

Environmental Policies

Key References for the City Manager's Office

What you need to know...

East Lansing's core environmental policies and ordinances establish the framework for municipal operations, development standards, and sustainability initiatives. While implementation is frequently delegated to individual departments, City leadership should maintain familiarity with their scope and intent, as these policies shape budgeting priorities, capital planning decisions, and interdepartmental coordination.

Climate Sustainability Plan (2012)

The City's roadmap for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving resources, and building sustainability across five areas: waste, energy efficiency, renewable energy, transportation, and water. Departments are expected to align projects, purchases, and procedures with these goals.

100% Clean Energy Resolution

(Resolution 2020-1)

Commits the City to source 100% of municipal electricity from renewable energy by 2030 and reduce facility energy use by 5% annually. Capital plans and purchases should prioritize efficiency and renewable technologies.

Procurement Policy for Purchase of Recycled Products

Policy Resolution 1990-2

Directs staff to prioritize purchasing paper products with the highest recycled material percentage, allowing a 10% price preference.

Recycling in Multifamily Housing

(Code § 36-86)

All new apartment and mixed-use buildings must provide accessible, appropriately sized recycling containers. Planning staff ensure design and truck access are addressed up front.

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy

(Resolution 2017-2)

Requires staff to select products and services with lower life-cycle impacts when quality is equal and the price premium is no more than 10%. Applies to all purchasing; exceptions allowed only for function, cost, or emergencies.

Coal-Tar Sealant Ban & Contractor Registration

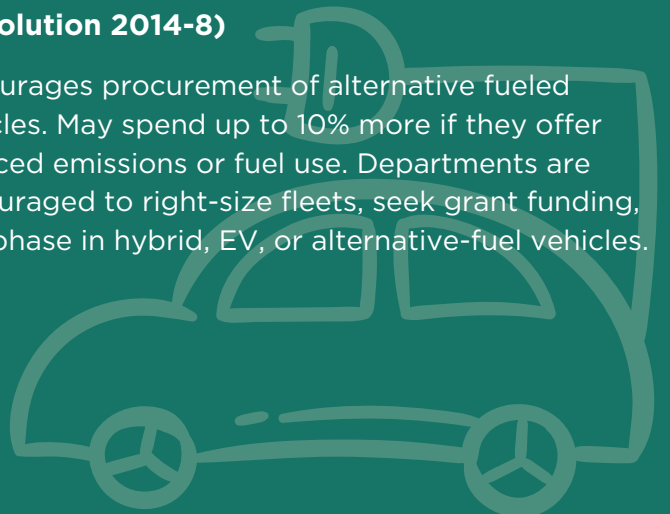
(Code Ch. 14, Art. IV)

Coal-tar pavement sealants are banned due to toxic PAHs that threaten water quality and health. Commercial applicators must register annually with the City Clerk. Illegal application or unregistered work may result in fines up to \$500 per day.

Green Fleet Policy

(Resolution 2014-8)

Encourages procurement of alternative fueled vehicles. May spend up to 10% more if they offer reduced emissions or fuel use. Departments are encouraged to right-size fleets, seek grant funding, and phase in hybrid, EV, or alternative-fuel vehicles.



Green Building Policy

(Resolution 2009-01)

New municipal buildings over 5,000 sq ft must achieve at least LEED-NC Silver. Major renovations must incorporate green building and low-impact design when practical. Private developments receiving City financial incentives above a certain threshold must achieve LEED certification, with requirements outlined in development agreements. The policy ties public dollars to measurable environmental performance.

Soil Erosion & Sedimentation Control Ordinance

(Code Ch. 34, Art. I)

Projects that disturb land over certain thresholds must obtain a City permit and follow approved erosion control plans. Applies to City projects, private development, and residential improvements.

Post-Construction Stormwater Ordinance

(Code Ch. 34, Art. V)

New development and redevelopment must manage stormwater so runoff doesn't exceed pre-development levels. Encourages low-impact design like bioretention. Mandates maintenance in perpetuity.

Wetland Protection Ordinance

(Code Ch. 49)

The City regulates wetlands in addition to the State. Projects impacting regulated wetlands require City review and permitting. City goal is "no net loss" and may compel mitigation.

Pollinator-Friendly Community Resolution (2016)

Council annually reaffirms its commitment to pollinator habitat. Staff are encouraged to use native plants, reduce mowing, and limit pesticide use in both public landscapes and development planning.

Tree Protection Ordinance

(Code Ch. 48, Art. I)

Public trees (in ROWs and parks) are managed by DPW; removal without approval is prohibited. Private removals require permits on most commercial and multifamily sites. Unauthorized removal may result in fines and required replacement.

Green Purchases for the Office

10% Green Purchasing Incentive: Purchasing more sustainable options is encouraged as long as they're less than 10% more expensive than your standard purchase.

Bathrooms and Kitchen: Upgrading to low-flow water fixtures is encouraged! Consider paper, aluminum, or reusable alternatives to single use plastics for cups, plates, and cutlery.

Printing: Opt for paper products made from the most recycled paper material. Set printers and copiers to automatically make double-sided copies.

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