



City of Delray Beach

M E M O R A N D U M

www.mydelraybeach.com

TO: City Commission

FROM: Green Implementation Advancement Board

DATE: January 16, 2025

SUBJECT: Recommendations for Implementing an Environmentally Preferred Purchasing Program

The Green Implementation Advancement Board respectfully submits the following recommendations for your consideration regarding an Environmentally Preferred Purchasing Program (EP3), which would enhance sustainability efforts within the City of Delray Beach. Based on previous discussions and feedback from community surveys, there is broad support for prioritizing environmentally responsible purchasing, particularly in the context of City-sponsored events and broader municipal procurement activities. An example of such actions is a resolution passed on November 20, 2024 by Miami-Dade County banning the use of plastic from county concessionaires.

The following outlines two key areas of focus: (1) strategies for integrating EP3 practices into City events and (2) broader policy recommendations for City-wide purchasing practices. These recommendations aim to reduce waste, minimize environmental impacts, and set a leadership example for the community.

Environmentally Preferred Purchasing for City Events

City events, such as the St. Patrick's Day celebration, Christmas Tree and Menorah lighting, 4th of July festivities, the Delray Beach Open, and the Green Market, present important opportunities for the City to lead by example in promoting sustainable practices. We recommend the following actions to reduce the environmental footprint of these events:

- 1. Eliminate Single-Use Plastics:** Following the lead of other municipalities like the City of Miami, which recently passed an ordinance prohibiting the purchase of single-use plastics, we suggest the City implement a similar policy for all City events. This would include banning plastic straws, plastic utensils, and plastic packaging in favor of sustainable alternatives (e.g., compostable or recyclable items).
- 2. Reduce Waste at Events:** Develop a strategy for waste reduction at major City events. This includes using recyclable materials for all event signage, food containers, and promotional items. A special focus should be on reducing waste from food vendors by encouraging or requiring the use of compostable, recyclable, or reusable materials.
- 3. Vendor Sustainability Considerations:** When selecting vendors for City events, we recommend giving preference to those who demonstrate sustainable practices, such as using recyclable materials, offering plant-based food options, or adopting energy-efficient practices. This will help the City create a more sustainable event experience while supporting businesses committed to environmental stewardship.

4. **Educational Campaigns:** Incorporate educational initiatives into City events to raise awareness about sustainable practices among attendees. For example, provide information about waste diversion (e.g., recycling stations) and the importance of reducing single-use plastic consumption.

Broader Environmentally Preferred Purchasing Policies

In addition to event-specific recommendations, it is critical to incorporate EP3 principles into the City's broader purchasing policies. As identified in the Climate Action Planning Survey, EP3 is highly supported by residents, and can be addressed within the context of waste reduction. The following measures are suggested:

1. **Formalize an EP3 Policy:** We recommend that the City adopt a formal Environmentally Preferred Purchasing policy for all procurement activities, prioritizing the purchase of sustainably sourced, low-waste, and non-toxic materials. This could include using green certifications (such as Energy Star, Forest Stewardship Council, and Green Seal) to guide purchasing decisions.
2. **Focus on Sustainable Materials and Green Building Certifications:** EP3 principles align with green building certification programs, where the use of sustainably sourced materials with lower environmental impacts can qualify for certification credits. The City should seek opportunities to incorporate these materials into public infrastructure and development projects.
3. **Waste Reduction and Recycling:** The City should continue to explore ways to reduce waste by purchasing products made from recycled materials, avoiding Styrofoam and other non-recyclable items, and promoting the use of recyclable items in all City operations. This could be an important waste reduction strategy in the developing Climate Action Plan.
4. **Microplastics and Health Considerations:** In making purchasing decisions, the City should consider the environmental and health impacts of microplastics and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in products. Avoiding items that release these substances, particularly in items like packaging, personal care products, and cleaning supplies, will support public health and environmental goals.

These initiatives will require coordination across multiple City Departments, including Purchasing, Parks, Public Works, Sustainability, and Special Events to name a few. We recommend that the EP3 recommendations be integrated into the broader waste reduction strategy being developed as part of the Climate Action Plan. This will ensure that EP3 is not only a standalone initiative but also a critical component of the City's comprehensive sustainability efforts.

The GIAB respectfully urges the City Commission to consider these recommendations which we believe will significantly contribute to the City's sustainability objectives and set a positive example for the community. The successful implementation of EP3 practices will reduce the environmental impact of City operations, lead to cost savings, and promote healthier, more sustainable practices throughout the community.

Sincerely,

Chair, Green Implementation Advancement Board