



November 15, 2011 Budget & Corporate Services Committee
Re: Green Procurement Policy

Dear Chair Sharman, Mayor Goldring, Members of Committee & Staff:

BurlingtonGreen Environmental Association commends the City of Burlington for recognizing the importance of establishing an effective green procurement policy to support the City's commitment to sustainability. If effectively implemented throughout all departments, not only will it be successful in achieving its' primary objective , but it can also serve as a very important "lead by example" tool, sending an important message to suppliers, community stakeholders and the citizens of Burlington that the City "walks the talk" when it comes to environmental sustainability.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comment on this very important policy:

1. **When put into practice, how will the green procurement policy integrate with currently established plans and policies?** The green procurement policy dovetails all the various policies listed in the report (*Corporate Energy Policy, Corporate Green Building Policy ,Greening the Corporate Fleet Transition Strategy, Toward Zero Waste Strategy, Implementation Plan to Restrict the Sale of Bottled Water (in City facilities)Idling Control By-law, Urban Forest Management Plan, Transit Master Plan (under development)*). **Is the plan for each department to be "trained" on how these policies should work in tandem versus independently to ensure maximum outcomes?**
 - a. For example, Forestry department application of the new policy in tandem with the UFMP would support a priority to purchase Ontario Native Species stock material versus Non-Native. Or, application of Toward Zero Waste Strategy together with the new policy would suggest that not only would recycled or FSC paper stock be the purchase of choice but additionally, staff would set double sided printer controls when printing to further reduce their environmental impact.

2. **When purchasing a product or service, how will staff prioritize or "weigh" environmental factors versus price/ tender bids?**
 - a. For example, everyone should agree that no trees should be cut down to produce facial or bathroom tissue. The obvious choice (and green procurement policy choice) would be products made from recycled material. However, what if the unit cost for the *green* choice is more money? **What "weight" does the green procurement policy carry within the broader purchasing decision making?** This speaks to the policy definition: "*The City of Burlington will endeavour to acquire goods and services that minimize impacts on the environment, and perform efficiently and effectively*". BurlingtonGreen proposes that this terminology be adjusted by replacing "endeavour" with "**prioritize**" *the acquisition of goods and services...*" and establish a reasonable price comparable margin for staff to follow. **Note:** As we don't always consider a product's cost to the environment, many "green" products can cost more than less-environment-friendly ones. Policy/Operations/Associated accounting forms need to reflect the intent of the green procurement policy if its objective is to be realized.

- b. **Additionally, as the policy is designed to support both products and services, how will the tendering process requirements be adjusted to support the green procurement policy. i.e. how will bids that meet green objectives be “ranked” in addition to service price and other factors as part of the process?**
3. **How will the green procurement policy (together with other established policies) be applied in department operations and with external communications and stakeholder agreements?** Again, widespread, effective communications regarding this policy are required in order to send a clear and consistent message to suppliers and citizens that “Burlington is open for green business”. It can be done in a way that does not deter business but instead attracts new business, providing policy based incentives with positive opportunities available to all.

One way to “test” the effectiveness of a draft policy is to apply a variety of relevant scenarios or questions to determine if it or another policy captures the need. Here are just a couple to consider:

- a. Various events in Burlington realize a significant environmental impact...and they don't have to. The principles of the green procurement policy together with other established environmental policies should be integrated into event department operations. Event organizers are currently required to comply with a number of permit holder procedures at time of application, requirements should include manageable, environmentally responsible actions that organizers are expected to adhere to aswell. i.e. effective management of event waste, energy , anti-idling bylaw etc. **Note:** the new, high profile Performing Arts Centre provides plastic disposable bottled water to stage performers. Thousands of citizens see this ‘example’ and it is a clear visual contradiction to current city policy. Combine a number of policies, plans (bottled water, Toward Zero waste & the Green Procurement policy) and put them into practice and instead you would have a scenario where all performer contracts indicate (proudly) that the City of Burlington cares about sustainability – “ *we don't sell or promote bottled water – please remember to bring along a reusable water bottle –thank you*”. The City has a LEED facility. Facility operations should reflect the environmental standard of the building.
- b. How about all the park permit holders in the City? Here is an opportunity to communicate the green procurement and other relevant policies. Can the parks department include a statement on all outgoing permits for park use: “*The City of Burlington practices environmental sustainability, please properly dispose of waste/recyclables located at the park and/or pack out what you bring in*”
4. **Local Products and services:** while the report's factors and checklist may infer this via “lifecycle costs”, we suggest locally produced, manufactured, packaged etc be included on your checklist so it is clear to staff that made in Burlington, or Ontario, Canada products and services are recommended.

Finally, in the spirit of striving to support a sustainable City, we thought we would share this 2 minute video clip with you as we believe it supports the intent of the green procurement and other environment related city policies. Enjoy: <http://vancouver.ca/greenestcity/>

Respectfully,

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