



Chapter 5: Local Action Plan Best Bets Municipal Purchasing Programs

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The purchasing decisions that municipal offices make can have a substantial impact on the overall environmental impact of the office while serving as an example to the community. Purchasing “green” or more environmentally friendly products can also support local vendors, and often helps recycling programs by creating markets for the collected materials that are processed and used to manufacture new products. In turn, this creates new jobs and helps strengthen the economy. It conserves natural resources, saves energy, and reduces solid waste, air, and water pollutants, and greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming.

In 2002, the U.S. spent around \$50 billion on office supplies—a

huge potential market for green products. The magnitude also means that there are ample opportunities for cost savings. Just sending printers and copying cartridges for remanufacturing could save U.S. offices \$1.5 billion and at least 100,000 barrels of oil annually.¹ Yet despite the fact that two-thirds of U.S. businesses have policies on recycling, only 40% have policies regarding the purchase of recycled materials.

Recommendations for making a green purchasing program a success:²

Evaluate each recycled or environmentally preferable product to determine the extent to which the product may be used in practice by the agency and its contractors.

¹ Green Seal’s Choose Green Report, seattle.gov/environment/Documents/GreenSealOfficeSupplies_finalCE.pdf, 29 September 2006.

² King County Environmental Purchasing Program, Model Environmentally Preferable Products Policy. Feb. 2004. www.metrokc.gov/procure/green/mdpolicy.htm, 27 September 2006.

Purchase recycled products with the best balance of recycled material and cost.

Ensure contracts that the office issues require recycled and environmentally preferable products whenever possible.

Ensure contracts for recycled products require that contractors provide certification of this content and report the amounts used.

Ensure that all printing by city agencies uses recycled paper and bears the chasing arrow logo or other imprint identifying it as such.

Use both sides of paper sheets whenever practicable in printing and copying. See Chapter 5 Waste Reduction Section.

Ensure that requests for bids and proposals issued by the city require that contractors and consultants use recycled paper and both sides of paper sheets whenever possible.

Report total purchases of environmentally preferable, recycled, and non-recycled products by the agency and its contractors annually to the climate protection agency.

Promote the use of recycled and other environmentally preferable products by publicizing and educating others about the procurement program.

Energy Efficient Standards for Municipal Office Equipment

ENERGY STAR® was introduced in 1992 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a voluntary labeling program designed to identify and promote energy efficient products to save energy and reduce GHG emissions. Computers and monitors were the first labeled products. Through 1995, EPA expanded the label to additional office equipment products and residential heating and cooling equipment. In 1996, EPA partnered with the U.S. Department of Energy for particular product categories.

The ENERGY STAR® label is now on major appliances, office equipment, lighting, home electronics and much more. EPA has also extended the label to cover new homes and commercial and industrial buildings. Overall, ENERGY STAR® office products use about 50% less energy than standard office equipment.³

ENERGY STAR® has partnerships with more than 8,000 private and public sector organizations, and so delivers the technical information and tools that organizations and consumers need to choose energy-efficient solutions and best management practices. ENERGY STAR®

has successfully delivered energy and cost savings across the country, saving businesses, organizations and consumers about \$12 billion in 2005 alone—while saving enough energy to avoid annual greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those from 23 million cars.⁴

The ENERGY STAR® website is a good source of information on every product available containing the ENERGY STAR® label. The site can identify the best ways to reduce total energy costs using ENERGY STAR® products.

³ ENERGY STAR® website, www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=ofc equip.pr office equipment, 27 September 2006.

⁴ Ibid.

CASE STUDY: New York City, NY

In 2003, Mayor Bloomberg of New York City put into code the city's energy efficient purchasing practices that have been in use since 1994. Local Law No. 30 requires that all energy-using devices purchased by the city of New York be ENERGY STAR® labeled, providing that there are at least six manufacturers producing ENERGY STAR® products. During the fiscal year of 2002, NYC spent \$90.8 million on ENERGY STAR® products, most of which went to purchasing computer related products such as CPU's, printers and monitors.⁵ Jennifer Blum, of NYC's Department of Citywide Administrative Services said of the program, "New York City firmly believes that in our role as a market participant we should

promote the purchase of energy-efficient products."

Indeed, New York's adoption of an exclusive ENERGY STAR® purchasing program sends a very strong message to appliance vendors and manufacturers that major purchasers are now opting for more efficient technology. The market is forcing manufacturers to comply, or risk losing business to more efficient competitors. New York City is a major player in reaching the tipping point for increased standardized efficiency in appliances.

While the program itself comes at zero cost, there may be slightly higher up front costs associated with more efficient appliances

(although not always the case). Yet a net savings can be expected over time associated with the significantly decreased energy use.

In 2005, the city passed Local Law 119, which is a more expansive and stringent version of Local Law No. 30.

CONTACT

Assistant Director & Special Counsel for Environmental Procurement
Russ Unger
NYC Mayor's Office of Contract Services
(212) 788-0060
RUnger@cityhall.nyc.gov

⁵ Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Environmental Energy Technologies Division Newsletter. eetdnews.lbl.gov/nl16/estar.html, 27 September 2006.

CASE STUDY: Washington, D.C.

The municipal government of the District of Columbia passed the ENERGY STAR® Efficiency Amendment Act in 2004, requiring city officials to buy only ENERGY STAR® rated products for energy consuming devices.

The bill states that,

In any solicitation by an agency for the purchase or lease of energy-using products, the agency shall include a specification that the products be ENERGY STAR® labeled; provided, that there are at least 3 manufacturers that produce products with the ENERGY STAR® label,

and that there are at least 3 responsible vendors offering ENERGY STAR® labeled products.⁶

This program greatly resembles NYC's ENERGY STAR® legislation in that while reducing energy use within the city, it also takes advantage of D.C.'s high profile status to create positive publicity for purchasing of energy efficient products. Since the legislation was introduced, the DC Energy Office has scheduled several training sessions, offered by the EPA, for government officials to help them implement ENERGY STAR® purchasing District-wide.

The city's procurement ENERGY STAR® operation is currently self-regulating, but the Energy Office is working on putting enforcement mechanisms in place to hold city government offices accountable for their purchasing decisions.

CONTACT

Chief, Environmental Sustainable Solutions Division
Tomaysa Sterling
Energy Office
Washington, D.C.
(202) 671-1405.

Recycled/Salvage Product Use Policies

Creating city policies that encourage or require the use of recycled products in city operations can reduce costs and serve as a good example to the community. However, it is also important to focus on how those products are used once they are purchased and how they are discarded when no longer needed.

Many office products, such as computers, printers and other electronic equipment can be recycled or refurbished for reuse. PCDisposal.com and other similar companies offer services such as direct pickup, erasing data from hard-drives, profit

sharing from equipment resale, preparation for donation and online employee purchasing programs. Some computer manufacturers, Dell for example, will agree to take back and recycle used units for a small fee. When negotiating contracts, departments making large equipment purchases can require that the computer manufacturer take back the used equipment for recycling at the end of its life free of charge.

Architectural Salvage and Deconstruction

Architectural deconstruction is the systematic dismantling and reuse of part or all of a building. Reusable and recyclable materials are removed before the building is demolished. Doing

this prevents large amounts of waste from ending up in a landfill. In addition to significantly reducing waste, in some communities, salvaged materials can be donated to a non-profit organization⁷. Such a tax deduction will offset the cost of recovering the materials making the process comparable to the cost of demolition and can earn points towards LEED™ certification.

The Canadian company i-wasteNot makes and operates community waste exchanges in the City of Chicago, California, Colorado, Georgia, Washington, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario. Such exchanges prevent waste from reaching the landfill, creates jobs and new products instead of trash. Their

⁶ www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=government.local_gov_news, 27 September 2006.

⁷ ReSource, www.resourceyard.org. To contact call 303-419-5427 or e-mail decon@resourceyard.org.

online waste exchanges for residential, industrial and construction demolition waste facilitate the sale or donation of good used items and material for reuse and recycling. They bundle these waste exchanges within green community websites where requested, so that other tools like Green Business Directories, Green Events and Calendars, Reuse and Recycling

Directories are available to citizen.⁸

Implementing a city policy of purchasing salvaged products whenever possible, and sending used office equipment to a non-profit salvage company instead of sending it to the landfill can stimulate local business and create new jobs by creating a

market for and supplier of salvaged goods. The city of Portland developed a Furniture Surplus program where city employees can post and view surplus furniture so that it may be reused by another bureau. The program reduces waste and saves costs associated with procuring new supplies as well as disposal and recycling fees.⁹

Recycled/ Salvaged Products

CASE STUDY: Davis, CA

In 1997, the city of Davis, California adopted a municipal code that mandates city purchasing of recycled products. The codes require that the city purchase recycled material with the highest possible recycled content whenever possible. City departments must implement strategies to maximize their purchasing and use of recycled materials, equipment and machinery. In addition, departments must promote the use of products made from recovered materials and label products to indicate that they are recycled. The city also agreed to

stimulate the market for recycled goods through cooperation with neighboring agencies.

Davis' procurement strategy has diverted an impressive 50% of its waste-stream away from the landfill.¹⁰ Annual reports must be prepared by the various departments to catalogue the types and amount of recycled content purchased as well as the overall cost of these purchases. The mandates also require that no virgin materials be required in any products for city purchasing.¹¹

CONTACT

Senior Utility Resource Specialist
Richard Tsai
(530) 757-5671
rtsai@ci.davis.ca.us

Conservation Coordinator
Jennifer Franceschine
(530) 757-7559
jfranceschine@ci.davis.ca.us

Recycled/ Salvaged Products

CASE STUDY: San Jose, CA

The city of San Jose is a pioneering leader in municipal recycling programs with a curbside pickup program serving over 165,000 residents. The city recognized, however, that just

collecting neatly separated trash in bins is not quite enough to close the recycling loop.

San Jose city officials decided to create a market for the products

produced from recycling by creating the Buy Recycled program in 1990. San Jose now purchases over 40 types of recycled content products. More recently, in September 2001, the

⁸ WasteNot Systems, www.i-wastenot.com/site/, 15 January 2007.

⁹ City of Portland, Office of Sustainable Development, www.portlandonline.com/osd/index.cfm?a=117682&c=42401, 27 September 2006.

¹⁰ New Renaissance, Vol 11, No.3, www.ru.org/113-Davis-California.htm, 27 September 2006.

¹¹ Davis Municipal Code, www.city.davis.ca.us/cmo/citycode/detail.cfm?p=15&q=473, 27 September 2006.

city council adopted a policy that addresses Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP).

Within city offices, everything from copy paper to printer paper, as well as post it notes and folders contain post-consumer waste. Janitorial products such as paper towels and trash bags are made of recycled material, as is the compost used in city parks. All paper products and printing done through contracts outside of the city is mandated to be on

recycled paper. The city has set a standard of using up to 95% recycled material for street signs, as well as refurbished aluminum.

San Jose's vehicular fleet maintenance crew utilizes recycled oil and antifreeze products in its fleet. At first this was a tough sell, but the recycled automotive products have greatly exceeded the crew's expectations. They now prefer the recycled oil because it burns better and runs cleaner.

The city saves around \$10,000 every year through purchasing of recycled products, and reaps unquantifiable environmental benefits.

CONTACT

Committee Member
Gay Gale
EPP Steering
(408) 535-7054
Gay.Gale@sanjoseca.gov

Establish Local Purchasing Programs

Local purchasing programs are programs that prioritize patronizing local businesses before buying from “absentee” owners or large, distant corporations¹². Buying locally reduces transportation costs and emissions of purchased goods and can also stimulate and support the local economy by supporting local businesses and jobs. In addition, people are increasingly likely to invest in or move to communities that preserve the culture embodied in its unique businesses. Buy-local programs are a good investment for a community's future because three times more money stays in the local economy when goods and services are bought from

locally owned businesses instead of large chain stores.¹³

Cities can adopt a city procurement policy of buying from locals before non-local businesses and can also create a local first campaign where the city encourages the community as a whole to buy from local businesses.

Local city procurement policies are sometimes difficult to implement, especially for smaller cities without a large industrial sector. Combining a buy-local procurement policy with a buy-green procurement policy can become complicated and costly.

However, by making a conscious effort to look for local products before making purchasing decisions, cities can reduce the carbon footprint of purchases and

boost their local economies with relatively little effort.

The advantage of a local first campaign is that it has a low cost to the city government and improves the local government's interaction with the community. Many such campaigns are organized by the local businesses themselves with the government playing a partnering role. Campaigns can consist of everything from rallies, public events, distribution of literature, stickers or placards placed in windows to designated local businesses, media coverage, websites with relevant information and much more. The success of a campaign largely depends on the effectiveness of its outreach to the community, so the more creative it is, the more likely it is to gain community involvement.

¹² BALLE, Business Alliance for Local Living Economies. www.livingeconomies.org/localfirst/whylocalfirst/, 27 September 2006.

¹³ Buy Local Philly website, www.buylocalphilly.com/, 27 September 2006.

Local Purchasing

CASE STUDY: Philadelphia, PA¹⁴

Philadelphia's Buy Local program is an excellent example of a city program to promote patronage of independent local businesses. For every \$100 spent on local businesses, \$45 goes back into

the local economy, as opposed to only \$14 for a non-locally owned business. The website for the Buy Local program includes information regarding local businesses, a comprehensive directory of registered local

businesses as well as information on how to register your business.

CONTACT
(215) 386-5211
info@buylocalphilly.com

Local Purchasing

CASE STUDY: Portland, ME¹⁵

Portland, Maine's, local purchasing program went into effect in the summer of 2006. For a \$20 membership fee, qualifying businesses (the business must be registered in Portland, and the owners must live locally) can obtain a window decal and poster to be displayed at their business that reads "Buy Local: Keep Portland

Independent". The fees also go toward maintaining the website, administrative costs and local media advertising. The Portland Buy Local campaign is a non-profit group led by a coalition of local business owners, pro-business organizations, city officials, and consumer activists. The city of

Portland marketing and economic development staff has helped guide and support this effort. As of 2006, the Buy Local campaign has around 160 participating local businesses.

CONTACT
info@portlandbuylocal.org

Local Purchasing

CASE STUDY: Santa Fe, NM

The Santa Fe Alliance¹⁶ is a locally run program dedicated to building an alliance between local businesses, non-profits, government and community members. The Alliance has a commitment to educating the people of Santa Fe on the benefits of supporting locally run and owned businesses.

Local businesses and non profits that chose to sign on to the program with a minimum donation of \$100 for a business and \$30 for a non-profit benefit through a link on the website to their business as well as publicity in Alliance newspaper advertisements and educational

information. As of 2006, the Santa Fe Alliance has over 700 participating local businesses.

CONTACT
Santa Fe Alliance
(505) 989-5362
info@santafealliance.com

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Portland Buy Local Campaign, www.portlandbuylocal.org/index.html, 27 September 2006.

¹⁶ Santa Fe Alliance, www.santafealliance.com, 27 September 2006.

Additional Resources

Other websites dedicated to building strong local economies through uniting local businesses and educating citizens on the benefits of local purchasing include:

The American Independent Business Alliance

www.amiba.net/

Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE)

www.livingeconomies.org

Local Town USA.COM

www.localtownusa.com

Institute for Local Self-Reliance

www.ilsr.org

The following is a list of some office products with green alternatives: 17

- Highlighters, Markers, Correction Fluid: Buy non-toxic, water-based. Conventional aromatic solvent and alcohol-based contain toxic materials. Choose refillable markers if available.
- Clipboards: Buy recycled. Clipboards made of 100 percent post-consumer plastic are now available.
- Paper-based Office Products: Buy recycled, chlorine-free. Paper manufacture using virgin pulp consumes trees and is highly water intensive, energy intensive, and polluting.
- Binders and Folders: Binders made from 100% post-consumer recycled cardboard and 100% post-consumer recycled PET (from soft drink bottles) are available.
- Self-Stick Notes: Buy 100% recycled or use electronic programs like Stickies¹⁸
- Envelopes: Buy unbleached, light-weight and recycled. FedEx and other shippers use envelopes made of Tyvek because of their lighter weight and strength. The lighter weight translates directly into fuel savings, particularly in the case of long-distance shipments. Tyvek also incorporates 25% post-consumer recycled content from plastic milk and water jugs, and the used envelopes are recyclable.
- Pens and Pencils: Buy refillable pens, and pens made from recycled materials. Buy pencils made from recycled materials, such as lunch trays and shredded dollar bills.
- Toner Cartridges: Remanufactured cartridges can be obtained at roughly half the price of a new one while significantly reducing the environmental impact of discarding cartridges.
- Presentation Transparencies: Buy at least 50% total recycled content with at least 25% post-consumer recycled content.
- Slag cement (95% less CO₂ emitted than regular cement)
- 80 PLUS computer power supplies for PCs and servers
- Bio-based lubricants, etc. (fleet uses)

The Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP)

FEMP criteria and the federal ENERGY STAR® energy efficiency labeling program identify efficient products, helping agencies “buy efficient”, often as part of an agency’s broader policy to “buy green”.
eetdnews.lbl.gov/nl16/estar.html

City of Berkeley Resolution to adopt an Environmental Preferable Purchasing Policy.

A portion of the resolution states: Policy requires purchase of products and services that minimize environmental and health impacts, toxics, pollution, and hazards to workers and community safety and to the larger global community to the greatest extent practicable

Specifications are described for Source Reduction, Toxics Reduction and Pollution Prevention, Recycled Content products, Energy and Water Savings, Green Building Construction and Renovation, Landscaping, Forest Conservation, and Agricultural and Bio-based products.
www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/sustainable/government/101904.EPPPpolicy.pdf

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ www.zhornsoftware.co.uk/stickies/index.html, 29 September 2006.

California Integrated Waste Management Board

For a directory of companies that meet or exceed these standards, please visit the California Integrated Waste Management Board's website¹⁹: A good deal of information can also be found on the best ways to reduce, reuse, recycle, and where to purchase recycled office supplies in this document hosted by Seattle's municipal website.²⁰

EPA Report: Promoting Green Purchasing

EPA's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) Program has announced the availability of a new document entitled "Promoting Green Purchasing: Tools and Resources to Quantify the Benefits of Environmentally Preferable Purchasing." This compilation of tools and resources will be useful to any organization trying to estimate the environmental and economic benefits of both past and projected EPP choices. www.epa.gov/epp/tools/epp_metrics.pdf



**NATURAL CAPITALISM SOLUTIONS IS A 501 (C)3 NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
WWW.NATCAPSOLUTIONS.ORG + P.O. Box 398 + ELDORADO SPRINGS, CO 80025
INFO@NATCAPSOLUTIONS.ORG + TEL: 303-554-0723 + FAX: 303-554-6548**

¹⁹ www.ciwmb.ca.gov/RCP/Product.asp?VW=CAT&CATID=264, 27 September 2006.

²⁰ seattle.gov/environment/Documents/GreenSealOfficeSupplies_finalCE.pdf, May 2002.