



PROCURING SUSTAINABILITY: A CLOSE LOOK AT GREEN PRACTICES IN MUNICIPAL PROCUREMENT



Clean Air Partnership

ABOUT THE CLEAN AIR PARTNERSHIP:

Clean Air Partnership (CAP) is a registered charity that works in partnership to promote and coordinate actions to improve local air quality and reduce greenhouse gases for healthy communities. Our applied research on municipal policies strives to broaden and improve access to public policy debate on air pollution and climate change issues. Clean Air Partnership's mission is to transform cities into more sustainable, resilient, and vibrant communities where resources are used efficiently, the air is clean to breathe and greenhouse gas emissions are minimized.



DISCLAIMER

This report is an academic exercise conducted by graduate students in the Master of Environment and Sustainability (MES) program at the Centre for Environment and Sustainability (CES) at Western University, London, Ontario, Canada. For information on this program, please visit <https://www.uwo.ca/mes/index.html>.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is focused on green procurement practices implemented by municipalities in Canada and the United States. The study was initiated to help municipalities understand the current landscape of green procurement, including best practices and implementation challenges. Green procurement practices encompass all elements of sustainability and have the potential to positively influence every municipality's efforts to combat climate change impacts.

This report categorizes various green procurement practices that promote environmental sustainability, including Acknowledgement, Conservation and Efficiency, Cooperative Purchasing, Environmental Criteria in Bid Consideration, Green Cleaning Supplies, Green Office Supplies, Green Reporting, Life-Cycle Analysis, Local Procurement, Recycled Materials, Responsible Supply Chain, Staff Education, Supplier Awareness and Accountability, Third-Party Certification, Third-Party Programs, Waste Reduction, and other Unique Practices. These practices aim to increase transparency and promote replicability and scale into other municipalities, encouraging the adoption of best practices that can lead to a more sustainable future, reduce municipal carbon footprints, and positively impact both the environment and the community.

This report and an Excel database toolkit summarize green procurement practices implemented within and beyond the Clean Air Council (CAC), a network of 39 Ontario municipalities and health units. The Clean Air Council is a program of the Clean Air Partnership organization.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION



1.0 - INTRODUCTION

Canada became one of the 196 signatories of the Paris Climate Accords, striving for greater mitigation, adaptation, and financing related to climate change. In 2021, the Government of Canada declared the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act in order to reach sustainable net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. This Federal Act also impacted the provinces and municipalities across Canada, as many declared a state of emergency in recognition of the severity of the climate crisis. Municipalities are uniquely positioned to act in the fight against climate change, as across Canada they account for nearly 50% of all national GHG emissions¹. As such, many municipal governments are implementing strategies to reduce their GHG emissions and improve their overall sustainability. Throughout this evolution, a growing area of focus is green procurement.

Green procurement is defined as the purchasing of goods and services that minimize environmental impact. The concept of green procurement also includes consideration of the social and ethical impacts of procurement activity. Municipalities make purchasing decisions every day, and consequently, these decisions can have significant impacts on the community. Incorporating sustainable choices into procurement, however, has often been overlooked. Fortunately, it is becoming much more common for municipalities to implement overarching green procurement policies in an effort to advance their climate action and sustainability goals. In the past, many municipalities have taken a primarily economic approach to procurement; minimizing financial costs without considering environmental impacts. Recently, green procurement has gained more traction, as best value considerations have indicated that the more sustainable purchasing decision is often also the most financially viable in the long term.

1. Federation of Canadian Municipalities, "Climate and sustainability," accessed March 22, 2023, <https://fcm.ca/en/focus-areas/climate-and-sustainability>.

Despite municipalities' best efforts and intentions, challenges may arise when putting green procurement policy into practice. This is because these policies are often meant to apply to all municipal procurement activities, which can range from the purchasing of new office supplies to new clean energy technology for municipal buildings, and anything in between. However, with the growing importance of sustainability, municipalities have begun to consider the holistic impacts of procurement and have additionally started collaborating to share the best practices for implementing green procurement policy. Through concentrated effort and generous knowledge sharing, green procurement has the potential to not just reduce environmental impact, but positively influence the environmental, social, and financial sustainability goals of municipalities around the world.

1.1 Clean Air Partnership and Past Green Procurement Work

In 2012, CAP published the Green Procurement Policies and Action Scan which was intended to highlight the current state of green procurement across CAC members and to illustrate specific actions being taken. This report provides a newly updated scan of municipal green procurement policies and practices across Canada, aimed to share action being taken to advance CAP's vision for healthy, sustainable, and resilient Canadian communities.

1.2 Scope

Municipal policies and procurement practices within Canada and the United States were reviewed to identify the leading green procurement practices. The study prioritized municipalities within Ontario for ease of replicability across CAC member municipalities. This green procurement best practice scan focused on daily operational procurement; municipal fleets, buildings, and transportation practices are not included in this practice scan.



2.0 BEST PRACTICES IN GREEN PROCUREMENT

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Through a combination of desktop research, interviews and collected survey responses, numerous green procurement best practices were identified. These practices were found to have significant impacts on improving municipal sustainability and to be the most replicable across municipalities. The following section will outline each category of best practice and will present relevant case studies to illustrate how municipalities are implementing and benefitting from green procurement initiatives.

2.1 Cooperative Purchasing

Cooperative purchasing is a procurement strategy wherein organizations collaborate to purchase goods and services collectively, leveraging their combined buying power to negotiate better prices and terms with suppliers. This approach can be used by public and private organizations of all sizes and can lead to cost savings, increased efficiency, and better access to goods and services.

Cooperative purchasing has become increasingly popular in recent years, as organizations seek to reduce costs, increase efficiency, and promote sustainable procurement practices. By collaborating with other municipalities, cooperative purchasing enables members to acquire a wider range of goods and services at competitive prices by working with other municipalities, which can be especially helpful for smaller municipalities with limited budgets.

Additionally, cooperative purchasing can facilitate the adoption of environmentally friendly procurement practices. Through collaboration, municipalities can leverage their collective bargaining power to demand eco-friendly products and services from suppliers, helping to increase their availability and promote sustainability throughout the supply chain.

2.1.1 Case Study: York Purchasing Co-operative

The York Purchasing Co-operative² (YPC) in Ontario, Canada, founded in 2008, is a non-profit organization that provides its members with access to a wide range of products and services at competitive prices while promoting sustainable procurement practices.

Through their contracts with suppliers, the YPC ensures that their members have access to environmentally friendly products and services such as energy-efficient lighting and HVAC systems, compostable food service products, and environmentally friendly cleaning supplies. The YPC also prioritizes the use of local suppliers, which simultaneously supports the local economy and reduces carbon emissions associated with transportation. By joining the YPC, members can benefit from the organization's collective buying power, reducing procurement costs while promoting sustainability. Cooperative purchasing also helps to create a more robust knowledge base within the sector and makes it easier for organizations to adopt green procurement practices.

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2. York Purchasing Co-operative, "Welcome to the York Purchasing Co-Operative," Homepage - York Purchasing Co-operative, (n.d.), <http://www.ypc.co.ca/css/index.html>.

2.2 Environmental Criteria in Bid Consideration

Including environmental criteria in bid consideration is to formally state and evaluate the environmental impact of products and services being procured. This process involves the integration of environmental criteria into the procurement process, from the development of bid documents to the evaluation of supplier bid proposals. Procurement staff assess the environmental impact of the products or services offered, as well as the sustainability practices of the supplier, and the potential long-term environmental and social effects of the purchase.

Municipalities may also give specific weight to sustainability criteria during bid consideration. This means that suppliers who prioritize and use sustainable practices in their products and operations may be viewed favourably over those who do not. By formalizing environmental criteria in the procurement process, municipalities can guarantee that suppliers are held to high environmental standards and that municipal sustainability commitments are taken seriously.

2.2.1 Case Study: The Town of Aurora's Green Procurement Policy

The Town of Aurora, Ontario implemented a Green Procurement Policy, starting in 2022, that requires staff to consider climate change impacts when planning procurements and to identify opportunities to include green procurement evaluation criteria and specifications in project bid documents³. The evaluation criteria and specifications must be transparent and rationally connected to the procurement project, with appropriate technical advice obtained to develop defensible green procurement requirements. Bid compliance requirements include clear pass-fail criteria, such as third-party

3. Town of Aurora, "Attachment 2 - Green Procurement Policy - Aurora," Final-TOA-Green-Procurement-Policy, (2022), <https://www.aurora.ca/en/your-government/resources/Climate-Change/Final-TOA-Green-Procurement-Policy.pdf>.

environmental certification, while scoring requirements include a total percentage weighting for the green procurement category, a breakdown of sub-weightings for specific technical criteria, and a minimum scoring threshold that will disqualify bidders who fail to meet it. Contract specifications were clearly linked to the procurement project's scope and objectives and avoided unnecessarily restrictive standards

2.3 Green Cleaning Supplies

A common transition being seen by many municipalities is the switch to purchasing green cleaning and hygiene supplies that are environmentally friendly and sustainable. These products are designed to minimize the negative impact on the environment and to promote sustainability by using non-toxic and natural ingredients. Alternatively, a product may have a more sustainable end-of-life option such as composting as opposed to landfill. These products are also safe for human use and do not harm the user's health. Examples of products considered within this category are disinfectants, paper towels, various bin liners, and more. Despite some misconceptions, switching to the use of these green supplies does not compromise on the effectiveness of traditional cleaning and hygiene supplies. This commitment is seen widely across municipalities in both Canada and the United States. The City of Guelph, the City of Oshawa, the City of Mississauga, the City of Burlington, the Province of Nova Scotia, the Halifax Regional Municipality and King County, USA are all examples of jurisdictions using green cleaning and hygiene supplies in their facilities.

2.4 Green Office Supplies

Historically, many municipalities considered financial costs when purchasing office supplies for their facilities. However, municipalities have now started to consider purchasing green office supplies which are more sustainable and have a lower environmental impact. This may entail the procurement of

products that are composed of recycled materials, are reusable as opposed to disposable, and/or are more energy-efficient than traditional options (ex. energy-efficient printers and computers). Green office supplies are designed to reduce the environmental impact by minimizing waste and reducing GHG emissions. The use of green office supplies can help contribute to a more sustainable future and can create better value for municipalities as well.

2.4.1 Case Study: King County's Sustainable Purchasing Policy

In 2018, King County, USA mandated the purchase of 100% recycled-content copy paper for municipal office use. The County has also been striving to reduce paper use overall and has reached its 35% reduction target. Additionally, this allowed the county to save 23% of the financial cost of purchasing paper⁴. King County is an excellent example showing how the procurement of green office supplies can be both environmentally and financially beneficial.

2.5 Reporting and Tracking Green Procurement Progress

Green procurement tracking and reporting are two essential components of a comprehensive green procurement program in any municipality. Green procurement tracking involves monitoring the progress of practices over time. This may be done by counting the number of green purchases made, quantifying greenhouse gas emissions reductions, reviewing the percentage of the procurement budget allocated to green purchases, and ongoing monitoring of other environmental impacts of those purchases. Green procurement reporting involves updating relevant stakeholders, including municipal councillors, department heads, suppliers, and the general public, on the results of green procurement tracking.

4. King County, "Sustainable Purchasing Policy," last modified January 16, 2019, <https://kingcounty.gov/about/policies/aep/contractingaep/con722ep.aspx>.

Green procurement reporting should be transparent and clear, allowing all stakeholders to understand the progress made in implementing green procurement policies and the environmental benefits achieved.

By incorporating, tracking, and reporting green procurement policies, municipalities can monitor their environmental achievements, promote effective environmentally friendly practices and reduce their carbon footprints. Reporting and tracking green procurement progress is essential for municipalities to understand the impact of their procurement policies, identify areas for improvement, and communicate their efforts to the public.

2.5.1 Case Study: The City of Whitehorse's Solicitation Documents

In 2020, The City of Whitehorse adopted a tracking and reporting policy that aims to incorporate principles of sustainability into its procurement processes. Under this policy, the city staff are required to submit a semi-annual report to the City Council on the municipality's procurement policy outcomes. The report must include details of procurements valued over \$100,000 that have incorporated requirements related to economic sustainability, environmental sustainability, and social sustainability in their solicitation documents⁵.

By implementing the tracking policy, the City of Whitehorse aims to promote sustainable procurement practices that align with its values of economic, environmental, and social sustainability. The tracking policy allows the city to understand the long-term impacts of purchased goods and services on the environment, economy, and society. The city also seeks to promote transparency in its procurement policies by reporting the outcomes of those processes publicly. This enables the city to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability to municipal councillors, department heads, suppliers, and the general public.

5. City of Whitehorse, "City of Whitehorse Council Policy," Procurement Policy Effective, (2020), <https://www.whitehorse.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/ProcurementPolicyEffective-1.pdf>

Through its reporting and tracking mechanisms, the City of Whitehorse has begun to assess the effectiveness of its procurement practices and is positioned to make necessary adjustments to ensure alignment with its sustainability goals.

2.6 Life Cycle Analysis

A fairly common, yet critical practice within green procurement is the use of life cycle analysis (LCA). LCA is a method used in the evaluation of a product's environmental impact that considers factors such as raw material extraction and processing, manufacturing, usage, and end-of-life disposal.⁶ Embedding life cycle considerations into a purchasing decision is not a new practice, and is commonplace for procurement across most sectors; however, this assessment has historically only considered the economic value and impact of a product or service across its lifetime. In green procurement, the use of LCA allows for the incorporation of true 'best value' into a purchasing decision by considering factors apart from just capital costs. It is a comprehensive way of evaluating the complete economic, environmental, and social costs and benefits of a product. Many municipalities, including CAC members such as the City of London, the City of Guelph, and the Town of Caledon, have now embedded holistic LCA into their procurement policies, maximizing the impact of their purchases.

2.6.1 Case Study: The City of Burlington's Life Cycle Considerations

One example of a municipality that is making its LCA process incredibly transparent is the City of Burlington. In 2011, Burlington City Council approved the first Green

6. Mehmet Ali Ilgin and Surendra M. Gupta, "Environmentally conscious manufacturing and product recovery (ECMPRO): A review of the state of the art," *Journal of Environmental Management* 3, no. 91 (2010): 563-591, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2009.09.037>.

Procurement Policy in order to support and enhance the city's commitment to sustainability. The policy explicitly outlines that when evaluating a purchase of any good or service, "all aspects related to the production, transportation, use or operation, and replacement or disposal of goods" will be considered.⁷ In addition to explicit policy language, the City of Burlington has also published its "Green Procurement Guidelines" to help its staff best undertake the life cycle costing process.⁸ These guidelines outline questions that purchasing staff can use to evaluate a good or service throughout the life cycle stages from the aforementioned official Green Procurement Policy and when comparing multiple bids. These questions include :

- *Is the good durable as opposed to a single-use or disposable item?*
- *How much water and energy is used?*
- *What are the costs and frequency of upgrades?*
- *Does the good contain harmful components (such as mercury in some lighting fixtures) that require special disposal with additional costs?*

By considering these added environmental and social factors, Burlington can better understand the overall economics of a purchase and more easily quantify an environmental benefit over a longer period of time.

2.7 Prioritization of Local Procurement

Another recent shift in municipal green procurement has been the increasing prioritization of local vendors. This practice not only reduces the emissions associated with the transportation of goods, but also supports the local economy of a municipality, providing benefits from an environmental, social, and financial

7. City of Burlington, "Procurement Services - Green Procurement Policy" (2017), <https://www.burlington.ca/en/council-and-city-administration/resources/Corporate-Policies/Green-Procurement-Policy.pdf>.

8. City of Burlington, "Green Procurement Guidelines" (2014), <https://www.burlington.ca/en/business-in-burlington/resources/Bid-Opportunities/Green-Procurement-Guidelines.pdf>.
[City of Burlington, "Green Procurement Guidelines"](#).

sustainability perspective. Any policy indicating a preference for local vendors, prioritization of bids from local businesses, or targets set with the intention of increasing the procurement of locally-sourced goods and services qualifies for this category of green procurement policies and practices as defined in this report.

2.7.1 Case Study: The City of Montréal's Local Procurement Policy

This case study was taken from a document released by the City of Montréal, originally written in French. Translations were completed by the Vivi Consulting team, but please refer to the original French document cited for the official language of the policy.

The City of Montréal has released a thorough plan for encouraging local procurement within the municipality. The Responsible Procurement Policy is a tool combining information on responsible and sustainable procurement strategies for the City of Montréal. It is intended to encourage the integration of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors into purchasing decisions through the prioritization of purchases from companies making efforts to increase social responsibility, improve environmental sustainability, and strive for equity in their business practices. This policy views buying locally as a catalyst for economic growth and sustainability, a key factor in reducing the carbon footprint associated with procurement, and an incentive for local entrepreneurs and creators to transition towards an ESG-conscious, circular, and low-carbon economy.¹⁰

The policy outlines three types of criteria: economic, social, and environmental. The criteria related to local procurement fall into the economic category, as the policy states procurement staff must consider the following: “business

10. City of Montréal, “Énoncé d'achat local et responsable,” enonce_achat_local_responsable_ville_de_montreal_0, 2023, https://portail-m4s.s3.montreal.ca/pdf/enonce_achat_local_responsable_ville_de_montreal_0.pdf

location; the share of products and services acquired, designed, produced, assembled locally; the holding of share capital by persons residing in Quebec and Canada.”¹¹ Additionally, the policy outlines the steps taken for implementation, including the formalization of this policy, specific directives provided to staff regarding supply chain management and accountability, as well as the resources assigned to responsible procurement which include a Responsible Purchasing Committee. This committee will mobilize the department and office managers responsible for purchasing guidelines, as well as members of sub-committees related to social purchasing, the reduction of GHG emissions, circularity, and innovation with regard to purchasing decisions.¹²

This policy applies to all procurement staff, as well as any other city staff involved in the procurement of goods and services. The City of Montréal considers any purchases made within the entire province of Quebec to be local and will favour these purchases so long as an existing law or trade agreement does not indicate a conflicting priority. This policy will be followed up by a five-year action plan for responsible procurement that is currently in development.¹³

2.8 Recycled Materials

Some municipalities have implemented various measures of incorporating the purchase of recycled materials into their green procurement practices. Using recycled materials in municipal procurement can be environmentally friendly and cost-effective. It reduces waste going to landfills, conserves natural resources, and reduces the energy required for manufacturing new materials. Recycled materials can often be sourced locally, which can lead to cost savings that can be invested elsewhere. The use of recycled materials can also have economic benefits by supporting local recycling industries, which creates jobs and stimulates economic growth in the community. Overall, using recycled materials in municipal

11. City of Montréal, “Énoncé d’achat local et responsable”

12. City of Montréal, “Énoncé d’achat local et responsable”

13. City of Montréal, “Énoncé d’achat local et responsable”

procurement can promote sustainable practices, reduce the carbon footprint of the municipality, and bring about environmental and economic benefits.

2.8.1 Case Study: The Town of Aurora's Recycled Concrete

The Town of Aurora incorporated recycled concrete material as a provisional item in its 2021 road reconstruction project to encourage sustainable construction and building practices for town-owned infrastructure. The process of using recycled concrete involves crushing concrete waste into smaller pieces that can then be used as aggregate for new concrete mixes. This not only reduces the amount of waste sent to landfills but also saves resources by using existing materials.

2.9 Green Procurement Education and Awareness

One of the best ways that municipalities can advance sustainable procurement within their units is by educating those who are directly involved. This may include parties such as buyers, contract managers, and vendors. Not only is education important for ensuring that necessary steps are taken throughout the procurement process, but it also fosters a greater understanding of and aligns individuals with the municipality's overarching sustainability goals. By educating vendors and staff, the municipality will have more people who can hold it accountable to take actionable steps to advance sustainable procurement. It also can create a more robust supplier and vendor pool to choose from by sparking larger market changes.

2.9.1 Equipping Staff with Tools for Effective Green Procurement

Municipalities can work to integrate sustainable purchasing guidelines into their procurement policies; however, there will be little to no impact if this information is not effectively conveyed to those who are carrying out the purchasing. High-

quality education and training of municipal staff can be achieved by promoting the municipalities' sustainable procurement priorities and equipping purchasing staff with the tools and knowledge to incorporate that information into purchasing decisions in equal measure.

Many municipalities within the CAC and beyond were found to already have training programs and educational resources related to green procurement available to staff. In fact, this practice was one of the most commonly identified across the municipalities researched for the purposes of this report. This is likely because training and education is an essential first step to creating explicit practices that can be undertaken on a broader scale. York Region, the Town of Caledon, and the Town of Oakville are some examples of municipalities currently undertaking educational initiatives. Training can take a variety of forms such as interactive web modules, live or recorded webinars, or graphic material that staff can read at their own pace. Other useful educational resources may include green procurement checklists or guides which have more clearly outlined steps to take when beginning the purchasing process.

When procurement staff are educated on sustainability, it also alleviates the stress from those who previously were solely responsible for implementing green initiatives. This is particularly important for larger municipalities, such as Vancouver, where purchasing happens across multiple departments within the city. By educating staff across the city's operating units on the value and potential of green procurement, Vancouver has integrated the responsibility surrounding sustainability across the entire city staff.¹⁴

14. Kim Buksa (Sustainable and Ethical Procurement Manager, City of Vancouver) in discussion with the authors, April 2023.

2.9.2 Increasing Vendor Awareness of Municipal Sustainability

It is also important for municipalities to educate their vendors on what green procurement is and why municipalities are adopting related practices. Unlike staff engagement and education, the goal of vendor education focuses more on the why of green procurement and less on the how. It is not an instructional practice, but instead more like an awareness campaign. Through promotion and increasing pressure from municipalities surrounding supplier accountability, vendors will be encouraged to operate more sustainably in ways that align best with their business operations. Additionally, the development of more sustainable market options can be stimulated if the demand for these products is both tangible and urgent.

To share their commitment most effectively to sustainable and green procurement, municipalities should facilitate opportunities for interaction and collaboration with their vendors. For example, The City of Saskatoon collaborates with its suppliers and other key stakeholders to advance corporate social responsibility in the business community. The municipality actively encourages its suppliers and subcontractors to work towards sustainability objectives that align with existing municipal policy.¹⁵

Municipalities are also beginning to hold suppliers and vendors more accountable for their sustainability practices. One place this is being done is in the Region of Peel. The Region is implementing scorecards which will assess the environmental, ethical, and social values of a vendor.¹⁶ These scorecards will simultaneously demonstrate Peel Region's commitment to sustainability and highlight the areas in which vendors can and need to be improving.

15. City of Saskatoon, "Procurement at the City: Policy and Protocols Manual" (2018), [https://www.saskatoon.ca/sites/default/files/documents/asset-financial-management/finance-supply/procurement how-to-guide planning protocols procedures final apr9.pdf](https://www.saskatoon.ca/sites/default/files/documents/asset-financial-management/finance-supply/procurement%20how-to-guide%20planning%20protocols%20procedures%20final%20apr9.pdf)

16. Region of Peel, "Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy" (2017), <https://www.peelregion.ca/corpserv/pdfs/corporate-social-responsibility-report.pdf>

Another tool that is being used more commonly by municipalities is a supplier questionnaire. These are typically related to either the social and diversity goals of the supplier or to specific environmental practices. Including these questionnaires when looking for suppliers reinforces the importance of sustainability at all levels of municipal procurement.

King County, USA is a unique example of a municipality that has developed a tool to simultaneously showcase its commitment to sustainable procurement and improve the transparency and accountability of its vendors. King County has publicized all of its currently awarded contracts on its website in the form of an interactive database. The County has included a column titled “Green” in which a green heart icon appears for the contracts that have been identified as meeting the County’s sustainability standards. This tool is widely accessible to the public, other purchasers, as well as both current and potential future vendors.¹⁷ This demonstrates King County’s dedication to sustainability and places the onus on suppliers to continually improve their operations in order to achieve this desirable status.

2.10 Third-party Certification Requirements

Third-party certifications are issued by independent organizations that evaluate and verify a product or service’s compliance with specific environmental, social, and ethical standards. These certifications are helpful within green procurement because they provide a way to identify and prioritize products and services that meet certain predetermined sustainability criteria. The following table highlights some of the most common third-party certifications, referred to in the green procurement practices database:

17. “Awarded Contracts,” King County, accessed March 20, 2023, <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/finance-business-operations/procurement/for-government/awarded-contracts.aspx>

Third-Party Certification	Description
<p>EnergyStar</p> 	<p>Energy Star is a voluntary program launched by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1992 to promote energy-efficient products and practices. Products and buildings meeting specific EPA energy efficiency criteria earn the Energy Star certification, indicated by the logo, saving consumers money on energy bills while reducing environmental impact. Certification is available for appliances, electronics, lighting, heating and cooling systems, commercial and residential buildings, and new homes.</p>
<p>EcoLogo</p> 	<p>EcoLogo is a third-party certification program established by the Canadian federal government in 1988 to help identify environmentally friendly products and services. Certification evaluates a range of environmental criteria and factors such as performance, health and safety, and packaging. The EcoLogo certification mark indicates products and services that meet specific environmental standards. The program covers various products and services such as cleaning products, building materials, office equipment, and personal care products, and is widely recognized in Canada and internationally.</p>
<p>LEED</p> 	<p>LEED is a green building certification program by the US Green Building Council promoting sustainable construction and design practices. Buildings must meet environmental criteria in categories such as site development, water/energy efficiency, materials selection, and innovation in design to earn certification. Available for various building types, certification levels are Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum. Recognized worldwide as a symbol of sustainability, certification is required for many government and private projects and involves a rigorous review process.</p>
<p>Pollution Prevention Award</p> 	<p>The CCME Pollution Prevention Awards recognize leadership and innovation in pollution prevention and sustainable development in Canada. Organized by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, the awards highlight initiatives in various sectors and serve as a platform to share best practices. Open to all across Canada, award categories vary annually and include sustainable manufacturing, energy conservation, and pollution prevention in transportation.</p>

<p>Recycling Council of Ontario Award</p> 	<p>The Recycling Council of Ontario Awards is an annual program recognizing excellence and innovation in waste reduction and recycling in Ontario. The program has categories for individual achievement, municipal/public sector, commercial/institutional sector, product stewardship, and innovation in recycling. Winners are recognized for their contributions to waste reduction and recycling and to inspire sustainable waste management practices. The awards are open to individuals, organizations, and businesses in Ontario, with winners announced at an annual spring ceremony.</p>
<p>Fair Trade</p> 	<p>Fair Trade is a movement and certification program promoting equity and fairness in international trade. It empowers small-scale farmers and workers in developing countries by ensuring fair prices, safe working conditions, and sustainable production methods. The certification process includes audits of producers, supply chains, and trading practices. Fair Trade covers a wide range of products, and the certification label is recognized globally as a symbol of ethical and sustainable trade practices.</p>
<p>Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)</p> 	<p>The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification promotes responsible and sustainable forest management practices through a third-party certification program. Established in 1993, FSC assesses forest management practices for environmental, social, and economic sustainability. The certification is awarded to forests, forest products, and companies that meet FSC's strict standards. The FSC certification is globally recognized and used by companies and governments to promote the responsible sourcing of forest products. Choosing FSC-certified products supports responsible forest management and contributes to the conservation of the world's forests.</p>
<p>EPEAT</p> 	<p>EPEAT (Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool) is a global certification program for electronic products that evaluates their environmental sustainability based on criteria such as energy efficiency, recyclability, and hazardous material usage. Managed by the Green Electronics Council, it rates products on a bronze, silver, or gold scale, and includes computers, monitors, printers, and televisions. Choosing EPEAT-certified products promotes sustainable manufacturing and recycling practices.</p>

Table 1: Third-Party Certification Descriptions

2.11 Third-Party Program Participation

Green procurement can be incredibly challenging as it is guided heavily by policy, trade agreements, and the market availability of any given good or service. Moreover, when organizations lack resources to allocate to green procurement, it can be even more difficult to understand the existing opportunities for change and implementation. Many public and private organizations are overcoming this challenge by joining collaborative networks dedicated to green procurement. These networks vary in size and focus, and can be found at the local, national, and global levels; however, each brings its members together with the goal of increasing collaboration and transparency within green procurement to create a more robust knowledge base within this growing field.

One global example is the Responsible Purchasing Network (RPN). Founded in 2005, the RPN is “an international network of buyers dedicated to socially responsible and environmentally sustainable purchasing.”¹⁸ RPN provides their members with a wide range of services and tools to assist them in their green purchasing efforts. These include webinar offerings, various sustainable purchasing guides, custom consultations, and member-only discussion forums for sharing tools and best practices between organizations. An example program within Canada is Buy Social Canada. Buy Social Canada is a non-membership, independent social enterprise that advocates for using purchasing as a tool in building stronger communities. Buy Social Canada collaborates with various community, private, and public institutions, encouraging and educating on the adoption of true ‘best value’ – social, economic, cultural, and environmental impact – consideration in procurement.¹⁹

18. Responsible Purchasing Network, “About the Responsible Purchasing Network,” accessed March 15, 2023, <http://www.responsiblepurchasing.org/about/index.php>.

19. Buy Social Canada, “About Us,” accessed March 15, 2023, <https://www.buysocialcanada.com/about>.

2.11.1 Case Study: The Canadian Collaboration for Sustainable Procurement

The Canadian Collaboration for Sustainable Procurement (CCSP) is a network of over 40 Canadian public-sector institutions that collaborate to ensure that their purchasing decisions align with their sustainability commitments. From 2020 to 2021, the CCSP saw membership growth of 33%.²⁰ The CCSP facilitates opportunities for members to meet, discuss, and learn about what other organizations are doing to advance green procurement within their unit(s). Their ultimate goal is to increase knowledge sharing so that member success stories can be replicated across the country. Members can also use valuable resources such as time and finances most effectively by having access to a centralized toolkit and knowledge base that is readily and easily accessible.

Throughout 2021, members of the CCSP Working Group collaborated on the development of two unique tools that were designed to address a commonly identified gap in supplier diversity. Within six months, the CCSP created a series of profiles for different Supplier Diversity Councils along with an introductory presentation on supplier diversity. Both of these tools became publicly available to CCSP members for use in implementing supplier diversity initiatives within their organization. This example illustrates the efficiency and value associated with combining knowledge and resources to eliminate a barrier to further green procurement.

20. Reeve Consulting, 2021 Annual report on the State of Sustainable Public Procurement in Canada, (2021), https://www.reeveconsulting.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/CCSP_2021_State-of-Sustainable-Public-Procurement-in-Canada.pdf.

2.12 Waste Reduction

When procuring goods and services, municipalities should consider the amount of waste generated through both packaging and usage. This may entail making purchasing decisions that prioritize products which are reusable or recyclable and avoiding products that generate excess packaging waste or are designed for single-use.

2.12.1 Case Study: The Town of Oakville's Coffee Consumption

In their office space, the Town of Oakville previously provided a coffee machine for staff use that required individual capsules (i.e. Keurig K-Cup® pods). For each single coffee beverage that was made, a new plastic pod was used and subsequently disposed of. In an effort to reduce waste generation, the Town attempted to recycle these pods, rather than send them to landfill. To take its waste reduction efforts even further, the municipal office has since chosen to purchase coffee in bulk and grind its own coffee beans, eliminating the need for single-use pods altogether. Staff are also encouraged to drink out of reusable mugs. This practice allows the town to generate primarily organic waste from coffee consumption, rather than sending plastic pods to material recovery facilities or landfills and saves both financial and physical resources.²¹

2.13 Unique Purchasing Practices

In some instances, municipalities are implementing unique policies and practices. The following case studies provide examples of the innovation occurring within the green procurement sector today, and demonstrate the potential for both technological and ideological evolution to drive progress within municipal procurement strategies.

21. Town of Oakville, "2018-12-04 11.05 Town of Oakville Green Procurement Webinar." Accessed March 22, 2023. <https://vimeo.com/304478818>.

2.13.1 Case Study: The Province of P.E.I.'s Energy Technology Investment Fund

Prince Edward Island has implemented many sustainable practices province-wide with regard to general sustainability as well as green procurement. To incentivize the procurement of sustainable technology and infrastructure, the province has an Energy Technology Investment Fund. This fund provides government departments or agencies responsible for operating and maintaining government facilities with an opportunity to request funding for the purchase of technologies that reduce energy usage and increase the overall energy efficiency of that facility. The applicants would be responsible for ensuring an energy audit was completed for the facility and the existing infrastructure, as well as confirming a payback period for the technology of five to ten years. Any savings generated through these technologies are invested back into the fund to create a self-sustaining form of revenue. As of 2017, this fund had not become fully established and self-sustaining; however, the concept of incentivizing government employees to take initiative in their work and propose energy-efficient investments is a unique idea that could lead to the development of similar funds within government facilities as well as municipal purchasing departments across Canada. Any proposal made to the fund could impact future purchasing decisions and lead to long-term green procurement policy regarding similar purchases. This is an example of how initiatives that are not directly related to the decision-making process within a municipal procurement department can inspire and influence purchasing staff towards more sustainable decisions in the long term.²²

22. Urban Climate Change Research Network, "Prince Edward Island & Climate Change", 2008_Prince-Edward-Island_A-Strategy-for-Reducing-the-Impacts-of-Global-Warming, 2017, https://uccrnn.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2008_Prince-Edward-Island_A-Strategy-for-Reducing-the-Impacts-of-Global-Warming.pdf

2.13.2 Case Study: The Town of Oakville's Procurement Policy Amendment Procedure

The Town of Oakville has a unique policy, which allows purchasing staff to amend sections of the sustainable purchasing policy without going through the process of City Council approval. The Town of Oakville now allows its purchasing staff to add or amend clauses in the current procurement policy if or when a new best practice is identified by the Town. This allows the Town to quickly adapt and implement the best practices to develop up-to-date green procurement initiatives. It also prioritizes the knowledge of those who have the greatest understanding of the procurement process and sustainability goals.²³

2.13.3 Case Study: The City of Denver's EnviroTech

The City of Denver has a strict road deicing policy that avoids using sodium chloride due to its negative environmental impact. Instead, the city uses liquid magnesium chlorides and granular deicing compounds, such as Ice Slicer® and Meltdown Apex®, which are less corrosive and easier on the hydrological ecosystems along Colorado's roads. These products have unique blends of naturally occurring minerals that outperform traditional road salt, melt ice to a lower temperature, and require fewer applications, resulting in reduced amounts of chlorides introduced into the environment. The use of these products also reduces the need for aggregates, which mitigates sediment road wash entering into streams and hydrological ecosystems.

23. Town of Oakville Green Procurement Webinar, <https://vimeo.com/304478818>.

3.0

CONCLUSION



3.0 CONCLUSION

Municipal green procurement considerations are currently being implemented on a variety of scales across Canada and the United States. These initiatives are becoming increasingly important, as the negative impacts of human consumption and production on the environment become more evident. By adopting green procurement practices, organizations can reduce their carbon footprint, conserve resources, and promote both environmental and social sustainability in their supply chains. While progress has been made in green procurement, there is still room for improvement, as many organizations have yet to fully embrace this approach. There are plenty of opportunities for municipalities to adopt existing initiatives, and promising innovations have been identified as catalysts for growth within the green procurement sector. Despite the promise this report identifies, there are significant barriers to implementing green procurement policy that prevent these practices from becoming standard procedures. Identifying these barriers and strategies for mitigation is important so that CAP can properly support municipalities moving forward

3.1 Barriers in Green Procurement

It is important to acknowledge that while implementing green procurement initiatives can seem simple on paper, procurement staff face several barriers when putting these ideas into practice. One of the main barriers to implementing green procurement in municipalities is a lack of awareness and knowledge amongst municipal staff. Improving education, not just within the procurement departments, but across the municipality will foster discussion and engagement about the opportunities available for incorporating sustainability criteria into purchasing decisions. This lack of knowledge is further complicated by high municipal staff turnover, as this leads to a loss of the expertise that has been developed.

Additionally, procurement is often siloed within municipalities, making it difficult for sustainability experts to provide recommendations and enforce standards. The complexity of procurement requires specialized expertise, which creates a challenge as sustainability personnel are not always involved in decision-making and planning. This can also be mitigated through education, as when all staff are aware of green procurement considerations, it is more likely that they will refer to the expertise of sustainability staff before taking action. Furthermore, policy plays a crucial role in driving green practices, but without demand and education, policies may not be put in place. This lack of policy is challenging because municipalities demand both interest and education to drive policy development. This barrier is difficult to address, as the lack of policy feeds the lack of demand and education and vice versa.

These barriers highlight the need for concentrated efforts from municipal staff who are educated on green procurement to begin driving change toward more sustainable purchasing decisions. Most importantly, CAP can help redirect the focus from these barriers, instead centring discussions of green procurement around the opportunities for knowledge sharing and growth based on the existing initiatives identified through this project.

3.2 Future Recommendations

The future of green procurement is promising, as more and more organizations recognize the importance of sustainability in their purchasing decisions. However, there is still much work to be done in order to fully integrate sustainable procurement practices into everyday municipal operations. One important step in this direction is to empower employees to take action on sustainable practices, even if formal policies or guidelines do not yet exist.

This empowerment can take many forms, such as providing training and resources to help employees identify sustainable products and suppliers, or giving them the authority to make sustainable purchasing decisions within

their respective departments. By doing so, organizations can create a culture of sustainability, where employees feel empowered to take action and contribute to the green procurement goals of the municipality.

The key next step toward the future of green procurement is the development of more comprehensive and explicit policies and guidelines. While many organizations have already implemented some form of sustainable procurement policy, there is room for improvement and expansion. This includes setting more ambitious sustainability goals, identifying new areas for improvement, and collaborating with suppliers and stakeholders to drive innovation and progress.

The resources identified and the database tool provide a starting point from which municipalities can determine which initiatives best suit their populations and resources. CAP will continue fostering engagement with green procurement staff across the CAC, providing knowledge and support for municipalities to lean on as they strive for sustainability.

4.0

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4.0 REFERENCES

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