



City of Cambridge

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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MEMO TO: Department Heads

FROM: Oden C. Wheeler, Jr., Director 

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SUBJECT: City of Cambridge Sustainable Procurement Policy

Attached is new the Sustainable Procurement Policy for the City of Cambridge. For future purchases, please refer to this Policy when looking to purchase any items to be utilized by City Staff, in a City workplace, or on City projects. Most of this is already engrained into how we conduct business for the City of Cambridge, but the Policy will serve as a guiding document to refer to in the future. Please let me know if you have any questions.

City of Cambridge SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT POLICY

1. Purpose

City of Cambridge 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 of Cambridge recognizes that the types of products and services the City of Cambridge buys have inherent social, human health, environmental and economic impacts, and that the City of Cambridge should make procurement decisions that embody the City of Cambridge's commitment to sustainability.

This Sustainable Procurement Policy is intended to:

- Identify those sustainability factors that shall be incorporated into procurement decisions;
- Provide implementation guidance;
- Empower employees to be innovative and demonstrate leadership by incorporating sustainability factors into procurement decisions;
- Communicate the City of Cambridge's commitment to sustainable procurement.

2. Policy

2.1 General Policy Statement

City of Cambridge employees will procure materials, products or services in a manner that integrates fiscal responsibility, social equity, and community and environmental stewardship.

2.2 Sustainability Factors

City of Cambridge employees will incorporate the following factors when writing specifications for, or procuring, materials, products, or services.

Environmental factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, the life cycle assessment of:

- Pollutant releases
- Toxicity, especially the use of persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic (PBT) chemicals
- Waste generation
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Energy consumption
- Depletion of natural resources
- Impacts on biodiversity

Social equity factors to be considered include, but are not limited to:

- Human health impacts
- Use of local businesses
- Use of State of Maryland Minority, Women, and Emerging Small Businesses

Fiscal Factors to be considered include, but are not limited to:

- Use reduction; buy only what you really need
- Product performance and quality
- Life-cycle cost assessment; lowest total cost
- Leveraging buying power
- Impact on staff time and labor
- Long-term financial/market changes

While not all factors will be incorporated into every purchase, it is the intent of this policy that City of Cambridge employees will make a good faith effort to incorporate and balance these factors to the maximum extent possible.

2.3 Use of Best Practices

City of Cambridge 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 in an efficient and effective way that is successful and replicable.

2.4 Toxics in Products and Services

City of Cambridge employees will utilize the framework of the Precautionary Principle as a guide when evaluating the comparative toxicity of products and services.

2.5 Use of Social and Environmental Product or Service Labels

City of Cambridge employees are encouraged to use independent, third-party social and/or environmental (eco) product or service label standards when writing specifications for, or procuring materials, products, or services, so long as such labels:

- Were developed and awarded by an impartial third-party;
- Were 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.

2.6 City of Cambridge Code and State Law

It is the intent of this policy to complement City of Cambridge code and State laws.

3. Implementation and Responsibilities

3.1 Product and Service Standards

The City of Cambridge Director of Public Works shall be responsible for:

- Ensuring City of Cambridge staff utilize product and service standards and best practices that comply with this policy. Examples include, but are not limited to, standards for minimum recycled content, energy efficiency, and prohibited toxic ingredients;
- Ensuring that when the need for developing a City of Cambridge standard or best practice in sustainable procurement arises, Department of Public Works staff will participate and collaborate with other applicable City of Cambridge staff so as to harmonize and continuously improve standards throughout the City of Cambridge;
- Encouraging pilot testing for environmentally preferable/sustainable products; and
- Ensuring internal policies and procedures reference this policy and incorporate the use of sustainable products and services that meet the intent of this policy.
- Providing resources for assisting departments with standards and best practices in sustainable procurement.

3.2 Specifications and Contracts

The City of Cambridge Director of Public Works shall be responsible for:

- Ensuring that specifications written by their department comply with this policy and incorporate sustainable procurement best practices.
- Ensuring purchasing manuals and other internal procedures reference this policy and incorporate best practices for specifying products and services that meet the intent of this

- policy;
- Ensuring that evaluation criteria for determining the responsibility of prospective contractors incorporate sustainability factors that meet the intent of this policy; and
- Developing and integrating sustainable procurement boilerplate language into solicitation document templates.

3.3 Education

The City of Cambridge Department Heads shall be responsible for:

- Building awareness of this policy through information dissemination and incorporation into routine employee trainings;
- Encouraging employee attendance at internal and external trainings related to sustainability; and
- Encouraging the use of environmentally preferable/sustainable products and services through information dissemination, development of internal procedures, pilot testing, and leading by example.

The City of Cambridge Director of Public Works shall be responsible for:

- Developing employee sustainable procurement resources such as, but not limited to, standards, specifications, tools, and best practices;
- Developing buyer-specific training on sustainable procurement best practices that meet the intent of this policy;
- Developing buyer competency in communicating to other City of Cambridge departments about this policy and opportunities for incorporating sustainable procurement best practices into solicitations and contracts;
- Developing inter-office communication among public procurement professionals about sustainable procurement best practices; and
- Taking the lead in communicating to existing and potential contractors and the public about this policy and related City of Cambridge requirements.

3.4 Data Collection and Performance Reporting

The City of Cambridge Department Heads shall be responsible for:

- Cooperating in gathering information for the purposes of tracking, reporting, and evaluating the City of Cambridge's sustainable procurement activities and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy
- Integrating department-specific sustainable procurement goals into City of Cambridge's sustainability plans.
- Incorporating a progress report on sustainable procurement activities and the effectiveness of this policy into the City of Cambridge's annual or biennial report.

3.5 Resources

The City of Cambridge shall commit to providing the appropriate dedicated staff levels and related funding to support the implementation and coordination of this policy. This includes activities such as, but not limited to, employee training and resources, professional services, product/service pilot tests, and educational materials.

3.6 Policy Review

The Finance Director shall be responsible for periodically bringing together internal stakeholders to review this policy for updates or to otherwise determine whether this policy is in alignment with other City of Cambridge sustainability efforts and policies. The policy review shall be completed at least every 2 years, but may be done on a more frequent basis as needed.

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

“Biodiversity”: the total diversity of all organisms and ecosystems at various spatial scales (genes, populations, species, ecosystems, and biomes). Biodiversity is often used as a measure of the health of biological systems.

“Environmentally Preferable”: products or services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose. This comparison may consider raw materials acquisition, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation, maintenance, or disposal of the product or service.

“Life Cycle Assessment or Life Cycle Analysis (LCA)”: the comprehensive examination of a product’s environmental and economic effects 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.

“Persistent, Bioaccumulative, and Toxic (PBT) Chemicals”: chemicals that are toxic, persist in the environment, and bioaccumulate in food chains.

“Precautionary Principle”: a framework that guides decision makers to take anticipatory and protective measures when an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically.

“Sustainable Procurement”: purchasing materials, products, and services in a manner that integrates fiscal responsibility, social equity, and community and environmental stewardship.

“Toxicity”: the quality, relative degree, or specific degree of being toxic or poisonous.