



**City of St. Helens**

**Purchasing ~~Policy~~Policy**

**Effective – X/XX/2024**

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**City of St. Helens**  
**Purchasing ~~Policy~~Policy**

**INTRODUCTION**

**I. General**

This Purchasing ~~Policy~~Policy is intended to ensure adequate and uniform control of the City of St. Helens' purchasing and payment activities. Principles and policies incorporated into this ~~Policy~~Policy are in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), City of St. Helens municipal code, and applicable State of Oregon Law.

All parties involved in the negotiation, performance, or administration of procurement and/or contracts for the City shall act in good faith. All procurements should be made for the purpose of meeting the City's current budget goals.

Information in this ~~policy~~Policy will be reviewed at least biennially and updated by the ~~Finance Department~~Finance Division as necessary so that the maximum use and benefit may be derived in accordance with its intended purpose. Revisions to the purchasing thresholds and bidding procedures will be presented to City Council as deemed appropriate.

This ~~Policy~~Policy encompasses all purchasing activity conducted on behalf of the City, by City staff. City Council may utilize this ~~policy~~Policy for general direction, but they are not bound by any provisions of this ~~policy~~Policy. Any questions on any purchasing or payments situation should be directed to the ~~Finance Department~~Finance Division for assistance.

**II. Goals and Objectives**

The fundamental objective of this Purchasing ~~Policy~~Policy is to provide operating departments within the City with the goods and services they need in the right quantity and quality, in a timely fashion, as efficiently as possible, and at the lowest overall cost.

Therefore, the goals of this ~~Policy~~Policy include:

- A. A process streamlined enough to keep pace with new technology and procedures
- B. Adequate controls which are not at the expense of efficiency
- C. A minimum of paperwork
- D. Single signature ~~policy~~Policy on all small dollar purchases
- E. An emphasis on quality and results

**III. Forms**

All forms associated with this ~~policy~~Policy are in the City's shared documents folder.

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**RESTRICTIONS AND GUIDELINES**

**I. General**

All purchases shall be made in accordance with the policies prescribed in this Purchasing ~~Policy~~Policy and ~~City of St. Helens Public Contracting Code 2.04 the St. Helens Municipal Code Chapter 2.04 Public Contracting~~. Any agreement made contrary to these policies and code may be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

Commented [GB1]: Edits from KP

**II. General Provisions/Restrictions**

- A. No personal purchases may be made using the City's funds. Purchasing venues provided within this ~~policy~~Policy may be utilized only in the interest of the City.
- B. Only City employees and approved volunteers, with valid City identification and supervisor's authorization, may purchase utilizing City funds.
- C. Purchases must be charged to the proper account, regardless of budget availability in that particular line item.
- D. Employees are encouraged to obtain bids or price comparisons from St. Helens merchants who are qualified to provide the requested goods or services. When receiving bids or comparisons from both inside and outside St. Helens, and all award factors are deemed to be equal, the bid shall be awarded to the St. Helens merchant.
- E. For small purchases (i.e. supplies, etc.) where bids are not required, when similar products or reasonable alternatives are readily available from St. Helens merchants, the purchase shall be made from the St. Helens merchant.
- F. Alcohol may not be purchased with City funds, except in specific situations of economic development.
- G. Sales tax is not to be charged on any purchase.
- H. When purchases are within the department head's authority, any bid information shall be maintained by the department. If additional authorization is required, any required bid information shall be attached to the documentation requiring approval (i.e. purchase order, check request, etc.).
- I. No multi-year financing obligations (i.e. space rentals, copier leases, etc.) may be entered into without the review and concurrence of the Finance Director and the City Administrator.

Commented [GB2]: Improved language noted by JG

**III. Emergency Procurement**

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Notwithstanding any other provision of this ~~policy~~Policy, the City Administrator or designee may make or authorize others to make emergency procurement when there exists a threat to public health, welfare, or safety under emergency conditions. A written determination of the basis for emergency and for the purchase or selection of the particular vendor or contractor shall be included with the purchase documentation.

**IV. Sole Source**

Occasionally it is necessary to purchase supplies, services or construction items without going to bid or cost comparisons, or that only one firm is in a better position to provide. Examples of potential sole source purchases/services include: state bid, engineering or other professional or consulting services, items for resale, matching existing equipment, custom items, paint, prime lumber (except for large quantities), new technology services or equipment, on site repairs (such as heating, air, plumbing, phone etc.) and utilities.

The authorization to approve sole sourcing shall be per the dollar limits identified in the summary of purchasing thresholds within this purchasing ~~policy~~Policy. Written justification/approval for the sole source shall be attached to the documentation submitted to Finance (purchase order, contract, invoice, etc.) for any purchases over \$20,000.

**V. Cooperative Purchasing**

The City Administrator or designee shall have authority to join with other governmental bodies to the extent authorized by the City Charter, including but not limited to, the State of Oregon and other cities in cooperative purchasing in the best interest of this City, notwithstanding any provisions of this ~~Policy~~Policy.

**VI. Negotiating Price**

Unless specifically stated otherwise within a bid or Request For Proposal (RFP) document, the City Administrator, Department Head, or designee may negotiate the price for any given product or service.

**SUMMARY OF PURCHASING THRESHOLDS**

**Thresholds:**

<del>Procurement-Purchasing</del> Card	Per cardholder limits
Store Charges	Per signature authority.
Purchase Orders / Contracts	Per signature authority.

**Signature Authority Guidelines:**

Department managers / field staff, as

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designated by Department Head, up to	\$5,000
Department Directors or designees...up to	\$10,000
City Administrator...up to	\$50,000

**Bidding Thresholds:**

Refer to St. Helens Municipal Code Chapter 2.04 Public Contracting Code 2.04

**City Council approval is required for purchases and contract awards as follows:**

Any Purchases over \$50,000

~~Professional Service~~-Contracts / Agreements exceeding, or with the potential to exceed, \$100,000 in a calendar year.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Bid Package**

Documentation prepared and distributed by the City in the solicitation of bids.

**Business**

Any corporation, partnership, individual, sole proprietorship, joint stock company, joint venture, or any other private legal entity.

**Capital Improvement**

A fixed public improvement, including, but not limited to: streets, alleys, sidewalks, water or wastewater facilities, flood control facilities, traffic control devices, street lighting, parks, public structures, and landscaping.

**Change Order**

A written order signed by the City Administrator or his designee, directing the contractor to make changes, or changing non-contractual information on the City's purchasing system (i.e., account number, budgeted amount, etc.)

**City**

The City of St. Helens, Oregon, a municipal corporation with a primary business location of 235 Strand St., St. Helens OR 97051.

**City Administrator**

The chief executive officer of the City.

**City Council**

The legislative and governing body of the City.

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~~City Administrator~~

~~The chief executive officer of the City.~~

**Confidential Information**

Any information which is available to an employee only because of the employee's status as an employee of the City and is not a matter of public knowledge or available to the public on request.

**Construction**

The process of building, altering, repairing, improving, or demolishing any public structure or building, or other public improvements of any kind to any public real property.

**Consulting Services**

Services provided by individuals possessing specialized educational qualifications, practical expertise or professional certification, including without limitation to architects, engineers, legal counsel, planners, accountants, and actuaries, where the final product is predominantly oral or written advice or information.

**Contract**

All types of City agreements, regardless of what they may be called, for the procurement or disposal of supplies, services, or construction. The term shall not include intergovernmental agreements or any interest in real property by the City or another governmental body.

**Contract Modification**

Any verbal or written alteration in specifications, delivery point, rate of delivery, period of performance, price, quantity, or other provisions of any contract accomplished by mutual action of the parties to the contract. Proper judgment should be used in determining when a verbal modification needs to be documented in writing.

**Cooperative Purchasing**

Procurement conducted by, or on behalf of, more than one (1) governmental body.

**Designee**

A duly authorized representative of a person holding a superior position.

~~St. Helens Merchant~~

~~A business having a permanent physical location within the corporate city limits of the City of St. Helens.~~

**Governmental Body**

The City Council.

**Invitation for Bids**

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All documents, whether attached or incorporated by reference, utilized for soliciting bids.

**Merchant**

A business having a permanent physical location within the corporate city limits of the City of St. Helens

**Non-Capital Purchases**

Tangible property that is typically used or consumed within a year. Examples include pens, paper, staples, fertilizer, chemicals, repair parts, etc.

**Person**

Any business, individual, union, committee, club, other organization, or group of individuals.

**Procurement**

The process through which the City acquires goods and services for its own use.

**Professional Services**

Services of a specialized nature, including, but not limited to: architecture, engineering, legal, accounting, hiring screening process (drug testing, psych testing, etc.), equipment repair and maintenance, etc.

**Purchase Description**

The words used in a solicitation to describe the supplies, services, or construction to be purchased, and includes specification attached to, or made part of the solicitation.

**Purchase Order**

A request to purchase goods or services typically provided to the vendor as a confirmation of the City's commitment to purchase.

**Purchase Requisition**

A form used to initiate award of Purchase Order, or any other type of Sub-award including but not limited to Leases, Construction Contracts, and Consulting Agreements.

**Purchasing**

The process through which solicitations are issued, advertisements run, vendors selected and goods or services received.

**Purchasing Agent**

Any person duly authorized to enter into and administer contracts and make written determinations with respect thereto. The term also includes an authorized representative acting within the limits of authority.

**~~Purchasing~~**

~~The process through which solicitations are issued, advertisements run, vendors selected and goods or services received.~~



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**Regulation**

A governmental body's statement, having general or particular applicability and future effect, designed to implement, interpret, or prescribe law or ~~policy~~Policy, or describing organization, procedure, or practice requirements.

**Request for Proposals (RFP)**

A process used to acquire supplies and services that involve the review of written proposals and the use of negotiations with the most qualified bidder(s). This process may also include the use of a Request for Information (RFI) as a preliminary step to the RFP process in an attempt to gather information and pre-qualify prospective bidders.

**Services**

The furnishing of labor, time, or effort by a contractor not involving the delivery of specific end product other than reports which are merely incidental to the required performance, or repairs to an existing product.

**Specification**

Any description of the physical or functional characteristics, or the nature of a supply, service, or construction item. It may include a description of any requirement for inspection, testing, or preparing a supply, service, or construction item for delivery.

**Supplier**

Any person having or soliciting a contract, professional service agreement, purchase order arrangement or any other agreement to provide goods or services with a governmental body. Interchangeable with "contractor."

**Supplies**

Tangible property that is typically used or consumed within a year. Examples include: pens, paper, staples, fertilizer, chemicals, repair parts, etc.

**Tangible Property**

Personal property and materials, including without limitation supplies, equipment, parts, printing and consumable supplies, but not including insurance, real property leases, securities, or water rights.

**SIGNATURE AUTHORIZATION ~~POLICY~~POLICY**

**I. General**

Signature authority is granted on an individual basis. All departments shall keep current a list of designated staff authorized to approve City expenditures. The list shall include the full signatures and initials of each authorized individual and the amount of signature authorization granted to the individual.

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All City employees have signature authority for purchases up to \$100. Receipts or invoices must be provided to the ~~finance department~~Finance Division with the proper GL coding.

All Department Directors, and designated staff within each department, have the authority to sign contracts that obligate City funds within their signature authorization limits, and where the terms and conditions are reasonable, customary, and generally authorized for municipal contracts.

**II. Procedures**

- A. An updated Signature Authorization Summary shall be submitted to the ~~Finance Department~~Finance Division in January of each year.
- B. The ~~Finance Department~~Finance Division shall be responsible for deleting signature authority for terminated employees. Should authority need to be revoked prior to termination, the applicable department shall be responsible for notifying the ~~Finance Department~~Finance Division.
- C. All changes and additions to the Signature Authorization Summary must be submitted in writing and must include the following information:
  - Name of employee
  - Title
  - Authorization amount
  - Effective Date
  - Employee signature and initials
  - Signature of Employee delegating authorization
- D. Unless signature authorization has been formally delegated, no employee shall sign on behalf of another otherwise authorized employee. Written notification of delegation must be sent to Finance.

**TRAVEL ~~POLICY~~POLICY**

**I. GENERAL**

This travel ~~policy~~Policy applies to all employee travel ~~for City-related business~~ and mileage reimbursements for City-related business.

**II. APPROVAL REQUIRED**

Employees shall obtain approval for travel on City business or training in accordance with the Training & Travel policies located in the Personnel Policies & Procedures Handbook.

**III. TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT FORM**

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Completed travel expense reimbursement request forms must be submitted to the **Finance Department Finance Division** in accordance with the Training & Travel policies located in the Personnel Policies & Procedures Handbook.

**IV. RECEIPTS**

Receipts and documentation must accompany the request for reimbursement.

**V. PURCHASING CARD**

- a. Purchasing Cards should be used whenever possible and practical for all travel-related expenses, except for meals.
- b. Upon completion of travel, actual receipts for registration fees, lodging, travel and transportation, and other allowable expenses should be uploaded in the p-card spend management system as required in the Purchasing Card Policies & Procedures Manual.

**VI. TRANSPORTATION**

- a. In all cases, but within reason, the most cost effective and efficient manner of travel should be sought. Direct flights shall be considered the standard, even though flights with connections and/or layovers are often less expensive. When booking airfare through a discount airlines where seat assignments are not a part of the ticket price (i.e. Southwest Airlines), the City will cover early check-in fees as long as the total cost of the ticket and fees is still the most cost effective option. The employee shall pay for any seat upgrades or other upgraded/expanded services if they choose to utilize them. In general, the City will reimburse the cost of one checked bag, however, employees are encouraged to utilize carry-on luggage whenever possible. Situations requiring more than one checked bag (i.e. for presentation materials, etc.) require Department Head approval.
- b. For out-of-state travel where the employee requests to use alternative transportation (i.e. train or automobile), the City will reimburse the most cost-effective method (i.e. what airfare would have cost, the cost of a rental car with unlimited mileage and actual gas costs, or mileage reimbursement).
- ~~c. In all instances where a rental car is needed, the City's insurance is sufficient and any insurance offered by the rental car company should be declined.~~
- e.d. Ride Sharing (Uber/Lyft, etc.) is permitted.

**Commented [GB3]:** PD requested change.

**Commented [GB4R3]:** PD concerned about requirements in other states, etc.

**Commented [GB5]:** Requested by PD.

**VII. PARKING / AIRPORT PARKING**

In all cases, but within reason, costs for parking should be kept to a minimum.

- a. **Hotel Parking:** Self-parking shall be utilized, if available. Valet parking is allowed if it is the only option available. The employee shall pay the difference for additional costs of covered parking or valet service when other options are readily available.
- b. **Airport Parking:** Employees shall be reimbursed at the standard daily rate for uncovered, off-site parking for each day or portion thereof where airport parking is

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required. Employees may choose which airport lot they wish to utilize but must pay the difference of any parking that exceeds the standard daily rate.

**VIII. USE OF TOLL ROADS/EXPRESS LANES**

In general, a reasonable alternative to using toll roads/express lanes should be utilized. In cases of emergencies, extenuating circumstances, or the location of the destination in relation to using a toll road versus a non-tolled route, employees should use appropriate judgment or obtain prior supervisor approval as the situation warrants.

Employee reimbursement of charges for toll roads/express lanes while using a personal vehicle for City purposes requires Department Head approval.

In all cases of utilizing a toll road/express lane in a City vehicle, the fleet manager shall be notified as soon as possible.

**IX. MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT**

In general, the use of a City-owned vehicle is preferred. While using a personal vehicle for City purposes, the employee shall be reimbursed for mileage based upon the most reasonable, direct route as identified by commonly used mapping software (Google Maps, Mapquest, etc.). The route used should avoid toll roads/express lanes except as provided for in Section VIII. of this ~~policy~~Policy. See Training and Travel Policy for more information.

The amount per mile of mileage reimbursement is set at the current Internal Revenue Service's allowable rate per mile. Please contact the ~~Finance Department~~Finance Division for the current allowable rate.

**X. PER DIEM**

- a. Meal Per Diem: A meal per diem reimbursement is allowed for travel requiring an overnight stay. Refer to the Training & Travel ~~Policy~~Policy section of the Personnel ~~Policy~~Policies and Procedures Handbook for more information about reimbursement.

**XI. COMPENSATION FOR HOURS WORKED**

Contact Human Resources with any questions regarding compensation for hours worked during travel for non-exempt employees.

**XII. INTERNET CONNECTION CHARGES**

If internet connectivity is needed for work related purposes while traveling and the hotel and/or conference charges for internet service, contact IT to check out a cellular hotspot if one is available. If necessary, the City will cover the cost of any Internet connection charges incurred while traveling when the primary purpose of the connection is work related.

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**DEBARMENT OR SUSPENSION**

**I. General**

The City Administrator is authorized to debar or suspend a vendor or contractor for just cause.

**II. Guidelines**

- A. No vendor or contractor shall be debarred or suspended until an opinion regarding the same has been obtained from the City Attorney and until procedures recommended by the City Attorney have been followed.
- B. The period for debarment shall be determined by the City Administrator on a case-by-case basis.
- C. Reasons for debarment or suspension include the following:
  - 1. Commission of fraud or a criminal offense as an incident to obtaining or attempting to obtain a public or private contract or subcontract or in the performance of such a contract or subcontract.
  - 2. Conviction or indictment under a state or federal statute of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification, or destruction of records, or receiving stolen property.
  - 3. Conviction or indictment under a state or federal antitrust statute.
  - 4. Failure or default without good cause to perform in accordance with the terms of any contract or unsatisfactory performance of any contract.
  - 5. Debarment, disqualification, or suspension by another government entity for any reason.

**PURCHASING CARD ~~POLICY~~POLICY**

**I. General**

Purchasing Cards (P-Cards) are a streamlined approach to pay for point-of-sale or invoiced purchases, and to pay for business-related travel expense in the most cost-effective manner possible. P-Cards reduce/eliminate paperwork, deploy resources to other activities, facilitate management authorization and internal controls, and increase the timeliness and quality of management and financial reporting. The use of P-Cards is a privilege and should be treated as such.

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Because the City receives an annual rebate based on the dollar volume of purchases made through the Purchasing Card Program, P-Cards shall be used whenever possible and practical when procuring goods and services on behalf of the City.

**II. Authorization for Purchasing Card**

Employees must be authorized by their Supervisor and Department Head based upon both the need for a purchasing card and the signature limits.

**III. Card Use**

Employees are responsible for knowing the dollar limits per transaction and per statement period for their P-Card, and to use the P-Card appropriately within those limits.

Adherence to the ~~Procurement-Purchasing~~ Card Policies and Procedures is mandatory. A ~~Purchasing~~-Card Agreement must be completed and submitted to the ~~finance department~~Finance Division prior to obtaining a card.

**REFUNDS**

**I. General**

Refunds of money paid to the City are to be initiated by the department responsible for the revenue collection. All refunds must be run through Accounts Payable or through the payment portal used for transaction receipt. Exceptions may be made for same day admissions at City recreation facilities on a case-by-case basis.

**II. Procedures**

- A. A Check Request, or other department specific refund form, must be completed, authorized, and submitted to Accounts Payable.
- B. Refunds for overpayment of on-going receipts (i.e., Utilities) may be given in the form of a credit on a future billing.