

**GEORGE WASHINGTON REGIONAL COMMISSION**  
**CURRENT AND FUTURE GREEN OFFICE PRACTICES**  
**(PROPOSED)**

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**Goal of Green Office Practices**

The goals of the George Washington Regional Commission’s Green Office Practices are:

- To assess current green office practices
- To reduce the environmental impact of our business operations
- To increase demand for “green” products (e.g. made of post-consumer recycled material content, lower energy consumption, foster resource conservation through greater efficiency, etc).
- To increase staff awareness, involvement, and investment in office environmental practices

By giving preference to environmentally-preferable goods and services, we maximize the efficient use and reuse of our resources, improve human, worker, and public health, and improve the environmental quality of the Region. By recycling, we increase demand for products made from post-consumer materials to strengthen the market to a sustainable level, and reduce the amount of solid waste deposited in the landfill. By greening our facility, we set an example for the general public, and provide a healthier work environment for employees. By encouraging environmentally sound travel practices, we minimize the cost of business operations, reduce vehicle miles traveled, support public transit, and reduce the Commission’s “eco and carbon footprint”.

**A. GREEN PURCHASING**

**Definition**

Buying environmentally preferable goods and services means staff will choose products with reduced environmental impacts, while maintaining economical and performance standards. This should entail the product’s entire lifecycle from raw materials, production, distribution, operation, and disposal.

**Current Practices**

Paper products routinely purchased containing post-consumer recycled content

- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| ▪ Paper towels | ▪ Blue paper      |
| ▪ Toilet paper | ▪ Green paper     |
| ▪ Yellow paper | ▪ Goldenrod paper |

Paper products sometimes purchased containing post-consumer recycled content

- |                      |           |
|----------------------|-----------|
| ▪ White office paper | ▪ Napkins |
|----------------------|-----------|

Paper products never purchased containing post-consumer recycled content

- Paper plates
- Red paper
- Cups

Cleaning products

- Currently identifying types of cleaning products used.

Appliances

- No GWRC appliance is Energy Star certified.

Plastic cups

- Provided by Diamond Springs, plastic #5.

NOAA/DEQ CZM contract

- *“The Grantee agrees to use paper with the highest recovered material content level practicable for all reports which are prepared as part of this contract and delivered to the Department. This requirement does not apply to standard forms.”*

## **Future Practices**

GWRC will give preference to products whose components and processes have a lower environmental impact.

To determine a product’s environmental impact, the following characteristics should be considered:

- Biobased
- Biodegradable
- CFC free
- Conservation of natural resources
- Durable
- Energy efficiency, in production and use
- Lead free
- Locally or regionally manufactured
- Low toxicity
- Low VOC content
- Mercury free
- PBT free
- Rapidly renewable materials
- Recyclable
- Made of recycled content, maximizing post consumer content
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Reduced packaging
- Refurbished
- Resource efficiency
- Upgradeable
- Waste minimization
- Water conservation
- Water efficiency

As part of GWRC’s procurement policy, environmental and performance standards shall be considered along with price. Environmental considerations shall be a component of the determination of the best economical value. Life cycle costs should also be considered when determining the product with the best economical value.

- All purchasing and procurement agreements shall be reviewed to ensure their requirements do not conflict with GWRC's Green Office Practices.
- All applicable products purchased shall meet or exceed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's recommended recycled content percentages unless it is cost prohibitive to do so.
- All applicable products purchased shall meet or exceed the standard for energy efficiency set by the federal Energy Star program unless it is cost prohibitive.
- All applicable products purchased shall meet or exceed the U.S. Department of Agriculture biobased recommendations unless it is cost prohibitive to do so.
- All applicable products purchased shall meet or exceed the Environmental Choice or Green Seal standards unless it is cost prohibitive to do so.

### **Implementation of Future Practices**

GWRC will improve its energy efficiency and minimize its environmental impact by concentrating on the following measures:

- Increase the recycled content in office paper purchases, with a minimum of 30% post-consumer recycled content.
- Use soy-based inks in printing agency stationary & reports produced through outside printing services.
- Collaborate with the custodian to use biodegradable and less hazardous cleaning products.
- Collaborate with landscaper/grounds maintenance crew to use less hazardous products.
- Collaborate with pest management company to use less hazardous products.

To ensure the maximum benefit from implementation of future practices, the education of staff will take place to ensure the understanding of procedures and how to implement them.

GWRC will require contractors and vendors to use environmentally-preferable products, unless it is cost prohibitive to do so.

### **Future Monitoring and Reporting**

The Regional Litter Control Coordinator shall track the office purchases and analyze their environmental impact. At the pleasure of the Commission and the Executive Director, an annual report will be made tracking the office's environmental measures, environmental products purchased, energy costs, and energy savings.

## **B. RECYCLING**

### **Definition**

There are three parts that make recycling efforts successful. Part one is reducing the amount of goods consumed. Using fewer products saves resources. Part two is recycling acceptable materials. The final part is 'closing the loop' and buying products made from

post-consumer recycled content to support manufacturers' efforts to use recycled content by creating a market for recycled goods.

## **Reduce**

### Current Practices

The following are practiced by the majority of staff on a regular basis:

- Rely heavily on e-mail for communication and to circulate documents and memos.
- Print in single-line spacing.
- Order supplies in bulk to minimizing packaging waste.
- Print copies of reports in duplex-mode on the office copier.

### Future Practices

The following are practiced to a minimal extend by staff. Increasing efforts in the following areas would reduce waste and increase recycling.

- Print double sided when appropriate by all the staff.
- Save documents electronically instead of printing a hard copy.
- Use available mugs and cutlery in the kitchen and make mugs and cutlery available to guests.
- When designing projects, avoid unrecyclable elements (adhesives, plastic bags, etc.)
- Meeting agendas should be projected on the screen instead of printed and distributed.
- Meeting materials should be emailed when appropriate. Materials that must be printed and distributed should be done so with respect to the guidelines above.

## **Recycling**

### Current Practices

Weekly curbside recycling service is provided by the City of Fredericksburg on Tuesday. GWRC may also make use of the Belman Road Recycling Center if needed. The City recycling bin is located in workroom for paper.

Current recycling equipment:

- Additional City recycling bin(s) to be located bin in other areas of the office.
- Blue plastics recycling bin in kitchen.
- Aluminum can recycling box in kitchen (provided by Habitat for Humanity)
- Desk side mixed office paper recycling bins for certain staff members.

Current item recycled

- Aluminum (cans, foil)
- Glass (brown, clear, and green)
- Mixed Office Paper (dry newspaper, junk mail, magazines, phone books, cereal boxes, mixed office paper, old corrugated containers)
- Plastics #1- #7

### Future Practices

- Rotate the responsibility of putting the recycling bin out for collection among all staff members.
- Staff should recycle everything that is accepted in recycling bins throughout the office.
- Add container recycling bin in conference room.
- Desk-side recycle bins should be made available to and used by all staff.
- Educate staff on types of recyclable items.
- Training for custodial staff to assist in office recycling.

Extend recycling efforts to other accepted materials such as

- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| ▪ Scrap metal   | ▪ Batteries         |
| ▪ Steel/tin cans  | ▪ Cell phones       |
| ▪ Used Electronics (small appliances) & Computer Hardware | ▪ Ink cartridges    |
|   | ▪ Fluorescent bulbs |

### **Purchased Recycled Content**

As stated in the Section A. Green Purchasing, preference should be given to products containing a minimum of 30% post-consumer recycled content.

### **Future Monitoring and Reporting**

Curbside recycling services are provided to GWRC by the City of Fredericksburg. In compliance with the City's instructions, designated staff will place the recycling bins on the sidewalk for weekly pick up by the City. Additional trips to the City's recycling facility will occur on an as needed basis. In cooperation with GWRC administrative staff, the Regional Litter Control Coordinator will track the volume recycled. At the pleasure of the Commission and the Executive Director, recycling efforts shall be included in an annual report tracking the office's environmental measures, environmental products purchased, energy costs, and energy savings.

## **C. GREEN FACILITY**

### **Cleaning**

#### Current Practices

In the process of determining which cleaning products are used by custodial staff.

#### Future Practices

Using green cleaning products improves worker productivity by providing a healthier workplace. If a need is determined, GWRC will collaborate with custodial staff to encourage the use of environmentally friendly cleaning products:

- Cleaning products will meet the standards of Green Seal or Environmental Choice.
- Chlorine-based and biological cleaners will be replaced with oxygenated, biobased alternatives.

## **Energy**

### Current Practices

- The Commission's programmable thermostats should be set to only heat/cool the building when occupied.
- Computers, printers, and monitors should be turned off overnight.
- GWRC provides reusable mugs, and cutlery for staff. Staff has the responsibility for hand washing the dirty dishes.
- GWRC equipment must be kept running smoothly.
- Meeting room and private office lighting should be turned off when room is unoccupied.

### Future Practices

- Appliances purchased should be Energy Star qualified. A dishwasher installed in the kitchen would increase the use of reusable kitchen items, therefore reducing the consumption of those goods, saving the Commission money. Energy efficiency should be considered when replacing the following: water heater, heat pump, toilet, faucet, etc.
- Space heaters should be discouraged.
- Computer should use power-saving settings during the day.
- GWRC will provide reusable plates for staff. Staff will take on the responsibility for hand washing the dirty dishes unless a dishwasher is provided.
- Staff may provide reusable dishes to guests but must take on the responsibility of the cleaning.
- GWRC will conduct an energy audit to provide a baseline with which to measure energy efficiency after the implementation of the Green Office Policy.
- Research the availability of renewable energy sources from the existing power provider or other providers.

## **Lighting**

### Current Practices

- The last staff member to leave the office at the end of the workday will ensure all lights and equipment are turned off.

### Future Practices

- Staff members with private offices that are leaving the building for a meeting outside the GWRC office, will turn off office lights.
- If necessary, occupancy motion sensors will be installed in restrooms and meeting rooms.
- Compact fluorescent light bulbs will be used in place of incandescent bulbs.

## **Recycling**

### Current Practices

- Recycling bins are provided in the workroom for paper, aluminum, and plastics.

### Future Practices

- A recycling bin will be provided in the conference room for meeting attendees.

## **Water**

Water conservation is a priority for GWRC considering the water situation in the region.

### Current Practices

- Any water leaks in faucets or toilets shall be fixed immediately.

### Future Practices

- Bottled water shall be discouraged at meetings. The workroom water cooler shall be placed in the conference room to provide water for meetings. Paper cups, made from recycled content, shall be provided instead of plastic cups.
- GWRC shall coordinate with the landscaping company to promote water-efficient landscaping.
- When replacing or purchasing faucets or toilets, low-flow, water-saving products should be considered.

## **Monitoring and Reporting**

Electricity bills and water bills will be monitored to document usage trends. These bills will be compared with the initial energy audit to document any savings. At the pleasure of the Commission and the Executive Director, an annual report will be made tracking the office's environmental measures, environmental products purchased, energy costs, and energy savings.

## **D. GREEN TRAVEL**

### **Flexible Work Schedules**

#### Current Practices

As stated in the Employee Handbook, adopted x, xx, 2008, GWRC may offer employees the opportunity to work regular, flexible work hours. Alternative work schedules will be considered based upon the Commission's and its clients' needs and an employee's unique circumstances. Flexible work schedules will be approved on a case-by-case basis.

#### Future Practices

Encourage employees to implement a flexible work schedule when applicable.

### **Alternate methods of transportation**

#### Current Practices

The Commission supports employees commuting by means other than use of their personal vehicle.

#### Future Practices

Subject to budget considerations, the Commission should consider offering a monetary benefit for employees commuting by means other than the use of their personal vehicle, a minimum of 50% of one month.

## **Carpooling**

### Current Practices

GWRC promotes carpooling as a commuting method and as a way to travel to meetings.

### Future Practices

Carpooling to meetings maximizes the Commission's resources by reducing or eliminating redundant mileage reimbursement. Carpooling should also be encouraged for those attending meetings at GWRC.

## **Walking/Biking**

### Current Practices

- GWRC promotes walking or biking as a means of transportation.
- FAMPO is in the final stages of completing its Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan update which aims to preserve and enhance the Region's bicycling and pedestrian network; and to improve the safety, attractiveness, and overall viability of cycling and walking as legitimate transportation alternatives to the transportation system.

### Future Practices

GWRC should provide employees and visitors with a bike rack or encourage the use of the train station's bike rack.

## **Public Transit**

### Current Practices

- Use of public transit to travel to meetings (especially use of VRE to travel to meetings in Washington, D.C.)

### Future Practices

- Train and bus schedules should be consulted when scheduling meetings.
- Whenever feasible, employees traveling to meetings should use public transit.

## **Conference Calls & Video Conferencing**

### Current Practices

- The Commission provides conference call technology in the Gibbons Conference Room.
- If an in-person meeting is not absolutely necessary, telecommunication should be employed.

### Future Practices

- Arrangements may be made with Germanna Community College or the University of Mary Washington to conduct a video conference session.
- Research may be done in the area of videoconferencing and other telecommunication technologies available to explore technical and cost-feasibility for implementation in the Gibbons Conference Room.

## **Fleet procurement**

### Current Practices

Not currently pursuing a vehicle purchase.

### Future Practices

- In the event the Commission procures an agency vehicle, it is recommended that a low greenhouse gas emitting vehicle be chosen using hybrid gas/electric or clean diesel technology.
- The Commission fleet must follow a preventative maintenance schedule to maintain the vehicle(s) in good working condition.