

**AN EVALUATION OF THE TASK FORCE PROCESS USED  
TO DEVELOP THE CITY OF PORTLAND'S AND  
MULTNOMAH COUNTY'S SUSTAINABLE  
PROCUREMENT POLICIES**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Sustainable procurement is an issue that governments at all levels have begun to address in recent years. Briefly stated, sustainable procurement is the process of integrating environmental, social, and economic factors into purchasing decisions.

Using the State of Oregon's sustainable purchasing program as a model, the City of Portland and Multnomah County joined forces to develop a strategy for sustainable procurement. This strategy is based on the development of recommendations by product-specific task forces composed of City and County employees. This report evaluates the task force process that has been used to develop the City of Portland's and Multnomah County's sustainable procurement policies over the past year, and it presents conclusions and recommendations for improving the process in the future.

### **Case Study Findings**

The three jurisdictions examined as case studies include the City of Santa Monica, California; the City of Seattle, Washington; and King County, Washington. While each of these programs is quite unique, there are similarities among them which present an opportunity for Portland and Multnomah County to learn from others' experiences.

Similarities among the programs include:

- Supportive culture of residents and government employees for sustainability efforts;

- Staff person(s) specifically dedicated to the coordination and implementation of the sustainable purchasing program;
- End users of products make product specifications decisions;
- Recognition programs for employees that participate; and
- Evaluation efforts focus on quantitative assessments.

The biggest difference among these three programs is the overall program structure.

Seattle's approach is very team-based, while the other programs rely more heavily on staff for decision-making, research, and product testing.

### **Survey Findings**

Respondents to the online survey indicated that there are a number of aspects of the City and County's process that have worked well, and a number of aspects that need improvement.

Positive aspects of the task force process include the following:

- Meetings were run in a way that was fair and created an open environment;
- City-County collaboration was beneficial to the process and to participants;
- The process included employees whom were most knowledgeable about products;
- Participants were enthusiastic to participate;
- The process raised participants' awareness and understanding of sustainability;
- Participants shared information from their task forces with their agencies;
- The majority of participants' jobs involved purchasing and implementing sustainability on a daily basis;
- Participants would like to continue to have input on the process and learn about the implementation of their task forces' recommendations. Email is the preferred method; and

- Overall, most participants felt that their task forces were somewhat or very successful in accomplishing their goals.

Negative aspects of the process identified by survey respondents felt include:

- A lack of clarity about goals, expectations, and timelines for task forces;
- Selection of task force members should occur after product selection;
- Difficulty collecting the necessary information to develop sound recommendations;
- A need for more assistance—specifically from experts, consultants, facilitators, and/or research assistance;
- Barriers to participation—especially lack of product knowledge and workload concerns; and
- Confusion about the outcomes of task forces' efforts.

### **Leaders Findings**

Input from four of the five task force leaders revealed their perspectives on the task force process. Key findings from the leaders include:

- Most felt somewhat prepared to lead their task force;
- Leaders expressed concerns about sustainability knowledge and their lack of clarity about the process goals, expectations, and timelines;
- Leaders would like additional facilitation training, case study examples of sustainable purchasing policies, and additional sustainability information; and
- Irregular attendance of participants made it difficult to effectively move the process forward.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The findings from the case study jurisdictions, the task force participant survey, and the supplemental questions for leaders suggest several conclusions about the task force

process and present suggestions for recommended changes to improve the process. As shown in **Tables ES-1 and ES-2** these conclusions and recommendations fall into four categories: support for the sustainable procurement policy development process; the structure of the task force process; assistance needs for task forces; and the connection between the Steering Committee and the task forces.

**Table ES-1. Conclusions and Recommendations.**

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***Support for the Sustainable Procurement Policy Development Process***

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CONCLUSIONS

1. Support is needed at all levels from the elected officials to the City/County staff to the general citizenry
  
2. Erratic attendance of task force meetings impedes progress

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. Build support at the top level of each agency; get a commitment from each agency director
  
  - b. Report annually on the progress made by the program
  
  - c. Use pilot projects to gather data and to build staff support for the process
  
  - a. Develop a system of accountability and buy-in to the process; give members assignments for each meeting
  
  - b. Build support with supervisors
- 

***Task Force Process***

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CONCLUSIONS

1. It may be more effective to select task force members after products are selected
  
2. Different commodities have different reporting and process needs
  
3. Participants expressed some uncertainty about the expected final product

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. Select a "core group" of task force members to select products and develop the process, then select additional members
  
  - b. Work with agency liaisons to include the most knowledgeable employees
  
  - a. Provide the report structure as a guideline, but allow task forces to adapt it as necessary
  
  - b. Include more space for narrative in the report format
  
  - c. Allow task forces to develop their own processes and timelines
  
  - a. Present examples of the level of work expected and number of recommendations to be developed
-

**Table ES-2. Conclusions and Recommendations (continued).**

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***Assistance Needs of Task Forces***

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CONCLUSIONS

1. Task forces and leaders need research and logistical assistance

2. Task forces need a sustainability expert

3. Leaders need a thorough orientation process

4. Tracking data is necessary to develop policies and measure progress

RECOMMENDATIONS

a. Hire a staff person at least part-time to work with each of the task forces

b. Select associate leaders to help lead the process

c. Hire an intern for each task force to help with research and bringing in product experts

d. Assign a member of the Steering Committee to each task force as a "helper"

a. Assign a staff person from the Office of Sustainable Development or the County's Sustainability Division to participate on each task force

a. Meet with leaders several times beforehand

b. Provide leaders with information about process goals, timelines, and end products; facilitation; sustainability; running effective meetings

a. Establish a tracking system of purchases and ensure access to this data

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***Connection between the Steering Committee and Task Forces***

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CONCLUSIONS

1. Establishing a mechanism for task force participants to provide feedback is helpful

2. Maintaining contact with task force members can establish a network of employees to provide opportunities for future collaboration, sharing experiences, recognition, and special events

3. Participants expressed some uncertainty about the outcomes of their efforts

4. Providing recognition is a good way to motivate participants

5. Task forces expressed desire for additional guidance from the Steering Committee

RECOMMENDATIONS

a. Develop a system for task force members to submit comments on an continuous basis

b. Conduct an annual process evaluation

a. Establish an email list serve with a periodic newsletter

a. Follow through on implementation and communicate this to participants

b. Do not drastically alter task force recommendations

a. Establish a mechanism of positive feedback from the Steering Committee to task force participants

a. Conduct periodic check-ins

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Sustainable procurement is an issue that governments at all levels have begun to address in recent years. Briefly stated, sustainable procurement is the process of integrating environmental, social, and economic factors into purchasing decisions.<sup>1</sup> Sustainable procurement is one mechanism that governments can implement in order to achieve goals of sustainable development—that is, sustainable procurement can work towards meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.<sup>2</sup> In addition, as large consumers and purchasers, government entities have the ability to drive market forces. Sustainable procurement attempts not only to reduce a government’s environmental impact, but also to push the market forces of sustainable goods.

### **Portland’s Process for Developing Sustainable Procurement Policies**

In 2000, Executive Order EO-00-07 established the State of Oregon’s Sustainable Supplier Council, which makes recommendations on purchasing policies and targets to Oregon’s Department of Administrative Services. Sustainable procurement is one way in which the state government is aiming to meet the directive of the Executive Order, which

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<sup>1</sup> Sustainable Procurement Steering Committee, “Sustainable Procurement Strategy: A Joint City of Portland and Multnomah County Effort,” March 20, 2002: 2. [www.ci.portland.or.us/purchase/Sustain-Procure.pdf](http://www.ci.portland.or.us/purchase/Sustain-Procure.pdf) 11/1/2002.

<sup>2</sup> This is the most commonly accepted and widely used definition of ‘sustainable development’ crafted by the United Nations’ Brundtland Commission—from City of Eugene, “Background Paper on Sustainability,” September 8, 1999. [www.ci.eugene.or.us/PDD/Sustain/Memo\\_8\\_30\\_99.htm](http://www.ci.eugene.or.us/PDD/Sustain/Memo_8_30_99.htm) 10/1/2002.

states “The State of Oregon shall develop and promote policies and programs that will assist Oregon to meet a goal of sustainability within one generation—by 2025.”<sup>3</sup>

Following the State’s lead, the City of Portland joined forces with Multnomah County to develop a cooperative strategy for sustainable procurement. The City of Portland’s Director of Purchasing spearheaded this effort when the mayor announced that the City’s purchasing efforts would be revamped to include sustainability as an evaluation factor. The Mayor’s announcement reinforced several “green” initiatives already approved by the City Council and County Board of Commissioners.<sup>4</sup>

The “Sustainable Procurement Strategy” encourages the collaboration of these two jurisdictions, but also recognizes that there may be necessary differences in how they take action. This document states, “It is intended that both City and County staff participate in the development of individual recommendations for changes in policies and procedures. It is, however, recognized that because of differences in governmental structure, variations in the implementation of the recommendations may occur.”<sup>5</sup> The strategy also promotes building upon the State of Oregon’s work and maintaining coordination and communication between the State, City, and County.<sup>6</sup> This document was initially drafted by the City of Portland’s Director of Purchasing, and was later approved by the City Council and County Board of Commissioners.

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<sup>3</sup> Oregon Solutions, “Executive Order EO-00-07: Development of a State Strategy Promoting Sustainability in Internal State Government Operations.” [www.oregonsolutions.net](http://www.oregonsolutions.net) 12/1/2002.

<sup>4</sup> Sue Klobertanz, personal communication, email 4/9/2003.

<sup>5</sup> Sustainable Procurement Steering Committee 3.

<sup>6</sup> Sustainable Procurement Steering Committee 4.



These two local governments have structured the process such that there is a Sustainable Procurement Steering Committee of approximately 20 people from various agencies of the County and City. The initial Steering Committee was selected by the City of Portland's Director of Purchasing, and has changed somewhat over time. The County Chair and Mayor drafted letters to the initial committee members emphasizing that this process is a priority for these jurisdictions.<sup>7</sup>

There are also five task forces that are each addressing a specific topic area of goods that are purchased. This process is modeled after the State of Oregon's process for establishing its sustainable procurement policies.<sup>8</sup> Task force leaders are members of the Sustainable Procurement Steering Committee, but most task force members are not on the Steering Committee. Presently the topic areas being addressed by the task forces include: paper, automotives, cleaning and coating supplies, office furniture, and building materials. Figure 1-1 provides a graphic description of the sustainable procurement process established by the City and County. Initial task force members were selected after the Steering Committee had identified commodity areas. The Steering Committee attempted to include the major users and stakeholders at the City and the County for each type of commodity.<sup>9</sup>

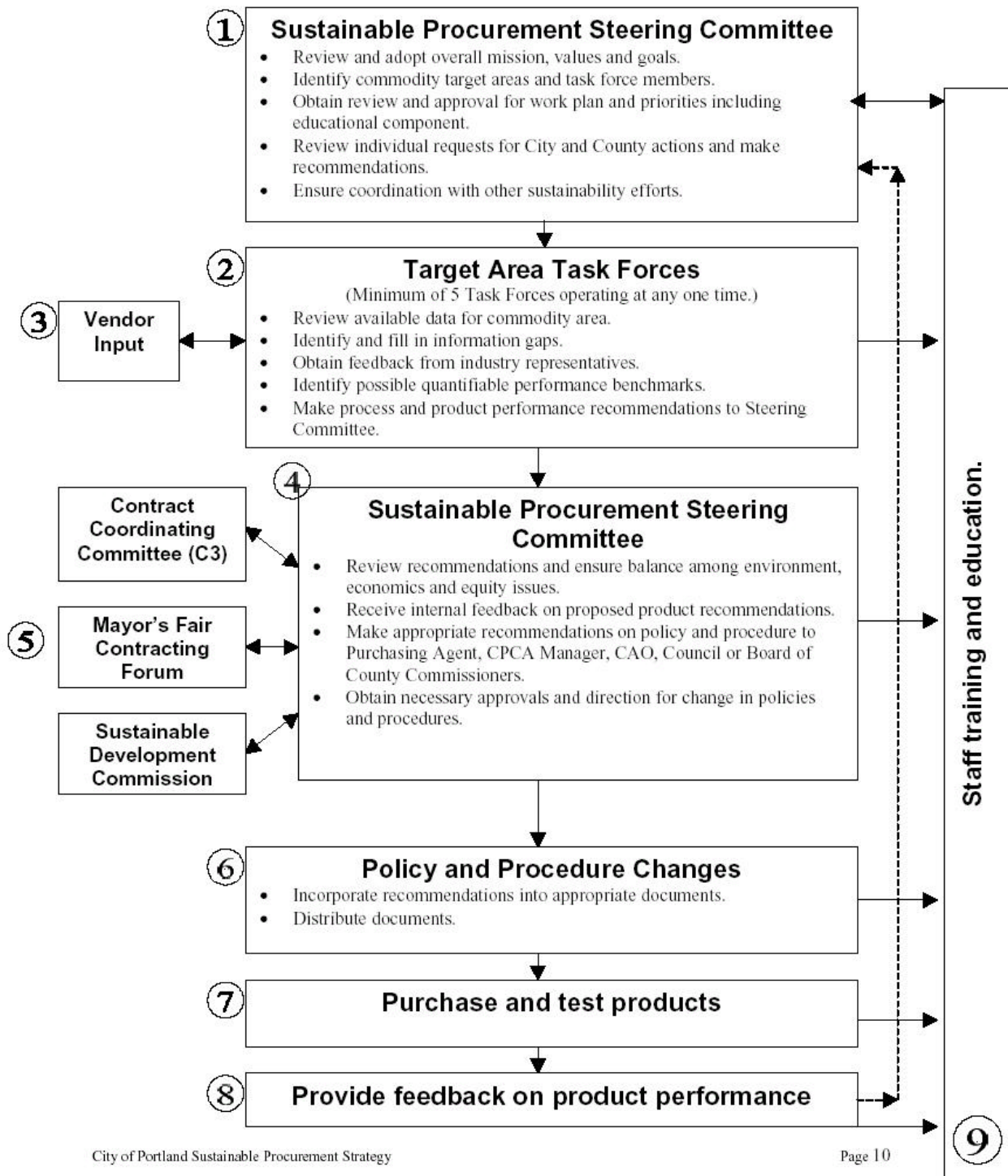
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<sup>7</sup> Sue Klobertanz, personal communication, email 4/9/2003.

<sup>8</sup> The State of Oregon's Sustainable Supplier Council utilizes product task groups to develop product target and policy recommendations that are based on what is achievable today and three years from today. This process emphasizes collaborative consensus in developing these recommendations. From Department of Administrative Services, "Sustainable Purchasing: Charge and Expectation." <http://tpps.das.state.or.us/purchasing/sustainable/charge-expectation.html> 3/1/2003.

<sup>9</sup> Sue Klobertanz, personal communication, email 4/9/2003.

**Figure 1-1. Sustainable Procurement Strategy Process Description**



Source: Sustainable Procurement Steering Committee.

Each task force is made up of County and City employees from agencies that use and purchase the given products. In addition, each task force has an assigned leader that reports back to the Steering Committee on the task force's research, findings, and recommendations. The task forces are charged with the following five tasks as outlined in the Steering Committee's strategy:

- Reviewing the available information about the specific commodity and obtaining any additional information needed;
- Determining the specific focus of the group's effort within the commodity area—for example, choosing to focus on carpet and wood products within the broader category of building materials;
- Obtaining feedback from industrial representatives and/or experts on the product about product availability, packaging, specifications, usage, disposal, and other aspects of the product's life cycle;
- Identifying quantifiable performance measures for the particular product(s); and
- Producing written recommendations on how to increase sustainable procurement of the particular product(s).<sup>10</sup>

The process has been structured so that each task force goes through four phases of reports that are presented to the Steering Committee. These reports take the form of a matrix structure, which was provided by the Steering Committee. At the end of these reports, the idea is that the Steering Committee will have actionable items that can either be acted upon without further process or can be presented to Portland City Council and/or Multnomah County Board of Commissioners for approval.

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<sup>10</sup> Sustainable Procurement Steering Committee 11-12.

## **The Purpose of this Project**

While the process set up by the Steering Committee seems logical, well structured, and the collaboration between the City and County has worked well, it is the general sentiment of the Steering Committee leaders that the process has become too bureaucratic. Conversations with the Steering Committee Chair and City of Portland staff indicate that task force members are no longer enthusiastic about the process, and it has become more of an exercise in filling in the prescribed report format rather than thinking of creative solutions.

The City and County are completing the first cycle of task force reports in the spring of 2003 and are now looking to see what could be improved for the next cycle of task force topics and reports that will begin later this spring. The hope is that this process will continue on an annual cycle with the goal of addressing at least five topic areas each year for at least five years—resulting in sustainable procurement policies for a total of at least 25 product areas. This project is quite timely, as it will evaluate the process that has been used thus far, and it will provide recommendations for improving its effectiveness in the future and better engage those involved in the process.

The specific research questions of this exit project are: How well is the task force process of the City of Portland and Multnomah County's Sustainable Procurement Strategy working? And, how can it be improved to increase its effectiveness?

## **Key Terms**

In addition to terms defined above, “the City of Portland” refers to the city government of Portland, Oregon and will be referred to simply as “the City” throughout this project.

Similarly, “Multnomah County” refers to the county government of Multnomah County, Oregon and will be referred to simply as “the County” in this project. Also, the term “Steering Committee” refers to the Sustainable Procurement Steering Committee established by the City and County.

## **Themes in the Literature**

There are two main themes explored in the literature review for this study. The first is an overview of sustainable procurement—more specifically, the US Environmental Protection Agency’s environmental purchasing program, why governments should implement sustainable procurement, how to develop and implement sustainable procurement programs, and policy tools for sustainable procurement. Because shifting to a new way of purchasing goods involves a great deal of change, literature on organizational change—including sources of resistance to change and how to successfully implement change—is the second theme included in the literature review.

## **Project Methodology**

Data for this project are primarily from (1) surveys of the 73 task force members and leaders, (2) additional questions answered by the five task force leaders, and (3) interviews with sustainable procurement staff at the City of Santa Monica, the City of Seattle, and King County. The survey addressed issues of individuals’ participation

levels, the structure of the task force process, resources and information used to develop the strategies, and individuals' personal and professional interest in the process. Both task force members and leaders were asked to complete this online survey. In addition, an extra set of questions was emailed to the task force leaders since these participants hold some of the key roles in the implementation of the task force process, and different leadership styles may have affected the different experiences of the task forces. Also by acquiring knowledge about the processes that other local governments are using to develop their sustainable procurement strategies, and by learning what does and does not work well for them, I was able to better assess the feasibility of recommendations that I am presenting to the Steering Committee.

### **Project Implications**

There are several broader implications of my work. First, this study will hopefully aid the City and County in improving their ability to buy more sustainable products. By doing this, this study can also impact society on several larger scales. For one thing, as such large entities, the City and County have the ability to help drive the market of more sustainable goods. In addition, Portland has a reputation for its leadership in environmental and sustainability initiatives, and although it is not among the first cities to address the issue of sustainable procurement, it too can become a national example whose lead other cities may follow. In addition, by choosing to purchase goods on a basis of sustainability, not just economic cost, the City and County can reduce their environmental impacts and better reflect the values of their residents while also serving as an example to residents and visitors of Portland. Finally, this work may help the City

and County, as well as other organizations that look to Portland as a model, to handle organizational issues of change, development, and collaboration.

### **Report Structure**

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 provides a review of relevant literature pertaining to sustainable procurement and organizational change and processes. Chapter 3 describes the methodology used in this project. Chapter 4 presents information about the three other local governments that I examined as case studies. Chapter 5 presents the results of the research, and finally, Chapter 6 presents conclusions and recommendations that the City and County can use to improve the sustainable procurement process.





## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide background knowledge on sustainable procurement programs, and to gain a better understanding of what it takes for organizations to implement these successfully. This chapter examines literature on sustainable procurement and organizational change. More specifically, it looks at the Environmental Protection Agency's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Program, why governments should implement sustainable procurement, how to develop and implement sustainable procurement programs, and policy tools for sustainable procurement. Because shifting to a new way of purchasing goods involves a great deal of change, literature on organizational change—including sources of resistance to change and how to successfully implement change—was reviewed as well.

#### **Sustainable Procurement**

Sustainable procurement is an effort emerging out of environmentally preferable purchasing (EPP) programs—also commonly referred to as “green purchasing” programs. Sustainable procurement considers social and economic aspects of products in addition to the environmental focus of EPP programs. As such, sustainable procurement and EPP are closely linked and a review of EPP literature is relevant to this project.

#### EPA's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Program

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is a national leader in promoting green purchasing and in providing resources related to EPP. The EPA describes EPP as “a

concept that melds procurement and environmental sustainability into an environmentally conscious purchasing strategy [and] advocates multifaceted environmental purchasing decisions . . . EPP encourages government agencies, businesses, and institutions to consider multiple environmental attributes of both products and services prior to purchase.”<sup>11</sup> The EPA’s official definition of EPP is “the purchase of products and services [that] have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared to other products and services that serve the same purpose.”<sup>12</sup>

Guiding principles of the EPA’s EPP program are as follows:

1. Include environmental considerations as part of the normal purchasing process;
2. Emphasize pollution prevention early in the purchasing process;
3. Examine multiple environmental attributes throughout a product/service’s life cycle;
4. Compare relevant environmental impacts when selecting products and services; and
5. Collect and base purchasing decisions on accurate and meaningful information about environmental procurement.<sup>13</sup>

EPP takes into account many environmental aspects of a product. These include:

- Durability
- Energy and water efficiency
- Resource conservation
- Packaging
- Recyclability

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<sup>11</sup> US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), “Wastewise Update: Environmentally Preferable Purchasing,” July 2001: 2. [www.epa.gov/wastewise/pubs/wwupda15.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/wastewise/pubs/wwupda15.pdf) 1/1/2003.

<sup>12</sup> US EPA, “Environmentally Preferable Products (EPP) Final Guidance Brochure.” [www.epa.gov/opptintr/epp/documents/eppbro.htm](http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/epp/documents/eppbro.htm) 12/1/2002.

<sup>13</sup> US EPA “EPP Final Guidance Brochure.”

- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Renewable or recycled material content
- Safer manufacturing approaches
- Toxic material content
- Transportation-related impacts
- Waste prevention approaches
- Impacts on worker and consumer safety
- Impacts on biodiversity, air, and water quality<sup>14,15,16,17</sup>

The City of Portland and Multnomah County expand the scope of EPP to also include social and economic aspects of products. The City and County’s vision is to “seek to promote actions which are environmentally and socially beneficial while also being economically intelligent.”<sup>18</sup> This means in addition to looking at the environmental impacts of products, Portland also strives to promote fair contracting opportunities to minority and women-owned businesses, and emerging small businesses while spending the public’s tax dollars efficiently.

### Why Governments Should Purchase Goods in a Sustainable Manner

Shifting to a procurement system that is not solely based on economic costs of products requires a paradigm shift in decision-making that reflects the government’s priority of the

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<sup>14</sup> US EPA “Wastewise Update”<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Elwood, Holly and Scot Case, “Private Sector Pioneers: How Companies are Incorporating Environmentally Preferable Purchasing,” *GMI* 29 Spring 2000: 71.

<sup>16</sup> Case, “Environmentally Preferable Purchasing—Moving Beyond ‘Buy Recycled,’” *Government Procurement* October 2002: 9. [www.newdream.org/procure/GovernmentProcurementOctober2002.pdf](http://www.newdream.org/procure/GovernmentProcurementOctober2002.pdf) 2/14/2003.

<sup>17</sup> US EPA, “State and Local Government Pioneers: How State and Local Governments are Implementing Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Practices,” November 2000: 3. [www.epa.gov/opptintr/epp/pubs/statenlocal.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/epp/pubs/statenlocal.pdf) 2/14/2003.

<sup>18</sup> Sustainable Procurement Steering Committee, “Sustainable Procurement Strategy: A Joint City of Portland and Multnomah County Effort,” March 20,2002: 5. [www.ci.portland.or.us/purchase/Sustain-Procure.pdf](http://www.ci.portland.or.us/purchase/Sustain-Procure.pdf) 11/1/2002.

long-term over the short term.<sup>19</sup> While this may not be an easy or quick transition, the literature points to several reasons for governments to participate in and promote sustainable purchasing practices.

### *Reducing and Preventing Negative Environmental, Social, and Economic Impacts*

One of the overarching goals to “reinventing government” through the use of sustainable procurement programs is to improve environmental, social, and economic performance and to contribute to meeting policy objectives. In the long-term, purchasing in a sustainable fashion avoids considerable environmental and social damages and prevents many costs to future generations.<sup>20</sup>

### *Purchasing Power*

Americans are disproportionately large consumers. Our country consumes about one-quarter of the world’s resources even though the US represents less than 5% of the world’s population, so the choices that we make as consumers impact not only our own nation, but the entire world.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the governments running the US are enormous consumers in and of themselves. As such, governments hold an incredible amount of purchasing power, which means they can help drive the market in socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable directions. Ralph Nader writes, “The government’s immense purchasing power is an unappreciated and potentially significant force for innovation . . . Government procurement can promote the development of

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<sup>19</sup> Nader, Ralph, “Introduction” In *Forty Ways to Make Government Purchasing Green* by Eleanor J. Lewis and Eric Weltman. (Washington, DC: Center for Study of Responsible Law, 1992) v.

<sup>20</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). *Greener Public Purchasing: Issues and Practical Solutions*. (Paris, France: OECD, 2000) 19-20.

<sup>21</sup> US EPA, “Wastewise Update” 2.

newer, better products, as well as advance declared national policies.”<sup>22</sup> Like individual consumers who make value-based choices when they purchase products, “Large purchasers have incredible power to push markets in socially beneficial directions. The nation’s 87,000 federal, state, and local governments spend \$385 billion a year on goods and services, including everything from paint to office paper.”<sup>23,24</sup> This represents about one in every five dollars spent in our economy.

In his article, Scot Case points out that “this belief in the power of government purchasing to improve markets has a historical basis.”<sup>25</sup> He cites the following four examples to make this point.

1. *Standardized Clothing Sizes.* During the civil war army purchasing agents introduced the idea of standardized clothing sizes as they attempted to outfit their new recruits. The government’s standard sizing charts quickly grew in use throughout the clothing industry.
2. *Air Bags.* When air bags were first developed in the 1950’s and 1960’s auto manufacturers did not believe consumers would be willing to pay for this added feature. In 1984 the US General Services Administration began to require air bags in the more than 5,000 vehicles that were purchased. Following this mandate, air bags began to be offered to the general public, and as more customers began ordering them the cost per unit dropped, and they are now considered a standard feature of most new cars.
3. *Energy Efficient Computers.* Today’s computers are increasingly energy efficient because of the government purchasers’ preference for energy

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<sup>22</sup> Nader v.

<sup>23</sup> Motavelli, Jim and Josh Harkinson, “Buying Green: Harnessing the Incredible Procurement Power of Governments, Hospitals, Colleges, and America’s Biggest Corporations to Protect the Environment,” *E Magazine* September/October 2002: 27. They also note that colleges and universities represent another \$300 billion/year in spending.

<sup>24</sup> US EPA, “State and Local Government Pioneers” 1.

<sup>25</sup> Case 11.

efficient computers. Until the federal government began expressing its preference for energy efficiency in computers, manufacturers were reluctant to invest the time and effort to design these machines. These computers are now available at no extra cost to the general public.

4. *Recycled Paper.* Paper containing recycled-content used to be a relatively small portion of the market until the federal government began requiring recycled content in its paper purchases. By 2000, over 98% of the federal government's paper contained more than 30% recycled content, and these papers are widely available to consumers at a comparable rate to virgin paper.<sup>26</sup>

*Promotes "green" products and product stewardship*

Due to the nature of our capitalist society "green" products are subject to market forces that pit them against very well funded mainstream products.<sup>27</sup> The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) suggests that the ability to influence the behavior of other socio-economic actors and to send clear signals to the market place is one of the three primary aims of implementing "green" purchasing as a way to "reinvent government."<sup>28</sup> Motavelli and Harkinson propose that large purchasers can be effective in promoting environmentally sound products by targeting large manufacturers to "green" their practices while also encouraging and purchasing sustainable products from smaller businesses.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Case 11.

<sup>27</sup> Motavelli and Harkinson 27.

<sup>28</sup> OECD, 19-20.

<sup>29</sup> Motavelli and Harkinson 28.

One way that governments can push large companies to become more sustainable is by promoting product stewardship, also known as extended product responsibility.<sup>30</sup>

Product stewardship is “an environmental management strategy that means whoever designs, produces, sells, or uses a product takes responsibility for minimizing the product’s environmental impact throughout all stages of the product’s life cycle.”<sup>31</sup> This principle promotes a shared responsibility between industry, government, and consumers.

The Northwest Product Stewardship Council advocates a partnership among industry and government as they write:

Industry should provide leadership in realizing [product stewardship] principles. Government will provide leadership in promoting the practices of product stewardship through procurement, technical assistance, program evaluation, education, market development, agency coordination, and by addressing the regulatory barriers and, where necessary, providing regulatory incentives and disincentives. Industry and government shall provide—and consumers should take full advantage of—information needed to make responsible environmental purchasing, reuse, and recycling, and disposal decisions.<sup>32</sup>

The development of Portland and Multnomah County’s sustainable procurement policies in many ways fulfills the mission set forth here. The Sustainable Procurement task forces are addressing issues of agency coordination, regulations, education, and market development. In doing so, these government agencies will encourage and push industry to fulfill its part of the partnership of product stewardship.

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<sup>30</sup> City of Eugene, “Background Paper on Sustainability,” September 8, 1999. [www.ci.eugene.or.us/PDD/Sustain/Memo\\_8\\_30\\_99.htm](http://www.ci.eugene.or.us/PDD/Sustain/Memo_8_30_99.htm) 10/1/2002.

<sup>31</sup> Northwest Product Stewardship Council, “Defining Product Stewardship.” [www.productstewardship.net/definingStewardship.html](http://www.productstewardship.net/definingStewardship.html) 2/1/2003.

<sup>32</sup> Northwest Product Stewardship Council.

### *Economic cost savings*

Sustainable purchasing can be beneficial not only to society as a whole, but also as a budgetary tool for government units implementing this strategy. The OECD recognizes the intent to “advance economic performance by improving the quality of spending or by achieving cost savings” as a primary aim of governments that are implementing sustainable purchasing.<sup>33</sup> The US EPA notes that oftentimes choosing environmentally preferable products can help organizations save money by reducing purchasing and disposal costs of goods.<sup>34</sup> In addition, choosing goods that prevent pollution can save money in the long run and be far more effective than trying to remove or clean-up the pollution later.<sup>35</sup>

The Northwest Product Stewardship Council promotes product stewardship for four primary reasons which all directly or indirectly also produce cost savings. First, product stewardship can be used to recapture lost resources—that is, it encourages using materials more efficiently, which can often reduce economic and environmental costs of producing goods. The second and third reasons are closely related—by reducing the amount of garbage produced in the production, consumption, and disposal of goods, waste management costs to government and ratepayers are reduced. Finally, sustainable products reduce potential harm due to toxic material exposure—the impact and mitigation of which can be very expensive.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> OECD 19-20.

<sup>34</sup> US EPA, “Wastewise Update” 3.

<sup>35</sup> US EPA “EPP Final Guidance Brochure.”

<sup>36</sup> Northwest Product Stewardship Council.



*Public relations and the organization's image*

The EPA also notes that implementing environmental or sustainable purchasing strategies can help organizations improve their public image by demonstrating their commitment to conserving the environment.<sup>37</sup> Sustainable purchasing can give private businesses a competitive edge in distinguishing themselves from their competitors, saving money, and responding to customer interests.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, implementing sustainable procurement can serve to promote greater public trust and faith in the government's efforts to reflect citizens' values and concerns.

The City of Portland and Multnomah County's Sustainable Procurement Steering Committee states that through its efforts it hopes to "wield monetary and symbolic influence and bear responsibility to ensure that purchasing practices support public values."<sup>39</sup> Public values related specifically to sustainability are included in the City of Portland's adopted Sustainable City Principles. Principle 8, in particular, ties into sustainable procurement as it states that City elected officials and staff will "Purchase products based on long term environmental and operating costs and find ways to include environmental and social costs in short term prices. Purchase products that are durable, reusable, made of recycled materials, and non-toxic."<sup>40</sup> By demonstrating that it is making diligent efforts to purchase goods in a sustainable fashion, the City of Portland can demonstrate to its citizens and visitors that it is following through on the values set forth by its citizens and City councilors.

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<sup>37</sup> US EPA, "Wastewise Update" 3-4.

<sup>38</sup> Elwood and Case 72.

<sup>39</sup> Sustainable Procurement Steering Committee pg 2

<sup>40</sup> City of Portland, Office of Sustainable Development, "Sustainable City Principles," November 1994. [www.sustainableportland.org/Sustainable%20City%20Principles.pdf](http://www.sustainableportland.org/Sustainable%20City%20Principles.pdf) 11/1/2002.

## Developing and Implementing Sustainable Procurement Programs

“Much creativity, energy, and attention is needed to forge a permanent link between public purchasing and society’s goals and needs,” writes Ralph Nader.<sup>41</sup> The EPA and King County’s literature provide insight and suggestions on what it takes to make sustainable purchasing programs a reality.

The EPA’s EPP program states that there are four main elements required to have a successful environmental purchasing program. These include: a green team to guide and promote the program, measurable goals for specific time periods by which success can be evaluated, an organization-wide EPP policy highlighting philosophy and objectives, and support and involvement from all levels within the organization. They also suggest that a diverse team of individuals with different institutional perspectives can help to ensure that all opportunities for environmental considerations are explored.<sup>42</sup> King County adds to this in stating, “Implementation of [a procurement policy] relies on the judgment of people who actually use the products in their daily work.”<sup>43</sup>

King County suggests that there are eight steps to successfully implementing a “green purchasing” program.

1. Make a statement of intent. This establishes support from management and set priorities.
2. Put someone in charge. This establishes a system of accountability.

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<sup>41</sup> Nader vi.

<sup>42</sup> US EPA, “Wastewise Update” 5-7.

<sup>43</sup> King County Environmental Purchasing Program, “About the Environmental Purchasing Program: Introduction.” [www.metrokc.gov.procure/green/about.htm](http://www.metrokc.gov.procure/green/about.htm) 1/1/2003.

3. Work with departments one on one. This engages experts in what they know best.
4. Start where you are. Look at the products you are buying and see which ones have recycled or otherwise environmentally preferable alternatives.
5. Look for products that save money. This will also help garner agency and management support.
6. Have reasonable expectations and reward small accomplishments. Realize that change takes time and don't expect green purchasing to happen all at once.
7. Network and share information with other jurisdictions. This can improve the efficiency of the process—there is no need to reinvent the wheel if someone else has figured something out.
8. Collect data and publicize. This establishes further accountability with the public and helps in information sharing.<sup>44</sup>

Furthermore, King County believes that program success is dependent on enabling agencies to appreciate the new opportunities being created in a changing marketplace. It is crucial that information is a central part of the procurement program—this means not only educational seminars, but also internet resources and email newsletters/bulletins.<sup>45</sup>

### Sustainable Procurement Policy Tools

Product leasing can be an effective way to encourage manufacturers to design products that are durable and can be upgraded. In addition, dematerialization—using fewer materials to produce products that have the same or better performance—and product take-back programs can also be effective.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Hamilton, Karen, King County Environmental Purchasing Program, “How to Make an Environmental Purchasing Program Work.” [www.metrokc.gov/procure/green/about.htm](http://www.metrokc.gov/procure/green/about.htm) 1/1/2003.

<sup>45</sup> King County, “About the Environmental Purchasing Program.”

<sup>46</sup> Northwest Product Stewardship Council.

The US EPA also suggests that establishing price preferences for environmentally preferable goods may be helpful in encouraging manufacturers to produce environmentally preferable goods. A price preference acknowledges a buyer's willingness to pay slightly more for a product that is more sustainable than the buyer would typically pay for the "traditional" equivalent.<sup>47</sup>

Another system that can be put in place to help encourage sustainable procurement is the use of a "best value" approach. This approach modifies the typical "low bid wins" approach that many governments take to purchasing. Instead, in a "best value" approach purchasers are encouraged to identify and consider many other aspects of a product—such as those listed earlier in this chapter.<sup>48</sup>

#### Summary of Sustainable Procurement Literature

The literature suggests that some of the main reasons for implementing sustainable procurement practices include: reduction of negative environmental, social, and economic impacts; the purchasing power of governments to drive markets in sustainable directions; the promotion of sustainable products; economic cost savings; and an enhanced public image. Making sustainable purchasing a reality requires effort and structural change in an organization's purchasing practices.

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<sup>47</sup> US EPA, "State and Local Government Pioneers" 12.

<sup>48</sup> US EPA, "State and Local Government Pioneers" 14.

## Organizational Change

Organizational survival is the ultimate test of an organization, but most of the time organizational change is the result of shifting environmental pressures and goals.<sup>49</sup>

Organizations are dynamic entities, and a culture change represents planned, encompassing, substantial changes and involves a break with the past.<sup>50</sup> Change planned through research and development is what Hall terms “programmed innovation.”<sup>51</sup> Even if change is intentional and planned, however, culture change in an organization is “a difficult, complicated, and demanding effort that may not succeed.”<sup>52</sup> The success or failure of an organizational change is often impacted by the pervasiveness, magnitude, innovativeness, and duration of the new paradigm.<sup>53</sup> Hall identifies the debate over whether it is the values of the organization’s elite or the organizational structure that is more important to shaping organizational innovation and change.<sup>54</sup>

Trice and Beyer identify three main types of culture change. First change in an organization may be revolutionary and comprehensive efforts to overhaul the culture of the entire entity. Secondly, organizational change may be more specific alterations to subunits or subcultures within the organization. Finally, organizational change may be a gradual, cumulative, and comprehensive reshaping of the organization.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Hall, Richard H. *Organizations: Structures, Processes, and Outcomes 5<sup>th</sup> Edition*. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1991) 183.

<sup>50</sup> Trice, Harrison M. and Janie M. Beyer. *The Cultures of Work Organizations*. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1993) 395.

<sup>51</sup> Hall 193-194.

<sup>52</sup> Trice and Beyer 395.

<sup>53</sup> Trice and Beyer 396-398.

<sup>54</sup> Hall 194.

<sup>55</sup> Trice and Beyer 396-398.

## Resistance to change

Regardless of the type of change that an organization is undertaking, it is likely that the organization will encounter resistance at one level or another. Katz, Kahn and Adams point out the nearly inevitable link between organizational change and the conflict this often brings about due to resistance among the organization's members. "Organizations are characterized by orderly, recurring patterns of behavior; an array of people whose behavior shows no such interdependent patterning and recurrence we call unorganized"<sup>56</sup> making resistance inherent in organizational change. Furthermore, they highlight the fact that this resistance may be "wise or foolish, constructive or destructive, peaceful or violent."<sup>57</sup>

Several of the authors suggest different sources of this resistance. Hall, Katz and Kahn, and Kaufman cite several main reasons that organizations experience resistance to change. These include:

1. Familiarity with existing patterns;
2. Calculated opposition by groups within the organization who may feel threatened;
3. Simple inability to change—this may be due to systematic obstacles and/or mental blinders;
4. The presence of multiple mechanisms to ensure organizational stability;
5. Local determinism;
6. Individual and group inertia;
7. Change may threaten the established power system;
8. Organizations are conservative by nature; and

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<sup>56</sup> Katz, Daniel, Robert L. Kahn, and J. Stacy Adams. *The Study of Organizations*. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1980) 465.

<sup>57</sup> Katz, Kahn, and Adams 465.

9. Acknowledged collective benefits of stability.<sup>58,59,60</sup>

Hellriegel, Slocum, and Woodman and Trice and Beyer identify many sources of resistance to change at both the individual and group level. At the individual level these include: fear of the unknown, self-interest (that is, individuals benefit from the status quo), selective attention and retention (receptivity to new ideas), habit, the need for security, and dependence on others. At the group or organizational level resistance to change may stem from: threats to power and influence, a lack of trust within the group or of the leaders, differing perceptions of goals, the expectation of disruptions to social relations, resource limitations, fixed investments, and inter-organizational agreements.<sup>61,62</sup>

Specific to sustainable procurement, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) suggests that there may be a variety of difficulties as managers within government agencies try to implement these new purchasing systems and policies.

Their list of possible difficulties includes the following:

1. An attitude that there are “more important” things to focus on;
2. Confusion about the policies or legislation;
3. A loss of commitment over time;
4. The use of reassuring, but out-of-date standards;
5. Not giving adequate time before expecting results;

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<sup>58</sup> Hall 184-185.

<sup>59</sup> Katz, Daniel and Robert L. Kahn. *The Social Psychology of Organizations 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. (New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons, 1978) 714-715.

<sup>60</sup> Kaufman, Herbert. *The Limits of Organizational Change*. (University, AL: The University of Alabama, 1971) 8-39.

<sup>61</sup> Hellriegel, Don, John W. Slocum Jr., and Richard W. Woodman. *Organizational Behavior 6<sup>th</sup> Edition*. (St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Company, 1992) 741.

<sup>62</sup> Trice and Beyer 402-404.

6. Letting audit and financial concerns drive procurement;
7. Lack of clarity about what products are “sustainable” or “green;”
8. Lack of skills; and
9. Lack of environmental or sustainability knowledge and awareness.<sup>63</sup>

### Implementing organizational change

Trice and Beyer propose that an organization goes through three stages as it changes.

First, the organization must distribute information about the change to its members and/or participants. The second phase of implementation occurs when the members become receptive and accepting of the organizational changes. Finally, after these two preliminary stages have taken place, the new system or practice can actually go into effect.<sup>64</sup>

Trice and Beyer also present eight key recommendations to successfully implementing and sustaining change in an organization. First, they suggest, “cultural change [of an organization] is best initiated at propitious moments, when some obvious problem, opportunity, or change in circumstances makes change seem desirable.”<sup>65</sup> Secondly, they propose combining caution with optimism. They emphasize the importance of managers’ confidence and optimism and state how important it is that people in these positions remain consistent and persistent as the change is implemented. Third, understanding resistance to change and where it stems from can help to identify and deal with underlying issues that may prevent the change from taking place. This resistance may be partially addressed by the authors’ recommendation for maintaining some continuity of

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<sup>63</sup> OECD 77.

<sup>64</sup> Trice and Beyer 407.

<sup>65</sup> Trice and Beyer 399.



organizational tradition despite the many changes that may take place. Other recommendations that these authors set forth are: (1) recognize the importance of implementation of change, (2) select, modify, and create appropriate cultural forms as ways of conveying change, (3) modify socialization tactics, and (4) find and cultivate innovative leadership.<sup>66</sup>

Kaufman also provides several suggestions for instigating organizational change and getting beyond the inability to change. To address systematic obstacles, he suggests: importing and concentrating resources, avoiding sunk costs, lifting official constraints, and reorganizing. To remove the mental blinders that organizations may be wearing, Kaufman proposes recruiting unorthodox personnel, training and retraining group members, and exposing the organization to external ideas to spark creativity.<sup>67</sup>

The OECD recognizes that developing environmentally preferable purchasing systems provides the opportunity for an organizational cultural change. This group emphasizes that there are two critical components to making this change successful. First, there needs to be support and commitment from the highest level of management in the organization. Secondly, it is crucial that individuals in the organization feel that sustainable procurement is a valuable long-term objective for the organization as a whole and for the staff of the organization.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Trice and Beyer 399-413.

<sup>67</sup> Kaufman 45-61.

<sup>68</sup> OECD 21-22, 76.

### Summary of Organizational Change Literature

The literature on organizational change presented in this review suggests that there are different types of organizational change, but that human nature resists change, and there are several common sources of the resistance that organizations often encounter when their culture shifts in some way. Understanding why individuals and groups resist change can be helpful in making suggestions as to how change can be implemented. In the case of this study, the change underway involves a major paradigm shift about what is important to consider when buying products. City and County employees may be comfortable and familiar with the current practices, thus resistant to this change. This review also presents suggestions for successfully implementing organizational change, which can be incorporated as conclusions and recommendations are formed for the Steering Committee.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This study examines the task force process that has been used to develop sustainable procurement policies for the City of Portland and Multnomah County. The research for this project came from 6 different tasks as follows:

- Attending the Sustainable Procurement Steering Committee’s meetings;
- Briefly reviewing the five task force’s Phases 1 through 4 reports;
- Interviewing sustainable procurement staff at the City of Seattle, the City of Santa Monica, and King County;
- Developing and administering a survey to task force participants;
- Developing and administering additional questions to task force leaders; and
- Developing findings and recommendations.

Following is more detailed information on each of these research processes.

*Attendance of Steering Committee Meetings*—I attended four of the Sustainable Procurement Steering Committee’s meetings on December 17, 2002, February 18, 2003, March 18, 2003, and May 20, 2003. Each of these meetings had a different focus. At the meeting on December 17, 2002 each of the task force leaders presented their “Phase Four” (final) reports. The purpose of the February 18, 2003 meeting was to review the core recommendations to be taken to the City Council and/or County Board of Commissioners. The March 18, 2003 meeting reviewed recommendations to be moved forward to the City Council and County Board of Commissioners. I was able to get input

from Steering Committee members on my survey instrument during this meeting. I presented the findings of this study to the Steering Committee at the May 20, 2003 meeting. The purpose of my attendance at these meetings was primarily to familiarize myself with the process that has been in place thus far as well as to gain a better understanding of the different players involved and their roles.

In addition these meetings provided me an opportunity to get the Steering Committee's input on this evaluation process. I also met with Sue Klobertanz, City of Portland Director of Purchasing and Steering Committee Chair, and Matt Emlen, City of Portland Office of Sustainable Development, to discuss this project outside of the Steering Committee meetings, and these individuals served as my primary contacts throughout this project.

*Review of Task Force Phases 1-4 Reports*—I reviewed the reports developed by the five task forces to gain a better understanding of the process and structure that was provided to the task forces by the Steering Committee.

*Interviews with Other Local Governments*—There are several other cities and counties on the west coast that have sustainable procurement policies in place. Among those that are considered leaders in this field are the City of Santa Monica, California; the City of Seattle, Washington; and King County, Washington.<sup>69</sup> I conducted phone interviews with the staff person in charge of sustainable procurement programs at each of these local

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<sup>69</sup> This information is City of Portland staff and the director of the Center for Watershed and Community Health.

governments to find out what sort of processes their jurisdictions use and if they have conducted any kind of evaluations of their programs thus far. Interview questions were as follows:

1. What sort of process did your City/County use to develop your sustainable procurement policies for specific products or product areas?
  - a. Who was/is involved in this process? How was this group selected?
  - b. Do you have staff specifically dedicated to your sustainable procurement program? If so, how many full-time equivalents (working 40 hours/week)?
  - c. What elements of the process have worked well? What has not worked?
  - d. Who made the initial decisions about what specific product alternatives would be investigated or promoted?
  - e. Who made the final decisions on policies that were proposed to City Council or the County Board of Commissioners? Who determines what is in the product specifications? (If there is an internal dispute, who has the final say?)
2. Have you evaluated your City/County's sustainable procurement program?
  - a. How did you approach this?
  - b. Did you evaluate the process? If so, how did you do this?
  - c. What sort of questions did you focus on in your evaluation? Do you try to gauge whether this program has raised overall awareness and learning about sustainability that employees could apply in their work?

Additional details about these interviews as well as notes from the interviews can be found in Appendix A.

*Survey of Task Force Members and Leaders*—All City and County employees who participated in one of the task forces first received an email on April 2, 2003 providing a link to the online survey and urging them to complete the survey by April 8, 2003. This was sent to 52 City employees by the City of Portland’s Director of Purchasing (and the Steering Committee Chair) and to 21 County employees by the Central Procurement and Contract Administration Manager. A follow-up email was sent by the same individuals on April 7, 2003 reminding participants to complete the survey if they had not already done so.

The 19-question survey consisted primarily of close-ended questions for the purpose of analysis, but also included open-ended follow-up questions and left room for additional comments at the end of the survey so that respondents could address any other issues that came to mind. Questions addressed the following six informational objectives:

1. To determine the participation levels of task force members.
2. To determine the positive and negative aspects of the task force process.
3. To determine if adequate resources were provided in this process.
4. To determine participants’ interest/investment in this process and if they are relating information from the process back to their agencies.
5. To determine participants’ understanding of the process and overall goals.
6. To determine ways in which the process could be improved in the future.

The survey questions were reviewed multiple times by my committee and by members of the Steering Committee. Appendix B includes a copy of the survey instrument that was posted online and the email sent to participants.

The survey questions were transferred into HTML format by Portland Development Commission (PDC) staff. Although the survey was posted on PDC's website, it was not linked to any of their other webpages to avoid extraneous responses. Survey responses were automatically recorded into a spreadsheet in HTML format and were then entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), which was used for data analysis. Data analysis of survey results focused on similarity of themes among individuals on different task forces. I was also able to analyze responses by task force.

*Additional Survey of Task Force Leaders*—I sent an email containing seven additional questions to each of the leaders of the five task forces. Contact information of the task force leaders was obtained from the Steering Committee Chair. The survey was sent via email to participants on April 3, 2003, and participants were asked to respond by April 11, 2003. The objectives of these questions were to acquire a more in-depth understanding of the roles and responsibilities of leaders as well as an idea of the level of support they received. Appendix D contains a copy of the email the leaders received.

*Develop Findings and Recommendations*—I used the data gathered through the surveys and interviews to develop overall findings about the task force process. From these I was

able to develop recommendations as to how the Steering Committee might improve the process in the future. These findings and recommendations are presented in Chapter 6.

### Limitations to this Methodology

One possible drawback to the approach I used is that surveys do not explore issues as deeply as in-depth interviews and may not have forced the task force members to think creatively about how this process could be different. There were, however, too many questions to ask people in an interview setting, and the time and logistics to set up more than 70 interviews were not feasible in the timeframe of this project. In addition, when individuals complete surveys there is no opportunity for the synergy that sometimes results from group thinking and brainstorming. On the other hand, collecting individual responses by surveys minimizes the collective “group whining effect.”

I was also concerned about the possibility that no one would have feasible suggestions for improving the process or that response rate would be very low, and thus inconclusive. These did not prove to be issues in analyzing this survey.

### Delimitations

This study focused simply on the process that is being used to develop the City and County’s sustainable procurement policies. It is not meant to be an overall evaluation of how effective the strategy is to date as it seems a bit early in the process for this. In



addition, this study does not attempt to make recommendations for reforming the City and/or the County's purchasing system(s).<sup>70</sup>

### Ethical Issues that Could Arise

In order to avoid ethical issues that could arise from participants providing responses that could jeopardize their jobs, survey responses were anonymous, and the leaders and interviewees were not identified by name in this report. Furthermore, I obtained human subjects approval from the University of Oregon.

The next chapter presents information about my three case studies of other jurisdictions' sustainable/environmental purchasing programs.

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<sup>70</sup> At present, City bureaus can make purchases of less than \$5,000 without going through the Bureau of Purchasing. This means that it will be more difficult to implement sustainable procurement efforts for purchases that do not go through the centralized purchasing process.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **CASE STUDIES**

The City of Portland and Multnomah County are not among the very first jurisdictions to develop sustainable procurement practices at the local government level. As such, looking at other programs that have been in place for longer periods of time may provide insight into what does and does not work well in making these types of programs successful. For this study I examined three other local jurisdictions on the west coast that are considered leaders and role models in the field of sustainable procurement. The selection of these three jurisdictions—namely, the City of Santa Monica, California; the City of Seattle, Washington; and, King County, Washington—came at the recommendation of City of Portland staff.

Information about these three jurisdictions was collected primarily through phone interviews with one of the primary persons in charge of the sustainable procurement program at each jurisdiction. Interview questions focused on the history of the program and its policies, how the program operates to develop sustainable procurement practices, what has and has not worked well for the program, and any program evaluations that have taken place. These interviews were supplemented by documentation about each program from their websites. Additional notes on these interviews can be found in Appendix A.

## **City of Santa Monica, California**

Santa Monica, California is a city of approximately 84,000 residents and 1,800 employees. This is clearly much smaller than the City of Portland, which has an estimated population of around 530,000 and employs approximately 5,900 people, and Multnomah County's population of about 661,000 with 4,400 employees.<sup>71</sup> I spoke with an environmental analyst in Santa Monica's Environmental Programs Division about their environmental purchasing program.

### History of Program & Overview of Policies

The City of Santa Monica's environmental purchasing program kicked off in 1993 when a group of UCLA graduate students reviewed the hazardous materials being purchased by Santa Monica and offered suggestions for alternatives. Santa Monica began environmental purchasing by focusing on toxics use reduction and working with its different departments to do this. This evolved into an environmental purchasing program in Santa Monica's Environmental Programs Division. The city hopes to expand their program beyond the environmental aspects of purchasing into the realm of sustainable purchasing, but they note that this is significantly more complex.

The environmental purchasing program is part of Santa Monica's Sustainable City Program, which is a citywide effort to "create the basis for a more sustainable way of life—helping the city to meet its current needs without compromising the ability of future

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<sup>71</sup> Figures for Santa Monica are from interviewee and are not available from the Census of Governments. Population figures for the City of Portland and Multnomah County are from the 2000 US Census, and employment figures are from the 1997 Census of Governments. [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) 5/1/2003.

generations to do the same.”<sup>72</sup> Santa Monica does not have any official policies that dictate their environmental purchasing practices. Instead they have a few general administrative policies that instruct staff to buy “the best where practicable.” For example, their informal Recycled Products Procurement Policy states:

*Whenever practicable*, products should be purchased which contain in order of preference: 1. the highest percentage of post-consumer recovered material available in the marketplace; 2. the highest percentage of pre-consumer recovered material available in the market place; and 3. paper products should at a minimum meet the State of California’s definition of “recycled paper products” (at least 10% post-consumer recovered material and at least 50% total recovered material).<sup>73</sup>

The only specific purchasing policies adopted by Santa Monica’s City Council are a ban on the purchase and use of tropical rainforest hardwood products (unless they are certified by the Forest Stewardship Council) and regulations on the purchase and use of ozone-depleting compounds.

The environmental analyst explained that part of the reason Santa Monica does not have anything more specific is because it has not been needed, and products are always changing so the policies would have to be updated constantly. He also stated that environmental purchasing has been a staff-led effort thus far, so there is a chance that if a number of the existing staff left it would go away; however, he said they have a fairly established network of staff with buy-in on this initiative.

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<sup>72</sup> US EPA Environmental Preferable Purchasing Program, “The City of Santa Monica’s Environmental Purchasing: A Case Study.” March 1998: 3. [www.epa.gov/opptintr/epp/pubs/santa.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/epp/pubs/santa.pdf) 2/14/2003.

<sup>73</sup> City of Santa Monica, Sustainable City Program, “Purchasing: Policies.” [www.ci.santa-monica.ca.us/environment/policy/purchasing/](http://www.ci.santa-monica.ca.us/environment/policy/purchasing/) 3/1/2003.

### How Program Operates and Process of Developing Purchasing Practices

The environmental programs analyst in the Environmental Programs Division (EPD) at the City of Santa Monica described their program process as “evolutionary”—that is, they do not have a standardized approach to developing environmental purchasing practices. He made the point that this non-standardized approach works well for their jurisdiction of 84,000 residents, but that he has observed issues of scale that significantly change what processes work well for larger cities.

While Santa Monica’s EPD staff takes the lead on environmental purchasing, they work closely with the staff in the Purchasing Division. EPD works with different groups of city employees at different times. They do not have an ongoing environmental purchasing group as they have found that it is hard to keep the energy level of a large group from tapering off over time.

Santa Monica’s program approach is a combination of EPD staff approaching the departments with new environmentally-preferable products to test and use and the departments approaching EPD with specific situations in which they would like to find environmentally preferable alternatives—such as finding alternatives to using plastic cutlery at large events. For citywide initiatives, EPD works with the departments that are most closely involved with the product. For example in developing their paper purchasing practices EPD worked with their print shop, and for toner cartridges and electronics they worked with their Information Systems department.

EPD also sometimes tests products without notifying the departments to see if problems arise. This approach is not intended to be deceitful, but rather to avoid any stigma that sometimes comes with environmentally preferable products—that is, it prevents peoples' preconceived notions from influencing the results of their product testing.

### *Number of Staff*

Santa Monica has one main staff person in the Environmental Programs Division that works on environmental purchasing. He is full-time, but this is only part of his job. His role is to research products, assist departments with sustainable procurement efforts, and follow-up with the departments.

### *Who Makes the Initial Decisions*

In Santa Monica, the initial decisions and prioritization of which products to research and what type of new purchasing practices to pursue are made by the EPD. The program's highest priority is eliminating toxic products. Their other strategy for this prioritization is to focus efforts on widely used products so that they can “get the biggest bang for the buck.” Examples of these products include paper, electricity, and vehicles.

### *Who Makes the Final Decisions*

Final decisions about purchasing of environmentally preferable products are made by the product users. The EPD staff writes the technical aspects of the purchasing contracts after the users provide them with product specifications of what they need.

### Successful Program Elements

The environmental analyst I spoke with stated that there are many aspects of Santa Monica's program that have worked well. Four specific aspects that he noted include:

1. They use a pilot basis for products. That is, they start very small so that there is no major upfront commitment required by departments. This helps avoid problems and keeps attitudes positive.
2. EPD's system of internal testing, research, and evaluation allows EPD and the individual departments to determine what works best for their specific needs.
3. Having a staff person who does research and assists the departments is important to the success of this program not only for the product research, but also for following up with the departments. The analyst noted that Santa Monica's employees are generally very happy to buy and use environmental products, but that they do not have the time to research where to buy them and what the costs will be.
4. The culture of the City of Santa Monica is receptive to environmental purchasing practices and strategies.

### Less Successful Program Elements

Two things that Santa Monica has had problems with over time include:

1. There have been some problems with the performance of environmental products. This is their impetus for really researching and testing products thoroughly on a pilot basis.



2. Having a large green purchasing group with people from lots of different departments did not work well when Santa Monica tried it in the past. Their approach to this process was to have different people research different products and bring the information to the group. However, the group was not specific to a product area (automotives, for example) so not everyone in the group was necessarily involved in using that particular product. Santa Monica found that it is more effective for the EPD staff to help departments address specific issues.

#### Approach to Evaluating their Program

Santa Monica is beginning a program evaluation right now, which includes going through their formal and informal policy statements for each area, looking at compliance and effectiveness, and trying to update and make their program consistent. The analyst noted that they have had difficulty tracking what has happened thus far because there are 100-200 people in the City with some level of purchasing power. Santa Monica is also investigating how to conduct a cost savings analysis for the environmental purchasing program.

Santa Monica has not conducted any sort of process evaluation to date. EPD staff has not felt it was necessary because they stay in touch with the employees who are doing the purchasing and get ongoing feedback so they can address problems as they arise.

Santa Monica's Sustainable City program periodically produces status or progress reports. In 2002, the only purchasing-specific accomplishments that were reported were:

“In June 1999 Santa Monica became the first city in the United States to use 100% renewable electricity for all City facilities. In addition, all City facilities have been retrofitted to improve energy efficiency and reduce costs. The City has also constructed several groundbreaking solar photovoltaic installations,” and a more general statement that “Santa Monica has developed one of the most successful and comprehensive environmentally preferable purchasing programs in the United States.”<sup>74</sup> The 1999 report mainly highlights the informal and formal policies that have developed related to environmental purchasing and notes two obstacles that Santa Monica has encountered for this program. These two obstacles are the lack of a reliable third party certification for environmentally preferable products, and the lack of city staff awareness of environmental purchasing practices and products.<sup>75</sup>

### **City of Seattle, Washington**

The City of Seattle is the most comparable case study to the City of Portland and Multnomah County in terms of the population size and number of employees. The City of Seattle’s population is approximately 563,000 and the city employs 9,700 people. In addition it, like the City of Portland and Multnomah County, Seattle has taken a very team-based approach. I spoke with the strategic advisor who is primary coordinator for their sustainable purchasing program.

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<sup>74</sup> City of Santa Monica Environmental Programs Division, “Sustainable City Status Report 2002.” <http://pen.ci.santa-monica.ca.us/environment/policy/CSMsustain.rpt.pdf> 3/1/2003.

<sup>75</sup> City of Santa Monica Task Force on the Environment, “Sustainable City Progress Report Update,” October 1999 [www.santa-monica.org/environment/policy/SCPRU99Full.PDF](http://www.santa-monica.org/environment/policy/SCPRU99Full.PDF) 3/1/2003.

## History of Program & Overview of Policies

The City of Seattle's sustainable purchasing program is known as the Copernicus project. This began towards the end of 1999 when the City of Seattle changed its computer systems to be Y2K compliant. At the same time they analyzed their purchasing process and found that it was not very efficient. Seattle decided to centralize purchasing around 18 different commodity teams, which allows them to take a targeted approach and to implement purchasing strategies on a citywide basis while providing a mechanism for collaboration. Before this, individual departments had their own environmental goals, and each made its own purchasing decisions.

Seattle's Environmentally Responsible Purchasing Policy states that:

The City shall acquire its goods and services in a manner that complies with federal, state, and City laws. The City shall promote the use of environmentally preferable products in its acquisitions of goods and services. Environmental factors to be considered in selecting products include life cycle analysis of pollutant releases, waste generation, recycled content, energy consumption, depletion of natural resources, and potential impact on human health and the environment.

City departments shall use, where practicable, reusable products, recycled-content products, and recyclable products.

Recognizing its role as a major purchaser of goods and services, the City shall seek opportunities to enhance markets for environmentally preferable products through employee education; encourage pilot testing of potential new products; adopt innovative product standards, specifications, and contract; and embark on cooperative ventures with other jurisdictions.<sup>76</sup>

Like Santa Monica, this policy does not set forth specific purchasing requirements, but rather guides the City of Seattle to do the best "where practicable." Seattle also has a

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<sup>76</sup> City of Seattle Department of Executive Administration Purchasing Services Division, "Purchasing Services: Environmentally Responsible Purchasing." [www.cityofseattle.net/purchasing/purchasingservices/ERP6-14.htm](http://www.cityofseattle.net/purchasing/purchasingservices/ERP6-14.htm) 3/1/2003.

charter for the Copernicus project, which defines the roles and responsibilities of the commodity teams. The Purchasing Services Division's strategic advisor that I spoke with, however, noted that these guidelines are fairly flexible in order to permit for a mix of creativity.

### How Program Operates and Process of Developing Purchasing Practices

Seattle's Purchasing Services Division is in charge of the Copernicus program. Copernicus is very integrated into the government's overall purchasing structure. The strategic advisor explained that this process has a three-tiered structure. At the top is a group of directors that generally guides the process and makes decisions if there is controversy. At the middle level are the coordinators from the City of Seattle's different departments, and below them are the 18 commodity teams. The directors and coordinators meet every 2 to 3 months depending on the needs of the teams. The mayor is also involved in the decision making process.

The commodity teams meet once or twice per month and have between 5 and 20 members depending on the commodity, but they usually average around 7 to 10. The analysts who set up the structure of the process recommended the initial team members. Each commodity team includes the users and purchasers of the specific type of product. In addition, other city employees or outside experts are often brought in to assist teams—such one of the City of Seattle's environmental analysts or legal staff members, or someone who is a known expert in the field of that particular commodity. Each team also

has a leader and a buyer from the purchasing department. There is no specific reporting format for the teams because of the different needs for the different commodities.

The strategic advisor stressed that this program is a fluid process that has changed over time. Some of the major changes that have occurred include: the addition of new teams; providing new guidance to teams in the form of documents and training; the approach used for the benefits analysis; the development of their Office of Sustainability—which provides oversight and guidance on the citywide sustainability goals each year; and creation of the Sustainable Purchasing network—which is representative of all departments and also provides guidance on the program’s goals.

#### *Number of Staff*

Seattle has one staff person, the strategic advisor whom I spoke with, whose primary job focus is the coordination and vision of the Copernicus project. She meets with all of the teams and ensures that the right mix of people is involved. In addition she does the marketing and publicity of the program—which includes a quarterly newsletter that goes to all of the people involved in the process and anyone else who wants to receive it. She does have other job responsibilities within the purchasing department, however, so she is not dedicated to Copernicus full-time. The team leaders and the buyers working with each team, which come from the different City of Seattle departments, also specifically dedicate time to this project.

### *Who Makes the Initial Decisions*

The commodity teams make the decisions about which products to investigate. There is a core group for each team that makes these decisions, and then they bring in additional team members with specific knowledge or use of the product being discussed. They have also developed a scorecard to help teams analyze the different aspects of the product.

### *Who Makes the Final Decisions*

The teams make decisions on the policies to recommend unless there is a conflict. If there is internal dispute, the decisions are funneled up to the directors. The end users on each team write the technical specifications for products, while the purchasing logistics (contracting details, etc.) are the responsibility of the buyers on each team.

### Successful Program Elements

The strategic advisor noted that there are many aspects of Seattle's program that have worked well. These include:

1. The Copernicus project has buy-in and support at lots of different levels in the City of Seattle including the Seattle City Council, the directors, the coordinators, and the team members.
2. In addition, there is broad support for sustainability both from the City of Seattle employees and from the general citizenry.
3. Seattle has a well-documented and well-structured process. Each November the teams meet to set goals for the process. In addition each team is provided with training on facilitation and purchasing. The leaders receive additional training in

- facilitation. The strategic advisor works with each team to develop their own approach as they figure out what works well for them.
4. There is a recognition program for the Copernicus Program that has been helpful in motivating teams. There are two components to this: first, there is an annual recognition event that includes lunch and entertainment at which team members are honored. In addition, the department coordinators give out a quarterly Copernicus Award to one of the teams for their work. This includes a glass award, \$100, and a “kudos package” of fun goodies. Teams can be nominated or can self-nominate for this award.
  5. The Copernicus project is an open process that is subject to criticism and scrutiny, and which asks people to be totally honest so that they can get good feedback and continually improve it.

#### Less Successful Program Elements

Two things that Seattle has found have presented difficulties in developing sustainable purchasing practices include:

1. Limited resources are available for supporting the program due to budget reductions.
2. Trying to implement a single approach across all of the commodity teams—for example, using a life cycle approach—to making product decisions limits the flexibility and room for innovation that Seattle wants to encourage.

### Approach to Evaluating their Program

Each year between January and May, the Purchasing Services Division conducts both a qualitative and a quantitative benefits analysis. The quantitative evaluation focuses on how well their strategies have worked—where they have saved money, lost money, etc. The qualitative analysis examines the social and environmental impacts of the program. The net result of this analysis is an annual report that goes to the Seattle City Council. The “2001 Annual Report” illustrates this combination of qualitative and quantitative evaluations as it includes figures on the percent and value of contracts to women and minority-owned businesses; figures on recycled product purchases as well as a description of their environmental benefits; and estimated cost savings from the improved efficiency developed through Copernicus.<sup>77</sup>

Process evaluation takes place annually each November when new program goals are set. This takes the form of a discussion between the strategic advisor and each of the teams. The Purchasing Manager is also involved in some of these discussions. These discussions include questions that focus on whether or not new team members are needed, how successful the team was in accomplishing its goals for the last year, if there is a need to develop new strategies or obtain additional assistance, and if the program needs to be innovated as a whole.

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<sup>77</sup> City of Seattle, Department of Executive Administration Purchasing Services Division, “Purchasing Services 2001 Annual Report.” [www.cityofseattle.net/purchasing/docs/2001psdreport.pdf](http://www.cityofseattle.net/purchasing/docs/2001psdreport.pdf) 3/1/2003.



## **King County, Washington**

King County is the largest of the three case studies presented here with approximately 1.7 million residents and 14,200 employees.<sup>78</sup> This county includes the City of Seattle as well as the suburbs around it. I spoke with the environmental purchasing analyst in King County's Environmental Purchasing Program.

### History of Program & Overview of Policies

In 1989 the King County's Solid Waste Division started its waste reduction and recycling program to encourage recycling and regulate haulers. The haulers found it was difficult to market recycled goods, and so King County began an internal recycled product procurement program. This is still in continuation and has shifted from being a program under the guidance of a 38-page executive policy document to one shaped by a 4-page environmental purchasing policy.

Like the other two case studies, this policy includes guiding statements that do not set specific product requirements, but rather state objectives such as "All Departments, Offices, and Agencies shall use, and require their contractors and consultants to use, products with the maximum *practicable* amount of recovered material, especially post-consumer material."<sup>79</sup> The two specific guidelines are related to the permission of establishing a 15% price preference for recycled paper products and a 10% price preference for re-refined oil.

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<sup>78</sup> Population from 2000 US Census and employment figure from 1997 Census of Governments. [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov) 5/1/2003.

<sup>79</sup> King County Environmental Purchasing Program, "King County Recycled Product Procurement Policy." [www.metrokc.gov/procure/green/policy.htm](http://www.metrokc.gov/procure/green/policy.htm) 3/1/2003

### How Program Operates and Process of Developing Purchasing Practices

This program puts the two environmental purchasing program (EPP) staff in charge of implementing the program. It is the responsibility of the staff to investigate environmentally preferable product alternatives and to keep their eyes open for new environmental purchasing opportunities. After conducting preliminary research about products, the staff takes a “marketing package” of information to the “designated appropriate personnel”<sup>80</sup> at the agencies for their evaluation. The agencies then decide whether or not they are going to buy the products.

There are a few exceptions to this standard approach. Commodities that are bought on a centralized countywide basis—such as paper and motor oil—are not evaluated by each of the individual agencies, but rather by EPP staff and one or two agencies. If an agency does not want to use one of these recycled products, they can file an exception form and will be provided with the traditional product. However, the environmental purchasing analyst pointed out that these exception forms require managers’ signatures, and managers in King County frown upon not following County policy. As a result, employees are hesitant to file an exception and are more willing to try out the recycled product.

EPP sends out an email bulletin every couple of weeks to all of the people they have talked to—all of their “liaisons.” This serves the purpose of reminding the liaisons about

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<sup>80</sup> The Recycled Product Procurement Policy dictates that agencies will appoint someone from their agency in charge of evaluating the products and reporting back to the EPP.

EPP, establishing a network, and keeping them posted on new developments. The EPP staff tries to write about new opportunities for environmental purchasing and success stories. When they write about the success stories of agencies they include their contact information. These folks then get calls from others on the list (often from other places in the country) asking about how they used the product, which provides a loop of very positive feedback and is highly motivating the to agencies.

In addition, EPP uses this liaison network to get the liaisons involved in events—such as a national conference call about alternative fuel vehicles in which several of the liaisons were asked to speak to the 500+ participants. This is another way of providing recognition to employees who participate. The analyst said they do not think it would be worthwhile to bring all of the liaisons together for an event because it would be very expensive, and each liaison has a very specialized role, so it would be difficult to make it relevant to all of them.

Although King County policy lays out guidelines for price preferences, the environmental purchasing analyst does not recommend the use of this tool. He states that price preferences really only work well when you are comparing the exact same product—for instance it works with affirmative action where you are buying the identical product just from a different contractor. If you are comparing products with the exact same performance it can work somewhat well. In addition, King County found that their buyers did not calculate the price preferences in a uniform fashion.

The environmental purchasing analyst emphasized the importance of encouraging ownership by the agencies and the product users in the changes EPP encourages. He said there is sort of an automatic assumption that when you propose something new you are implying that there is a problem you're trying to fix. He repeatedly underscored the importance of permitting the agencies to decide if they like the product and want to use it so that they are not usurping their authority.

#### *Number of Staff*

King County has two full-time staff persons dedicated to their EPP program. As described above, these employees research products and provide information to the King County's agencies.

#### *Who Makes the Initial Decisions*

The EPP staff makes the initial decisions about what products to develop marketing packages for and take to agencies. They basically try to stay alert to what is new on the market and then research the new products that become available.

#### *Who Makes the Final Decisions*

King County does not write countywide policies because their purchasing is all decentralized for the most part. Decisions on environmentally preferable products are made by the agencies, and the product specifications are written by the agencies based on their evaluations of the product. The analyst emphasized the importance of the decisions

being made in the “appropriate” places—that is, in the hands of the product users. The buyers then deal with the technical contracting aspects.

### Successful Program Elements

The analyst highlighted several program components that he sees as central to the success of the program. These include:

1. Appropriate personnel in the individual agencies make the decisions about which environmentally preferable products to purchase. The EPP staff essentially asks these employees for their “expert” advise on the products they use and leaves the evaluation to the product users.
2. The EPP bulletin helps to maintain contact with their liaisons throughout King County.
3. Providing recognition to employees through the liaison network motivates people to continue their involvement with EPP.
4. The centrality of the EPP staff facilitates the research and follow-up that is necessary for this program’s success.
5. Often times EPP staff are able to help the agencies save money through environmental purchasing. This is another motivating factor to encourage agency participation.

### Unsuccessful Program Elements

One thing that King County found did not work well for their program was to have the buyers write the product specifications. This is because they are not the consumers of

these products and may not have a thorough understanding of the technical aspects of the goods.

### Approach to Evaluating their Program

King County produces an Environmental Purchasing Annual Report. This reports not only the estimated cost savings and the activities that the agencies are doing, but it also provides information on the history of the program and the outreach that the EPP is conducting. The analyst emphasized that reporting is critical because it motivates agencies to be responsive to the marketing packages they receive—that is, if an agency is non-responsive and chooses not to evaluate the product, this will be reported and will not reflect well upon the agency.

The “2002 Annual Report” includes data on the quantities, costs, and estimated cost savings for twenty-one different commodities ranging from recycled concrete to hybrid vehicles. In 2002 the EPP estimates that King County saved over \$550,000 through these purchases. The report also includes statistics on the number of website visitors, the number of recipients of the EPP bulletin, and the number of other jurisdictions from whom they field questions.<sup>81</sup>

King County has not conducted a process evaluation. EPP staff feels that they are able to determine if the process is working well by monitoring the quantity of environmental products purchased.

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<sup>81</sup> King County Department of Executive Services, “King County Environmental Purchasing 2002 Annual Report.” [www.metrokc.gov/procure/green/annrep02.pdf](http://www.metrokc.gov/procure/green/annrep02.pdf) 3/1/2003.

### **Similarities Among the Programs**

There are several similarities among the three case study programs presented in this chapter. First, all of the interviewees noted the supportive culture of residents and employees in their jurisdictions for sustainability efforts. Second, all three of the programs have at least a part-time staff person who is specifically dedicated to the coordination and implementation of their environmental or sustainable purchasing program.

In addition, in all three cases, the end users of the products make decisions on product specifications. Both Seattle and King County have worked to develop a recognition system for employees or agencies that participate in their programs. Finally, the evaluation efforts of these case studies all focused on quantitative assessments—i.e., cost savings, amounts purchased, etc.—of the program. Only Seattle does a periodic assessment of the process.

### **Differences Among the Programs**

One key difference among the case studies presented here is the overall program structure and approach. Seattle uses a very team-based approach in determining which products to target, much like the City of Portland and Multnomah County, while Santa Monica and King County's programs rely on program staff to make these initial decisions. This also affects how agencies or departments receive information about sustainable products and who does the research and product testing. The staff to population ratio in each of these

case studies varies from 1 staff person (dedicated part-time) per 84,000 residents in Santa Monica to 1 full-time staff person per 850,000 residents in King County.<sup>82</sup> In addition, the case studies vary in that Seattle's program is housed in their purchasing division, while King County and Santa Monica's program are part of the environmental divisions. This may affect the overall goals or the priorities set for the programs.

The following chapter provides findings from participants in the City of Portland and Multnomah County's process. These findings can be used in combination with the lessons learned and ideas presented by these case studies to develop recommendations for improving the City and County's sustainable procurement process.

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<sup>82</sup> Even if the Santa Monica staff person dedicates only 10 hours per week to their program this is still a much higher ratio (equivalent to 1 full-time staff person per 336,000 residents) than King County or Seattle.



# CHAPTER 5

## SURVEY FINDINGS

This chapter provides detailed information on the findings from the online survey administered to all task force participants and from the supplemental questions emailed to the five task force leaders. A total of 42 out of 73 participants responded to the survey providing a response rate of 58%, and four of the five task force leaders answered the supplemental questions.

Respondents were asked to identify which task force they participated in so that I could determine if there were differences in responses by task force. **Table 5-1** shows that the cleaning and coating supplies task force had the highest percentage of respondents while the office furniture task force had the lowest percentage of respondents despite the fact that each of the task forces was assigned approximately the same number of members.

**Table 5-1. Survey respondents by task force.**

<b>Task Force</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percent of Total Respondents</b>
Automotives	8	19%
Building Materials	9	21%
Cleaning and Coating Supplies	11	26%
Office Furniture	4	10%
Paper	10	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100%</b>

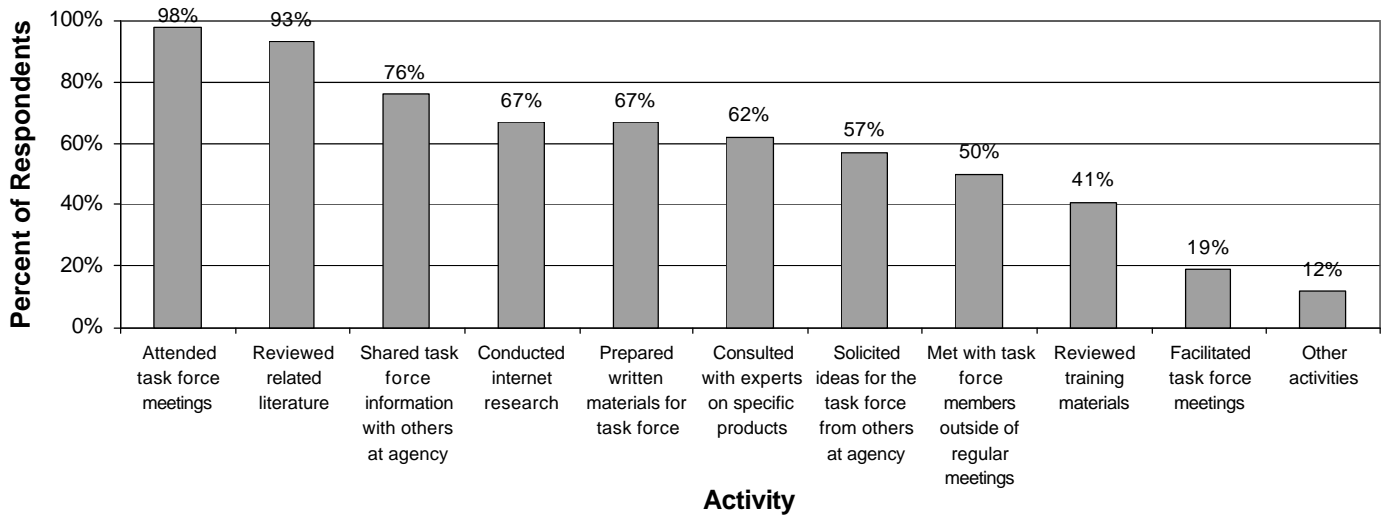
As described in Chapter 3, the survey questions were designed to address six informational objectives. Results of the survey are presented below by informational objective. This is followed by results from the supplemental questions for the task force leaders. Appendix B includes the survey instrument with responses for each question, Appendix C presents responses to open ended survey questions, and Appendix D includes task force leaders' responses to the supplemental questions.

**Informational Objective 1: To determine participation levels of task force members.**

Participation levels of individual task force members can greatly influence the level of success of each of the task forces. Involvement in the task force process can be analyzed by looking at the amount of time invested by individuals and the activities they did to contribute to their task force.

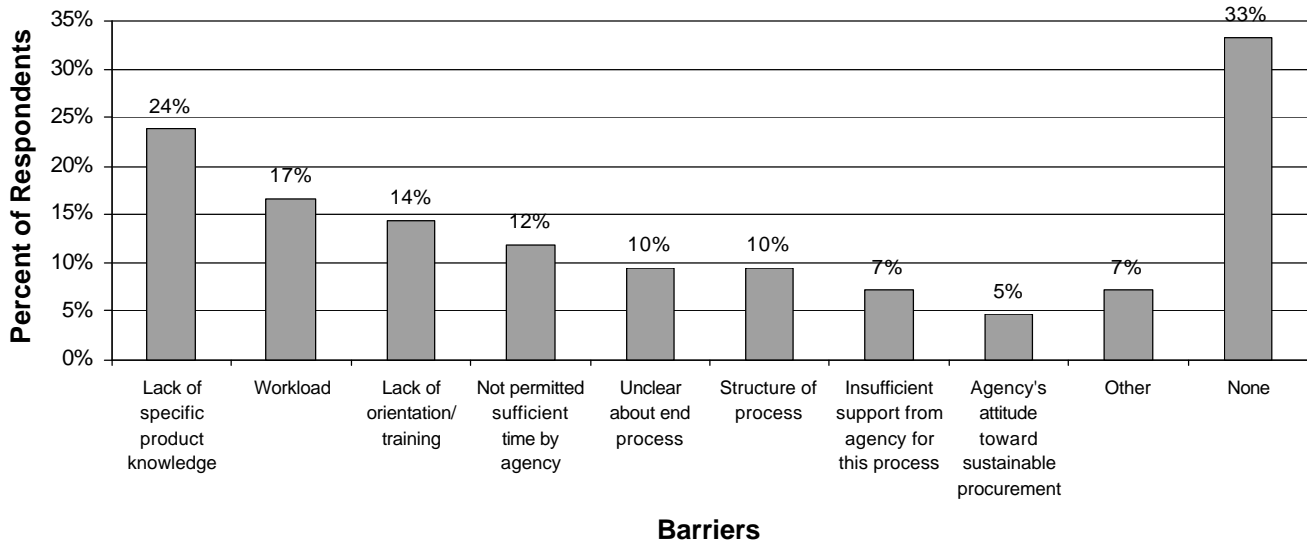
Task force members estimate that they dedicated an average of two and a half to four hours per week (median=2.5, mean=4.0, standard deviation=4.8) to the sustainable procurement project. This did not vary significantly among the five task forces. When asked what specific activities they conducted as task force members or leaders, attending meetings, reviewing related literature, and sharing task force information with others at their agency were the three most common activities. **Figure 5-1** shows the distribution of activities conducted by respondents.

**Figure 5-1. Activities conducted by task force members.**



Two-thirds of task force members identified barriers that restricted their involvement in the task force process. **Figure 5-2** shows task force members’ perceptions of these barriers. The biggest barriers to greater involvement were lack of specific product knowledge (24%) and workload concerns (17%). Several respondents indicated that although this project had been “added to their plate” of things to do, no other tasks had been removed from their list of work projects.

**Figure 5-2. Barriers that restricted involvement in the task force process.**



**Informational Objective 2: To determine the positive and negative aspects of the task force process.**

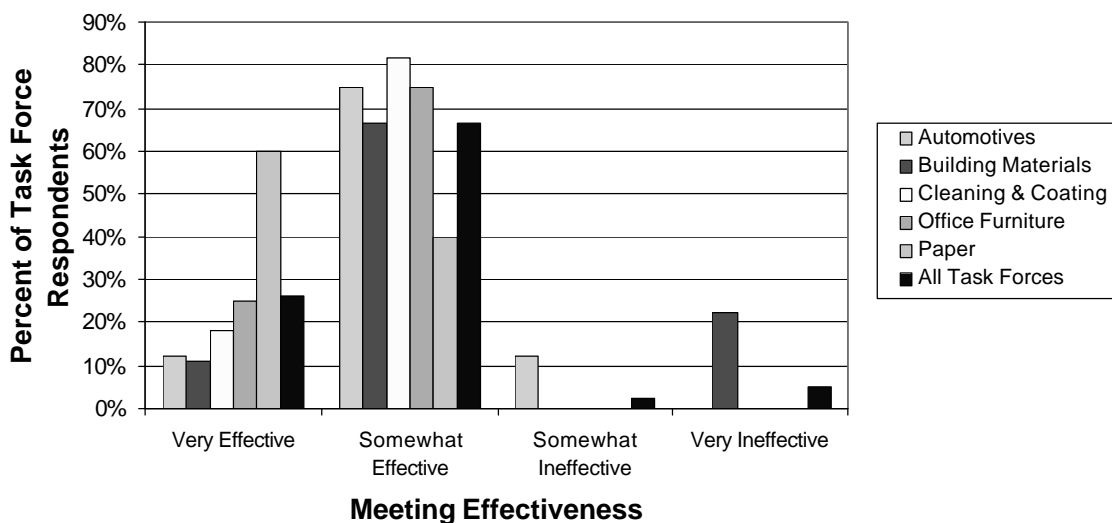
Conversations with members of the Steering Committee indicated that there were elements of the task force process that worked well and elements that did not work as well. Survey participants were asked about a number of different aspects of the process to determine their perceptions of what the positive and negative aspects of the process included.

Positive elements

More than 90% of respondents felt that the task force created an open environment in which they could express their ideas; meetings were run fairly; and City and County collaboration was beneficial. These results did not vary by task force.

In addition, 93% of respondents indicated task force meetings were somewhat or very effective. **Figure 5-3** illustrates that participants of the paper task force found their meetings to be the most effective—over 60% indicated they were *very* effective with the remaining 40% indicating they were *somewhat* effective. In all of the other task forces at least two-thirds of respondents indicated that meetings were *somewhat* effective. Reasons given for meetings being effective include: members being open to ideas, members’ knowledge about products, attendance by members, clear goals, and having a clear agenda. Comments from participants of the paper task force were similar to those of other task forces even though they found their meetings more effective. The two respondents that indicated meetings were very ineffective were from the building materials task force, who explained that the meetings were very ineffective because work was being replicated, minimal research was being conducted, and conclusions were not well thought out.

**Figure 5-3. Meeting effectiveness by task force.**



More than half of the respondents also agreed that their task force included the City and County employees that are the most knowledgeable about their specific product area; they made valuable contacts with other City and County employees during the course of the task force process; their participation contributed to make this a valuable project; and the process raised their understanding and awareness of sustainability. The building materials task force was the only one in which nearly half of the respondents indicated they did not feel the most knowledgeable employees had been included on their task force.

#### Negative Aspects

While most respondents indicated that their task force included the most knowledgeable employees, nearly half (46%) of respondents indicated that they thought task force members should have been selected *after* the specific commodities were determined rather than before hand—this response did not vary among task forces. In addition, less than half of the respondents (38%) felt that the task force was given clear goals, timelines, and expectations—this was especially prevalent among responses from the building materials and paper task forces.

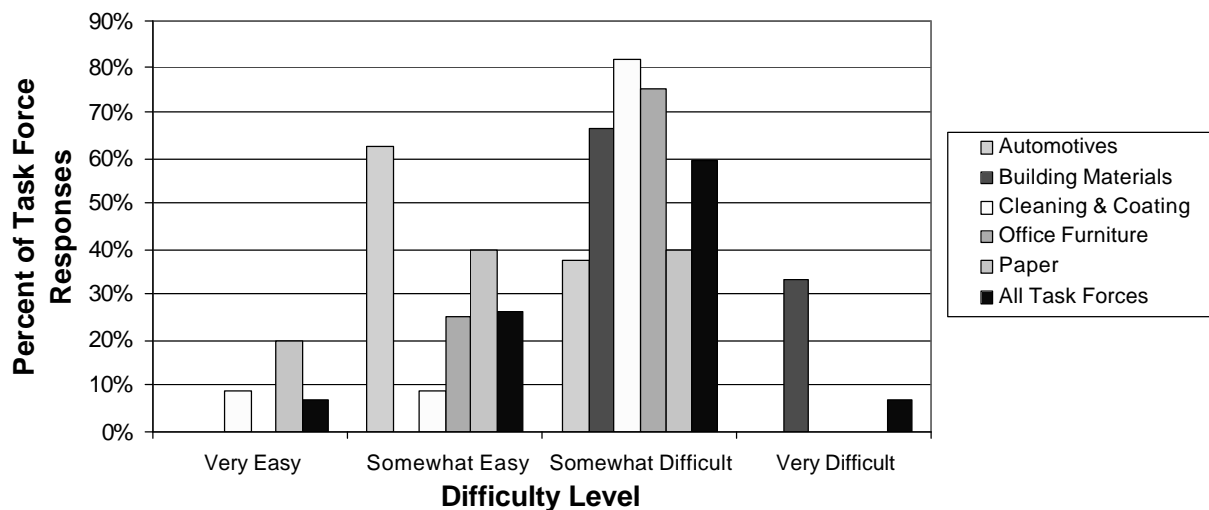
#### **Informational Objective 3: To determine if adequate resources were provided in this process.**

To determine if adequate resources were provided for the task force process, survey participants were asked about the difficulty of collecting the necessary information for

them to develop their recommendations, which information sources they used, how useful each of these sources was, and additional types of assistance that task forces should be provided with in the future.

Two-thirds of respondents indicated that their task forces had difficulty collecting the necessary information as shown in **Figure 5-4**. Reasons given for this included: lack of knowledge about the specific product(s), lack of time, lack of tracking mechanisms/records for purchases, and the need for research on the specific commodity. The majority of respondents from the paper and automotive task forces indicated that collecting information was somewhat or very easy, while the majority of respondents from the other task forces found this somewhat or very difficult. This could, in part, be due to the resources available to the different commodity areas and the amount of research already done in each area.

**Figure 5-4. Difficulty of collecting necessary information by task force.**



Sources that task forces utilized in developing their recommendations include:

background and recommendations from the Oregon State Supplier Council (69%), task force members' knowledge of products (100%), consultation with experts in the product area (87%), information from magazines or journals (88%), information from websites (100%), and materials from the sustainable procurement training session (97%). Task force members found that the most useful information sources were: task force members' knowledge, information from websites, and materials from the sustainable procurement training session.

Two-thirds of respondents indicated that they feel additional types of assistance should be provided to the future task forces. Suggestions for the types of assistance needed include: outside experts, consultants, facilitators, clarity about goals and the process, and research assistance.

**Informational Objective 4: To determine participants' interest/investment in this process and if they are relating information from the process back to their agencies.**

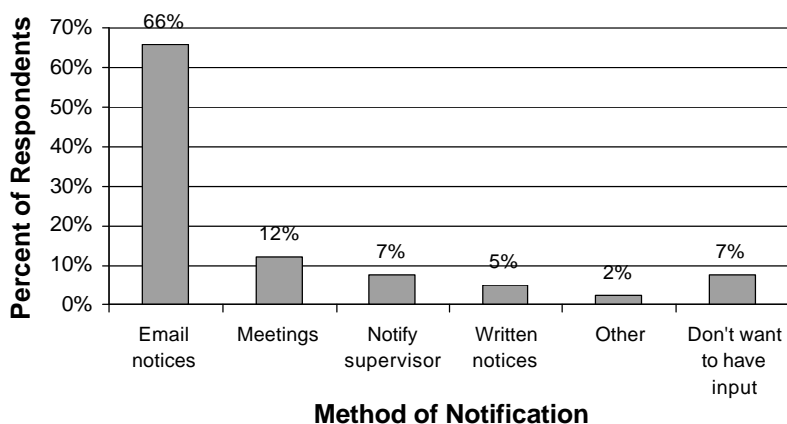
Participants' interest and investment in this process is in part revealed by the activities they conducted and the amount of time they dedicated as discussed under Informational Objective 1. It is also shown in their level of enthusiasm for participating in the project, whether their job involves sustainability or purchasing issues on a regular basis, and how they would like to have input on proposals and implementation of recommendations from the task force process.



More than half (59%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were enthusiastic to participate in this process—this was particularly true for the building materials (89%) and office furniture (100%) task forces—and that they felt their participation contributed to making this a valuable project for the City and County (69%).

In terms of their investment in the project, 62% of respondents indicate that their jobs involve purchasing decisions on a day-to-day basis, and 72% of respondents see implementing sustainability as a regular part of their job. Only the automotives task force had half of its respondents indicate that purchasing wasn't part of their regular job. Ninety-three percent of survey participants indicated that they want to have input on proposals for new sustainable products or implementation of task force recommendations. **Figure 5-5** indicates that email notices are the overwhelmingly preferred method for having this input.

**Figure 5-5. Preferred methods of notification.**



As presented in **Figure 5-1** earlier, three quarters of participants indicate that they have shared information from their task force with others at their agency, and 57% have asked others at their agency for ideas about their task force's project.

**Informational Objective 5: To determine participants' understanding of the process and overall goals.**

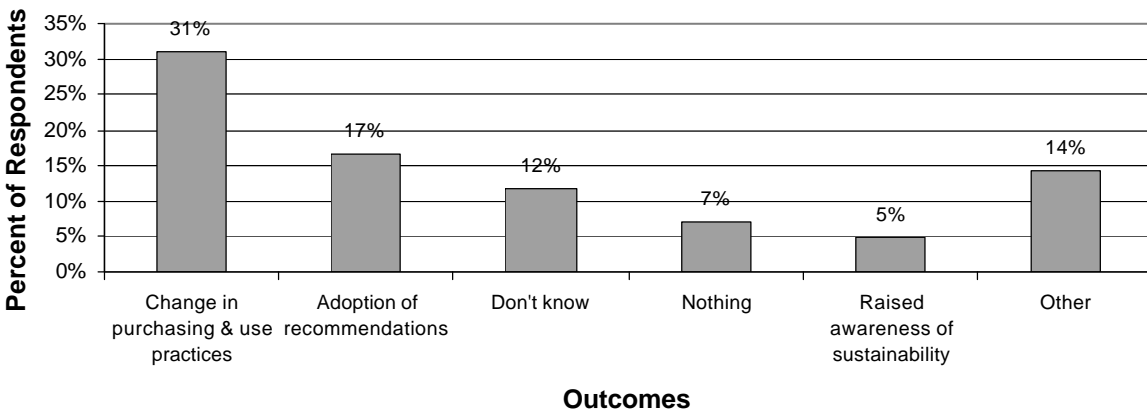
Only about one-third (36%) of all respondents indicated that they thought the process set up by the Steering Committee was effective. In addition, as mentioned earlier, 38% of respondents felt that task forces were given clear expectations, goals, and timelines. The results of these perceptions may affect participant's perceptions of how successful their task force was and what the direct outcome(s) of their task force efforts will be.

Nearly twenty-nine percent (29%) of respondents felt that their task force was very successful, and 55% thought they were somewhat successful. In all task forces except for paper, the majority of respondents indicated that their task force was somewhat successful. Sixty percent of respondents from the paper task force indicated they were very successful. Comments about why task forces were successful focused on themes of commitment from task force members and feeling that they had produced quality recommendations.

When asked to specify what they thought would be the direct outcome(s) of their task force's efforts, thirteen respondents (31%) indicated a change in the purchasing and use of specific products. In addition, seven respondents (17%) think that City Council or the

County Board of Commissioners will adopt their recommendations. **Figure 5-6** shows that only three participants (7%) indicated that they do not think anything will happen, but five others (12%) said that they do not know what will come of their efforts. Finally, two respondents indicated that they think a raised awareness of sustainability will be a direct outcome of the process.

**Figure 5-6. Perceptions of the direct outcomes of task force efforts.**



**Informational Objective 6: To determine ways in which the process could be improved in the future.**

In addition to asking the open ended question of what suggestions respondents have for improving the process in the future, questions about specific aspects of the task force process were asked—including how to bring the most knowledgeable employees to the table, how the report structure could be improved, how much structure should be provided to the task forces by the Steering Committee.

Although three quarters of respondents indicated that their task forces included the most knowledgeable employees, they also suggested ways to ensure that this happens in the future. These suggestions include: selecting the specific products first, including persons with knowledge about sustainability; getting commitment from participants and/or requiring attendance at meetings; and including product users.

Opinions were mixed about the amount of structure provided for the reports. Forty-five percent of respondents thought the reports were too structured while 48% thought the structure was adequate. There were mixed opinions among participants of all five task forces as well. Suggestions for improvement to the report format include: more flexibility for different commodities to adapt it to their needs; a need for greater clarity and/or direction; a more narrative format; and simplification of the report format. Several respondents also noted that the report format changed during the process.

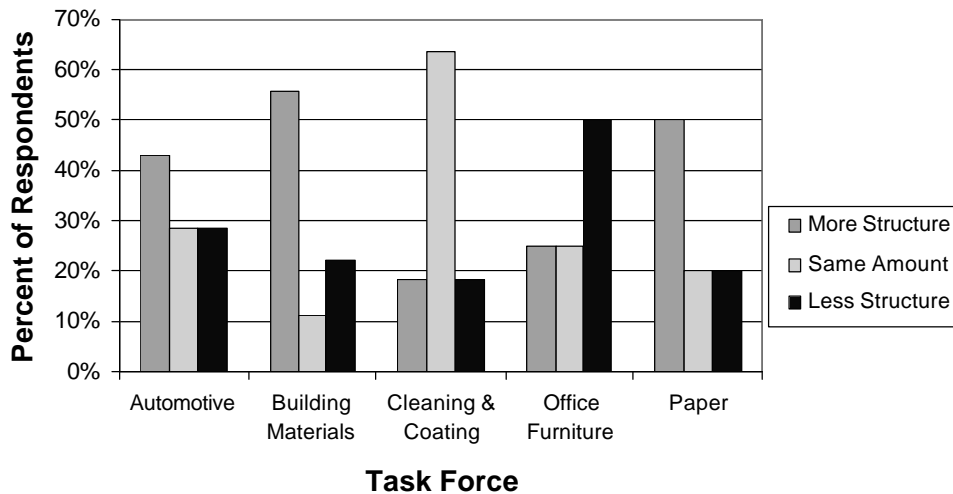
**Table 5-2** demonstrates that opinions were even more mixed about the amount of structure that should be provided to future task forces. Thirty-nine percent of respondents indicated that more structure should be provided to future task forces, while 32% thought the same amount of structure should be provided, and 24% replied that less structure should be provided. Responses to this question varied between task forces as shown in **Figure 5-7**. At least half of the respondents from the building materials and paper task forces indicated that they thought more structure would be appropriate while 64% of respondents from the cleaning and coating supplies task force thought that the same

amount of structure should be provided. Responses from the automotives and office furniture task forces were mixed.

**Table 5-2. Amount of structure that should be provided to task forces.**

Amount of Structure	Definition	Percent of Respondents
More Structure	Present the task force with a specific product goal and an outline of the process to get there	39%
Same Amount of Structure	Present the task force with a specific product goal but let the task force develop its own process	32%
Less Structure	Present the task force with the general topic area and let the task force select products they want to address and develop their own goals and process for these products	24%
Other		5%

**Figure 5-7. Amount of structure desired by task forces.**



Other suggestions for improving the process in the future include: making sure the facilitator has good facilitation skills and that a note taker is assigned for each meeting; encouraging creativity; giving the task force more free rein of where they go with their

recommendations; periodic progress reviews by the Steering Committee; a less structured report; simplify/condense the process; and enforcement of team participation.

### **Results specific to Task Force Leaders**

Task force leaders were asked to respond to an additional seven questions to gain greater insight into their perspectives on this process as they play a critical role and are not only participants (leaders) in task forces, but also members of the Steering Committee.

Most of the leaders felt somewhat prepared (although one indicated he/she was very unprepared) to lead their task forces but they expressed concerns about having clear expectations for the process and having limited knowledge about the process and about sustainability. Two leaders expressed a desire for additional training in facilitation, and another stated that he/she wanted more case studies of sustainable procurement practices and additional sustainability information on specific commodities.

All task forces met twice per month, but three of them indicated that irregular attendance by task force members prevented the task forces from moving forward productively. One leader stated that he/she narrowed their group down to a core team that was able to move forward more effectively than when they had large group discussions.

When asked what techniques/activities were used to lead their task forces, all four leaders indicated that they established a meeting routine, provided agendas in advance, assigned research to individuals, and used group brainstorming. Three of them also said they had

small group discussions in their meetings. Of these techniques/activities group brainstorming, small group discussions, and establishing a meeting routine were most effective while assigning research and creative problem solving activities were mentioned as the least effective.

Recommendations from the leaders about improving the expectations, goals, and timeline provided by the steering committee include: providing the goals and expectations to leaders in advance and having at least a couple of “kick off” meetings for the leaders beforehand; sending different task force members to the steering committee meetings to take some of the pressure off of the leaders; and assigning a “helper” to each task force to help them narrow their focus and develop effective recommendations.

These results in combination with themes from the literature review in Chapter 2 and the case studies presented in Chapter 3 can be used to develop recommendations for the Sustainable Procurement Steering Committee. These recommendations are presented in the following chapter.





## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to gather information from task force members and leaders about what has and has not worked well in the task force process thus far. This chapter presents conclusions and recommendations developed from the online survey administered to task force members, additional questions asked of leaders, and the case studies of three other jurisdictions' programs.

Conclusions and recommendations generally fell into the following four areas: support for the sustainable procurement process, the process implemented by task forces, assistance needs for task forces, and the connection between the steering committee and task force members. Conclusions are presented in italics with the corresponding recommendations in plain type following each conclusion.

#### **Support for the Sustainable Procurement Policy Development Process**

*All three of the case studies underscored the point that support from all levels of government—from elected officials, to agency directors, to city/county employees and citizens—contributes to programmatic success. Survey respondents indicate that there is a need for additional support in balancing workload demands from agencies to make possible their participation.*

Build support for sustainable procurement at the top level of each agency, and ensure that they commit the resources necessary for their employees to take part.

Conduct an initial meeting with all of the agency/bureau directors to present the

time expectation, secure their support, and get a commitment to meet with employees and make appropriate workload adjustments.

Report annually on progress made by the task forces so that employees at all levels, as well as the general citizenry, gain a better understanding and appreciation of the process.

*Most participants saw County and City collaboration as a positive aspect of this process.*

Continue working on sustainable procurement as a joint effort—recognizing that implementation may take different forms for the two jurisdictions.

*Both leaders and task force members expressed frustration that many task force members had erratic attendance, which impeded the progress of the task forces.*

Develop a system of accountability for members. This can be addressed in part by getting employees really excited about what they're doing so they have buy-in to the process and/or by giving them assignments that they are responsible for completing for each meeting. It can also be accomplished by building support for this process with the manager of bureaus and agencies so that they convey the importance to their employees (see recommendation above).

*The case studies suggest that using pilot projects for testing out new products in the workplace is an effective way to gather staff support for the new products and to determine how well they work.*

Consider implementing an internal testing program in bureaus or agencies that are the primary users of the products under consideration.

## **Task Force Members Process**

### Selection of Products and Task Force Members

*Both the case studies and the task force participants suggest that it may be more effective to have staff or a core group select the specific product area before task force members are selected.*

Establish a core group (about 5 people) for each task force that selects the specific product areas upon which the task force will focus and outlines the process of developing recommendations for those product areas. After a specific product area is selected, work with agency liaisons (see next recommendation) to find the most knowledgeable employees, and bring in outside experts to provide guidance.

*The case studies suggest that having a main contact person at each bureau can facilitate the involvement of the most appropriate employees and end users of products.*

Establish a sustainable procurement liaison within each of the City bureaus and County agencies. When there is a new product to be researched, this person can serve to facilitate finding the most knowledgeable employee(s) from their bureau/agency to serve on the task force. It was suggested by one survey participant that the agency liaisons could be the sustainability representatives at each agency.

## Task Force Reports to the Steering Committee

*Many survey respondents stated that the report format was too structured. In addition they indicated that it was difficult to apply uniformly across all of the commodity areas, and they expressed a desire for space for a more narrative format. Case study interviewees mentioned they have found it better not to try to apply the exact same structure and process across all product areas.*

Provide the report structure as a guideline for task forces that want to use it, but let teams change it or develop their own to fit their particular process and recommendations.

Restructure the report template to include more room for writing narrative recommendations and presenting information and citations.

*Participants lacked a clear vision of what the end product of their recommendations to the Steering Committee should look like.*

Provide examples of the level of work expected for the final set of recommendations. Also provide a guideline as to the number of recommendations that ought to be included.

## Flexibility for Individual Task Forces

*The case study programs suggest that not all products need the same process for research, evaluation, and policy development. Some participants found that there was insufficient time to conduct the necessary research for their product area. Furthermore,*

*different groups of people may prefer different approaches to problem solving. Some task force participants commented that they felt they were trying to fit “square pegs in round holes” by following the process set out by the Steering Committee, and that they were unclear about this process.*

Build in flexibility for the different commodity areas and different task forces to develop their own processes and to design guidelines and practices that are most appropriate for the specific product at hand. Provide flexibility in the report format (see recommendation above).

Have the task force leader and the core group of each task force work with staff to outline the process start to finish and set realistic deadlines and work goals before the work begins. This could then be presented to the Steering Committee for their comments and/or approval.

## **Assistance Needs for Task Forces**

### Staffing Needs

*All three of the case studies have at least one part-time staff person dedicated to the sustainable purchasing program. Interviewees stated that this really makes their programs logistically possible, and having a staff person serving as a resource minimizes the background research that has to be done by the product users. Leaders also expressed a need for overall assistance in this process.*

Consider hiring a staff person at least part-time to work with the task forces and to provide appropriate support, research, and guidance to them. This person can also

serve to keep their eyes open for new products and to track ideas and policies emerging elsewhere. The staff person should assist task force leaders in investigating other local work that's been done or is currently underway to minimize redundancy of work with other City, County, and/or State efforts.

Other options for providing leaders with additional assistance would be to designate certain task force members as “associate leaders” who would contribute additional time and support as necessary; to hire interns assigned to each task force for research (see recommendation below); or to assign a “helper” from the Steering Committee to each task force.

*Many task force participants and leaders commented on the need for a sustainability expert on their task force team.*

Assign a staff person from the City's Office of Sustainable Development or the County's Sustainability Division to participate in each task force and to provide expertise, research, and guidance on sustainability and setting benchmarks. One participant suggested that clear criteria on what it means to be “sustainable” would also be helpful.

*Research assistance and product expertise were two areas in which task force participants felt their task forces could use additional help.*

Assign an intern to each task force to help with research assistance needs and to arrange for product experts to consult with the task forces. These interns should

be under the supervision of the task force leader and/or OSD or Sustainability Division staff person assigned to the task force.

### Preparation and Orientation to the Sustainable Procurement Process

*Task force participants and leaders indicate that there is a need for additional clarity of goals, timelines, and expectations for the project.*

Be sure to provide a clear outline for the goals, timelines, and expectations of the task force. Make sure that leaders have a good understanding of all three of these so that they are prepared to lead their team through the process and can see where the project is going.

*Task force members that started later in the process felt behind because they had not received the same orientation as the others.*

Provide all employees who join a task force later in the process with an orientation packet and meeting minutes, task force reports, etc. for the meetings prior to their joining. Consider conducting a mid-year orientation meeting for task force members who are selected after the specific product has been chosen.

*Leaders indicated the need for a thorough orientation for those people in leadership roles in this process. Furthermore, both participants and leaders commented on the need to ensure that leaders have good facilitation skills.*

Meet with leaders several times prior to beginning the task force process to orient them on the following: discussion of goals and timeline, end product expectations,

report structure, background information on sustainability, facilitation training, case studies of other sustainable procurement programs, discussion of meeting routines and agenda, ways to motivate team members, and brainstorming activities.

### Tracking Data on Purchases

*Experiences of the case study interviewees show that the ability to track purchases and use of products—especially in a decentralized purchasing arena—is important in understanding current behaviors and developing goals and policies for the future.*

*Furthermore, task force participants expressed frustration in the lack of tracking records (or the inability to access these), and they stated that this made it difficult to develop sound recommendations.*

Establish a tracking system for purchases made by both the centralized purchasing systems and by the individual agencies who buy products, so that task forces can have a good understanding of what the City and County are currently buying and can monitor changes that take place as new policies are implemented. The staff person should work with the main person responsible for purchases in each agency/bureau to obtain purchasing records and store these in central and accessible location.



## **Connection between the Steering Committee and Task Force Members**

*The case studies show that establishing a mechanism for continuous, on-going feedback about the process is helpful. Furthermore, many survey respondents expressed their thanks in being asked for their opinions about this process.*

Provide a way in which task force members can give the Steering Committee and/or sustainable procurement staff feedback on a continual basis. One way to do this might be to provide a comment box (either paper or electronic). Or if a staff person attended the task force meetings, he or she could ask for feedback at each meeting—a check-in of sorts.

It would be useful to continue a system of annual evaluations that are more formal to get feedback on the overall process—that way if major changes need to take place these can be implemented as the new task forces come on board.

*The case studies suggest that maintaining contact with employees involved in developing sustainable purchasing policies can successfully establish a network of people that can provide opportunities for further collaboration on sustainable purchasing, sharing experiences of what worked and didn't work, and providing recognition to individuals. In addition, almost all task force participants expressed a desire to continue to have input on new products and implementation of task force recommendations.*

Establish an email list-serve newsletter that is distributed regularly (monthly or quarterly) to all employees who have participated in task forces. Provide news of new products, task force progress, and implementation of task force policies. Use

this as a liaison network that can be drawn upon for special events and connecting employees in different bureaus.

*Some task force participants expressed confusion about what would actually be accomplished as a result of their efforts.*

Make sure to follow-up on implementing the purchasing practices recommended by the task forces; the Steering Committee should not drastically alter the recommendations put forth by the task forces. Also, communicate these implementation actions to task force members (see recommendation above).

*Providing positive feedback and recognition to teams and individuals has been demonstrated to be a successful way to motivate participants in the case study programs.*

Establish mechanisms of recognizing task force successes and rewarding individuals who make significant contributions. This could take the form of an annual event—i.e. a luncheon with awards and door prizes—or it could be more ongoing—i.e. a monthly recognition that is included in the e-newsletter.

*Some task force participants expressed a desire for additional guidance from the Steering Committee.*

Have a periodic check-in for each task force with the Steering Committee—this could be quarterly or monthly as necessary. One leader suggested that 2-3 task force members accompany leaders to Steering Committee meetings.

# APPENDIX A

## NOTES FROM CASE STUDY INTERVIEWS

**Interview with Environmental Programs Analyst, City of Santa Monica, CA,  
Sustainable Purchasing, Environmental Programs Division, (310) 458-2227  
March 17, 2003 9:30-10:00am**

The interviewee was happy to discuss Santa Monica's approach with me. Thus far they have really done "environmentally preferable purchasing" rather than sustainable purchasing—this is something they hope to work towards. He made the point that their "evolutionary" non-standardized approach works well for their jurisdiction of 85,000 (with 1800 working for the City), but that there are *issues of scale* that change things significantly for larger cities. The interviewee also gave me Carl Bruskotter's contact info—he's the main Environmental Programs Division staff person who works on sustainable purchasing. The interviewee was nice about telling me to contact either him or Carl if I have additional questions.

**1. What sort of process did your City/County use to develop your sustainable procurement policies for specific products or product areas?**

**a. Who was/is involved in this process? How was this group selected?**

Santa Monica's environmental purchasing program kicked off in 1993 when a group of UCLA graduate students reviewed the hazardous materials being purchased by the City and offered suggestions for alternatives. The City began by really focusing on toxics use reduction (TUR) and working with its different departments to do this.

The Environmental Programs Division (EPD) has really taken the lead on environmental purchasing—although they work closely with purchasing staff. For citywide initiatives they work with some of the departments—i.e., for paper they worked with their print shop and for toner cartridges and electronics they worked with their Information Systems department.

EPD works with different groups at different times. They don't have an ongoing green purchasing group as they've found that it is hard to keep the energy level of a large group from tapering off over time.

Santa Monica's program is a combination of EPD approaching the departments with new products to test and use and the departments approaching EPD with specific situations—i.e. looking for alternatives to plastic cutlery for events. Carl is the staff member who is linked into the different departments.

Sometimes EPD tests products without the departments knowing—i.e., paper—and they see if problems arise. This approach gets around the stigma

that sometimes comes with environmentally preferable products—that is, it prevents peoples’ preconceived notions from giving them accurate results.

**b. Do you have staff specifically dedicated to your sustainable procurement program? If so, how many full-time equivalents (working 40 hours/week)?**

Carl Bruskotter (310) 458-2255 [carl-bruskotter@ci.santa-monica.ca.us](mailto:carl-bruskotter@ci.santa-monica.ca.us) is the main staff person in EPD that works on environmentally preferable purchasing. He is full-time, but this is only part of his job.

**c. What elements of the process have worked well? What has not worked?**

There are many aspects of Santa Monica’s program that have worked well these include:

1. They use a pilot basis for products. That is, they start very small so that there is no major upfront commitment required by departments. This helps avoid problems and keeps attitudes positive.
2. Internal testing, research, and evaluation allow the City to find out what works best for them.
3. Having a staff person who does research and assists the departments is key. It is also important for the follow-up aspect of the program. The interviewee notes that people in the City are generally very happy to buy and use environmental products, but they don’t have the time to research where to buy them and what the costs will be. The culture of the City is receptive to environmental purchasing.

Two things that they have found have not worked well:

1. There have been some problems with the performance of environmental products.
2. Having a large green purchasing group with people from lots of different departments didn’t work well. For this approach different people would research different products and bring the info to the group—but not everyone in the group was necessarily involved in using that particular product. They found it is better just to help departments address specific issues.

**d. Who made the initials decisions about what specific product alternatives would be investigated or promoted?**

The EPD prioritizes environmental purchasing work internally. Their highest priority is to get rid of toxic products. They also try to focus where they can get the biggest bang for the buck—i.e., paper, electricity, and vehicles.

**e. Who made the final decisions on policies that were proposed to City Council or the County Board of Commissioners? Who determines what is in the product specifications? (If there is an internal dispute, who has the final say?)**

The specifications are basically done by the users. The technical aspects are written by the EPD after the users tell them what they need. The interviewee said that it really depends on the product also.

Santa Monica doesn't really have any official Council policies dictating what they must buy. In stead they have a few general administrative policies that tell them to buy "the best where practicable." He said part of the reason they don't have anything more specific is because it hasn't been needed and products are always changing so the policies would have to be updated constantly. They do have a few council policies—such as only buying tropical wood that is FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified.

He noted that this has basically been a staff-led effort so far, so there is a chance that if lots of the existing staff left it would go away; however, he said they've got a pretty established network of staff with buy-in on this initiative.

**2. Have you evaluated your City/County's sustainable procurement program?**

**a. How did you approach this?**

They are beginning an evaluation right now, which includes going through the policy statements for each area, looking at compliance and effectiveness, trying to update and make their program consistent. They've had a tough time tracking what has happened thus far because there are 100-200 people in the City with some level of purchasing power. They've been talking with King County about how they do cost/savings analysis. They are also working with vendors to get records about how much the City has purchased from them.

Santa Monica is planning to go beyond environmentally preferable purchasing to sustainable purchasing, but the interviewee noted this is significantly more difficult because there isn't really a good third-party certification for sustainable products, and this involves lots of research.

**b. Did you evaluate the process? If so, how did you do this?**

They haven't done any sort of process evaluation to date. Basically they haven't felt it was necessary because they stay in touch with the folks who are doing the purchasing and get ongoing feedback so they can address problems as they arise.

**c. What sort of questions did you focus on in your evaluation? Do you try to gauge whether this program has raised overall awareness and learning about sustainability that employees could apply in their work?**

This question was not asked since they have not done any process evaluation.

**Interview With Strategic Advisor, City of Seattle, WA, Copernicus Project,  
Purchasing Services Division  
(206) 615-0593, 700 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Suite 910, Seattle, WA 98104  
March 7, 2003 9:30-10:00am**

The interviewee was quite helpful and happy to talk about their program. It sounds like this program is really integrated into their overall purchasing structure. This program is similar to Portland's in that it takes a very team-based approach—although there are 18 teams instead of five. It also sounds like the interviewee's role is pretty vital in making these teams successful. She requested a copy of my final report and said she'd be happy to answer any additional questions I have.

**1. What sort of process did your City/County use to develop your sustainable procurement policies for specific products or product areas?**

**a. Who was/is involved in this process? How was this group selected?**

The Copernicus project began towards the end of 1999 when the City of Seattle changed over its computer systems to be Y2K compliant. At the same time they analyzed their purchasing process and found that it was not very efficient. They decided to centralize purchasing around 18 different commodity teams, which allows them to take a targeted approach and to implement things on a citywide basis and provides a mechanism for collaboration. Before this, individual departments had their own environmental goals, and each made its own purchasing decisions.

The process is a three-tier structure. At the top is a group of directors that generally guides the process and makes decisions if there is controversy. At the middle level are the coordinators from the City's different departments, and below them are the 18 commodity teams. The directors and coordinators meet every 2-3 months depending on the needs of the teams. The mayor is also involved in the decision making process.

The commodity teams have between 5 and 20 members depending on the commodity, but they usually average around 7-10. The teams meet 1-2 times each month. The analysts who set up the structure of the process selected the (initial?) team members. The team includes the users and purchasers of the product. In addition, they often bring in city employees or outside experts to assist the team—such an environmental analyst or a legal person, or someone who is really an expert in the field of that particular commodity. Each team also has a leader and a buyer from the purchasing department. There is no specific reporting format for the teams because of the different needs for the different commodities.

There is a charter for all of the teams that sets forth their roles and responsibilities as well as some general guidelines. These guidelines, however, are fairly flexible in order to permit for a mix of creativity.

**b. Do you have staff specifically dedicated to your sustainable procurement program? If so, how many full-time equivalents (working 40 hours/week)?**

The interviewee's primary job focus is the coordination and vision of this project. She meets with all of the teams and ensures that the right mix of people is involved. In addition she does the marketing and publicity of the program—which includes a quarterly newsletter that goes to all of the people involved in the process and anyone else who wants to receive it. She does have other job responsibilities within the purchasing department, however, so she is not dedicated to this full-time.

The team leads and buyers, which come from the different City departments, also specifically dedicate time to this project.

**c. What elements of the process have worked well? What has not worked?**

There are many aspects of Seattle's program that have worked well these include:

1. They have buy-in at lots of different levels—from the directors, the City Council, the coordinators, the teams, etc. There is lots of support for the project.
2. They have a well-documented and structured process. Each November they set goals for the process. In addition each team is provided with training on facilitation and purchasing. The leaders receive additional training in facilitation, although not as much as the interviewee would like to see. The interviewee works with each team, and each team takes its own approach—they figure out what works well for them.
3. There is broad support for sustainability both from the City employees and from the general citizenry.
4. There is a recognition program for the Copernicus Program that has been helpful in motivating teams. There are 2 components to this: first, there is an annual recognition event that includes lunch and entertainment of some sort at which team members are honored. In addition, the Department Coordinators give out a quarterly Copernicus Award to one of the teams for their work. This includes a glass award, \$100, and a "kudos package" of fun goodies. Teams can be nominated or can self-nominate for this award.
5. This is an open process that is subject to criticism and scrutiny, and asks people to be totally honest so that they can get good feedback and continually improve it.

Two things that they have found have not worked well:

1. Limited resources for supporting the program due to budget reductions.
2. Trying to implement a singly approach across all of the commodities—for example, using a life cycle approach.

**d. Who made the initials decisions about what specific product alternatives would be investigated or promoted?**

The commodity teams make the decisions about which products to investigate. There is a core group on each team that makes these decisions, and then they bring in additional team members with specific knowledge or use of that product. They have also developed a scorecard to help teams analyze the different aspects of the product.

**e. Who made the final decisions on policies that were proposed to City Council or the County Board of Commissioners? Who determines what is in the product specifications? (If there is an internal dispute, who has the final say?)**

The teams really make the decisions on the policies unless there is a conflict. If there is internal dispute, the decisions are funneled up to the Directors. The technical specifications for a product are written by the end users included on the team, while the purchasing logistics (contracting details, etc) are in the hands of the buyers on each team.

**2. Have you evaluated your City/County's sustainable procurement program?**

**a. How did you approach this?**

Each year between January and May they do both a qualitative and quantitative benefits analysis. This focuses on how well their strategies have worked—where they've saved money, lost money, etc. They get help from the Dept of Finances (?) with this process. The qualitative analysis examines the social and environmental impacts of the program. The net result of this analysis is an annual report that goes to City Council.

**b. Did you evaluate the process? If so, how did you do this?**

The process is evaluated each November when new goals are set. This takes the form of a discussion between the interviewee and each of the teams. The Purchasing Manager is also involved in some of these discussions.

**c. What sort of questions did you focus on in your evaluation? Do you try to gauge whether this program has raised overall awareness and learning about sustainability that employees could apply in their work?**

Questions that the discussion focuses on include whether they need new members on the team, whether the team accomplished what it hope to do, whether they need to develop new strategies, if there is a need for additional assistance, and if the program needs to be innovated as a whole. The interviewee stressed that this program is a fluid process that has changed over time. Some of the major changes that have occurred include: the addition of new teams, providing new guidance (documents and training), the approach used for the benefits analysis, the development of their Office of Sustainability—which provides oversight and guidance on the citywide sustainability goals each year, and the Sustainable Purchasing network—



which is representative of all departments and also provides guidance on the program's goals.

The interviewee said that she thinks that the sustainability education component could still use additional work. Her general perception is that the team members have a raised awareness of sustainability, but she has found it hard to translate this concept beyond the teams to the rest of the City's employees. There has been, however, a raised environmental awareness in the City over the last five years.

**Interview With Environmental Purchasing Analyst, King County Environmental Purchasing Program**  
**(206) 263-4278**  
**March 6, 2003 10:00-11:10am**

This program is organized quite differently from Portland's program. The interviewee was more than happy to share his thoughts and ideas, and gave many stories about different successes they've had. He was very friendly and said I was welcome to call or email him with additional questions.

**1. What sort of process did your City/County use to develop your sustainable procurement policies for specific products or product areas?**

**a. Who was/is involved in this process? How was this group selected?**

In 1989 the Solid Waste Division started its waste reduction and recycling program to encourage recycling and regulate haulers. The haulers found it was difficult to market recycled goods, and so the County began its internal recycled procurement program. This is still in continuation and expanded from a 38-page executive policy document to a 4 page environmental purchasing policy.

This program puts the environmental purchasing program (EPP)—namely the two staff persons—in charge of implementing the program. The staff look around for “great ideas” and keep their eyes open for new environmental purchasing opportunities. They then take a “marketing package” of information to the “designated appropriate personnel” at the agencies for their evaluation. The policy dictates that County agencies will appoint someone from their agency in charge of evaluating the products and reporting back to the EPP. The agencies then decide whether or not they are going to buy the products—so all of the nuts and bolts purchasing decisions are made by the people that use the products in their work.

There are a few exceptions to this. Things like paper and motor oil that are bought on a central countywide basis are not evaluated by the individual agencies. If an agency does not want to use one of these recycled products, they can file an exception form and will be provided with the “traditional” product. The key is that this form has to include the manager's signature, and managers in the County frown upon not following County policy. As a result, County employees are hesitant to file an exception, and are more willing to give the recycled product a chance.

In general, the interviewee does not recommend that use of price preferences. He says these really only work well when you are comparing the exact same product—for instance it works with affirmative action where you are buying the identical product just from a different contractor. If you are comparing products with the exact same performance it can work somewhat well. In addition, they found that the buyers did not calculate the price preferences in a

uniform fashion, and it ended up not working well. King County's policy does, however, allow for price preferencing—it is 15% for recycled paper, and 10% for recycled motor oil.

One of the keys to making this program work is leaving the materials to be evaluated in the hands of the people who would be using them on a day-to-day basis.

One of the big goals of the program is to save the agencies money. The interviewee gave an example about using plastic lumber for the spline system at the KingDome.

EPP sends out an email bulletin every couple of weeks to all the people they've talked to—all of their "liaisons." This serves the purpose of reminding them about EPP, establishing a network, and keeping them posted on new developments. They try to write about new opportunities for environmental purchasing and success stories. When they write about the success stories of agencies they include their contact information. These folks then get calls from others on the list (often from other places in the country) asking about how they used the product. This provides a loop of very positive feedback and is highly motivating the to agencies.

In addition, EPP uses this liaison network to get the liaisons involved in events—such as a national conference call about alternative fuel vehicles in which several of the liaisons were asked to speak to the 500+ participants. This is another way of getting them recognition. He said they do not think it would be worthwhile to bring all of the liaisons together for an event because it would be very expensive, and each liaison has a very specialized role, so it would be difficult to make it relevant to all of them.

The interviewee emphasized the importance of getting the individuals to own the change. He said there is sort of an automatic assumption that when you propose something new you are saying there is a problem you're trying to fix. He emphasized the importance of allowing the agencies to decide if they like the product and want to use it so that they are not usurping their authority.

The interviewee emphasized the importance of the decisions being made in the appropriate places—that is, in the hands of the agencies for anything technical. The buyers basically deal with the contracting aspects.

**b. Do you have staff specifically dedicated to your sustainable procurement program? If so, how many full-time equivalents (working 40 hours/week)?**

King County has two full-time staff persons—including the interviewee. King County has approximately 13,000 employees and 1.5 million residents.

**c. What elements of the process have worked well? What has not worked?**

Things that have worked well for King County include:

1. The decision making by the appropriate personnel in the agencies—asking for their “expert” advise.
2. The EPP bulletin
3. The liaison network, giving them recognition
4. The centrality of the EPP staff

Things that did not work well:

Initially the buyers were writing the specifications for the environmental purchasing. This did not work well because they are not the consumers of these products. Instead it works best to have the agencies write the specifications, and then the buyers serve as contract specialists.

**d. Who made the initials decisions about what specific product alternatives would be investigated or promoted?**

The Environmental Purchasing Program makes the initials decisions about what products to develop marketing packages for and take to agencies. They basically try to stay alert to what is new on the market and then research the new products that become available.

**e. Who made the final decisions on policies that were proposed to City Council or the County Board of Commissioners? Who determines what is in the product specifications? (If there is an internal dispute, who has the final say?)**

The County does not write countywide policies because their purchasing is all decentralized for the most part. The product specifications are written by the agencies based on their evaluations of the product, not the buyers.

**2. Have you evaluated your City/County’s sustainable procurement program?**

**a. How did you approach this?**

King County produces an Environmental Purchasing Annual Report. This reports not only the estimated cost savings and the activities that the agencies are doing, but it also provides information on the history of the program and the outreach that the EPP is conducting. The interviewee emphasized that reporting is critical because it motivates agencies to be responsive to the marketing packages they receive—namely, because if an agency is non-responsive and just chooses not to evaluate the product, this will be reported and will not reflect well upon the agency.

**b. Did you evaluate the process? If so, how did you do this?**

King County has not evaluated the process per se. Basically the interviewee said that their “flat footed” approach is that they know their process is working well if the quantity of environmental products purchased continues to rise.

- c. **What sort of questions did you focus on in your evaluation? Do you try to gauge whether this program has raised overall awareness and learning about sustainability that employees could apply in their work?**

I did not ask these questions since they do not do any sort of a process evaluation.

**Other:**

I explained generally the approach that the City of Portland and Multnomah County are taking. His reaction was that as long as the steering committee is not usurping the power of the task forces it really could work quite well—especially if the task forces include a good representation of the users. He also noted that this is a more expensive approach simply in terms of the number of people involved.



## **APPENDIX B**

### **TASK FORCE MEMBERS' SURVEY WITH RESPONSE FREQUENCIES**

Dear Task Force Participant-

Last year, you were invited to participate with a task force on sustainable purchasing. Thanks to the efforts of these task forces, a package of recommendations will be presented to the City Council and County Board in late April or May of 2003.

First, from the outset of this project, we knew that it would require extra effort, but we also knew that the recommendations needed to reflect the knowledge and concerns of staff. Thank you for time and energy in support of this project.

Next, as we look ahead, we want to make sure we have an effective ongoing process for involving staff in sustainable purchasing decisions. For this reason, we've asked Jennifer Curkendall from University of Oregon to evaluate the process we used and to make recommendations for improvement.

To assist Jennifer, we are asking that you please go to <http://www.pdc.us/new/survey/sustain.asp> to complete the survey. Your responses will help determine how we proceed with sustainable purchasing efforts at the City and County in the future. This is your opportunity to have input on the sustainable procurement task force process that will be used in the future.

Again, thank you for your time and effort. Please take a few minutes now to complete the online survey no later than April 8.

Thank you for your help and participation!

# SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT TASK FORCE SURVEY\*

**Instructions:** Please take a few minutes to carefully read and answer each of the following questions to the best of your ability. Your opinions are very valuable and can help shape this process in the future.

If you have questions regarding the survey, please feel free to contact Jennifer Curkendall, (541) 346-3651 or [jcurkend@uoregon.edu](mailto:jcurkend@uoregon.edu). Your participation is voluntary and your returned survey indicates your willingness to take part in the study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the Office of Human Subjects Compliance, 5219 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, or call (541) 346-2510.

Q-1. Which task force did you participate in/lead?

<u>19.0%</u> Automotives	<u>9.5%</u> Office Furniture
<u>21.4%</u> Building Materials	<u>23.8%</u> Paper
<u>26.2%</u> Cleaning and Coating Supplies	<u>0.0%</u> None

Q-2. What specific activities did you do as a task force member/leader? Check all that apply.

<u>19.0%</u> Facilitated task force meetings	<u>61.9%</u> Consulted with experts on specific products
<u>97.6%</u> Attended task force meetings	<u>76.2%</u> Shared task force information with others at my agency
<u>50.0%</u> Met with task force members outside of regular meetings	<u>57.1%</u> Solicited ideas for the task force from others at my agency
<u>92.9%</u> Reviewed related literature	<u>11.9%</u> Other: <u>See Appendix C</u>
<u>66.7%</u> Conducted internet research	
<u>40.5%</u> Reviewed training materials	
<u>66.7%</u> Prepared written materials for my task force	

Q-3. On average, how much time did you dedicate to this project per week between December 2002 and April 2002? Median=2.5, Mean=4.0, Standard Deviation=4.8 Hours per week

Q-4. Did any of the following restrict your involvement in the task force process? Check all that apply.

<u>11.9%</u> Not permitted sufficient time by my agency to work on this project
<u>7.1%</u> Insufficient support from my agency for this process
<u>4.8%</u> Agency's attitude toward sustainable procurement in general
<u>14.3%</u> Lack of orientation/training
<u>23.8%</u> Lack of specific product knowledge
<u>31.0%</u> Other barriers (please specify): See Appendix C: (of all 42 participants)
<u>16.7%</u> Workload, 9.5% Unclear about end product, 9.5% Process structure, 7.1% Other
<u>33.3%</u> None

*\*Note: All percentages are valid percentages (do not include "system missing" responses) unless otherwise specified. Open-ended questions were categorized and are reported here where there were enough similarities among responses to create categories.*



Q-5. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about the task force process. Please type an “X” in the appropriate column for each statement.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The task force created an open environment in which I could express my ideas.	54.8%	35.7%	7.1%	0.0%	2.4%
Meetings were run in a way that was fair to everyone.	50.0%	42.9%	4.8%	0.0%	2.4%
It was beneficial for City and County staff to work together to develop task force recommendations.	64.3%	33.3%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%
The task force was given clear goals, timelines, and expectations.	11.9%	26.2%	31.0%	23.8%	7.1%
The task force process set up by the Steering Committee was effective.	7.1%	28.6%	38.1%	23.8%	2.4%
Task force members should be selected <i>before</i> the specific product area is decided upon.	4.9%	7.3%	17.1%	46.3%	24.4%
My task force included the City and County employees who I believe are the most knowledgeable about our specific product area.	26.2%	52.4%	9.5%	9.5%	2.4%
I made valuable contacts with employees from other City and/or County agencies.	16.7%	50.0%	28.6%	4.8%	0.0%
My participation contributed to making this a valuable project for the City and County.	11.9%	57.1%	16.7%	7.1%	7.1%
I was enthusiastic to participate in/lead this task force.	26.8%	31.7%	36.6%	4.9%	0.0%
My job involves purchasing decisions on a day-to-day basis.	40.5%	21.4%	16.7%	14.3%	7.1%
Implementing sustainability is a regular part of my job.	31.0%	40.5%	11.9%	11.9%	4.8%
This process has raised my understanding and awareness of sustainability.	26.2%	40.5%	26.2%	4.8%	2.4%
Prior to this process I had a good understanding of sustainability.	28.6%	35.7%	19.0%	14.3%	2.4%

Q-6. What suggestions do you have to ensure that the most knowledgeable employees are included in future task forces? See Appendix C: (some respondents specified multiple suggestions, % are of all 42 respondents) 14.3% Choose commodities first, 9.5% Include persons with sustainability knowledge, 7.1% Get commitment/attendance, 4.8% Include users, 26.2% Other

Q-7. In general, how effective do you think the task force meetings you attended/led were?  
26.2% Very effective  
66.7% Somewhat effective  
2.4% Somewhat ineffective  
4.8% Very ineffective

→ If they were very or somewhat effective, what made them this way? If they were somewhat or very ineffective, how could they have been more effective? See Appendix C

Q-8. Was the *report format* provided by the Steering Committee too structured, not structured enough, or just right for your task force?

- 45.2% Too structured
- 47.6% Provided adequate structure
- 7.1% Not structured enough

Q-9. How could the report format be improved for future task forces? See Appendix C (one respondent specified multiple suggestions, % are of all 42 respondents) 11.9% Flexibility for task force to adapt, 16.7% Need for clarity, 9.5% More narrative text, 7.1% Simplify, 4.8% Noted form changed during course of the project, 9.5% Other

Q-10. How difficult was it for your task force to collect the necessary information for the reports that were produced?

- 7.1% Very easy
- 26.2% Somewhat easy
- 59.5% Somewhat difficult
- 7.1% Very difficult
- Why? See Appendix C

Q-11. How useful was each of the following information sources in developing your task force’s recommendations? Please type an “X” in the appropriate column for each information source.

Information Source	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Very Useful	Not Useful At All	Task force did not look at this source
Background and recommendations from the Oregon State Supplier Council	2.8%	41.7%	13.9%	11.1%	30.6%
Task force members’ knowledge of products	70.0%	30.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Consultations with experts in the product area	35.9%	38.5%	10.3%	2.6%	12.8%
Information from magazines/journals	17.5%	60.0%	5.0%	5.0%	12.5%
Information from websites	40.0%	55.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Materials from sustainable procurement training session	56.8%	24.3%	0.0%	16.2%	2.7%
Other: (please specify) <u>See Appendix C</u>					
Other: (please specify) <u>See Appendix C</u>					

Q-12. Are there additional types of assistance that should be provided to future task forces?  
65.6% Yes → What are these? See Appendix C (of those who answered “yes”) 18.2% Outside experts, 9.1% Consultants, 13.6% Facilitators, 22.7% Clarity about goals and process, 9.1% Research assistance, 27.3% Other  
34.4% No

- Q-13. How successful do you feel that your task force was in accomplishing the goal(s) for its product area?  
28.6% Very successful  
54.8% Somewhat successful  
9.5% Somewhat unsuccessful  
7.1% Very unsuccessful  
 → Why? See Appendix C
- 
- Q-14. What do you think will be the direct outcome(s) of your task force's efforts?  
See Appendix C: (some respondents specified multiple suggestions, % are of all 42 respondents)  
16.7% Adoption of recommendations, 7.1% Nothing, 31.0% Change in purchasing and use practices, 4.8% Raised awareness, 11.9% Don't know, 14.3% Other
- 
- Q-15. What is the best way for you, as a City or County employee, to have input on proposals for new sustainable products and/or implementation of task force recommendations?  
12.2% Meetings  
65.9% Email notices/electronic newsletters  
4.9% Written notices/printed newsletters  
7.3% Notify my supervisor  
2.4% Other: See Appendix C  
7.3% Don't want to have input
- 
- Q-16. Relative to the current task force process, would you like the Steering Committee to provide more, the same, or less structure to future task forces?  
39.0% More structure—present the task force with a specific product goal and an outline of the process to get there  
31.7% Same amount of structure—present the task force with a specific product goal but let the task force develop its own process  
24.4% Less structure—present the task force with the general topic area and let the task force select products they want to address and develop their own goals and process for these products.  
4.9% Other: (Please explain) See Appendix C
- 
- Q-17. Are there other interagency projects that would be a good model to use with sustainable procurement?  
39.1% Yes → What are these projects? See Appendix C
- 
- 60.9% No
- 
- Q-18. Do you have any other suggestions for improving this process in the future? See Appendix C
- 
- Q-19. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please share any other comments you have in the space below. See Appendix C
-



# APPDENDIX C

## RESPONSES TO OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS ON TASK FORCE SURVEY

### **Q2 Other specific activities conducted by task force members:**

- Consulted with professional colleagues on policies
- Note taker for all meetings
- Collected data on volume and products used at Parks & Recreation.
- Provided some expertise
- Provided speakers for my task force

### **Q-4 Other barriers that restricted involvement in the task force process:**

#### Workload:

- My own desire to manage my workload
- The "just one more thing" syndrome on top of other work
- Took away from time used to oversee crews.
- Day to day workload did not permit sufficient time for project.
- Did not have adequate time to submit a better product from the standpoint of my regular job and the help from other members of the team.
- Due to general workload wasn't able to devote as much time as I would have liked to this project.
- It was a priority, but nothing was taken off my calendar to allow for the necessary time needed

#### Lack of clarity about end product:

- It would have been helpful to have a better idea early on as to what the product should look like at the end.
- Didn't seem clear of what we are trying to accomplish
- Confusion on completed product desired.

#### Structure of process:

- The process structure was restrictive
- Poor understanding of effective process by steering committee.
- Templates provided were time consuming
- Product evaluation methodology

#### Other:

- Management support for task force members
- No help from other dept.
- Not knowing the 'paperwork' forms for the final report
- Inadequate task force involvement to effect change. Task Force Leader did not allow my input because I was not one of the original Task Force members and came to the party late in the process.

### **Q-6 What suggestions do you have to ensure that the most knowledgeable employees are included in future task forces?**

#### Select specific products first:

- Choose commodity areas first, then identify most knowledgeable employees for that area, include someone in sustainability, get a commitment from the employees as well as the effected management.
- You should not choose the employees until you know the product area then select the "experts" for those items. Sometimes the "experts" can be those processing the procurements, sometimes the best expert is a user.

- The product area "cleaning & coating products" is so broad. Narrow down the product area the Task Force will focus on prior to selecting the members.
- Decide what products are to be studied first and match the employees with the products.
- Spectrum of choices was too broad. Need to choose employees based on specific products i.e. paints, general cleaning products, paper, etc.
- Task Force members should be selected after the products are picked.

**Include persons with sustainability knowledge:**

- Simply pick people that work in the areas of focus for sustainability
- Ask the people who are already involved in sustainability in their dept/bureau to participate
- Make sure someone the task forces has an understanding about the product and the meaning of sustainability.

**Get commitment from members/require attendance:**

- Make them attend meetings. Most people did not go.
- The individual does not have to have the knowledge but must be willing to seek out expertise within their department. Representatives must have an enthusiasm for the goals and objectives and be willing to go to all the meetings. Attendance is critical.

**Include product users:**

- Ensure staff who are already involved in that area on a daily basis are offered the opportunity to participate

**Other:**

- Think of experts in areas other than procurement.
- This task force was somewhat dominated by two persons who lead the respective city/county divisions. They seem to have answers (pro & con) for most suggestions that others tried to throw on the table. The leader did a good job of trying to draw out new ideas but, while some did get included in the final draft, it seemed like most were met by resistance by one of the division directors. I personally learned a lot about some sustainable products which in the long run may help our bureau.
- I would have liked to see more specific direction in terms of the number of recommendations we were to bring forward. I asked these questions - Are two recommendations enough? Is it too many to provide a dozen suggestions? - and got no answers. I know they didn't want to restrict us, but it would have been helpful to know that they wanted our top 3 to 6 (or whatever) ideas. I also felt that we were working in a vacuum compared to other task forces. If we weren't going to be given targets from the top, we could have at least been given more opportunities to compare our progress to our contemporaries. Finally, we were operating in an atmosphere that didn't provide continual contact (and guidance). I suggested a few times that there be a blanket e-mail to all participants at least once every two weeks to update us on progress, upcoming deadlines, and other news. (Oops. I see these comments should have been restricted a bit more. Please apply this input in the appropriate areas below.)
- A cross section of employees should be included, maybe experienced is a better term than knowledgeable. BES did not participate in our group, yet their bureau claims to have already done the same research we did from scratch and we had many specific questions about their conclusions. The city does not share information or process across bureaus.
- I would suggest that the managers for work sections impacted by product decisions in that area be consulted to select task force members.
- Let employees choose if they want to participate and in what areas (don't 'volunteer' them).
- I feel that the individual bureaus have the best handle on who utilizes different materials.
- Conduct a skills survey in advance
- One of the problems for me was that I was not given time away from my normal duties to perform any kind of tasks associated with this task force. I had to squeeze it in whenever and wherever possible. I think there were knowledgeable employees present, but time may have been an issue.
- Sorry, I am not sure
- Employee recommendations from managers and peers.

**Q-7 If meetings were very or somewhat effective, what made them this way? If they were somewhat or very ineffective, how could they have been more effective?**

Very Effective:

- People were willing to openly debate their needs. This was augmented by a steady write and revision process that adhered to deadlines as well as continuously honed the final document.
- The commitment of the people on the taskforce
- People were knowledgeable and committed.
- Open to lots of different ideas and interesting participants producing very thoughtful solutions.
- Good participation and attendance by most members. Lots of knowledge among group members too!
- They were very effective in that we would all go do our own internet surfing and other investigative activities and then discuss our findings with other participants. The only way to make them more effective would be to have more frequent meetings. With our ongoing crew supervision, this probably wouldn't have been possible.
- Knowledge & a history of trial & error were shared by City & County. By combining City & County employees it may have shortened the process.

Somewhat effective:

- New area for all involved, working on a timeline with little room for "real" research.
- No clear goal from steering comm.
- Good Knowledge base of participants
- See above (Q-6 Response: This task force was somewhat dominated by two persons who lead the respective city/county divisions. They seem to have answers (pro & con) for most suggestions that others tried to throw on the table. The leader did a good job of trying to draw out new ideas but, while some did get included in the final draft, it seemed like most were met by resistance by one of the division directors. I personally learned a lot about some sustainable products which in the long run may help our bureau.)
- Pos. Input from outside the 'usual suspects'. Neg. too much 'we know what to do' from those really in charge.
- Participation of individual group members
- Again the structure of the process
- We had enough people that attended who would be directly affected by the outcome of the commodity that was being discussed. Therefore it motivated the attendees to attend and make an impact on possible outcomes.
- See question 6 (A cross section of employees should be included, maybe experienced is a better term than knowledgeable. BES did not participate in our group, yet their bureau claims to have already done the same research we did from scratch and we had many specific questions about their conclusions. The city does not share information or process across bureaus.)
- Having a targeted agenda was helpful
- I have seen no tangible results of the efforts.
- Clear agenda for each meeting.
- A larger group of Members could have showed up at the meeting
- Several team members did not participate; attend; do their homework; attend the full meeting; did not make it a priority
- Many of the task force members were very knowledgeable about the products we researched
- We can implement the recommendations immediately.
- Many time attendance was poor at meetings
- Most of us lacked expertise in the products we were assigned.
- Define evaluation criteria (i.e., "do not purchase toxics").
- They were not facilitated by professional facilitators which sometimes made the meetings drag on and run astray quiet often - but most people were on board and willing to help
- Clearer definition of final goal.
- Too many members absent on a regular basis

Somewhat ineffective:

- They address measures that will only have a temporary impact.

Very ineffective:

- I took someone's place at the meetings and decisions had already been rendered. Research had been minimal and conclusions appeared to be not well thought out.
- Good intentions, complex issues, no staff support, replication of work previously undertaken by City and County sustainability initiatives.

### **Q-9 How could the report format be improved for future task forces?**

Flexibility for different task forces to adapt it to their needs:

- Report structure should be specific for items in study. Trying to fit processes and recommendations for cleaning products into a structure also suitable for autos and paper goods left little latitude for nuances specific to products studied.
- Furniture is different from cars. Recognize the uniqueness of the products.
- One size does not fit all. Much time was spent trying to fit square pegs into round holes. The final product had little value. In the work on materials, COP sustainability group, and MC FPM sustainability group could have been brought together to pool their combined knowledge, and a report of some value would have been created.
- Give a little more latitude for each team to develop their own format
- Seemed like we were trying to shoehorn specific selection criteria into a universal rating system. For example, evaluating mercury in light bulbs, and suggested actions, was different from evaluating CCA treated wood, and suggested actions. Yet we spent a lot of time trying to use the evaluation matrix we were given. Also we did not have some info, for example, the amounts of product purchased by the City and County (to determine whether the product was important in terms of the amount purchased).

Need for clarity:

- It seemed unclear at various times. This survey should have been conducted right after the committees stopped meeting.
- While the structure was adequate the directions seemed confusing to our group and we weren't exactly sure what they should look like until the end. There was enough flexibility to put our information in the reports in a way we felt best represented our work.
- Provide clear reporting requirements to the task forces. The biggest challenge was that the reporting requirements were developed after the task forces had begun work. In some cases, a report was created for a certain phase of the process, i.e., product selection, after the task force was well beyond that phase.
- Set the goals clearer
- The report format did not have a clear way to move the process forward. Between exercises it was difficult to figure out what was really needed. It seems like a better way would be to have an example of a finished report and outline of the major components needed. There seemed to be a disconnect between assignments which produced more confusion than clarity.

More narrative text:

- More room for explanatory narrative. The columnar format for deadlines and involved staff was OK, but a narrative structure with a set of headers would have worked better for me. It might be nice to include some area for citation of sources, too. That way report readers could check where the TF's information came from.
- The format was tedious. The use of tables was overdone. Next time, less tables, more free flowing on some reports that allowed for more dissertation of the subject.
- I feel that the information could be passed along in one or two paragraphs that summarized the findings and the direction that we felt the City/County should take.

Simplify:

- Make a simpler report structure, smaller, less detailed, perhaps an organized narrative with tables or attached data as needed to highlight conclusions.
- We found it to complicated with the same information asked for in different ways.



### Form changed during course of the project:

- It was restructured near the end to reflect what the task force needed.
- Format kept changing. The way reports needed to be presented was confusing.
- Form was restructured about 3/4 of the way thru the process.

### Other:

- The format of the report was hard to work with, although I liked the general direction it gives. I would suggest that the report and outcomes be reviewed with task force leads before the process starts.
- Don't require the report to be the focus of the effort. More time was spent on report generation than the topic. Not because of our leader, but because of the report requirements. Way too bureaucratic
- Except as noted above re: number of suggestions sought.
- Better explanation on what type of format and information is being sought
- It was difficult to apply the benchmarking questions that the phase three report asks such as actual or estimated use, actual or estimated annual cost, how the product is purchased, who are the key people involved in the purchasing process effectively in such a short timeline. It was much easier to determine all the barriers and constraints to replacing or modifying product usage.
- Rather than have the task forces fill out multiple forms, I would recommend providing them the questions they need to address in their work and have only one report (maybe a preliminary and a final).

### **Q-10 Why was it easy or difficult to collect the necessary information for the reports that were produced?**

#### Very Easy:

- With the county having a mostly centralized paper purchasing, the information on usage was readily available from the computerized inventory usage reports.
- Already had staff who were/are working in that area and had knowledge and were willing to do research when necessary

#### Somewhat Easy:

- Finding information was easy. Evaluating it's relevance and authority were less so.
- Knowledgeable staff
- Purchasing staff and students did most of the research
- We had key people that had access to the usage figures. The subject has been researched thoroughly by others in the past and present and sources of information was readily available especially from the internet.
- Our task force was fortunate in that good baseline was available and that the people that had this data were involved in the process.
- Because we had the experts in the room.

#### Somewhat Difficult:

- This is new for everyone, so we need lots of research. Timelines were very restrictive and did not allow a lot of time for external research. The internal information needed was not always readily available.
- Not everyone showed up regularly that could supply the information.
- Not all members could commit enough time to gather information from multiple sources. Only information easily obtained was brought to discussion.
- The City/County "experts" that should have been able to tell us things (like how much diesel each bureau buys) took quite a while to provide that data. And, in some cases, they didn't seem like they wanted to share it with us. One example of this was a request to determine the term of our current diesel purchase contract(s). Rather than being given a date (or range of dates), we were told that these are frequently extended for an additional year beyond their initial term.
- It is hard to find correct and current information.
- It was easy to track paper use in the County purely by purchases made but harder to reach out and find what departments are actually doing re: recycling, sustainability efforts, policies, etc.

- No one had been tracking on the issues.
- There was competing information and varying degrees of mutual understanding of concepts and facts, we never actually decided what was 'necessary' information. We made good general conclusions, but I thought detail was difficult.
- Multiple points of purchasing within City & County made it difficult to get accurate statistics for starting points for comparison
- A lot of products available to choose from and time spent researching.
- It called for us to get other people to look up purchasing records that supplied the information needed for the survey. I felt that the Bureau of Purchases should already have the information and might have provided it to us.
- Usage volume was especially difficult to obtain as purchase of the products is not centralized.
- Did not have the right people. Also, did not have enough time.
- Variability of data; limited scope of problem; problems of "Green" compounds being ineffective (for graffiti removal, for example).
- I had very little background in sustainable products.
- No internet access at my site. Usage information was not readily available.
- We did not have generally accepted criteria and standards for selection. For example, CCA-treated wood has been banned by EPA for consumers but not for institutional users--is EPA action a valid criterion to avoid purchasing? Bureaus that use this product want well defined reasons for switching, especially if cost or performance changes.
- Too many different groups doing this work to identify and access their information
- We had too many items we were trying to process.

**Very Difficult:**

- No information that was requested by the steering committee after we had turned in our report was available.
- The subject matter was broad but the input became specific to particular disciplines, such as lighting. Some of the conclusions were inaccurate due to lack of time to research. A simpler approach would have improved the result. A consultant for each task force would have been helpful to facilitate the discussions and assign tasks.
- Sustainability is different from recycling. The issues are more complex, even subtle. Much technical information is available, however it takes resources to pull them together. Since the task force completed its task, both MC FPM and COP Sustainability have published green guides that look at some of the same issues. If we put the two shops together to look at some of the issues that the committee started to look at, we would be able to address all of them with the knowledge and experience base required.

**Q-11 Other information sources used by task forces in developing recommendations:**

**Very Useful:**

- Experts in disciplines that use products
- ACEEE Publication - green vehicle guide
- Vendors
- Other public agencies' sustainability efforts in different parts of the country
- Environmental Building News

**Somewhat Useful:**

- Area fleet managers

**Not Very Useful:**

- City/County directors

**Task Force Did Not Look At This Source:**

- Federal government sources (EPA, etc)

**Other Comments:**

- Not sure where the information was obtained.

- Comments - background from Oregon Supplier Council was very confusing and not very organized.

**Q-12 Additional types of assistance that should be provided to future task forces:**

Outside product experts:

- Subject matter experts from the private sector, or college interns working in fields related to items reviewed.
- We should have drawn in more outside experts (from beyond the City/County).
- Outside technical experts could be invited to participate on the task forces
- Try to have more subject area experts

Consultants:

- Consultants
- Consultants

Facilitators:

- Full time task force facilitators
- It would be a tremendous help to new facilitators to receive separate training that would clearly outline the path to follow in working with their group. We got where we needed to go and new facilitators should receive the benefit of learning how to best tackle this effort.
- A consistent person who leads each taskforce in order to keep each on track. Each facilitator had their own understanding of the outcome and it wasn't consistent.

Clarity about goals and process:

- Better defined goals and objectives given earlier on
- Be clear at onset of final report structure
- Clearly defined formats
- It seemed very disorganized from the start at the top-Steering Committee- Didn't always know what the expectations were.
- Clarify ground rules

Research assistance:

- Assistance with product research
- Research assistance

Other:

- More grass root committee members. Fewer management staff
- More time
- Current city/cty/state policies & rules that regulate
- Purchasing Records
- See other comments
- Ensure that we have support from the top

**Q-13 Why do you feel your task force has been successful or unsuccessful in accomplishing the goal(s) for its product area?**

Very successful:

- Because we laid out an effective plan that can be both implemented immediately and can be used as a base for future work.
- Look at the final recommendations.
- People were knowledgeable and committed to working through the gray areas of the structure.
- Good group of people who cared very much about the work they were doing.
- Very determined to come up with reasonable answers/goals
- Produced a thoughtful report and recommendations
- Relative to application, we determined that there are alternatives to status quo, and there exists policy already in place (recycled paint use in City buildings) that should be useful

#### Somewhat successful:

- Hit those areas that could easily be implemented
- It's a large topic which required a narrow focus to accomplish anything
- Seems like the strategies ended up being limited to those that have no direct cost impact
- It was logical, with the recommendations we should be able to bring city/cnty purchases up to a very doable standard and then surpass it quite rapidly. Our recommendations are success driven and very positive. Everyone should be able to help in the effort. It is a very inclusive product.
- Wish could have pushed the envelope a bit further but have to start somewhere I guess!
- Final results too general
- More info available on latex paint/recycled paint

#### Somewhat unsuccessful:

- Final recommendations were not adopted by steering committee
- Apparently nothing's changed (we're still not buying biodiesel for City vehicles).
- I don't believe the measures chosen will have much of an impact.
- Nothing new here.

#### Very unsuccessful:

- Most of the goals presented were disqualified
- Lacks backup information to support conclusions
- Poorly thought out process from the task force.

### **Q-14 What do you think will be the direct outcome(s) of your task force efforts?**

#### Adoption of recommendations:

- I've already seen a draft city proposal for sustainable procurement of paper. It incorporates some of our team's ideas. I think that the direct outcome will be incremental adoption of sustainable procurement practices.
- I would hope that the recommendations be adopted and that paper usage eventually begin to decline.
- New policies, shared procurements, paper reduction and more sustainable products in the consumption chain.
- I believe that both recommendations will be adopted by both the City and the County which would be great.
- City/County purchasing standards
- They will probably be accepted
- Recommendations will probably be accepted. However, they have been changed by the Steering Committee to make it viable.

#### Nothing:

- Nothing will be done that will do any good.
- No sure if there will be any major shift (sustainability wise) that was not already taking place or in the pipeline.
- I don't think that the recommendations will be implemented because they involve significant increased costs in an increasingly tight fiscal environment.

#### Change in purchasing and use of products:

- Changes to City and County Rules, much greater use of recycled paint products.
- Appropriate purchasing
- Possibly some change in the products purchased and used.
- More equitable sustainability of paper usage and/or equipment usage City-wide
- Use of recycled latex paint
- Lower paper usage and a much more sustainable product being used.
- Some report suggestions will be implemented and awareness of the concept and process will be raised.
- More sustainable approaches Follow existing policy Greener alternatives
- Some recommendations will be implemented immediately.

- Better purchasing procedures and guidelines for paint usage both in city and county
- Hopefully an increase in recycled-content paper City-wide. The County seems to have a good system already and it will be easier for them to implement an increase in percentage of recycled-content material.

**Raised awareness:**

- I'm new to the City, so I don't really know, except that it raised awareness regarding how much abandoned furniture there was and BGS has asked the different bureaus to claim their abandoned furniture or lose it. The excess will be picked up by the State for auction.

**Don't know:**

- Unsure. We're not being told (no final follow-up to close the loop with us). Somehow I heard that the City may start making biodiesel purchases in Nov ... but this was unofficial and there was no explanation about why we waited until Nov (as opposed to acting sooner or later).
- Difficult to say, but it worries me.
- That is the \$64,000 question. Who knows.
- I don't know. With the budget cuts, I'm not sure any recommendations will be implemented.
- I don't know. I haven't heard feedback re any changes in purchasing policy.

**Other:**

- It was determined that many of the items studied may have departmental policies written regarding their use. However, due to minimal quantities utilized, they may not need board or council resolution.
- Depends on management and commissioners support, without that, this goes nowhere.
- Participants from COP Sustainability and MC FPM sustainability have already produced written guides that move beyond the task force work. Note: It is useful to start from the benchmark work product and move beyond as far as possible. The States previous work was far from a benchmark product.
- City-wide goals, new statistics.
- At parks we are trying to use recycled paint as often as applicable.
- Hope to see City/County efforts become more focused and more "on the same page"

**Q-15 Other ways for employees to have input on proposals for new sustainable products and/or implementation of task force recommendations:**

- Web surveys like this could work for product-specific input just like it helps evaluate the process.

**Q-16 Other suggestions for the amount of structure the Steering Committee should provide to future task forces:**

- But please allow flexibility to divert from the structure provided. I liken it to a job where you're expected to work 8 - 5; that doesn't mean you do every day, but you know that's what's expected.
- I never had an understanding of the steering committees purpose.
- Confine the outcome to a realistic expectation

**Q-17 Other interagency projects that would be a good model to use with sustainable procurement:**

- Computer surplus
- Toner and print cartridges
- Parks
- I think there are, but don't know that we know where they are.
- Don't know
- Cleaning products, landscaping practices, building materials and installation practices
- Don't know
- Facilities and Property Management Green Guidebook
- Meeting with other City/County/State personnel that perform the same jobs we have within their entities and comparing notes.

- COP and MC FPM (BCS) sustainability work groups
- Unknown

**Q-18 Do you have any other suggestions for improving this process in the future?**

- Keeping the political area out of sustainability. Politics have no place here.
- Make sure the facilitator has good to excellent facilitation skills. Make sure the task forces have recorder/note takers for each meeting.
- None, other than listed above
- See above. Besides that, I did like the fact that our task force had a "neutral" chair (e.g. not a fleet manager). But, I felt that we didn't have the support to be as creative as we could have -- fleet size reductions (or outsourcing) were excluded from consideration and vehicle size limits were bypassed also. At the same time, stuff that was happening -- like the City's move from our standard sedan being the Dodge Stratus to the Ford Focus -- were not even brought up until the very end of the process (and then only as an afterthought).
- I think I've covered most of my thoughts in the body of the survey.
- Remove or redefine the steering committee. Task forces should be objectively instructed and then be able to reach their own goals without bias or 'steering'. Sometimes I felt we were being herded towards goals already decided. I didn't want to simply be a validation of foregone conclusions.
- Periodic progress reviews by a Steering Committee member might be helpful to keep task force focused if a consultant is not hired.
- Some of the feedback from the steering committee came too late in the process to effectively incorporate.
- Having a less structured final answer sheet.
- See comments above.
- Have a date for completion of tasks, but make it flexible.
- Enforce team participation e-mail attendance of team members to his/her agency
- Simplify the process. Categories were too broad. Smaller groups working on specific products.
- Let task group define the desired outcomes. For example, that the City and County should require proper recycling of mercury-containing light bulbs in contracts for relamping facilities. Then let Purchasing determine what policies and procedures would have to change to achieve that outcome. We spent too much time discussing how our choices fit selection matrix.
- Maybe condense it into a shorter process with more direction.
- A strong statement of commitment from the task force at the start

**Q-19 Other comments:**

- I hope that all the time and effort put into this task force results in adoption of some or all of the recommendations. We were very enthusiastic that we could make a difference.
- Thank you very much for asking our opinions. Please make sure that all participants are adequately recognized -- mention in the report to council, a memo from the Mayor (or ?) to each supervisor, and anything else that seems appropriate. Finally, let us know what you've learned from this survey process. You might not want to share everything, but at least give us the high points.
- Thanks for the opportunity for feedback.
- I appreciate the opportunity to work with other employees and agencies. It allowed me to become more aware of sustainable products available to the City and being in on the process to set the goals/terms.
- I still don't understand what "sustainable" means. A clear presentation of this concept is still needed. Most people I know equate it with 'environmental', yet clearly this is not correct. We need to be on the same page when we say sustainable. For example the city's wind generator was installed without considering the flight path of birds, it is certainly not sustainable for them, yet it is lauded as a perfect example of this process.
- Due to fiscal restraints, I expect this to be yet again an exercise in futility on the part of a few dedicated employees who truly wish to see effective changes made.

- Thank you for including me in the initial effort. I found myself getting more educated on "green" products than if I was left to my own devices.
- At the kickoff meeting, the facilitators must really get the interested groups to understand what is expected of every member. If we cannot get a full commitment, they should not be a member of the team. All or Nothing.
- Our facilitator, Ms. Rasmussen, was very dedicated and did a great job in encouraging and leading the group. She gave everyone things to do and kept us on schedule. Great job!
- Establish acceptable basic "knock-out" criteria for products: not to be purchased if they violate existing City policies on health, safety, fair labor, global warming, waste management. For example, products containing toxic components (such as compounds on the EPA 'Known to cause cancer' list), cause global warming (like CFCs), can't be recycled (like Chlorpyrifos) etc. are not acceptable.
- It is great the City and County are undertaking such an endeavor. I am proud of the initiative. I hope that everyone involved can be updated on the progress of the recommendations either through a follow-up session with all the taskforce groups or through email. It would be great to have a summary of proposed actions and status to date (or/and next steps with the recommendations). Thanks for the hard work.





## APPDENDIX D

### RESPONSES TO SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS FOR TASK FORCE LEADERS

Dear Task Force Leader-

As you already know, the Sustainable Procurement Steering Committee is evaluating the task force process that is being used to develop the specific sustainable procurement strategies for the City of Portland and Multnomah County. As a leader of one of these task forces, your opinions are very important to this evaluation.

In addition to the online survey that Sue Klobertanz or Franna Hathaway sent you information about, could you please take a few minutes to answer the following questions that are specific to your role as a task force leader? The purpose of these additional questions is to gain a better understanding of your experience as a leader-what worked well, what didn't work well, and what type of support is needed for leaders. Your responses are confidential, and you will not be identified by name in my report to the Steering Committee.

This is your opportunity to have input on the sustainable procurement task force process that will be used in the future. Please return your answers to these questions to me via email (jcurkend@uoregon.edu) by April 11th.

Thank you for your assistance and participation!

Jennifer Curkendall  
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#### **1. How would you recommend improving the expectations, goals, and timeline provided to task force leaders by the Steering Committee?**

**AUTOMOTIVE:** I would recommend that different people from the task force attend the steering committee meetings to take some of the pressure off the task force leaders and distribute among the team.

**BUILDING MATERIALS:**

**CLEANING AND COATING:** Basically, the goals and expectations need to be provided to the task force leaders at the onset of the process. Since everyone was kind of figuring it

out as we went, it was difficult, as a leader, to effectively facilitate the task force's efforts. Since the reporting formats were developed after the task forces were underway they didn't always match up with the direction the task force had gone.

**OFFICE FURNITURE:** At least a couple meetings prior to the kick off involve task force leaders with steering committee expectations.

**PAPER PRODUCTS:** Be more specific on expectations and goals the task force is expected to work toward and achieve. The format for the various reports could be improved to be more electronic format friendly. Also more background information on the various topics to facilitate a quicker focus for the task forces and facilitators. The steering committee should assign to each task force a "helper" that can be used to help the group narrow their focus and make effective recommendations based on the best information.

**2a. How prepared did you feel to lead your task force? (Very prepared, Somewhat prepared, Somewhat unprepared, or Very unprepared)**

**AUTOMOTIVE:** Somewhat prepared

**BUILDING MATERIALS:**

**CLEANING AND COATING:** Somewhat prepared.

**OFFICE FURNITURE:** Very unprepared.

**PAPER PRODUCTS:** Somewhat prepared

**b. Why? Were there any specific trainings or materials you received that were particularly helpful?**

**AUTOMOTIVE:** Learning curve getting to know different people from the different agencies and the way their processes work. Having the report templates was helpful to know what was required.

**BUILDING MATERIALS:**

**CLEANING AND COATING:** I was comfortable with facilitating a group effort but had very limited knowledge of sustainability. Also, the process and expectations were pretty much undefined.

**OFFICE FURNITURE:** Missed the one meeting before the kick off; basically walked into the kick off with not much more knowledge than the task force members. They were looking to me for direction that I could not provide at that time.

PAPER PRODUCTS: Facilitation training class I attended gave me some useful tools to aid in facilitation and better defined for me the role of the facilitator.

**3. Are there additional materials or trainings that would have been helpful to you as a leader? (Yes or No) If so, what are these?**

AUTOMOTIVE: Yes - basic training on effective meeting facilitation would have been helpful - say one hour for the task force leaders to help deal with issues of consensus, attendance etc.

BUILDING MATERIALS:

CLEANING AND COATING:

OFFICE FURNITURE: More background on other sustainable procurement practices that are working through out the country (case studies). Additional sustainability information on particular commodity areas.

PAPER PRODUCTS: Training on effective facilitation to achieve expected outcomes.

**4a. Which of the following techniques and/or activities did you use to lead task force meetings? (Group brainstorming, Established a meeting routine, Provided meeting agendas in advance, Round-robin discussions, Creative problem-solving activities, Assigned research to individuals, Small group discussions, Other(s)-please describe)**

AUTOMOTIVE: Group brainstorming, established a meeting routine, provided meeting agendas in advance, round-robin discussions, no creative problem-solving activities, assigned research to individuals, and small group discussions. Other - surveyed members on priority product area to get us started.

BUILDING MATERIALS:

CLEANING AND COATING: We established a meeting schedule right up front. Meeting agendas were provided in advance for almost all the meetings. A lot of group brainstorming. Tasks for next meeting assigned to individuals.

OFFICE FURNITURE: All of the above.

PAPER PRODUCTS: We used group brainstorming, establishing a meeting routine, provided meeting agendas in advance, assigned research, small group discussions.

**b. Which of these techniques/activities were most effective?**

AUTOMOTIVE: Some of the small group discussions were very effective, how with group brainstorming before and after to ensure buy-in and input from everyone

BUILDING MATERIALS:

CLEANING AND COATING:

OFFICE FURNITURE: Group brainstorming, establish a meeting routine.

PAPER PRODUCTS: all

**c. Which of these techniques/activities were least effective?**

AUTOMOTIVE: assigning the research to others - had difficulties finding someone willing to do it!

BUILDING MATERIALS:

CLEANING AND COATING:

OFFICE FURNITURE: External research; group members do not know where to go to get this information or do not have enough time to research.

PAPER PRODUCTS: creative problem solving

**5. How often did your task force meet? (Weekly, Twice per month, Once per month, Other-please describe)**

AUTOMOTIVE: Started once per month and then switched to twice per month to meet deadlines.

BUILDING MATERIALS:

CLEANING AND COATING: Twice per month.

OFFICE FURNITURE: Twice per month.

PAPER PRODUCTS: twice a month

**6. How many people were assigned to your task force?**

AUTOMOTIVE: 20

BUILDING MATERIALS:

CLEANING AND COATING: Fourteen (had 16 initially, but 2 never showed)

OFFICE FURNITURE: Twelve were assigned, on average our group had about 9 members. The same people did not stay with the group through out the process.

PAPER PRODUCTS: 13, including me

**7a. On average, how many task force members attended each task force meeting?**

AUTOMOTIVE: 10

BUILDING MATERIALS:

CLEANING AND COATING: Nine

OFFICE FURNITURE: On average about 6.

PAPER PRODUCTS: 6

**b. How did the number of attendees at meetings impact the process?**

AUTOMOTIVE: We had more people attend at first which was a pretty large group to have effective discussions. I felt our group narrowed down to core group that was able to positively get us through the process. Having more active participation by sustainability folks would have maybe impacted the process to have recommendations that pushed the envelope a bit farther.

BUILDING MATERIALS:

CLEANING AND COATING: Much of the work on my task force was done at the meetings and required input from all the members. With erratic attendance, it was difficult to maintain continuity and keep moving forward.

OFFICE FURNITURE: When we had all members attend got a lot done, but when they did not it was like a road block. This really impacted our group as far as additional sustainability research was concerned.

PAPER PRODUCTS: put more burden on those that participated regularly. prevented or hindered our ability to get a complete view of present business norms and ideas on effectively changing business norms to facilitate the movement toward sustainability in all areas of the City employee workforce.