



**Policy Type:** Board

**Category:** Procurement

**Policy Name:** Sustainable Purchasing Policy - Board Policy 5.15

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## **5.15 SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING POLICY (Adopted 12-7-21)**

### **Background**

In accordance with the County of Santa Clara's Policies on Sustainability in Chapter 8 and elsewhere in this Policy Manual and the Sustainability Master Plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors on January 12, 2021, the County recognizes its responsibility to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, build resilience and support a vibrant and just economy, healthy environment, and social equity with a whole-systems approach. The County also understands that the types of products and services it buys have inherent environmental, economic, human health, and social impacts and that it should make sustainable procurement decisions that embody the County's commitment to sustainability.

Sustainable purchasing is purchasing that considers social, human health, environmental, and economic impacts, while supporting a diverse, equitable, and vibrant community and economy.

### **Purpose**

This Sustainable Purchasing Policy is intended to:



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- Communicate the County's commitment to sustainable purchasing to its employees, vendors, and community;
- Achieve cost optimization to build a financially sound organization by choosing products that are more resource-efficient and by considering the total life cycle cost;
- Spur the growth of sustainable and innovative technologies and cost-effective market-based solutions to further support sustainable purchasing;
- Empower employees to be innovative and demonstrate leadership in sustainability by considering sustainability benefits when making purchasing decisions; and
- Enable administration of sustainable purchasing standards, including the development of supporting guidelines and training.

This policy, along with related policies in Chapter 7 (Policies on Land Use and Environment) and Chapter 8 (Policies on Sustainability), work together to implement the County's sustainability vision and goals.

### **Policy**

County agencies, departments, employees, and contractors (prime and subcontractors) when doing business on behalf of the County, shall consider and apply, to the extent practicable, environmental, economic, and social equity sustainability outcomes when identifying, soliciting, and evaluating products or services procured with County funds.

Environmental, economic, and social equity sustainable purchasing priorities are those that:

- proactively combat climate change by lowering greenhouse gas emissions associated with the purchase, use, and disposal of products, and the provision of contracted services;
- protect, enhance, and restore natural resources by choosing products and services that conserve resources and ecosystems;



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- protect and improve the health of our community by choosing products and services that reduce cumulative impacts of environmental hazards; and
- cultivate a vibrant, prosperous, and just regional economy by considering vendors, products, and services that promote social equity.

### **Applicability of the Policy**

Compliance with this policy shall not deem an agency, department, employee, or contractor exempt from complying with all other sections of this Chapter 5 and all other applicable procurement policies and procedures, including applying a satisfactory level of competition, acquiring products and services that meet performance requirements, and are available at a reasonable price in a reasonable period of time. Nothing in this policy shall be construed as requiring any agency, department, or employee to terminate an existing contract to comply with this policy.

Where funding sources or emergency purchases prohibit the acquisition of products or services in conformance with the sustainable purchasing priorities in this policy, the County shall attempt to minimize negative sustainability implications resulting from the acquisition of the alternative goods or services.

### **Administration, Monitoring, and Evaluation Procedures**

A Sustainable Purchasing Working Group, led by the Office of Sustainability and the Procurement Department in partnership with the Office of Countywide Contracting Management and the Facilities and Fleet Department, shall oversee implementation of the Sustainable Purchasing Policy, including training and outreach. Specific elements of the policy, including sustainable purchasing requirements and best practices, will be



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developed by the working group for inclusion in the Procurement Administrative Guidelines and/or future contracting manuals.

County-specific purchasing standards established to support the priorities in this policy, shall be recommended by the Director of Sustainability to the Chief Procurement Officer for consideration in accordance with the process set forth in County of Santa Clara Ordinance Code Section A34-91 and the Procurement Administrative Guidelines. Proposed sustainable purchasing standards developed through this process will be presented to the County Executive or designee and if adopted, shall be incorporated into the Procurement Administrative Guidelines. Any sustainable purchasing standards mandated by State or Federal laws or regulations are not required to follow the process in section A34-91 and instead shall be developed, in consultation with the Office of the County Counsel and other departments as appropriate, for approval by the Chief Procurement Officer and shall be incorporated into the Procurement Administrative Guidelines as a minimum standard.

The Office of Sustainability shall report once a year to the Finance and Government Operations Committee (FGOC) and the Housing, Land Use, Environment, and Transportation Committee (HLUET) on the County's sustainable purchasing activities and the cost and effectiveness of this policy as part of the annual reporting for the Sustainability Master Plan. As needed, the Office of Sustainability shall also coordinate or support data collection with respective County agencies and departments for reporting in accordance with State and Federal regulations.

This policy will be reevaluated and updated as needed to ensure alignment with any new sustainability policies and priorities. Any revisions to this policy shall be developed in consultation with the Procurement Department, and the Office of Countywide Contracting Management to ensure compliance with other procurement-related policies and processes.



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### Related Policies

None.

### Related Forms and Information

None.

### History

Date	Changes Made
12/7/2021	Policy Adopted. <a href="#">View Legislative File.</a>