

Sustainability Resources for West Linn Businesses

In Fall 2006, West Linn City Council adopted the [Sustainable West Linn Strategic Plan](#) and established a Sustainability Advisory Board in 2007 to oversee the plan's implementation. Sustainable West Linn is about how we can thrive as socially vibrant, environmentally healthy and economically viable community in ways that protect our natural resources for future generations. It is a process that requires governments, residents, and businesses to rethink how we do things and take advantage of new findings and tools.

For businesses, the challenge of sustainability is finding ways to meet the “triple bottom line” of focusing on people, planet and profits by:

- Pursuing society equality in the workplace and community involvement (people),
- Revising business systems to reduce waste and curtail environmental harm (planet),
- Accounting for the real economic impact of business resource use (profits).

Opportunity knocks even during today's difficult economic climate. Businesses that incorporate sustainability principles into their practices can streamline operating costs, grow more efficiently, and position themselves to meet the needs of customers more favorably. Below are resources to help West Linn businesses grow greener.

Solid Waste

Reducing and recycling help save money, natural resources and energy while eliminating waste and preventing pollution.

- Contact a recycling specialist at Metro's Recycle at Work Program to learn how to minimize trash and obtain **free** recycling boxes and posters. Call your Clackamas County representative at (503) 557-6363 or visit www.recycleatwork.com.
- Clackamas County Recycling Partnership offers businesses within the county **free** on-site assistance with their waste reduction programs. Call (503) 353-4465.
- Check out Clackamas County's business recycling requirements and best management practices at www.clackamas.us/transportation/recycling.
- Contact the commercial specialists at West Linn Refuse & Recycling at (503) 557-3900 to set up a business recycling program.
- For the nearest electronics recycling locations, go to www.OregonEcycles.org.
- Visit Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality Commercial Waste Reduction Clearinghouse web site at www.deq.state.or.us/lq/sw/cwrc/setup/ for information on analyzing your waste stream, waste reduction strategies, savings calculations, materials exchange and recycled-content.

Energy:

Energy efficiency improves the bottom line and saves natural resources.

- The Clackamas County Energy Efficiency on Main Street Program is working with Energy Trust of Oregon to provide **free** energy audits, resource information, and grant consideration to commercial businesses in West Linn's Willamette District. For details, visit www.clackamas.us/business/mainstreet/energy.jsp or call Sam Honl at (503) 742-4304.
- Energy Trust helps commercial building tenants, owners and property managers offset rising energy costs by paying cash incentives for energy-efficient equipment or solar installations. Visit <http://energytrust.org/business> for information.
- Oregon offers business energy tax credits and low interest loans for qualifying projects that promote energy conservation or use of renewables. For more information go to www.oregon.gov/ENERGY/CONS/BUS/bushome.shtml.
- Ask your energy utility providers about how you can support the use of renewable energy sources in your workplace.

Water

The amount of water we use indoors and outdoors and the quality of the water we return to our watershed through the sanitary sewer and storm water systems directly impacts our local ecosystem. As businesses become more water-efficient and eco-wise, they can both reduce utility costs and protect habitat.

- The Clackamas County Soil and Water Conservation District offers technical assistance for businesses developing integrated, small scale strategies (e.g., rain gardens, green roofs, pervious pavers, rainwater harvesting, and bioswales) for stormwater management. Contact Nikki Cerra at (503) 655-3144.
- The Clean Water Services' new handbook on Low Impact Development for the Tualatin River Watershed contains best management practices for sustainable site planning and design. See <http://cleanwaterservices.org/PermitCenter/NewsAndResources/>.
- Construction projects need to obtain erosion control permits from the West Linn Engineering Department at (503) 722-5500.

Transportation

Motor vehicles are responsible for nearly 25 percent of annual US emissions of carbon dioxide, the primary global-warming gas. While West Linn boasts a large number of home-based businesses, commuting to work from the suburbs is a sustainability challenge.

- Offering employees a commute subsidy or even just a pre-tax flexible spending account can save your company money on federal or state taxes, or both. Contact the Oregon Department of Energy at (800) 221-8035 for details.
- Consider using a shared vehicle service such as Zipcar for automobile travel and using the TerraPass Carbon Balanced Business program (www.terrapass.com) to offset business travel carbon emissions,

Employee Training

It takes a team of dedicated staff to implement sustainability practices in organizations. Here are some resources for forming your own team of champions.

- The Natural Step offers training and resources for integrating sustainability business practices into your workplace. Visit www.naturalstepusa.org for details. Check out A Passion for Sustainability (DVD) at the West Linn Library to see how Portland area businesses are using The Natural Step framework to improve their bottom line.
- The Northwest Earth Institute offers a new training, [Sustainable Systems at Work](http://www.nwei.org), designed specifically for the workplace setting. See <http://nwei.org> for details.

Green Purchasing

Sustainability entails closing the loop by changing purchasing practices to buy recycled-content products, avoid toxic cleaners and lawn care products, and support local businesses.

- See Metro's guide for recycled-content products at www.oregonmetro.gov/index.cfm/go/by.web/id=2728.
- See the Pacific Northwest Pollution Prevention Resource Center's web site link for green procurement on <http://pprc.org/hubs/>.

Recognition Programs

Showcase your sustainability business practices as part of your marketing strategy. Look into the two leading awards programs for West Linn businesses.

- Business Recycling Awards Group (BRAG) www.clackamas.us/transportation/recycling.
- BEST Awards for Portland Metro companies committed to innovation and commitment to social, environmental and economic sustainability <http://bestbusinesscenter.org/recognition/BEST-awards>.

About the West Linn Sustainability Advisory Board:

Sustainability Advisory Board members advise regarding the implementation and subsequent reviews of the approved City of West Linn Sustainability Plan and its updates; stay current on sustainability and environmental issues, make recommendations, and assist the City in promoting sustainability and environmental improvement to the West Linn community, individuals, City Council, and staff; and make recommendations to the City Council as requested by the City Council. Sustainability Advisory Board meetings are noticed on the City of West Linn web site at <http://westlinnoregon.gov>. Contact the Sustainability Advisory Board members by emailing sshroyer@westlinnoregon.gov or calling 503-657-0331.