

Greening the games

by Jeff Jedras

Green procurement key for 2010 Olympics

WITH THE 2010 WINTER Olympic Games in Vancouver and Whistler expecting to create at least \$2 billion worth of direct contracts and billions more in indirect opportunities, Olympic procurement is sure to be big business between now and when the last athletes leave British Columbia in 2010.

The procurement processes for the 2010 Games are ongoing as the games organization shifts from the bid phase to the organizing phase. But games organizers can promise one thing at this point: these games will be green.

The three pillars of the Olympic movement are sport, culture and the environment, and Vancouver 2010 spokesperson Sam Corea says that philosophy was taken to heart as the bid was developed, with the goal of making these games as sustainable as possible.

“Our vision statement was to create sustainable legacies for athletes, our host communities, and the global Olympic family,” says Corea. “That was guiding our decision-making throughout the bid phase.”

The International Olympic Committee adopted Agenda 21 in 1999, enshrining the environment as one of the pillars of the Olympic movement and putting forward the notion that a bigger games isn’t necessarily better. Sydney did a good job on the environmental side (*Summit*, March 1999), as did Lillehammer with biodegradable potato starch plates and Atlanta with alternative fuels. But Corea says Vancouver wants to go beyond basic green initiatives and create a truly sustainable games.

The use of existing venues will be maximized – such as BC Place, the Pacific

Coliseum and General Motors Place – and where new venues have to be built they will be placed where they will get the most long-term use. Also, with Whistler hosting the alpine events and the other events being hosted in Vancouver, there is a need to minimize travel between those two communities, so the athletes will be housed in the communities where they compete.

A *Sustainability Management Policy* will be put in place for the games and every contract tendered will be measured against these standards and framework, keeping in mind what the long-term picture will be for each decision made.

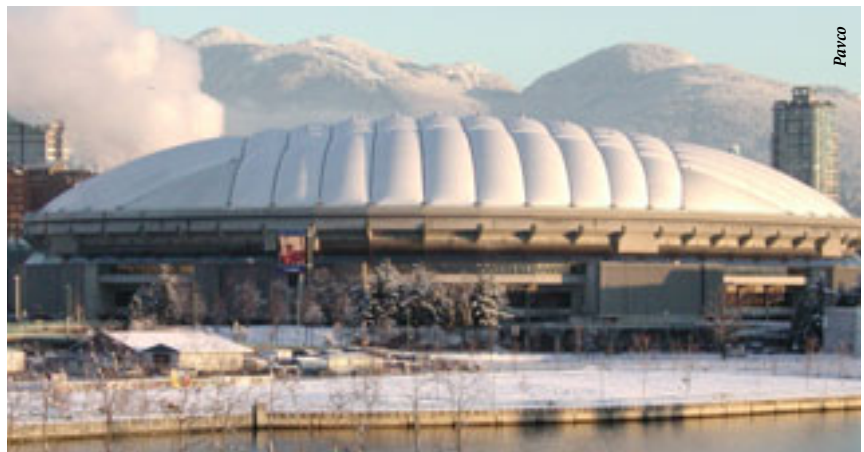
On the construction side, the games have also committed to ensuring all renovations and new venues constructed showcase the latest “green” building designs and construction techniques using the Leadership in Environmental Energy and Design (LEED) ratings system.

“We want to make each venue as green as possible by employing the newest avail-

able information and ways of doing things in all of our new venues,” says Corea. He adds accessibility will also be an important factor, such as ensuring the washrooms in a facility are wheelchair accessible.

Opportunities for companies to bid on contracts for the games will be many but “given the commitment to sustainability embedded into the bid, it’s not a leap to suggest the organizing committee will want to do business with organizations, people and companies that have the same goals in mind,” says Corea.

A member of the IOC’s Sport and Environment Commission and president of Ottawa-based Green and Gold Inc., David Chernushenko advised the Vancouver 2010 bid committee on incorporating sustainability and green procurement into their bid for the games. Chernushenko says the goal is to ensure the games have as small an environmental impact as possible, and that encompasses everything from the building of the major venues and infra-



BC Place, Vancouver, BC.

structure to products and supplies used for day-to-day operations.

“It’s an opportunity to not only showcase Canadian know-how around greener products and services, but to actually deliver a better quality games and have a more positive impact on the community,” says Chernushenko.

A common myth is that procuring and building green costs more. “It doesn’t need to cost any more,” says Chernushenko, “and where it does cost a bit more, it often ends up saving money down the road.”

There may be some upfront costs around building design and operations, but Chernushenko says that is minimized if the design is done right early on, and can be recouped in the construction phase through lower construction costs. The long-term operation of the building will also be cheaper.

While it’s easier to identify green procurement issues around venue construction, such as LEED standards and green choices, Chernushenko says green procurement covers the gambit.

Information technology, for example – with energy costs skyrocketing and grids reaching capacity during peak times, the energy efficiency of IT devices is an important issue. The more energy-efficient the IT equipment can be, the less peak demand it will create during the games.

Chernushenko says another big issue around IT equipment is disposal – that includes the packaging and the devices themselves after they’re no longer needed. “Companies and bidders need to be thinking down the road to when this equipment is disposed of; what are the costs of that going to be?” says Chernushenko. “We see a number of manufacturers now designing for disassembly, so a lot of the toxic materials are out of their products so there aren’t issues of toxic or hazardous materials to be dealt with down the road.”

The eyes of the world will be on British Columbia and Canada in 2010, and Chernushenko says potential bidders would do themselves and the games a service by finding and offering a more sustainable product or service.

“You don’t want to be one of the horror stories where some environmental NGO says late in the games that hey, we’ve just discovered that such and such is being used in this venue and all of a sudden

you’re the target of a negative story,” says Chernushenko. “You want to be one of the positive stories, one of the showcases.”

Getting ready for bids

Most of the materials the organizing committee will be procuring won’t be needed for a few years, and Corea says the procurement processes will evolve over time. Venue construction will be happening first, with requests for proposals to be issued late in 2004 or early 2005 for construction to begin mid-2005.



Vancouver's Proposed Athlete's Village, BC.
Image courtesy: Lori Brown & Vancouver 2010 Bid Corp.

The BC government's online procurement website, BC Bid, will likely be used for much of the Olympic procurement. Opportunities will also be advertised in newspapers and posted on the organizing committee's website. There may also be one central site, and organization, to handle all Olympic procurement. Corea says they're looking at the model being used for the 2006 Winter Games in Torino, Italy, and seeing how it works there.

"They have an organization called Agenzia Torino 2006, which is actually a subsidiary of the Torino organizing committee, that managed all their procurement and contracts," says Corea. "We'll look at that sort of a model as well, but we're not finalized on how it's going to work."

Between now and the time the first tenders are put out, Corea recommends potential vendors look at what happened during the Salt Lake City Games in 2002, what they thought worked well and didn't work well there. Also, research Torino and look at what they've done and what services and products were needed there.

"We're not going to re-invent the wheel, but our games will be the Canadian games, the British Columbian games, and we'll have our own unique aspects," says Corea.

The games will bring 5,000 athletes and officials, 250,000 visitors and 10,000 media to British Columbia. Over \$500 million will be spent on venue construction, the organizing committee at its peak will employ 1,200 people, and more than 25,000 people will be volunteers.



*Whistler's proposed Athlete's Village.
Image courtesy: Lori Brown & Vancouver 2010 Bid Corp.*



Vancouver, British Columbia. View from Grouse Mountain.

"Right now just use your imagination as a company to ask what you could do for the games," says Corea. "Can you offer something unique and interesting, whether it's to supply a material or a unique way of doing things?"

Different sectors prepare to bid

The technology industry has its eye on getting a lot of mileage from the 2010 Games, both in direct business contracts and as a showcase for Canada's technology companies and their innovation.

George Hunter, president of the British Columbia Technology Industry Association, says they're currently waiting for the organizing committee to get up and running, and they'll be holding awareness building sessions for their members and briefings on opportunities related to direct technology applications in the months and years to come.

"Right now we're beginning to think how we go about getting access for the technology community to the various aspects of the games, and really using the games as a showcase for our sector," says Hunter. "If a company has a product or a service they believe is directly relevant to the development or the operation of the games themselves they should be making themselves aware to the organizing committee and to the IOC itself."

One showcase project already in the works is for a "Hydrogen Highway" between Vancouver and Whistler, which will see hydrogen-powered vehicles working the road between the two Olympic sites with re-fuelling available along the way, as a model of future transportation methods.

The construction industry has also been working hard to get ready for an expected boom in games-related business, including \$800 million in direct capital construction opportunities, says Keith Sashaw, president of the Vancouver Regional Construction Association. Sashaw says every one million dollars of capital construction can create 20 person years of employment.

There are also non-direct, games-related construction projects, such as the Vancouver Convention Centre expansion and the Richmond-Airport-Vancouver (RAV) rapid transit project.

One issue is a potential skills shortage, making sure there are enough skilled trades people in BC to handle all the games construction, and Sashaw says they've been working with the British Columbia Institute of Technology and other educational institution to raise awareness of career opportunities in the field.

They've also urged the organizing committee to spread out venue construction between now and 2010, to make sure there is sustained work over the coming years rather than one burst of activity.

The VRCA has also been holding information sessions for its members with games officials and other experts to educate them on games opportunities, and will be ready to help companies through the bidding process. *MM*

Jeff Jedras is a British Columbia-based freelance writer whose work has appeared in The Ottawa Citizen, ITBusiness.ca, Silicon Valley North and the Ottawa Business Journal, among others.