

Local Stories: Procurement for Community Well Being

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Port Hardy: Test-Driving Our Community Values

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Social Procurement

INITIATIVE

"At the beginning, we thought social procurement was about 'what are they going to gift us?'- that they would leave us a clock or something, but it isn't about that. It is about being inclusive, about the environment, and about the community, workforce and local economy'." - Allison McCarrick



Location:
Port Hardy
Population:
4,100

**Recreation Centre
Revitalization
Project**

Port Hardy is a small community at the tip of Vancouver Island. The local government is both a provider of services to the community as well as a supporter of local economy and businesses. Wherever possible, the District is looking at how to include local businesses in their procurement, and to ask outside suppliers and vendors, "what can you bring to our local community that adds something extra to the people that will be using the services that we pay you to provide?".

Recreation Centre Revitalization Project

Port Hardy's recreation centre is the beating heart of the community, providing health and wellness services and a place for people to gather. It is beginning to show its age and recently, the District replaced the chiller for the arena. In doing this work, the District identified that additional work was needed on the refrigeration system, a new roof was in order, and other work required inside the arena.

These renovations also provided an opportunity to meet emerging community and environmental needs:

- The accessibility ramp had tight corners that are difficult for scooters to navigate. Residents using scooters had been accessing the arena through a back door, an access point that impacts upon dignity and sense of welcome.
- In updating the heating and cooling systems, heat reclamation options could help the complex become more energy efficient.

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Port Hardy is a member of British Columbia Social Procurement Initiative (BCSPI) and has access to training, consulting support, tools and templates to help integrate social procurement into their existing spend. The District worked from one of the sample templates, incorporated definitions and used a 'descriptive' process so that proponents could describe how they wanted to achieve community benefits including any anticipated associated costs.

The resulting Request for Proposals (RFP) aimed to integrate local employment, local supply chain management and local living outcomes. One of the goals was that project managers would look for suppliers that also embody and create social value and community benefit.

Port Hardy received 7 bids for the project. The District was very pleased with the number and quality of the responses. With respect to social value the proponents varied their responses, which included environmental conscience, employment of local labour force and individuals facing barriers, apprenticeships offered, involvement with and financial support of local community non-profit groups and unique methods of tracking energy savings upon completion of the project.

Request for Proposals (RFP):

Professional Project Management Services Recreation Revitalization (Arena) Project

Proposal Contents include this statement:

Social and Community Values; the Proponent has the opportunity to describe any social and community benefits it is prepared to supply as part of the Contract. Unless otherwise stated, it is understood that there are no extra costs for these services, however if there are any additional costs pertaining hereto, the summary and explanation of those costs should be shown separately in the proposed budget table (Schedule A). Social and Community Value items could include:

- The employment of barriered individuals;
- Unique or proprietary methods of work;
- Involvement of Social Enterprises in any portion of the work;
- Your company's supply chain practices which could be inclusive of local sourcing for labour and / or materials;
- Your company's commitments to a diverse supply chain;
- Your company's ability to monitor and measure social and community value commitments; and,
- Other.

Social Value Criteria = 10 points out of 110

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Outcomes and Lessons Learned

For this project, Port Hardy was able to pilot how to integrate social value into an RFP and learn the different ways that contractors and consultants can provide community benefit. The key was making sure the criteria wasn't too onerous and allowing proponents to describe what they do already and could do moving forward.

"We are not anticipating too much response this time around. Either people will understand social community value and will include it, or they won't. We may have to do a better job explaining the District's position on social value in the future, our process and expectations. We are practicing for our upcoming \$20M infrastructure pool project!"

One of the key project outcomes was increased engagement with local First Nations. First Nations use the recreation services regularly, and these facilities are key to keeping people in community and providing a location for ongoing relationship building and engagement. The District engaged local First Nations on how they would like to be involved in the project and also let them know about related employment opportunities.

Another key outcome was realizing how much existing procurement is already connected to community benefit. For example, a local janitorial contractor employs people facing barriers such as newcomers to Canada and youth. Another local service provider employs vulnerable youth, and is a key supporter of community events, service clubs and non profits. One of the biggest lessons learned was the need to let Council know about the impact they are already making, and the District is changing their SOFI reporting to list procurement >\$5k from local service providers, especially that which supports local employment.

"If you are feeling nervous, you just need to go for it. Be general the first time, don't make an extra 'ask' or get too focused or detailed- this may get you more grief. See what you get back, see how it fits, and how it feels for your community."

Port Hardy Social Procurement Policy Wording

Port Hardy updated their procurement policy to include social procurement. Section 11 states:

The District considers the environmental, social and economic sustainability value of the goods and services being purchased, with the intent to shift spending away from goods and services that negatively impact the environment and society towards products and services that are more environmentally sound, socially beneficial and economically sustainable.

Recognizing its role as a major purchaser of goods and services, the District will seek opportunities to encourage environmental and socially preferable products where possible. The District will practice economic sustainability by evaluating life cycle costs when evaluating projects.

It is the District's practice to include sustainability guidelines as value added evaluation criteria in procurement documents where practical. The evaluation criteria used will be tailored to the specific competition; however, more points may be awarded for activities that have a greater impact on social, environmental and economic sustainability.

The value-added evaluation criteria used will be tailored to the specific competition; and will be clearly stated in the procurement documents.

Social, environmental and economic sustainability achieved through District purchasing practices will be reported annually in the Annual Report.

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