



**GLOBAL LEAD CITY NETWORK
ON SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT**

City of Pittsburgh

(USA)

Sustainable Procurement Profile



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PROCURING SUSTAINABLY, LEADING GLOBALLY



Introduction

The City of Pittsburgh is the second largest city in the US-state of Pennsylvania, with more than 300,000 inhabitants. It approaches procurement and the connected budgeting processes with a lens of resilience. Mayor William Peduto declared his commitment to sustainable procurement by recognizing the critical power of it that it be leveraged “*in an equitable and responsible way that promotes clean energy and sustainable solutions*”. Pittsburgh uses its purchasing power as a key tool to drive sustainable procurement as a means to be a role model for climate action, local workforce development, fair and green consumption as well as circular use of resources. In addition, the City leverages procurement to collaborate with other cities in incentivising the market to implement on the renewable energy transition.

With the Pittsburgh [Climate Action Plan 3.0](#) of 2018 the City established important and ambitious targets for 2030. The city is also part of the [Urban Transition Alliance](#), an opportunity for industrial legacy cities across the world to demonstrate their commitment to inclusive and sustainable urban development. Pittsburgh focuses on the exchange of training models that connect local workforce development programs with both labor and clean energy project developers.

In 2020 the City adopted new “Socially Responsible Investing” guidelines to screen for pension investments in companies that follow environmentally friendly and socially responsible business procedures. By investing in companies that practice responsible initiatives in a transparent manner, the City is encouraging behaviours that align with underlying values and beliefs around sustainability and responsibility.

Notably, in November 2020 the City of Pittsburgh launched the [Marshall Plan for Middle America Roadmap](#), a regional energy transition and green recovery strategy developed by the City together with other partners. It aims to build a regional, multi-sectoral coalition of stakeholders to drive investment in infrastructure and energy diversification that will catalyze more equitable economic recovery while laying a foundation for the Ohio Valley to be a global leader in cleaner energy resources and circular economy practices.

The City of Pittsburgh believes its critical to approach inclusive procurement with a lens of sustainability in order to create opportunities to realize the 2030 climate action goals. How procurement is managed - what they purchase, where they invest and what kinds of companies they contract with - is interconnected with the city’s climate and equity goals to create a better Pittsburgh for all.

The City adopted some important targets in several procurement-related sectors for the following years:

- **Energy:** Pittsburgh’s ambitious Climate Action Plan 3.0 of 2018 commits the City to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2023, 50% by 2030, and 80% by 2050 as well as a 100% renewable energy usage and 50% of energy and water use reduction by 2030. Also, a divestment of the City pension fund from fossil fuel will be

done by 2030. This strategy includes a mandate to invest millions in pension funds into sustainable energy companies. Moreover, all future City owned buildings will commit to Net Zero Energy Standards to reduce City government's impact on carbon emissions.

- **Transport:** by 2030 the City intends to operate a fully fossil-fuel-free fleet by using its procurement power to invest in electric vehicles powered by solar energy and aims to reduce emissions for transportation by 50%.
- **Food:** The Climate Action Plan 3.0 declares commitments to purchasing local produce and food products. The City will implement a local food procurement policy for public institutions and government entities that would give preference to local farmers and producers that may otherwise be overshadowed by large corporations.

OUR SPP HIGHLIGHTS

HIGHLIGHTS IN GLCN PRIORITY SECTORS

- **Transport:** As of 2020, the City owns 26 electric vehicles, with a carbon reduction of 75% per vehicle. The Equipment Leasing Authority (ELA) established a Green Vehicles Ordinance in 2008 to prioritize purchasing vehicles with high fuel efficiencies and alternative fuels. New road salt distribution methods were adopted by the Department of Public Works which resulted in an estimated 60% reduction in salt usage - over 11,000 tons of salt - during 2019-2020 Snow and Ice Control Operations.
- **Construction:** in April 2021 the City government published a [Deconstruction Executive Order](#) which aims to contribute to a unified City-led deconstruction policy which among others requires the City administration to focus on waste management planning and waste diversion, to explore purchasing opportunities to sustain demand for reused building materials (e.g. the use of gypsum as a de-icing agent), to incentivize reuse of building materials during plan review and approval of private development projects and to transform demolition sites to productive and community-driven end use. In the context of the Order, the Administration staff shall work cooperatively and in a transparent manner. In addition, the Order established that the City will pilot deconstruction on its condemned properties that will be selected using metrics to advance equity (including for example proximity to historically Black business districts that are part of the Mayor's [Avenues of Hope](#) initiative). Also, a neighborhood engagement and plain language marketing strategy shall be adopted to inform a productive end-use for properties slated for demolition and deconstruction, and promote awareness of deconstruction through media. A Deconstruction Action Council will be established that will, among others, assess the ability of the local circular economy to support deconstruction initiatives and identify opportunities to strengthen and scale beyond City-owned condemned properties. Additionally, the City has developed a net-zero energy policy for major renovations and new construction projects.
- **Energy:** the City of Pittsburgh procured 100% renewable electricity for the first time in 2020

for all of their accounts through a REC (Renewable Energy Credit) purchase. In 2021 the City finalized their new energy supply agreement with their energy supplier to transition their accounts to a wholesale sub account aggregation, in order to be able to buy in the wholesale energy market (instead of retail) and therefore enable procurement of power purchase agreements for local wind or solar projects in Southwestern Pennsylvania. The City is also currently looking at developing project labor agreements to coincide with new generation projects. Moreover, in the energy procurement process the City notably included a CSR/SDG reporting requirement that was very helpful for our selection team to link their ‘value chain’ with their ‘supply chain’.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- In January 2020 the City began an e-Signature pilot project. Since then it has been expanded from a small select group of documents to being used with all city contracts. As of July 31, 2021, the City has saved the following equivalents through e-signatures:
 - 30,462 lbs of wood (approximately 90 trees)
 - 89,691 gallons of water (approximately 66 washing machines)
 - 71,499 lbs of CO2 (approximately 6 cars)
 - 4,950 lbs of waste (approximately 81 trash cans)
- **Stationary and office supplies:** The City of Pittsburgh has chosen Office Depot as its preferred supplier for paper and office supplies. Office Depot offers a GreenerOffice catalog which “includes thousands of high-quality, sustainable products with eco-attributes and eco-labels to help you reduce your environmental impact.” By utilizing Office Depot’s GreenerOffice and advanced sustainability reporting capabilities, the City will have the capability to measure and change its office supplies purchasing habits.
- **Drinking water supply change:** In May 2021 the City began the process of switching from 5-gallon water coolers to plumbed water filtration systems. This change will result in less carbon emissions realized through the reduction of weekly water deliveries at many locations across the city, as well as reduce the use of plastics - all while providing cleaner water for the City’s employees and visitors.
- **Waste:** by 2030, Pittsburgh intends to become a zero-waste city.

How we procure

Accessible and inclusive procurement

The City is striving to help support businesses owned by women and people of color by publicly displaying the forecast of future solicitations and shortening the time between when a contract is awarded and executed. Time and preparation are of the essence for Pittsburgh’s small businesses, so the City implemented these tools to help them compete more effectively for City contracts.

To facilitate small businesses’ access to public sector procurement, the City prepared a 12-month outlook for upcoming contracting needs and organized a collective Buying Plan that identifies procurement opportunities also with other government agencies, so that businesses can view upcoming contracts and bidding information in one unique spot. In addition, the City simplified the administrative procurement procedures and introduced online tools and electronic signatures to

eliminate delays.

During the 2020 COVID pandemic they also launched a series of remote training to help local, diverse small businesses learn how to participate in the City and other agencies' procurement processes.

In 2020, the City also pivoted the government incubator program PGH Lab, to focus on engaging local tech startups that are run by and benefit women, racial minorities, and disadvantaged residents. In exchange for the startup company's time and skills, the City has offered our expansive government networks, a solid case study example, promotion from our social media and public engagement platforms, and an inside look at government procurement processes. Since 2016, PGH Lab has elevated and engaged over 30 startup companies, some which have since been awarded government contracts.

Procurement-related sustainable projects

The Marshall Plan for Middle America (MP4MA) Roadmap



With the support of all key project partners — including the City of Pittsburgh and Mayor William Peduto, the [United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network](#) and [Steel Valley Authority](#) and the [Heartland Capital Strategies Network](#) — the MP4MA Roadmap, a non-partisan, data-driven research document which lays out a strategy for regional cross-sectoral cooperation across the Ohio Valley (including Upper Appalachia), it brings together five essential components in order to transition the regional economy from one built on fossil fuels to one built on renewable energy and

innovations in infrastructure and manufacturing to drive public and private investment in more equitable and sustainable economic development strategies:

1. Reliable research and evidence to help chart the path forward;
2. Governing institutions with identifiable infrastructure needs and community ties;
3. Companies to invest in long-term market development and support the transition to more sustainable business practices;
4. Capital to finance development; and,
5. Community oversight, transparency, and accountability.

The Roadmap is the result of the scientific work of academic and policy researchers from the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, the City of Pittsburgh, the Steel Valley Authority, the Heartland Capital Strategies Network and the Enel Foundation.

Keeping track of procurement

In the City of Pittsburgh's efforts to meet its procurement and sustainability goals data has been used to support decision making. Pittsburgh is in the process of creating a centralized point of access for sustainability related data, which will help standardize goal measurement, create internal buy-in and share collective progress. By creating greater transparency of activities, the hope of the dashboards is to better align needs with the required financial and human capacities to address the scale of the challenge.

Future challenges

- Developing an enterprise solution for a paperless office.
- Reducing consumption of bottled water city-wide
- Changing habits of individuals to reduce/reuse/recycle
- Developing a system to combine multiple data sets into one dashboard to track progress toward our climate goals.
- Incorporating more SDG's into our procurement strategies.
- Installing adequate charging infrastructure to align with our electric vehicle goals.
- Ensuring that our renewable electricity supply aligns with the City's budgetary capacity.
- Educating our Permitting and Commission staff on our net-zero goals to ensure proper permits and permissions.

Further information

RESOURCE	WEBSITE
Marshall Plan for Middle America	https://www.sustainablebusiness.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/marshall_plan_for_middle_america_roadmap_0.pdf
Inclusive Procurement	https://www.livingcities.org/blog/1460-how-pittsburgh-is-mobilizing-to-help-businesses-owned-by-women-and-people-of-color-in-a-time-of-great-uncertainty
Pittsburgh's Climate Action Plan 3.0	https://apps.pittsburghpa.gov/redtail/images/7101_Pittsburgh_Climate_Action_Plan_3.0.pdf



Contact

Ms. Jennifer L. Olzinger, CPPB
Assistant Director/Procurement Manager
Office of Management & Budget
414 Grant Street, Room 502
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
412-255-2640
jennifer.olzinger@pittsburghpa.gov

Mr. Grant Ervin
Chief Sustainability Officer
Department of City Planning
414 Grant Street, 6th Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
412-627-4785
grant.ervin@pittsburghpa.gov

About the GLCN on SP

The **Global Lead City Network on Sustainable Procurement** is a group of cities committed to drive a transition to sustainable consumption and production by implementing sustainable and innovative procurement. All participating cities are acting as ambassadors of sustainable procurement to lead to a resource efficient, low carbon and socially responsible society.