

Document Code No.: CON-7-22-EP

Title: Sustainable Purchasing Policy

Affected Agencies: All Executive Branch Departments and Agencies

Authorities: KCC 18.20

Keywords: sustainable purchasing, environmental purchasing, green purchasing

Sponsoring Agency: Department of Executive Services, Finance and Business Operations Division, Procurement and Payables Section



King County

Executive signature: Dow Constable
Date signed and effective: 11-14-18

I. Purpose

This policy provides guidelines for the Sustainable Purchasing Policy authorized by chapter 18.20 of the King County Code. Its purpose is to ensure the purchase of sustainable goods and services whenever they meet price, performance and availability requirements of the County and advance the goals and priority actions of the King County Strategic Plan, Strategic Climate Action Plan, Green Building Ordinance and Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan. This policy also outlines the roles and responsibilities of personnel involved with the specifying and buying of sustainable goods and services.

II. Applicability and Audience

This policy applies to the Administrative Offices and Executive Departments supervised by the King County Executive. The audience may also include any King County non-Executive Branch Departments adopting this policy.

III. Definitions

“Agency” means Administrative Offices and Executive Departments supervised by the King County Executive.

“Ecolabels” means a label or symbol indicating that compliance with environmental standards established by a standard setting body has been verified. Use of the label is usually controlled by the standard-setting body.

“Environmental certification” means a procedure by which a third party gives written assurance that a product, process, or service is in conformity with certain environmental standards.

“Environmental standards” means technical specifications or other precise criteria to be used consistently as rules, guidelines, or definitions, to ensure that materials, products, processes, and services are fit for their purpose and meet environmental criteria.

“Federal guidance” means the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s comprehensive purchasing guidelines authorized by Congress under section 6002 of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, 42 U.S.C. 6962, as amended, and “Guidelines for the assessment of environmental performance standards and ecolabels.”

“Life cycle” means consecutive and interlinked stages of a goods or services system; from resource generation and raw material acquisition through production, use, and final disposal.

"P&P" means the Procurement and Payables Section of the Finance and Business Operations Division, King County Department of Executive Services

"Sustainable purchasing" means procuring goods and services in a manner that integrates fiscal responsibility, social equity, and environmental stewardship.

"Total life-cycle cost" means the comprehensive accounting of the total cost of ownership, including initial costs, energy and operational costs, longevity and efficacy of service, and disposal costs.

IV. Policy

A. Purchasing Requirements

1. Agencies shall include in their procurement planning process for all goods and services consideration of the environmental, social and fiscal impacts in subsections 2. through 4, use the strategies in subsections 5. and 6. and make the required purchases and implement the strategies in subsections 7. and 8. in order to: promote practices that improve human and environmental health; protect and conserve natural resources, water, and energy; and minimize the County's contribution to climate change, pollution, and solid waste.
2. Consider the environmental impacts of purchasing decisions, such as:
 - a. Recycled content;
 - b. Resource efficiency (i.e. energy and water);
 - c. Durability, reusability, or refillable;
 - d. Leasing options;
 - e. Remanufactured parts;
 - f. Low volatile organic compounds "VOC's;"
 - g. Low greenhouse gas emissions "GHG's."
3. Consider the social impacts, such as:
 - a. Human health;
 - b. Labor and Human rights;
 - c. Fair wages;
 - d. Use of Small Contractors and Suppliers program.
4. Consider the fiscal impacts, such as:
 - a. Quality, durability, and repairability;
 - b. Conducting a life-cycle cost assessment;
 - c. Leveraging buying power (i.e. piggybacks and cooperatives).
5. Use strategies to reduce consumption:
 - a. Reusing and repurposing goods and materials on hand;
 - b. Purchase durable goods;
 - c. Purchase goods with minimal packaging;
 - d. Utilize manufacturer's take-back programs;
 - e. Purchase recyclable goods.
6. Think beyond purchase price – consider the life cycle of goods and services including the costs and environmental impacts associated with raw material extraction, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, use, maintenance, and disposal of the product.

7. The requirements and recommendations within this policy apply to all purchasing mechanisms including delegated purchasing authority, requisitions, and RFPs per purchasing code 2.93.
8. Agencies are required to purchase the specific goods and services below and use the following strategies:
 - a. Refer to Procurement and Payables "Sustainable Purchasing Guide," which:
 - i. requires and recommends standards, certifications and ecolabels by product and service and;
 - ii. identifies King County contracts that already include sustainable goods and services;
 - b. 100% recycled content copy paper (Priority Action in Goal Area 4: Consumption and Materials Management of the Strategic Climate Action Plan);
 - c. Reduce copy paper consumption by 35% by 2020 over 2010 numbers (Target in Goal Area 4: Consumption and Materials Management of the Strategic Climate Action Plan)
 - d. Print double-sided copies; (Ord. 17074 § 1, 2011);
 - e. Re-refined, bio-based, or long life lubricants (Ord. 14811 § 31, 2003; Ord. 9240 § 9, 1989);
 - f. EPEAT-certified computers and electronics; (Executive Policy: INF 8-9 (AEO));
 - g. ENERGY STAR–certified appliances (Appendix C: Energy Strategy Details A.9 in the Strategic Climate Action Plan);
 - h. Recycle all electronics per e-stewards standard or equivalent (Ord. 17085 § 2, 2011);
 - i. Alternative fuels, increase 10% by 2025 (County Operations Commitments in Section One: Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions of the Strategic Climate Action Plan);
 - j. Alternative fuel vehicles (Priority Action in Goal Area 1: Transportation and Land Use of the Strategic Climate Action Plan);
 - k. Biosolids compost; (KC 28.86.090);
 - l. LED lighting in County facilities by 2020 with exceptions for hazards, access and uncertain occupancy (Executive Initiative, 2017);
 - m. Fluorescent lamp recycling (PUT 7-3(AEP), 2003);
 - n. Green cleaners (Council motion #12793, 2008);
 - o. FSC-certified wood (SM Credit 5.0 in King County's Sustainable Infrastructure Scorecard);
 - p. Low-GHG cement alternatives (Priority Action in Goal Area 4: Consumption and Materials Management of the Strategic Climate Action Plan.);
 - q. Avoid single serve water bottles; (Ord. 16129, 2008); and
 - r. Integrated pest management (PUT 8-17 (AEO), 1999).

B. Environmental Standards and Certifications

1. Agencies are required to evaluate the use of environmental standards and certifications and ecolabels when writing specifications for or procuring materials, goods, or services where criteria and ecolabels have been established, so long as such labels meet:

- a. Federal Guidance – “Recommendations of Specifications, Standards, and Ecolabels;”
 - b. Third Party Certifications that:
 - i. Were developed and awarded by an impartial third-party;
 - ii. Were developed in a public, transparent, and broad stakeholder process; and
 - iii. Satisfy the standards for certification developed by the International Organization of Standards or other recognized standards-setting or accreditation organizations.
 - c. Sustainable purchasing guidance from P&P staff.
2. The evaluation should include reviewing the minimum environmental standards, certifications and ecolabels requirements listed by goods and service categories in the Sustainable Purchasing Guide.

C. Responsibilities

1. P&P will serve as the lead agency for the County’s sustainable purchasing program by:
 - a. Providing guidance to all agencies on sustainable purchasing requirements, processes, and strategies;
 - b. Developing sustainable purchasing tools and resources such as, but not limited to, recommended standards and certifications, draft specifications, and best practices;
 - c. Including standard sustainable purchasing boilerplate language in solicitation document templates;
 - d. Assisting Agencies in developing product and service specifications that meet the requirements of the County’s sustainable purchasing policy;
 - e. Ensuring that sustainability criteria are included in product or service evaluations where appropriate;
 - f. Developing and providing training to buyers and purchasers on sustainable purchasing best practices that meet the intent of this policy;
 - g. Tracking and reporting biennially on the County’s sustainable purchasing efforts [per Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP) and KCC 18.50];
 - h. Promoting contracts that offer sustainable goods and services, and best practices to other public agencies;
 - i. Communicating to vendors about this policy and related requirements; and
 - j. Requiring vendors to supply data for performance tracking and evaluation.
2. Agencies will implement the requirements of the sustainable purchasing program by:
 - a. Working with P&P to advance the goals of the County’s sustainable purchasing policy and program;
 - b. Including sustainable purchasing considerations in initial needs assessment for all product and service procurements;

- c. Ensuring agency employees utilize applicable goods and services environmental standards and certifications, and best practices that comply with this policy;
- d. Identifying and pursuing opportunities to reduce overall consumption;
- e. Selecting sustainable goods and services when available on the County's contracts list over conventional goods provided they meet required performance standards;
- f. Serving on specification or best practice teams, to collaborate with P&P and other departments in setting minimum environmental requirements, recommendations, strategies, and specifications as needed;
- g. Encouraging employee attendance at internal and external trainings related to sustainable purchasing;
- h. Ensuring internal Agencies' policies and procedures reference this policy and incorporate the purchase of sustainable goods and services that meet the intent of this policy; and
- i. Cooperating in gathering data for the purposes of tracking, reporting, and evaluating sustainable purchasing activities for biennially reporting per the Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP) and KCC 18.50.

D. Implementation Guidance

1. P&P shall provide implementation guidance to internal decision makers by providing sustainable purchasing requirements and recommendations, approved environmental standards and certifications, training, resources, and best practices to assist in fulfilling the intent of this policy. These tools will include:

- a. Sustainable Purchasing Guide
 - i. Minimum requirements and recommendations including ecolabels, for applicable goods and services.
 - ii. List of existing contracts that meet these requirements and recommendations by commodity.
 - iii. Direction to choose and avoid certain product attributes and end-of-life considerations.
- b. Awarded Contracts List
 - i. Lists all King County active contracts.
 - ii. Identifies "green" contracts that meet sustainability criteria.
- c. Training
 - i. Provide internal training for county agencies in person and online.
 - ii. Provide external training to other jurisdictions and vendors regarding the policy.

V. Implementation Plan

- A. This policy becomes effective for all Agencies on the date that it is signed by the Executive. P&P is responsible for implementation of this policy.
- B. P&P is responsible for communicating this policy to the management structure within Agencies and other appropriate parties.

VI. Maintenance

- A. This policy will be maintained by P&P or its successor agency.
- B. This policy will automatically expire five (5) years after its effective date. A new, revised, or renewed policy will be initiated by P&P, or its successor agency prior to the expiration date.

VII. Consequences for Noncompliance

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed as requiring a department or contractor to procure goods that do not perform adequately for their intended end use or are not available at a reasonable price in a reasonable period of time.

Noncompliance with this policy may cause delayed or cancelled purchases if P&P needs to intervene late in the process to fulfill the requirements of this policy.

Appendices: [Note: List Appendices using formal titles.]

KCC 18.20 Sustainable Purchasing Policy

KCC 18.50 Reporting

KCC 18.16 Green Building Ordinance

Sustainable Purchasing Guide – www.kingcounty.gov/procurement/green

Strategic Climate Action Plan (2015) – www.kingcounty.gov/climate

Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan (ESJ) 2016-2022

Living Wage (Ordinance 17909, CON 7-2.1 Public Rules)

Contracting Opportunities Program – Small Contractor or Supplier Certification (KCC 2.97 and CON 7-17)

Responsibility Determination Ordinance (#18372, 2016)