

ORDINANCE 2026-010

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, FLORIDA, RELATING TO THE REGULATION OF SYNTHETIC TURF; PROVIDING FINDINGS; AMENDING SECTION 7.04.01 OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE; PROVIDING MINIMAL STANDARDS FOR THE INSTALLATION OF SYNTHETIC TURF ON SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES OF ONE ACRE OR LESS; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION, SEVERABILITY, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Be it ordained by the Town Council of the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida:

Section 1. Findings, Purposes and Intent. In adopting this Ordinance, the Town Council of the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida, hereby makes the following findings, purposes, and intent:

1. The Florida Legislature created section 125.572 of the Florida Statutes, through session law Chapter 2025-140, requiring the Department of Environmental Protection to develop minimum standards for the installation of synthetic turf on single-family residential properties of one acre or less in size.

2. The statute prohibits any local government from enforcing any ordinance that prohibits a property owner from installing synthetic turf that complies with the standards adopted by DEP.

3. DEP published the final rule via Florida Administrative Code section 62-308.100, setting forth such minimum standards.

4. The Town's Land Development Code currently prohibits installation of synthetic turf.

5. The Town Council determines that the proposed amendments to the Land Development Code set forth in Section 2 of this ordinance are consistent with Section 125.572, Florida Statutes, and section 62-308.100 of the Florida Administrative Code. It is in the interest of the citizens, residents, and property owners of the Town to enact the amendments to the Town's Code of Ordinances contained in Section 2 of this ordinance.

Section 2. Amendments to the Land Development Code of the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills. Subsection 7.04.01(c) of the Land Development Code is amended as follows (words that are underlined are additions; words that are stricken are deletions):

7.04.01. Florida Water Star Program/Florida Friendly Landscaping

C. Synthetic Lawns and Plants: Synthetic or artificial turf, trees and plants shall be prohibited from use in lieu of required live plantings, except on single-family residential properties of 1 acre or less in size. Installation of synthetic or artificial turf on such properties shall conform to the following guidelines:

1. Synthetic turf may not contain heavy metals or intentionally added per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances.
2. Synthetic turf, including backing material and infill, must be disposable under normal condition at any Florida-permitted landfill.
3. Infill material may only be clean silica sand, rock, shell, or other natural material. Installation will be designed to prevent washing away of infill material off of the property.
 - a. Coated silica sand may be used so long as the coating is non-toxic and otherwise complies with all other requirements of this subsection.
 - b. Rubber or other synthetical infill material is only allowed within the footprint of playground equipment, provided that it complies with all other requirements of this subsection.
4. Subgrade must be composed of natural materials, such as crushed rock or crushed concrete.
 - a. Where crushed concrete is used, it must meet the permeability standards of this subsection.
 - b. Subgrade materials must be washed prior to installation to prevent fines from binding.
5. In ground irrigation may not be used to irrigate synthetic turf areas. Irrigation heads must be removed and pipes capped in areas where synthetic turf is installed if an in-ground irrigation system is already installed.
6. Synthetic turf must be permeable and affixed to a permeable backing with a pervious subgrade.
 - a. The installed synthetic turf system, including backing, subgrade, and infill, must exhibit a maximum permeability rate of 10 inches per hour.
 - b. Synthetic turf must be installed over a subgrade prepared for positive drainage and evenly graded porous material.

- c. Soil beneath installed subgrade shall not be compacted to the extent that it adversely impacts percolation through the soil.
- 7. Installation of synthetic turf must be designed and installed to prevent pooling or an increase in the stormwater runoff volume, direction, or rates to adjacent properties and, where possible, runoff shall be directed to on-site pervious areas.
- 8. Installation of synthetic turf must not alter the permitted stormwater management system as designed and shall not be installed within a swale, ditch, stormwater pond, or a stormwater pond's littoral zone.
- 9. Synthetic turf may be installed no closer than 25 feet from a natural of man-made waterbody unless there is a physical barrier between the synthetic turf and the waterbody.
- 10. Installation of synthetic turf must not compromise the health of nearby trees, including damage to the roots, or be installed inside tree drip lines unless the trees are identified as noxious weeds pursuant to Florida Statutes or a certified arborist certifies that installation within the drip line would not be harmful to the tree.
- 11. Synthetic turf must be installed according to manufacturer specifications and anchored at all edges and seams to ensure that it will withstand the effects of wind and flooding.
- 12. If installed, synthetic turf must provide access to the septic tank for routine pump out.
- 13. If installed, synthetic turf must be landward of any dune system and must not replace any existing dune vegetation.

Section 3. Codification. The amendments in Section 2 of this Ordinance shall be codified and made part of the official Land Development Code of the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills.

Section 4. Severability. If any provision or portion of this ordinance is declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be void, unconstitutional, or unenforceable, then all remaining provisions and portions of this ordinance shall remain in full effect.

Section 5. Effective Date. This ordinance takes effect immediately upon enactment.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Town Council of the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills on the ____ day of _____, 2026.

Town of Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida
By: Town Council

By: _____
Graham Wells, Mayor

Attest:

John Brock
Town Clerk

First Reading:
Advertised:
Second Reading:



Date: September 14, 2026
To: Mayor and Town Council
From: Sean O’Keefe, Town Manager
Re: Discussion: **GFL Default Letter**

Objective:

To discuss the approach in managing the GFL default letter.

Summary:

At the August 10th, 2026 meeting, council requested that a default letter be sent to GFL for unresolved issues.

Legal drafted a letter (attached in the packet), with a section for “specific defaults to be remedied are the following:”. This is followed in the letter by the note that “GFL must cure these defaults within thirty (30) days of receipt of this Notice.”

In an analysis of reported issues during the preceding 60 day period, Town Hall Manager Kim Bohrer provided the following response:

In the past 60 days, the Townhall has recorded 7 resident requests for replacement garbage cans and 2 second requests 1 week after the original request. Additionally 2 resident complaints were received about missed pick-ups.

In the same period, GFL has advised on 10 occasions they left tags for residents to bundle yard waste properly for pick up and on 1 occasion to call in for a bulk pick-up.

One separate complaint for leakage was forwarded to Morgan for resolution and GFL advised it was not their equipment that caused the leakage.

This record of reported GFL-related issues creates a difficulty in the framework of the default letter, as there is not a list of outstanding items to be remedied by GFL within the stated 30 days.

Fiscal Impact

There is no direct fiscal impact.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff awaits direction from the council.