



Corporation of the Village of Cumberland

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A BC First: Cumberland adopts Social Procurement Framework, better leveraging tax dollars for community benefit

Cumberland, B.C. The Village of Cumberland has passed a motion to implement social impact purchasing, making the Village the first municipality in British Columbia to proactively leverage existing spending to improve social outcomes in the community.

“Council is aware of the positive impact we can make through our purchasing practices,” said Mayor Leslie Baird. “That’s why we included social procurement purchasing as a strategic priority for the municipality, and why we’ve approved the Social Procurement Framework.”

By passing the Social Procurement Framework the Village of Cumberland is working to build a stronger local economy, to increase diversity among government suppliers, and to improve access for micro, small business and social enterprises to government contracts.

“Council spends \$5 million annually,” said Councillor Jesse Ketler, who will be representing the Village at a presentation on social procurement during the annual Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Conference in September. “We want to maximize returns for taxpayers by better aligning this spending with community values and strategic priorities.”

To help move forward the social procurement strategy the Village engaged the help of Comox Valley resident Sandra Hamilton, a Canadian expert in social procurement who works with municipalities to strategically align purchasing with local objectives, all while working within the confines of trade agreements.

Hamilton, the former business manager to Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics CEO John Furlong, has seen first-hand how social procurement can have a positive effect on a community.

“The floral contract for the 2010 Olympic Games included something called a Community Benefit Clause,” said Hamilton. “The winning bid, would not only offer a competitive price and supplier capability, but would also commit to train women from the downtown eastside as florists. It was a pivotal moment for me, I realised procurement had the power to change lives.”

This set in motion a journey that has resulted in a number of Canadian firsts for Hamilton. She became the catalyst for creating Canada's first Social MBA degree program; she is the first person to secure the supply of farm direct, local food into a B.C. Hospital, and now her work with Cumberland has helped lead to the design and implementation of the first municipal Social Procurement Framework in B.C.

"Sustainability is about doing the right thing. How we buy and how we invest, drives the economy, which shapes our communities," said Hamilton. "In Canada, government spending accounts for 40 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). On Vancouver Island public sector spending, in the form of health care and social services, represent the second and third largest economic drivers respectively. Small businesses and social enterprise growth in our smaller communities will be driven by improving access to taxpayer funded contracts. It's good to see the Village of Cumberland stepping forward and taking the lead in this important issue."

At this year's UBCM, Hamilton along with representatives from the Village of Cumberland and City of Vancouver will speak on the topic of Social Procurement and Economic Development at 7:30am on September 24th, 2015.

Those unable to attend UBCM, can learn more about social procurement, by attending the [Localizing Prosperity](#) event hosted by WeAreYQQ and the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce, on September 28th and 29th, 2015.

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For more information: cumberland.ca and www.sandrahamilton.ca.

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BACKGROUND

What is Social Public Procurement?

Social Public Procurement leverages existing purchasing to achieve social value.

Why is the Village of Cumberland creating a Social Procurement Framework?

Each year the Village of Cumberland spends on average \$5 million procuring goods and services, professional services and construction services.

Social procurement ensures that a values aligned approach to purchasing, in keeping with community values and strategic priorities, is considered while spending public dollars. Social impact purchasing seeks to leverage existing public purchasing to add social value. The concept is that when spending taxpayer dollars, the Village will also be a catalyst for positive social change.

Key Pillars guiding social procurement in Cumberland

The framework is based on core principles that will shift purchasing behaviour so that tax dollars can be strategically leveraged to compliment the targeted and desirable social outcomes as stated in the community vision of Council's 2015 Corporate Strategic Priorities.

A summary of these principles follow:

1. Village procurement processes will continue to meet all the principles of fairness, integrity, accountability and transparency along with the Village's existing purchasing policies and procedures. The framework will not give an unfair advantage to any one vendor over another. Competitive bidding activities will continue to be compliant with the obligations set out in applicable trade agreements.
2. The framework imposes a duty for Village procurers to explore opportunities to achieve positive social outcomes and community benefits. To improve access for small, local and/or social enterprises, consideration will be given to contract structure, language and blended value evaluation criteria. Through its competitive bidding practices, the Village will evaluate price point, capability and environmental considerations with a points system, which also scores suppliers against social such as providing a living wage, job creation commitments or training opportunities.
3. Purchasing practices will be aligned to support the strategic economic, social and environmental goals of Cumberland. Staff will be encouraged through the implementation of the framework to promote innovation. Community Benefit Clauses may be added to procurement contracts, where possible, to leverage project dollars to provide benefits within the Village.

Social Impact Purchasing - Moving from do no harm, to do some good.

Over the last thirty years the environmental movement has done an excellent job of educating and increasing awareness surrounding the importance of developing more sustainable practices. This has led to considerable changes in behaviours and societal norms. Environmental considerations in government procurement have now become normalized.

Social procurement seeks to further leverage tax dollars to achieve broad societal goals, increasing equality and diversity, while contributing to improved community wellbeing through the blending of social, environmental and economic considerations in the procurement process.

The Canadian Landscape

[Research Paper](#)

Social Procurement- The Olympic, Commonwealth & Pan Am Games, and the growing case for Social Procurement Policy in Canada - Sandra Hamilton, July 2014.

[Buy Social Canada](#)

Early stage development of a Social Enterprise Database and certification program, similar to Fair-trade and LEED environmental building standards.

[BC Provincial Social Impact Purchasing Guidelines](#)

Developed in November, 2014 for B.C.'s first pilot within the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation. The guidelines became publicly available in June 2015 and offer a good foundation for staff who maybe new to social impact purchasing.

SFRP: Short-Form Request for Proposals

SFRP's must now be used by for all BC Government procurement under \$250,000.

Vancouver Healthy City for all strategy – July 2015

The strategy includes social purchasing goals, community benefit clauses and a living wage requirement. Eg. The PARQ Casino development has a Community Benefit Clause that requires 10% of the construction employment to come from the inner City, and 10% of the supply chain to be contained from the inner City.

Province of Ontario, Bill 6 – June 2015

Infrastructure planning and investment should promote community benefits

In keeping with Ontario's Bill 6, infrastructure planning and investment should promote community benefits, being the supplementary social and economic benefits arising from an infrastructure project that are intended to improve the well-being of a community affected by the project, such as local job creation and training opportunities (including for apprentices), improvement of public space within the community, and any specific benefits identified by the community.