

TOWN COUNCIL

STAFF REPORT

Executive Department



MEETING DATE:	August 11, 2026
PROJECT:	Consideration and Direction on Proposed Amendments to the Town of Bluffton Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 12. Environment, Article VI. Regulations and Requirements Relating to the Use of Single-Use Plastic Bags in the Town of Bluffton
PROJECT MANAGER:	Heather Colin, AICP Assistant Town Manager

REQUEST: Town Council to provide input and direction on proposed amendments to the Municipal Code of Ordinances, Chapter 12. Environment, Article VI. Regulations and Requirements Relating to the Use of Single-Use Plastic Bags.

BACKGROUND: In 2018, the Town of Bluffton along with Beaufort County and other municipalities within the County, adopted an ordinance banning single use plastic bags for general use with some exceptions ('Plastic Bag Ordinance').

In May of 2024 Beaufort County Council asked staff to explore whether or not amendments to the Ordinance would be necessary. An ad-hoc committee was created and two surveys were designed to gauge support for regulating thick plastic bags, Styrofoam take-out containers and cups, and plastic utensils and straws. The survey results were presented to Soloco and Beaufort County staff made a presentation to Town Council in November 2025 requesting Town of Bluffton support.

Beaufort County Council passed amendments to the 'Plastic Bag Ordinance' on June 8, 2026 (attachment 1). The ordinance does not take effect until all municipalities within the County adopt a substantially similar ordinance.

SUMMARY OF AMENDMENTS:

- Addresses thick plastic bags that met the previous Ordinance;
- Includes prohibitions for Styrofoam disposable food service items; and
- Implements a by-request only (BRO) rules for plastic straws and cutlery.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- Does Town Council request that the Town Manager direct staff to proceed with amendments to the 'Plastic Bag Ordinance'?

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Approved Beaufort County Ordinance with Amendments Noted