Measuring Up The North 2011
A Snapshot Of Where We Are Now And Where We Are Headed

July 2011
Evaluation Completed and Report Prepared by

Laurie Ringaert
Evaluator/Researcher &
MUTN Phase I Project Director
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Acknowledgements

The author would like to acknowledge the MUTN Liaisons (local government staff, elected officials, community members) who took the time to answer the 2011 evaluation survey. Many thanks to you and to all the people, organizations and businesses in the MUTN communities who continue to persevere in your commitment to create more livable communities for all in Northern BC. You are all truly heroes and social innovators who are making transformational changes.

The author would also like to acknowledge the leadership of the North Central Local Government Association for recognizing the value of the MUTN Initiative and for continuing to support the efforts of its members even in these times of few resources.

Thanks to all of you, more people will be able to live, work, play, fully participate and visit our Northern BC communities now and in the future.
Executive Summary

The Measuring Up The North Initiative (MUTN) began in 2007 in the North Central Local Government region with the goal of assisting over 40 communities to become more livable, age-friendly, disability-friendly, inclusive, universally-designed, active-living, sustainable communities for all residents and visitors. MUTN Phase I was unique in that it brought together a variety of strategies, organizations and players to plan more livable communities rather than focusing on uni-dimensional populations or approaches.

By the end of Phase I in December 2009, many changes were seen including policy, system and environmental changes. Most importantly, cultural shifts and capacity changes had begun occurring in the local governments, the communities and businesses as awareness raising, education and positive on-the-ground changes began to happen. The NCLGA communities were particularly influenced with knowledge of the increasing aging demographic and the economic advantages of preparing for the aging and disability populations: both in terms of residents and visitors. At the same time, the communities became aware of how the changes that were needed would positively create more livable communities for everyone. MUTN Phase I occurred during a period of positive support and available funding streams from various Provincial government and foundations. At the same time, the NCLGA, through partnerships with various other agencies including the BC Paraplegic Association, BC Healthy Communities, 2010 Legacies Now, BC Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, and Northern Health provided a supportive environment for the MUTN communities to carry out the MUTN Initiative. A major part of the MUTN Initiative was to build in several sustainability measures. For instance, several of the communities leveraged infrastructure funding from a variety of sources and others developed action plans that would continue for several years.

Since December 2009, there has been a major reduction in resource support for the MUTN Initiative, however there was anecdotal information that several of the communities were continuing with their efforts. In the spring of 2011, the previous MUTN Phase I Director, Laurie Ringaert, asked the NCLGA Executive if she could conduct a limited evaluation of the communities to determine their accomplishments, progress, challenges and next steps. This evaluation was conducted using an on-line survey of the MUTN contacts, a review of websites, MUTN Award applications and other documents.

The 2011 evaluation positively showed us that there is a great deal of progress still occurring and much more activity planned. Positive changes range from the adoption of the first Visitable housing bylaw in the North in Prince George, to the creation of an accessible tourism and recreation strategy in the Cariboo Regional District, to the completion of accessible housing units in Terrace and
Tumbler Ridge, to changes to businesses and the development of accessible business awards in several communities, to changes seen in elected officials’ and staff ways of thinking and doing. Plans are underway in several communities to incorporate MUTN principles into Official Community Plans which will bring long term sustainability to this effort. The NCLGA has been able to provide limited support by providing encouragement for stories in the Connector newsletter and by providing annual MUTN awards since 2010. The NCLGA membership has also passed several MUTN related resolutions since 2009 which were subsequently brought to the UBCM annual convention. These NCLGA efforts have been critical to the continued success of the Initiative by showing the commitment and encouragement to the members.

However, the evaluation also showed areas of concern. Many of the communities are struggling due to the lack of support for their efforts. The NCLGA communities indicate the need for funding, policies and a centralized support mechanism where they can receive technical support, resources, latest trends and updates, networking with other like communities, and general encouragement for their efforts. They are calling for funding to support their efforts to enhance transportation, housing, tourism and business partners who want to increase their economic viability by becoming more accessible to all. Many of the MUTN committees are no longer active and this is of critical concern as the voices of the people no longer part of the planning process. Without continued MUTN work, older adults and persons with disabilities will continue to face barriers to participation, isolation, poor health, institutionalization and will be unable to contribute to society. Visitors and conventioneers will head elsewhere to more favorable venues.

Most importantly, the evaluation tells us something about the people of the North. These accomplishments and challenges tell us about tireless efforts and perseverance of local government staff, elected officials, community based organizations, businesses, and other agencies. All are working step by step to create better places to live, work and play and ensuring that all people can participate in their communities. Hundreds of people across the North are working as social innovators to make transformational changes.

The Province of British Columbia has been a Canadian and world leader in several age-friendly, disability-friendly, healthy, livable community efforts. This evaluation shows that the NCLGA communities of Northern British Columbia see the positive economic, health, and social benefits of creating livable communities, are primed to continue their efforts but need support. The increasing aging and disability demographic is not going away. Communities still have a long way to go to create livable communities for all. The positive momentum of the MUTN Initiative should be encouraged through mechanisms such as a provincial livable communities strategy. Next steps should include a dialogue of Northern and Provincial leaders to discuss opportunities and strategies to move forward. There is still a great deal of work to do.
Purpose of the Report

The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the MUTN activities in the NCLGA Region. Although several structural changes have occurred to the MUTN Initiative centrally since the end of 2009, there was an understanding that several of the NCLGA Local Governments were continuing with MUTN Activities. Laurie Ringaert, MUTN Project Director, Phase I, asked the NCGLA executive if she could conduct a snapshot evaluation of the members to determine their MUTN progress and plans. As evaluator, her intent was to provide a report that the NCLGA, its members and key stakeholders could use to inform present and future strategic directions.

The evaluation was carried out March-June 2011 and consisted of the administration of the Livable-Inclusive UD Communities Report Card through two on-line surveys, plus an environmental scan including: a review of entries received for the NCLGA MUTN Awards (March 2010 and 2011); a review of NCLGA Connector Newsletters (Oct 2009-May 2011); a review of the MUTN website news; as well as a Google search “measuring up the north” indicating news stories. Although the surveys were to be the main body of work, the evaluator decided that they would not provide an adequate picture of what was happening. She therefore also conducted the scan as described above to try to fill in more of the picture.
Background

What is the Measuring Up The North Initiative?

The Measuring Up The North Initiative began in 2007 in Northern British Columbia. Its goal is “to assist over 40 communities to become livable age-friendly, disability-friendly, universally designed, sustainable, active, inclusive communities for all residents and visitors”. MUTN communities include populations ranging from 50 to 70,000 people. The framework of change is policies-systems-environment (PSE) approach to societal participation, health, well-being, livable communities and to create economic opportunities for the local governments. A critical aspect to the change framework was creating organizational cultural change as well as building organizational capacity.

During Phase I, MUTN was a partnership between the North Central Local Government Association (NCLGA) and the BC Paraplegic Association (BCPA) with supporting partners, the BC Healthy Communities Initiative, 2010 Legacies Now, the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport-Age-Friendly Communities Initiative, and Northern Health: Healthy Community Development Program. Funding was received from a variety of sources including: 2010 Legacies Now, the BC Real Estate Foundation, the Vancouver Foundation, the United Way of Northern BC, the Nechako Kitimaat Development Fund Society, from the NCLGA communities themselves and as well as funding for the major April 2009 conference from the City of Prince George, the Real Estate Foundation of BC, Affordability and Choice Today (ACT)-Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the BC Network on Aging Research, Northern Health.

Unique Structure: The project was unique in structure in Phase I as each community had a designated Liaison from the Local Government (staff or elected official) and a Community Liaison (person with a disability or an older adult). The intent was that these two individuals worked together as partners with a committee composed of a variety of interests: disability, seniors, tourism and hospitality, housing, developers, recreation, chamber of commerce, builders, public works, code officials, urban/social planners, elected officials, realtors, health professionals, developers, business and more.

Why is the Initiative Important for Communities?

Most communities around the world were not built with accessibility and inclusion in mind. Thus many people are unable to participate or make meaningful contributions in society. The built environment is critical for participation and ultimately for health-physical and mental health. Many aspects of the built environment are also difficult for anyone pushing a baby carriage, moving boxes and furniture into a building, or pulling a suitcase into a building. 90% of homes have only stairs to enter them, making it very difficult to enter or exit if you are trying to move your refrigerator or to try to enter with a mobility disability. Many people live in isolation or have to move to care homes due to housing design. There is a lack of accessible transportation within communities and across communities including air, rail, and inter-city bus travel.

Many local government facilities, recreational facilities and businesses lack accessibility not only for persons with mobility disabilities but also those with cognitive, visual, hearing, and agility disabilities. Most websites are not accessible to persons with visual disabilities. Universal Design means creating environments that are better for all: thus a curb cut benefits someone pushing a baby carriage as well as a mover pushing in a heavy load. Accessibility and inclusion are intertwined: the more accessible the environment is, the more inclusive it is: more people can participate and contribute in all aspects. Attitudes, polices, laws and practices are key aspects that must be considered in order to change our communities. We have begun to address all of these areas in our Measuring Up The North Initiative. With Canada's aging population, the need for more livable communities for all is critical.

As well, we are recognizing a growing aging and disability population around the world that is interested in travel. Accessible travel is becoming big business around the world. The economic imperative to businesses and to communities to ensure accessibility
and inclusion is no longer just a nice thing to do for a niche market: it is an economic imperative. Many northern BC communities began recognizing both the need to address the aging and disability population, health, livability, as well as the need to address economic development opportunities.

**How This Initiative Is Helping To Improve Local Accessibility And Inclusion For Northern Communities?**

In creating more livable communities, this Initiative has promoted universal design, active living by design, sustainability, healthy communities, economic aspects, accessible tourism, visitable housing and many other concepts-intertwined. There has been seen a high rate of success already due to the fact that not only were all of these concepts brought together, as well, many organizations and partners were brought together, sometimes for the first time, in this Initiative. For instance, aging and disability partners had not necessarily worked together previously to the Initiative.

**What Were the Key Indicators of Success During Phase I?**

Changes have been seen in local government policies, by-laws, official community plans, local government attitudes and knowledge, environmental changes-changes to actual town owned and privately owned buildings, new structures being built that incorporate universal design (small airports, recreation centers, housing developments); changes to the businesses: their premises and the way they conduct business; changes to outdoor recreation areas; accessible trail systems, transportation systems. We have seen intergenerational collaboration taking place; collaboration now between local governments, tourism associations, economic development associations and community members as well as collaboration with businesses. One local builder has totally re-thought their business and is now building "visitable" and has seen a tremendous increase in their business.

**Tool Creation, Resolutions and Dissemination:** Four key tools were developed that have continued to be used by the communities across British Columbia: “The Livable-Inclusive-UD Communities Report Card®” (L. Ringaert, 2009), the “Planning for the Future: Age-Friendly and Disability-Friendly Official Community Plans” (R. Mahaffy, L. Ringaert, M. Herman, W. Yu, D. Welch, A. Miro, 2009) and the Prince George Visitable Housing Declaration created at the 2009 MUTN Conference. As well the MUTN website which contains many resources and tools continues to be available although has not been updated since the end of Phase I. Six resolutions were presented by the NCLGA to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) during Phase I and two in Phase II and all were passed. Many of the tools, suggested policy changes and changes to practice have gone "provincial" as Measuring Up The North is seen as model for the entire province.

**What Made MUTN Phase I Work?**

Keys to success for MUTN Phase I were many. First of all, was the style of the Initiative whereby ownership and empowerment was given to the communities themselves. Centrally we offered various support mechanisms (i.e. tech assistance, monthly virtual networking and peer support, periodic face to face meetings) but ultimately, each community owned and grew their own priorities and strategies that worked for them. A key principle was meeting the communities where they were. Champions that emerged in the communities-either elected officials or community members or local government staff were critical to success. Providing methods of accountability, public recognition and being part of a “collective”—both through the NCLGA as well as creating a “group or club” (we gave all Liaisons MUTN T-shirts) feeling through being part of MUTN.

Staffing was limited for such a large undertaking, however the staff available provided more time, dedication and value added than had been anticipated. The BCPA and the NCLGA each provided part time leadership positions as well as administrative resources. The two paid leaders and the Project Director and her part time assistants (5 over the course of the project) made up the key staff. An evaluation showed that many felt that the coaching, supportive style, technical assistance, and vision of the Project Director was one of the keys to the project’s success. The Project Director also provided or organized several capacity building on-site visits, trainings, workshops (including a one day multi-speaker workshop on employment and a two day full provincial wide conference). The Project Director also ensured tools and resources were developed and provided and created the MUTN Website as a source of information and sharing.

Two critical components were the provincial atmosphere of support through various granting programs as well as various related programs occurring
during this time period including 2010 Legacies Now programs, BC Healthy Communities, Smart Growth BC, Northern Health-Healthy Community Development Program, Age-Friendly Communities and others. The granting programs (2010 Legacies Now Measuring Up fund, Local Motion, Towns for Tomorrow, Seniors Dialogues, Age-Friendly Planning Grants, BC Housing funding, Federal Enabling Accessibility grants, New Horizons grants and others) were critical to success and the progress made could not have occurred without them. Another important aspect to success was the natural learning and competition that occurred between communities. Mayors and other elected officials wanting to ensure their town was not falling behind.

Finally the new partnerships that were formed through the MUTN centrally and the new ones formed in each local government were essential to success. Strategic partners on the Steering Committee helped facilitate change, create wider network of support, support tool creation, and provide access to stakeholders and funding opportunities through their positions in key organizations. Not only were their positions helping to move things forward with MUTN, the learnings from MUTN also helped make changes in their own organizations. A complete report on MUTN Phase I is available at www.measureupthenorth.com.

Where are We Now?

By the end of 2009 funding ended for the MUTN Initiative centrally. While the project began as a partnership between the NCLGA and the BC Paraplegic Association (with several supporting partners), after 2009, the NCLGA became the sole over-seeing body of the Initiative. As well, many of the provincial funding programs that were offered to local governments for these kinds of initiatives are no longer available. For example, other supportive initiatives such as 2010 Legacies Now MUP and Accessible Tourism ended with the completion of the 2010 Winter Olympics.

In summary, there have been several contextual, structural and resource changes since the end of Phase I:

- Staffing resources and support have diminished: the full time Project Director, project assistant and part time staffing from NCLGA and BCPA no longer exist
- Tools and Resources have diminished: the website is present but has not been updated since early 2010
- Support has diminished: The monthly networking phone calls between liaisons no longer occur
- The MUTN Steering Committee no longer exists
- Several other initiatives ended or changed structure by the end of 2009: i.e. 2010 Legacies Now
- Several funding opportunities that were available in 2007-09 are no longer available
- The province faced a significant economic downturn by the end of 2009

During the Phase I period, many positive policy-system and environment outcomes were achieved in several of the NCLGA communities including changes in organizational culture, attitudes and practices of local government staff, elected officials and citizens, policy changes, program changes and actual changes in the built environment. As well several measures were enacted to ensure sustainability. During Phase I, several of the communities had been encouraged and developed strategic action plans, had created or enhanced accessibility-type committees, had begun to change their Official Community Plans and had garnered funding to carryout MUTN activities. As well sustainability was built into the project through strategic measures such as a variety of capacity building trainings provided throughout the Initiative in Phase I, including the 2009 Conference; the creation of tools to assist making change including the planning tool previously described and now widely distributed by UBCM; the continuation of the MUTN website on a limited basis; the establishment of the NCLGA MUTN Awards in 2010; and reserved places in the NCLGA monthly newsletter for MUTN communities to present their successes.

Despite the decrease in support and change in structure, the NCLGA was continuing to hear anecdotes of continued work. This 2011 evaluation was initiated to dig a little deeper and capture a snapshot of what is happening in the NCLGA region in the Spring of 2011. As well the goal was to evaluate what the NCLGA communities were able to achieve with MUTN centrally limited and how effective the sustainability efforts were in continuing MUTN efforts.
Evaluation Process

The evaluation process consisted of a number of steps:

- **Two surveys were administered in March and April of 2011.**
  - The longer survey “MUTN 2011 Update” (31 questions) (see Appendix 1) included 20 parallel questions to the Livable UD Communities Survey administered in 2009, as well as questions on demographics of the participants, level of participation in MUTN, leverage of funding, benefits seen of pursuing these activities, keys to success, what would ensure continued work in this area, how progress could be enhanced, their contact information and anything else they wanted to add.
  - A shorter supplemental survey “MUTN Main Accomplishments” (9 questions) (See Appendix 2) that focused on specific accomplishments and Plans was administered in April 2011 to the same group.

- **A scan of relevant websites** (including the MUTN website), the NCLGA 2010 newsletters, and Google search of news items was conducted.
- **A review of materials sent by some survey respondents:** including PowerPoint presentations and reports.
- **Comparison** was made with the previous 2009 surveys which were administered by L.Ringgaert.
- **Review of 2010-2011 NCLGA Connector Newsletter**
- **Review of review** of 2010 & 2011 NCLGA-MUTN Award entries
- **Analysis was conducted and a report developed.**

Limitations of the Evaluation

This evaluation is limited as it is based mainly on voluntary surveys conducted in March-April 2011 as well as the review of the 2011 NCLGA-MUTN Award entries and did not involve any other evaluation methods such as interviews, focus groups, follow up phone calls, site visits, etc which would have yielded more information. Survey responses may be limited by the experience of the people who responded to the survey.

Results

The following pages provide the results of the evaluation. This section is followed by the Analysis and Summary.
Who Responded to the Survey?

A total of 15 different communities responded to the two surveys. Table I shows the communities (and populations) that responded in 2009 and to the two surveys in the spring of 2011.

The NCLGA Region currently includes 39 members of which six are Regional Districts which include a number of cities, towns and communities. Fifteen communities responded to the surveys. Thirteen of the 39 NCLGA members responded to the survey request or 13/39=33% plus two additional communities located within the Cariboo Regional District for a total of 15 communities that responded. (Note: These two latter communities, Tatlayoko Lake and Horsefly, created their own separate MUTN committees during the MUTN Phase I period).

The population estimate for the NCLGA region is 307,551. The 15 communities that responded to the survey in 2011 represent 186,563/307,551 or over 60% of the population of the NCLGA region. In 2009, the 20 communities that responded to a similar survey represented 178,981/307,551 or 58% of the population.

- Thirteen NCLGA communities responded to the March 2011 Update Survey and of these 12/13 were the same communities that responded to the 2009 survey. In 2009, 16 communities responded to the survey. Note these 13 communities represent 99% of the population of the communities that responded.

- Six NCLGA communities responded to the April 2011 MUTN Main Accomplishment Survey. Of these, 4/6 were the same that responded to the “MUTN 2011 Update” survey above and two had not previously responded to either the 2009 survey nor to the March 2011 survey. The population the six communities represent is 53912/186,563 or 29% of all those who responded. The six communities also represent 17.5% of the total NCLGA population.

- Generally an equal number of Local Government Liaisons and Community Liaisons Responded.
- All communities that responded were previously actively involved in the MUTN Initiative Phase I.
- 14/15 communities have continued to pursue MUTN activities since 2009

### Communities Responding to MUTN Surveys 2009 and 2011

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Note: Horsefly and Tatlayoko populations are included in Cariboo RD figures.
What Were their Top Accomplishments 2007-09?

We asked the communities to think back about their accomplishments in 2007-09. Six communities responded to this survey and it is notable that each community has been working on multiple focus areas. The majority indicated that increasing accessibility to outdoor recreation was their top accomplishment for 2007-09. This was followed by:

- Sidewalks
- Tourism
- Transportation
- Changing attitudes of Local Government Council Members
- Housing

**Fig. 1 Top Accomplishments 2007-09**

Multiple accomplishments were described per community:

- **New Curling Rink** - accessible Renovated District office - improved accessibility wheelchair accessible sidewalk up to library
- Four new streets received new pavement and sidewalks, new bus stop, Games Park - basketball/outdoor ice rink and chess/checkers boards
- Our largest accomplishment was the installation of a lift at City Hall.
- Library ramped, museum ramped, community hall ramped upstairs, accessible dock at Tisdall Lake, all businesses accessible, signage at Likely turnoff has the access logo for our town and businesses that cater to older adults and persons with disabilities, and access indicated on at least three websites
- Began development of five wheelchair accessible recreation trails.
- Worked toward affordable wheelchair friendly housing as well as wheelchair accessibility at entrances to public buildings.
What Were Their Top Accomplishments In 2010-11?

Six communities responded to this survey and the majority indicated that increasing access to **Outdoor Recreation** was a major accomplishment for 2010-11 by 3/6 respondents. This was followed by:

- Transportation
- Sidewalks
- Tourism
- Business

**What They Described:**

- **Parks and Outdoor Recreation Improvements**
  - Completed development of five wheelchair accessible recreation trails in the region.
  - Wheelchair accessible trails at Cottonwood House (2009/10) and at Kersley (2010) developed.
  - We have a new park right off Highway 16 - to be completed by the end of July 2011 that has accessible washrooms and rest area.
  - All of these projects are ongoing. Spawning channel trail and wheelchair ramp is complete. Portable seasonal walkway to water in progress, and wheelchair ramp in community hall in progress.

- **Transportation**
  - All new buses ordered will be low-rise; taxi saver approved by Council but waiting for BC Transit approval; we have one accessible taxi in town and have a handy dart.
  - An active transportation plan has been incorporated in new OCP.
  - We don’t have local taxis or buses but the biggest improvement for our seniors and disabled is our Northern Health bus which transports people to health appointments.

- **Other**
  - Our top priority was to make the library entrance more accessible and to renovate the washroom to enable it to be used by those in wheelchairs.
  - Two new streets received pavement and new sidewalks.
  - United Church had a ramp built to allow access to their upper hall from the street (2010) with help from CNC Trades students and Community Foundation Funding.

**What are They Continuing to Work On Now?**

The top areas that the Local Governments are working on now are:

- Outdoor Recreation (12)
- Public Realm (sidewalks, public right of way) (12)
- Local Government Properties (11)
- Tourism Cultural (11)

- Businesses: Hospitality (9) and Retail (8)
- Marketing (8)
- Official Community Plans (8)
Official Community Plans: It is noteworthy that 8/15 communities are continuing to work on incorporating MUTN principles into their Official Community Plans. This was one of the main thrust of our sustainability focus as the OCP will guide all policies, planning and actions.

What They Described:

Sidewalks appear to be an on-going project for many of the communities:
- There are no sidewalks or apron alongside the highway. Working on it
- We are continuously improving our sidewalks to ensure against trip hazards and better walking surface.
- Sidewalks will always be an ongoing project with any infrastructure works.
- Sidewalks: Lots of this is completed but some still in progress

Businesses appear to be an on-going strategy for many of the communities. Many have created business recognition awards. Some communities are describing the need for funding- incentive programs for businesses to become accessible. Many communities indicate that many businesses still need improvement.

Businesses is an Area of Focus
- Businesses is where our current focus is right now. Council is actively reviewing and prioritizing our recent community accessibility surveys for businesses (public use buildings)
- A Bed and Breakfast is now accessible

Business Recognition Awards
- Local businesses are recognized if they address accessibility.
- We have mixed progress the New Wal-Mart store in the community received the Accessibility Award of Merit in 2010 but downtown core businesses still have a ways to go.

Support is needed for Businesses to Make Improvements
- Not aware of any programs to support specific building modifications. One hardware store did install automatic front doors in 2009/10 but this only allows access to the main floor of the business. (There are upstairs and downstairs departments.
- We can highly recommend through various committees but not require in all developments
- Some are able to make changes while others are not able to at this time [due to funding issues]

Visitable and Accessible Housing is a focus for six of the communities while others have limited resources to address this area:
- Our new B.C housing project is just a step away from being completed - 10 new houses
- Limited resources to do this and not a priority at present. Interesting concept though.
- Visitable housing has been discussed. City isn’t working on any bylaw for that. Looking at bylaw changes for legal, secondary suites. City participating in Affordable Housing Action Committee with respect to housing for the homeless, seniors, and single parent families -- i.e. safe, accessible, affordable/subsidized housing. Housing for persons with disabilities.
- Through OCP, housing policies will be provided
- Some discussions around visitable percentage if not 100%

Note: although not answered in the survey, in the spring of 2011, Prince George passed a visitable housing bylaw See page “Looking Beyond Survey Results”
Beyond 2011, there will be a strong focus on:

- Outdoor Recreation
- Sidewalks
- Tourism
- Websites
- Transportation
- Businesses

**Figure 4: Comparison of MUTN Focus During Three Time Frames**

They Plan to....

**Work on Outdoor Recreation**
- Develop at least one more wheelchair accessible recreation trail.
- Continue to make better outdoor recreation.
- We are working closely with the Leisure Services Department to improve accessibility at Ferry Island which is our Municipal campground.
- **Funding** is the key, but we have several outdoor areas we would like to make accessible including mountain viewing areas, riparian access to various watershed areas, the portable seasonal walkway to the Horsefly river, more accessible B&B’s.
- Continue Making public recreation areas more accessible.

**Work on a Variety of Areas**
- Apply for the grant which was refused last year so that the improvements to the library can be done.
- Continue streets/sidewalk program, and town website.
- Housing and transportation issues still need to be addressed and housing initiatives are underway on a small scale.
Has There Been A Difference in the Community as a Result of the MUTN Activities?

Are people attracted to our town to live and visit because of this level of accessibility and inclusion?

- 10/13 communities indicated that they had seen a positive difference in the community since participating in MUTN
- Five of the communities indicated that they had obtained funding to assist with MUTN activities while others indicated that funding was in progress.

“I am extremely pleased that we have now completed the Sisters Creek Accessible Trail,” stated CRD Vice-Chair and Electoral Area A Director Ted Armstrong. “However, this was just the next step in making the Cariboo Chilcotin one of the most attractive wheelchair accessible tourism destinations in the world.”

Steve Forsyth blog June 2010

“We are very proud of our new park and hope to continue improving McBride for all residents and visitors” Glenda Thompson, MUTN Liaison. NCLGA Connector Nov 2009

Photo: accessibility improvements at Horsefly

Village Park located in the Village of McBride
What Benefits Has Your Local Government/Community Seen As A Result Of Pursuing These Activities?

The top four benefits were described by the communities included:

- Increased Participation of Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities
- Benefits to Health
- A New Way of Thinking
- Better Design and more livable communities

**Fig.5 Benefits of Pursuing MUTN Activities**

![Bar chart showing benefits]

**A Favourable Change to the Local Government Council has Occurred:**

There has been a change in
- Attitudes
- Practices
- Allocation of budget toward making our town/city more livable, age-friendly, accessible, inclusive.
- Our Council is “walking the talk”.

Seven of the sixteen (7/15) respondents felt there had been a positive change on Council. However, two indicated they had seen no change and two felt that change was still to come.

**Comments:**

**Positive**
- The MUTN opened the eyes of locals and council making them always aware of accessibility with new changes.
- These people didn’t need convincing once they perceived the problems
- Our New OCP will shed light on the importance of Accessibility in the community

**Not so Positive**
- Hard to know if locals feel any change.
- Still talk of a desire for “age-friendly”, accessible, and inclusive initiatives but are we “walking the talk”? Some people would say no.
What Have Been Your Keys To Success?

The communities felt that the top two keys to success were:

- Being part of the MUTN Initiative
- Local Government Support

Followed by:

- The support by the NCLGA
- Funding Received
- MUTN Peer Support
- Funding Support from Other agencies

**Fig. 6  Keys to Success**

“I have found that if the need is expressed low key that people are quick to see the good common sense of access for the future needs of everyone as they age.” 2011 Survey Respondent

“The town is off to a great start. This is due to a Mayor’s Task Force that meets almost weekly, has representatives from all stakeholders, and has collaborated effectively to guide the town in making Tumbler Ridge a town that meets the needs of all of its citizens, regardless of age or ability. It is a great example of what can be accomplished when local government, businesses, and community representatives work together.” David Price, MUTN Liaison, Tumbler Ridge. NCLGA Connector Newsletter October 2009

“Our council has been very supportive and continues to support the Accessibility Chamber Award as well as other local initiatives.” Survey Respondent 2011
Looking Beyond the Survey Results

Although this evaluation began as a survey, it became apparent that the survey would provide a limited amount of information. Other achievements that were not necessarily shown in the March-April survey needed to be accounted for. For instance, evidence of progress and achievements were apparent through the NCLGA Connector monthly newsletter, the two years of NCLGA MUTN Awards, recordings of achievements on the MUTN Website, and through various other personal contacts with the evaluator who previously served as the Project Director and maintains several contacts. Some people sent along stories and photos as a result of the 2011 survey contact. Other notable achievements are discussed below.

- **NCLGA Awards**: Over the past two years awards have been provided in the following categories: Over 5000 population, Under 5000 population, and the Individual Category. In 2011, it was decided to add a fourth category (at the discretion of each award selection committee): The President’s Award for Leadership and Innovation. Fifteen awards have been provided during the two years, 2010 and 2011.

- **Winton Global Homes** promotes visitable homes! (2010) Although Winton Global had already started to move toward visitable homes since being introduced by MUTN to the concept in 2008, in 2010 they made a significant step by creating a visitable home webpage on their website, thereby advertising the concept to potential customers. [http://www.wintonglobal.com/about_winton_global/visitable_homes.php](http://www.wintonglobal.com/about_winton_global/visitable_homes.php)

- **Prince George** is the first NCLGA community to pass a visitable housing policies and a bylaw March 28, 2011. (see Sidebar)

- **BC Achievement Awards**: the following people, partially through their work as MUTN Liaisons were awarded significant achievement awards in BC:
  - Braunwyn Henwood: 2010 BC Achievement Award
  - Lori Slater: 2011 BC Achievement Award
  - Nancy Harris: Sport BC Award

**IN THE NEWS**

- **Smithers (June 6, 2011)**: June 4 was Access Awareness Day in British Columbia. The day is meant to get people thinking about how people get into stores with a baby stroller, a walker or wheelchair, or the difficulties of disabled people in finding work. In the Bulkley Valley, a group called Measuring Up the North, comprised of community members from all walks of life, work under the mandate in assisting to make communities for accessible and inclusive. In Smithers, that mandate has meant curbs cut at several busy intersections, wheelchair friendly shelters along the transit route, and various government partnerships that have benefitted accessibility. The local committee wants you to think about accessibility, and how the town can continually improve. Smithers Interior News June 06, 2011. [http://www.bclocalnews.com/bc_north/interior-news/community/123267208.html](http://www.bclocalnews.com/bc_north/interior-news/community/123267208.html)

- **Prince George**: April 2011: Duchess Park development announced. To have several accessible features.

- **Vanderhoof**: March 23, 2011: Cariboo-Prince George MP Dick Harris announced that Vanderhoof had received funding for Accessibility Upgrades from the Federal Enabling Accessibility Grant of just over $30,000 to help fund the upgrades on three different buildings in town. The accessibility upgrades will be at the arena, the court house and the municipal office. BC Local News.com: [http://www.bclocalnews.com/bc_north/ominecaexpress/news/118399079.html](http://www.bclocalnews.com/bc_north/ominecaexpress/news/118399079.html)

- **Tumbler Ridge**: (Strategic Plan Report Card 2010 and PowerPoint-David Price, Aria Consulting). Newly completed access ramp to City Hall, completion of seniors fitness

Visitable Housing: Prince George Council Meeting Minutes: March 28, 2011

Moved by Councillor Munoz, seconded by Councillor Krause, that Administration BE DIRECTED to prepare policies and objectives as part of the ongoing Official Community Plan review to advance recommendations itemized within the Prince George Visitable Housing Project as follows:

- a) Inclusion of objectives and policies for Visitable Housing within new single and two-family homes;

- b) Contemplate further analysis of Visitable Housing within an Amenity Contribution Policy and any incentives packages;

- c) Reference a Visitable Housing Voluntary Design Guideline Checklist for development applications, and consider incorporation into the future Sustainability Checklist; and

- d) For land sold by the City of Prince George: No less than 15% of market-rate single and two-family residential development shall be visitable; and All affordable (non-market) single and two-family residential development shall be visitable.

“This is a momentous day for the Cottonwood House Historic Site, and we are extremely proud of this new trail,” says Ed Coleman, Manager Cottonwood House Historic Site. “I feel that the trails, combined with the accessible facilities will be a huge draw, bringing people of all abilities to the area to enjoy a step back in time at our beautiful historic site.” From: [http://www.welcometowilliamslake.ca/index.php/the-news/local-news/2233-crds-unveils-new-cottonwood-accessible-trail.html](http://www.welcometowilliamslake.ca/index.php/the-news/local-news/2233-crds-unveils-new-cottonwood-accessible-trail.html)
park. Tax incentives for businesses making accessibility changes, more businesses becoming accessible, encourage businesses to advertise for seniors and persons as disabilities as employees, 12 accessible housing units, Snow Angels program, more accessible parking.

- **Cottonwood House Accessible Trail (Sept 2010)** The trail network has four route options with a total of approximately 3.4 kilometers to explore, features sections of packed crushed gravel surface, and circles the perimeter of the Cottonwood site, providing a unique view of the historic site and offers a spectacular view of the Cottonwood River. The trail has a very gentle, almost completely flat grade. The trailheads are located at the Cottonwood House Historic Site parking lots and an information kiosk display map of the site and the available trails. The CRD Board of Directors passed a resolution in 2006 to work towards developing the Cariboo Chilcotin as a world leader in accessible outdoor recreation and tap into niche tourism markets for persons of low mobility. On August 9, 2008, the Tatlayoko Community Association developed and officially opened the first Wheelchair Accessible Trails in the Cariboo Regional District. The Association built two kilometers of accessible trail, along with an accessible washroom and a picnic area. In June of this year, the community of Kersley followed suit and opened the Sisters Creek Recreation Site Accessible Trail. Other priority wheelchair accessible sites currently in development are at Ten Mile Lake, the Horsefly salmon spawning grounds, and the 108 Greenbelt.

- **Kersley, BC- Cariboo Regional District:** opened the Sisters Creek Recreation site accessible Trail. (June 2010) In celebration of the CRD’s Forest Capital of Canada designation the Sisters Creek Recreation site Accessible Trail has also earned the distinction of being named the first trail on the newly created Forest Capital of Canada Legacy Trail Network. The trail was built in partnership between the Cariboo Regional District (CRD), the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, and the Kersley Community Association.

- **Cariboo Regional District Resolution passes at UBCM: Accessibility Capital of BC**

- **Village of Telkwa:** (Jan 2010) (a) The Village Council supports the program and has worked toward making public places wheelchair friendly (i.e.: transportation, trails system, public parking, public buildings). (b) A transportation system to enable seniors and people with disabilities to be mobile. (c) Support to the Telkwa & District Seniors Complex to enlarge their coat room (d) Supported the newly renovated Round Lake Hall to make washrooms and entranceway W/C friendly (e) Working with the Telkwa Seniors Housing Society in securing the funding from the Canada/BC grant funding for 8 housing units. (f) Accessible trails system (Jim Hiltz, NCLGA Connector Jan 2010)

- **Williams Lake (Dec 2009):** Accessible Kiwanis Park, curb cuts and accessible parking, Accessible Business Award, Integrated Community Sustainability Planning process including Accessibility Committee on affordable housing and livable neighborhood planning process. (NCLGA Connector, Dec 2009)

- **Village of McBride:** (Nov 2009) Completion of Village Park: New wheelchair accessible concrete sidewalks were installed this summer, with one connecting to the playground so adults with disabilities can take their children into the park to use the new accessible playground equipment. Glenda Thompson, NCLGA Connector Nov 2009

The following two pages highlight the NCLGA Connector newsletter articles and the NCLGA Awards.
The first annual Measuring Up The North Awards of Excellence were presented at the NCLGA Convention 2010.

The winners were:

**Category: Over 5000 population** - Winner: City of Dawson Creek
Honourable Mention: Cariboo Regional District

Category: Under 5000 population - Winner: District of Tumbler Ridge

The Second annual Measuring Up The North Awards of Excellence were presented at the NCLGA Convention 2011.

The winners were:

**Category: Over 5000 population** - Winner: City of Quesnel
Honourable Mention: Horsefly District Board of Trade and District of Chetwynd

Category: Individual Nomination - Winner: Nancy Harris - Fraser-Fort George Regional District
Honourable Mention: Diane Rogers - City of Quesnel

Honourable Mention: Horsefly District Board of Trade and District of Chetwynd

Category: Individual Nomination - Winner: Sandra Brown, Village of Queen Charlotte
Honourable Mention: Nancy Harris. Let’s Play President’s Award for Leadership & Innovation: The City of Prince George: Visitability Bylaw
The NCLGA Connector Plays a Critical Role in Ensuring MUTN Sustainability

MUTN Phase I built in various sustainability concepts. One of the concepts was to provide space in the NCLGA Connector monthly newsletter for good news items from the MUTN communities.

Dates were scheduled for the MUTN communities to provide an article. A schedule was planned for the period: October 2009 - June 2010.

The intent was that the article would allow the communities to show off and share their good work; spur them on to assess what they had accomplished and to celebrate their successes. This would thus help "sustain" the MUTN effort.

Between Oct 2009 - June 2010, there were seven full page articles. (see Appendix) Between June 2010 and May 2011 there were seven quarter page highlight articles either on specific projects or on achievements of individuals. As well, the NCLGA MUTN Awards were showcased in full page articles in May 2010 and May 2011.

### List of Full Length Articles

- **Oct 2009** District of Tumbler Ridge
- **Nov 2009** Village of McBride
- **Dec 2009** City of Williams Lake
- **Jan 2010** Village of Telkwa
- **Feb 2010** City of Fort St. John
- **Mar 2010** Tatlayoko Lake
- **Apr 2010** City of Dawson Creek
- **May 2010** City of Quesnel
- **Jun 2010** City of Prince George

### List of Shorter Articles

- **Aug 2010** MUTN Receives Donation
- **Oct 2010** Cottonwood House Trail Accessible
- **Nov 2010** Ancient Forest Trail Accessible
- **Dec 2010** Sepa Lake Accessible Trail
- **Feb 2011** Accessible Horsefly Brochure
- **Apr 2011** Lori Slater: MUTN Liaison: BC Community Achievement Award
- **Mar 2011** Nancy Harris MUTN Liaison: Sport BC Award
- **Apr 2010** Braunwyn Heywood: MUTN Liaison: BC Community Achievement Award

Note: Alex Bracewell MUTN Liaison, CRD received the BC Community Achievement Award in 2009 for his MUTN Work.
INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SCHOOL CURRICULUM
NCLGA Ref: A2
Category: Social Issues - Education
Year: 2011
Status: Endorsed by NCLGA Membership
Resolution:
WHEREAS physical literacy is crucial to the inception of positive lifelong activity patterns and healthy lifestyles in children; however the social well-being of children may be affected if they are not able to access all school programs and facilities;
AND WHEREAS the Let’s Play Program in association with the Rick Hansen Foundation is an example of a success story of integrating seamless access into school programs for all students regardless of physical ability:
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that NCLGA and UBCM lobby the Province to implement a Provincial adaptation to curriculum that will encourage:
1) Inclusive physical activities into all grades, particularly in physical education
2) Adapt wording in Provincial curriculum that will reflect seamless inclusion for all students
3) Promote input and awareness in the development of resources and services (or programs) that will enhance inclusive physical activity
4) Adapt and enhance post secondary education to teach and reflect inclusive physical activity through sport and recreation, healthy living, education and other related programs.

DEVELOPMENT OF A LIVABLE-INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES STRATEGY
NCLGA Ref: A1
UBCM Ref: B114
Category: Selected Issues
Year: 2010
Status: Endorsed by the NCLGA & UBCM Membership
Resolution: WHEREAS the Measuring Up The North Initiative (Phase 1) has been successful in helping BC communities assess and improve how livable, age-friendly, disability-friendly, universally designed and inclusive they are for all residents and visitors;
AND WHEREAS many time-limited initiatives such as MUTN Phase 1 and others in the Province have started the momentum but there is still a great deal more to do;
AND WHEREAS MUTN has developed tools and processes and learned lessons that could contribute to a provincial-wide initiative:
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NCLGA requests that UBCM work with the Province of BC to enact a Provincial Livable-Inclusive Communities Strategy that will include provincial funding and support as well as Provincial Awards that recognize business, community, local governments and individuals in their efforts.

ACCESSIBILITY DESIGNATION
NCLGA Ref: B35
UBCM Ref: B149
Category: Selected Issues
Year: 2010
Status: Endorsed by the NCLGA & UBCM Membership
Resolution:
WHEREAS many members of our society are affected by accessibility limitations;
AND WHEREAS communities who strive to make accessibility a priority are often unrecognized and unknown to those who might utilize them;
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the NCLGA and UBCM lobby the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport to implement a Provincial Accessibility Capital designation similar to the Forest Capital of British Columbia designation administered by the Association of BC Forest Professionals, and to award that designation to a community or region within British Columbia on a two-year basis.
What are the Challenges?

Many of the communities are facing challenges to continue the MUTN work. Challenges seem to stem from:

- A lack of support at the local level
- Lack of Provincial and Federal funding
- Lack of Policy creation and support provincially
- A lack of the central MUTN mechanism.

One Respondent discussed why there is a decrease in momentum (See sidebar)

For Many, The Areas That Are Getting Least Attention Are:

- Transportation
- Religious-Spiritual Facilities
- Websites
- Employment
- Housing

Some Reasons Why Transportation is Not Getting Attention:

Communities seemed to describe funding as an issue for not focusing on transportation:

- **Cost restrictive for us.** Need more pressure on BC Transit. Supposed to get new bus.
- **The City no longer has an accessible taxi.** We do have limited hours of a Go Bus. According to local BC Transit staff, low floor buses cannot be serviced in Williams Lake.
- **Accessible taxis are needed but no entrepreneur stepping forward.**

Some Reasons Why Employment is Not Getting Attention:

The communities identified a lack of a focus both provincially and locally. With the ending of the provincial focus (10x10 Challenge) and the ending of central support from MUTN, this area has diminished. As well, the downturn in the economy appears to have created employment issues for all.

- **Don’t have very many jobs here but those disabled or not can find a job if they are “willing” to work.**
- **10 x 10 initiative ended. 3 or more people with disabilities were hired by the city over 2009/2010.**
- **Is this an ongoing process, yes?**
- **We aren’t doing anything as a committee because there are two other organizations that work with this**
- **The 10 x 10 employment initiative seems to have ended. Inclusive employment has been hurt by the down turn in the economy.**

What is not on the Radar or Focus is Unknown?

Three areas stood out as “not on the radar” for 5/13 communities:

Fig 7: Not on the Radar or Don’t Know What is Happening

- Religious-Spiritual Facilities
- Support Services
- Employment

This was followed by 4/13 communities indicating that the following areas were not on their radar:
Two areas were particularly prominent as “don’t know” what is happening. These include:
- Making websites accessible (7/13) and
- Marketing the accessibility features of the town/city (3/13).

We are Seeing Decreased Level of Committee Activity

An area of concern is the apparent decline in activities of the MUTN Committees which include the local government staff as well as the standing committees. There also seems to be a decline in interaction between the local governments and the communities in some cases. Only six of the communities responded that their MUTN Committee (or equivalent) has been on-going since 2009. Many say that the committees rarely meet, that the local government staff carry out the project without the staff or the person who answered the survey was the only one committed to the work. This means that community members’ voices are not being heard. Only six communities indicated that their Committee was on-going since 2009.

Fig 8: Activity Level of MUTN Committees

Comments about Committees and Activities:

Lack of Involvement of All Stakeholders
- Seems to be "hit and miss". Some initiatives still seem to happen without everyone being directly involved.
- We have kept up some of the initiatives, have not met regularly
- Some initiatives have been undertaken by the City but not necessarily involving all Committee members. Some rumblings that the City could be doing more and that costs would be minimal.

Committee Activity Is Diminished or Does Not Meet Regularly
- We have a committee but it has not met since April 2010
- Committee is on an Ad hoc status.
- There has been a decrease in activity
- There’s just me!
How Do The Results Compare to 2009?

In the spring of 2009 an on-line survey was sent to the MUTN Liaisons. The survey consisted of questions from the Livable Inclusive UD Communities Report Card (2009) developed by L.Ringgaert. (See Appendix). Twenty of the same core questions were asked as in 2011 except that the answer choices were different. In 2009 respondents were asked to provide “grades” of A (100% of our facilities), B (75% of our facilities), C (50% of our facilities), D (25% of our facilities) or F (none of our facilities), while in 2011, these choices were changed to a description of progress choices based on feedback in 2009. In 2009, feedback indicated that the grade scoring was not fair as it did not provide adequate information on plans or progress. The answers were then changed for the 2011 survey to: Goal Completed; In Progress, Planned for 2011-2012; Planned for After 2012; Not on the Radar; and Don’t Know. It is thus difficult to compare “apples” and “oranges” however, we can look at how “highly” and “lowly” items were scored on the two scales. The following Table shows the most low and high score categories in 2009 and in 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009 Highest and Lowest Scoring Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Most Low Scoring 2009</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scores of “D” and “F”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Car Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Fam Home</td>
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<tr>
<td>Websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Great Place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Rec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Most High Scoring 2009**               |
| Scores of “A” and “B”                    |
| Standing Committee                       |
| Education                                |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2011 Highest and Lowest Scoring Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2011 Lowest Score Categories</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scored as “Not on the Radar” or “Don’t Know”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Spiritual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **2011 High Scores**                     |
| Scored as “Completed” or “In Progress”   |
| Tourism-Cultural                        |
| LG Programs                             |
| Outdoor Recreation                      |
| Public Health                           |
| Change to LG Council                    |
| LG Planning                             |
| Food                                    |
| Hospitality                             |

Although we can’t really compare the responses to the two surveys, a trends analysis shows that there have been some positive changes as the communities appear to have focused attention on areas that were needing attention in 2009. See Table xx
Moving from a Low to a High Rating: Very positive increases in focus and/or continued focus was shown with the categories of retail business, hospitality, outdoor recreation, and marketing.

Moving from a Low to a Medium Rating: While transportation received a low rating in 2009, the communities are planning to focus on this area in 2011-2012 and/or beyond (medium). The same movement from “low 2009” to “medium-2011” rating can be said for single family homes, multi-family homes, employment, town services, support services and on a Great Place to Come to focus.

Moving from Medium to a High Rating: Positive increases and/or continued focus was shown with Official Community Plans, Local Government Properties, Tourism-Cultural and with Public Realm (sidewalks, street design, etc)

There appears to also be some negative trends:

- Moving from High to Medium: Standing Committees and Education
- Moving from Medium to Low: Religious-Spiritual.

Particularly significant is the apparent decrease in emphasis on the Standing Committees. This could be attributed to the absence of the central MUTN structure as well as to the absence of funding sources such as 2010 Legacies. Now funding that also required the presence of a committee. By not having a Standing Committee, raises several concerns including lack of stakeholder input into issues, priority setting, design and construction, etc.

Evidence of Changing Emphasis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Positive Change</th>
<th>Negative Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Business</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>++</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>++</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Recreation</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>++</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>++</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Family Homes</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Family Homes</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Place to Come To</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Town Services</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>+</td>
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<td>Support Services</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Official Community Plan</td>
<td>Med</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>+</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Realm</td>
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<td>Negative Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standing Committee</td>
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<td>Medium</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Spiritual</td>
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<td>Low</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Websites</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>No change</td>
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Comparison of the 2009 and 2011 Surveys: Differences Between Possible Answers

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<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Planned for After 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Not on the Radar</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
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Not Applicable

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<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Not asked in 2009</td>
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What Would Ensure That Your Local Government Will Continue Work In This Area?

- 10 of the communities indicated that government support from both the Provincial and the Federal levels of government would ensure continued work in this area
- 9 of the communities indicated that they would continue the effort because it was important to them
- 7 communities indicated that having the NCLGA support was important while 5 communities indicated that training and consultation for their communities would be beneficial
- None of the communities indicated that they would discontinue the effort

Fig. 9: What is needed to Continue?

Comments were divided into Three Theme areas:

- Re-Instate MUTN Central Support Model
- Funding is Needed
- Change Takes Time

Re-Instate MUTN Central Support Type of Model

- Bring back the MUTN program!!
- Peer support through previous monthly conference calls
- Reinstate MUTN Project Director
- Support for staff at the local government level
- Measuring up The North is a wonderful organization with a lot more potential to build the communities we need now and in the future. Keep up the good work.

Funding is Needed

- Funding opportunities make things happen!
- We are always open to ways to help improve our community, but funding the projects is not always possible with the downturn in the overall economy.

Change Takes Time

- We are making progress but it just takes time!
- Much has been accomplished in a little over 3 years by a very dedicated Task Force. There is always lots more to do.
- Need time to create Bylaw development

“Since the creation of our Accessibility Committee in 2005 and the adoption of Measuring Up The North we have made great progress even though it does not happen overnight it is happening. There are always more big dreams to fulfill but, hopefully one day accessibility will not be an additional accommodation instead it will be a common practice that everything is accessible. It will be what we call “normal”.  Kary Fell, MUTN Liaison. NCLGA Connector  December 2009

“There is much yet to do – major sidewalk repair is a long and costly endeavour, and there are many other issues such as accessible housing that are also being pursued”  David Price, MUTN Liaison NCLGA Connector

“Fort St. John has continued to be proactive in making our community livable, accessible and inclusive. We have spent a lot of time working on policies, the OCP and building our membership up this year. Once we have that ground work done we can continue on some of the other areas we want to work on” 2011 SURVEY RESPONDENT.
Our Progress Would Be Enhanced If The Government Would Consider Providing:

The Communities suggested that their progress would be enhanced if the government would provide:

- Grant Funding
- Incentives for Businesses
- MUTN coordination and technical assistance

These suggestions were followed by

- Seminars
- Resources/tools
- Passing of policies/bylaws

**Fig. 10: Our Progress Would be Enhanced by Government Providing...**
Analysis and Summary

MUTN Continues to Progress Despite Central Resource Changes

MUTN Phase II includes continued work by the local governments and their committees but a changed central structure for MUTN centrally. MUTN is under the sole umbrella of the North Central Local Government Association with no program staff however, the NCLGA continues to host the MUTN concept and sustains the effort as best it can. Many communities continue with their own efforts as the groundwork was laid in 2007-09 where they created action plans and started to incorporate MUTN concepts into their Official community Plans. As well, during Phase I, the ground work was laid for organizational capacity changes were made due to various workshops, technical assistance and messaging that helped change attitudes. As well, many had applied for and received grant funding that was not realized until 2010-2011.

The March-April 2011 survey of NCLGA members showed that the change in organizational culture and the action plans that were put into place during Phase I are bearing fruit by continued changes being seen in policy, systems and environments. A major recent policy success (2011) was the passing of a Visitable Housing resolution by the City of Prince George- a first of its kind for the Province. The Cariboo Regional District now has a mandate to be “the” number one accessible tourism destination in BC and has already developed several accessible trails, salmon viewing areas and accessible B&B’s. Several communities are continuing to work on incorporating MUTN principles into their Official Community Plans which is a highly favorable indicator of continued sustainability.

The communities indicate that they are planning to continue work on a variety of areas including outdoor recreation, sidewalks, businesses, transportation, and their websites. Several of the communities indicate that they have seen positive changes in their community including increased participation of older adults and people with disabilities, benefits to health, a new way of thinking and a better design for their communities: they are more livable. Many communities indicate positive change has occurred with their council and elected officials. They are seeing changes in attitudes, practices, allocation of budget and the council is “walking the talk”. Other indicators of success (beyond the survey) include

- 15 NCLGA communities have received NCLGA MUTN Awards for their achievements,
- The City of Prince George has passed the first Visitability bylaw in Northern BC
- Winton Global homes is now advertising visitable homes
- four MUTN Liaisons have received BC Community Achievement Awards
- Several NCLGA Communities have instituted business recognition awards
- At least one community is offering tax incentives for business accessibility improvements
- Several communities continue to work on projects through funding they applied for in 2007-09, while others have found other funding sources since 2009.
- Communities indicate that they are going to continue the MUTN efforts as they say there is much more to do

Despite Progress there are Challenges

The communities surveyed face several challenges including a decrease of targeted accessibility and age-friendly funding within the constraints of an overall economic downturn that occurred at the end of 2009. Although there are some opportunities these are less compared to the 2007-09 phase. In some cases, some areas are not being addressed due to lack of funding. These include transportation, housing and businesses. However, other communities are focusing on policy and planning changes while the funding is slow at this time.

With other priorities facing the communities (with the economic situation), priorities have shifted and this has affected the focus. We are seeing decreased Committee and Staff Liaison activity in some cases. This is an unfortunate result and indicates a potential loss of focus but also a loss of key stakeholder voices at the table to inform the local governments of what the issues are and how to best make changes.

What is needed to Ensure Continuity: An important aspect has been the decreased central support and resources that were once provided through the NCLGA. Communities indicate that they miss the monthly phone calls organized by the
Project Director where they could share with peers, be accountable and also hear about technical assistance. They indicate that they would like to see the re-instatement of a central support function that serves to help coordinate efforts and provide technical assistance. A key point that the communities emphasized is that they feel that they are only at the beginning of their work in most cases. Many say that there is still a great deal more to do and that it takes time. Other key supports they indicate are needed to ensure continuity are provincial-federal grants, policy development and endorsement; coordination and technical support functions, and support for businesses to become accessible.

**Implications for Rural and Remote Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities**

The evaluation indicated that although progress has been made, there is still a great deal to be done in terms policies, systems and environments in all aspects of the community. The communities recognize the need to continue work to create visitable housing policies, better designed streets and roadways, improved transportation, outdoor recreation, local government properties, businesses and other areas. The fact that they indicate that there is still room for improvement with their continued plans and yet there are many areas that they cannot address due to lack of funding indicate that our older adults and persons with disabilities continue to face barriers. Not only will this mean potential health issues and social isolation for many, it can also have economic implications as many people are unable to shop at businesses, are unable to live in their homes and are forced to go to care facilities and visitors are unable to visit our communities and spend money. An important implication of the evaluation is the decreasing voice of older adults and persons with disabilities as well as other stakeholders at the planning and policy table. Their voices are essential to ensuring communities are designed for all.

**Conclusions and Recommendations:**

Northern British Columbia can be proud to be a leader as MUTN can serve as a model for all jurisdictions around the world who are preparing for the future-in terms of livability, aging demographics, economics and health. The Livable-Inclusive UD Communities Report Card (Ringaert, 2011) has been used in this evaluation to provide a measure of how livable our communities are for all ages and abilities. It provided a snapshot of the accomplishments, progress, plans and challenges facing the Northern BC communities especially for older adults. The evaluation showed that numerous achievements have occurred, that the communities continue to make progress and are committed to bettering their communities.

Although various sustainability measures were built into MUTN Phase I (capacity building, development of action plans, incorporation into Official Community Plans, encouragement to produce newsletter articles) and several communities are indicating that they are continuing their MUTN efforts, there is also a threat that some communities are struggling due to the lack of focus on this area centrally both at the Provincial level and at the NCLGA level. It is important not to lose the momentum that has been achieved. Unfortunately the aging demographic is not disappearing and there is still a great deal to do to repair, enhance and build more livable communities.

Information gained through this evaluation will be provided to the NCLGA executive and also to the MUTN communities themselves to help make further strategic decisions and to initiate discussions with the Provincial government to further advance a livable communities strategy which was suggested by the MUTN Initiative-NCLGA in 2010 through presentation of a resolution that was passed at the Union of British Columbia Municipalities. If this action was moved forward by the Province, sustainability of these efforts will occur not only in the North but also for the entire Province.
About the Evaluator and Author

Laurie Ringaert, BSc., BMR-OT, MSc.

Laurie is considered to be a national and international leader in research, evaluation, education, policy analysis and consultation on universal design of communities, aging/disability issues, age-friendly communities, age-friendly tourism, chronic conditions, healthy built environments, community-based health programs, participatory action research and related public health issues. Laurie currently serves as a social research scientist/evaluator with the Seattle King County Public Health Department working on a Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CDC) Initiative.

Laurie has lead organizations, initiatives and change efforts in several roles. As Senior Researcher for the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies, Winnipeg, MB; as the Director of the Center for Universal Design at NC State University; as the Director of the Universal Design Institute, Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba and as Assistant Professor Landscape Architecture; as the Director of the Office of Research at the School of Public Health at UNC Chapel Hill; and as lecturer at the School of Medical Rehabilitation, University of Manitoba. Recent work includes serving as Principal Partner with DSL Design Consulting, North Carolina serving as a consultant on a variety of projects including the America’s Byways Resource Center, Duluth, MN, where she developed curriculum for their Universal Design and Accessibility Training Initiative, as well as the Project Director of the Measuring of the North Initiative in Prince George, BC, working for the North Central Local Government Association and the BC Paraplegic Association assisting over 40 communities to become livable, age-friendly, disability-friendly, universally designed sustainable communities for all residents and visitors. She recently served as an evaluator with MJones Consulting, Winnipeg on projects examining new ways to deliver health services to older adults with diabetes and mental health.

Laurie’s research, evaluation, consultation, and program development has varied and included work on healthy built environments and policy-systems-environmental (PSE) changes; intersections of aging and disability and PSE; social determinants of health; code/dimensional requirements, policy analysis, user needs, program evaluation, post-occupancy evaluation, community development and planning, facilitation of community engagement and collaborative leadership, health care program planning, creating age-friendly/disability-friendly businesses/communities/ organizations as an economic imperative. She has worked with communities on universal design and disability and aging issues in Russia, the Ukraine, China, the USA, the Caribbean and Canada. Laurie has worked as a lead policy consultant and trainer with the Canadian Department of National Defence/Canadian Forces and has had key roles in projects with the World Health Organization, the World Bank, and the Canadian International Development Agency.

As a long standing committee member, Laurie has provided advice on policy and strategies to the Canadian National Building Code as well as to the Canadian Standards Association. She has conducted research/evaluation on housing, health, transportation, aging, disability, supports and accessibility issues that has been translated into policy and practices. She has recently worked with a team to develop an Official Community Planning Tool: “Developing Age-Friendly, Disability-Friendly Official Community Plans: Guidelines for Local Governments”(2009) in conjunction with the Union of BC Municipalities and developed an assessment tool: Livable-Inclusive-UD Communities Report Card®Ringaert (2009) through her work with the Measuring Up The North Initiative, British Columbia. Laurie has also been a strong advocate for visitable housing, conducted the first study in Canada on the subject and has helped change building policy and practices.

Laurie co-authored the booklet: “Is Your Business Open to All?” and has conducted research on the business case for accessibility and inclusion/accessible tourism. As an invited presenter for all Caribbean members of Disabled Peoples International Laurie helped them shape an economic future for the islands through this approach. She brought her economic approach to accessibility and inclusion to Northern BC which has helped move the MUTN Communities forward in their economies and future sustainability. She has provided advice on economic development strategies for communities, businesses, and the hospitality industry as related to the aging and disability demographic and accessible tourism.

Laurie was recently nominated for two prestigious American Public Health Awards for her work on the MUTN Initiative: the Archstone Foundation Excellence in Program Innovation Award and the Excellence in Aging and Public Health Rural and Environment Research Award. Laurie is a member of the American Public Health Association, the American Planning Association and the American Evaluation Association. Laurie’s research, engagement style with communities as well as her invited authorship in several articles and book chapters and her service on codes and standards committees has moved the field of universal design, age-friendly communities and disability studies forward including creating several policy, planning and code changes. Laurie has personal experience as a person with a disability. She is a former Manitoban who now lives in Washington with her husband and parrot, has five children and enjoys sailing, flea markets, exploring public gardens, outdoor trails and camping.