



Title:	<b>City of Seattle Sustainable Purchasing Policy</b>	No: <b>26</b>
Division:	Purchasing and Contracting	Effective date: April 22, 2021

**1. Policy Statement**

The City of Seattle (“the City”) shall practice sustainable procurement: purchasing goods and services in a manner that integrates environmental stewardship, social equity and fiscal responsibility. Social equity includes race and social justice and women- and minority-owned business (WMBE) opportunity. The City supports a circular economy via prioritizing the purchase and use of post-consumer recycled-content products, which support the City’s Zero Waste goals.

Each City office and department shall comply with this policy and actively encourage decisions that reflect the policy purpose. Purchasing and Contracting, a division of Finance and Administrative Services, (“FAS-Purchasing and Contracting”) shall actively promote and encourage purchases compliant to the adopted policies and guidelines detailed below.

**2. Scope**

**2.1 Purpose**

In accordance with the City’s sustainable procurement ordinance, the City recognizes its responsibility to minimize negative impacts on human health and the environment while supporting a diverse, equitable and vibrant community and circular economy. The City recognizes that the goods and services the City purchases have inherent social, human, health, environmental and economic impacts and that the City should make purchasing decisions that embody and promote the City’s commitment to Zero Waste and sustainability.

This Sustainable Purchasing Policy intends to:

- A. Substantially increase the percentage of purchased materials, goods and services that best align with the City’s environmental sustainability (e.g. Zero Waste), social equity and fiscal goals;
- B. Retain the City’s long-term commitment to prioritize post-consumer recycled-content purchases;
- C. Reduce the spectrum of environmental impacts from products the City purchases and uses, including greenhouse gas emissions resulting from manufacturing, transporting and using a product; plastic and other forms of pollution; release or exposure to toxic chemicals; exploitation of limited resources including conflict minerals; and exploitation of human labor and production of unnecessary waste;
- D. Incorporate sustainability standards into purchasing decisions;
- E. Empower City staff innovation and demonstrate leadership by incorporating progressive and best-practice sustainability standards, specifications, strategies and practices in purchasing decisions;
- F. Encourage vendors to promote goods and services that they offer that are most suited to the City sustainability principles and Zero Waste goals;
- G. Encourage City departments and partner agencies to purchase products made from locally recycled materials, such as compost derived from Seattle/King County region’s food and yard waste;
- H. Complement City ordinances and policies;
- I. Communicate the City’s commitment to sustainable purchasing, by modeling the best goods and services choices to Seattle residents, other public agencies and private companies;
- J. Establish methods to track City adoption of sustainable purchasing practices that include environmental, social equity and fiscal factors; and

- K. Question intentions to purchase new and single-use products. Prioritize durable and reusable products, such as reusable plates instead of single-use plates. When possible, purchase used or utilize surplus supplies.

## **2.2 Purchasing Preferences**

FAS-Purchasing and Contracting does not calculate a direct price preference for sustainable goods and services in the selection of winning offerors. The City instead establishes a minimum specification for sustainable solutions for particular goods and services and may also use an evaluation allowing additional consideration for positive sustainable goods and services options, corporate practices and other environmental solutions proposed by the offeror.

## **2.3 Environmental Stewardship Factors**

Goods and service purchases shall incorporate other City policies and guidelines regarding packaging and responsible recycling. As possible, goods and services purchases shall incorporate environmental factors including, but not limited to, the assessment of:

- A. Pollutant releases and toxins, especially persistent bio-accumulative toxics (PBTs), air emissions and water pollution from production through end of life;
- B. Waste prevention, minimization and generation;
- C. Greenhouse gas emissions including both operational and embodied carbon, and any emission produced through transport, shipping and construction;
- D. Reusability, recyclability, compostability and use of post-consumer recycled content;
- E. Energy consumption, energy efficiency, use of renewable energy;
- F. Planetary boundaries and the depletion of natural resources;
- G. Potential impact on human health;
- H. Impacts on biosphere integrity, including biodiversity; and
- I. Environmental practices that vendors and manufacturers have incorporated into their office and production process.

## **2.4 Social Equity Factors**

Goods and service purchases shall incorporate other City policies and guidelines of social equity, responsible purchasing and justice, as appropriate to each purchase, in a way that supports each of the policy initiatives holistically and in concert with each other. Factors include, but are not limited to:

- A. Micro-, Small-, Women- and minority-owned business (WMBE) opportunity and participation;
- B. Fair labor practices, health and retirement benefits, safety, livable wages and worker rights;
- C. **International Fair Labor Code of Conduct**, including prohibitions on forced overtime, forced labor, child labor, health and safety equal to the laws of the country of the manufacturer;
- D. Opportunities for workforce development;
- E. Human health and well-being impacts; and
- F. Environmental justice (disproportionate environmental and health impacts on different population groups).

## 2.5 Fiscal Responsibility Factors

Goods and services purchases shall incorporate, as appropriate, fiscal factors including, but not limited to, the assessment of:

- A. Use reduction: the purchase only necessary products;
- B. Product performance, quality and durability, including repairability;
- C. Cost (dollar and non-dollar);
- D. Life-cycle cost assessment including capital costs, operational costs and end-of-life management;
- E. Leveraging buying power;
- F. Social cost of carbon;
- G. Impact on staff time and labor, including operational and maintenance requirements; and
- H. Long-term financial/market changes.

While not every example of every factor will be incorporated into every purchase, it is the intent of this policy that City employees will make a good faith effort to incorporate and balance these factors to the maximum extent possible. Goods and services that meet established sustainability goals may be given a preference in the purchasing selection process and a premium may be paid for such items to support the City's sustainability goals.

## 2.6 Source Reductions and Reuse

City offices and departments will adopt and implement strategies to reduce societal and community costs of consumption, such as litter, plastic pollution, managing waste, waste having to be landfilled, toxic exposures, resource depletion and greenhouse gas emissions. Strategies include:

- A. Reducing City consumption;
- B. Purchasing remanufactured, recycled, post-consumer recycle-content, or reusable products;
- C. Minimizing or reusing packaging;
- D. Reducing entry of toxic chemicals into the City consumption stream;
- E. Using goods that are durable, long-lasting, reusable, recyclable, refillable, or that otherwise create less waste; and
- F. Using manufacturer or vendor take-back programs.

## 2.7 Environmental Standards and Product Certifications

- A. **Standards:** In accordance with SMC 20.60 the City standard for all procurements shall be compliant at minimum to:
  - 1. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) comprehensive purchasing guidelines both authorized by Congress under Section 6002 of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, 42 U.S.C. 6962 and whenever published for a good or services;
  - 2. Washington State environmental standards including but not limited to those in RCW 39.26.280, RCW 39.26.160, RCW 43.19, RCW 70.95, RCW 70.360, RCW 39.35; and
  - 3. Other specific City environmental sustainability standards, such as the Zero Waste Resolution #30990, as amended.
- B. **Third-Party Certifications:** Content standards may follow independent third-party sustainability-label

standards, so long as the labels satisfy the standards for certification developed by the International Organization of Standards or other recognized standards-setting or accreditation organizations.

## **2.8 Responsibilities**

### **A. City Department Directors shall:**

1. Designate staff to consult on specification development with support from FAS-Purchasing and Contracting;
  - a. Designated staff shall incorporate standards and third-party certification into any solicitation specification;
2. Review information provided by FAS-Purchasing and Contracting and track department usage of contracts meeting the sustainability criteria; and
3. Fulfill reporting requirements as listed in Section 2.9.
4. As they are able to, Department Directors should also:
  - a. Ensure internal policies and procedures reference this policy and incorporate the use of sustainable goods and services that meet the intent of this policy;
  - b. Ensure staff use product and service standards and certifications and best practices that comply with this policy and relevant City ordinances, orders and rules;
  - c. Stay current and informed on advances in sustainable purchasing specifications and strategies; and
  - d. Seek opportunities to cooperate with other jurisdictions to enhance markets for sustainable products, to obtain favorable prices and to reduce waste packaging and product by combining purchases for the same or similar products, without unduly precluding small business participation.

### **B. FAS-Purchasing and Contracting shall:**

1. Build awareness of this policy through information dissemination, integration into internal procedures and guidelines and incorporation into routine employee trainings for each City department;
2. Encourage vendors to bring forward sustainable approaches, solutions and alternatives;
3. Promote contracts that offer sustainable products and best practices to other public agencies;
4. As needed, integrate sustainable purchasing boilerplate language into solicitation templates, and maintain and update such language to incorporate evolving standards;
5. Coordinate review of this policy when significant code or practice changes warrant additional review; and
6. Fulfill reporting requirements as listed in Section 2.9.
7. As it is able to, FAS-Purchasing and Contracting should:
  - a. Support department pilot testing for the purchase of sustainable goods and services;
  - b. Ensure that evaluation criteria for selecting a good or service incorporates, encourages and prioritizes sustainable factors through scoring, incorporating minimum specifications and other guidance;

- c. Ensure that the qualification of a company as a responsible offeror includes a criterion for incorporating sustainability; and
  - d. Promote and ensure purchasing and contract strategies incorporate the most favorable standards and best practices in sustainable purchasing.
- C. FAS-Purchasing and Contracting shall be the lead and coordinate a “Green Team” with Seattle City Light (SCL), Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR), Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), the Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE), FAS – Capital Development (FAS-CD), Department of Transportation (SDOT) and other departments to:
1. Advise, strategize and promote sustainable purchasing, including efforts to update related policies and ordinances;
  2. Advise on post-consumer recycled-content standards (these efforts will be led by SPU);
  3. Disseminate information to City staff about sustainability standards and sustainable practices and strategies;
  4. Disseminate information about priority pricing and selection processes for sustainably preferred goods and services;
  5. Disseminate information about vendors and City contracts for such products or services; and
  6. Support department pilot testing of the purchase of sustainable products or services.

### 2.9 Data Collection and Performance Reporting

- A. If reasonably achievable, FAS-Purchasing and Contracting will strive to:
1. Track performance of the sustainable purchasing program, including qualitative or quantitative data.
  2. Produce performance reports of the City’s sustainable purchasing program as needed.
  3. Work with vendors to supply data upon request for performance tracking and evaluation of the City’s sustainable procurement program.
- B. Each City department shall cooperate in information gathering for tracking, reporting and evaluating the sustainable purchasing program.

### 3. Definitions

**City solid waste stream:** Any solid waste created or generated within City limits whether residential or nonresidential.

**Compost:** The product of biological degradation and transformation of organic solid waste under controlled conditions designed to promote aerobic decomposition.

**Compostable product:** A product or package made from a material for which curbside or drop-off compost 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 by local compost facilities to manufacture composted material such as soil amendments.

**Embodied carbon emissions:** The greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the manufacture, transport and construction of materials.

**Sustainable purchasing:** The procurement of goods and services that have a lesser or reduced adverse effect on the environment while also considering social equity and fiscal responsibility. Some factors sustainable procurement could consider are recycled content procurement including reusable products, post-consumer recycled-content products and recyclable products, as well as procurement decisions that impact climate change, greenhouse gas emissions, pollution, release or exposure to toxic chemicals; exploitation of limited resources including conflict minerals; exploitation of human labor and production of unnecessary waste.

**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.

**Local post-consumer recycled-content product:** product or products that are derived from recycled materials recovered from City solid waste, provided the material used in the manufacture of such products can be reasonably traced back to its generation within City limits. Such products must contain a minimum of twenty-five (25) percent recycled materials except in those cases where the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has adopted procurement guidelines under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-580, 42 U.S.C. Section 6901 et seq.) ("RCRA"). In those cases, the minimum content of recycled material shall not be less than specified in the most current adopted issue of those guidelines.

**Paper and paper products:** All items manufactured from paper or paperboard.

**Post-consumer waste:** Solid waste, including yard waste and food waste, that has passed through its end use as a consumer item and is suitable as feedstock in product manufacture.

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

**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.

**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 materials:** Post-consumer waste or secondary waste that have been recovered or diverted from solid waste and that can be utilized in place of raw or virgin material in manufacturing a product.

**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.

**Secondary paper waste:** Paper waste generated after the completion of a paper or paper product making process, such as envelope cuttings, bindery trimmings, printing waste, cutting and other converting waste, bud rolls, mill wrappers, and obsolete inventories, rejected unused fibrous waste generated during the manufacturing process such as fibers recovered from waste or trimmings of paper machine rolls (mill

broke), or fibrous byproducts of harvesting, extractive or woodcutting processes, or forest residue such as bark.

**Secondary waste:** Waste resulting from a part of a manufacturing process that, unless incorporated as a feedstock in product manufacture, must be disposed of as solid or hazardous waste.

**Solid waste:** All putrescible and nonputrescible solid and semisolid wastes, except wastes identified in WAC 173-304-015, including but not limited to garbage, rubbish, ashes, industrial wastes, swill, demolition and construction wastes, abandoned vehicles or parts thereof, discarded commodities, sludge from wastewater treatment plants and septage from septic tanks, wood waste, dangerous waste and problem wastes. This includes all public, private, industrial, commercial, mining and agricultural operations. Unrecovered residue from recycling operations shall be considered solid waste.

**Waste prevention:** Waste prevention means creating less waste by buying and using less, investing in reusable items and sharing or donating items so others can use them.

**Zero waste:** The concept of valuing all resources and looking at the whole life cycle of materials so the City can eliminate waste, prevent pollution, encourage product durability and reusability, conserve natural resources, and ultimately, build a circular and inclusive economy.

#### 4. References

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

- A. [Executive Order 2020-01: Advancing a Green New Deal for Seattle](#)
- B. [Seattle Climate Action Plan](#)
- C. [SMC 20.60.200](#) et. Seq., Reusable Products, Recycled Content Products, and Recyclable Products Procurement Program
- D. [Resolution 27828](#): A resolution directing the Solid Waste Utility to develop policies and practices to encourage, increase, and/or require recycling, waste reduction and the purchase of products made with recycled materials for use by City government and contractors with City government.
- E. [Resolution 28556](#): A resolution establishing policies, procedures and programs to encourage the purchase of recycled content products and recyclable products.
- F. [Resolution 30990](#): A resolution establishing new recycling goals for the City of Seattle and providing direction on waste-reduction programs and solid waste facilities.
- G. [Resolution #30487 on Persistent Bio accumulative Toxins](#)
- H. [Executive Order for Paper - #01-05](#)
- I. [City Sustainable Building and Sites Policy](#)
- J. [City Green Fleets Action Plan](#)
- K. [Seattle Green Ribbon Commission Report on Greenhouse Gases](#)
- L. [Seattle's Solid Waste Plan](#)

M. **Environmental Management Program Chemical Use Policy**

N. **Landscape and Grounds Management Policy**

O. **Landscape and Grounds Management Guidelines**

P. **Ordinance 122751 – Food Service Business Packaging Requirements:** An ordinance relating to the City of Seattle's solid waste system, prohibiting the use of expanded polystyrene food service containers, requiring food service businesses to transition from disposable plastic food service ware to compostable and recyclable alternatives, and amending Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 21.36.

Q. **Ordinance 123307 - Food Service Business Collection Requirements:** An ordinance relating to the City of Seattle's solid waste system, providing for the collection of compostable and recyclable food service ware from certain food service businesses, and amending Section 21.36.086 of the Seattle Municipal Code.

**5. Attachments**

If applicable, this section references and incorporates any attachments.

**6. Signature**

The division director has reviewed and approved this policy.

Liz Alzeer  
Division Director, Purchasing and Contracting

04/22/21  
Date

**7. Revision history**

Date	Revision Description	Revised by
08/11/2008	City of Seattle Sustainable Purchasing Policy	N/A
04/22/2021	Revised Policy Executed	Erin Buch