



City of Seattle

City of Seattle Sustainable Purchasing Policy

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1. Purpose

In accordance with the City of Seattle environmentally preferable purchasing ordinance, the City of Seattle recognizes its responsibility to minimize negative impacts on human health and the environment while supporting a diverse, equitable, and vibrant community and economy. The City recognizes that the products and services the City buys have inherent social, human, health, environmental and economic impacts and that the City should make procurement decisions that embody, promote and encourage the City's commitment to sustainability.

This Sustainable Procurement Policy is intended to:

- Encourage the purchase and use of materials, products and services that best align with the City's fiscal, environmental, climate change, social, community and performance goals;
- Reduce the spectrum of environmental impacts from City use of products, including reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, reduction of landfill waste, health and safety risks, and resource consumption;
- Incorporate sustainability standards into procurement decisions;
- Empower Department and City Purchasing staff to be innovative and demonstrate leadership by incorporating progressive and best-practice sustainability specifications, strategies and practices in procurement decisions;
- Encourage vendors to promote products and services that they offer which are most suited to the City sustainability principles;
- Complement City ordinances and sustainability policies;
- Encourage and promote both local and national companies to bring forward emerging and progressive sustainable products and services, by being a consumer of such products and companies; and
- Communicate the City's commitment to sustainable procurement, by modeling the best product and services choices to citizens, other public agencies and private companies.

2. Organizations Affected

All City departments that make purchases of goods and services or that contract with others to make purchases.

3. Ordinance and Regulation

The City has the following ordinances and policies that govern sustainable purchasing:

1. SMC 20.60.200 et. Seq., Reusable Products, Recycled Content Products, and Recyclable Products Procurement Program
2. Resolution 27828, directing Solid Waste to develop policies and practices to encourage, increase, and require recycling, waste reduction, and the purchase of recycled products.
3. Resolution 28556, authorizing the Director of ESD to develop a "Recycled-content Procurement Plan."
4. Resolution 29949 –implementation of Copernicus, encouraging the City to act as a regional partner in environmental protection
5. City Council Resolution #30487 on Persistent Bioaccumulative Toxins
6. Executive Order for Paper - #01-05
7. City Pesticides Reduction rules
8. City Sustainable Building Action Plan
9. City Green Fleets Initiative
10. Seattle Green Ribbon Commission Report on Greenhouse Gases
11. Seattle Solid Waste Management Comprehensive Plan)

4. Policy

a. General Policy Statement

The City shall acquire its goods and services in a manner that integrates fiscal responsibility, social equity, women and minority business opportunity, and environmental stewardship. Each City Department shall comply with this policy and actively encourage department decisions that reflect the policy objectives. City Purchasing (Department of Finance and Administrative Services), shall actively promote and encourage product and service acquisitions compliant to the policies and guidelines adopted herein.

b. Sustainability Factors

Environmental factors to be considered in product and service acquisitions include, but are not limited to, the assessment of:

- Pollutant releases and toxins, especially persistent bioaccumulative toxins (PBTs), air emissions, and water pollution;
- Waste generation and waste minimization;
- Greenhouse gas emissions;
- Recyclability and Recycled content;

- Energy consumption, energy efficiency, use of renewable energy;
- Depletion of natural resources; and
- Potential impact on human health and the environment;
- Impacts on biodiversity
- Environmental practices that vendors and manufacturers have incorporated into their office and production process.

c. Preferences

City Purchasing does not calculate a direct price preference for recycled products in the selection of winning bidders because the City prefers to directly implement product decisions that are most environmentally preferable.

The City instead establishes a minimum specification with the most environmentally preferable solutions for particular products, and may also utilize a scored evaluation criteria allowing additional points for positive environmental product options, corporate practices, and other environmental solutions proposed by the Bidder.

d. Social Equity Factors

Product and service acquisitions shall consider and incorporate other City policies of social equity, responsible purchasing, and justice, as appropriate to each acquisition, in a way that supports each of the policy initiatives holistically and in concert with each other:

- Women and minority business opportunity and participation
- Fair labor practices, health and retirement benefits, safety, livable wages, and worker rights.
- International Fair Labor Code of Conduct, including prohibitions on forced overtime, child labor, health and safety equal to the laws of the country of manufacturer.
- Human health impacts
- Environmental justice (disproportionate environmental and health impacts on different population groups)

5. Use of Best Practices

City Purchasing and City employees will utilize best practices in sustainable procurement as they evolve. As it applies to this policy, best practices in sustainable procurement are those that utilize leading edge sustainability factors, standards and procedures.

6. Source Reduction and Reuse

City Purchasing and City Departments will promote and encourage strategies to reduce consumption, due to the societal and community costs, such as landfill waste handling, toxin exposures, resource depletion, and greenhouse gas emissions:

- Reduced City consumption;
- Purchase of remanufactured, recycled, or reusable products;
- Minimized packaging;
- Reduced entry of toxin chemicals into the City consumption stream;
- Products that are durable, long lasting, reusable, recyclable, or otherwise greater less waste; and
- Manufacturer or vendor take-back programs and/or participation in the King County “Take Back” program.

7. Environmental Standards and Product and Certifications

Standards: In accordance with SCM 20.60 the City standard for all acquisitions shall be compliant at list to:

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) standards whenever published for a product or services; and
- The State of Washington Prohibited Toxins list, that prohibits specified chemicals (see Washington Department of Ecology prohibited toxins <http://www.toxicfreelegacy.org/pbtlist.html> .

Third-Party Certifications: City Departments and City Purchasing shall apply the most stringent third-party label standard available for a product or service being acquired. The City shall use independent, third-party social and/or environmental (eco) product or service label certifications when writing specifications for, or procuring materials, products, or services, whenever a responsible label standard is available. Qualifying labels shall be:

- Developed and awarded by an impartial third-party;
- Developed in a public, transparent, and broad stakeholder process; and
- Represent specific and meaningful leadership criteria for that product or service category.

In addition, whenever possible, label standards used in product or service specifications should represent standards that take into account multiple attributes and life-cycle considerations, with claims verified by an independent third party.

8. City Code and State Law

It is the intent of this policy to complement City code and State laws. When such code or law is updated to accommodate a more rigorous standard, the policy shall be considered to likewise require such additional provision.

9. Acquisition Responsibilities

City Departments shall:

- Ensure City staff utilizes product and service standards and certifications and best practices that comply with this policy.
- Serve on specification or best practice teams, to collaborate with other departments and City Purchasing in standards, strategies and specifications;
- Ensure internal policies and procedures that reference this policy and incorporate the use of sustainable products and services that meet the intent of this policy.
- Encourage pilot testing for environmentally preferable/sustainable products.

City Purchasing shall:

- Promote and ensure that bid and contract strategies incorporate the most favorable standards and best practices in sustainable procurement.
- Stay current and informed on advances in sustainable procurement specifications and strategies;
- Consult with the experts available in the City when reviewing or designing specifications, to sure progressive and emerging specifications for the product or service being solicited;
- Research and incorporate the USEPA, EPEAT or other appropriate best standards; incorporate the applicable third-party seal or certification as a product or service standard;
- Prohibit toxins (see Washington State Department of Ecology list of prohibited Toxins) and seek exemptions from vendors as applicable;
- Encourage vendors to bring forward product and service approaches, solutions and alternatives;
- Ensure that evaluation criteria for selecting a product or service incorporates and encourages sustainable factors by providing scored points or incorporates minimum specifications;
- Ensure that the qualification of a company as a responsible bidder includes a criteria for incorporating environmental responsibility;
- Encourage and promote contracts to other public agencies that offer sustainable products and best practices.
- Ensure purchasing guidelines and other internal procedures reference this policy and incorporate best practices for specifying products and services that meet the intent of this policy;

- Integrate sustainable procurement boilerplate language into the solicitation templates, and maintain and update such language to incorporate evolving standards;
- Encourage pilot testing for environmentally preferable/sustainable products.

10. Education and Technical Assistance

DEA (City Purchasing) shall join Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), the Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE), and other Departments to:

- Establish a Green Team to advise, strategize and promote environmental purchasing;
- Disseminate information to City staff about sustainability standards and environmentally preferable practices and strategies;
- Disseminate information about vendors and City contracts for such products or services;
- Encourage and participate in user groups and other opportunities to test and discuss new products.
- Appoint Evaluation Teams for solicitation specifications and selections that include users knowledgeable or informed of the sustainable purchasing objectives and product specifications, standards and labels; and
- Encourage pilot testing of new products or services.

11. Data Collection and Performance Reporting

City Purchasing shall:

- Require vendors supply data for performance tracking and evaluation of the City's environmentally responsible purchasing program upon request; and
- Compile records for producing an annual summary of the City's environmentally responsible/sustainable purchasing actions, and to evaluate the effectiveness in reducing the environmental impacts of City procurement.

Each City department shall cooperate in information gathering for the purposes of tracking, reporting, and evaluating the sustainable purchasing program.

12. Market Enhancement

City Purchasing shall join with and encourage City Departments to:

- Seek opportunities to cooperate with other jurisdictions to enhance markets for environmentally preferable/sustainable products, to obtain favorable prices, and to reduce waste packaging and product by combining purchases/contracting for the same or similar products; and
- Promote and encourage vendors, particularly local vendors, in production and distribution of emerging and progressive products and services.

Definitions¹

Environmentally Preferable Product: A product that has a reduced negative effect or increased positive effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products that serve the same purpose. This comparison may consider raw materials acquisition, production, fabrication, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation, maintenance, and disposal of the product. This term includes, but is not limited to, recyclable products, recycled products, and reusable products.

Performance: The efficacy of a product, material or service to accomplish its intended task or job

Life Cycle Assessment (LCA): The comprehensive examination of a product's environmental impacts throughout its lifetime, including new material extraction, transportation, manufacturing, use, and disposal.

Life Cycle Cost Assessment (LCCA): The comprehensive accounting of the total cost of ownership, including initial costs, energy and operational costs, longevity and efficacy of service and disposal costs.

Recyclable Product: A product or package made from a material for which curbside or drop-off collection systems are in place for a majority of City residents or businesses, to divert from City solid waste for use as a raw material in the manufacture of another product or the reuse of the same product.

Recycled Content Product: A product containing a minimum of twenty-five percent (25%) recycled materials except in those cases where the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has adopted procurement guidelines under the Resource Conservation Recovery Act of 1976. In those cases, the minimum content of recycled material shall not be less than specified in the most current adopted issue of those guidelines.

Reusable Product: A product that can be used several times for an intended end use before being discarded, such as a washable food or beverage container or a refillable ballpoint pen .

Sustainable Product: A product that achieves performance objectives while respecting the City's values and balancing: environmental stewardship, social equity, fiscal responsibility and community enhancement.

Sustainable Purchasing: Purchasing materials, products, and labor in a manner that reflects fiscal responsibility, social equity, community and environmental stewardship.

¹ From SMC 20.60 or federal Executive Order

