

An Argument for Free Menstrual Products in City Bathrooms

Presented by Riley Moon (they/them)

What is Menstrual Hygiene?

- Proper menstrual hygiene is defined by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) menstruating individuals have access to *“clean menstrual management material to absorb or collect menstrual blood, that can be changed in privacy as often as necessary, using soap and water for washing the body as required, and having access to safe and convenient facilities to dispose of used menstrual management materials.”*
- The menstrual management materials suggested are **sanitary menstrual pads** and **tampons**.

Who is Affected?

- According to the 2020, US Census, 52% of the people living in Gainesville are assigned female at birth. That roughly equates to 62,645 people, excluding those over 65 and those under the age of 5, who have the potential to experience menstrual cycles.
- Just about 30% of Gainesville live below the poverty line. Of the 62,000 people with the potential to experience menstrual cycles, roughly 18,600 likely experience period poverty (unable to afford or attain sanitary products).
- People assigned female at birth, aged 18-24, make up the largest demographic living in poverty.

Who is Affected, continued...

- Those living on or below the poverty line are disproportionately made up of:
 - People of color (particularly members of indigenous groups)
 - Immigrants
 - LGBTQ+ members
 - Those affected by natural disaster
 - Those affected by abuse in and outside of the home
 - Those who are affected by a disability
 - Ect...

Why Free Menstrual Products are Important /Cost for the Individual

- Average box of tampons usually contains 36 tampons for \$13 (plus tax) = \$2 per tampon.
- (**7 days** x 24 hours) 168 hours of bleeding, 8 hours each (3 tampons a day) for is 21 tampons a cycle = \$41 a cycle.
- (**4 days** x 24 hours) 96 hours of bleeding, 8 hours each (3 tampons a day) for is 12 tampons a cycle = \$24 a cycle.
- With the average menstruating person spending over \$1,700 on the products in their lifetime and an average of \$300 per year.

Why Free Menstrual Products are Important/Living Without Hygiene Products

- Negative repercussions of unsanitary menstrual hygiene can result in:
 - Fungal infections
 - Yeast infections
 - Urinary tract infections (UTIs)
 - Bacterial infections
 - Toxic shock syndrome (TSS) which can result in death
- These are often times due to overextended usage of menstrual products or improper/makeshift menstrual products. All of these repercussions require a doctor visits to alleviate to problem putting more economic strain on the recipient.

Who/Where Else has Implemented Menstrual Products in Public Bathrooms?

- Brookline, Massachusetts (2019)
 - Menstrual products provided in all municipal bathrooms, regardless of gender.
 - The city has expected a two year roll out process with an estimated cost of \$50,000 which includes the machine dispensers.
 - The total population of Brookline, at the time of the research, was 63,000.
- Ann Arbor, Michigan (2021)
 - Legislation passed requiring sanitary products in all public bathrooms.
- Salt Lake City, Utah (2019)
 - Legislation passed requiring sanitary products in municipal and public restrooms.
 - \$20,000 pilot.
 - \$1.75 million has been allocated for the first two years of implementation.

Who/Where Else has Implemented Menstrual Products in Universities?

- University of Minnesota (since 2007),
- Iowa State University (since 2010),
- University of Iowa (since 2016)
- Saint Louis University
- University of South Florida
- James Madison University
- Temple University
- University of Nebraska–Lincoln
- University of Arizona
- University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee
- University of Wisconsin–La Crosse
- Elon University
- University of California–Davis
- Texas A&M–Corpus Christi
- Florida State University
- University of Washington
- University of Pennsylvania
- Texas State University
- The Ohio State University

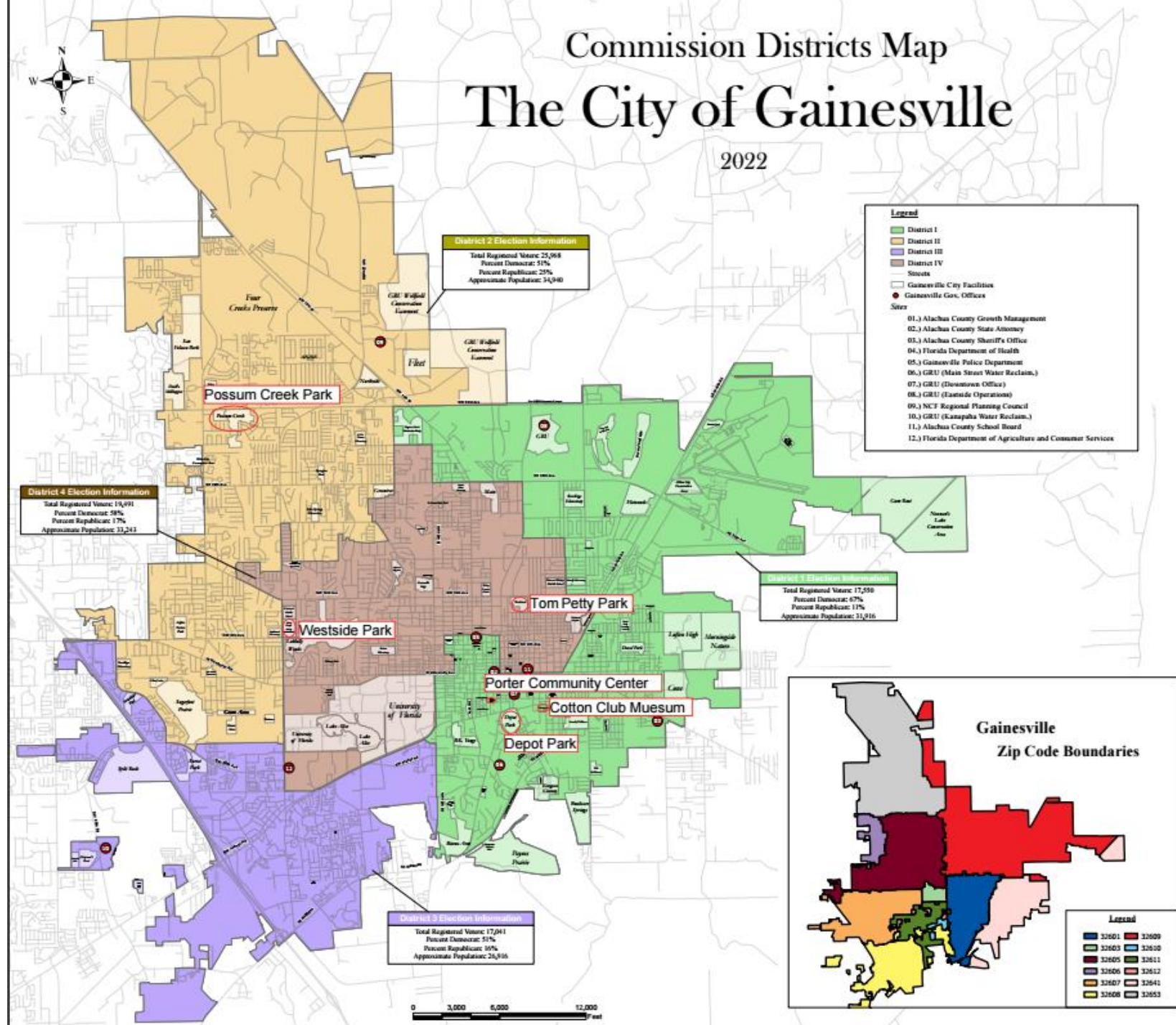
Possible Disadvantages

- Finding adequate, cost-efficient sources of products may be difficult.
 - Counter: The city can buy these products in bulk, resulting in a lower cost per item. The city also has the time to sift through options to find that which is most economic unlike someone who may work multiple jobs.
- Facilitating the policy would require additional work for restroom managers.
 - Counter:
- Potential environmental impacts of sanitary product waste management.
 - Counter: These products are getting used regardless; as of now this often comes at the cost of those finances being used elsewhere: transportation, rent, food, other medical expenses...
- Potential misuse of sanitary products provided in restrooms.
 - Counter: We live in society that stigmatizes the menstrual cycle. We need to start the normalization process and the only way to do that is to start.

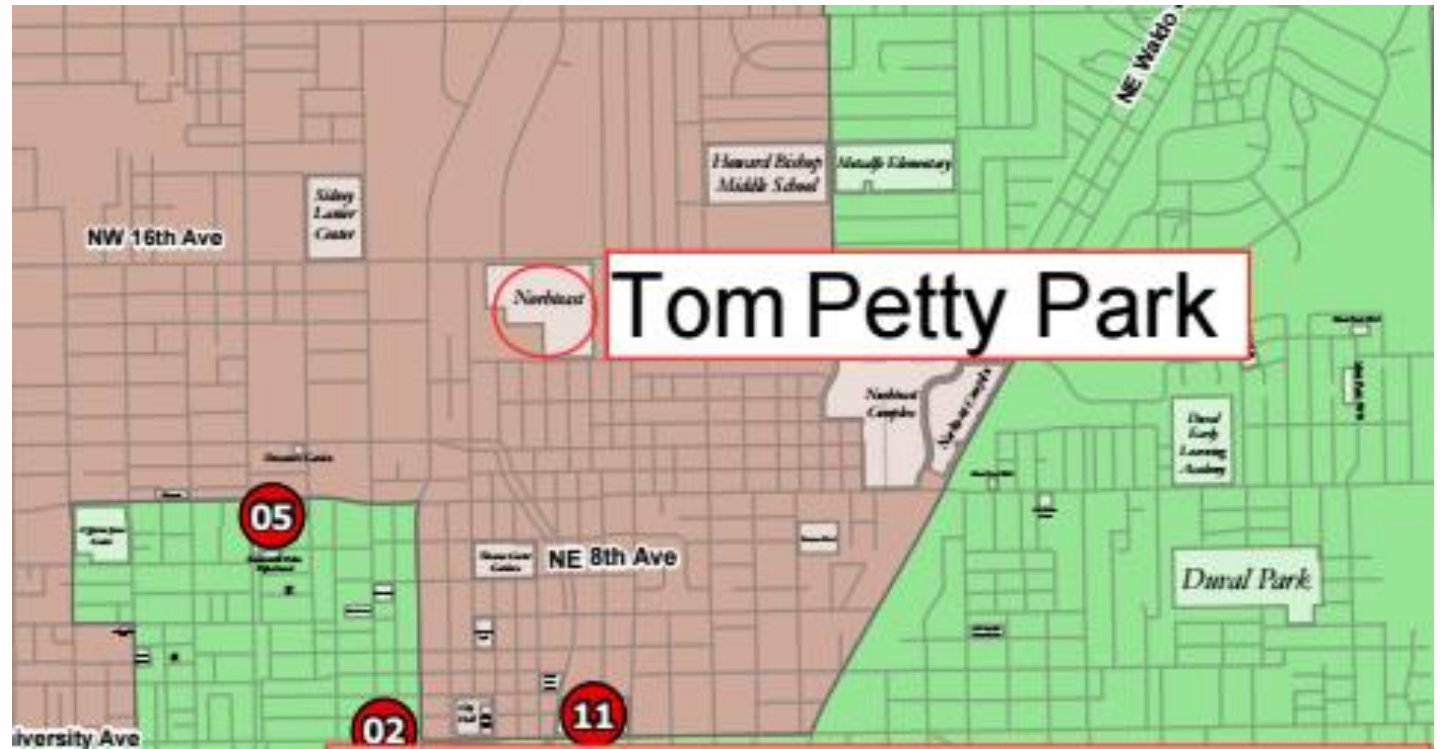
Suggested Locations

- (1001 NW 34th St, Gainesville, FL 32605) Westside Park (**NW**)
- (512 SW 6th Ave Gainesville, FL 32601) Porters Community Center (**SW**)
- (200 SE Depot Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601) Depot (**SE**)
- (4009 NW 53rd Ave, Gainesville, FL 32653) Possum Creek (**NW**)
- (837 SE 7th Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601) Cotton Club Museum and Cultural Center (**NE**)
- (501 NE 16th Ave , Gainesville 32601) Tom Petty Park (**NE**)

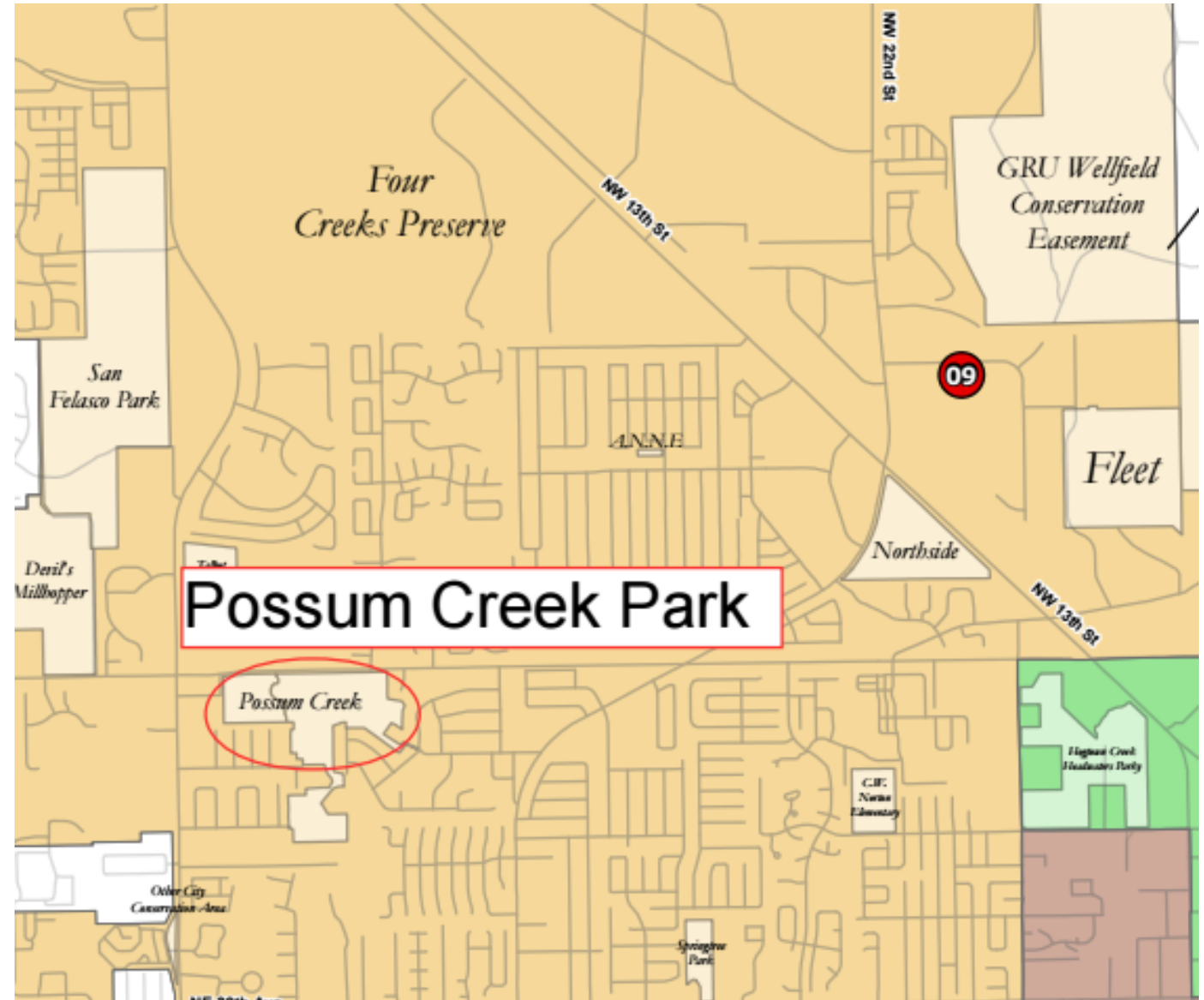
Map



Northeast Quadrant – District 4



Northwest Quadrant – District 2



Northwest
Quadrant –
District 4



Southeast
Quadrant –
District 2



Works Cited

- <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/gainesvillecityflorida>
- <https://www.verywellhealth.com/ann-arbor-free-period-product-public-restroom-5210726#:~:text=Ann%20Arbor%2C%20Michigan%20on%20Monday%20became%20the%20first,violators%20will%20be%20charged%20with%20a%20%24100%20fine>
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- <https://www.healthshots.com/intimate-health/menstruation/4-risks-of-poor-menstrual-hygiene-practices-and-infections-it-can-lead-to/>