Sustainability Assessment: Draft Working Tool (Task 1.A.5)
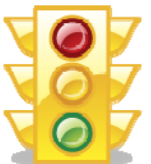
Step 1: Identify and Distill Potential Action or Decision
Clearly identify a topic, policy issue, action or issue that you would like to evaluate for its impact on sustainability. The action should be phrased as a statement, such as "establish detailed sustainability purchasing policies and procedures" – and should be as specific and concrete as possible.

Step 2: Initial Qualitative Evaluation and Comparison
Evaluate each idea based on the sustainability criteria below (which are based on the Draft Guiding Principles) by putting a check in each box where the potential action, on balance, positively impacts the criterion listed. It is helpful to list potential actions and/or alternative actions within the same table to aid in benefit comparison, gap analysis and prioritization. Some users may also want to sum the checkmarks for each potential action, however certain criteria deserve greater emphasis. An action should address at least one of the four environmental focus areas (in green), to be considered a potential sustainability initiative or action. Preferred actions will also usually provide a clear or direct economic, social, and/or human health and safety benefit as well (in yellow).

POTENTIAL ACTION	SUSTAINABILITY					FEASIBILITY			
	Advances sustainable development & transportation	Directly + Impacts Energy Conservation and Carbon Reduction	Likely to result in Improved Local Ecosystem Health	Tangible Waste Reduction and Resource Efficiency Benefits	Provides Clear or Direct Economic, Social, or Human Health and Safety Benefits	Relies upon existing system, proven technology or incremental change	Promotes City Leadership and/or Broader Participation	Represents a Potential Quick Win	Recommendation:
Develop Sustainable Purchasing Guidelines for All Staff		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

If the initial evaluation indicates an idea presented is worthy of further thought, it should be given the "green light" for a modified SWOT analysis. Eliminate items (red light) or hold items (yellow light) for future consideration if more information is needed or there are higher priorities. When eliminating or "holding" ideas, record rationale for future reference.

Step 3: Modified SWOT Analysis
This step allows more detailed qualitative analysis of those potential actions that are able to pass through the filter of Step 2. Although presented here as Step 3, the Modified SWOT Analysis is also useful when evaluators find it difficult to establish whether an action is consistent with a criterion, and represents a "feedback" loop that provides an opportunity to revise the Step 2 evaluation.

POTENTIAL ACTION: Develop Sustainable Purchasing Guidelines for All Staff		RECOMMENDATION & RATIONALE:	
Evaluation Criterion	**Strengths**	**Weakness**	**Unknowns or Level of Control Over Outcome**
Advances sustainable development & transportation	None.	None.	Not clear how this would impact criterion.
Directly Impacts Energy Conservation and Carbon Reduction	Products purchased under sustainable purchasing guidelines would be more energy efficient and have lower carbon emissions.		
Likely to result in Improved Local Ecosystem Health	Products purchased under sustainable purchasing guidelines would reduce impacts to local air and water quality.		Benefits to local ecosystem health may be difficult to quantify. Measurement of change could be difficult.
Tangible Waste Reduction and Resource Efficiency Benefits	Products purchased under sustainable purchasing guidelines would emphasize reducing, reusing, and recycling resources.	Adjustments to perceived quality of sustainable products may be slow.	
Provides clear or direct economic, social, or human health and safety benefits	Products purchased under sustainable purchasing guidelines should be more economical in the long term, less harmful to ecosystem/human health., and promote sustainable business .		Unknowns regarding lifecycle costs could require more investigation and documentation.
Relies upon existing system, proven technology or incremental change	Existing sustainable products could be substituted for less sustainable products and more could be added as they become available or more cost effective.	Unproven, yet potentially beneficial products may be dismissed.	
Promotes City Leadership and/or Broader Participation	City leadership in the purchase of sustainable products would strengthen the market for sustainable goods leading to greater availability.		City's ability to influence availability of sustainable products and purchasing by general public could be limited.
Represents a Potential Quick Win	Using sustainable purchasing guidelines could be implemented quickly and benefits documented.	Documenting benefits would require coordination and training city-wide. Product lists would be very useful, but would take a greater level of effort.	

If, on balance, the idea seems worthy of further analysis, it should be given the "green light" for cost and resource evaluation. Eliminate (red light) or table (yellow light) items. When eliminating or "holding" ideas, be sure to record rationale for future reference.

Step 4: Preliminary Cost and Resource Evaluation
Evaluate potential actions that are given the "green light" in Step 2 on the basis of cost and other resource availability factors. Red should be selected if costs appear to be an insurmountable barrier when compared to potential benefits, yellow if costs represent a barrier to short term implementation and possible long term implementation, and green should be selected if after evaluation of costs, the idea appears to be worthy of further consideration.

POTENTIAL ACTION	Initial Cost Increase?	Lifecycle Cost Savings?	Cost Estimate (if known)	Able to Accomplish Using Existing Resources?	Resource Assistance Availability and Details	Summary Cost Evaluation (TBD)
Develop Sustainable Purchasing Guidelines for All Staff	No, not if done by existing staff	Yes	TBD	Yes, with implementation steps to be described in Sustainability Strategy	Yes, details TBD	🚦 (green circled)
						🚦
						🚦
						🚦
						🚦
						🚦