

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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2019 COUNCIL STUDY ISSUE

NUMBER

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy

BACKGROUND

Lead Department: Environmental Services Department

Support Departments: Office of the City Manager
Office of the City Attorney

Sponsor(s): Sustainability Commission

History: 1 year ago: N/A
2 years ago: N/A

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

What precipitated this study?

The city's purchasing decisions can have significant impact on greenhouse gas emissions not necessarily within the city, but in the wider world. Although previous Climate Actions for Sunnyvale have mostly focused on direct emissions within the city, as we know, purchasing products that are made outside the city induces greenhouse gas emissions in other locations thus contributing to climate change. If the city required that the products and services it buys are made and delivered in a sustainable way then when aggregated, market demand is created for more sustainable options. It is likely that the city could even money on some products and services over the long term.

A green purchasing policy is consistent with the Council Priority of accelerating climate action. There is considerable information available about Environmentally Preferable Purchasing programs/policies adopted by cities, universities and the federal government. The study should leverage on the significant work already done by others (see References for just a few examples).

Desired Outcome: A comprehensive Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy (EPPP) for the city.

Benefits:

The city spends a lot of money on goods and services that are made outside the city and which produce greenhouse gas emissions elsewhere. This is an opportunity for the city to be a leader and role model for residents and businesses as well as to accelerate the demand signal in the economy for sustainably produced and delivered products and services. Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions generated by city purchases will be significantly reduced after full implementation.

Background:

Sunnyvale does have a few items related to environmental purchasing in the Council Policy Manual. These include: 7.1.3 on Environmental Procurement, 7.3.2 Reduction of Carbon Dioxide Emissions from City Operations and 7.3.25 on Expenditure of Public Funds for Bottled Water.

Very few specifics are called out in these policies. One exception is that the city will purchase paper with at least 30% post-consumer recycled content. This could be updated to 100% post-consumer recycled content which is readily available at reasonable cost. Bottled water is prohibited to be bought using city funds, but not other single-use plastics such as utensils, cups, straws, plates and bowls. The travel policy for council does not consider greenhouse gas emissions related to air travel.

What are the key elements of the study?

- Review EPPPs of other organizations and cities to identify components that could be easily and cost effectively adopted in Sunnyvale. For example, see Palo Alto's "Default to Green" policy. Check with Palo Alto staff to identify 'lessons learned' in their roll-out.
- Identify cost in staff time to set up and manage an EPPP policy.
- Study potential unintended consequences and how to address - for example an excessive administrative burden to track indirect GHG emissions or determine the greenest option for each product or service.
- Identify areas where a city EPPP could reduce scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions. Many EPPP's only address consumable supplies, but study whether other areas could be included such as Air travel, Food purchases, Capital equipment / fleet vehicles, chemicals/pesticides, and large contracts.
 - Air Travel by city employees and council. There are current policies to reduce expenses from air travel, but not GHG emissions. Suggestions include: virtual meetings to reduce the need for air travel, give preference to airplanes with lower emissions, and a implement a policy to purchase carbon offsets for all city air travel.
 - Food Purchases. The existing Sunnyvale Climate Action Plan has LUP3.4 "Develop and implement a purchasing policy that requires food and other appropriate materials purchased by the City to be purchased from as local a supply as possible." However this has not been studied or implemented. In addition to local purchasing, there could be a policy to favor plant-based food purchasing to reduce GHG impact from animal based foods.
 - Capital Equipment and Fleet Vehicles. Consider giving preference to all-electric options which would favor use of renewable electricity from SVCE. Other factors could also be considered to reduce GHG emissions such as manufacturer sustainability policies, materials used to manufacture the equipment, distance of travel to ship the equipment to Sunnyvale, recycled content of the product, and manufacturer take-back provisions at end of life (for recycling). Identify procedures to calculate total lifetime cost and not just initial capital cost. Define procedure for selecting other items when the greenest solution does not pay back over the lifetime compared to other less green options.
 - Supplies. When purchasing supplies for city operations the following should be considered and maximized to the extent that quality of product is not compromised unduly: 1) recycled content, 2) recyclability, composability or manufacturer take-back provision, 3) re-usability/durability in accordance with the purpose of use, and 4) use of natural materials (paper, glass, metal, cloth, wood, as opposed to fossil fuel based synthetic materials such as plastic, nylon, polyester, melamine, etc.). Consider including that single use plastic supplies would not be purchased at all (utensils, plates, straws, cups, bottles, bowls, bags, wrap, etc.), and instead specify reusables.
 - Chemicals and Pesticides. Some city purchases like hazardous chemicals and pesticides may not have a green or sustainable alternative. some of these products when used as intended release chemicals into the environment that have negative or unintended consequences. Products in this category should be carefully evaluated as to whether they need to be purchased at all. There may be non-chemical alternatives that could obviate the

purchase altogether. For landscaping this could include mulching, physical weed removal, spraying weeds with boiling hot water, etc.

- Contracts Requests for proposals, bid sourcing, and contracts should require the company seeking to provide goods or services to address issues of greenhouse gas emissions and sustainability in their bids/proposals. An accounting of projected greenhouse gas emissions should be included which spans the direct greenhouse gas emissions during construction or implementation of the contract as well as the projected emissions over the life of the building or serviceable life of the product. Contracts should specify aspects that will be monitored and measured or verified during contract execution. This includes contracts for new city buildings and infrastructure.
- Consider a 'menu' of approved supplies and 'templates' for bid proposals that would ease of implementation. Flexibility should be built-in to allow for new and innovative products that meet the framework criteria.

The supporting processes should make it easy to implement in practice through a menu of approved products that is periodically reviewed and updated. A provision should be put into the policy to periodically audit actual purchases for compliance to the policy.

- Study methods and costs to promote an EPPP and publicize its criteria for selecting sustainable products and services. This will serve as an example for residents and business to do the same. Once developed, implemented and shown to be saving the city money as well as producing other benefits to the city, this should be shared with other cities to create even more demand for sustainable products and services. Employees working for manufacturers and service providers will be influenced to develop more innovative and sustainable products and services to meet the demand.

Estimated years to complete study: <1 year

References:

Alameda County Green Purchasing website and policy [<https://www.acgov.org/sustain/what/purchasing/>](https://www.acgov.org/sustain/what/purchasing/)

City of Palo Alto Sustainability Policies website

[<https://cityofpaloalto.org/services/sustainability/cityefforts/sustainability_policies_.asp>](https://cityofpaloalto.org/services/sustainability/cityefforts/sustainability_policies_.asp)

City of Palo Alto Audit of Green Purchasing Practices:

[<https://www.google.com/url?>](https://www.google.com/url?)

Here is an excerpt from City of Palo Alto Sustainability and Climate Action Plan November 2016 pages 32-33 that describes the “Default to Green” framework:

5.3 Goal: “Default to Green” Procurement for Products and Services

In 2007, the City authorized the implementation of a green purchasing program, and subsequently adopted a Green Purchasing Policy (GPP) in 2008, which supports existing environmental policies and Council direction to reduce GHG, pesticides and mercury, and achieve Zero Waste and pollution prevention goals. In 2015, the City Manager established a “default to green” strategy that makes the greener product the norm rather than the exception. Staff will always have the option to purchase alternative products, wherever cost or performance requirements make the green product inappropriate, but by making the greener purchase easier, and supported by tools that assist staff in choosing the best option, the City hopes to embed greener purchasing into City processes. (This has been accomplished for paper and toner purchases, and is underway for fleet purchases.)

5.3.1 Strategy: Establish Green Purchasing criteria in all priority categories

5.3.2 Strategy: Fund Green Purchasing programs, products and services

5.3.3 Strategy: Embed Green Purchasing into City procedures

5.3.4 Strategy: Educate staff about Green Purchasing policies

5.3.5 Strategy: Track and report progress

A 2014 analysis in Palo Alto showed that the Scope 3 GHG impacts of City purchases would add an estimated

25% to City government emissions.

City of San Jose Environmentally Preferable Purchasing website

<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?NID=1774>

Environmental Protection Agency Purchasing Rules:

<https://www.epa.gov/greenerproducts/about-environmentally-preferable-purchasing-program>

<https://www.epa.gov/greenerproducts/about-environmentally-preferable-purchasing%20program>

CalRecycle website <https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/epp/lawpolicy>

Check other cities and universities EPPP's such as Arizona State, City of Phoenix, San Francisco, and Santa Monica.