

RESOLUTION NO. 20240229-058

WHEREAS, the Austin Climate Equity Plan established the goal of equitably reaching net-zero community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 2040; and

WHEREAS, in 2004, Council adopted Resolution No. 040115-31 directing the initiation of a pilot project for emissions reductions through changes and improvements to the City's acquisition processes for goods and services to accomplish the most immediate, short-term impact to air quality without increasing the cost to the City more than five percent of the cost of such goods and services; and

WHEREAS, since 2008, the City's central procurement office has been working to implement a responsible purchasing program to help the City identify more sustainable alternatives to traditional goods and services; and

WHEREAS, a City-wide purchasing policy was adopted in 2018 that asks all City departments to track, measure, and encourage the use of sustainable products and services with the following attributes:

1. Conserve natural resources, including water, energy, and raw materials throughout the product life cycle;
2. Minimize environmental impacts such as water and air pollution during usage;
3. Eliminate or reduce toxins that create hazards to workers, citizens, wildlife, and the environment;
4. Support upcycling and recycling efforts, as well as utilize products with high recycled content;

5. Encourage vendors to reduce environmental impacts in their production and distribution systems;
6. Support worker health, safety, and fair wages; and
7. Consider total cost of ownership during the product's useful life, including operation, suppliers, maintenance, and disposal cost.

WHEREAS, in 2020, Austin adopted the Austin Climate Equity Plan, which included the goal “[b]y 2030, reduce greenhouse gas emissions from institutional, commercial, and government purchasing by at least 50%”; and

WHEREAS, in December 2021, the White House issued Executive Order 14057, which created the Federal Sustainability Plan that includes actions to achieve net-zero emissions from federal procurement by 2050 while increasing the sustainability of federal supply chains; and

WHEREAS, City staff, along with the Sustainable Procurement Leadership Council, has worked to develop a methodology to measure lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental and social impacts from non-residential purchasing and identify a baseline for progress; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 271 of the Texas Local Government Code, permits local governments to form purchasing cooperatives and to engage in cooperative purchasing for the benefit of all parties; and

WHEREAS, in June 2020, the City joined the Texas Interlocal Purchasing Cooperative with other regional governments which permits a lead government to establish cooperative contracts and makes these standardized contracts available for use by participating governments; and

WHEREAS, the Sustainable Procurement Leadership Council provided coaching and the Parametrix firm performed an initial baseline analysis of the City's existing spending across human respiratory impacts, toxicity, water use intensity, and energy impacts highlighted the disproportionate impact of certain products, particularly cement and transportation equipment, and services such as waste management and green space maintenance; and

WHEREAS, the City has existing programs and focused goals regarding some high-impact procurements, such as electric vehicle transition and waste reduction; and

WHEREAS, lawncare equipment, which runs on smaller, less efficient motors with a mix of fuels, has a significant climate impact; and

WHEREAS, the 2020 National Emissions Inventory from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found that lawncare equipment emitted large quantities of smog-producing nitrogen oxides, greenhouse-gas-contributing carbon dioxide, and other toxins such as benzene; and

WHEREAS, the EPA report found that lawncare equipment produced a disproportionate amount of fine particulate matter, known as PM_{2.5}, that is particularly harmful to human health; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, gas-powered lawn equipment in the United States produced 21,800 tons of PM_{2.5}, which is an amount equivalent to the pollution from 234 million typical cars over the course of a year; and

WHEREAS, in February 2024, the EPA finalized rules regarding the level of air pollution, seeking to limit PM_{2.5} at less than 9.0 ug/m³, and published

guidance that the air quality data for Travis County recorded between 2020 and 2022 would be considered non-attainment by this standard; and

WHEREAS, City staff and contractors specializing in green space maintenance have provided feedback regarding some of the cost challenges regarding a transition to electric lawncare equipment; and

WHEREAS, Council passed Resolution No. 20230420-024 acknowledging the disproportionate environmental impact of cement production, which accounts for seven percent of all global carbon emissions, and directed City staff to explore a plan to transition all future City contracts and projects to low-embodied-carbon concrete; and

WHEREAS, after working to get industry feedback, City staff presented to the Joint Sustainability Committee in January 2024 regarding a draft implementation plan for transition to low-embodied-carbon concrete and recommended revising City-wide purchasing and contracting documents to reflect updated standards; **NOW THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed to develop a systemic approach for the procurement processes of the City, including specifications and requirements, to prioritize low environmental impact options and actively support the transition of contracted goods and services to more environmentally sustainable practices. Implementing sustainable purchasing is expected to be the responsibility of all departments, including enterprise departments such as the airport and convention center.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to commence an initial pilot program that focuses on the two categories identified by staff during the baseline analysis: concrete construction and greenspace maintenance services and equipment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to include establishing a preference policy for low environmental impact options as well as providing tailored assistance to vendors seeking to transition to more sustainable practices in the pilot program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to work collaboratively with other regional government purchasing managers to seek harmonization of sustainable purchasing practices and cooperation in any vendor support programs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

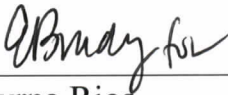
The City Manager is directed to include environmental impact information used for evaluation or tracking, such as Environmental Product Declarations, as a part of any request for Council action on a Council agenda related to these pilot areas.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to report to Council by July 19, 2024, regarding program recommendations and to identify any staffing or resources needed in Fiscal Year 2024-2025 for pilot implementation and for the broader implementation of sustainable procurement practices.

ADOPTED: February 29, 2024

ATTEST:


Myrna Rios
City Clerk