

Procurement work group – 5-15-08 mtg (1st meeting)

Problems:

- City no longer has centralized purchasing function
 - Individual departments make credit card purchases – based on what criteria?
- Procurement Policy is focused on what NOT to do, not focused on “green” re both products and services
- No environmental specification (EPP: Environmentally Preferable Purchasing) allowed to factor in to which bid price to accept
- No concise internal management system where answers are centralized re how things are “spec’d” now, and what the City government is doing to recycle its own waste
- Not enough local markets for our locally recycled markets
 - No preference for local markets to recycle things, just have to go for lowest price now
- People don’t understand the impact of their actions (re buying bottled water instead of using water bottles, no deposits charged on aluminum cans)
- Not enough recognition of good things various departments are doing already.
- Overnight shipping incurs additional GHG emissions re transporting it here
- City no longer pays for subsidized bus passes for city employees.
- Rising fuel costs are likely to increase shipping costs to the point where currently available products will no longer be available or cost-effective to buy. How much does that drive the need to develop more local sources (within 300 miles)?
- Governance: need corporate support for various principles, values, guidelines
- Future population growth (“climate refuges”) likely to impact the amount of waste we have to deal with.

Solutions:

- Need to outline/recommend principles for a “green” procurement policy for City government; for example:
 - Buy within a 300 mi. radius
 - Keep technical nutrients in technical nutrient cycle, keep organic nutrients in organic nutrient cycle
 - Constantly review purchasing preferences to assess newly available options
 - Ecology has EPP (Environmentally Preferable Purchasing) and is developing models for local governments to use
- Develop a Procurement Characterization Study for 1-2 departments and then use that as a model for other departments.
 - Need to study – review current practices and procedures, to evaluate which policies we could change that would reduce amount and what we purchase, and waste generated from what we do purchase
 - e.g., do we need to require a car wash each time a City vehicle refuels?
 - Are there interfund transfer requirements that end up requiring purchases that might not otherwise be necessary?

- Reducing City's reliance on oil will also thereby reduce GHG emissions.
- Fleet Svcs is starting a study now to see how cost and GHG emissions are related to various fuel purchasing trends.
- Check with other jurisdictions (Portland, Metro in Seattle + compare to other Inland NW cities that are geographically isolated like Spokane) re how they set their own baselines
- NW Product Stewardship Council & Product Stewardship Institute – city needs to belong to these and be active at high level & the level of many different departments (incorporate industrial waste reduction into development and building approval processes) – create markets
- City formally participate in E3 Summit as sponsor, participant
- Move to limited purchase credit cards for city employees
- Could/should we sell GHG offsets stemming from various types of “green” purchasing and related reduced impacts?
- Need to write RFPs differently so we ask for recyclable, reusable, locally reused, “green”
- Fuel procurement: GHG inventory efforts need each department to more accurately report all the fuel that they buy (even if it's not bought from Fleet Svcs.)
- Identify what products can we produce at our own facilities. If we buy less, then we generate less waste.
- Need to establish a baseline – how would we do the accounting?
- Need to target suppliers of “green” products or services that lend themselves to “green” practices
- Need a waste reduction policy re Purchasing (in addition to “green”)
- Need a list of Best Practices, reward/recognize good things that City departments are already doing
- City offer incentives to encourage community to reduce the amount of waste they generate
- Reduce # of trucks/fleets needed to drive around and pick up garbage
- Identify how City government can impact products sold, packaging used (take-out packaging for food - styrofoam)
- What can City government do to reduce food waste and use only “green” products for food consumed at city events? weigh specific product costs against total collateral systemic costs
 - City of Spokane work to increase the potential for and thus the availability of locally produced goods by encouraging local residents to “buy local” – distribute information about local sources/sellers of “green” items
- Scale: identify an appropriate scale for a particular type of purchasing (might be more sustainable to purchase long-term durable items from farther away & buy frequent purchases more locally)
- Waste should be valued more for it's energy or power value (re WTE)
- Evaluate whether recycling and reusing more in each City department would reduce their operating costs and thus taxes on low-income residents

Data needed:

- What recycled products are we using now?
- What is the City government doing to recycle its own waste? What waste reduction and recycling practices are already in use by other city departments?
- What is the overlap between state regs and Spokane Municipal Codes?
- Inventories held by each department (re capital purchases,
- What are top 100 (or at least 20) purchases made by City (\$, volumn)?
 - How much is fossil-fuel based?
 - How far does it travel before it gets here? evaluate double freight charges (re buying cheaper product from far away and shipping it here vs. not buying from supplier in Spokane who's already shipped it here) --
- How are things "spec'd" now?
- What conditions exist in current contracts that prevent us from making purchasing decisions with more "green" implications?
- How much waste is City picking up now? How much is being recycled and in what categories now? (extrapolate #s for within city of Spokane based on #s for all of Spokane County)
- What are household & public health impacts of moving to less frequent garbage pickup in order to reduce fuel consumption (& fuel costs)?
 - Weekly pickup schedule based on reproduction cycle of fly larvae

Partnership opportunities:

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Related to other topic areas:

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Work group leader(s):

- Geoff Glenn
- Jim Wavada

Work group meetings:

- Every other Thursday, until the end of August
 - May 29th: 10:30 a.m. – noon, City Hall conference room 3B (3rd floor)
 - After that: 12:30 – 1:30 p.m., City Hall conference room 3C (3rd floor)