

# A Greener Gainesville: Zero Waste Ordinance

Did you know the City of Gainesville is developing a Zero Waste Ordinance? In 2020, City Commissioners formed a subcommittee to draft a holistic policy to bring Gainesville to a new level of environmental sustainability by diverting waste from the typical waste stream. By promoting reuse and repurposing, and separating food and recyclables from garbage, the city can reduce the volume of waste, reduce the reliance on landfills, and increase composting. The ordinance has three parts: Solid Waste Ordinance, Food Waste Ordinance and Food Diversion Ordinance. This is a brief overview of the main components of the ordinance, but we encourage people to visit the [City's Zero Waste website](#) for a deeper dive into this important policy.

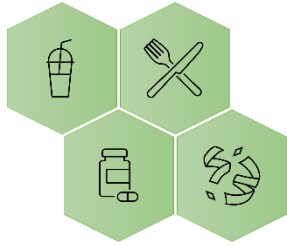
It has long been recognized the contribution that food waste makes towards climate change due to potent greenhouse gasses released from landfills. In addition, it is a humanitarian and social issue impacting millions of people around the world. One of the major aspects of the ordinance is utilizing food waste for beneficial purposes, such as feeding the hungry, feeding animals, using it for industrial purposes, and composting. In order to use food waste, though, infrastructure is required to collect residential and commercial food waste areas.

For residential areas, the ordinance aims to make environmental consciousness more convenient. It establishes a plan for curbside food waste collection and mandates the provision of containers for food waste and recyclables.

More than just residential infrastructure is needed to create a greener city; there are also provisions for public and commercial areas. One focus of the ordinance is to add food waste and recycling receptacles next to the typical garbage containers, and to make labeling of containers



consistent across the city. Additionally, by 2026, businesses will separate all food waste from garbage, which will be collected frequently.



A big part of Zero Waste is reusing and repurposing goods. Twice a year, university move-in and move-out leads to huge amounts of waste. As students leave apartments, everything from toasters to cardboard boxes are thrown out with little attention to repurposing or recycling. Instead, the ordinance mandates that apartment complexes develop plans to divert these usable and functioning goods from the waste stream.

Finally, the ordinance also restricts the use of various unsustainable products, like plastic straws and stirrers, some Styrofoam and single-use plastic items, and releasing confetti, balloons, or glitter in public, outdoor areas. It mandates pharmacies and other medicine merchants to provide medicine collection containers, to make disposal of prescription drugs and medicines safer and more convenient.

The Zero Waste Ordinance will help to make the city a more sustainable, environmentally friendly community. It considers the nuanced needs of the city's residents, businesses, and students to build robust infrastructure and lay a foundation for a Greener Gainesville.

We encourage all Gainesville residents to email City Commissioners to support the Zero Waste Ordinance and ensure that our city continues to make great strides towards our sustainability goals! Visit Zero Waste Week 2022 on [zerowastegainesville.com](https://zerowastegainesville.com) for a template letter.

