



May 22, 2025

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : General Manager, Board of Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT : **“Think Local” Update – Board Briefing Memo**

---

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to provide staff's response to the January 20, 2025, Park Board motion [“Think Local”: Prioritizing Canadian Goods for Vancouver Park Board Facilities](#) (full motion in Appendix A).

Park Board directed Staff to undertake a review of current procurement procedures, contracts, vendors, capital projects, and trade agreement implications to identify opportunities to buy local/buy Canadian on a priority basis. Staff do not recommend any changes at this time to existing procurement policies and procedures.

#### *Background*

Trade agreements are generally required to provide open, fair, and transparent access to its procurement opportunities to vendors of the applicable trade agreement parties, including avoiding any preference for Canadian local vendors. Canadian content requirements, domestic content preferences, and requirements for Canadian benefits are prohibited in procurements that are subject to any trade agreements.

There are three main trade agreements that prevent the City from indicating a preference for local or Canadian vendors or content for contracts over \$75,000 – the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), and New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWP). The risk of not abiding to these obligations can initiate a dispute process or a legal claim under Canadian common law procurement principles or statutory frameworks. However, while indicating a preference for local is not allowed, there is nothing that precludes the Park Board from excluding suppliers from certain countries, like the US and still be compliant.

#### *Discussion*

Currently the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation has very few contracts directly with United States (US) based entities, but it has exposure to retaliatory tariffs, via procurement from Canadian suppliers who source their goods/services from the US. Much of this would add costs to capital projects, where contracts are generally structured to pass the risk of high materials procurement costs due to tariffs/ taxes to the owner of the facility.

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation procures some goods and services that are currently only manufactured in or available from the United States. For these, barring supply issues, there may be opportunities to work with existing distributors or new suppliers to source Canadian goods (e.g., for food and beverage) and change menus and product selection for concessions, community centres, restaurants, and event spaces. For more complex goods and services, trade-offs will have to be assessed on a case-by-case basis (e.g. information technology



or software replacement). Where alternatives exist, they should be evaluated vis-a-vis financial implications, performance capabilities, and compliance with technical requirements.

In order to avoid potential misalignment with strategies adopted by senior governments, staff recommend deferring any decision regarding exclusion of US goods from procurement processes pending more clarity regarding federal and provincial decisions on non-tariff measures. Staff recommend to retain existing contracts with US suppliers. Staff do not recommend terminating existing contracts with direct US suppliers, as the spend is currently limited, and largely in areas where there would be operational implications should these contracts be terminated. In 2024, Park Board spent approximately \$1.2 million directly with US vendors of which approximately half was with Activenet (registration software) and the remaining was for specialized goods like sod for FIFA and replacement parts for the Stanley Park Train.

For further consideration, as Municipal procurements under \$75,000 are not part of the scope of the trade agreements, Park Board could direct staff to amend the Procurement Policy to include language to prioritize local or Canadian products and services within what is allowable under trade agreements (e.g. purchases under \$75,000) and/or consider excluding direct US suppliers from any new purchasing or future procurement agreements in support of a Canada Team approach. Staff do not recommend this at this time.

Canadian retaliatory tariffs on US goods will have the effect of diminishing the competitiveness of those products in future procurement processes, assuming alternative sources of supply. As a non-tariff response to US trade measures, and irrespective of product prices, Park Board could make a policy decision to exclude US suppliers from specific procurements, accepting the risk that such a policy could result in increased costs to taxpayers. Staff do not recommend this at this time.

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation participates in the Social Procurement program which has been in place since 2019. This program has the objective of awarding 50% of the contracts in value and in number to social and diverse businesses. This generates engagement and creates opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses take part in the procurement process either through direct contracts or sub-contracting.

More information regarding the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation procurement process and its policy is included in Appendix B.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "SJ" followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Steve Jackson (he/him)

General Manager, Board of Parks and Recreation – Vancouver Parks and Recreation

Copy to: PB Senior Leadership Team  
PB Communications



## **APPENDIX A**

### **“Think Local”:**

### **Prioritizing Canadian Goods for Vancouver Park Board Facilities**

**January 20, 2025**

- A. THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation directs staff to review current procurement procedures, contracts, vendors, capital projects, and trade agreement implications, and to report back as soon as possible on the potential benefits and opportunities of purchasing and utilizing Canadian-made goods in all Park Board operations. This should be done whenever feasible and cost-effective, including areas such as infrastructure materials, equipment, and maintenance supplies, with the aim of supporting the Canadian economy;
- B. THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation directs staff to review current practices and provide recommendations on enhancing sourcing from Canadian producers, with an emphasis on Canadian alcohol and locally sourced food for all food and beverage products sold or served at Park Board facilities, including concessions, community centres, restaurants, and event spaces and report back within 3 months;
- C. THAT the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation directs staff to work with the City of Vancouver, and where applicable, provincial and federal governments, to review policies in alignment with the City’s focus on prioritizing Canadian-made goods and the team Canada approach, ensuring alignment with local, provincial, and national priorities to enhance Canada’s resilience, which may include coordinating with the City and reviewing existing contracts as needed; and
- D. THAT staff collaborate and engage with local suppliers and businesses to support the shift to Canadian-made goods and create opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises to take part in the procurement process.



## **APPENDIX B SUPPORTING PROCUREMENT INFORMATION**

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation procurement is conducted through a shared service provided by the City of Vancouver.

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation supply chain is extensive and diverse, involving over thousands of vendors, with the significant majority based in Canada. While the Park Board spends millions of dollars annually on third-party goods and services, only a small percentage comes directly from the United States, primarily for software, IT services, and specialized goods.

The Procurement Policy has two main goals:

1. Ensure an open, transparent, competitive procurement process that:
  - provide best value;
  - minimize the total cost of ownership;
  - incorporate wherever possible, sustainable and ethical procurement considerations as integral evaluation components considerations in supply selection, and
  - applies leading practices; risk mitigation strategies and strong financial controls to the procurement process.
2. Ensure compliance with other policies and bylaws, the Vancouver Charter, Police Act, Public Library Act, collective agreements, inter-provincial, national, and international trade agreements that are binding on the Park Board and all other provincial and federal laws and regulations that apply to the procurement of goods, services and construction for public organizations.

The current Procurement Policy requires contract awards greater than \$2 million be brought to the Park Board for approval. In the case where a direct US supplier is recommended as a lead proponent for a contract of this value, Park Board approval would be required.