



MEMORANDUM

TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY

TO: Mayor and Members of the Town Council

FROM: Carol Borck, Planning Technician

DATE: June 7, 2006

RE: Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy

The Town of Portola Valley is proposing to adopt an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) policy that would promote the Town's purchasing and use of more environmentally conscious products and services by staff, elected officials, volunteers, consultants, and contractors. This policy would require the Town, where feasible, to actively seek and purchase products and services that minimize environmental impacts, are durable and long-lasting, have recycled content, conserve energy and water, and contain less toxic and hazardous chemicals.

Environmentally preferable purchasing is important because:

- It will contribute to resource conservation and minimizing environmental impacts
- Raise staff, elected official, and volunteer awareness on environmental issues and our impacts on the environment in our day to day business activities
- Encourages service providers to consider environmental impacts of service and products
- Support stronger markets for recycled products
- Portola Valley can serve as a model for environmentally preferable purchasing and environmental awareness in our local region

Presently, neighboring jurisdictions polled, including Woodside, Los Altos Hills, and Menlo Park, do not have such a purchasing policy in place, although many indicated that they do purposely select some recycled content and/or less toxic office, janitorial, and/or public works supplies. Basically, this is what the Town is also doing at this time. The County of San Mateo does have and implement a successful environmental purchasing policy that is overseen by a staff-formed committee. The East Bay cities of Berkeley, San Leandro, and Dublin have adopted EPP's in coordination with StopWaste.Org, which is a cooperative effort between Alameda County Waste Management Authority and the Alameda County Source Reduction and Recycling Board. These jurisdictions have implemented their EPP policies relatively recently, and discussions with them have provided insight and guidance as to how Portola Valley can implement an effective EPP policy.

Of primary importance is the flexibility of the policy. It will take time for staff members to become familiar with alternative products and how to obtain them; a full-blown, mandatory implementation from the first day the policy goes into effect is too restrictive. Based on feedback from the East Bay cities and San Mateo County, the allowance for a phased approach is the best option. Upon adoption of the EPP, Portola Valley should continue its current effort in green purchasing while both utilizing pre-existing green product lists (obtained from StopWaste.Org or other sources) and compiling our own lists as we continue to order supplies and services. Staff members making purchases should re-evaluate currently used products and materials that do not have recycled content and/or contain hazardous or toxic materials and pursue alternatives; a list of discouraged/prohibited chemicals and materials should be developed. In some cases, greener alternatives may be difficult to quickly obtain or may not be compatible with the Town's equipment, needs, or desires, therefore the allowance for phasing in of the policy as well as implementation where practicable is crucial.

Existing vendors (e.g. janitorial supplier and printing services) will need to be informed of the new policy requirements (minimum recycled content, disallowed chemical ingredients, etc.) for various products. If currently used vendors are unable to meet the requirements of the policy, new vendors will need to be sought out. Additionally, bid specs for Town projects will also need to outline the EPP policy requirements. All prospective bidders will need to be aware of these requirements and will be expected to fulfill them if their bid is selected.

The Town, in general, by purchasing more environmentally conscious products can expect cost increases in the range of 5% to 20%. Many currently purchased supplies already meet the intent of the proposed EEP policy, such as recycled content copier paper and paper towels, and hence there would be no change in costs concerning these items. On the other hand, significant cost increases could be expected if, for example, the Town decided to utilize rubberized street paving which is about 40% more expensive than traditional asphalt, or if the Town purchased organic field fertilizers which can cost as much as 170% more than the currently applied products.

In adopting the EPP policy, Portola Valley will again move forward in its sustainability efforts, taking the lead in our local region in implementing an environmentally conscientious purchasing program. This policy will promote environmental awareness and resource conservation by the Town, and ideally, will also assist other jurisdictions in realizing the importance of such actions by municipal governments.

Approved: _____
Angela Howard, Town Administrator

Attachment: Draft Policy Concerning Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

Sample Cost Comparison: Traditional Product vs. Greener Option

Product	Traditional Item Price	Greener Option Cost	Cost Difference
Copy Paper	\$3.49/ream	\$4.99/ream	+43%*
Fax Toner	\$29.99/ea	\$12.95/ea	-57%
Lawn Fertilizer	\$510/ton	\$1,360/ton (organic)	+167%
Glass Cleaner	\$7.95/gal	\$8.95/gal	+12%

*Town currently purchases the greener option