



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

2010 Annual Awards Program

Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

Deadline for Nominations: March 12, 2010

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (*select only one*):

- ☒ Community Health and Safety
- ☐ Community Partnership
- ☐ Community Sustainability
- ☐ Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: District of West Vancouver Access and Inclusion Policy

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: District of West Vancouver

Jurisdiction population(s): 45,000

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented by or before January 31, 2009, to be eligible. The start date should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: 03 Year: 2008

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in San José, California, October 2010. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: Bill Soprovich

Title: West Vancouver Council Member

Jurisdiction: West Vancouver

Name: Leanne Sexsmith

Title: Manager, Social Services

Jurisdiction: West Vancouver

Name: Kelly Diamond
Title: Recreation Access Coordinator Jurisdiction: West Vancouver

SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of contact: Leanne Sexsmith
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ICMA Program Excellence Nomination Submission

Category: Community Health and Safety Award

Background

On April 21, 2008 Council established the Measuring Up Working Group to assess and increase accessibility and inclusion in West Vancouver, and build on an existing foundation of District policy and initiatives in this area. Over the past decade, the District has taken significant steps in supporting policies and initiatives that address accessibility issues in the community. The formation of the North Shore Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (ACDI) more than ten years ago has been at the forefront of the community's progress in this area. The ACDI is a tri-municipal committee whose members are appointed by the three Municipal Councils of the North Shore. The ACDI's mandate is to respond to requests and make recommendations to promote, develop and sustain an accessible community free of physical and social barriers. Their work has focused primarily on disability issues and has resulted in a solid foundation of West Vancouver District policies and initiatives, including the current "Accessibility" policy (2004), the "Pedestrian Access Guidelines" (2000) and accessibility policies within the "Official Community Plan" (2004). With this foundation of work, the District was well positioned to apply for new funding through the Provincial Government's 2010 Legacies Now "Measuring Up Initiative". This initiative is meant to enable communities to assess, prioritize and take action on accessibility and inclusion issues using community based committees as the cornerstone in their approach. In March 2008, the District of West Vancouver was successful in receiving a \$20,000 grant through this program, and subsequently formed the "Measuring Up Working Group" in April 2008 supporting this work, and fulfilling the funding requirements. The Measuring

Up Working Group (MUWG) was comprised of ten community members from West Vancouver, including two representatives from the ACDI. In fulfilling their mandate, the MUWG completed three projects that demonstrate how the combination of policy, education and infrastructure can achieve community goals and build community capacity for access and inclusion. These projects included amongst others developing an updated and expanded 2009 “Access and Inclusion” policy.

Policy Development

In undertaking their key task MUWG identified policy development as a priority, and brought forward an expanded and updated “Access and Inclusion” policy for Council consideration. The District’s primary 2004 “Accessibility” policy and associated actions were developed by the ACDI and, in keeping with their mandate, focused primarily on addressing disability issues. The MUWG felt that it was important to build upon this work with an updated and expanded policy definition and initiatives that would reflect the range of access and inclusion issues stemming from the community’s growing cultural, social, economic, and age diversity, and to provide a foundation for more focused District leadership in this area. To develop the updated policy, the MUWG reviewed all existing related policies, as well as best practices used in other communities. Based on this review and their overall objectives and experience in West Vancouver, they developed the following expanded policy definition and initiatives. This proposed policy continues to recognize the important and ongoing role of the ACDI in addressing access issues.

Access and Inclusion Policy - (Adopted by Council July 20, 2009)

1.0 Purpose: To establish an access and inclusion policy for the District of West Vancouver.

2.0 Definition: Accessibility cultivates inclusivity by eliminating barriers and creating social, physical and economic environments that enable all residents to participate actively in the community. Inclusivity embraces and values diversity in: age, culture, disability, gender, language, marital status, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

3.0 Policy: The District of West Vancouver is committed to implementing, maintaining and enhancing accessibility for all by demonstrating a leadership role in meeting the needs of all community members for whom accessibility is a concern.

3.1 Council endorses the following initiatives for implementation:

A) The District of West Vancouver:

- i) Recognizes and plans for people with diverse means, needs, and abilities, and continually assesses the potential to maximize accessibility for all within the range of programs, services and infrastructure and ensures financial planning includes the allocation of budget(s) to achieve accessibility initiatives;
- ii) Supports and adopts the provision of accessible building design;
- iii) Promotes safe and accessible environments for the public;
- iv) Ensures the Pedestrian Access Guidelines are used and updated as best practices; and,
- v) Ensures that means of civic participation are accessible for all persons, including the accessibility of public meeting spaces.

B) The North Shore Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (ACDI):

- i) Reviews development applications referred by staff;
- ii) Provides input prior to and during the design and/or upgrading of public facilities and spaces;
- iii) Meets annually with senior staff from all municipal divisions and other community members with expertise in accessibility issues. This meeting needs to occur prior to and/or during each division's budget consideration schedule. The purpose of this annual meeting is to review current and future accessibility initiatives for the District of West Vancouver; and,
- iv) Meets annually with appropriate senior West Vancouver Transit and related municipal staff, and other community members, to provide input into public transit services and municipal infrastructure that supports the continuous improvement of an available and accessible transit system.

Implementation of the Proposed Policy

The MUWG recognized that policy requires a clear implementation strategy to achieve significant results for the community. The initiatives in the "Access and Inclusion" policy are relevant across multiple Divisions within the District, and in many cases involve cross departmental partnerships. To fully achieve community goals for access and inclusion, the District has dedicated resources towards a leadership role for cross departmental coordination and implementation of initiatives, and communications with the broader community. Divisional Directors will continue to support access and inclusion initiatives in their departmental work programs by identifying immediate and long term actions to respond to the policy, with consideration given to the additional ideas generated by the MUWG. For the longer term, it is recommended that the

proposed 2009 “Access and Inclusion” policy be incorporated into the Social Action Plan to be developed in 2010. The ACDI will continue to play a key, ongoing role in facilitating the implementation of District accessibility initiatives.

Recognition

The District’s MUWG has been recognized across the Province for their outstanding work and leadership. The Provincial Government’s Measuring Up Coordinator contacted the District to seek permission to use the proposed 2009 “Access and Inclusion” policy to illustrate best practices for other communities and has articulated this initiative as an **“exemplary model of excellence.”** St. John’s Newfoundland contacted the District to request permission to use the proposed policy as a model for their community. Translink’s Access Transit Strategy Group has contacted the District to share information on accessibility initiatives. 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. The ACDI has recommended the policy as a model for future policies in the City and District of North Vancouver. The District of West Vancouver’s Measuring Up Initiative was recently featured at a National 2010 Accessibility Showcase (conference and exhibit) in Vancouver and referred to as a “best practices community” The District’s 2009 “Access and Inclusion” policy, which came out of this initiative, is now not only shaping our corporate and community directions; it is also being used as a “best practice” for the development of a provincial guide on “Age Friendly and Disability Friendly Official Community Plans”.