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City of Gainesville Policy Program Preliminary Research & Analysis

TOPIC: Green Purchasing Policy
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Gainesville has the capacity to reduce their negative environmental impact by addressing their method of purchasing and procuring goods, materials, services, and capital improvements. A green purchasing policy helps the City reduce waste at points of purchase and prioritizes the purchase of eco-friendly supplies and materials.

Source reduction through green purchasing has the greatest impact on waste minimization efforts, and additionally allows municipalities to choose products and services that are less toxic, less resource- and energy-intensive, and locally sourced or fairly traded, among other potential environmental and social benefits. These products are frequently available at little to no extra cost, and can result in net savings to a municipality. Although sustainable procurement is widely practiced by local governments, it is rarely standardized among municipalities. Thus, cities across the countries have begun to develop their own sustainable purchasing policies, programs, and procedures.

There are many environmental and economic benefits associated with green purchasing, including better performance and durability of products, decreased toxicity, improved energy usage, and waste and cost reduction. While the City of Gainesville's Procurement Division has established suggestions that City departments and employees can take to improve the sustainability of their purchases, the creation of an official green purchasing program would require that these standards be followed in all, or nearly all, City purchases and procurements.

HISTORY/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

United States

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) Program helps United States federal government purchasers utilize marketplace standards and ecolabels to identify and procure environmentally preferable products and services. Specifically, the program participates in consensus standards development to provide greater market clarity and definition around the manufacture and purchase of goods and services which are environmentally preferable and then supports the uptake of those standards in federal procurement.

The program outlines specifications, standards, and ecolabels that purchases within the categories of cafeteria, construction, custodial, electronics, grounds, and office/furniture should meet in order to be considered environmentally preferable.¹

State of Florida

In 2010, Section 403.7065² of the Florida State Statutes required any state agency or agency of a political subdivision of the state which was using state funds to procure products or materials with recycled content when the Department of Management Services determined that those products were available. Thus, state agencies would have an obligation to purchase products made with recycled content when possible. However, this statute was ultimately repealed in 2010.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) website describes green procurement as the affirmative procurement of environmentally preferred products and services which have a lesser effect on human health and the environment. FDEP³ describes environmental preferability as a function of one or more of the following factors:

1. Recyclability and recovered material content
2. Performance and durability
3. Toxicity and biodegradability
4. Life cycle energy/natural resource use

The goal of green procurement is to reduce the overall pollution in each purchase, from a product's production to its disposal. By choosing "green" products, individuals and governments are able to save money on waste disposal, as green products are generally easily recycled, last longer, and produce less waste. Additionally, green products require fewer resources to manufacture and operate, so savings are made on energy, fuel, water, and other natural resources.

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/greenerproducts/recommendations-specifications-standards-and-ecolabels-federal-purchasing>

² http://archive.flsenate.gov/statutes/index.cfm?mode=View%20Statutes&SubMenu=1&App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=403.7065&URL=0400-0499/0403/Sections/0403.7065.html

³ <https://floridadep.gov/waste/waste-reduction/content/greening-florida-government-procurement>

City of Gainesville

The City of Gainesville Procurement Office has performed research on a Green Purchasing Program and highlighted key areas of influence that it can exercise. This program provides useful guidelines to help City departments be a model for local citizens, businesses, and other governmental agencies. Those can be noted as follows:

1. Reduce waste at point of purchase
 - Purchase products made from recycled material, such as paper made from 100% post-consumer content.
 - Buy biodegradable and compostable items, such as plant-based napkins and cups.
 - Purchase furniture made with a percentage of post-consumer or post-industrial material.
2. Specify eco-friendly product packaging
 - Request biodegradable or compostable packing materials
 - When ordering large items, request that they are shipped blanket wrapped or using reduced biodegradable or compostable packing material
 - When shopping, request paper or reusable bags and avoid plastic bags
3. Purchase goods containing few toxic elements
 - Look for items and products with fewer or no toxic chemicals
 - Purchase low-toxicity products such as low mercury light bulbs, printing in low in Volatile Organic Compounds, looking for products with the EPA authorized “Safer Choice” logo which indicates that the products meet EPA standards for safety.
4. Purchase eco and human friendly cleaning supplies
 - Purchase supplies made with renewable resources, that are sold in spray pump bottles, are available in concentrated formulas, and use refillable bottles for diluting the formula for use
5. Purchase durable and reusable goods
 - Utilize life cycle cost analysis to help determine the best long-term value.
 - Consider durability and reparability and reparability of products prior to purchase
 - Eliminate single-use items
 - Choose items that can be remanufactured, recycled, or composted
6. Reduce paper use
 - Purchase office equipment that allows for printing on both sides of paper automatically, and allows for the sending and storage of information electronically.

All City of Gainesville employees have been made aware of the opportunities for reducing their carbon footprint by addressing their purchasing decisions.

To take this initiative to the next step would require making this policy mandatory for all City purchases with provided exceptions and reasonings. Gainesville’s Code of Ordinances, Section 2-

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622,⁴ indicates a preference for choosing local options when purchasing and contracting for equipment and services. A procurement preference such as this could be resembled with a similar statute but instead acknowledging a preference for environmentally friendly and sustainable equipment and purchases.

Also, in 2019, the City of Gainesville's Public Works Department added a Sustainability Manager who might be an excellent resource on this topic.

University of Florida

The University of Florida has a Sustainable Procurement policy which is aimed at supporting campus sustainability and providing guidelines, information, and resources in procuring products that will minimize negative impacts on society and the environment.⁵ The Procurement Office indicates that it is the responsibility of departments to develop and maintain information about environmentally and socially preferable products and to inform employees of their responsibilities under this policy.

The UF Procurement website indicates that the best practices in sustainable procurement strategies include:

1. Reducing waste at the point of purchase
2. Purchasing durable and reusable goods
3. Leasing and renting when appropriate
4. Specifying product and packaging take-back
5. Buying goods in bulk or concentrated form
6. Managing surplus effectively
7. Procuring commodities that are certified to meet sustainability standards
8. Procuring remanufactured goods and use refurbishing services
9. Purchasing goods containing fewer toxic constituents
10. Reducing paper use

Current Procurement Guidelines in place at UF include:

- All UF personnel will purchase recycled and environmentally preferable products whenever practicable.
- UF Departments will purchase hybrid or alternative fuel vehicles.
- UF will have a recycle container available within a reasonable distance of soda machines and in all dining establishments where canned or bottle drinks are served.
- UF should promote the use of recycled and other environmentally preferable products by publicizing its sustainable procurement program.

⁴https://library.municode.com/fl/gainesville/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOR_CH2AD_ARTXL_OPRPO_S2-622LOPRPUCO

⁵ <https://procurement.ufl.edu/uf-departments/directives-procedures/>

- The UF Procurement Department will make every effort to secure contracts with vendors that are socially and environmentally conscientious, and certified green whenever practicable

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH AND FINDINGS

This section will highlight how other jurisdictions within the State of Florida and across the country have implemented similar policies.

Jurisdictions in Florida

Miami Beach, Florida

The City of Miami Beach passed a Sustainable and Resilient Procurement Policy in 2016⁶ which requires each department to consider sustainability in its procurement decisions. The intention of the policy is to:

- Result in the purchase and use of materials, products and services that best align with the City's fiscal, environmental, social, community, and performance goals
- Reduce the environmental impacts from City use of products, including the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, climate change effects, landfill waste, health and safety risks, and resource consumption
- Incorporate sustainability standards into procurement decisions
- Empower Department and City Procurement staff to be innovative and demonstrate leadership by incorporating progressive and best-practice sustainability specifications, strategies, and practices in procurement decisions
- Ensure vendors provide products and services that are most suited to the City sustainability program
- Encourage and promote both local and national companies to bring forward emerging and progressive sustainable products and services, by being a consumer of such products and companies
- Communicate the City's commitment to sustainable procurement, by modeling the best product and services choices to citizens, other public agencies and private companies.
- Facilitate our emergency preparedness and the ability to quickly bounce back from shocks, such as hurricanes, and stressors, such as sea level rise

The policy additionally declares that the City *shall* acquire its goods and services in these sustainable ways through fiscal responsibility, social equity, and community and environmental stewardship. Factors to include in these decisions include pollutant releases, waste generation and minimization, energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, recyclability, depletion or enhancement of natural resources, potential impact on human health, and impacts on biodiversity.

⁶ https://www.miamibeachfl.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/GreenProc_Reso_Policy.pdf

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The policy indicates that the Procurement Department does not calculate a direct price preference for sustainable products in the selection of contractors because the City prefers to directly implement product decisions that are the most environmentally preferable. Instead, Miami Beach establishes a minimum specification with the most environmentally preferable solutions for particular products. The City may also utilize a scored evaluation criteria allowing additional consideration for positive environmental product options, corporate practices, and other environmental solutions proposed by the vendors.⁷

Village of Pine Crest, Florida

The Village of Pine Crest adopted a resolution which directed the Village Manager to develop a green action plan in 2010, which led to the creation of the Village's Green Action Plan in 2011. This policy applies to all Village departments, and included the establishment of an environmentally preferable purchasing policy within the village, which followed the guidelines outlined in the United States Environmental Protection Agency Guidelines for Environmentally Preferable Purchasing.

It is the intent of this policy that environmental considerations should become part of normal purchasing practice. The standards outlined in this policy include:⁸

1. All purchasing will consider the 5 EPA EPP factors when evaluating purchases for the Village
 - Guiding Principle 1: Environment + Price + Performance = Environmentally Preferable Purchasing
 - Guiding Principle 2: Pollution Prevention
 - Guiding Principle 3: Life Cycle Perspective/Multiple Attributes
 - Guiding Principle 4: Comparison of Environmental Impacts
 - Guiding Principle 5: Environmental Performance Information
2. All invitations to bid shall include the vendor blanket statement, which includes:
 - Material safety data sheets for all chemicals
 - Manufacturer location of product
 - Packaging recycled content
 - Information of recyclability of product and packaging
 - Whether product is available in bulk
 - Any additional environmental information
 - Any environmental certifications
3. EPP purchases will be logged on the Village of Pine Crest EPP spreadsheet
4. Reports of EPP purchases will be submitted to Village Manager on a quarterly basis
5. Purchasing staff will attend training seminar "Introduction to EPA Environmentally Preferable Purchasing"

St. Petersburg, Florida

⁷ <http://www.mbrisingabove.com/climate-mitigation/sustainable-and-resilient-procurement/>

⁸ <https://www.pinecrest-fl.gov/home/showdocument?id=3812>

There are several cities throughout Florida which have stated their intentions of creating a green purchasing policy. For instance, in St. Petersburg's Sustainability Action Plan, which was introduced in early 2019, the City outlines their intent to establish City procurement standards that encourage purchase of local goods and services. The City estimates that this program will be able to be implemented in a short timeframe, of less than 3 years, and will additionally require little upfront and ongoing costs to establish and maintain.⁹

Several other projects have been implemented or are pending implementation in St. Petersburg, including LEED-certified buildings, recycling, renewable energy, and initiatives for green development.

Jurisdictions Elsewhere in the US

Boulder, Colorado

Boulder has an Environmental Purchasing Policy¹⁰ that is intended to encourage all City Departments to both use and purchase recycled and environmentally preferable products. The Policy establishes Procurement Requirements which includes a list of products that must be purchased as recycled content and not in virgin form. This list includes items such as paper towels, stationary, business cards, copy paper, napkins, and printer toner cartridges. For others items, such as parking blocks, vinyl sheeting, low-flow toilets, plastic sheeting, and fluorescent light bulbs, the procurement requirement is only preferred/optional, meaning that the departments are encouraged to purchase the environmentally preferable option whenever possible.

Additionally, all City departments in coordination with the Purchasing Department are instructed to give an annual report regarding their procurement of environmentally preferable products and services. The reports should:

- Identify and eliminate any specifications that require the use of virgin products or exclude the use of recycled or environmentally preferable products, unless they can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the City Manager that such specifications are necessary to protect health and safety or that recycled or environmentally preferable products do not meet performance standards, unfairly eliminate competition, or are unreasonable in price, taking durability and liability into account.
- Revise specifications, where appropriate, to include recycled content and environmentally preferable criteria.
- Ensure that wherever possible, the department purchases or leases copiers, printers and offset equipment capable of using both recycled paper of the appropriate grade and reusable toner cartridges where applicable and of making two-sided copies.
- Re-use and recycle, to the greatest extent possible, the waste produced as a result of any City sponsored construction or renovation project.

⁹ https://www.stpete.org/sustainability/docs/ISAP_%20Highlights_for%20Print_FINAL.pdf

¹⁰ <https://bouldercolorado.gov/purchasing/environmental-purchasing-policy>

Boulder County, Colorado, implemented a similar environmental purchasing policy through a resolution passed by the Board of County Commissioners in 2011. This policy offers guidelines for environmental preferable purchases including office supplies and paper, bottled and dispensed water, and landscape products.¹¹

Sacramento, California

The City of Sacramento passed a Sustainable Purchasing Policy¹² which became effective in February of 2010. Its goal is for City employees to procure products and services in a manner that integrates fiscal responsibility, social equity, environmental stewardship and community enhancement. The policy includes standards which should be considered when determining if a product is sustainable such as being carcinogen-free, energy, resource and water efficient, and have low volatile organic compound (VOC) content. The sustainable purchasing objectives of this policy include acquisitions that:

- Conserve natural resources
- Reduce the use of energy and water
- Minimize environmental impacts such as pollution
- Eliminate or reduce toxins that create hazards to the community
- Support strong recycling efforts
- Reduce materials that are placed in landfills
- Increase the use and availability of environmentally preferable products
- Encourage vendors to reduce environmental impacts in their production and distribution systems

The policy establishes procurement responsibilities, some of those being:

- Working with other governmental purchasing groups and agencies, such as Environmental Protection Agency, Green Seal, National Institute for Governmental Purchasing (NIGP), and others to determine and establish appropriate standards for green purchasing and advocate the use of environmentally safe products
- Assigning purchasing department staff and Sustainability Committee members to evaluate various green products that are utilized city-wide and to provide guidance and assistance to City departments regarding the procurement of such products
- Developing and implementing a plan to phase in contract requirements for various categories of goods under the SPP. Generally easy to implement items (e.g. paper, and janitorial supplies) will be implemented very early in the program
- Evaluate various products where the cost differential is great and/or the products are not considered good substitutes
- Whenever feasible, including contract language that requires suppliers of electronic equipment, including but not limited to computers, monitors, printers and copiers, to take

¹¹ <https://assets.bouldercounty.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/bc-environmental-purchasing-policies.pdf>

¹² https://www.naspo.org/green/City_of_Sacramento.pdf

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back equipment for reuse or sustainable safe recycling when the City discards or replaces such equipment

- Establishing contracts and creating a catalogue of sustainably friendly and energy efficient products for City SPP purchases to help departments comply with this policy
- Within existing resources, the delegated procurement authority shall designate a single point of contact for City Departments, suppliers, and 9 other interested parties to contact regarding environmentally preferable and sustainable purchasing considerations.
- Develop and implement contract provisions for more sustainable products and services.
- Authorized buyers shall consider life cycle costing in the procurement process, that includes product disposal, trade-in or recycling of products at the end of its useful life.

To implement this program, the policy additionally notes specific actions that can be taken to phase in the policy, including:

- Exclusive purchases of 100% recycled paper for use in all City departments
- Purchase of postconsumer recycled content cardboard and paper office supplies such as envelopes, file folders, planners, and boxes
- Business cards shall be printed on recycled card stock and shall display the recycling symbol
- Restrictions on the purchase of bottled water
- Purchase of SPP cleaning and janitorial products, including 100% post-consumer recycled paper products
- Exclusive purchases of 100% remanufactured laser toner cartridges
- Purchases of appliances and electronics for which Energy Star certification is available and practicable
- The use/purchase of energy efficient lighting
- Purchase of water saving products
- Utilization of a bid evaluation preference when procuring supplies and equipment

The policy specifically notes that it does **not** intend to be interpreted as:

- Requiring a buyer or contractor to procure products or services that do not perform adequately for their intended use, exclude adequate competition, or procure products or services that are not available at a reasonable price, or available within a reasonable timeframe.
- Requiring a buyer or contractor to take any action that conflicts with city code, or state and federal requirements when applicable.
- Requiring a department or contractor to procure products that do not meet specifications or expected performance, or delivery requirements for their intended use.

The policy addresses cost and price considerations, stating that generally, for nonpaper products, if the life cycle cost of the environmentally preferable product does not exceed the cost of the

alternative by more than 10%, and the product meets all necessary specifications, strong consideration should be given to purchase the environmentally preferable product.¹³

Steps in Creating a Green Purchasing Policy

The first step in creating a successful green purchasing policy is to design the program itself, notably establishing the leadership of the program, designating support staff, and engaging with the departments necessary to ensure that sustainable products are able to meet their needs and technical requirements.

Once the team and resources for the program are established, the City would need to set the sustainable procurement priorities. In many ways, the Procurement Division has already established these for the City of Gainesville, as mentioned above. It is important that the City pursue efforts which result in the “biggest bang for the buck,” and that prioritize categories that are high-impact, easy to implement, and likely to yield multiple sustainability benefits. There are several high-impact areas that the City could look into, notably electronics, green building supplies, and vehicle and fleet maintenance products.

The next step is to create contracts for sustainable goods and services. This can make the process easier and more effective at securing discounts on goods and services with verifiable sustainable attributes. This can include looking for opportunities to use existing contracts that have been developed by neighboring local governments, tailoring bid solicitation documents that have been developed by other jurisdictions, conducting a pilot test to identify sustainable products that will best meet your needs, and evaluating vendors by including a vendor sustainability questionnaire in the bid solicitation package.

Once these policies are in place, it is integral that the City track and report sustainable procurement results, in order to convince leaders to devote more resources to the program, demonstrate that the policy is being implemented, gain credibility within the community, and identify opportunities for improvement.¹⁴

PRELIMINARY COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Costs

- Cost difference for choosing eco-friendly option, if applicable
- Initial time investment in developing a policy framework, implementing sustainability into the procurement process, and educating purchasing staff on how to consider sustainability issues.

¹³ https://www.cityofsacramento.org/-/media/Corporate/Files/Finance/Procurement/sustainability/Sustainable_Purchasing_Policy_SPP.pdf?la=en

¹⁴ http://responsiblepurchasing.org/purchasing_guides/playbook_for_cities/rpn_usdn_playbook_for_cities.pdf

Benefits

- Reduced waste
- Reduced human and environmental impact
- Less costs in the long-run [products last longer, less costs for disposal, etc.]
- Helps city move closer to zero-waste goals

PRELIMINARY AND ILLUSTRATIVE LIST OF POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS

- Office of the City Manager (Office of Procurement, Public Works Department, Sustainability Manager)
- City Attorney
- Zero Waste Gainesville

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Sample Procurement Policy¹⁵
- Sustainable Procurement Playbook for Cities¹⁶

¹⁵ <http://www.responsiblepurchasing.org/UserFiles/File/General/SacCounty.pdf>

¹⁶ http://responsiblepurchasing.org/purchasing_guides/playbook_for_cities/rpn_usdn_playbook_for_cities.pdf