

# **Social Services Commission Meeting Agenda Announcement**

On March 12, 2020, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order No. N-25-20, which allows Brown Act Body members to attend meetings telephonically. Please be advised that some, or all, Whittier Social Services Commission Members may attend this meeting telephonically.

Consistent with mandates of Executive Order No. N-29-20, a physical location from which members of the public may observe the meeting or offer public comment will not be made available. City Hall will not be open to the public for this meeting; however public comments can be submitted below as instructed.

To submit Public Comments/Questions:

- Email: [ltrinh@cityofwhittier.org](mailto:ltrinh@cityofwhittier.org)
- Voicemail: (562) 567-9400

Please submit email and voicemail public comments by 5:30 p.m. on the date of the meeting to ensure Social Services commissioners receive and have time to review them. All emails and voicemails received by 5:30 p.m. are forwarded to the Members. Emails and voicemails received after 5:30 p.m. but before the conclusion of public comments will be entered into the record.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Disability-related services are available to enable persons with a disability to participate in this meeting, consistent with the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Spanish interpreters are also available. For information or to request services, please contact the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting at (562) 567-9400.

**AGENDA  
CITY OF WHITTIER  
SOCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, 13230 PENN STREET  
MAY 5, 2020, 6:30 PM**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**2. ROLL CALL**

Loletta Barrett, Commissioner  
Marisol Enriquez-Santos, Commissioner  
Kathleen McDonnell, Commissioner  
Carlos Illingworth, Vice Chair  
Jose Luevano, Chair

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**4. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The public is invited to address the Social Services Commission regarding any item of business, or any matter within the bodies subject matter jurisdiction. Consistent with Executive Order No. N-29-20 public comments can be made via:

- Email: [ltrinh@cityofwhittier.org](mailto:ltrinh@cityofwhittier.org)
- Voicemail: (562) 567-9400

Please submit email and voicemail public comments by 5:30 p.m. on the date of the meeting to ensure Commissioners receive and have time to review them. All emails and voicemails received by 5:30 p.m. are forwarded to the Commission. Emails and voicemails received after 5:30 p.m. but before the conclusion of public comments will be entered into the record.

Pursuant to State law, the Commission cannot take action or express a consensus of approval or disapproval on any communications which do not appear on the printed agenda.

**5. STAFF REPORTS**

**5.A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Recommendation: Approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 7, 2020.

**5.B. 2020 - 2021 WHITTIER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

Recommendation: Review essay submissions and select five recipients for Athens and four recipients for Republic Services to award scholarships.

**6. SECRETARY COMMENTS**

**7. COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS/CONFERENCE REPORTS**

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

Disability-related services are available to enable persons with a disability to participate in this meeting, consistent with the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Spanish interpreters are also available. For information or to request services, please contact the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting at (562) 567-9400.

The agenda packet is available three days before the meeting in the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department at City Hall (13230 Penn Street), Whittier Central Library (7344 Washington Avenue) and the East Whittier Branch Library (10537 Santa Gertrudes Avenue). Additionally, the agenda packet can be viewed on the City's website. Materials distributed to the Commission within 72 hours of the Social Services Commission meeting are available for public inspection in the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department Office.

Los servicios relacionados con la discapacidad están disponibles para permitir que las personas con discapacidad participen en esta reunión, de conformidad con la Ley Federal de Estadounidenses con Discapacidades de 1990. También hay intérpretes en español disponibles. Para obtener información o para solicitar servicios, comuníquese con el Departamento de recreación y Parques al Servicio a la Comunidad de la reunión al (562) 567-9400.

El paquete de la agenda está disponible tres días antes de la reunión el Departamento Parques Recreación y Servicio a la Comunidad en el Ayuntamiento (13230 Penn Street), Whittier Central Library (7344 Washington Avenue) y Biblioteca sucursal del este de Whittier (10537 Santa Gertrudes Avenue). Además, el paquete de la agenda se puede ver en el sitio web de la Ciudad. Los materiales distribuidos al Concejo Municipal dentro de las 72 horas de la reunión del Comisión de Servicios Sociales están disponibles para inspección pública en el Departamento de Recreación y Parques al Servicio a la Comunidad.

I hereby certify under penalty of perjury, under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing agenda was posted in accordance with the applicable legal requirements. Regular and Adjourned Regular meeting agendas may be amended up to 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Dated this 30<sup>th</sup> day of April 2020.

/s/ Lanie Trinh

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Lanie Trinh, Administrative Secretary



# Agenda Report

Social Services Commission

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**Date:** May 5, 2020

**To:** Social Services Commission

**From:** Virginia Santana, Interim Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Service

**Subject:** Approval of Minutes

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 7, 2020.

## **BACKGROUND**

None

## **DISCUSSION**

Staff prepared draft minutes and hereby submits the Minutes for Commission approval.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of January 7, 2020.

**MINUTES  
CITY OF WHITTIER  
SOCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 13230 PENN STREET  
JANUARY 7, 2020 – 6:30 P.M.**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Luevano called the regular meeting of the Social Services Commission to order at 6:01 p.m. in the Whittier City Council Chambers, 13230 Penn Street, Whittier, California.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Jose Luevano, Chair  
Carlos Illingworth, Vice Chair  
Loletta Barrett, Commissioner  
Kathleen McDonnell, Commissioner

**ABSENT:** Marisol Enriquez-Santos, Commissioner

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Virginia Santana, Interim Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services  
Martin Browne, Community Services Manager  
Amber Tovar, Office Specialist II

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Community Services Manager Martin Browne led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Rita Murray addressed the Commission regarding issues she is concerned with in reference to homelessness. Ms. Murray stated various programs are not being used for their resources to assist with homelessness. She apprised the Commission of the lack of knowledge that the homeless population have regarding agency lingo and how it prevents them from asking for the services they require. Also of concern to her is the trust that is built in one agency before the homeless people are handed off to another agency where there is no trust built.

Susan Cameron addressed the Commission to share her concerns regarding the Homeless Plan and the report that has not yet been made available. Ms. Cameron believes that a Study Session is needed to understand the needs for overnight shelter and housing. The plan that City Council adopted three years ago is not having any effect, and wishes the Commission, who has oversight capabilities, to establish a

Study Session. Community Services Manager Martin Browne informed Ms. Cameron that he would email her the report on the two annual reviews.

## **5. STAFF REPORTS:**

### **5.A. Approval of Minutes**

It was moved by Vice Chair Illingworth, seconded by Commissioner McDonnell, and carried 4 – 0 (absent: Commissioner Enriquez-Santos) to approve the Minutes of the November 5, 2019 Regular Meeting.

### **5.B. 2020 Whittier Scholarship Program - Sponsored by Athens Services and Republic Services**

Virginia Santana, Interim Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services, reported that the scholarship applications for students who reside in Whittier are ready to go out and need to be submitted by March 21, 2020. There are four scholarships available, not the five that is shown on the application. Mr. Browne explained the specifics of the contract that had five awards in 2019 but only four in 2020. There are three questions listed, with the Commission deciding to use only Question 1 and Question 3 to make assessment of the essays more equitable. It was asked, by Commissioner McDonnell, how the scholarship is distributed to the community to get the most visibility, with Mr. Browne outlining the locations that receive notification. He also reviewed the challenges faced in reviewing the previous years' submissions. It was noted that the Commission did not expect Mr. Browne to respond to the applicants at midnight on the day of the deadline.

It was moved by Commissioner McDonnell, seconded by Vice Chair Illingworth, and carried 4 – 0 (absent: Commissioner Enriquez-Santos) to receive and file the 2020 Whittier Scholarship Program updates.

### **5.C. Update on City of Whittier Homeless Plan Implementation**

Ms. Santana updated the Commission about the Emergency City Council Meeting held on January 6, 2020. A decision was reached by the Council to have Parnell Park and the Parnell Community and Senior Center closed for environmental cleanup after a 10-day posting has been observed. During the 10 days, various agencies will be offering services to the homeless people to address their needs. To close the park, temporary fence panels will be installed along the perimeter. Once the park is reopened, curfew will be enforced and no tents will be allowed in the park. Concerns were raised about the long-term effect this plan will have and the length of time it takes for someone who is homeless to receive help. The police are training officers to approach the homeless in the same way that the Sheriff Department has been trained.

Mr. Browne updated the Commission on the need for additional staff and the two grants that were applied to fund the Esperanza Project. There is \$300,000.00 for a plan, yet still no contract with the County. Stage 1 of the Esperanza Project is completed, with Stage 2, soil testing, in process. It was suggested that Representative Janice Hahn's office be contacted for assistance in confirming a contract. There is a pilot program preparing to begin in February for ten homeless people who are currently receiving services. The program will help prepare them for job readiness, gain employment and stay employed by teaching them computer skills and having them work with mentors.

It was moved by Vice Chair Illingworth, seconded by Commissioner McDonnell, and carried 4 – 0 (absent Commissioner Enriquez-Santos) to receive and file the City of Whittier Homeless Plan implementation update.

**5.D. Information and Referral Year-End Report**

Ms. Santana directed attention to the Information and Referral Services handout that Mr. Browne's team at the Uptown Senior Center put together. Mr. Browne answered questions about which services are offered.

It was moved by Commissioner Barrett, seconded by Vice Chair Illingworth, and carried 4 – 0 (absent: Commissioner Enriquez-Santos) to receive and file the Information and Referral Year-End Report.

**6. SECRETARY COMMENTS:**

Ms. Santana thanked the Commission for their patience as they await the permanent person who will fill the Secretary's position. Ms. Santana announced the Business Expo will be held on January 15, 2020 at the Double Tree from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Mr. Martin Browne reminded the Commission that elections this year will be held in April.

**7. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS:**

Commissioner Barrett asked if there was any direction on funding as of yet. Ms. Santana replied that they would have answers soon. Commissioner Barrett shared her concern about the true role of the Commission in the community. She questions whether the Commission has, "any real authority, purpose and value?" Mr. Browne replied that they are waiting on direction from City Council. Commissioner Barrett stated that the Commission has no authority on the Homeless Plan and only contribute to the Volunteer of the Year, which is not what she signed up for. Chair Luevano agreed with her, stating that he had thought they would be a part of the planning, but the City Council made their own Ad Hoc Committee. Commissioner Barrett said that she does not want to be part of a Commission that is just "window dressing". Ms. Santana said she would take their concerns to Administration to get clarification.

**8. ADJOURNMENT:**

Chair Luevano adjourned the meeting at 7:46 p.m.

Approved and adopted by the Social Services Commission on \_\_\_\_\_.

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Virginia Santana, Interim Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services





# Agenda Report

Social Services Commission

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**Date:** May 5, 2020

**To:** Social Services Commission

**From:** Virginia Santana, Interim Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services

**Subject:** 2020 - 2021 Whittier Scholarship Program

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Review essay submissions and select five recipients for Athens and four recipients for Republic Services to award scholarships.

## **BACKGROUND**

On September 26, 2017, the City Council approved solid waste collection and recycling franchise agreements with Athens Services and Republic Services. Both agreements included annual funding of a Community Scholarship Program for City residents. Athens Services is to provide five \$500 scholarships and Republic Services is to provide four \$500 scholarships.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Community Scholarship Program will be advertised by the City and both franchise haulers. Scholarship applicants will write a 400 to 500 word essay on the theme of environmental sustainability. Two essay topics will be provided. The essay contest is open to college-bound graduating high school seniors who are residents of the City. Five \$500 individual scholarships will be awarded to entrants living in Athens' service area and four to entrants living in Republic's service area.

The City of Whittier's Social Services Commission will evaluate the essays. Essays will be judged anonymously with no identifying information available to the judges. Essays will be evaluated based upon creativity, demonstrated passion for the environment, and a vision for the future. Submissions will also be judged based upon writing standards set forth in *A Writer's Reference* required by most colleges and universities. Decisions made by the judges are final.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact. Funding for the Community Scholarship Program is provided by Athens Services and Republic services specifically for this purpose.

**ATTACHMENTS**

A. Entries for the 2020-2021 Whittier Scholarship Program



## 2020-2021 WHITTIER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

SPONSORED BY ATHENS SERVICES AND REPUBLIC SERVICES

ATHENS SERVICES:

A#1  
A#2  
A#3  
A#4

REPUBLIC SERVICES:

R#1  
R#2  
R#3  
R#4  
R#5  
R#6  
R#7  
R#8

### Scholarship Awards:

- Five (5) \$500 individual scholarships will be awarded to five recipients living in Athens' service area, and the City of Whittier city limits.
- Four (4) \$500 individual scholarships will be awarded to five recipients living in Republic's service area, and the City of Whittier city limits.

### Writing Guidelines:

- Essays must be 400 to 500 words in length, typewritten and double-spaced in 12-point font. Facts and quotations should be appropriately cited either in the body of the essay or in footnotes. Entries must be original, unpublished essays written by the contestants.

### Essay Topics - any one of the following questions:

1. Most packaging is either paper based or plastic based with some metal used as well. While metals are easily recycled, it is not the same for paper and plastic. How does the role of packing change with an increased focus on sustainability and green requirements? Will this drive materials in a different direction?  
Or,
2. Environmental sustainability is a huge topic. Some of the global concerns are so large that they seem insurmountable. Write an informative essay describing small things individual people can do to live a more sustainable life. Identify environmentally unsustainable things people do on a daily basis and alternatives they could do instead.

# ATHENS SERVICES ENTRIES:

A#1

A#

2

A#

3

A#

4

## The Future of Packaging Materials

The role of packaging is soon to change its focus of sustainability for a green future. We as a society need to achieve a brighter future and cleaner planet for our environment. One way we can do this is by changing the way we package products. According to the University of Southern India, “About one-third of an average dump is made up of packaging material, ” this shows the tremendous amount of trash accumulated from packaging materials. There needs to be a humane drive for packaging materials to turn in a different direction from the standard paper, plastic, and metal.

While researching more sustainable ways to package our day to day items, I came across the intuitive New York based company, Ecovative. At Ecovative, they believe that there is a better way to feed the planet and reduce the amount of plastic used in consumer products. Their mission is to grow better materials that are compatible with Mother Earth using a Mycelium Foundry (the stem of a mushroom). By collaborating with other companies, they wish to mass produce biodegradable packaging materials. In addition to packaging materials they hope to create other products such as: lamps, mugs, and other household items.

Many of the plastic and other packaging materials big corporate companies use to ship are thrown away after serving their purpose. Doing so, the trash ends up at sea or on the floor and the probability of that degrading will not happen for some time. This is why Ecovative’s goals is to make their packaging material biodegradable. They aim to have two goals for this material; the first is to keep your item safe, and the second is to use the mycelium foundry packaging as a nutritional substance for your garden and soil.

Studies show that use of plastics around the world is increasing, and is expected to double in the next 20 years. “They believe most of it will end up in the oceans, and that there will be more plastic than fish by 2050,” according to a report by the World Economic Forum. Ecovative started working with big companies to try and get them on board with using their new technology of packaging. Some of these companies consist of; Sealed Air, Ikea, Dell, Bolt Threads, bioMASON, and Gunlocke. At the end, many companies like Ecovative, are starting to blossom in today's society with their genius new inventions, by helping the world one step at a time, even by changing the way packaging materials are made.

For the past six years, I have developed a close relationship with Athens waste management (perhaps a relationship much closer than most teenagers would care for). You see, it is my weekly duty to take out the trash bins every Wednesday at the apartment complex I live in. In fact, this responsibility has been mine since I was in 7th grade at Dexter Middle School when the landlord trusted me to take on such an important task in exchange for a small stipend. Every week I'm lugging around six to eight heavy, stinky cans of other people's trash. But after many years with these smelly old bins, I have developed a sort of kinship with them. Week after week I see what the residents throw away and I can't help but contemplate questions like, Where does all the waste go? What if single-use plastic containers were illegal? How can people throw away so many valuable things? I try to do what I can by putting the misplaced trash in the trash bin and the misplaced recyclables in the recycle bin. I see first hand how my community practices environmentally unsustainable lifestyles by not recycling and by being unnecessarily wasteful.

What I have learned from working so closely with these bins and the waste inside them is that there are simple and easy things we can do to reduce our carbon footprints and live more sustainably. Right now, many people buy plastic water bottles that they discard after one use. These bottles may be recyclable, but oftentimes they end up in the trash instead of actually being recycled. An easy fix for the bottle situation is to use a water pitcher filtration system. Switching to one of these would drastically reduce the household's plastic use, resulting in happier trash bins!

From what I can tell by the content of the trash bins, lots of organic matter is thrown away. Old food, leftovers, expired fruits and vegetables; all discarded because most people don't realize that there's something better for these seemingly useless items. An eco-friendly alternative is to create a compost pile. Compost is decomposed organic matter that can be used to enrich soil and provide essential nutrients for plant life. Judging from all the organic matter I see in the trash bins every week, I'd say that our apartment complex could start and sustain a pretty little garden. But here's the kicker when it comes to compost: even cardboard and paper towels are compostable! What's not to love about compost?

As someone who spends a lot of time with trash, I see the wasteful and environmentally unsustainable methods that people practice when it comes to their waste disposal. The two biggest issues that I've observed being the overuse of plastic bottles and the wasting of potential plant fertilizer. But with the employment of composting and switching from plastic bottles to refillable water filtration pitchers our community can make a positive difference in our environment one trash bin at a time.



## Steps to Sustainability

A zero-waste lifestyle.

This is the life lived by Macarena Guajardo of Chile. She takes her own bags for purchased produce, bikes to work, composts all food waste, and even makes her own cleaning supplies. Guajardo is a woman who decided to take a stand against a plastic-ridden, polluted world; one woman against the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and the millions of tons of greenhouse gas emissions (T13).

Guajardo represents the determined few who are wholeheartedly committed to reducing the footprint they leave on Earth--but for the average person, such changes might seem extreme. Luckily, there are many simple steps one can take to limit their waste output (and they don't involve making dish soap from scratch).

First: reusable utensils. According to Plastics Today, around "40 billion plastic utensils are used every year in just the United States" (Embree). This number can be easily reduced if people switched to bringing their own cutlery and there are many vendors selling reusable utensils that come with pouches for easy carry. Furthermore, if metal or wood is too boring, then Bakey's Foods Private Ltd. in India has created the perfect, biodegradable alternative: edible cutlery made from sorghum, wheat, and rice (Embree).

Second: bringing containers to restaurants. While it might attract a few strange looks, using home-brought containers to save restaurant leftovers is a better alternative to coming into contact with Styrofoam containers. Styrofoam is not only harmful to the environment, but also toxic to humans because it contains styrene, a possible carcinogen. Styrofoam containers leach

styrene into foods--especially when heated. Therefore, using one's own containers is safer than risking styrene exposure (Kinhall).

Third: cutting straws out. Who needs straws anyways? Everyone can agree that plastic straws are bad; they cannot be recycled due to their weight and, to the great concern of the VSCO girl community, they kill sea turtles. There are several reusable options clamoring for attention, but each has its own host of cons. The easiest option: forego the straw (Aspegren).

Fourth: drinking tap water. Tap and bottled water are "generally comparable in terms of safety", according to a nutrition expert from Mayo Clinic (Zeratsky). While the quality of tap water varies from city to city, this is the same for brands of bottled water. The EPA regulates tap water quality, and the FDA sets standards on bottled water based on EPA regulations. In order to learn about one's tap water quality, one only needs to contact their water supplier for their consumer confidence report. If the quality is undesirable, there are numerous filters available for purchase (Water).

To conclude, one does not need to drastically upend their lifestyle to become sustainable. A few small steps a day is all it takes to lessen one's impact on the earth. Macarena Guajardo shows what can be possible if one is determined enough, but for those that aren't quite up for the switch to zero waste, saying no to the straw and saving a sea turtle's life is a possibility.

## Works Cited

- Aspegren, Elinor. "Plastic Straws Are Trash. Are There Alternatives That Don't Suck?" *USA Today*, Gannett Satellite Information Network, 16 Aug. 2019, [www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/08/16/plastic-straw-alternatives-often-bad-planet-people-disabilities/61397001/](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/08/16/plastic-straw-alternatives-often-bad-planet-people-disabilities/61397001/).
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- Zeratsky, Katherine. "Is Bottled Water Better?" *Mayo Clinic*, Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, 19 Mar. 2020, [www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/expert-answers/tap-vs-bottled-water/faq-20058017](http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/expert-answers/tap-vs-bottled-water/faq-20058017).

1. Most packaging is either paper based or plastic based with some metal used as well.

While metals are easily recycled, it is not the same for paper and plastic. How does the role of packing change with an increased focus on sustainability and green requirements?

Will this drive materials in a different direction?

Plastic is everywhere. It is impossible to avoid. Look around. It's on the streets, in our kitchens, covers our products, in the threads of our clothes and floating in our oceans. Regardless of how it is used, the sad fact is that the majority of plastic ends up in landfills, with an overwhelming amount coming from packaging. As Roni Dengler from *PBS* reports, 4.9 billion metric tons of plastic are discarded each year (par. 19). Seeing how much plastic is used around us, I begin to ask the question "How did we end up here with our dependence on plastic?"

The main driving force behind the excess plastic and paper packaging is its convenience for producers and consumers. Plastic and paper packaging is favorable because durability, protection, and preservation. With these benefits, buyers encourage the use of plastic packaging without realizing the impact it has on sustainability. It's easy to buy individually packaged goods and just throw them away when they are done. Many consumers believe they can simply discard plastics in the recycling bin, but the truth of the matter is that few plastics are actually reused. Sadly, the majority of plastic waste is sent to landfills instead of being recycled. According to the *Supply Chain Solutions Center*, out of the 9.2 billion tons of plastic trash that is produced, only 9 percent is recycled properly (par. 3). This creates an issue as plastics are not biodegradable and take hundreds of years to be broken down. With the threat plastic packaging has on sustainability, new ways of thinking must happen.

First, we have to come to terms with our problem with plastic, which means limiting the way we use it in our packaging. As our society moves towards environmentalist efforts, innovative ways of reducing plastic use have surfaced. This year in my AP Environmental Science class, I pledged to reduce my plastic consumption through what I buy. Though it was difficult at first, through research and time, I have found that living sustainably is doable. Individual efforts like buying from sustainable companies encourage other brands to move away from using plastic materials. These steps are not limited to just individual efforts. In fact, companies like Whole Foods, Trader Joe's, and Starbucks have made it more convenient to not use so much single-use packaging. For example, grocery stores have expanded their bulk sections which allow customers to use their own containers, not relying so much on plastic-wrapped products. With this trend of sustainability, more companies have introduced biodegradable and 100% recyclable packing. For instance, the brand Boxed Water Is Better has popularized using carton-based packaging instead of using plastic bottles. These collective efforts to reduce single-use plastics and increase the usage of biodegradable materials lightens the load for waste-management systems around the world and helps our planet.

## Works Cited

Dengler, Roni. "Humans Have Made 8.3 Billion Tons of Plastic. Where Does It All Go?"

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# **REPUBLIC SERVICES ENTRIES:**

**R#1**

**R#2**

**R#3**

**R#4**

**R#5**

**R#6**

**R#7**

**R#8**

## Scholarship Essay #2

Humans have been living on this earth for thousands of years, and through those years humans have taken their best interest to industrialize all the resources that the earth can provide. Things like oil, coal, fossil fuels, stone, and the plants and animals get dug out or stripped from the earth and sent out to be processed and traded with other countries in the world. The humans think that the constant taking of the resources will have no negative effects on the world around them, because the world is apparently a never ending supply of the goods that they can just obtain and ship off. Well this is not the case. Our world is dying because we as humans are slowly killing it. Just look at what we are doing to the animals!

The endangered species list, as of 2019, is now said to be at 41,415 different species. When garbage, plastic, and other waste is thrown into the ocean animals like turtles, fish, and the birds are forced to deal with it in their environment. Seal turtles constantly being trapped in old fishing nets, birds constantly having plastic caught around their necks and choking them, and many animals die because they confuse the waste for food. But while all of this seems bad, it's too late. Anyone can help stop this issue by adding some basic habits to their lives. Things like recycling, reusing plastic bags, and saving water. If more people were to recycle the aluminum



cans we could cut down ocean pollution by almost half. The aluminum could be repurposed and put toward other things. Also if people were to switch to washable bottles instead of plastic then that would also help decrease pollution. If more people reused bags to buy and bring grocery's home, then the need and production of plastic would decrease. Also if humans where to stop using plastic straws, and switched to metal straws then the pollution would decrease because the plastic that straws are made of is not biodegradable. That means that the plastic would just sit and rot away in our world. Another helpful thing would be for people to start buying recycled paper. By buying more recycled paper, less trees would be cut down for the production of new paper so animals like birds and monkeys would still have homes to live in. Another way that we can help out our world is to buy bamboo toothbrushes. Toothbrushes should be replaced every 3 or 4 months but most times the material used to make them isn't biodegradable. Unlike the bamboo toothbrushes which are all natural and can be properly disposed of when they're finished. Simple things like this can go a long way. We are killing our earth, but if we ban together then we may have a chance to save it. So let's make things right.

## Environmental Sustainability

Today in our society we have many resources to help us save energy and save water in our communities. The people can make a change to make our Earth a better place to live. Many people talk about changing for the better of the environment. There are many little things you can do to help with the cause, things you can do yourself and things your household can do to help.

Energy is a huge topic in sustainability and there are many ways to save and conserve energy. You can make sure to turn off your lights when you leave your house every morning, many people get caught up in their lives when they forget to turn off the lights which are using energy you don't need when you are not home. If you are one of those people that do forget to turn the lights on you can buy special light bulbs that conserve energy in your house. They are called compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) and they can use up to 80% less energy and last three times longer than a regular LED light bulb.

Another way to conserve energy would be to adjust your thermostat to no lower than 70 degrees when you're not home. There is also new technology that helps you conserve energy right through your smartphone. The new Nest thermostat lets you control your air condition at the touch of your hands. You can set it to when you leave your house it is turned on to conserve the energy and when you are on your way home from work, open the smartphone app and turn your air conditioner on. The nest will also track your tendencies and try to recommend energy efficient settings to help you save money and the Earth.

Appliances all around your house can also be using up a lot of energy even though you might not be using them. It is important to look for “energy efficient” appliances , these are better to use since when you use it, it will give you the full power of the normal appliance but when not used they take up less energy. The way you can find these would be to look for the energy star label on your appliances when shopping for new ones. I know many people don't buy new appliances every year. Rather than replacing an appliance, you can buy energy efficient power strips which will support your energy efficiencies. These power strips make standard appliances, energy efficient.

There are many ways to fix Environmental sustainability. If we work all together we can fix our world today and save a lot of energy. It is just the little things that will help us become a better world.

## Packaging and Sustainability

Packaging is complex. It is not often thought of, but the same amount of work goes into devising the packaging of a product as does the actual item it houses. Everything from the color, the lettering, the shape, the dimensions, and the material is carefully chosen to maximize profit, transport easily, and catch a shopper's eye. However, with an increasing focus on sustainability driven by climate change the role of packaging has extended to consider what happens after it is discarded.

The materials that make packing and how they produce climate change have drawn the attention of governments and environmentalists. The carbon emitted from the production of plastics have caused organizations to put money toward fighting plastic pollution and increasing the plastic that gets recycled. California's Senate passed a bill in September of 2016 to divert organic waste from landfills and to recycling plants to decrease emissions (Short-Lived). Organic waste such as paper or cardboard packaging gives off methane gas when it decomposes (Butler) which is a greenhouse gas twenty times stronger than carbon dioxide (Rapp). The new role of packaging in relation to sustainability is to design packaging to be as recyclable as possible.

One of the difficulties of recycling is contamination. Contamination is when a material ends up in the recycling system of another material. To prevent contamination recycling facilities must sort out contamination prior to entering the recycling process (Rapp), which is a detriment to efficiency. Packaging however can adapt to minimize contamination by using less varying materials. Packages such as cardboard toy boxes with plastic windows built in pose more of a contamination problem than a simple cardboard box would. Furthermore, packages that use less varying materials are more likely to be recycled (Sustainability) because it simplifies a person's

decision of whether a package is recyclable or not. This would decrease the billion pounds of plastic that ends up in landfills due to insufficient collection and conversion that will release greenhouse gases as they decompose and the carbon emitted by the new plastics created to supplement the loss of plastics that are not recycled (Butler).

Another problem recycling companies face is the continually changing types of materials packaging is made out of. Since not all plastics are composed of the same resins, companies must mark packages with resin identification codes that designate different types of plastics to assist recycling companies in sorting (Department). Due to the constant creation of new plastics, recycling programs cannot keep up and the recycling system is burdened because testing must be done to create new identification codes (Department). Packaging therefore should be designed with the most common recyclable materials rather than new materials in order to allow easier recycling.

In a world where sustainability is at the forefront the role of packaging as a recyclable will become more critical to packaging's design. This will cause packaging to simplify in its material composition as well as standardize materials used instead of creating new ones.

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What Can WE Do?

It is no secret that the actions many of us partake in, on a daily basis, contribute to the depletion and deterioration of our beautiful planet. In my AP Environmental Science class, I learned we produce approximately 6-7 pounds of trash, per person, per day. In a year, just one person is producing thousands of pounds of trash! Crazy right? That just goes to show us that ONE person's actions CAN make a huge difference in shifting the path of our planet. Many of our day to day actions can be shifted to sustainable alternatives with little to none difficulty.

We all have tasks and actions we do on a daily basis right? It's amazing that we can do these exact things AND be sustainable! It's all about conservation, reducing our waste, and shifting into sustainable lifestyles.

Conserving goes beyond just energy! However, if the sun is out, use the natural sunlight by opening your windows and doors, instead of depleting energy with lights. Conserving also ties into overharvesting. We want to conserve our renewable and nonrenewable resources for many generations. We need to get what we need, and not go crazy! Buying too much causes a higher demand which leads to depleting resources to get products. This is also known as tragedy of the commons! We can also conserve energy through carpooling and alternative transportation methods! Walking and biking or even the train or bus! Every bit helps.

Reducing waste goes into our daily production of trash and waste combined. We need to all reduce our production (even by a little bit!) to see a change in the world. Our landfills overflow with trash and items that could have been recycled, reused, or even repurposed! To reduce waste we can limit or eliminate our plastic use. This includes using metal straws instead of plastic, reusable bags instead of disposable, buying in bulk to avoid plastic packaging, avoiding use of styrofoam takeout containers (you can bring your own tupperware), and reusable water bottles! It may take time to get used to these changes, but once they become habits you will help Mother Earth without skipping a beat. I do all these things now and hardly am troubled by it. If you do use plastic, you can recycle or repurpose it. This means it will get recycled or used for more tasks before having to go to landfill. In my house, we reuse any plastic bags as trash can liners or reuse them at the store. Repurposing can go into other projects. Old wood or furniture? Donation locations or using pieces for projects! The barn door in my room was made out of repurposed wood we got from somebody else!

These are just a few of the things we can do to be sustainable. Sustainability is deeper than just recycling or metal straws. There are a lot of things we can do to save our environment, we just need to take the first step.

## Alternatives for a More Sustainable Life

Environmental sustainability is an important aspect in maintaining a healthy community and improving the quality of human life. It is defined as the rate of pollution creation, renewable resource harvest, and the non-renewable resource depletion (Environmental Sustainability 1). It is necessary to ensure that the needs are not only being met for the people today, but also for the people in future generations. Our human actions can decrease natural resources due to the usage of these assets, so things are bound to change. Without the use of environmental sustainability, long-term growth can be compromised. There are many ways individuals do unsustainable things on a daily basis when there are alternatives that could be done instead.

Using plastic bags affects our environment due to the fact that they may break down into the soil and result in animals consuming them and possibly dying. Customers may take advantage of those resources being supplied to them and not thinking of the outcomes. “You can usually find cheap reusable grocery bags either at your grocery store or online — stock up and shop on.”(Hale 4). Reusable bags are convenient to take when going to the grocery store and do not create trash to waste and just throw away. Similarly, plastic straws are not safe for the environment because they are not biodegradable substances making them harmful to plants, animals, and people. “Plastic straws have been a hot topic this year, but you may not realize people in the U.S. reportedly throw away over 500 million of them *each day*, according to CNN.”(Hale 7). Alternatives to plastic straws can be metal reusable straws that you can easily take with you when dining at a restaurant or simply drinking a substance at your house. Many plastic straws end up polluting the beaches and the ocean harming many sea creatures. Lastly,



plastic water bottles have harmful substances that leak into the environment. The chemicals from the plastic water bottle are known to cause cancer and other health problems. “Even though recycling programs exist, 91% of the water bottles we use every year wind up in a landfill.” (Leighton 5). The best alternative is investing in an eco-friendly reusable water bottle that you can take on the go. Not only is it going to help the environment but also your own health.

All in all, there are countless alternatives to things people use on a daily basis that are environmentally unsustainable. Keeping in mind on how even the little things we do can affect the environment dramatically should be motivation to make a difference. Using reusable straws, bags, and even simply an eco-friendly water bottle can go a long way. It will benefit your health and the environment long term. Environmental sustainability will improve the way of living for people today and for people in future generations.

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Whittier Environmental Scholarship Essay

Essay Topic & Title: Zero Waste: Individual Behavior is the Key

Many may view the concept of “zero waste” as only an idealistic dream because of the perceived lack of willingness for society to change. However, I believe that just cutting down on individual trash consumption can make a significant difference in the environment. With each of us reaching for this aspirational goal, we can make a marked impact.

This year I chose to take AP Environmental Science, and for my summer project I chose to read the book *Garbology: Our Dirty Love Affair With Trash* by Edward Humes, which depicts the horror that is human trash consumption. If nothing else, this book taught me about the ability of an individual to make a difference. Humes presents a family called the Johnson’s that was able to cut down its annual waste to such an extent that the amount of garbage that the entire family produced in a year would fit into a mason jar. Meanwhile, the average American produces 35 tons of waste each year. The Johnson’s explain that the secret to their success was adding an additional word to the common phrase “reduce, reuse, recycle.” This new word is “refuse.” Mrs. Johnson explains ““Refuse. Because every time you say yes, you are inviting more to be made. You have created demand for more waste.”

If every American would apply this lifestyle choice, literally millions of tons of waste could potentially be eliminated from the environment. Specifically, each person can use washable containers for lunches instead of plastic bags, metal hangers instead of plastic hangers, reusable towels instead of paper towels, etc. This is one area where every individual has the ability to make a difference. Frequently it seems to people that their actions do not matter because they are so small in such a large world. However, if people were to be educated

on the facts about human consumption, then it would become clear that every person has the power to make a difference.

After reading this novel, I not only have gained a better understanding of the environment, but I have also learned more about the ways that I can apply myself to make a difference. I have become a strong advocate and believe that every person can make a difference. I will continue to preach this idea as I carry out my career. Before we can begin to improve trash consumption as a whole, we must increase awareness of the problem through education, and take responsibility individually. Together, we have the ability to make a difference and cannot lose sight of the fact that what we each do matters.

2. Environmental sustainability is a huge topic. Some of the global concerns are so large that they seem insurmountable. Write an informative essay describing small things individual people can do to live a more sustainable life. Identify environmentally unsustainable things people do on a daily basis and alternatives they could do instead.

### Environmental Sustainability: Small Steps We Can Take to Clean Up Our Planet.

The most valuable class I have taken in high school has been AP Environmental Science. This class informed students on the exploitation of the earth's resources, the harsh realities of climate change, the hundreds of thousands of species that go extinct every year, and the negative impact that humans have on the environment. Humans have the responsibility to care for nature and to preserve it for future generations. Humans are dependent on nature and rather than preserve it we exploit its resources. A current and alarming tragedy are the millions of people suffering from food insecurity due to the millions of invasive desert locusts that are swarming Africa and the Middle East depleting their food supply, caused by irregular weather patterns. Although it is impossible to protect all biodiversity, stop the degradation of the earth's natural capital, and repair the ecological damages humans have created within the next year; there are many ways in which we can take small steps in the right direction of lowering our carbon footprint and living a healthier more sustainable life.

Yes, using a metal straw and reusable bottle can help reduce the amount of plastic in our oceans, but that is not the only thing that we can do to help save our planet. One way to improve the condition of the planet is to vote. Some politicians are supported by big fossil fuel corporations, so they are not going to support initiatives that will improve the environment.

Becoming educated on all candidates and what they stand for before voting can help the environment. If the United States president and people in office invest time and money into new environmental initiatives, other countries will take notice and do the same.

A second way to live more sustainably is to research how companies manufacture their products; whether they outsource, engage in animal cruelty, or have high levels of carbon emissions or waste water. As consumers we have the power to support businesses with our money. For example, the production of palm oil has caused the deforestation of Indonesian and African rainforests, causing many species to become endangered. Consumers should avoid purchasing products that consist of palm oil so that they do not support deforestation and destruction of the endangered species' habitat. Also, limiting their meat intake could limit the amount of methane and carbon released into our environment, along with using public transportation or a more energy efficient car, and buying from local or organic businesses. Avoiding fast fashion and instead buy second hand, revamp your own clothes, and donate old clothes. The agricultural and the fashion industries contribute the most to greenhouse gas emissions.

There are currently 7.5 billion people in the world and if we continue living unsustainably, degrading natural resources, and contributing to the ever growing emissions of greenhouse gasses; the earth will not be able to support future generations. The earth provides us with so much, the least we can do is try and protect it.

## 2. Environmental sustainability

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As we all know, people keep or throw away things they do not need, such as spoiled fruits and foods, plastic bags for groceries, old toys, shoe boxes, and paper cartons. But the thing is, not all of us throw away the things in the proper trash bin, or use the things we dispose of to the maximum capacity (if possible). Doing this is not a way for people to live a more sustainable lifestyle. People should change their habits of how they throw away and utilize plastic bags, biodegradable items, and papers so that the environment thrives and lasts.

Concerning plastic bags, people get them after getting groceries from a supermarket and simply throw them out in the blue bin as they think that they have no use for them, however they are wrong for doing so. Plastic bags are not allowed to be disposed of in the blue bin, according to the Whittier Public Works. These bags can be used as indoor trashcans for the bathrooms or kitchens. Another way to prevent the disposal of plastic bags is by purchasing a durable and reusable bag. A durable bag will last a long time leaving you not needing plastic bags in the future. Throwing away plastic bags is a hazard because they are likely to end up in the ocean or a landfill waiting to breakdown after 100 years.

Biodegradables are items that go to landfills for decomposition; they take up space and release carbon to the environment making compost a good option for these items to contribute to the sustainability of the environment. Compost consists of biodegradable items that are leaves, non-animal food scraps (fruits, vegetables, bread, cereal, and coffee), and dog food which all can be put in a large container. People who do not know about compost or do not have the time to do so just throw away their scraps in a black trash can (Whittier Public Works). They do not see how much of an asset it is to have compost at one's disposal since it can improve one's soil quality.

Paper has been around a long time and there is an abundance of it. With so much paper, especially junk mail/paper, people would throw it in the black bin without the knowledge of throwing it in the blue bin (Whittier Public Works) or reusing it for other purposes. Putting it in the blue bin is the best option because it allows it to be transformed into other objects. Regarding other purposes, people can use the other side to print, tear strips for garden mulch, note-taking, and a to-do list. Utilizing paper to the maximum potential ensures paper to not go to waste.

Changing people's habits of throwing away and utilizing plastic bags, biodegradables, and paper will surely benefit people and, most importantly, the sustainability of the environment.



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