
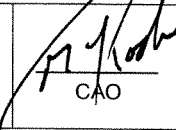


COUNCIL AGENDA/INFORMATION

<input type="checkbox"/> Closed	Date: _____	Item # _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reg. Council	Date: <u>Oct 5, 09</u>	Item # <u>12</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental	Date: _____	Item # _____

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DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER
750 – 17TH STREET, WEST VANCOUVER, BC V7V 3T3

COUNCIL REPORT

Date: September 23, 2009 File: 2620-10
From: Leanne Sexsmith, Community Planner - Social Services
Subject: **Measuring Up – Recognition and Community Support for West Vancouver’s Access and Inclusion Initiatives**

RECOMMENDED THAT:

1. The report titled “Measuring Up – Recognition and Community Support for West Vancouver’s Access and Inclusion Initiatives” from the Community Planner of Social Services dated September 16, 2009 be received for information.

Purpose

To provide Council with an overview of recent recognition and community support for West Vancouver’s “Measuring Up Initiative”.

Discussion

On July 20th, 2009, the Measuring Up Working Group (MUWG) presented their final report to Council for enhancing accessibility and inclusion in West Vancouver. Their presentation showcased the accomplishments and recommendations of the Working Group, and included a simulation exercise to demonstrate, first hand, access challenges faced by people of a wide range of ages and circumstances. The MUWG was very appreciative of the support and participation of Mayor and Council in the access simulation event, and of their subsequent discussion and adoption of the 2009 “Access and Inclusion” policy and associated recommendations.

Community Recognition for West Vancouver’s “Measuring Up” Initiative

Since the MUWG’s presentation to Council, the District has received many notable comments and feedback regarding the high calibre of work which came out of West Vancouver’s Measuring Up Initiative.

The Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (ACDI) discussed West Vancouver’s Measuring Up Initiative at their September meeting. The committee was very impressed with the outcome of this initiative and felt it was highly successful in setting a high standard for accessibility in this community. The ACDI believes the District’s new Access and Inclusion Policy is key to future implementation of accessibility initiatives

across the North Shore. They are recommending that it be used as a model for future policies in the City and District of North Vancouver. To this end, the ACDI passed a motion at their September meeting requesting that Staff from the District of North Vancouver and the City of North Vancouver present the District of West Vancouver’s Measuring Up Program to their respective Councils.

West Vancouver has been referred to by 2010 Legacies Now as an "exemplary model of excellence" and our work on Measuring Up will be featured in their upcoming provincial newsletter.

In addition, the District’s “Access and Inclusion” policy will be used as a “best practice” for the development of a provincial guide on "Age Friendly and Disability Friendly Official Community Plans". This resource is being developed by a working group of representatives from the Union of BC Municipalities, the 2010 Legacies Now Measuring Up program, Measuring Up the North, SmartGrowth BC, and the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport. The group is collaborating to develop a set of guidelines to support local governments to consider aging and disability issues and to take action on them in their Official Community Plans.

Shortly after the July 20th presentation to Council, the District was contacted by the Vice Chair of the Access Transit Users Advisory Committee and Executive Director of Citizens for Accessible Neighbourhoods. She had been informed by the Provincial Coordinator of Measuring Up that West Vancouver "really got it right" in regards to the accomplishments of our Working Group. She was very interested in discussing the projects first hand and was impressed with the work we are doing as a leader in accessible environments.

District staff were also contacted by a member of our community who is legally blind, and who has been a longstanding advocate for accessibility initiatives. He extended his congratulations on the Working Group’s efforts and will be meeting with staff to discuss our next steps on these initiatives.

The Executive Director of the West Vancouver Chamber of Commerce has contacted the District regarding the Chamber’s interest in the “Accessibility Means Business” brochure, and District staff look forward to arranging a presentation on this work for their members.

Within our own community, and throughout the Lower Mainland, West Vancouver’s MUWG has put the District at the forefront in responding to broad issues of access and inclusion which reflect the increasing social and cultural diversity of our communities, as well as the continuing importance of disability issues.

Recent Beach Access Improvements

Improved beach access is one of several initiatives that came out of the Measuring Up work. A number of upgrades at John Lawson Park have now been completed and have been very well received in the community. These include installation of automatic door

openers in the washrooms and a beautiful extension of the naturalistic beach front path between the John Lawson pier and the new Lawson Creek Bridge. Path improvements include beach view seating areas, appropriate drainage, hard packed surfaces and smooth transitions into other park areas.

Recent access improvements to the water have also been initiated at Eagle Harbour Beach, through a simple, cost effective initiative by our Parks Department. John Bannister, Chair of the Measuring Up Working Group, had these comments regarding Eagle Harbour:

I'm thrilled with what has been done at Eagle Harbour beach. What a clever concept changing the direction of the logs to allow for storm drainage flow and opening that end of the beach to those of us with challenges. I see that the sand has been brought up to the level of the concrete path which makes access to the beach so much easier for everybody. I can get into the ocean again!

Additional waterfront access initiatives at these and other locations will be explored in 2010.

A "Measuring Up" Video and Next Steps

The July 20th MUWG presentation to Council was recorded on video and staff are currently in the process of working with the videographer to develop a five minute short form version for future communications about the District's access and inclusion initiatives. We look forward to sharing this video with Council, staff and the broader community as we move forward with an implementation strategy for the newly updated "Access and Inclusion" policy. Staff will be reporting back to Council on the strategy this fall and will be incorporating it into the Social Action Plan that will be developed in 2010.

Author:



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