

City of St. Louis Park Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy (“EP3”)

Revised May 2024

Introduction

The City of St. Louis Park adopted five strategic priorities in 2018 to guide long-range community planning as well as daily decision-making. One of these priorities is St. Louis Park “is committed to continue to lead in environmental stewardship.” Also in 2018, the city adopted a Climate Action Plan, a roadmap to achieving carbon neutrality by 2040. The plan guides residents, businesses and city operations in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. While city operations may account for a small percentage of total citywide emissions, leading by example is one of the city’s key tools and can demonstrate how energy, vehicle and solid waste emissions reduction goals can be achieved.

The commitment to carbon neutrality requires that climate considerations are taken into account when purchasing. Choosing environmentally preferred products and practices:

- Conserves natural resources
- Supports recycling, reuse and compost markets
- Reduces the volume of materials that are landfilled or incinerated, which has local air quality and environmental justice implications
- Lowers overall lifecycles costs through choosing products that are durable and reusable
- Minimizes our operational carbon footprint
- Creates a model that encourages other purchasers in our community to adopt similar goals

Requirements

This policy applies to all city departments and employees for all products and services provided to the city. The requirements are ranked according to approximate greenhouse gas emissions impact.

Staff will adopt, practice and promote the following:

1. Greenhouse gas emissions reduction

Fleet vehicles: When a fleet vehicle, including but not limited to passenger vehicles and maintenance vehicles, is due to be replaced or added to the city’s fleet, the following rules apply:

- a. Staff will begin by evaluating whether a vehicle replacement is required or whether the fleet can be downsized or the vehicle replaced with an alternative mode of transportation, including a pool car.
- b. Staff will continue to identify vehicles that are over-sized for their purpose and replace them with right-sized, more efficient vehicles.
- c. Staff will continue to purchase battery electric vehicles when feasible. When a battery electric vehicle is unavailable or not cost-effective (defined under “Rules,” below), fuel-efficient vehicles and/or Flex Fuel vehicles that use low carbon alternative fuels (E-85) must be purchased.

Electricity: When electricity is not provided by on-site solar, the city will pursue full account enrollment in a Green Power Purchasing Program such as the Renewable*Connect program offered by Xcel Energy.

Heating and cooling: When an all-electric building heating, cooling, or water heating option exists, the city will pursue the all-electric option over any that burn fossil fuels when feasible and cost-effective.

Landscaping equipment: When an all-electric landscaping equipment option exists, the city will pursue the all-electric option over any that burn fossil fuels when feasible and cost-effective.

2. Waste minimization

Purchasing practices will begin with an evaluation of whether the product purchase is required or whether an equivalent product can be sourced from within a city facility. Following this, purchasing practices will reduce packaging and other excessive waste as much as is practicable within the city's control. This includes waste related to construction and demolition, electronic waste and hazardous material waste. Preferred practices may include buying in bulk; choosing reusable, recyclable and compostable packaging when suitable; and demonstrating closed loop composting practices.

Where practicable, staff will require the use of recycled or composted materials such as source-separated organic material (SSOM) in engineering projects in bid specifications.

Information technology equipment and devices, such as mobile phones, computers, monitors and multifunction printer devices and consumables, will be repurposed within the organization, donated or resold in accordance with state statute and city policy, or recycled in an environmentally safe manner whenever practicable. State requirements for destruction of some devices to ensure data privacy may disallow this practice in some cases.

All catering services, mobile use-food establishments and related suppliers providing food and beverages for city-sponsored events will observe the Zero Waste Packaging Ordinance, which requires that all single-use food packaging used by licensed food establishments be recyclable or compostable. All city-sponsored events, including internal events, will use recyclable or compostable single-use food packaging, dinnerware and cutlery and avoid purchasing food in individually-packaged portions.

3. Energy efficiency

All appliances and other powered fixtures purchased for installation will meet US EPA Energy Star certification when feasible and cost-effective. When Energy Star certified products are not available, products in the upper 25% of energy efficiency as designated by the Federal Energy Management Program are preferred for purchase. When feasible and cost-effective, "smart" and automated emissions reduction (AER)-enabled appliances should be purchased that

automatically adjust to conserve energy and load shift to operate during times when the energy grid is cleanest.

4. Recycled content products

Paper products will contain the highest post-consumer recycled content when available and cost-effective. These products should include no less than 30% recycled content (the minimum standard established by the EPA Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines). This applies to in-house printing needs, such as copier paper and external mailings to the community.

Paper towels and napkins will include post-consumer fiber content. Per EPA Guidelines, these should be no less than 30% for paper towels and napkins. Paper towels and napkins must be commercially compostable.

5. Water conservation

Products purchased will meet [EPA WaterSense](#) certification when feasible and cost-effective, including but not limited to toilets, faucets and irrigation systems. When feasible, irrigation systems will use technology such as sensors and central controls to prevent unnecessary watering of landscaped areas.

6. Green cleaning products

Cleaning products will meet Green Seal, EcoLogo, EPA Design for the Environment or equivalent standard when feasible and cost-effective.

Implementation

Each city department will be responsible for the implementation of this policy and ensuring their respective employees are fully aware and supportive of the policy.

Rules

1. Cost effectiveness is defined as an equivalent price or up to a 10% increased net cost for purchasing environmentally preferable products indicated in this policy, a standard that is widely used throughout Minnesota.
2. This policy will not be construed as requiring any department to purchase products that do not perform adequately for their intended use or are not available at a cost-effective price in a reasonable period of time.
3. These guidelines are subject to the requirements and preferences in the Municipal Contracting Law (MN Statute 471.345) and all other applicable laws and ordinances.

Responsibilities

1. The Sustainability Division will assist with the efforts of implementation and report on the chief outcomes of this policy to the city council when requested.
2. Annual meetings may be held with departmental purchasing contacts to understand policy challenges and help source qualifying products as needed.