



2019 Annual Buy Green Report for San Francisco City Departments

Prepared by the San Francisco Department of the Environment (SFE) Green Purchasing Program
Presented to the San Francisco Commission on the Environment
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I. Executive Summary

Several San Francisco City ordinances, most notably the [Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Ordinance](#) (EPPO), require that City departments purchase only green products under certain circumstances. The EPPO requires that the San Francisco Department of the Environment (SFE) implement the ordinances' mandates, which include filing this annual report.

SFE's Green Purchasing Program 2019 highlights include the below projects and initiatives. See Section IV for more information on each.

- Worked to strengthen a leading third-party environmental product certification
- Launched the City Sustainable Purchasing Committee*
- Piloted rechargeable landscaping equipment*
- Assisted in developing a C40 Cities case study on San Francisco's carpet regulation
- Assisted in implementing the Single-Use Foodware, Plastics, Toxics, and Litter Reduction Ordinance
- Updated the City's information technology purchasing policy
- Added health and environmental specifications to nine contracts, including two new paint contracts
- Updated guidance on furniture purchases
- Blocked noncompliant office supplies in online store
- Worked on system to promote green purchasing via the Financial Systems Project (FSP)
- Presentations and trainings to City staff and beyond

Each year, we conduct an in-depth analysis of certain products the City purchases. For 2019, we analyzed purchases of information technology (IT) products. Sales reports show that the percentage of information technology (IT) products purchased decreased from 83% to 58% in 2019. Part of this decrease is due to the adoption of more rigorous purchasing requirements and expansion of product categories covered. In the coming year, SFE staff will explore opportunities to improve green purchasing performance with City IT managers.

II. Background

History and mandate

Green products are less toxic, more energy efficient, more recyclable and/or compostable, have higher levels of recycled content, and have less impact on climate change than comparable alternative products. The EPPO, also known as the Precautionary Purchasing Ordinance (Environment Code, Chapter 2), was passed in 2005 and is the umbrella ordinance governing City government procurement of green products. Additionally, the Resource Conservation Ordinance (Env. Code, Chapter 5) mandates that departments maximize purchases of recycled products and the Green Building Ordinance (Env. Code, Chapter 7) mandates green purchasing requirements for interior finishes of City construction projects, including furniture, carpets, and paints. SFE leads the implementation of these mandates through its Green Purchasing Program, in collaboration with the Office of Contract Administration (OCA) and other City departments.

How green product specifications are developed

SFE works with City departments and OCA to develop green requirements for targeted City commodity and service contracts. These requirements range from purchasing products that meet existing standards or have ecolabels, such as Energy Star or Green Seal, to more detailed, independently developed technical specifications. In keeping with the Precautionary Principle Ordinance (Environment Code, Chapter 1), SFE seeks to prevent harm from certain products; conduct assessments of safest alternatives available to fulfill the same product function; and take a full-cost, life-cycle view of product costs and impacts.

The Green Purchasing Program seeks to develop purchasing criteria that satisfy three goals:

- Performance. Do compliant products work well? Are they durable and efficient? (Primarily addressed by product users)
- Impact. Do the products minimize impacts on worker health, public health, and the environment?

- Cost. Are compliant products cost-effective, including production, use, and disposal phases? (Primarily addressed by OCA)

Where City staff can find green products & specifications

SFE maintains the SFAApproved.org website as a clearinghouse for compliant green products, health and environmental purchasing criteria, specifications, and other green purchasing information. Product categories in SFAApproved.org are classified as either of the following:

✓ Required

For [Required product categories](#), City staff may only purchase products that meet Required specifications. Listed products meet all three goals above and usually have discounts on citywide term contracts. There are currently 34 product categories that are Required.

✓ Suggested

City staff are encouraged to buy products that meet Suggested environmental specifications and rate them at SFAApproved.org, to help determine which products should be included in future contracts. SFE has researched environmental impacts of these products however, more work may be needed on cost and/or performance goals. There are currently 54 Suggested product categories.

III. City staff champions



This year's Buy Green champions are the Nutritional Services staff at Laguna Honda Hospital (LHH) and Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital (ZSFGH), especially Elvis Lavarreda, the Nutritional Services Director at LHH (pictured left) and Chef Michael Jenkins at ZSFGH (pictured right). Both Elvis and Michael have been outstanding champions of the Department's environmental initiatives. They have been great thought partners, collaborated closely with the Green Purchasing Team, and went above and beyond to ensure that the products in the foodware contract met both the hospitals' standards as well as environmentally preferable criteria. In addition, in 2019, both Elvis and Michael have participated in the development of a detailed baseline assessment of their food purchases, using the Center for Good Food Purchasing method. We applaud their efforts to both measure their current purchases, their ongoing efforts to source high quality, local produce and other food, and their dedication to continuous improvement.

IV. 2019 Projects

Worked to strengthen a prominent ecolabel

Green purchasing efforts rely heavily on rigorous, credible ecolabels. Most ecolabel organizations publish a list of products certified as meeting their requirements, making it easy for purchasers to evaluate vendors' compliance with bid

requirements. When no existing ecolabels meet San Francisco's environmental or health requirements, staff must verify compliance themselves, and create and update lists of compliant products; these are highly time- and resource-intensive tasks. SFE's carpet requirements are an example; though based on the Cradle to Cradle (C2C) version 3 ecolabel, San Francisco's additional requirements (for example, a prohibition on fluorinated chemicals) make independent verification necessary. For these reasons, SFE organized and submitted wide-ranging comments promoting stricter standards to C2C version 4 in its 2019 request for comments.

Launched the City Sustainable Purchasing Committee

The Green Purchasing Program convened a new, interdepartmental working group to work on citywide sustainable purchasing priorities, initiatives, process improvements, and communications, in keeping with recommendations from a consultant's program review in 2018. SFE hosted three meetings which had about 30 attendees each time and intends to continue convening the group on a quarterly basis. Meetings featured prominent speakers, including Matt Henigan, Deputy Secretary for Sustainability with California's Department of General Services, and Elizabeth Bagley, Director of Sustainability for California Academy of Sciences. The group exchanged ideas to help the City buy green, was apprised of new green City contracts, and developed a template for department-level green purchasing scorecards.

Piloted less polluting, rechargeable landscaping equipment

Gas-powered landscape maintenance equipment (string trimmers, blowers, etc.) pollute the air, emit greenhouse gasses, and pose a small but quantified cancer risk to workers. To address these issues, SFE organized pilot tests with Recreation and Parks and Public Works of battery powered landscaping equipment. The California Air Resources Board generously provided their "e-landscaping" equipment trailer, along with expertise to support the effort. Both departments are already using battery powered equipment on a limited basis; the pilot aimed to promote this equipment and identify highest performing brands. The departments are currently exploring whether a citywide contract would be helpful in this regard. SFE's ultimate goal is to improve worker health, reduce climate impact, and ensure that alternatives to herbicides are truly safe and effective.

Featured SF's carpet regulation in a C40 Cities case study

San Francisco's carpet [regulation](#) is among the strictest in the nation. It includes, among other requirements, a restriction on broadloom (rolled) carpet and cushion-backed carpet tiles, a requirement for minimum recycled content and Cradle-to-Cradle Silver certification, and a ban on additional toxic chemicals including PFASs. SFE updates [lists of over 100 compliant carpet tile lines and eight compliant carpet adhesives](#). SFE staff assisted C40 Cities in creating a case study on SF's carpet regulation. C40 is a network of the world's megacities committed to addressing climate change.

Assisted with implementing the 2019 Single-Use Foodware, Plastics, Toxics & Litter Reduction Ordinance

This Citywide ordinance aims to reduce plastic pollution and eliminating fluorinated chemicals. It requires that:

- All plastic straws (including compostable plastic ones) be restricted,
- All compostable foodware (including paper and fiber straws) be [BPI certified](#), except for napkins, stirrers, splash or cocktail sticks, toothpicks and utensils made of natural fiber.
- Single-use accessories (condiment packages and portion cups, cup lids and sleeves, cutlery, drink stirrers and plugs, and napkins) be available only upon request or at self-service stations; and
- Events with prepared drinks for more than 100 attendees on City property promote or provide reusable drink containers to at least 10% of attendees.

In support of City departments that must also comply with the ordinance, SFE compiled [a guidance document](#) for City purchases and SFApproved.org page [listing](#). SFE staff reviewed products in use and offered to the City's two hospital cafeterias.

Updated the City's Green Technology Purchasing Policy

In 2008, San Francisco became the first City in the nation to buy only computers on the EPEAT-Gold list. EPEAT lists products that are less-toxic, more efficient and recyclable. In 2019, SFE worked with the SF Committee on Information Technology (COIT) to adopt new IT purchasing requirements for servers, computers and monitors, and added two new

product categories (imaging equipment; televisions and large digital displays). The new requirements for computers and monitors were needed due to EPEAT's adoption of an updated, more rigorous standard for these products.

Added health & environmental specifications to nine contracts

SFE staff worked with OCA and city staff end users to provide specifications for:

1. Plastic and Compostable Plastic bin liners
2. Furniture (general)
3. Furniture (49 South Van Ness)
4. Information technology
5. Janitorial services
6. City Government refuse services
7. Lighting contract requiring LEDs
8. Paint for SFMTA
9. Paint for SFO

Updated guidance on furniture purchasing

SFE developed "Suggested" criteria for furniture purchases in 2018. In 2019, SFE updated [SFApproved.org](https://www.sfapproved.org) to include "Green-Greener-Greenest" criteria for furniture, as well as lists of compliant furniture. These criteria include a prohibition on more than 5,000 Teflon-like chemicals (per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances, or PFASs) that are commonly added for their stain-, water-, and grease-resistant properties. PFASs are associated with cardiovascular toxicity and cancer, are extremely persistent, and can sometimes migrate out of products into our food and bodies. Since no ecolabels currently certify that furniture is PFAS free, purchasers must depend on manufacturers' claims to identify PFAS-free products. SFE submitted samples from one of the products claimed to be PFAS free to an independent lab, and learned that it contained the chemicals – further highlighting the need for rigorous third-party certifications.

Blocked noncompliant industrial and office supplies in online stores

One of the most efficient and effective ways to steer City staff to buy green is to block noncompliant products in online stores used by City departments. Using this approach, City purchasers are not burdened with checking environmental purchasing requirements, because the work has already been done for them. SFE has used this approach on a small scale for many years, but in the past three years has worked extensively with OCA and the current office supplies vendor, Staples, to expand the scope of product blocking. The current office supplies contract was awarded in 2016 and was the City's first effort to place the responsibility for blocking products on the contracted vendor. SFE's role is to spot-check key product categories to ensure that noncompliant products have been blocked from the online store. The results have been inconsistent, and SFE continues to work with the vendor to improve their system for meeting their contract obligation.

Steering City staff to buy green via the Financial Systems Project (FSP)

FSP is the City's comprehensive, citywide accounting, purchasing, and budgeting system that launched in 2018. SFE continues working with the Controller's Office to steer City staff to buy green in FSP and get detailed reports of products purchased. This effort is fundamental to integrating green purchasing into all aspects of City purchasing. These efforts have been slowed by the extensive and often urgent competing priorities faced by FSP administrators.

Delivered trainings and presentations

SFE gave presentations to City staff on the Green Purchasing Program and its mandates, how to find compliant products, and how SFE can make it easier for them to buy green. SFE gave 21 presentations and trainings to 686 people, including two national events.

V. City Green Purchasing Trends: Focus on IT

Impacts of stricter IT requirements

Overall purchases of green-compliant IT equipment declined in 2019 (see Figure 1), primarily due to a major redefinition of the City’s green purchasing criteria. The City’s new [Green Technology Purchasing Policy](#) went into effect in February 2019 for all product categories except computers/laptops/monitors, which went into effect July 1, 2019. With computers/laptops/monitors, the previous City requirement was EPEAT-Gold; however, EPEAT transitioned to the new, much more rigorous IEEE 1680.1 standard as of July 1. Because there were very few EPEAT Silver or Gold compliant products available on July 1, the City requirement was reduced to EPEAT-Bronze on that date. Since the change in City purchasing requirement took effect halfway through the year, this report categorizes EPEAT-Bronze and above products as compliant. Figure 2 shows the percentage of compliant or “green” computer/laptop/monitor purchases dropped from 82% in 2017 to 63% in 2019, possibly as a result of a dramatic drop in the number of EPEAT-registered products after July 1. However, manufacturers quickly responded and registered more products, and by the end of 2019, SFE’s review concluded that the City computer standard can be raised again to EPEAT-Silver in 2020. This change is pending approval by the Committee on Information Technology (COIT).

Figure 1.

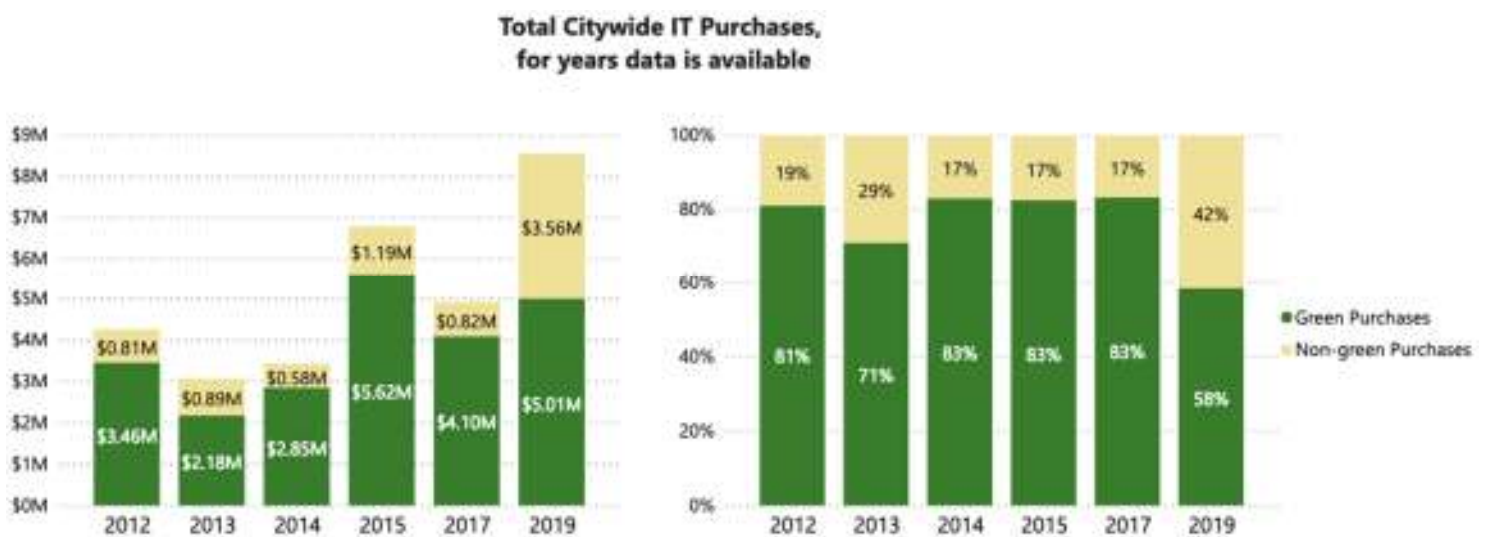
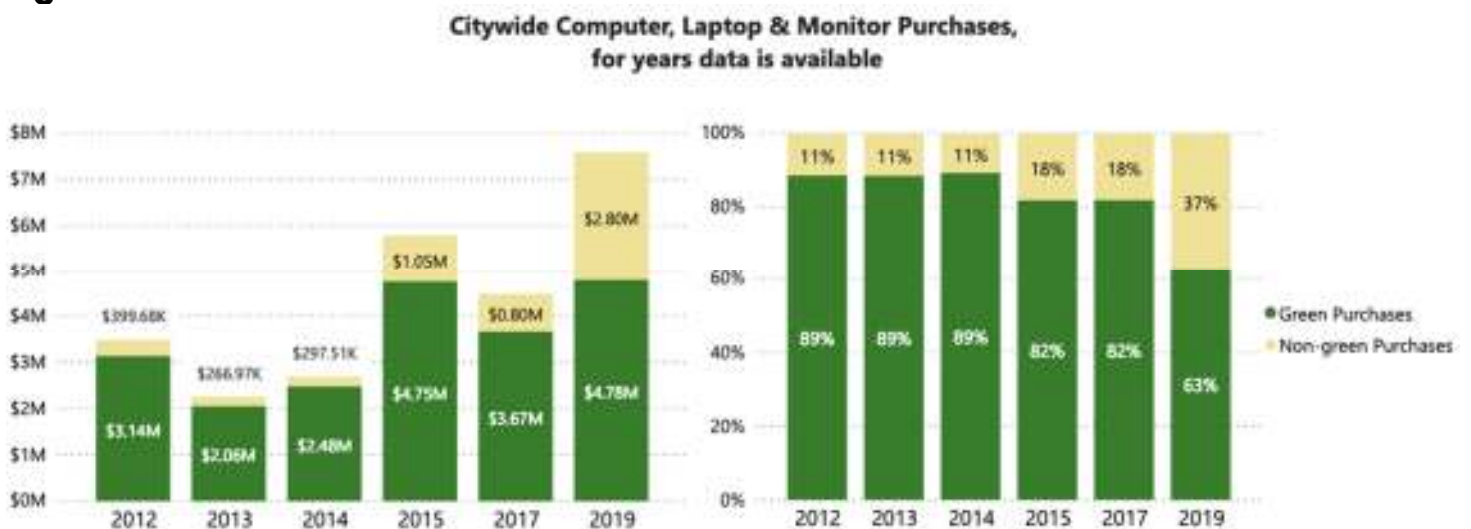


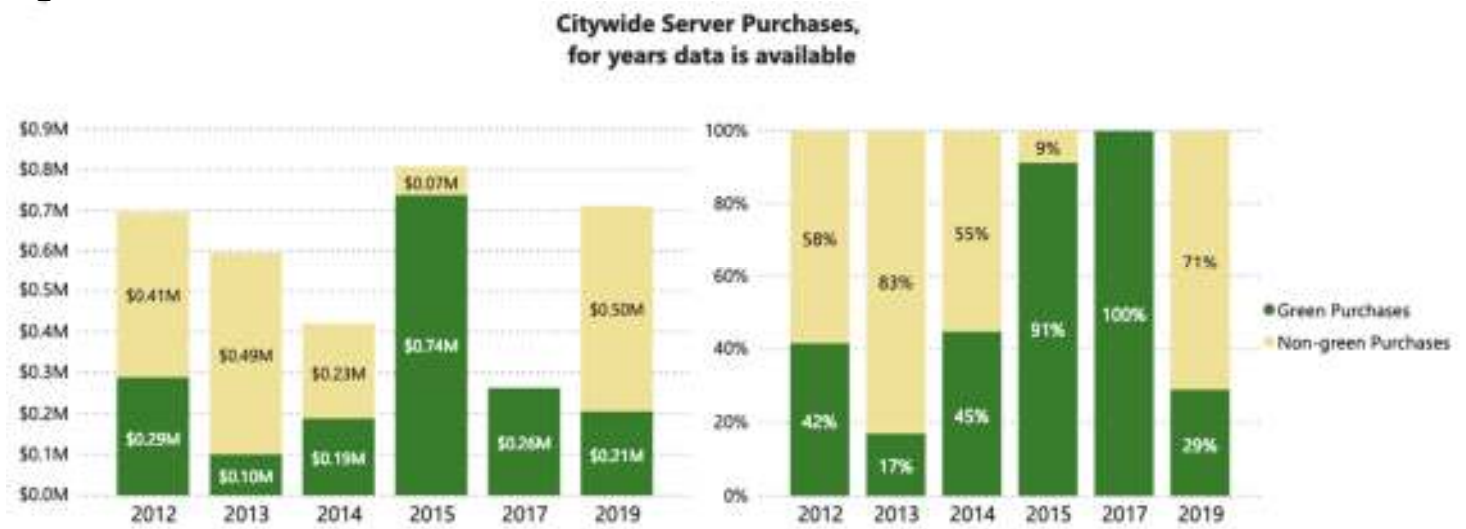
Figure 2.



Other 2019 IT purchasing criteria are also significantly more rigorous than in the past. Before 2019, the (non-mandatory) criteria for computer servers was simply that they be Energy Star-listed; the new criteria was set to EPEAT-Bronze (NSF/ANSI

426 – 2017 standard), which incorporates Energy Star along with a long list of other requirements. This higher standard accounts for the significant drop in compliant server purchases in 2019, from 100% to 29% (see Figure 3). However, if Energy Star registered purchases were still considered compliant in 2019, the percentage green purchases would be 89%.

Figure 3.



Prior to 2019, there were no mandatory purchasing requirements for imaging equipment or televisions/large digital displays. For imaging equipment, EPEAT-Gold registration is now required (IEEE 1680.2a - 2017 standard), and for TVs/large digital displays EPEAT-Bronze (IEEE 1680.3a – 2017 standard) or Energy Star are required. The percentage of compliance EPEAT purchases was very low (10%) for imaging equipment. If Energy Star and lower-tier EPEAT products were considered compliant in 2019, the percentage green purchases of imaging equipment would be 86% (see Figure 4). Purchases of TVs/large digital displays were quite small in 2019, but the percentage compliance was extremely low (2%). The reasons for these low compliance rates are still unclear and will be explored in the coming year.

Figure 4.

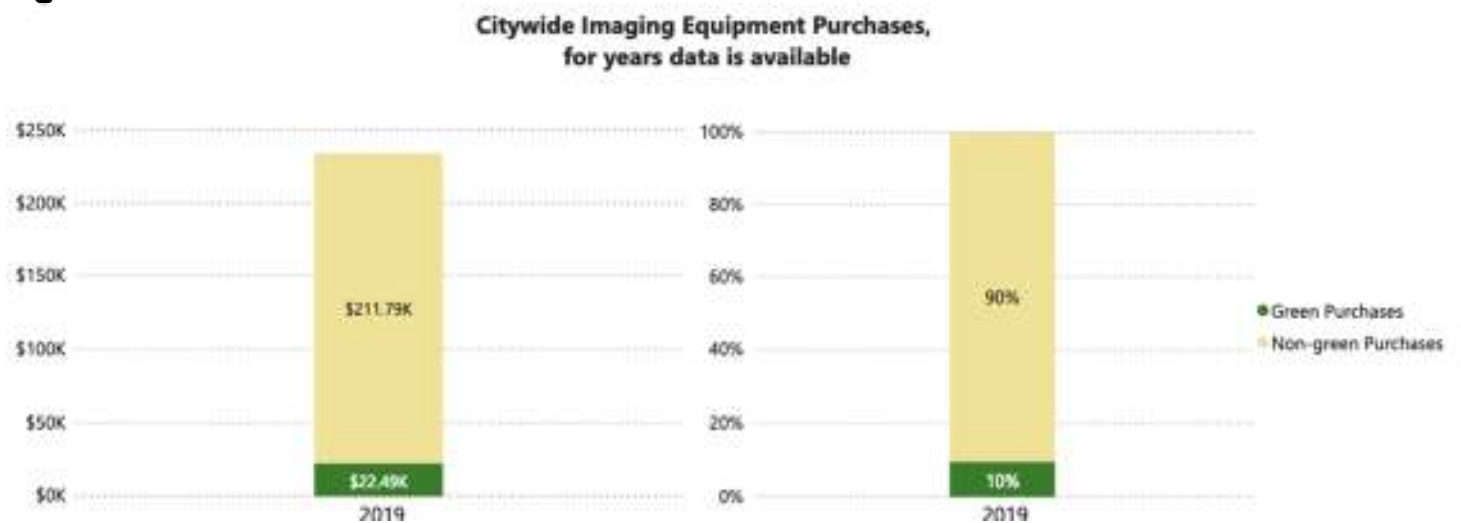
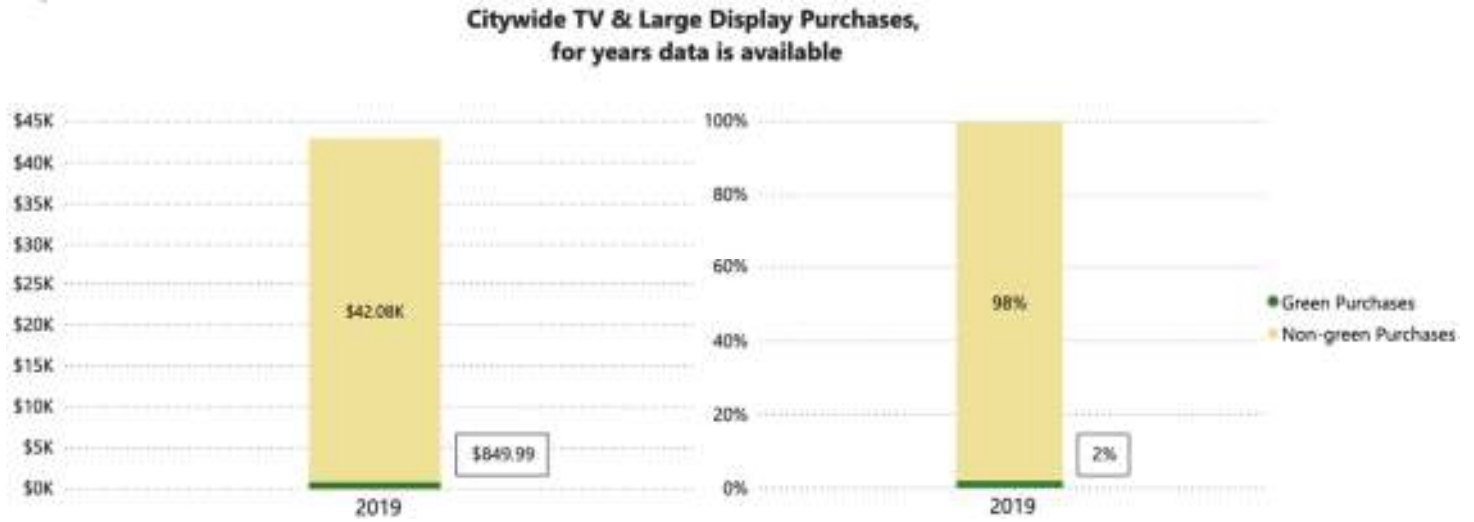


Figure 5.



Department compliance

Department purchases of IT products varied widely, as did their compliance with the new 2019 Green Technology Purchasing Policy. Departments whose mission includes very specialized equipment, such as Emergency Management or Elections, were likely to have lower percentages of green product purchases due to the unavailability of certified products. Table 1 shows departments and how well they complied with IT purchasing requirements.

Table 1. IT Green Purchasing Compliance, by Department

Department	Total IT Purchases (\$)	Percentage of City's Total IT Purchases	Percentage Green
Adult Probation	50,077	1%	86%
Airport	1,385,050	12%	75%
Arts Commission	675	0%	100%
Assessor-Recorder	34,025	0%	68%
Board of Appeals	1,275	0%	0%
Building Inspection	137,741	0%	7%
Child Support Services	3,531	0%	0%
Children Youth & Families	15,185	0%	61%
City Administrator's Office	257,100	2%	75%
City Attorney	65,431	0%	9%
City Hall	107,237	1%	61%
Controller's Office	121,394	1%	100%
District Attorney	31,677	0%	6%
Elections	84,217	0%	0%
Emergency Management	107,171	0%	17%
Ethics Commission	10,695	0%	0%
Fire	237,378	1%	40%
General Services Agency	651,772	7%	93%
Health Service System	15,365	0%	97%
Homelessness and Supportive Housing	43,283	1%	100%
Human Resources	10,264	0%	87%
Human Services	888,825	5%	48%
Juvenile Probation	1,082	0%	57%
Law Library	3,980	0%	0%
Library	768,702	5%	58%
Mayor's Office of Community Development	61,487	1%	100%
Municipal Transportation Agency	3,115	0%	100%
Office of Contracts Administration	67,204	0%	0%
Planning	83,539	1%	100%
Police	567,639	1%	21%
Port	72,760	0%	32%
Public Health	5,249	0%	76%
Public Works	906,004	7%	69%
PUC	345,525	1%	27%
Rec & Park	83,910	1%	94%
Redevelopment Agency	1,784	0%	38%
Sheriff	11,341	0%	0%
Technology	585,619	1%	9%
Treasurer/Tax Collector	3,580	0%	100%
Unknown	729,422	8%	92%
War Memorial	12,790	0%	71%
Grand Total	8,574,101	58%	58%

Vendor compliance

There are currently nine vendors listed on the Citywide contract for IT, seven of which sold products in the categories covered by the Green Technology Purchasing Policy (see Table 2 for a list of vendors and percent of compliant sales). Contract language requires these vendors to restrict sales of non-green products, and to submit sales data to the City.

Historically, vendor-provided data has been difficult to obtain and is sometimes incomplete and/or inaccurate. This year, data was provided by all vendors.

Table 2.
IT Compliance, by Vendor

Vendor	Total IT Sales (\$)	Total Green Sales (\$)	Percentage Green
Ameritech	198,622	101,633	51%
BridgeMicro	399,564	79,914	20%
Cland	2,921,829	1,978,702	68%
Insight	1,134,670	947,431	83%
SoftNet	1,098,839	768,521	70%
Xtech	1,311,064	1,131,786	86%
Zones	1,509,512	4,879	0%
Grand Total	8,574,101	5,012,865	58%

VI. Next steps

In the coming year, SFE’s Green Purchasing Program will focus on the following projects:

1. Update the existing purchasing requirements for carpet.
2. Pilot test Directors’ Scorecards for green purchasing, together with the City Sustainable Purchasing Committee.
3. Follow up on departmental efforts to convert to rechargeable landscaping equipment.
4. Update the City’s Green Technology Purchasing Policy to reflect changes in the EPEAT system, and explore possible improvements in departmental compliance for TVs and large displays.
5. Create new green purchasing regulations for paints and resilient flooring, in conjunction with the Paints and Flooring Green Teams.
6. Update the City’s office supplies contract, and continue to seek improvements in the system of blocking noncompliant products.
7. Continue to work with the Controllers Office to integrate green purchasing into FSP.