



Can Pembroke, ON, Mayor Michael LeMay buy local or not?

<http://www.thedailyobserver.ca/2015/02/25/city-cant-prefer-local-for-procurement>

Can local governments legally adopt buy local policies?

Can a City prefer local companies in the procurement process asked Mayor LeMay of Pembroke, ON. “No,” said deputy treasure Schofield. “Yes, if you know how to structure *the ask*,” says Vancouver Island based expert Sandra Hamilton; but the focus has to be local impact, not local geography. This is an example of why a lot more education and a lot more events like SE Catalyst are needed.

Hamilton, a Social Innovation Consultant and former Business Manager to John Furlong, CEO of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games says "The 2010 Games were the first Olympics to include social considerations within the sustainability strategy. Vancouver 2010 taught us a lot about the incredible power of social procurement and it all comes down to what you ask for."

The private sector has long since used strategic procurement to achieve a competitive advantage or elevate a brand. Businesses are becoming more social and non-profit organisations are starting social enterprises and becoming more businesslike. This is the start of a new economic development model for municipalities; a way to re-localise and re-vitalise economies transitioning from the resource sector to the knowledge economy on Vancouver Island. How well a city is able to strategically leverage tax dollars, that are being spent anyway, will be a key determinant of success.

Procurement is an important strategic function; a way for local governments to align with community values, to put policies and priorities into action. According to Hamilton, the magic happens in the pre-procurement stage and compliance with trade agreements and procurement directives, is all about knowing how to structure “the ask”.

While social enterprises represent the supply side, social procurement represents the demand side of a new local living economy. To narrow the gap, we need to build capacity in both areas.

Vancouver, Toronto, Winnipeg and Thunder Bay have already started to leverage social public procurement. When navigating trade agreements, the key for local governments is to think less about local geography and more about impact. There is absolutely a way through for communities seeking to maximise value from every tax dollar. (more)

Backgrounder: Sandra Hamilton

With an interest in applying business thinking to social change, Sandra Hamilton is currently working with North Island College, the Comox Valley Regional District and the [J.W. McConnell Family Foundation](#) to increase the supply of local food into Vancouver Island hospitals, post-secondary schools and long term care facilities. Hamilton is the first Canadian to pursue an [Executive M.B.A. in Social Enterprise Leadership](#), with a focus on Social Public Procurement. More at [SandraHamilton.ca](#)

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