

Sustainability Policies and Procedures

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Guiding Principles

From the nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, we draw guidance from a core philosophical concept often referred to as the [‘Seventh Generation Principle’](#). This principle takes into consideration “those who are not yet born but who will inherit the world”. This invites us to consider that decisions we make today will impact the world seven generations into the future. We recognize that this value cannot be enacted without also working to decolonize our practices, places and institutions. Decolonizing efforts start with the work of [Truth and Reconciliation](#).

We take our definition of sustainability from the 1987 Brundtland report ‘Our Common Future` which describes,

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

Our sustainability efforts are anchored by the seventh Co-op principle of Concern for Community and the fifth principle regarding Education.

We support Vancouver’s climate emergency declaration and related [Climate Emergency Action Planning](#). We acknowledge that human-caused climate change has reached the point of crisis. There is an urgent need for co-operatives to act and advocate for a future that is healthy, equitable and thriving.

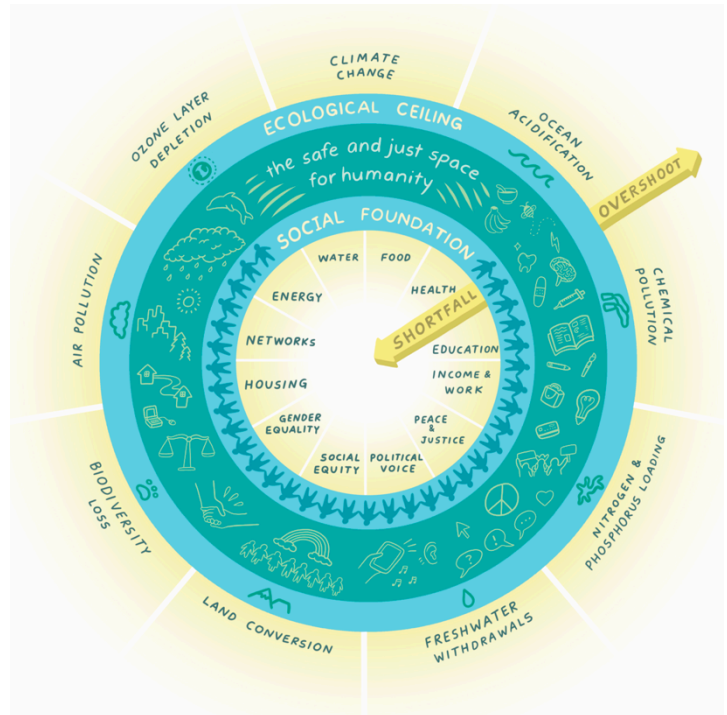


Figure 1 (Above) An artistic rendering of the classic image of [Doughnut Economics](#); the extent to which boundaries are transgressed and social foundations are met are not visible on this diagram



Environmental Sustainability Description

Goals

The environmental sustainability policy aims to help guide decision-making on the part of the Board and membership in support of environmental sustainability.

Values

As a co-op, we believe that:

- A healthy environment is vital for our own health, well-being and prosperity, and for the sake of present and future generations of people and all species; and,
- All members of society have a responsibility to protect the natural environment and reduce human-caused climate change;

To put these beliefs into action, we will:

- Prioritize evidence-based actions that have the greatest demonstrable benefits;
- Consider both short- and long-term objectives, including the welfare of future generations; and,
- Consider life cycle costs and benefits for environmental, social and economic sustainability, including non-monetary factors such as quality of life, social belonging and ecosystem health.

Major Activities

The Co-op's environmental sustainability policy exists to help the Board and committees to make decisions and encourage behaviour and practices from our members, suppliers and contractors, in a way that supports the social, economic and ecological well-being of our communities.

Member Involvement

Members can find and share ways to support a thriving natural environment through the ongoing conservation and stewardship of shared resources. Members may also join the Environmental Sustainability Committee.

Environmental Sustainability Policies and Procedures

Buildings and Energy

Policy

Co-op decisions regarding buildings and energy in new buildings and in retrofits should improve energy efficiency, reduce year-over-year greenhouse gas emissions, and improve overall building quality and comfort.

Example actions of this policy include:

1. Actively seeking designs that prioritize high levels of energy efficiency and low-carbon emissions in new buildings.
2. Investigating building and energy system retrofits that increase energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions, especially by replacing worn-out building components with energy-efficient products (e.g., programmable thermostats).
3. Providing information and investigating funding programs to support members in making energy-efficient upgrades to their units.
4. Tracking energy use over time, developing plans to maintain or reduce usage, and implementing them.
5. Completing an energy audit and taking the recommended steps to improve waste management and reduce water and energy consumption, borrowing as needed to pay the cost.

Air Quality

Policy

Co-op decisions regarding air quality should aim to limit exposure to harmful chemicals and airborne particulates by ensuring that materials and behaviours related to air circulation and filtration work to maximize indoor air quality.

Example actions of this policy include:

1. Ensuring that heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system retrofits prioritize indoor air quality by maintaining a relative humidity of 30-50% and increase air filtration and circulation capacity for communal spaces and dwelling units.

6. Developing, sharing and educating the membership on integrated pest management action plans for dealing with common household pests such as cockroaches and mice.
7. Purchasing fully biodegradable, non-toxic, minimal scent, unscented, low-volatile organic compound and other non- or low-emitting products and materials such as paint and cleaners.
8. Seeking cost-effective alternatives to materials with off-gassing of chemicals. For example, sourcing materials such as ethylene vinyl acetate or polyethylene vinyl acetate as alternatives to polyvinyl chloride.
9. Limiting exposure to materials containing flame-retardant chemicals by vacuuming, dusting and wet-mopping common areas in addition to sourcing used materials or those that are made from natural cork, glass, wool, stone or wood. For more on this topic see the sections on Building Materials and Supplier Sourcing Guidelines and Flame-Retardant Chemicals in Appendix C – Identifying Reputable Suppliers and Sourcing Sustainable Co-op Materials.

Water Protection and Conservation

Policy

Co-op decisions regarding water use should prioritize access to healthy drinking water, limit ground water contamination and aim to reduce individual and communal consumption.

Example actions of this policy include:

1. Choosing low-flow fixtures when feasible when units are upgraded.
10. Implementing landscape design and management strategies that reduce the need for irrigation.
11. Encouraging members to conserve water, such as by providing education and resources.
12. Tracking water use over time, developing plans to maintain or reduce usage, and implementing them.
13. Installing microplastic filtration units on laundry outflows.

Waste and Waste Diversion

Policy

Co-op decisions regarding waste should support material circularity, minimize landfill waste and ensure proper recycling and waste disposal

Example actions of this policy include:

1. Considering the environment, as well as price, before purchasing goods or services for the Co-op and encouraging members to do the same.

14. Providing proper recycling and green waste bins, services to maintain them, and information about their correct use.
15. Prioritizing contractors that practice higher rates of waste diversion (60%+).
16. Providing resources and information to members about the proper recycling or disposal of hazardous waste, electronics, bulky items and other materials.
17. Selecting supplies and materials with recycled content for the Co-op and encouraging members to do the same.
18. Reusing or donating Co-op items and building supplies and encouraging members to do the same with personal items through member swaps or direct donation.

Transportation

Policy

Co-op decisions regarding transportation should prioritize green transportation options such as transit, walking, cycling, shared vehicle ownership and zero-emission vehicles.

Example actions of this policy include:

1. Installing and maintaining adequate, secure bicycle storage and managing bike storage efficiently.
19. Encouraging active transportation by members, such as by providing information and resources.
20. Installing electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Land Use and Site

Policy

Co-op decisions regarding land use should both respect, protect and enhance the natural environment while considering land use that supports the Co-op's operational needs and long-term goals.

Example actions of this policy include:

1. Managing and planting trees and landscaping to support native biodiversity and climate resilience.
21. Reducing runoff with the use of permeable surfaces, on-site rainwater retention, re-use and/or infiltration.
22. Minimizing the use of pesticides and herbicides where possible.
23. Designing and implementing site improvements and long-term planning that support the sustainability of the Co-op and aligned goals of the broader community.

Food Systems

Policy

Co-op decisions regarding food systems should support local and sustainably grown practices.

Example actions of this policy include:

1. Providing and supporting opportunities for members access, grow and process food grown on site.
24. Supporting the improvement of Co-op soils by offering training on regenerative and soil carbon-sequestration techniques.
25. Choosing local, organic, and humanely raised food for co-op events where possible. For example, animal products may be sourced from suppliers that respect animal welfare standards such as the [Five Freedoms](#).

Paloma Purchasing and Supplier Guidelines

Policy

To maintain and improve the Co-op's environmental sustainability approach, Co-op purchasing decisions should follow the included guidelines listed in the procedures.

Procedure

1. In order of importance, we will prioritize suppliers that:
 - a. Pay a living wage and support fair labour standards;
 - b. Operate locally and employ co-operative or other social-impact focused business models; and,
 - c. Operate transparently by disclosing social and environmental goals, standards and outcomes.
2. In order of importance, we will prioritize the purchase of products that are:
 - a. Long-lasting, attractive and fit for purpose;
 - b. Support material circularity, including goods that:
 - Are pre-owned;
 - Are available in reusable, rechargeable or refillable models;
 - Contain a majority of recycled, repurposed, refurbished or reused content;

- Are composed of highly recyclable materials (wood, metal, glass, paper, plastics #1, #2, and #4);
 - Can be easily disassembled; or,
 - Are certified compostable under industrial or backyard conditions;
- c. Incorporate few, if any, toxic substances; and,
- d. Come with a minimal amount of packaging and transport.

Appendix A – Paloma Housing Co-operative Action Planning

Develop a Sustainability Action Plan

The next step to implementing these policies is to develop a Sustainability Action Plan. The following steps are a guideline to achieving a concise plan that reflects the community's strengths and goals:

1. Assemble a sustainability committee;
2. Create a purpose statement and relevant committee documentation;
3. Identify potential initiatives based on current strengths and in consultation with the board, Paloma committees and other key stakeholders. Start with the initiatives the Agency for Cooperative Housing's 2018 Sustainability Survey Summary Report summarized in Appendix D – Benchmarking Paloma's Sustainability Performance;
4. Organize 3-5 initiatives under 1-2 focus areas or key priority statements;
5. Prioritize sustainability priorities and initiatives based on urgency, capacity, member interest and anticipated overall impact;
6. Draft a Sustainability Action Plan and solicit feedback from the membership;
7. Finalize the Sustainability Action Plan with specific action steps;
8. Implement the Sustainability Action Plan; and,
9. Reassess sustainability capacity annually.

Example Sustainability Action Plan

Purpose Statement: [Describe the final long-term goal or vision of your program or initiative.]

Background: [Briefly summarize the history and current state of sustainability initiatives.]

Initial Assessment: [Summarize your co-op's existing strengths and identify areas for improvement.]

Partners and Key Stakeholders: [List partners involved in the sustainability assessment and/or creation and implementation of the sustainability plan.]

Funding Sources (Current and Potential): [List the current funding sources for this program along with their expiration dates.]

Time Frame: [period of time over which the sustainability activities will be implemented.]

Focus Areas:

Table 1. Sustainability Focus Area #1

Initiative Name:			
Objective: [Write an objective for this initiative that will enable you make meaningful progress within the identified priority area. The objective should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time Bound (SMART).]			
Steps to achieve objectives:	Who will do the work?	What does success look like?	What other resources are required?
1. [Be very specific and include important sub-steps. Anyone should be able to pick up this document and understand what needs to happen in order to reach your objective.]	[For every task, there needs to be a responsible party/parties. Who will ultimately ensure the work gets finished?]	[What metrics will you use to track progress on the completion of each step? How will you know it's time to move on to the next step?]	[What non- financial resources are needed for this step? Where will they come from?]
2.			
3.			
4. [Add or delete steps to meet your needs.]			

Appendix B – Sustainability-Related Rebates and Funding Opportunities

The following is a partial list of available sustainability funding and rebates available in BC:

- [Greener Co-op Microgrants](#)
- [CMHC's Preservation Funding](#)
- [National Housing Co-Investment Fund](#)
- [Green Municipal Fund for Sustainable Affordable Housing](#)
- [BC Hydro and Fortis BC](#)
- [Energy Conservation Assistance Program \(ECAP\)](#)
- [Electric Vehicle Charger Rebate Program](#)
- [Rebate Search Tool \(Clean BC\)](#)
- [FortisBC Rebates and Offers](#)

Appendix C – Identifying Reputable Suppliers and Sourcing Sustainable Co-op Materials

Paloma works extensively with our trusted suppliers to make decisions that promote the long-term economic and ecological prosperity. To this end, we have identified a list of preferred suppliers as follows:

Table 2. Paloma Preferred Supplier and Contractor Listing

Supplier Name	For	Business Address	Contact Info	Phone / Email
[BUSINESS NAME]	[SUPPLY /SERVICE]	[STREET ADDRESS] [CITY], [POSTAL]	Primary Contact [NAME] Paloma Point Person [NAME]	[PHONE] [EMAIL]
[BUSINESS NAME]	[SUPPLY /SERVICE]	[STREET ADDRESS] [CITY], [POSTAL]	Primary Contact [NAME] Paloma Point Person [NAME]	[PHONE] [EMAIL]

Paloma Supplier and Contractor Selection Guidelines

In addition to the preferred suppliers and contractors listed above, the following guidelines are designed to support Paloma’s ongoing continuous improvement the identification of new materials and supplier partnerships. This list identifies key issues and third-party certifications summarized from various co-operative housing resources and the [Ecolabel Index](#).

Food-related Sourcing Guidelines

Category	Look for	Avoid
Foodstuffs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third-party certified Fair Trade and bird-friendly coffee and tea. BC-grown, organic, seasonal, locally-harvested, halal, vegetarian and vegan options. • Also see Vancouver Coastal Health’s Food Asset Map. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Products containing palm oil. • Out-of-season or international produce when local alternatives are readily available.






Category	Look for	Avoid
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excessive red meat consumption, factory-farmed meats, dairy and eggs. Overpackaged products.
Food Service Materials*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For cups, choose plastics with resin code #1 or #2 as they are highly recyclable. BPI certified compostable cups fine but they are more expensive and energy intensive. For plates and utensils, compostable wood-based products are best (ie. chopsticks). For disposal, choose paper compost bags or BPI certified bioplastic bags. <p>* Food safety or other such health requirements may necessitate these materials. To reduce costs and unnecessary waste, disposable cups, plates, napkins etc. should be avoided (where possible).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bioplastic / "compostable" utensils, styrofoam, plastic plates, cutlery and straws (unless required for accessibility).













Building Materials and Supplier Sourcing Guidelines

Category	Look for	Avoid
Appliances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy Star appliances 	



Category	Look for	Avoid
Cleaning Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official biodegradability designation (e.g., biodegradable test OECD 301 D or E). Full disclosure of chemical names. Bulk and refillable options. Low-odour/unscented products. Pure plant-derived castile soaps. • Relevant brands: Method, 7th Generation, Ecover, ECOS, Mrs. Myers, Dr. Bronner's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tricosan. Ingredients like "parfum" or "fragrance". • Heavily coloured products (i.e. dyes derived from petrochemicals). • Labels such as "poison," "corrosive" or "irritant." • Lack of company contact information.
Electronics and electrical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputable electronic companies known for long product lifespans and strong warranty/return policies. • Low-energy consumption settings and auto-shut-offs. Products with repair options or low-cost refillable technologies (e.g. laser printers). High quality rechargeable battery technologies (such as li-ion/LiPO4). • UL-certified materials to ensure building code compliance and safety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown and uncertified brands and parts.
Flooring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-lasting options that are replaceable in small sections. • Bamboo, hardwood, engineered hardwood, plywood, parquet, ceramic tile, linoleum, cork-based and recycled-content products. • 100% reclaimable or recyclable materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laminate and vinyl (polyvinyl chloride)
Furniture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furniture that can be maintained easily with regular maintenance using non-toxic materials. • Third-party certified textiles and structural materials. • Second-hand furniture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faux leather (polyvinyl chloride)



Category	Look for	Avoid
	   	
Paint / Varnish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Paint: Water-based low-VOC paints ; Finishing: choose shellac or natural wax finishes over varnish. Teak, tung, lindseed or hemp oil are also recommended. ● Relevant brands: Milk Paint, ECOs, Homesead House, Safecoat, Finico and Seal-once. ● Relevant suppliers: Lee Valley Tools, Trustic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Oil and plastic-based paints and finishes
Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 100% post-consumer recycled content. ● FSC certified, Rainforest Alliance certified, certified chlorine-free .     	
Plastics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Containing > 50% recycled content with resin codes #1, #2 and #4. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plastics #3, #5, #6 & #7
Wood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FSC certified, Rainforest Alliance certified.  	
Contractors and Suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seek out suppliers that are able to answer specific queries about materials and options. ● The way a product is applied is also important, ask questions about application. 	

Category	Look for	Avoid
	   	
<p>Certifications that apply to 2+ categories above</p>	   	

Flame-Retardant Chemicals

The application of flame retardant materials to home furnishings such as furniture foams, textiles, rubbers, plastics, electronics, insulation, flooring (most consumer goods) is often mandated by law. These chemicals are definitively linked to endocrine disruption, cancer, liver and thyroid problems but the alternative costs are higher (fire damage, harmful smoke and loss of life). Still, some chemicals are much worse than others and there are low-risk materials and alternate chemistries available.

Flame retardants of particular concern are as follows: bromine containing flame retardants (BFRs), polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), organophosphate flame retardants (OPFRs), Chlorinated Tris (or TDCPP), Phosphorus Flame Retardants (PFR).

Appendix D – Benchmarking Paloma’s Sustainability Performance

The Agency for Co-operative Housing surveyed its co-op clients in November 2017 on their sustainable and environmental practices, capturing a snapshot of sustainable co-op housing practices in Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Alberta and British Columbia. The survey touched on building condition assessments, water and energy conservation, paper consumption, composting and recycling.

Table 3 was constructed using information and from the *Sustainability Survey Summary Report* published by the Agency for Co-operative Housing in August 2018.

Table 3. Paloma’s Sustainability Performance Comparison

Area	% Co-ops in Survey	Paloma
Buildings and Energy		
Repair and Maintenance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building condition assessment 	82%	Y
Indoor Lighting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LED bulbs Motion sensors/timer-controlled lighting 	80%	Y
Outdoor Lighting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timers 	60%	Y
Appliances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy Star (or similar) rating 	<8%	Y
Air Heating / Cooling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy audit conducted Moderate building temperature is set Wall/attic insulation Reflective blinds Door/window upgrades Heating, ventilation and air-conditioning upgrades (e.g., upgrades to heat pumps/air exchangers, programmable thermostats, baseboard heaters etc.) 	80%	Y
Water Heating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-demand water heating 	33%	Y
	60%	N/A
	34%	?
	8%	N
	62%	N
Clean Energy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean energy purchasing (e.g., renewable energy certificates via Bullfrog Power) Solar panels 	<10%	N
	N/A	N
	<5%	N

Area	% Co-ops in Survey	Paloma
Behaviour change initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, fans vs. air conditioning, turning down thermostats 	<10%	N
Air Quality		
Low-volatile organic compound paint	43%	Y
Off-gassing of flooring/furnishings	N/A	?
Indoor smoking guidelines	N/A	Y
Indoor scent policy	N/A	N
Water Use and Conservation		
Low-flow <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toilets Taps / showerheads 	81% 69%	N Up to member
Irrigation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rain barrels Metered system 	17% 18%	N N
Washing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited use of power washing Car washing 	N/A Y	Y? Y?
Behaviour change initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, improved leak reporting 	N	N
Waste and Waste Diversion		
Waste Reduction Behaviours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper consumption (e.g. electronic documents, preference for email) Household exchange Lending lists/library Access to repair gear/services Environmentally-preferrable event supplies 	82% Y Y N/A N/A	Y N Y Y Y?
Diversion Streams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Textile/housewares/furniture donations Building materials donation Container recycling Paper recycling Deposit/returnables management Food waste composting 	N/A N/A Y? Y? N/A 66%	N N Y Y N Y

Area	% Co-ops in Survey	Paloma
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yard waste composting Specialty recycling (e.g. scrap metal, styrofoam, building supplies etc.) Hazardous waste disposal (e.g. paint, light bulbs, oils, chemical-products, electronics, printer cartridges, batteries) 	7% N/A 46%	Y Y Y
Land Use and Site		
Chemical use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmentally preferable cleaning supplies 	N/A	N
Landscaping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drought-resistant species Native species Urban canopy Ban on pesticides/herbicides (non-organic) 	18% N/A N/A N/A	Y? Y? Y Y
Outdoor Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Naturalized outdoor space 	N/A	Y
Food Systems		
Food Security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garden plots Edible landscaping Food-share 	N/A	Y Y N
Transportation		
Active transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure bike storage 	<10%	Y
Low-carbon transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electric charging station Transit access (e.g. passes) 	<10% <10%	N N
Suppliers and Purchasing		
Screening criteria (e.g., environmentally preferable, fair trade, living wage, CHFC-approved, etc.)	39%	N
Tender package requirements	11%	N
Not Included		
Recharge batteries as many times as possible. Power bars for electrical equipment.		