Sustainability Vision

Urban development has played a significant role in the decline of many of the earth's natural systems. At the same time, public concern over these impacts has grown. Developing public water systems also impacts the environment. By embracing the concepts of sustainability into our daily operations, the Portland Water Bureau believes we can be responsible stewards of our resources and develop a water system to serve the metropolitan area.

The Water Bureau's long-term vision for sustainability will support the value of sustainable development and practices and an analysis of business decisions to reflect sustainability principles. The Water Bureau recognizes a definition of sustainability that builds on the City's 1994 Sustainability Principles:

> Ensuring that we promote a sustainable future that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

We will consider the financial, environmental, and social costs of business to make decisions that are fair and equitable to ratepayers and responsive to the environment.

Integration of Sustainability into the Business of the Bureau

The Water Bureau acknowledges the Sustainable City Principles (City Council Resolution #35338, November 1994) and plans to help the City meet four key goals:

- Support a stable, diverse and equitable economy
- Protect the quality of the air, water, land and other natural resources
- Conserve native vegetation, fish, wildlife habitat and other ecosystems
- Minimize human impacts on ecosystems

Rather than developing a stand-alone Sustainability Program, the Bureau will build sustainable practices and criteria into programs and work processes to the extent possible. Resources include the City's Office of Sustainable Development (and Sustainable Development Commission), The Natural Step, recognized standards for Environmental Management Systems (EMS), and best management practices from other organizations. The Bureau will establish performance measures to provide for progress reporting. Sustainability will be one of many criteria guiding improvements in work processes. This Sustainability Vision is the first step in a long journey. Our journey toward sustainability begins by phasing in the following actions:

Actions:

- The Bureau will reduce operating costs by purchasing materials that are durable and reusable. Where appropriate, the Bureau will consider the environmental and social costs of production, use and disposal of purchased materials.
- The Bureau will change work processes as needed to make more efficient and cost-effective use of materials, equipment, and natural resources.
- The Bureau will improve health and safety for employees by reducing or eliminating use of, and exposure to, hazardous and toxic materials. Work processes will be changed to reduce fossil fuel exhaust, noise, and other related hazards.
- The Bureau will provide training, information and tools for employees to enable them to provide water services in a sustainable manner.
- The Bureau will provide efficient and effective means to recycle used materials and equipment, and enable use of alternative energy, efficient modes of transportation.
- The Bureau will support suitable habitat for fish and wildlife, and healthy ecosystems.
- The Bureau will work to encourage efficient use of water.
- The Bureau will encourage development of a set of sustainability goals with our regional partners.