from the sand. In Fort Lauderdale, this risk is even more significant given the ecological importance of our shorelines. South Florida serves as an important nesting habitat for five species of sea turtles and nearly 80% of the world's loggerhead population nests in this region. Fort Lauderdale beaches alone host an estimated 1,000 to 1,200 nests each year across both public and private shorelines. The City's beaches also provide habitat for the piping plover, a sparrow-sized shorebird that nests and feeds along coastal sand and gravel beaches. The quality of beach sand is crucial for sea turtles, impacting their nesting success by affecting the sand's ability to retain moisture, allow gas exchange, and maintain a suitable temperature for incubation. Sand quality is affected by grain size, with finer grains sometimes leading to better hatchling performance, and by the presence of foreign materials like microplastics and contaminants like glass, which can negatively impact development by altering temperature or oxygen levels.

Expanded Polystyrene (EPS), commonly used in food service containers, floating docks, and buoy materials, poses additional risks. EPS breaks apart easily under UV exposure and wave action, producing long-lasting fragments and microplastics. Because EPS is extremely lightweight, wind and tides readily transport it across beaches, waterways, and stormwater systems, making it one of the most common and persistent forms of litter recovered during coastal cleanups ([Ocean Conservancy](#)). Its porous structure also absorbs oil and chemical pollutants, allowing these contaminants to hitchhike into marine environments and magnify ecological harm as EPS breaks down.

Background

The City of Fort Lauderdale has established a foundation of policies, plans, and operational practices that address sustainability and waste reduction. This background section reviews the key components of that foundation, including:

1. Existing City policy and regulatory tools (Table 1)
2. Review of existing City outdoor event agreements
3. The State of Florida regulatory context
4. Actions taken by other jurisdictions

Together, these elements offer a practical starting point for strengthening the City’s approach to reducing pollution from single-use plastics and other harmful materials.

<i>Table 1. Overview of City Code and Policy Frameworks</i>	
Key Regulations	
Sec. 16-140—16-143	Prohibition of sale or distribution of plastic straws
Sec. 16-151—16-155	Prohibition of the use of polystyrene products by City contractors and special event permittees operating on City property or City facilities
Operational Policies and Code Provisions	
Sec. 8-54	Temporary concessions for special events
Sec. 8-55.4	Sale, service, and consumption of food and alcoholic beverages
Sec. 8-91	Mooring Structures
Sec. 15-181-183	Outdoor Events
Sec. 24-7	Littering; unlawful accumulations
Sec. 26-202.1	Parade and public assembly prohibitions
PSM 9.2.4: Sustainable Purchasing Policy (2017)	To reduce the environmental impacts from City use of materials, products and services
Draft Special Events Guide (2016)	City staff drafted this guide in 2016, but it was never implemented. It would require event organizers to develop a comprehensive Garbage and Recycling Plan to promote waste reduction and recycling, and coordinates with vendors to minimize environmental impact.
Supporting Plans	
Net Zero Plan (2025)	Action #23: Advocate for policies to reduce the usage of single-use plastics
Advance 2040 Comprehensive Plan (2020)	Objective SW 3.2: Promote Waste Reduction Promote waste reduction and conservation of resources. POLICY FLU 2.7.13: The City, in coordination with Broward County and its local governments, shall provide for the protection of marine habitat and water quality of Broward County’s coastal waters, including the protection of natural and artificial reefs.
More Flavor, Less Plastic (2019)	Campaign to reduce single-use plastics, promoted from 2019 through 2020
Strategic Plan 2029, Press Play Fort Lauderdale	Goal 3: <i>Be a Sustainable and Resilient Community</i>
Sustainability Action Plan (2011)	Leadership Goal #1: Lead by Example Leadership Goal #2: Implement and Enforce Sustainability Policies
Proposed Amendment Underway	
Sec. 8-55.4, Sale, Service, and Consumption of Food and Alcoholic Beverages to include references to Section 16-140 and Section 16-153 of the City’s Code of Ordinances related to the prohibition of plastic straws and polystyrene respectively.	

Existing City of Fort Lauderdale Outdoor Event Agreements

Three of the City Outdoor Event agreements were reviewed as part of this assessment to determine their alignment with existing City policies on single-use plastics. While these agreements address important operational and safety considerations, they currently do not specifically reference the City's existing policies related to single-use plastics, especially the plastic straw restrictions.

1. The Outdoor Event Agreement includes the following code references: [Section 15-182](#) (application fee and agreement) and [Section 16-154\(1\)\(b\)](#) (Prohibition of the use of polystyrene products by City contractors and special event permittees operating on City property or City facilities).
2. The Temporary License Agreement for the Sale, Service, and Delivery of Food and Alcoholic Beverages on City Beaches, includes the following code references: [Sections 8-55.4](#) (Sale, service, and consumption of food and alcoholic beverages) and [8-55.5](#) (High impact events on beach property).
3. The Agreement for Mobile Food Concessionaire includes the following code references: [Section 2-183](#) (Suspension and debarment), [Section 2-186](#) (Local business preference), and [Section 2-187](#) (Non-discrimination by City contractors).

State Regulatory Context

State Preemption of Local Plastic Regulations

Florida has three main statutes that expressly preempt local regulation of many single-use plastic products and packaging. However, the regulation of plastic straws, plastic stirrers, plastic cutlery, plastic lids, balloons and other plastic decorations by local municipalities is not specifically preempted.

- [Florida Statute §403.7033](#) (2008): No local government, local governmental agency, or state governmental agency may enact any rule, regulation, or ordinance regarding use, disposition, sale, prohibition, restriction, or tax of such auxiliary containers, wrappings, or disposable plastic bags.
- [Florida Statute §403.708\(9\)](#) (1974): The packaging of products manufactured or sold in the State may not be controlled by local rule, regulation, or ordinance adopted after March 1, 1974, other than expressly provided.
- [Florida Statute §500.90](#) (2016): The regulation of the use or sale of polystyrene products by entities regulated under this chapter is preempted to the department. This preemption does not apply to local ordinances or provisions thereof enacted before January 1, 2016, and does not limit the authority of a local government to restrict the use of polystyrene by individuals on public property, temporary vendors on public property, or entities engaged in a contractual relationship with the local government for the provision of goods or services, unless such use is otherwise preempted by law.

Other Relevant State Regulations

- [Florida Statute §166.041\(4\)\(a\)](#) requires city governments to prepare a “Business Impact Estimate” (BIE) before adopting most new ordinances. The BIE must detail the ordinance’s potential economic effects on for-profit businesses.
- In tandem with the BIE requirement, [Florida Statute §166.0411](#) gives businesses and other affected parties, legal avenues to challenge local ordinances that harm them economically. Any interested party may sue a city or county over a recently adopted ordinance on the grounds that the ordinance is either arbitrary or unreasonable in its burden on businesses, or that it is expressly preempted by state law or the Florida Constitution.
- [Florida Statute §379.233](#) prohibits any intentional outdoor release of balloons filled with lighter-than-air gas, with limited exceptions for scientific uses.
- [Florida Statute §403.413](#) makes it unlawful to dump or discard litter on any public property or waterway, except in proper receptacles.
- [Florida Statute §403.41315](#) establishes a comprehensive illegal dumping, litter, and marine debris control and prevention program to combat litter and marine debris.

Actions Across Jurisdictions

Several Florida cities and counties have adopted ordinances and policies to reduce single-use plastics in areas where local regulation is allowed. Common measures include banning plastic straws and plastic stirrers in commercial establishments and prohibiting polystyrene and other single-use plastics on City properties, at City facilities, at Special Events, at City events and through vendor agreements. Many also address related litter control provisions regulating balloons and confetti across all outdoor areas of City property including public marinas, public marine facilities and public parks and beaches. Additionally, some jurisdictions prohibit the use or possession of glass containers on beaches and beach-access areas. Communities have also adopted restrictions on the use, installation or placement of unencapsulated expanded polystyrene (EPS) in floating docks, platforms and buoys. These efforts aim to reduce plastic and glass pollution while complying with state preemptions. [Exhibit 2: Review of Other Jurisdictions’ Regulations](#) summarizes the review of more than 60 code sections adopted across 32 jurisdictions in Florida to restrict single-use plastics, polystyrene and glass. In addition to Florida, efforts to reduce single-use plastics are expanding across the country, including most commonly bans of plastic bags in over 500 municipalities across 28 states, according to [Surfrider Organization](#).

Summary of Recommended Policies

The recommendations below present a framework for strengthening the City’s approach to reducing single-use plastics, managing environmentally-harmful materials, and minimizing associated risks to City properties, waterways and public spaces. The first set of recommendations, under “**Code Amendments,**” includes six proposed updates that introduce new regulatory requirements, revise existing ordinance language, and align City practices with State standards. The second set, titled “**Additional Recommendations,**” details three recommendations focused on internal policy

updates, enforcement mechanisms, operational improvements and community outreach. Together, these measures provide a unified and enforceable strategy to reduce plastic pollution, improve compliance and support long-term sustainability objectives across City properties, facilities and events.

Code Amendments

1. Regulation of Single-Use Plastic Food Service Products

- **Background:** During the last six years, the City has taken the lead on minimizing single-use plastic straws and polystyrene pollution by establishing two important ordinances, C-20-43 and C-19-01, which prohibits the usage of plastics straws citywide and of polystyrene on city properties and in city operations their usage, respectively.
- **Action:** To complement these existing ordinances, staff propose establishment of a new article within Chapter 16 – Miscellaneous Provisions and Offenses (e.g. Article X) to regulate the use of single-use plastic food service products by:
 1. Contractors, concessionaires, and special event permittees operating on City property or City facilities; and
 2. Individuals and temporary vendors located on City property or City facilities.
- **Definition:** “Single-use plastic food service products” means items intended to be used once in their original form and then discarded or destroyed. These include, but are not limited to, products made primarily from petroleum-derived plastics such as polystyrene, polypropylene, or polyethylene. Examples include plastic straws, cups, bags, utensils, bottles, lids, trays, and similar disposable food or beverage containers.
- **Material Requirements:** All food service products used or distributed by City vendors, contractors, permittees, or licensees must be compostable, biodegradable, or reusable. Acceptable alternatives include items made from paper, sugarcane, bamboo, or other non-plastic natural materials.
- **Suggested policy should be referenced within;**
 - Chapter 8 Boats, Docks, Beaches, and Waterways Article III. Public Beaches
 - Sec. 8-54 of the temporary concessions for special events
 - Sec. 8-55 of the temporary beach license agreement
 - Chapter 16 Miscellaneous Provisions and Offenses Article VII. Prohibition of Sale or Distributions of Plastic Straws
 - Sec. 16-141 Sale or Distribution of Plastic Straws Prohibited
 - Chapter 16 Miscellaneous Provisions and Offenses Article IX. Polystyrene Products
 - Sec. 16-153 prohibition of the use of polystyrene products by individuals and temporary vendors located on city property or city facilities
 - Sec. 16-154 prohibition of the use of polystyrene products by city contractors and special event permittees operating on city property or city facilities.
- **Compliance requirement:** As a condition of permit approval, each special event applicant must provide:
 1. A list of all food and beverage vendors participating in the event; and

2. A signed affidavit confirming that no single-use plastic food service products will be used on City property or within City facilities.

- **Enforcement; penalties:** Highlight the restriction in event and concessionaire agreements, with phased enforcement for events as outlined in Article V. Outdoor Events Section 15-182(e).
- **Contract and Permit Provisions:** All applicable contracts, agreements, leases, and licenses shall include clauses requiring compliance with this regulation. Contractors, vendors, permittees, and licensees shall be notified that single-use plastic food service products are not permitted on City property or within City facilities.
- **Exemptions apply to:**
 - Pre-packaged food products filled and sealed prior to receipt by the City contractor or permittee. Packaging raw meat, poultry, or seafood that is sold or distributed from a refrigerated display or storage.
 - Services or uses under a declared state of emergency or related to emergency response functions.
 - Where a reasonable accommodation is needed by an individual due to a medical or physical condition.

2. Unencapsulated Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) Dock Restrictions

- **Background:** Unencapsulated expanded polystyrene in floating docks, platforms, and buoys breaks down into foam particles and microplastics that pollute waterways, harm wildlife and accumulate along shorelines. Given Fort Lauderdale’s extensive system of waterways and marinas, these impacts are especially visible. Polystyrene and its microplastics act like a sponge, absorbing toxic chemicals and heavy metals from the water, which are ingested by marine wildlife and affect overall population health.

Pictured below, a polystyrene floating dock recovered in August 2025 in Fort Lauderdale.



Action: Amend City Code [Sec. 8-91 Mooring Structures](#) or/and [Division 2. Municipal Docks](#) to include restrictions in the use, installation, or placement of unencapsulated expanded polystyrene

(EPS) in floating docks, platforms, or buoys associated with pleasure boats, yachts, or other noncommercial watercraft. This prohibition should apply to:

- Contractors and special-event permittees performing work or operating on City property or City facilities; and
- Individuals and temporary vendors while located on City property or City facilities.
 - **Definitions:**
 - *Polystyrene* means a thermoplastic polymer or copolymer comprised of at least 80 percent styrene or para-methyl styrene by weight.
 - *Unencapsulated expanded polystyrene* means expanded polystyrene that is not completely encapsulated or encased within:
 - (a) [Polyurethane ethylene-vinyl acetate \(EVA\)](#);
 - (b) [Polyethylene](#);
 - (c) Concrete;
 - (d) Other comparable materials approved by and acceptable to the city's Marine Facilities Program; or
 - (e) A protective covering that is warranted by the manufacturer for eight years or more against cracking, peeling, sloughing, and deterioration from ultraviolet rays and physical contacts.
 - **Material requirements:** The use of unencapsulated polystyrene floating docks shall be prohibited at all City properties and City facilities.
 - **Enforcement:** Suggested sections of this article should include phased enforcement during the first six months engage in public education efforts and technical assistance during which the code compliance department shall issue written warning for violations; thereafter strictly enforce per schedule in ordinance. Recommended enforcement penalties should stay consistent with [Miami Beach, FL Sec. 46-211](#) of the Code of Ordinance.
 - **Exemptions:** Waters and waterways within the jurisdiction of the county, state, or federal government entities, as well as to emergencies or temporary public safety operations.

3. Public Beach Rules and Regulations

- **Background:** Glass contamination on our beaches poses a significant safety hazard for wildlife and people. The quality and safety of beach sand is especially crucial for sea turtles and shorebirds, as broken glass can injure nesting turtles and harm birds that forage and nest along coastal sand. While some efforts to discourage the use of glass on public beaches are already in place through signage, these measures are not currently reflected in the City Code.
- **Action:** Amend City Code [Article III Public Beaches](#) to include regulations intended to reduce safety hazards and prevent injury to beach patrons, specifically regarding the use of glass containers.
 - *Possession of glass containers prohibited.* It shall be unlawful for any person while on the beach or beach access areas to possess or utilize any glass bottle or container, other than for medical treatment. The prohibition applies to the sandy portion of the public beaches in the City.
- **Enforcement:** Enforcement for this measure would be supported primarily through the educational campaigns and public outreach efforts described in Recommendation 8.

4. Plastic Straws (Sec. 16-141)

- **Background:** Effective since January 2020, Fort Lauderdale has had a ban on single-use plastic straws. The Citywide ban prohibits commercial establishments from selling or distributing plastic straws, in or by any commercial establishment or at any City Facility or City Property or by any Special Event Permittee. There are exceptions for prepackaged straws, medical/dental uses, and those designed for disabled individuals.
- **Definition:** *Single-use plastic stirrer* means a device that is used to mix beverages, intended for only one-time use, and made predominantly of plastic derived from either petroleum or a biologically based polymer, including polymers derived from corn or other plant sources. Single-use plastic stirrer includes compostable and biodegradable petroleum or biologically based polymer stirrers but does not include stirrers that are made from non-plastic materials, such as paper, sugar cane, bamboo, or other similar materials.
- **Purpose:** Despite the ban, many restaurants and concessions with City limits still provide plastic straws without consumers expressing explicit desire. Thus, the prohibition of plastic straws needs to be broadly and appropriately enforced.
- **Actions:**

The prohibition shall expand to include single use plastic stirrers.

- Additionally, the City should suspend event agreements and/or contracts with vendors and/or concessionaires who fail to comply. Once the vendor or concessionaire successfully removes all single-use plastic straws from their establishment, the City may release the approval to operate again.
- Include an exemption under Sec. 16-141 for businesses that can demonstrate financial hardship. Any food service provider or store that reported an annual gross income under \$500,000.00 per location on its income tax filing for the most recent tax year, and that is not a chain food service provider or chain store, may request from the City Manager or designee, in a manner and form established by the City Manager, a financial hardship waiver of the requirements of this article. The City Manager or designee may grant a waiver if the food service provider or store proves the following:
 - (a) There is no comparable alternative product not composed of plastic that would cost the same as or less than single-use plastic beverage straws and single-use plastic stirrers, and
 - (b) The purchase or use of an alternative product not composed of plastic would create an undue financial hardship.

Such financial hardship waiver shall be valid for 12 months and may be renewable upon application to the city manager or designee.

5. Prohibition of the Use of Polystyrene Products

- **Background:** Since 2020 the City has had a ban on the use of expanded polystyrene (EPS, commonly known as Styrofoam™) products by individuals and temporary vendors located on City property or City facilities, and by City contractors and special event permittees on City

facilities or City property (Code [Sec. 16-151 through 16-155](#)). For these sections, the Code defines key terms like *food and beverage packaging* and *polystyrene products*, which include containers, plates, lids, coolers, ice chests, trays, cartons, cups, among other elements.



Source: Sustain Naperville Polystyrene

- **Action:** To complement the existing regulations, it is recommended:
 - Amend the City Code [Sec. 16-154](#) to require a formal commitment from event organizers to use alternative packaging. As a condition of permit approval, each special event applicant must submit:
 - i. A list of all food and beverage vendors participating in the event, and
 - ii. A signed affidavit confirming that no polystyrene products will be used on City property or within City facilities.
 - **Enforcement:**
 - Highlight the restriction in event and concessionaire agreements, with phased enforcement for events as outlined in Article V. Outdoor Events Section 15-182(e). Develop and install uniform signage across City properties and facilities to clearly communicate the prohibition of polystyrene products.

6. Prohibition on Intentional Release Outdoors of Balloons, Plastic Confetti, and Glitter

- **Background:** The Florida Statute §379.233, prohibits the intentional outdoor release of balloons inflated with gas lighter than air.
- **Action:** It is recommended that the City should incorporate and expand this restriction into Sec. 24-7 (Solid Waste – Littering; Unlawful Accumulations) to ensure alignment with State law and reinforce local enforcement authority. Keeping up with neighboring municipalities such as Gainesville, Boca Raton, and Broward County, Fort Lauderdale should also prohibit harmful plastics including plastic confetti and glitter.
 - **Suggested language:** It shall be prohibited for any person to intentionally release, organize the release of, or intentionally cause to be released any balloons, plastic confetti, or glitter to the atmosphere.
- **Enforcement:**
 - Suggested sections of this article should include phased enforcement during the first six months by engagement in public education efforts and technical assistance

during which the Community Enhancement and Compliance Department shall issue written warning for violations; thereafter strictly enforce per schedule in ordinance. Recommended enforcement penalties should stay consistent with other municipalities including [Miami Beach](#) and [City of Hollywood](#).

- Conducted phased enforcement for City-approved events as outlined in Article V. Outdoor Events Section 15-182(e).

Additional Recommendations

In addition to code amendments, staff have identified the need for updates to existing internal policies, enforcement mechanisms, and modernized operational practices that will further strengthen the City's approach to reducing single-use plastics. The additional recommendations are as follows:

7. Amend existing PSM Chapter 9, Section 2.4, Sustainable "Green Purchasing Policy"

- **Background:**
 - The Sustainable "Green" Purchasing Policy was implemented in 2017 to minimize the City's negative impacts of its purchases on the environment and human health while supporting a resilient and vibrant community and economy.
- **Action:** The policy should be revised to reference the City's code requirements related to the prohibition of plastic straws and polystyrene respectively and to further reduce purchases of other single use plastics.
 - **Suggested Code Additions:** It is the intent of this policy to comply with all relevant City Code of Ordinances and State and Federal laws. When such code or law is updated to accommodate a more rigorous standard, this policy shall be considered to likewise require such additional provision. *In particular, City purchases shall comply with the prohibition of the purchase of plastic straws and polystyrene products as per City Code Sections 16-140 and 16-153, respectively.*
 - *The City will not purchase single use plastic bags and single use plastic food service wares.*
 - *The City shall make its catering contractors aware of the prohibition of single use plastics and polystyrene.*

8. Educational Outreach Campaigns

Background: Previously, the City of Fort Lauderdale introduced an educational outreach campaign called "More Flavor, Less Plastic." This community-wide initiative to eliminate single-use plastics was active from 2019 through 2020. Code Enforcement officers also did an educational outreach by delivering fliers to Fort Lauderdale restaurants in 2019. Educational follow-up continued for six months, followed by six months of warnings for any violations. Enforcement began after the twelve-month rollout of the plastic straw ordinance leading into the Covid pandemic. Now that restaurants have recovered from the impacts of the pandemic, further education is needed to improve compliance.

Action: Expand educational outreach programs across the City to ensure compliance.

- Every staff member of the City of Fort Lauderdale attends New Employee Orientation before diving into their job responsibilities. Pending the approval of some or all of the above recommendations, the orientation curriculum would include how the City operates without single-use plastics.
- The Strategic Communications Department can support the educational efforts of avoiding single use plastics. Social media and email reminders could be sent to encourage the adoption of reusable bags, cutlery, straws, decorations and docks. Sporadic social media posts could also highlight progress to residents and visitors following the implementation of single-use plastic prohibitions.
- Pending the approval and creation of an internal “Green Team”, educational events and messaging can be conveyed across City departments. Interested staff could volunteer their time for environmentally sustainable endeavors and choose to educate their colleagues about alternatives to single-use plastics.
- Updating signage on beaches to reflect newly banned items is important for cooperation. A previous effort to introduce a Beach Etiquette signage encouraging more eco-friendly practices was proposed but not supported. This should be re-discussed to inform tourists and beach goers.
- Existing opportunities to build upon include [Plastic Free July](#): a global initiative to reduce single-use plastic consumption by encouraging people to make more sustainable choices during the month of July. [Plastic Smart Cities](#), [#BreakFreeFromPlastic](#), and the [Ocean Friendly Restaurants Program](#) are other organized efforts at getting rid of single-use plastics. The City of Fort Lauderdale can join these campaigns or create similar educational campaigns for residents, visitors, and employees.

9. Amendment to Existing Agreements Recommendations

The three agreement types reviewed should be amended to at least specifically reference the City’s existing Code related to prohibitions on plastic straws and polystyrene. In addition, the agreements could also include language to prohibit single use plastic food service ware.

a. *Outdoor Event Agreements*

Currently agreement incorporates Sec. 16-154 (1)(b) of the Code but does not reference single use plastics Sec. 16-141 of our City ordinance. Suggested modification would include reference of Sec. 16-141 and references to the City’s Special Events Guide and language stating that use of single use plastic bags and food service wares are prohibited.

b. *Temporary License Agreement for the Sale, Service, and Delivery of Food and Alcoholic Beverages on City Beaches*

These agreements currently reference Sections 8-55.4 and 8-55.5. Suggested modifications to these agreements should also include references to Sec. 16-154 and Sect 16-141 of our

City ordinance language stating that use of single use plastic bags and food service wares is prohibited.

c. *Mobile Food Concessionaire Agreements*

This agreement current references only Section 2-183, Section 2-186, and Section 2-187. Suggested modifications to these agreements should also include:

- Sec. 16-154 and Sec. 16-141 of our City ordinance. Suggested revisions would add language to concessionaire agreements, Section R Compliance with Laws. Reference below suggested modification underlined.

Action: It is suggested that the above agreements all include the following language: *Compliance with Laws Contractor shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, codes, ordinances, rules and regulations in performing Contractor's duties, responsibilities and obligations pursuant to this Agreement. This includes but is not limited to, City Code Sections 16-140 and 16-153, which address the prohibition of plastic straws and polystyrene products respectively.*

- **Action:** Agreements could also include language stating that use of single use plastic bags and food service wares is prohibited.

Upon implementation of these recommendations, the associated agreements should include language allowing the City to revoke vendor agreements in the case of non-compliance and should be reviewed periodically to ensure continued compliance with current regulations, operational needs and industry best practices.

If *Prohibition of the Use of Polystyrene Products* is advanced, event agreements should be updated to include consistent language requiring event organizers to provide a list of participating vendors and signed affidavits of compliance.

Financial Implications of Single-Use Plastics and Alternatives

Amending the City's code to regulate single-use plastic food service items at City-permitted events and on City properties carries both financial and operational implications. A 2020 assessment by the [Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council \(SPLC\)](#), "*Purchasing Recommendations for Sustainable Food-Service Ware*" found that although compostable or biodegradable alternatives generally have higher per unit costs than conventional plastics, overall program expenses can be effectively managed and in some cases reduced through strategic procurement, standardized product selection and long-term implementation planning. The SPLC further explains that managing cost effectively requires looking beyond the upfront purchase price and instead evaluating the full lifecycle cost of products. Considerations included product durability, maintenance and cleaning needs, waste stream compatibility, disposal or recycle cost and end-of-life disposal or recovery options. Retail pricing data from June–July 2019 in that report show that average unit costs for

compostable food-service ware vary by material type with compostable products generally priced higher than their plastic counterparts.

The financial impact of a single-use plastics regulation is likely to include modest short-term administrative and procurement cost increases, with potential medium to long-term cost savings driven by reduced material purchasing, decreased waste hauling volumes and economies of scale in standardized procurement. The degree to which the program is cost-neutral or cost-saving will depend on implementation strategy, vendor compliance, and waste-stream infrastructure. The inherent value of reusable extends beyond fiscal metrics, to include both social and environmental values. The most cost-effective strategy for plastics reduction is typically switching to reusable food service wares (FSW). However, options for reusable FSW are limited for vendors at more temporary and transient locations such as concession stands.

Price Points

Below are the cost comparisons for single use plastics based on review of online product offerings including cups, water bottles, straws, bags, cutlery, and décor. Actual pricing available to City vendors may be different.

Item	Material / Benefit	Cost Per Unit
Beverage cup	Single-use plastic	\$0.04 to \$0.29
	Reusable aluminum	\$0.25 to \$0.32
	Durable, disposable agave fiber	\$0.29
	Recyclable steel	\$1.42
	Reusable bamboo	\$5.00
Water bottle	Single-use plastic	\$0.35
	Aluminum 16oz Open Water	\$0.80
	Aluminum 12oz Smart Water	\$0.89
	Aluminum Liquid Death in sustainable packaging	\$1.28
	Aluminum 16oz SurfWater hydrolife	\$1.99
Straw	Single-use plastic	\$0.01 to \$0.05
	100% plant-made from wheat straw, sugar cane, and silver grass	\$0.08
	Reusable stainless steel	\$1.67 to \$2.95
	Reusable glass	\$0.35
	Reusable silicone	\$0.57
	Rice-based paper cocktail straw	\$0.12
	Disposable bamboo	\$0.26

Item	Material / Benefit	Cost Per Unit
Bag	Single-use plastic	\$0.03 to \$0.05
	Reusable canvass	\$1.08
	Reusable organic tote	\$0.97
	Reusable Jute	\$1.45 to \$4.66
	Reusable Cotton	\$0.62 to \$2.18
Fork	Single-use plastic	\$0.07
	Reusable stainless steel	\$0.63
	Compostable wood	\$0.03
	Disposable bamboo	\$0.24
	100% compostable forks	\$0.11
Spoon	Single-use plastic	\$0.07
	Reusable stainless steel	\$0.10 to \$0.70
	Compostable wood	\$0.03
	Compostable bamboo	\$0.10
	100% compostable spoons	\$0.11
Knife	Single-use plastic	\$0.07
	Reusable stainless steel	\$0.32 to \$1.50
	Compostable wood	\$0.03
	Compostable bamboo	\$0.10
	100% compostable knife	\$0.10
Alternative Décor	LED light-up balloon	\$3.67
	Dissolvable rice paper confetti	\$0.19 per gram
	Seed paper banner	\$17.75
	CleanFree™ Dissolvable Streamer	\$24.75
	Biodegradable tissue pom poms	\$2.90



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

DRAFT
MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY BOARD

Tower 101, Suite 1100
 101 NE 3rd Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301
 April 27, 2026 – 6:00 PM

Cumulative Attendance					
1/2026 through 12/2026					
	Members	Appt by	Attendance	Present	Absent
1	Robert Daoust	II	P	2	2
2	Kelly Charles	IV	P	4	0
3	David Blattner, Chair	I	P	4	0
4	Suzee Bailey	C	P	3	1
5	Idan Straus, Vice Chair	M	P	4	0
6	Vacant	III	-	-	-
7	Fabiana Ahumada	M	A	2	1
8	Sara Rahmankhah	IV	P	4	0
9	Aida Nesimi	I	P	1	0
10	Vacant	III	-	-	-
11	Vacant	II	-	-	-
12	Parker Jacobson-Bertanzetti, Non-Voting Youth Chair	C	A	3	1

Staff Present

Glen Hadwen, Sustainability Manager
 Silvia Duque Anez, Sustainability Coordinator
 Dr. Nancy Gassman, Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation / Chief Resilience Officer
 Melissa Doyle, Division Manager, Public Works (via Zoom)
 Enrique Sanchez, Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation
 K. Cruitt, Recording Clerk, Prototype, Inc.

Guests

Mary Herring, Rio Vista
 Stacey Miscisin, Croissant Park
 Jane Kish, River Oaks Civic Association

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. Roll was called, and it was noted that a quorum was present.

- **Approval of Minutes**
- **March 23, 2026**

Motion made by Ms. Charles, seconded by Ms. Rahmankhah, to approve the minutes of the March 23, 2026, meeting as presented. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Chair Blattner welcomed the members of the public to the meeting and noted that a public comment section is available during the meeting.

- **Liaison Report**

- **Welcome Aida Nesimi**

Ms. Duque Anez, Sustainability Coordinator, advised that Mr. Lasday resigned last month due to scheduling conflicts. An agenda item for the Election of Vice Chair is on today's agenda.

New Board member Aida Nesimi introduced herself and stated she moved to South Florida in 2021. She began working in the sustainability space in 2017 and earned her LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) AP ND (Advanced Professional, Neighborhood Development) credential this past summer. Ms. Nesimi is one of 438 people with this certification, which is part of the reason she decided to join the Board. Ms. Nesimi stated she is very excited to work with the Board and staff to make a difference.

Chair Blattner welcomed Ms. Nesimi and stated he is glad to have her join the Board.

- **Annual Board Member Information Update**

Ms. Duque Anez stated that a reminder email was sent to the Board to update their contact information. Ms. Duque Anez also asked the Board to check if they need updated parking passes as she will request new ones and will have them for next month.

- **EV Test Drive Event**

Ms. Duque Anez mentioned that the first EV Test Drive event for City vehicle operators was held, and it was a success. Thirty-two (32) drivers tested cars from four (4) vendors, including Rivian, Toyota, General Motors, and Volkswagen. Attendees provided good feedback, and Ms. Duque Anez is looking forward to a positive impact in future versions of the test drive event to help the City move toward its electrification goals.

- **Earth Day and Arbor Day Activities**

Ms. Duque Anez stated that the City participated in Earth Day events at St. Thomas Aquinas High School and at Delmar Arts Academy. Both events featured various activities for the students, focusing on trash, the waste we produce, and incentivized the use of

alternatives, such as reducing single-use plastics. For Arbor Day, the City team also participated in a tree dedication with the Garden Club at Snyder Park.

The Board thanked Ms. Duque Anez.

- **Presentations**

- **Private Property Resiliency Outreach Program** - Silvia Duque Anez, Sustainability Coordinator

Ms. Duque Anez stated the Private Property Resilience Outreach Program is a city-wide effort that is part of the Fortify Lauderdale Initiative, and it will support residents and businesses in becoming more resilient to climate risks. The City recognizes that relying solely on public investment is not enough; private property owners also need to contribute to increase their resilience. The Outreach program will focus on flooding and extreme heat, as the City's main climate risks, and will encourage practical actions on private property. The program will provide education and outreach activities for business owners and homeowners and help the City earn more points in the Community Rating System (CRS). The CRS points will contribute to improving the City's score which can provide larger discounts on flood insurance premiums for our residents. The program has five main tools:

- HOA and Civic Associations presentations,
- Flyers and handouts,
- Resilience Resources Website,
- Neighborhood-Scale Resilience Snapshots, and
- Feedback Collection

Ms. Duque Anez stated that the program is a multi-year project starting in 2026, with residential outreach. Planned activities include 15 HOA presentations, development of website materials, and development of four (4) resilience snapshots, at least one for each Commission District. City staff will also coordinate with the Sustainability Advisory Board and the Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations.

Ms. Duque Anez explained that the program aims to have tailored information for each neighborhood and showed the board an example of some materials homeowners with flood risk could receive. Ms. Duque Anez explained what climate resilience is, what it looks like in practice, and the economic case for resilience, highlighting how resilience provides economic benefits and avoided costs.

Ms. Duque Anez continued explaining that resilience takes the whole City. Multiple stakeholders must work together to address a single major risk. Ms. Duque Anez also explained how resiliency pays off, by protecting a family's biggest investment, keeping families safe, reducing repair costs, lowering insurance costs, and supporting stronger

property values. Resiliency also helps communities recover faster and reduces stress on City services.

Ms. Duque Anez continued by sharing actionable steps a family can take before, during, and after a storm, as outlined in a guidance document the City will publish from its Fortify Lauderdale work.

Ms. Duque Anez mentioned she has also requested an opportunity to present before the Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations to receive feedback on the program. Ms. Duque Anez requested that the Board share its thoughts and provide direction on this project.

The Board made no comments.

- **Public Comment**

Jane Kish of the River Oaks Civic Association opposed the use of synthetic turf, and noted that there is already too much plastic in the world. Ms. Kish does not want the turf in their neighborhood, and she referred to real plants that yield trees.

- **New Business**

Chair Blattner stated that the Vice Chair election will now be held. Chair Blattner asked for volunteers. Ms. Nesimi and Mr. Straus volunteered for the position. Chair Blattner opened the agenda item for the Board nomination.

Motion made by Mr. Daoust, seconded by Ms. Charles, to nominate Mr. Straus as Vice Chair. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Chair Blattner congratulated Mr. Straus as Vice Chair.

- **Old Business**

- Sustainability Advisory Committee Coalition (SACC)

Ms. Rahmankhah and Ms. Duque Anez both attended the April SACC meeting. Ms. Rahmankhah stated that two new members were present, one from Miami Beach and one from the village of Key Biscayne. Ms. Rahmankhah highlighted that The Village of Key Biscayne requested funding for their Sustainability Advisory Committee to implement programs and also held a Sustainability Summit in the fall of 2025.

To provide context to the new Board Member, Ms. Nesimi, Ms. Bailey shared that the SACC is an inter-city coalition created by the City of Hollywood's Sustainability Advisory Committee Chair. Sustainability Advisory Committee members from other municipalities are invited to attend, they started in Broward, but have now expanded to Miami-Dade

County as well. One representative from each municipality's board may attend the meeting. Ms. Duque Anez attends every meeting as the Staff Liaison, and one representative from the Sustainability Advisory Board attends once a month. Information is shared about what each municipality is doing to further sustainability initiatives.

Ms. Duque Anez confirmed that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 4, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., virtually via Zoom. Ms. Nesimi stated she could attend the next meeting.

● **Proposed Communication**

- Single-Use Plastics Regulation

Chair Blattner confirmed that nine possible actions could be recommended to the City Commission. The Board has been working on this item for about two months, and a copy has been distributed to the Board for review.

Chair Blattner briefly reviewed the four (4) options to present the recommendations to the City Commission:

1. Support all nine recommendations,
2. Advance the operational and policy strategies,
3. Support the code amendments only, or
4. Support selected recommendations

A discussion was held on the requested changes to the Communication.

Ms. Bailey recommended narrowing the choices to improve the chances of success and approval from the City Commission. Ms. Bailey suggested three or four recommendations. Ms. Nesimi also supported simplifying the request.

Chair Blattner asked Board members if the focus should be on policy or code amendments. Board members were generally more interested in the policy and operational strategies. Ms. Duque Anez stated that three recommendations are present in the operational policy strategies:

1. Updating their sustainable "Green Purchasing" policy,
2. Renew and expand educational outreach, and
3. Amend key City agreements, such as outdoor event agreements, temporary beach license agreements, and mobile food concession agreements, to explicitly reference explicit City Code provisions related to the prohibition of plastic straws and polystyrene products.

Mr. Daoust stated he is in favor of putting forward the strongest language possible, but he is concerned that the recommendations could be preempted by the state. Mr. Hadwen

explained that state preemptions are a valid concern and that the Governor just signed a bill (HB1217) prohibiting cities from adopting or implementing net zero plans; but the recommendations the City staff have put forward are all focused on items the City directly controls.

Ms. Duque Anez explained that the team started by analyzing the state-level policy to understand where the City's actions are preempted. All the recommendations are aligned with State level regulations and are aimed at City-controlled spaces, events, facilities, policies, and agreements.

Ms. Nesimi mentioned that she has relationships in the manufacturing space and could receive discounted pricing directly from the manufacturer that would support these policy amendments. Mr. Hadwen stated that resources would be helpful for vendors to get information on new products. Dr. Gassman stated that Ms. Nesimi's support should be purely contact-related and not procurement related. Dr. Gassman explained that the City must be careful not to recommend vendors, but only to provide resources that people can review, without specific endorsements.

Chair Blattner suggested considering ordinance recommendations as they would strengthen the tools the City has available to support the mission of reducing single-use plastics. Ms. Rahmankhah agreed.

Dr. Gassman suggested that the City Commission could redirect the Board to bring the item back once the items are prioritized. Chair Blattner liked the suggested direction.

Members of the Board suggested edits to the original document, and Ms. Duque Anez made the revisions in real time. Dr. Gassman shared that the City Manager prefers to inform the City Commission and suggested keeping part of the background information. Board members reviewed the adjustments and agreed on a final text for the communication.

The final language was as follows:

Fort Lauderdale's identity as the "Venice of America" and much of its economy depends on beaches, waterways, and reefs that support marine recreation. However, these natural assets are increasingly threatened by pollution from single-use plastics, glass, and expanded polystyrene (EPS), which contribute to marine debris, harm wildlife and degrade public spaces.

Staff conducted research on this topic at the request of the City Manager's Office, including a review of applicable state legislation and preemptions, analysis of actions taken by other municipalities in Florida, and consideration of the City's sustainability priorities. This work resulted in nine (9) recommended

strategies, including six (6) amendments to the City Code and three (3) operational or policy actions intended to reduce plastic pollution and protect Fort Lauderdale's waterways, beaches, and natural environment.

The Sustainability Advisory Board discussed this topic across its 2026 meetings, allowing members to better understand the regulatory context and explore potential options for Fort Lauderdale.

Based on this review and discussion, the Sustainability Advisory Board urges the City Commission to implement the three operational and policy recommendations and strongly recommends the adoption of the six amendments to City Code (see attached).

Motion made by Ms. Rahmankhah, seconded by Mr. Daoust, to adopt the communication as revised. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Mr. Hadwen stated that the next City Commission meeting where the Communication could be presented is scheduled for May 19, 2026, at 1:30 p.m. and suggested that a Board member volunteer to represent the Board. Ms. Nesimi volunteered.

Mr. Hadwen suggested that if a second City Communication is approved, the items should be presented a separate Commission meetings, and the Board agreed.

- Synthetic Turf

Ms. Duque Anez distributed a proposed communication with background and context, including the language shared by the City of Hollywood from their Sustainability Advisory Committee discussions.

Ms. Bailey provided the board with another proposed communication and distributed a hard-copy document, she referenced the two presentations recently made to the Board, and her desire to make an informed recommendation to the City Commission. Ms. Bailey stated that in the last meeting there had been interest from some Board members to make a recommendation to the City Commission to move toward an ordinance limiting the use of synthetic turf in any of the improvements made to new and existing parks, often through the Parks Bond.

Ms. Charles stated she likes the proposed communication presented by Ms. Bailey as it is more comprehensive.

A discussion was held on the requested changes to the communication proposed by Ms. Bailey. Ms. Rahmankhah shared a concern about not having enough documentation and

information to share with the City Commission to explain where the Board's concerns come from.

Mr. Daoust stated that no consensus has been reached regarding the actual environmental and health impacts of synthetic turf and the proposed communication does not reflect that. Ms. Rahmankhah stated that in previous conversations, the Board has not agreed on a single position on the topic.

Ms. Bailey stated, regarding the issue of maintenance and costs, that if planning is done effectively and properly, grass can accommodate for the needs of athletic fields and recreation. Mr. Daoust stated that if the Board is planning to ask the city to put cost and maintenance considerations aside, then the communication should capture that there has been a consideration of the economics and does not plan to put additional burden on the City. Chair Blattner agreed and suggested that the Board should put forward a more reasonable recommendation to have a more receptive audience.

Chair Blattner stated he agrees with most points in the communication proposed by Ms. Bailey, but some must be adjusted to present a reasonable recommendation where the Board supports grass and nature-based surfaces but is not telling the City it should not use synthetic turf, particularly on high-use fields.

Ms. Nesimi stated that to prioritize the natural grass option, the Board should consider adding information from California Proposition 65 warnings.

Ms. Rahmankhah stated that the City argued that the cost to maintain artificial turf is about \$1,000.00 per year, and the cost to maintain natural grass is about \$30,000.00 per year. Mr. Straus requested a cost analysis.

Mr. Sanchez stated that he and his team looked into the costs of maintenance, including labor, equipment, water, fertilizer, herbicides, and pesticides. He explained a grass field gets mowed 80 – 100 times a year. Mr. Sanchez explained that after analyzing these costs across the parks system and divided it by acre to normalize the numbers because fields and parks have varied shapes and sizes. The result is an approximate cost of \$20,000 for an acre of Bermuda grass field and \$1,800 for an acre of synthetic turf field. Mr. Sanchez continued to explain that for the maintenance of grass fields they are shut down for about eight weeks to have treatments performed during their slowest season. Mr. Sanchez stated synthetic turf fields can take four (4) to five (5) times the amount of activity than grass fields can. If the City were to use grass for ten (10) or twelve (12) fields, it would need to acquire 40 acres of field space, to maintain the status quo.

Dr. Gassman stated that part of the Parks Bond was approved to acquire additional land within the City boundaries to expand fields and recreational opportunities, but it has proven to be very limited. To Mr. Sanchez's point, to meet the demand for the fields, the City would need to look into synthetic turf options to meet the demand of the community.

This process would not diminish potential environmental health concerns but would meet the demand for playing fields.

Ms. Bailey stated that the dog park on Los Olas, by the beach, has natural grass, and the community park has artificial turf. The park is in an area by the ocean with no trees to cool down the turf. Ms. Rahmankhah added that she understands there is limited space for sports fields, but that when there is not a need for a sports field like in Las Olas or Huizinga, we are disrupting the ecological corridors by putting in synthetic turf.

Ms. Nesimi suggested clover fields for the parks instead of Bermuda grass. Fort Lauderdale is the South Florida hub for vitality. If turf fields are installed, additional money will not be coming into the area, and the intellectual capital from coming to the area will also be lost. The City should consider pricing for clover fields in parks to support biodiversity.

Ms. Bailey stated that a defense of natural grass is that it mitigates flooding, and plastic does not. Mr. Daoust stated that lawn is also not a natural system and is ecologically destructive. Dr. Gassman added, related to the topic of stormwater, artificial turf fields go through the same stormwater management permitting process as a grass field, both must mitigate the exact same amount of water. Mr. Sanchez added that the South Florida Water Management Permit could be provided.

Motion was made by Mr. Daoust, seconded by Ms. Nesimi, to revisit the communication at the next meeting by streamlining some topics that have reached consensus, focusing on heat islands, and excluding items where consensus has not been reached. In a voice vote, the motion was tabled unanimously.

Ms. Duque Anez confirmed that the materials that have been used for discussions will be shared with the Board again.

● **Comments**

Ms. Charles stated there is an immediate need for trash bins on the beaches. Ms. Charles was on the Fort Lauderdale beach Saturday evening, around 8:00 p.m., and the trash bins were overflowing. Ms. Charles sent a message to Ms. Doyle requesting that the trash bins be emptied. There were no events that weekend, and people were simply enjoying the beach, with nowhere to put the trash. A huge amount of that litter will end up in the ocean. Ms. Charles asked about the beach pickup schedule for trash bins and stated that the bins should be emptied more frequently.

Ms. Duque Anez confirmed she will follow up on this concern.

● **Items for Next Meeting**

- Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) presentation by Ingrid Kindbom, Program Manager, Utility Services Department

Mr. Hadwen stated that the City began a pilot phase to install smart water meters to support water conservation. With the new meters, residents could set alerts for detailed water usage, see summaries and diagnose bill increases.

Ms. Duque Anez briefly reviewed the following upcoming events:

- Sunday Jazz Brunch Tree Giveaway on May 3, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Esplanade Stage in Fort Lauderdale
- National Adaptation Forum from May 12, 2026, to May 14, 2026, in Pittsburgh, PA
- Ms. Rahmankhah added the Broward Social Resilience Gathering on May 1, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at the Wharf

X. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.