

City of Middleton Sustainable Purchasing Policy

A Policy from WECC

431 CHARMANY DRIVE | MADISON, WI 53719
DAN STEIT | PROGRAM MANAGER
608.729.6954 | DANS@WECCUSA.ORG

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Purpose and Background

The City of Middleton’s sustainability initiatives seek to “meet community needs and aspirations and best optimize the unique nature of the community without compromising the well-being of future generations.” To support the implementation of this vision, the City adopted its Sustainable City Plan in 2010, which outlined goals and strategies to achieve this objective.

The Sustainable City Plan included a goal to, “Develop sustainability guidelines for City purchasing, including office supplies, building and remodeling supplies (paint, carpet), and services to encourage local, environmentally-friendly products and/or fair trade purchases.” The purpose of the City of Middleton’s Sustainable Purchasing Policy is to implement guidelines that promote the purchase of environmentally-preferable and locally-sourced products, in accordance with the goals stated in the Sustainable City Plan.

When approving this policy, the City of Middleton acknowledges that product options, costs, and market-penetration of environmentally preferable products will evolve over time. To ensure the relevance and value of this policy, the Middleton Sustainability Committee will periodically review the policy and make recommendations to the Common Council for updates to the policy.

Exemptions

This policy is intended to provide guidance to city staff to support the purchase of locally sourced and/or sustainable products and services. The policy is intended to supplement, but not replace, Middleton’s existing Purchasing Policy Guidelines. No part of this policy shall be construed to require the specification or purchase of products or services that are unreasonably priced or of inferior quality.

Furthermore, no part of this policy shall be construed to require the City to conduct its purchasing or procurement activities in a manner that conflicts with local, state, or federal ordinances or laws.

Selected Definitions

Disposables: Products that are intended to be sent to a landfill or recycling center after a single-use.

Environmentally-preferable product: A product for which the negative environmental impact of its production, use, and disposal is significantly less than a comparable conventional product.

Guidance: Within this document, sections labeled as “guidance” represent best-practices to be followed by city staff, but are not policy requirements.

Standard: Within this document, sections labeled as “standard(s)” represent requirements of the policy.

General Guidance

1. To reduce costs and resource use, before purchasing a new product, staff should consider options for reuse, or expanded use, of an existing product.
2. To reduce long-term costs and resource use, when selecting products for purchase, staff should consider the durability and expected useful life of each product option. Within budget limits, staff

are encouraged to select products that are expected to provide the greatest long-term value to the City, rather than the product with the lowest initial cost.

3. Staff shall pursue opportunities for financial and environmental savings through investments that enable the City to reduce its consumption of products associated with negative environmental impacts including, but not limited to, paper, cleaning materials, process chemicals, water, and fuels.
4. To maximize the benefit of the City's purchasing activities on the local economy, when substantially cost-equivalent, staff shall seek to purchase products and services that are produced locally and/or purchased from local vendors. Among substantially cost-equivalent product options, highest preference should be given to vendors and producers headquartered in the City of Middleton, with secondary preference to vendors and producers headquartered in Dane County and tertiary preference to vendors and producers headquartered in Wisconsin. Vendors and producers who do not meet the definition of "local" in this section, but who own or operate a facility located within one of the preferred regions should be given preference over vendors and producers with no local facilities.
5. In addition to adhering to the sustainability standards and guidelines for the purchase categories specified in this policy, staff shall give preference in purchasing decisions to cost-effective environmentally-preferable product options.
6. To recognize cost-savings on environmentally preferable products and to promote efficient use of staff time, the City Administrator, or his/her designee, will take steps to standardize its purchasing processes and, where beneficial, promote consistency across departments in the types of products that are purchased.
7. City staff will support the City's sustainability goals by participating in the successful implementation of this policy by seeking to align purchasing practices with the policy and by identifying and overcoming challenges to implementation of the policy.

Targeted Purchase and Product Categories

This policy establishes criteria for consideration of products within certain high-frequency and high-environmental impact purchase categories as being cost-effective and environmentally preferable. The policy also defines guidelines for how environmental criteria shall be weighed when selecting products based on cost, quality, and sustainability.

Purchase Category: Paper products and office supplies

Policy Context

Every department in the City purchases and/or uses paper products in the course of conducting its normal business. Paper is a renewable resource that the City seeks to manage responsibly. While forests are a renewable resource, producing paper from virgin and/or recycled content consumes energy and water, while also producing greenhouse gases. Therefore, alternatives to paper usage are frequently the most environmentally friendly option. By selecting paper that is sourced from sustainably managed forests and includes recycled content, Middleton will support important global environmental objectives including carbon mitigation and habitat preservation.

By purchasing sustainably-sourced paper with recycled content and recycling paper after use, the City will also support its vision regarding solid waste reduction: “The residents, businesses, and government of Middleton utilize the most efficient and effective methods available to reduce, reuse, compost, and recycle waste. City government uses incentives and policies to limit unnecessary waste and to promote the profitable reuse of materials. Middleton is a leader in the application of technologies and practices that keep physical resources cycling within the local economy.”

Guideline

1. Implement strategies, such as electronic document management systems and high-speed electric hand dryers, to reduce the amount of paper purchased by the City.

Standards

Office paper and paper towels must meet the following two requirements:

1. Include a minimum of 30 percent recycled content or 30 percent post-consumer waste content.
2. Demonstrate certification by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). This requirement does not apply if the paper includes 100 percent recycled content and/or 100% post-consumer waste content.

Exemptions

Staff may choose to purchase products that do not meet the sustainable product standards if one of the following circumstances applies:

1. Paper that meets the standards above and satisfies the business needs of the department does not exist, or is not available in a timely manner.
2. Paper that meets the standards above is more expensive than a conventional alternative and purchasing the compliant paper would affect the department’s ability to accomplish its responsibilities, due to budget limitations.

Purchase Category: Printer cartridges and other office supplies

Policy Context

Plastics, ink, and printer toner are derived primarily from petroleum, which is an unsustainable natural resource. Changing purchasing patterns to reduce demand for petroleum promotes sustainability by decreasing the need for oil extraction and the corresponding environmental consequences.

By purchasing recycled toner cartridges and other office products, then recycling products after use, the City will support its vision regarding solid waste reduction: “The residents, businesses, and government of Middleton utilize the most efficient and effective methods available to reduce, reuse, compost, and recycle waste. City government uses incentives and policies to limit unnecessary waste and to promote the profitable reuse of materials. Middleton is a leader in the application of technologies and practices that keep physical resources cycling within the local economy.”

In addition to environmental degradation, conventional printer toner frequently has higher volatile organic compound (VOC) content than soy-based toner. VOC emissions degrade indoor air quality and can harm human health. Taking steps to reduce exposure to VOCs supports the health and productivity of staff.

Guideline

1. Purchase printer cartridges that use soy-based or vegetable-based toner.
2. When ordering printer cartridges, give preference to vendors that collect and recycle empty cartridges.
3. Trash can liners should include a minimum of 10 percent recycled content.
4. When purchasing all office supplies, give preference to products that include recycled content.

Exemptions

1. Office supplies that comply with the guidance above and satisfy the business needs of the department do not exist, or are not available in a timely manner.
2. Office supplies that comply with the guidance above are more expensive than conventional alternatives and purchasing the compliant product would affect the department's ability to accomplish its responsibilities, due to budget limitations.
3. Available compliant products do not perform adequately to meet the business needs of the department.

Purchase Category: Chemicals, cleaning products and cleaning services

Policy Context

Cleaning products frequently include chemicals that are toxic and have the potential to harm humans and the natural environment as a result of the air pollution, water pollution, and other environmental degradation caused by their use and/or disposal. The City uses non-cleaning chemicals with potential environmental impacts to maintain its vehicles and facilities. In addition to pollution of the natural environment, some cleaners and chemicals include volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and other substances that lead to poor indoor air quality in the facilities where they are used. Research shows that poor indoor air quality causes reductions in employee productivity and higher levels of employee absenteeism¹.

By encouraging the purchase and use of environmentally preferable chemicals and cleaning products in city-owned facilities, Middleton will promote the health and safety of employees and residents, while also reducing environmental harm caused by the production, use, and disposal of conventional chemicals. These actions will support the water vision statement in the Sustainable City Plan: "The City is vigilant in its efforts to keep harmful substances out of all water resources..." The Plan also establishes a goal of instituting green cleaning practices in municipal buildings.

Product Purchasing Standard

Chemicals (including cleaners) purchased by the City must meet at least one of the four standards below. Cleaning products must also meet any other performance and safety standards that are applicable to, or required by, their intended uses.

1. Certified under the US EPA's Safer Choices (formerly Design for the Environment) label

¹ Wyon, 2014. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15330777>

2. Certified under one of the Green Seal standards
3. Certified under one of the standards provided through the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) ECOLOGO label
4. Product lists all ingredients and all ingredients are known to be non-toxic.

Service Purchasing Standard

When contracting for third-party cleaning services, Middleton will specify the use of green cleaning practices by the vendor. Green cleaning practices include use of products meeting the standards described in the Product Purchasing Standard in this section, as well as measures taken to reduce waste, promote reuse, and access products with recycled content.

Exemptions

Staff may choose to purchase products or services that do not meet the standards in this policy if one of the following criteria applies:

1. No environmentally preferable cleaning product exists that can successfully and efficiently accomplish the intended use of the product.
2. Adequately performing environmentally preferable products or services are more expensive and purchasing the environmentally preferable alternative would affect the department's ability to accomplish its responsibilities, due to budget constraints.

Purchase Category: Products that Use Energy or Water

Policy Context

The City of Middleton spends over \$700,000 per year on energy and over \$70,000 on water to support its facilities and equipment. Electricity purchased from the grid, as well as fossil fuels combusted to heat buildings and power equipment also generates emissions that contribute to air pollution, water pollution, and climate change. The amount that Middleton spends on energy and water does not include the full social and environmental cost of greenhouse gas emissions, which the US Environmental Protection Agency estimates to be \$36 per metric ton of carbon dioxide equivalents.

Middleton's Sustainable City Plan set goals for the City to reduce municipal energy consumption by 20 percent from 2010 to 2020 and also established a goal of decreasing municipal water consumption. Plug and process load represents 33 percent of total electricity consumption in commercial buildings² and frequently represents energy used at work stations and by shared equipment, such as printers and copiers. Taking steps to reduce plug and process load, as well as implementing measures that reduce water consumption, will help to achieve Middleton's energy and water reduction goals.

Products that maximize energy and water efficiency can deliver comparable functionality to conventional products, while offering lower total costs over the lifetime of the product. By purchasing products that use energy and water efficiently, Middleton will reduce its short-term and long-term operating costs, while also reducing the amount of pollution that it generates.

² National Renewable Energy Laboratory, 2013. <http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy13osti/54175.pdf>

Standard

1. Where there are cost-equivalent products that can meet the needs of the City, purchase products that are certified under ENERGY STAR, EPEAT Silver, EPEAT Gold, and/or WaterSense.
2. If no certified product is available, or if the environmentally preferable product has a higher initial cost than a comparable conventional product, staff should use Middleton's lifecycle cost calculator to determine the lifecycle product cost. The lifecycle cost calculator accounts for the cost of purchase, energy consumed, water consumed, required maintenance, planned replacement, greenhouse gas emissions, and resale value or disposal of the product. To reduce total financial and environmental costs, staff should purchase the product with the lowest life cycle cost, rather than the lowest initial cost.
3. For products that will be purchased using a quote or bid process, the request for quotes or bids should require respondents to provide the product specifications described in #2. The request for quotes or bids should also advise respondents that a product life cycle cost analysis will be used by the City in selecting a vendor.

Exemption

1. The application of this policy will be limited when the applicable department leader determines that the value of consistency within the City's existing fleet or portfolio of products requires that the product options to be considered be limited so that purchased products fit within the City's existing ability to support those resources.

Purchase Category: Disposables

Policy Context

Middleton's Sustainable City Plan established a goal of reducing by 10 percent per capita waste production. Single-use products contribute to the production of municipal waste and are frequently unsustainable because they require ongoing harvesting/extraction of resources and consumption of limited disposal capacity, rather than reuse of materials. Recycling disposable items reduces waste and resource consumption, but the recycling process requires energy and other resources. For this reason, recycling disposable products is more environmentally responsible than disposing of those items in a landfill, but less preferable than reducing overall consumption of disposables.

The purchase and disposal of single-use products represent recurring expenses for the City. Substituting reusable items for disposable products encourages sustainable resource consumption, waste reduction, and long-term cost savings.

Guideline

1. The City shall encourage staff to minimize the purchase and use of disposable products, while recognizing that certain city functions and services may be best provided through the use of disposable products. Due to their high environmental impacts, special attention should be given to reduce the purchase of Styrofoam products and bottled water.

2. When the City needs to purchase and use disposable products, it will seek to purchase disposable products that may be recycled. When the City purchases and uses recyclable disposable products, it will take steps to ensure that recycling receptacles are easily accessible when the products are used.

Purchase Category: Products and Services Procured Through a Quote, Proposal or Bid Process

Policy Context

The Economy/Food/Fair Trade section of the Sustainable City Plan instructs the City to develop guidelines for City purchasing that encourage the purchase of local, environmentally-friendly products. Medium and high-cost purchases, requiring a quote, proposal, or bid process, provide opportunities for the City to achieve this goal and demonstrate its sustainability leadership through its procurement process. Additionally, high-value and high-volume purchases may have greater environmental impacts than low-cost purchases.

By communicating a preference for local and/or sustainable products and vendors in its purchasing process, Middleton will encourage engagement on sustainability within the business community and may catalyze sustainable economic development.

Guideline

When a department head determines that compliance with a third-party environmental certification (ex. ISO 14001 compliance) is a needed attribute of a product or service to be procured through a bid process, the department head may specify the acceptable certification(s) in the written request for bid.

Standard

When requesting written quotes or proposals from vendors, the City's request shall include the following statement: "The City of Middleton seeks to promote sustainability within its operations, within the community, and beyond. Therefore, Middleton also values the sustainability performance and engagement of the vendors from whom it purchases goods and services. For this reason, this request for proposal/quote incorporates considerations of vendor and product sustainability into the evaluation process."

The request for written quotes or proposals should ask the vendor to submit one, or more, of the three types of sustainability disclosures described below. The product selection process should assign between one and five percent of the evaluation weighting to the vendor's response to these criteria. The applicable department head will have discretion in determining, within this range, the weight to assign to one or more of the criteria described in this section.

1. "Provide documentation of all of the following third-party environmental certifications that the vendor or applicable product(s) have earned. If the vendor, or its products, has earned additional relevant environmental certifications, it may attach documentation of the certification, as well as a statement from the vendor explaining the reason that the certification demonstrates an advanced level of environmental performance."
 - o When preparing the request for quote/proposal, the department head will identify organization/facility-level and/or product-level environmental certifications that are relevant to the goods and/or services to be provided through the request for quote/proposal

- o Quotes will be assessed for the number and category of certifications earned, based on points assigned under a pre-established scoring matrix. (See sample matrix below.)

Vendors will be assigned points for organization/facility certifications AND for product certifications. Maximum points = 5	Organization/facility certifications (Sample) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B Corporation • CarbonNeutral • ISO 14001 • LEED • Zero waste 	Product certifications (Sample) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EcoLabel • ENERGY STAR • EPEAT • Fairtrade • FSC • Green Seal • Rainforest Alliance Certified • Smart Way • USDA Organic • WaterSense • Includes an Environmental Product Declaration (not a certification)
No applicable certification	0 points	0 points
1-2 certifications earned	2 points	1 points
3+ certifications earned	3 points	2 points

2. “Provide documentation of the vendor’s success in reducing year-over-year intensity of its energy use, emissions, water use, or waste production.”
 - o The department head will determine whether intensity metrics should be reported in terms of revenue or production units.
 - o The request for quote or proposal will identify for which of the environmental metrics the respondents should report.
 - o Recommended documentation of intensity reductions may include billing statements showing consumption data and financial statements documenting revenue.
 - o Scoring will be based on the percentage reduction for each metric, with no points assigned if intensity did not change or increased; one score for a reduction of up to five percent, and a higher score assigned for a reduction of more than five percent. (See sample matrix below.)

Vendors will be assigned points for reductions	GHG Emissions	Material Waste	Water Use	Energy Use

demonstrated for each category. Maximum points = 5				
Increase or no change	0 points	0 points	0 points	0 points
Up to 5 percent intensity reduction	0.5 points	0.5 points	0.5 points	0.5 points
Greater than 5 percent intensity reduction	1.25 points	1.25 points	1.25 points	1.25 points

3. “Provide a copy of the vendor’s current sustainability plan, describing baseline sustainability performance, setting future goals, and identifying steps that the company will take to achieve those goals. To be accepted, the vendor’s governing body must have approved the sustainability plan.”
 - o A vendor will receive a designated number of points if it submits a copy of its sustainability plan, which meets the stated criteria. Vendors who do not provide a sustainability plan will not receive points in this area. (See sample matrix below.)

Vendors will be assigned points based on their submission of an organizational sustainability plan.	Points Assigned
Maximum points = 5	
Vendor does NOT submit approved sustainability plan	0
Vendor submits approved sustainability plan	5

Exemptions

1. Sustainability considerations will not be included in the quote, proposal, or bid process if doing so would conflict with existing laws, policies, or regulations.
2. In no circumstances should the consideration of sustainability criteria cause the City to purchase goods or services that the City determines do not meet the needs of the City.

Reporting

The City of Middleton currently uses a decentralized purchasing process, which limits the City’s ability to track data regarding the sustainability of purchased products across all departments. The City will

investigate opportunities to centralize its purchasing functions in order to reduce costs and measure its progress in purchasing sustainable products and services.

While the City uses a decentralized purchasing process, the City Administrator, or his/her designee, will gather information from Department Heads in order to provide annual qualitative reports to the Common Council on the City's progress and challenges in complying with the standards and guidelines stated in this policy.