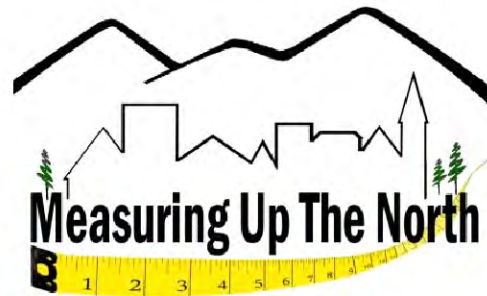


**2009**



# The Measuring Up The North Initiative



**MUTN Phase 1 Report August 2007 - December 2009  
December 2009**





## The Measuring Up The North Initiative

Phase I Final Report

December 2009

Presented by the MUTN Initiative Partners:

The North Central Local Government Association and the BC Paraplegic Association

with Supporting Partners:

2010 Legacies Now, the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, BC Healthy Communities and Northern Health



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**This report is dedicated to all of the hard working MUTN Liaisons, Committee Members, Coordinators, Mayors and Councils, Community and Business Leaders who have worked so hard to make incredible changes in the North**

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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, and Northern Health

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*We could not have done it without you!!*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary	p. 5
2. Project Summary	p. 8
3. Measuring Up The North Initiative Accomplishments	p. 16
4. Accomplishments of Participating Communities	p.24
5. MUTN PHASE I: Evaluation Results	p.33
6. Challenges and Lessons Learned	p.81
7. Recommendations and Next Steps	P.84

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**What is MUTN?** 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, inclusive communities for all residents and visitors”. During Phase I, a 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. During Phase I, 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. As a result of the conference, income also was received from registrations and exhibitors. The project is unique in structure as each community has a designated Liaison from the Local Government (staff or elected official) and a Community Liaison (person with a disability or an older adult). These two individuals work together as partners with a committee composed of a variety of interests: disability, seniors, tourism, housing, developers, recreation, chamber of commerce, builders, public works, etc. MUTN communities include populations ranging from 50 to 70,000 people.

**Why is the Initiative Important for the 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. 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. There is a lack of accessible transportation within communities and across communities including air, rail, and inter-city bus travel. Many municipal 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, policies, 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.

**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.

**What are the Key Indicators of Success?** Changes have been seen in town policies, by-laws, official community plans, local government attitudes and knowledge, 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. Two key tools were developed that will be continued to be used by the communities across British Columbia: "*The Livable-Inclusive-UD Communities Report Card*" (L. Ringaert, 2009) and 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). Six resolutions were presented by the NCLGA to UBCM during Phase I 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 Work?** Keys to success for MUTN were many. First of all, was style of the Initiative whereby ownership and empowerment was given to the communities themselves. Centrally we offered various support mechanisms but ultimately, each community owned and grew their own priorities and strategies that worked for them. Providing methods of accountability, public recognition and being part of a "collective" –both through the NCLGA as well as creating a "group or club" feeling through being part of MUTN. 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.

**What are the Challenges?** At this time funding is ending for the MUTN Initiative centrally. As well, many of the funding programs that have been offered to local governments for these kinds of initiatives are no longer available. As well, other supportive initiatives such as 2010 Legacies Now MUP and Accessible Tourism will soon end. Momentum has begun in the communities, and continued support both for a central hub as well as for local government processes and projects must continue in order for further progress to continue.

**What are the Next Steps?** MUTN Phase II will see continued work done by the local governments but a changed central structure for MUTN centrally. MUTN will be under the sole umbrella of the North Central Local Government Association. Until the Association finds further funding, it will provide a limited number of central support services. The Initiative recommends that the BC provincial government continue the good work of the MUTN Initiative and other related initiatives by developing a provincial framework and providing continued support for the communities and local governments of British Columbia. British Columbia has taken the lead in this area and must continue as it prepares for future demographic changes and future economic imperatives.

## 2. PROJECT SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

The Measuring Up The North Initiative has been highly successful in assisting nearly 40 communities across the North to become more livable, age-friendly, disability-friendly, universally designed, inclusive communities for all residents and visitors. Positive community changes have already been made including awareness building, strategic alliance building, attitudinal, policy, practice, infrastructure, marketing, capacity building, and receipt of funding for overall community development. A great deal has occurred within two years, yet as the communities say, “there is still a long way to go!” These changes and this Initiative could not have occurred without the generous support of our funders .

We are considering years 2007-09 as Phase I of the Initiative and are planning for Phase II: Years 2010-2010. We are currently in our Transition Phase until January 2010 when MUTN will then be under the umbrella of the North Central Local Government Association (formerly the North Central Municipal Association (NCLGA).

The following is our final report of our activities for Phase I: August 2007-December 2009. The report addresses our accomplishments and also provides the results of our evaluation of Phase I.

## BACKGROUND

**Goal:** To assist over 40 North Central Local Government Association communities to become livable, age-friendly, disability-friendly, universally designed inclusive communities for all citizens and visitors.

**Expected Outcomes:** are increased participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities and seniors in all aspects of the community including education, employment/volunteerism, economic and business aspects, tourism, recreation, cultural, social, spiritual activities and local government affairs.

**A Partnership:** During Phase I, the Initiative was a **partnership** between the North Central Local Government Association and the BC Paraplegic Association 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 Received:** 2010 Legacies Now, BC Real Estate Foundation, Vancouver Foundation, the United Way of Northern BC, the Nechako Kitamaat Development Fund Society, from the NCLGA communities themselves and funding for a recent 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, as well as Northern Health.

<b>Initiative Timeline:</b>	<b>Phase I: 2007-09</b>	<b>Phase II: 2010-2012</b>
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**Approach:** The Initiative is designed to empower and build capacity in the communities. The Initiative uses a community participatory action, community development approach. Each participating community has two Project Liaisons - an NCLGA Liaison who is a representative of the city, town, village (i.e. planner, recreation director, engineer, or councillor) and a Community Liaison who is a person with a disability or a senior. (In some cases, communities have both) These two individuals work in partnership and ensure that a local Measuring Up The North Committee is formed. The Initiative is voluntary and the Local governments make the decision as to whether to “join” or not. They are under no obligation to MUTN centrally for reporting or attending any functions. This thus has its benefits as well as its limitations.

The Committee consists of a variety of individuals including seniors, persons with disabilities and representatives from First Nations, youth, building/planning officials, the business community, tourism, homebuilders, recreation, transportation, employment, education, parks, arts and

culture, sustainability, and other interests. The intent is that the Committee will assess its own community and determine areas of priority to make improvements. The community then seeks funding through a variety of sources to carry out a variety of projects and also incorporates the principles of accessibility and inclusion into their community vision, official community plans and community strategic plans.

### **The Initiative operates under the following principles:**

- The Initiative was established in the North for the North
- Initiatives are locally controlled and include Initiative Liaison Partners
- The Initiative strongly promotes dignity, respect, inclusion and participation in civic life and intergenerational approaches
- The Initiative uses a universal design approach
- The Initiative promotes an economic development and sustainability approach
- The Initiative facilitates and supports the planning of accessibility and inclusion in all aspects of society including information/communication, all forms of transportation, buildings, spaces, all forms of housing, leisure, cultural, social tourism and spiritual activities
- The Initiative brings together code officials, urban/social planners, politicians, disability and seniors groups, tourism and hospitality industry, realtors, health professionals, developers, builders, business and more
- The Initiative supports the principles of its partners and supporting partners

### **The Measuring Up The North Initiative emphasizes the economic benefits of developing inclusive communities in regard to:**

- Increased use of retail and businesses
- Increased employment and volunteerism by people with disabilities and older adults
- The economic benefits of accessible tourism.

### The Initiative uses a variety of approaches to assist in its goals:

- Measure Up Process: 2010 Legacies Now
- Age-Friendly Communities
- BC Healthy Communities
- Livable Communities
- Active Living by Design
- Universal Design
- Visitable Housing
- Accessible Tourism
- Smart Growth
- Sustainability Concepts
- Healthy Built Environment
- Other relevant concepts

### KEY INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

MUTN employed a number of intervention strategies in order to make change occur in the communities. These strategies were used to build capacity and to empower the communities.

- **Encouraged a Local Government-Community Partnership Model:** Asked communities to identify an NCLGA Liaison ( Local government staff or elected official ) and a Community Liaison (person with a disability or an older adult)
- **Encouraged Identified Leaders (Champions):** the two liaisons became identified leaders in their community. Other leaders emerged in some communities as various elected officials, business leaders, town staff took on the ideals of MUTN
- **Encouraged a Community Development Approach:** The liaisons were asked to form a committee consisting of a variety of interests: public works, recreation, housing, economic development, business, health professionals, developers, aboriginal groups, disability and seniors representatives, and others. The committee was guided by MUTN as to potential areas to focus on, however the decisions were based on their assessment of their community, overall community/town priorities and their available resources

- **“A Little Bit is Okay” Asset Driven Approach**
  - Rewarded Liaisons/communities for even small gains. Did not say that they had to do a lot of things in their communities: tried not to overwhelm. The idea was that even small gains could be very big gains in many communities. The result was that with these small rewards, many communities received words of gratitude from their communities that then propelled them to do another project, and another project, etc.
  - Suggested that they build on existing committees (i.e. seniors or community concerns), existing projects/plans (i.e. downtown revitalization) in their communities: this did two things: they felt less over-whelmed about developing a new committee and the tasks felt less onerous.
  
- **Utilized an Economic Development and Healthy Community/Smart Planning Approaches**
  - One of the key approaches/messages used by MUTN to engage communities was one of the economic imperative to make communities more livable, universally designed, age-friendly and disability-friendly. We took this approach rather than from a human rights or a medical model approach. The Liaisons also used this approach to engage many community interests including business leaders and tourism interests
  - Another key approach was engaging a Healthy Community and Smart Planning Approaches: we need to combine these approaches with age-friendly, disability-friendly, universal design to ensure a more livable community for everyone. This helped to also lever funding and helped not make the changes in the communities to be disability or aging specific, but better programs and facilities for all members of the community.
  
- **Provided Strategies for Empowerment, Recognition, Accountability**
  - Communities made decisions on their own priorities
  - Communities were encouraged to make monthly presentations on the Liaison Conference Calls as well as at any Liaison Meetings/Workshops that were held
  - MUTN assisted the communities in developing PowerPoint presentations (Fall 2008, Regional Meetings) poster presentations (NCMA conference 2008) and finally a Community Profile (2009). Communities were then empowered to take ownership of their work. They were also recognized by their peers at these events. Liaisons were also made accountable for the work in the community.
  - Liaisons were highlighted on the MUTN website for particular projects or during site visits
  - Press releases issued by local communities were highlighted on the MUTN website

- MUTN set up a “kudos” page on the website to recognize business leaders and others in the community who had made worthy changes to their policies and practices
- In the first year, awards certificates were given at the NCMA AGM to those local governments who had started a committee and had identified liaisons. This provided affirmation for starting and also highlighted to those who had not started what others were doing in the NCMA association-thus bringing more on board later.
- **Provided Opportunities for Networking, Sharing Between Communities, Friendly Competition**
  - MUTN set up regular (usually monthly) conference calls for the Liaisons that proved to be important for sharing between communities, providing updates, camaraderie, solving common problems, coming up with new ideas and as well offered a friendly competition between groups
  - Friendly competition was also evident between elected officials between towns. MUTN was able to capitalize on this at times by sending out information to the various elected officials to engage them in a particular strategy etc. Seemingly unengaged elected officials would be seen to stand up and profess the great MUTN work their community was doing at various official meetings
  - MUTN developed and ensured several networking opportunities for the Liaisons at all of the workshops, conferences, regional workshops as this was seen to be a method of helping build capacity, further engagement, and provide on-going support between like-minded individuals
  - MUTN set up an on-line social networking forum for communities to share ideas and engage
- **Provided Capacity Building Through Coaching/Site Visits/Technical Assistance**
  - The Project Director provided phone coaching sessions to Liaisons at their request. These sessions would assist them with setting goals, keeping motivated, assistance with technical issues, dealing with difficult people, etc.
  - The Project Director provided several site visits to various communities. The Site visits provided coaching to the liaisons and their committees; helped engage elected officials, the business community and others; assisted in publicizing the good works of the local committee in the press and thus encouraging rewards for their work; provided advice on areas that needed to be addressed in the community
  - The Project Director provided technical assistance in a variety of areas
- **Provided Capacity Building Training:**
  - MUTN offered an initial workshop to “sell the idea” of MUTN and its principles and get the initial communities on board as well as train them on the concepts.

- Subsequently in early 2008 MUTN held three more Liaison workshops to engage more communities. In the fall of 2009 MUTN offered a workshop on the topics of making small businesses accessible and inclusive as well as on employment of older adults and persons with disabilities.
- MUTN also provided a number of “regional workshops”.
- MUTN hosted a major conference in the spring of 2009 that attracted people from across the province. Invited speakers came from across British Columbia as well as from across North America. The intention of the major conference was to bring together not only the liaisons, but also builders, town/city staff, planners, developers, health professionals, designers, policy makers, businesses, etc. to gain new knowledge and to build capacity in these work areas of the town/city.
- **Changes to Policies: Early Capacity Building and Intervention**
  - We trained the communities from the beginning that the way to make real changes was not just through community one-off projects, but also through changes in policies and practices at the local government and provincial government levels
  - MUTN discussed some local government policy and practices changes with the Liaisons who then began working with their local governments to make changes
  - MUTN worked with the NCLGA to develop six resolutions that went to UBCM
  - MUTN invited various provincial government and planning agencies, elected officials, policy makers to its various workshops/conferences learn about new trends and strategies in hopes that they would in turn work toward changing policies and practices
  - Encouraged the communities to adopt the CSA B651 Accessibility for the Built Environment Standard (beyond BC Code)
- **Marketing of the Ideals of MUTN and Getting People on Board**
  - The Project Director provided several key note presentations, press releases, project updates, presentations to local government councils and boards
  - The Project Director attended and spoke at several NCMA, UBCM conferences where she networked and engaged various local government officials in discussions about coming on board with MUTN, sharing their accomplishments. Offering encouragement
- **Encouraged Building of Partnerships, Engaging with Other Initiatives**
  - Another key intervention that MUTN did both centrally and also encouraged locally was the building of partnerships
  - MUTN originally had two partners (NCMA and BCPA) and two supporting partners (2010 Legacies Now and the BC Healthy Communities). In 2008, MUTN invited two more partners: Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport and Northern Health, Healthy Community Development Program.

- MUTN encouraged the Local committees to build partnerships in their communities to ensure better progress
- Worked together with Smart Growth BC and Northern Health on the Planning and Health Workshop Fall 2009
  
- **Created Tools to Build Capacity**
  - MUTN developed a website early on that contained a number of tools to assist the communities: technical assistance, resources, MUTN Power Points, presentations from workshop presentations, etc.
  - MUTN developed an extensive Topics section of resources on the MUTN Website
  - MUTN in collaboration with 2010 Legacies Now, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, Smart Growth, and UBCM developed an Age-Friendly, Disability-Friendly Official community Planning Tool
  - MUTN provided a by-weekly newsletter with resource information as well as information on funding opportunities to the communities
  
- **Encouraged a “Collective” “Team” “Group” “Club” Approach**
  - Under the umbrella of the NCLGA
  - Provided the MUTN T-Shirts to all Liaisons
  - Developed marketing materials (brochures, businesses cards with common logo and they could put on their own names)
  - Used “created by the North for the North” slogan
  - Created MUTN logos and banner

### 3. MEASURING UP THE NORTH INITIATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

AUGUST 2007-DECEMBER 2009

#### OVERALL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The Initiative grew from an original idea of influencing six North Central Local Government Association members to now over 40 NCLGA members with 26 highly involved. The original concept was for a one year Initiative.
- The Initiative is now seen as a model for the entire Province
- The Initiative assisted in identifying three of the top areas that seem to be affecting all communities in our region as housing, transportation and lack of access into businesses.
- Many Involved! There are 49 NCLGA Liaisons, 25 Community Liaisons, and 8 Coordinators and many approx 5 committee members in each community: so over 200 directly involved across the North
- There is great enthusiasm being shown in the participating communities for this project. All are seeing the economic benefits of developing more accessible and inclusive communities. Many have their business and tourism leaders involved.
- Many of the communities have a high percentage of seniors and are dovetailing into existing seniors task force committees, while others are dovetailing into sustainable social planning initiatives to conduct the MUTN project.



- Many of the communities have made changes to a variety of areas such as: sidewalks, public buildings, businesses, social housing, market-rate housing, recreational areas, greenways, trails, tourism sites, restaurants, hotels and motels, transportation, playgrounds, and employment.
- As a result of involvement with MUTN, many of the communities have received extensive provincial and/or federal funding to make major changes in their communities. (Towns for Tomorrow, Local Motion, Seniors Dialogues, BC Healthy Communities, Enabling Accessibility Funds, Tourism funding and others)
- One of the main accomplishments as expressed by the communities themselves is a **change in attitude** seen regarding inclusion of persons with disabilities and seniors. There is a great awareness building that is happening. This is occurring in several ways. The establishment of the MUTN Committees is providing empowerment for persons with disabilities as well as seniors. Many of the town officials are now saying they are becoming more aware of issues and appreciate this new partnership whereas before there was no official mechanism to communicate and things were done on an ad-hoc basis.
- The involvement of these individuals in civic affairs is very powerful. Another factor that is changing attitudes not only within the Town level but also within the communities themselves is awareness raising activities as well as media events and various media stories. There is also a change in attitude within the persons with disabilities and seniors themselves toward the Town officials. They are establishing a new understanding on how the Town works and how to get tasks accomplished. These new partnerships are also occurring with the business communities as well.
- A unique interactive website chock full of accessibility-inclusion resources was created. Communities can post their achievements and interact with each other here
- A network was developed of all the Liaisons in the North. Other regions are envious and are requesting the same kind of infrastructure support.
- Letters of endorsement for Year Two were received by the new Mayors and Councils in early 2009. Several indicated a commitment of funding toward their own committees and to their own town projects
- 23 MUTN Communities have received 2010 Legacies Now MUP grants (see Appendix)

**Village of Burns Lake: MUTN Day Activities: Measuring Accessibility  
Friday Jun. 26th, 2009**



**Village of Burns Lake:** Mayor Magee, Councillor Olson, Councillor Benedict and local resident Pennie Jones wheeled around town on June 10<sup>th</sup> to raise awareness of accessibility issues within our community. Pennie was able to point out a few difficult areas in town for the Councillors and Mayor to attempt, such as steep sidewalk ramps, buildings with faulty wheelchair ramps, and even some businesses in town that have no wheelchair access at all. This activity highlighted many concerns and was an eye opening experience. The Village is currently undertaking an assessment of buildings in town to identify areas for improvement. Thanks to a successful Towns for Tomorrow Grant application, the Village will be undertaking renovations to the Museum, the Arena and the Chamber of Commerce to improve accessibility.

## MUTN ACHIEVEMENTS: AWARDS

*MUTN and its participants received four awards this year:*

- 1) A British Columbia Community Achievement Award  
Alex Bracewell, Tatlayoko Lake, Cariboo Regional District



Photo 1) Lt Governor Steven Point, Director Alex Bracewell & Premier Gordon Campbell

Photo 2) Alex Bracewell here describing the process to Pat Harris and Laurie Ringaert. Alex's committee members in the background.

Alex Bracewell is an Electoral Area director of the Cariboo Regional District and is our NCLGA Liaison in that area. Alex saw in the 2010 Legacies Now's Measuring UP Accessibility and Inclusion Fund, the unique opportunity to provide wilderness trail experiences for persons with disabilities. He organized a grass roots community committee to design and build an innovative trail at Tatlayoko Lake using recycled mining belts to create a surface suitable for wheelchairs, walkers, strollers and the like. With a goal of 210 kilometers by 2010, Alex's leadership in building accessible-friendly trails is a role model for other communities and, more importantly, is part of his dream 'to make the Cariboo Chilcotin one of the most attractive accessible tourism destinations in the world'. Alex's enthusiasm continues to expand as he has continued to work tirelessly to ensure that outdoor toilets along the highway are accessible, is exploring making more areas accessible for tourism and has even built a visitable home for his mother. He is also a business owner of a Bracewell's Wilderness adventures and is ensuring that persons with disabilities can participate in all adventures that his business offers.

## 2) Coast Mental Health Courage to Come Back Award



**Lori Slater, Fort St. John:** Lori serves as our Fort St. John Community Liaison as well as serving on the MUTN Steering Committee. She received this award for “coming back” through many physical and emotional struggles with her disability and deciding to “give back” to other disabled people and to her community. Seeing the struggles of people in rehab, Lori saw herself and decided that she wanted to make a difference in their lives in a way professionals couldn’t: she wanted to be a peer supporter and share her experiences with others. Back home, she got involved in fundraising, and soon was volunteering nearly full-time – 1600 hours a year! – To improve the lives of people living with a spinal cord injury. And make a difference she does: Lori holds down eight volunteer positions in Fort St. John, unselfishly focusing her passion and energy to make her community more inclusive to people with disabilities. People who know Lori well will tell you that on or off the job, she is always helping others, going out of her way to engage and encourage people one-on-one, wherever she goes. Despite living with chronic pain and limited physical ability, Lori has made a dramatic difference in her community. Lori works tirelessly on MUTN activities for her community as well as for the entire North.

## 3) MUTN was placed on the Short List for the 2009 Fraser Basin Council Sustainability Awards



## 4) The MUTN Initiative and Project Director Laurie Ringaert, were awarded the Prince George Accessibility Advisory Committee Recognition Award



## CAPACITY BUILDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Year 1** Two major and several general workshops were held to get the communities on board, educate and motivate them
- **Year 2**
  - A major workshop: “Increasing *Employment of Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities through Community and Small Business Changes*” was held for the Liaisons in October 2008.
  - A major conference was held in April 2009: *Creating Universally Designed Healthy Sustainable Communities*: that attracted professionals, advocates, policy makers from across the province. One day focused on public buildings and spaces while the second day focused on visitable housing
  - The Project Director was asked to provide workshops on Vancouver Island and for the Columbia Valley showing the influence our project is having across the Province
  - The MUTN Initiative’s focus was on “teaching the communities to fish” approach and provided coaching and empowerment opportunities

### Key Results:

- Many communities are “taking off” and doing more and more projects as they receive more positive reinforcement back from their communities, see positive changes and as well as continue to receive grants. The Initiative has a hard time tracking all of the projects that are going on because of the enthusiasm that is growing and no reporting requirements.
- Changes are being seen in attitudes and approaches by the elected officials as well as by many City/town staff. One elected official pronounced that “this is the way their council is going to do business now” meaning hearing the voices of older people and persons with disabilities and a building staff person pronounced that they were not building a new building “just to code, but were making it more universally designed”. Many communities are saying that the elected officials themselves are now raising the key questions to developers and builders which would not have occurred before.
- Capacity is also being shown by the growing number of active voices of persons with disabilities and older adults at council and committee tables. As these people are able to become more engaged in their communities through changes in accessibility and inclusion, they will become even more active

- Capacity Building is evident through the number of MUTN Committees that have been formed (over 20): prior to MUTN there were only three disability-accessibility related committees

- *Capacity Building Through Changes in Policies and Practices*

- Some communities are creating incentives for builders, developers and business owners
- Several communities looking toward changes to their housing policies and suggesting visitable housing policies
- Some communities have made changes in policy regarding transportation, parking
- Several communities are changing their accessibility standards
- Staff and elected officials are changing their practices and policies due to the capacity building through this Initiative

- *Capacity Building Through Changes at a Broader Systemic Level*



- MUTN worked With 2010 Legacies Now to develop tools and processes that can be used by all of British Columbia. MUTN is serving as a model and is assisting to perfect the MUP process.
- With 2010 Legacies Now to assist with development of Accessible Tourism and Parks and Trails assessment tools.
- **Winton Global Homes, Prince George:** MUTN has been

discussing visitability with this company since January 2009. They have contacted the Project Director to indicate that their business has increased greatly since they are now selling the concept of visitable homes (just since our Spring Conference). They have some

very good prospects from a local First Nations Community that want to build over 30 visitable homes (once land is acquired) and they recently had meetings with developers from the USA and Japan regarding building “visitable”

- Working with the Prince George Housing Committee to work together on a housing-needs survey that included concepts of accessibility, visitability.
- Working with the BC Age-Friendly Communities Initiative to work together on mutual goals
- Working with Smart Growth BC, Fraser Basin Council Smart Planning, the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport to incorporate age-friendly, disability-friendly, universal design concepts into their work. As a result “universal design” as well as disability-friendly and age-friendly concepts were incorporated in the recently released “Creating Healthy Communities: Tools and Actions to Foster Environments for Healthy Living” publication with contributions from MUTN.
- Worked with Smart Growth BC and Northern Health on a Planning and Health workshop in the fall of 2009
- **The NCLGA Executive passed six resolutions over the past two years.** Three were passed by UBCM 2008, while three more were passed in 2009.
  - *2008 Resolution Topics:* Incentives for accessible/inclusive Businesses, Incentives to create universally accessible housing; incentives for accessible transportation.
  - *2009 Resolution Topics:* Continued funding of MUTN as a provincial initiative; Encouragement that Communities include MUTN principles into their Official Community Plans; Encouragement that Communities use the CAN-CSA B651 Accessibility of the Built Environment Standard
- The Initiative has encouraged the communities to include MUTN Principles into their official community plans and several have begun this process. MUTN formed a sub-committee including 2010 Legacies Now, the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, UBCM, Smart Growth BC and the Seniors Secretariat to develop an **Age-Friendly-Disability-Friendly Official Community Planning Tool Kit** which will show how to include age-friendly, disability-friendly, universal design principles. The on-line Tool Kit will be launched on-line by December 2009.
- The Initiative developed a **Livable-Inclusive Universal Communities Assessment Tool**© that can be used by all communities in BC and North America (See Appendix)
- The Initiative influenced provincial policy makers, government staff and others about best practices in public building and space accessibility as well as on visitable housing. The Initiative will be meeting with BC Housing, CMHC and others to move forward with these concepts.
- MUTN developed the **“Prince George Visitable Housing Declaration”** that is now being transmitted around the world and influencing policy (see Appendix)
- Working to change rail transportation issues across Northern BC where currently many train stations are inaccessible
- Was highlighted on the National United Way website as a successful project

## 4. ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF PARTICIPATING COMMUNITIES

### PARTICIPATION OF THE COMMUNITIES

The North Central Local Government Association encompasses over 40 “communities” or entities that include cities, districts, regional districts, towns, and villages. (In the spring of 2009, the association became the “local government association” so that it could also have First Nations communities as members if they wished.) All NCLGA communities were invited to participate in the Initiative in 2007. All of the communities have sent letters of support for the Initiative and when invited to voluntarily contribute funds (9cents per capita) toward the Initiative in the first year, 25 communities contributed. In the second year we suggested that instead of contributing to the central MUTN Initiative, that they commit funding to their local initiative including considering a line item in their budget for on-going support to their local MUTN Initiative.

All the communities, except the Peace River Regional District have identified a NCLGA Liaison to the Initiative. During the course of the project, we have also engaged the Kitimat Village. As well, Tatlayoko Lake in the Cariboo Regional District has become an identified participating community as it has structured its own MUTN Committee.

In total we have 41 NCLGA Primary Liaisons, of which 19/41 are elected officials; eight secondary NCLGA Liaisons of which three are mayors; twenty Community Liaisons of which 13 have a disability, five are seniors, one is both a senior and has a disability and one has a family member with a disability; five secondary Community Liaisons including three seniors, one with a disability and one representing a disability non-profit; and over the course of the project we had eight paid coordinators of which three remain in the positions. (Most were there due to MUP grants). In total we have 49 NCLGA Liaisons, 25 Community Liaisons and 3 current Paid Coordinators. In total, we have had 82 “Liaisons” to the Initiative over the period of 2007-09. This provides one indication of the “person power” involved in the effort, but we must also consider the committee members. If we assume that there are on average five committee members (other than the Liaisons) and we have 26 “active” communities (see below), then we have another 130 people involved for a total of 82 plus 130 = 212 people. This number does not account for non-committee members who are known to be advocates such as various elected officials, businesses etc.

<b>LIASONS</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>
NCLGA Liaisons	49
Community Liaisons	25 (8 Seniors)
Paid Coordinators (Nov 09)	3
Paid Coordinators (2007-09)	8
Total Liaisons (2007-09)	82

Activity Levels have varied across the communities over the 27 month period. Some were early adopters (2007-08), some were mid adopters (2008-09) while others have been late adopters (Mid-Late 2009) and some have not become active to our knowledge. Twenty-six of the communities have been highly involved, 10 communities have had minimal involvement or only beginning the process, seven have had no involvement.

**Table 2: Activity Levels of NCLGA Communities 2007-09**

Community Type	Total Number	Active	Minimal or Beginning	No Activity Known	Activity Waning
City	7	7			2
District	14	9	4	1	2
Regional District	7	2	2	3	
Town	2	1	1		
Village	10	5	3	2	
Other	2	1		1	
Total	42	26	10	7	4

The Table above shows activity levels of the various community types. “Active” communities include 7/7 Cities, 9/14 Districts, 2/7 Regional Districts, ½ Towns, 4/10 Villages, and ½ other. Four communities are showing waning activity levels. One assumption for this waning activity level is due to the end of their MUP grant. In total 26/42 or 62% of the communities are “active”.

**Our results are very positive as the initial goal was to have six (14%) communities on board: so we have well exceeded that goal.**

This analysis provides good information for future intervention activities to help communities move forward or to keep moving forward especially targeted at the “minimal-beginning” group, the “no activity” group and the “activity waning” group. However, this also indicates we must also ensure on-going support for the “Active” group so that they do not become part of the “Activity Waning” group.

### Site Visits/Specialized Meeting Interventions by the Project Director

The Project Director provided various “on-site” interventions. Some communities received more interventions from the Project Director than others did. This was due to a variety of reasons including amount of time and resources that the Initiative had as well as specific requests made by the communities. Many of the communities also attended the various workshops that were held by the Project Director, meetings at UBCM/NCMA or attended Liaison meetings so to save resources; the Project Director also was able to meet with people at these kinds of meetings. In total, the Project Director made 42 site visits with some communities receiving 2 or 3 visits while others (many of whom did not communicate an interest in activity) received none. During these visits, the Project Director made three presentations to Council, had specific meetings with Mayors, and was asked to make three special presentations (presentations to chambers of commerce, strategic planning workshops. Although the Project Director was regularly available for emails and coaching calls with the Liaisons to answer any questions over the Phase I period, starting in July 2009, with a limited budget and no funding available for site visits, she indicated to the communities that she would offer “one-hour phone coaching sessions” which seven communities requested between July-Nov 2009. Many of the communities brought together their committees and/or mayors and other councilors for these meetings. A table showing which communities received these interventions is provided in the Appendix.

### Grants Received By Communities

One of the reasons that the communities were so successful was due to grants that they received to support their efforts. During the MUTN Phase I period, there were several granting opportunities available. Receiving the 2010 Legacies Now MUP grant was a particularly good predictor of a community that would become highly active. Many of the communities used the funds to hire a coordinator to assist with the work and to assist in conducting a community evaluation and in assist in developing a strategic plan. One of the interventions provided by MUTN was to alert the communities about various grants. This was done through our bi-weekly e-news, via information placed on our website as well as helping the communities “connect-the-dots” to grants during coaching sessions, liaison calls, workshops, and site visits. Generally, the most successful MUTN communities were those that received grants. Many communities indicated that they had gained knowledge of the grants from MUTN. The following table indicates the grants received that were tracked. What we have not tracked are any other grants they may have received during this period. One of the things that was encouraged was to “dovetail” into other grants that were not “accessibility-seniors-disability” specific such as infrastructure, planning grants, etc but to enfold these concepts into anything that the town was involved with. We

also know that several of the communities received tourism-related grants and made town improvements to visitors' centers during this period.

**TABLE 3: GRANTS RECEIVED BY COMMUNITIES**

<b>Grant Type</b>	<b>Number of Communities</b>
2010 Legacies MUP	23
Age-Friendly Planning	2
Community Development	28
BC Healthy Communities	4
Federal Enabling Accessibility 2008	7
Towns for Tomorrow	16
Local Motion	10
UBCM	4
Rick Hansen Let's Play	Approx 4
ACT Now Seniors Community Parks	Approx 4
Spirit Squares	11
BC Gaming Commission	One known
BC Housing: Seniors/Disability	Approx 4
New Horizons for Seniors Capital Grant	13
New Horizons for Seniors Comm Participation	5

See Appendix a listing of the type of grants each community received.

## Community Accomplishments: Changes Made to their Communities

Several Communities across the North are making incredible changes. The following information provides highlights of their achievements. In many cases much more is going on in each community but may not be captured since reporting is voluntary. Oftentimes, information is collected during a site visit or during the Liaison calls if they participate. What is reflected here are “project accomplishments”, rather than changes in participation, attitudes, etc.

MUTN also gathered information on the communities to develop “community profiles” which showcase community priorities, process and outcomes. (See attached in Appendix). These will be posted on the MUTN website and will also serve as tools for the communities themselves to use as promotional pieces for their own work.

- **Burns Lake:** Mayor and Council toured the town in wheelchairs to gain an appreciation of the problems of accessibility. Conducted an assessment of the downtown area; constructing an accessible trail along the lake.
- **Cariboo Regional District:** taking a regional approach to the MUTN Initiative and focusing on economic development. Seeing making trails accessible and marketing this as a key opportunity. Conducted an accessible trails feasibility study for the region. Have made some regional district fishing areas and a local museum accessible. Also working on making outdoor toilet facilities accessible along highways.
- **Chetwynd:** Has produced an incredible video outlining their MUTN assessment and implementation over the past year. There is clear evidence that the elected officials, town council and the town Engineer, planners, department of recreation have changed their attitudes and practices toward a more universal design approach. Our understanding is that MUTN provided the first opportunity for the voices of older people and persons with disabilities to be heard and changes made as a result. Many other communities have seen the video and would like to use it in their communities. \***Chetwynd and Tumbler Ridge:** both developed video presentations on accessibility and inclusion
- **Dawson Creek:** conducted an extensive community assessment survey, installed accessible bus shelters, and addressed accessibility in its new arena. Received funding to develop a seniors’ park, completed accessibility changes to City Hall, this year working on a major renovation to an old school which will become a community centre and incorporating universal design principles. Was chosen as a site for the 2010 Legacies Now Business-Tourism assessment.

- **Fort St. John:** working on changes in policy regarding visitable housing, has made changes to its cultural centre, downtown sidewalks, to their City Hall, developed an accessible parking program, installed accessible doors and an assistive listening system at the cultural centre and is influencing the design of its EnerPlex, chosen as a site for new BC Housing seniors units. This year plan to work on OCP; Fort St. John was a site chosen by 2010 Legacies Now to conduct accessibility evaluations of tourism affiliated businesses.
- **The Hazeltons:** Conducted an assessment of both New Hazelton and Old Hazelton. Seeking funding to make Lion's Hall accessible, working on strategic plan, registered for 10x10 challenge, local bakery is hiring people with disabilities, developing a directory of services, received support from local businesses to move forward with Initiative, working to get local First Nations groups on board, plan on working on visitable housing, recreation facilities and outdoor recreation
- **Houston:** Received a Local Motion Grant and enhanced trails to make them accessible and also to connect their seniors' housing to the downtown area. Working on their OCP this year
- **Kitimat:** Conducted an extensive community survey and developed a Strategic Plan, have built an new swimming pool facility that is accessible, purchased and installed wheelchair accessible doors at Tamitak Sports Jubilee Complex
- **McBride:** renovated their recreation facility as well as their downtown park and these facilities accessible. Received many comments from tourists about the overall improvement to McBride. They have received thousands of dollars in funding due to their affiliation with the Initiative
- **McKenzie:** received funding for eight seniors assistive living housing units; made their ski chalet accessible; working on accessibility of their recreation facility, and working on making a church hall accessible. Also ensuring new Spirit Square is accessible.
- **100 Mile House:** conducted an extensive community survey, made trails around a lake accessible, studied pedestrian linkages between seniors' housing and downtown, looking at downtown accessibility
- **Prince George:** conducted a seniors housing survey, worked with 2010 Legacies Now and conducted an assessment of all tourism related businesses, developed innovative accessible community gardens, established a program place to make all bus stops accessible, developed a sidewalk rehabilitation program and updating curb cuts and sidewalks; received funding for a seniors' park.

- **Prince Rupert:** Installed automated doors at recreation facility, improved curb cuts, installed an audible traffic signal, installed seniors outdoor gym, developed a calendar for sale and included older people and people with disabilities in the photos to highlight their City activities, have received funding for seniors assistive living units
- **Quesnel:** Did an extensive community assessment and was first to develop a Strategic Plan in the MUTN Initiative Has made extensive changes to their recreation facilities including the inclusion of accessible weight-lifting equipment, changes to their curling facility, and changes to parking and sidewalks in the recreation sites and created an accessible dock at a public beach. They renovated a rodeo facility, and ensured their Spirit Square was accessible. Cottonwood Park: in the process of making the heritage site accessible. They also conducted a study on employment and persons with disabilities; held the first accessible golf tournament of the North in 2008 and this year working on an accessibility recognition program for businesses. First MUTN community to adopt the CSA B651 Standard for design of their municipal facilities and infrastructure.
- **Regional District of Fraser-Fort George:** Have completed extensive renovations to the Reid Lake Community Centre: including making the main entrance a no-step entrance and installing an accessible washroom amongst other key accessibility improvements. **One patron commented that it was the first time she could enter the building together with her friends and not have to go through a separate entrance.**
- **Smithers:** Completed a community assessment and developed projects including completing curb cuts at a busy downtown intersection, working on an accessible bridge over a river for a local trail. Jointly established accessible transportation system between Smithers and Telkwa.
- **Stewart** now has its first public accessible washroom! They also are making their central park accessible and as a result of these successes are taking off to do more!
- **Taylor:** Received a joint initiative grant to work with MUP and the Age-Friendly team as one of three pilots in the project. Assessed municipal facilities and local businesses.
- **Tatlayoko Lake Accessible Trail:** This community shows how partnerships really work! An elected official, Alex Bracewell, spearheaded the idea of developing 210 km of accessible trails in the Cariboo Regional District by 2010. He and the community worked with Gibraltar Mines who supplied belting material that serves as the surface material for the trail near Tatlayoko Lake. Since the opening of the trail, the CRD has completed a feasibility study determining an accessible trail system for the region which will

boost the economy. Since April Alex Bracewell has built a visitable home and is working to make it outfitting business inclusive and accessible for persons with disabilities and older adults so that they can participate in wilderness adventures.

- **Telkwa:** has made major changes to its seniors transportation system with Smithers, made changes to its seniors and community centres, businesses are hiring people with disabilities, developed an accessible walkway and fishing area along its river frontage and is working with a developer on a visitable housing project. Will be receiving Federal and Provincial funding for a seniors housing project
- **Terrace:** Conducted an extensive community survey and developed a strategic plan. Made several changes to their City Hall and other municipal facilities, purchased Zoom Text software for public access computers at the library, and worked on making their city website more accessible. Installed a seniors park (which is used by all sorts of adults), has launched an Initiative with their Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club on Accessible/Inclusive Businesses and has received funding from the province to build a centrally located housing development geared toward seniors and persons with disabilities. The neat thing about it is that it is walkable to the downtown area: making their community even more "livable" and attractive. There is a new 55+ housing complex that has been built that is all visitable and a single family home that was built to be visitable was located during a site visit by the Project Director so now used as an example. As well a new accessible walking path in a new riverbank park has been installed. Terrace has also made considerable changes with businesses: Tim Horton's: Terrace was the first community in the MUTN Initiative to approach a local business. Also approached the Provincial Highways so that changes were made to a pedestrian walkway along a bridge to make it more accessible and ultimately safer for everyone. Developed taxi saver program.
- **Tumbler Ridge:** more and more businesses are becoming accessible. Recently the pharmacy did a great renovation with wider aisles, accessible entrances. The pharmacist/owner said the renovations have made it a better place to work and everyone loves to come in now. They also have received funding to build housing for seniors/persons with disabilities which will be centrally located within easy walking distance to downtown making the community very "livable". They have also recently completed their shared youth-seniors space: a great gathering place used by seniors during the day and youth in the evenings. They installed a new accessible unisex washroom here and they plan on doing intergenerational activities in the future. A major issue is increasing support services for seniors and working with Northern Health on this issue. Another major issue they are working on is developing an accessible transportation program. Council has been working with a developer to build visitable homes. Recently received funding to enhance trail accessibility in the area.

- **Valemount:** Incorporating universal design into their downtown revitalization plans
- **Vanderhoof:** developed the “Bean on Burrard” a coffee house that employees persons with disabilities
- **Wells:** conducting a community assessment, installing a lift
- **Williams Lake:** Have been working to make improvements to their airport, have made considerable improvements to downtown sidewalks, curb cuts and crossings, received \$300,000 to improve Kiwanis Park including considerable accessibility improvements including an accessible play ground, Starting to work on OCP; developed an Accessibility Award for Businesses, working with local developers re: visitability Also worked on wheelchair accessible taxi service and an employment program.
- **Many communities are starting to address rail, air and inter-community bus transportation**
- **Many communities are incorporating MUTN principles into their official community plans this year**
- **Numerous Communities:** developed and conducted community assessments: focus groups, and on-line surveys
- **Several businesses** have made changes and are reaping the benefits of the increased customer and employee base. **Tumbler Ridge** is a model in this regard with three businesses making major changes.
- **Over 100 press releases, news articles, radio and television spots occurred across the North through the efforts of the participating communities**



Fort St. John: Mayor Bruce Lantz, Community Liaison Lori Slater, Project Director Laurie Ringaert

## 5. MUTN PHASE I: EVALUATION RESULTS

The evaluation of MUTN Phase I (2007-09) consisted of a number of methods that occurred between July and November 2009:

- A. Project Evaluation Based On Logic Model: Outcomes of Proposed Activities for Year Two
- B. Evaluation of MUTN by Key Stakeholders
- C. Evaluation of the Status of Community Liveability: Age-Friendliness/Disability-Friendliness
- D. Reflections by the Project Director, Core Project Team and others in the Steering Committee

### A) PROJECT EVALUATION BASED ON LOGIC MODEL: OUTCOMES OF PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FOR YEAR TWO

Our proposed Logic Model for 2008-09 included one major goal and several objectives or activities. These included the following:

*Major Goal: To ensure that work begun in Year One would continue into Year Two.*

*Major Activities or Objectives:*

- **OBJECTIVE ONE:** provide a series of targeted workshops to assist in community capacity building for MUTN communities, town planners, home builders, home buyers, developers, code officials and others
- **OBJECTIVE TWO:** develop an employment of persons with disabilities and small business strategy through seeking funding from the Vancouver foundation
- **OBJECTIVE THREE:** develop a community accessibility/inclusiveness rating scale
- **OBJECTIVE FOUR:** conduct site visits to NCLGA communities and provide coaching, on-site assistance with the MUTN process

- **OBJECTIVE FIVE:** build on the current MUTN website and provide resources, funding opportunities, networking opportunities for the participating communities
- **OBJECTIVE SIX:** continue to build community networking and capacity via on-going development of the MUTN network including monthly conference calls and on-line form
- **OBJECTIVE SEVEN:** establish a stronger relationship with the aboriginal communities
- **OBJECTIVE EIGHT:** hold two face to face meetings of all participating project liaisons to share lessons learned, successes, what works, what doesn't, and discuss next steps
- **OBJECTIVE NINE:** continue to develop relationships with provincial and municipal stakeholders to assist in region-wide policy developments, coordinate efforts
- **OBJECTIVE TEN:** participate in relevant conferences to promote the project, network and also to learn new ideas to bring to the project
- **OBJECTIVE ELEVEN:** conduct on-going and periodic evaluations via monthly on-line reports as well as one year comprehensive evaluation
- **OBJECTIVE TWELVE:** work in partnership with other initiatives to join forces and dovetail MUTN activities so as not to confuse communities, but rather to enhance activities to create better communities for all

The following details the results of our proposed Goal and Objectives for Year II.

## Major Goal Results

One of our major goals in for 2008 was *to ensure that work begun in Year One would continue into Year Two*. We had proposed that we would work with early adopters, mid-adopters and later and non-adopters.

RESULTS: We have met this objective.

As a result of continued funding received by the United Way and other funders, we were able to continue with the MUTN Initiative across the North. The early adopters generally continued to strengthen their work and make significant gains. Several of these communities had received 2010 Legacies Now MUP grants that had motivated them. Two of our early adopters did slow down activities once their MUP grants were completed. However, we are now seeing a reactivation of activities in these communities now even though they don't have a MUP grant. Several of our mid-adopters or original non-adopters received MUP grants that motivated them to begin their processes this year. However, others who did not receive the MUP Grants at all, and were non-adopters have even recently begun to come on board in earnest. At this time we still have some non-adopters or some communities who are generally inactive.



Mackenzie: Core Project Team member, Pat Harris providing advice at a site visit

## RESULTS OF PROPOSED MAJOR ACTIVITIES

- **OBJECTIVE ONE: PROVIDE A SERIES OF TARGETED WORKSHOPS TO ASSIST IN COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING FOR MUTN COMMUNITIES, TOWN PLANNERS, HOME BUILDERS, HOME BUYERS, DEVELOPERS, CODE OFFICIALS AND OTHERS**

RESULTS: We did meet and exceed this objective. We held several workshops throughout the year and a large conference in April 2009.



- **October 2-3 2008: “INCREASING EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND OLDER ADULTS THROUGH COMMUNITY AND SMALL BUSINESS CHANGES” AND YEAR II KICK START WORKSHOP held in Prince George.** Main target audience was our MUTN Liaisons. Over 30 people attended representing 20 communities. Ten non-liaisons also attended and included business interests and non-profit organizations. See agenda (Appendix) Focus was both on employment as well as on changes to make businesses more accessible and inclusive to employees and customers. During the workshop we also provided a session on how to develop MUTN Strategic plans. We had several speakers from provincial agencies, representatives from business and non-profits.  
We provided resources as handouts and also posted those on our website especially for those how could not attend. We sponsored any MUTN Liaison who wished to attend if their community was unable to pay for their expenses. One of the highlights of the workshop is the allocated time where we had asked the MUTN communities to present and share their accomplishments. All felt this was a very critical part of the workshop. Several had prepared PowerPoint presentations which were then posted on the website. A certificate was provided. Press releases were sent out and media coverage occurred. The following are comments received on the question:

- ***What was the key thing you learned?***
  - *People are onboard*
  - *Wide spectrum of ideas/ Refreshed ideas*
  - *The availability of Grants/Grants Reminder*
  - *Through education and time: Cooperation, communication and perseverance*
  - *Change in awareness that help prioritize decision for funds and projects in communities*
  - *About different supporting organizations and potential Partnerships*
  - *Many ideas from communities.*
  - *Knowing we are part of a very dynamic and committed group with a common goal.*
  - *Ways to do new things in new ways.*
  - *Many ways to improve the town.*
  - *Govt. resources.*
  - *Assessment tools availability.*
- **January 14, 2009: REGIONAL NORTH EAST ONE DAY WORKSHOP:** held in Dawson Creek. The intent of this workshop was to bring together the MUTN Liaisons and Committee Members from a region so that they could share information, meet each other as well as receive updates from MUTN Project Director. The intent also was to try to use the Project Director's time and MUTN Budget resources efficiently and effectively. The Project Director facilitated several team building exercises, provided updates, discussed strategic planning, and asked for sharing from the communities represented. The Project Director then led the group on a tour of the new arena/recreation facility in Dawson Creek and showed the participants good and bad universal design features. In all approximately 13 people attended representing: Dawson Creek, Pouce Coupe, Chetwynd, Fort St. John, Taylor and Tumbler Ridge. All indicated that they felt like they knew each other better and would feel comfortable in continuing sharing information and meeting amongst themselves. One positive outcome that occurred after this meeting was that Pouce Coupe, which had been inactive, began attending the Dawson Creek meetings and began to ramp up their activities in 2009.



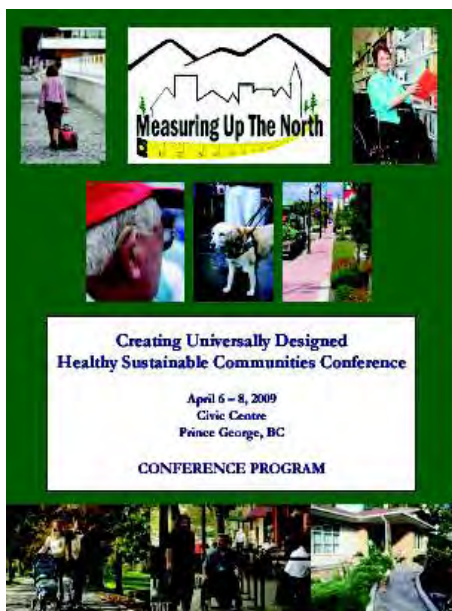
DAWSON CREEK NORTH EAST REGIONAL MUTN MEETING of PROJECT LIAISONS AND COORDINATORS: George Hartford, Tumbler Ridge Committee Member; Rhonda Smith, Taylor Coordinator; Peter Thomas, Pouce Coupe NCLGA Liaison; David Price, Tumbler Ridge Coordinator; Laurie Ringaert, Project Director, Duncan Redfearn, Dawson Creek NCLGA Liaison, Keir Gervais, Taylor NCLGA Liaison. Front Row: Dennis Mracek, Dawson Creek Community Liaison, Lori Slater, Fort St. John Community Liaison.



Dawson Creek's new Sportsplex and accessible swimming pool

- [March 19, 2009: "Connecting the Dots Workshop" Held in Fort St. John.](#) The Project Director was invited by the Fort St. John MUTN Committee to provide an all day workshop that included a) a facilitation session on connecting the dots (agencies and initiatives with MUTN) b) The Business Case for Accessibility and Inclusion (luncheon presentation) C) Visitable Housing and D) Strategic Planning Session. Over 25 people attended. The Mayor and media were present for the lunch time event. The Fort St. John Committee augmented this event with funding received from the BC Healthy Communities Seed grant.

- **APRIL 6-8, 2009: “CREATING UNIVERSALLY DESIGNED HEALTHY SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES “ HELD AT THE PRINCE GEORGE CIVIC**



CENTRE. This was our major capacity building event of our two year Initiative. We opened up to the entire Province, to Alberta and even across Canada. Over 175 people attended. This event included internationally known key note speakers (Eleanor Smith (Atlanta), Jake Pauls (Washington, DC) , Bob Topping (Mississauga), and Laurie Ringaert), lectures, short workshops, Think Tanks, poster presentations, a tour of Winton Global homes, a tradeshow, planned networking events, and informal networking. The conference also included two half day and a full day workshop. We were able to address many of our proposed targeted workshops as described in our proposal to the United Way (Universal Design of Public Buildings and Spaces, Universal Design of Visitable Housing, Planning Age-Friendly, Universally-Designed Communities, Planning for Accessible Tourism, and Conducting Universal Design Community Assessments (focus on Parks assessment)). This event was highly successful. Due to the comprehensiveness of this activity, a full report is included in the

Appendix. Targeted funding was obtained for this event from the City of Prince George, the Real Estate Foundation of BC as well as ACT (Federation of Canadian Municipalities).



**October 17, 2009: Site Visit to Chetwynd:**

The Project Director was invited to Chetwynd to view the community's accomplishments and also to provide feedback on ideas for next steps for future projects in Chetwynd.

**October 18-19 2009: Site Visit to Tumbler Ridge:**

The Project Director was invited to Tumbler Ridge for two days to provide an assessment of the community's progress as well as to provide ideas for next steps. The Project Director provided a presentation to the Tumbler Ridge Seniors Advisory/MUTN Committee which includes Mayor Larry Evans.

**October 2009: Site Visit to Terrace**

The Project Director was invited to Terrace to view the community's various accomplishments in the community and to assist the Committee in planning for next steps. The Project Director was invited as the keynote speaker at the Rotary/Chamber of Commerce Luncheon where she presented on the "Universal Design of our Towns and Businesses: the Business Case for Accessibility and Inclusion". The intent was that this event would launch the Terrace MUTN Committee's accessibility of businesses project. The Project Director was also invited to speak to the City of Terrace Council meeting regarding areas that they can address as a local government.

**October 27, 2009: MUTN Western Regional Meeting** held in Terrace. The intent of this half day meeting was to bring together the MUTN Liaisons and Committee Members from this region so that they could share information, meet each other as well as receive updates from MUTN Project Director. Liaisons attended from Terrace, Kitimat, Stewart and Prince Rupert. Presentations on accomplishments and future plans were made by all the Liaisons who attended.

**Our Success Brought Us More Requests from the "South"!** MUTN is seen as a "model" by many in the rest of the province. The Project Director was asked to visit and provide workshops in two other provincial locations. Expenses were paid for by the host communities.

- A) **November 14, 2008, Parksville:** Several communities who had received funding from 2010 Legacies Now MUP attended this event. The Project Director was asked to provide a workshop on the principles of MUTN, to assist the disparate communities to form a network

similar to MUTN, to facilitate discussion on mutual goals that the communities could work on (including tourism) and to facilitate some strategic planning. Approximately 20 people attended this event.

- B) **March 7-13, 2009: Columbia Valley:** This three day site visit and one day workshop was hosted and by Glenys Snow-Dymond and the ACE (Access in the Community for Equality) Committee who raised funds to cover costs of the visit. The Project Director was asked to visit Mayors and Councils and strategic community leaders in Canal Flats, Kimberley, Invermere, and Radium Hot Springs. (nearly 30 people were addressed) The idea was to inform them about the MUTN Initiative, to help “sell” the idea to them to help support the work of the local committee. The Project Director was asked to provide a one day workshop on ***“Universal Design: The Economic Imperative”*** which was held at the College of the Rockies. Over 35 people attended: more than anticipated in a packed room. This showed the interest and enthusiasm for the concepts.



Meeting at Canal Flats Council Chamber

What were our Challenges? More regional meetings in the central, south and south-Eastern regions would have been beneficial. However due to limited time and resources we were unable to do this.

➤ **OBJECTIVE TWO: DEVELOP AN EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND SMALL BUSINESS STRATEGY THROUGH SEEKING FUNDING FROM THE VANCOUVER FOUNDATION**

RESULTS: We were able to address this objective but in a different way from planned

We did not receive the full amount of funding that we had requested from the Vancouver Foundation so we could not carry out our full scale strategy. With the \$35,000 that we did receive, we were able to host our October workshop and built the capacity and excitement in the communities about employment and small business accessibility and inclusion. (See above) However we did have focus on these areas during the year. We emphasized these areas during site visits, Liaison conference calls and in our on-line community report surveys. We also developed a “kudos” page where communities could “boast” about small businesses that had made a difference. Tumbler Ridge and Terrace particularly focused on this area and highlighted businesses on our website. Tumbler Ridge developed a partnership with their Chamber of Commerce. Several businesses in Tumbler Ridge have made significant changes in accessibility and are also now hiring persons with disabilities and older adults. Terrace launched a focus on business in October 2009 beginning with an invited presentation by the MUTN Project Director to the Terrace Rotary Club/Chamber of Commerce. Over 50 people were in attendance to hear *“Universal Design of our Towns and Businesses: An Economic Imperative”*. Quesnel received external funding to hire a project coordinator (a person with a disability) to conduct a study on employment issues facing persons with disabilities in that city.

The Cariboo Regional District is focusing on the economic development advantage of accessibility and inclusion and is planning a regional accessible trails system, planning on focusing on local businesses and developing marketing materials. We also worked closely with 2010 Legacies Now Accessible Tourism project on assessment of tourism-related businesses. The Project Director provided feedback on the draft assessment tool, assisted in setting up the assessment in Prince George and assisted in connecting Legacies with the Northern Communities. Over 688 Northern BC



and Queen Charlotte Island businesses are planned to be assessed by 2010 Legacies Now over 2008-09. As was mentioned previously, the Project Director also made presentations on the business case for accessibility and inclusion in Fort St. John as well as in the Invermere areas, as well as transmitting this message in all of her workshops and site visits. She also wrote an article on this subject for the NCLGA Newsletter in the spring of 2009. (Photo: Kory Heyland: MUTN Project Assistant)

➤ **OBJECTIVE THREE: DEVELOP A COMMUNITY ACCESSIBILITY/INCLUSIVENESS RATING SCALE**

RESULTS: This objective was met.

Due to the need to develop a simple community assessment scale that encompasses both age-friendly and disability friendly concepts, the Project Director developed the “Livable-Inclusive-UD Report Card” © 2009. (See Appendix). A review of the literature and environmental scan showed that such an instrument did not exist. It is a 19 question tool to assist communities in determining their current level. The Report Card gives a rating of A, B, C, D. The Project Director is piloting testing this with the communities and will perfect the tool later this fall. Pilot testing showed that the communities generally rate themselves as “C” or “D” ... In other words... .They still have a long way to go. The Project Director presented preliminary results at the NCLGA-AGM in May 2009

➤ **OBJECTIVE FOUR: CONDUCT SITE VISITS TO NCLGA COMMUNITIES AND PROVIDE COACHING, ON-SITE ASSISTANCE WITH THE MUTN PROCESS**

RESULTS: This year the Project Director did not conduct as many site visits as in Year One. This was due to time constraints (several capacity building events) as well as financial constraints. However, the Project Director provides monthly updates and group coaching and mentoring at the monthly Liaison Conference Calls. She also announced one hour coaching calls for the communities to tap into starting in July 09. Several communities are taking advantage of these calls and several have brought together committee members and even their Mayors into the calls.

## Measuring Up The North Phase I Final Report December 2009

### 2008-09 Site Visits included:

- August 2008: McBride, Valemount
- August 2008: Tatlayoko Lake
- November 2008: Quesnel
- January 2009: Dawson Creek, Fort St. John; MUTN North East Regional Meeting
- March 2009: Fort St. John
- May 2009: Quesnel
- Oct 2009: Chetwynd, Tumbler Ridge, Terrace, Regional District Fraser Fort George: Reid Lake; MUTN Western Regional Meeting



Hazelton Site Visit: Laurie Ringaert, Project Director and Braunwyn Henwood, Community Liaison

➤ **OBJECTIVE FIVE: BUILD ON THE CURRENT MUTN WEBSITE AND PROVIDE RESOURCES, FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES, NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PARTICIPATING COMMUNITIES**

RESULTS: We have met this objective

Over the past year we have continued to enhance the website ([www.measureupthenorth.com](http://www.measureupthenorth.com)) including posting of new resources as well as presentations and resources from our workshops and conference. This year we also tried some innovations: we posted an audio file of a media conference we held; we posted a video of a speech a presenter made and we added a feature for people to join our list-serv. We also continue to encourage our communities to use our MUTN Forum. Thus far this has not been as popular, but we are examining strategies to increase participation.



➤ **OBJECTIVE SIX: CONTINUE TO BUILD COMMUNITY NETWORKING AND CAPACITY VIA ON-GOING DEVELOPMENT OF THE MUTN NETWORK INCLUDING MONTHLY CONFERENCE CALLS AND ON-LINE FORM**

RESULTS: We have met this objective.

The monthly phone calls have proven to be invaluable to several of our liaisons. They say that they not only feel like they are sharing information, they are also feeling “rejuvenated” by the calls. They indicate that they appreciate the coaching provided by the Project Director. They say they appreciate the new ideas that they learn from each other, the problem solving and in many cases, “not re-inventing the wheel”. Our on-line forum is not used frequently at this time. The Project Director has been encouraging the Liaisons to use it more often. This forum could be critical for future sustainability of the network especially without future funding.

➤ **OBJECTIVE SEVEN: ESTABLISH A STRONGER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES**

RESULTS: We have more work to do under this objective.

We had established an initial connection with an Aboriginal Leader in the North in 2008; unfortunately both his and our resources were stretched this year. We had also had a discussion with Kitimaat Village late last year and they felt they would come on board but have not become engaged as planned. However, they did write a letter of support indicating that the work we are doing in the “hubs” assists aboriginal communities that come to those areas for goods and services.

Both of our supporting partners, 2010 Legacies Now and the Age-Friendly Communities Initiative (through the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport) are setting engagement with aboriginal communities as a priority strategy over the next year and we have been in discussions with both of these supporting g partners. 2010 Legacies Now actually hired a consultant to help with develop the strategy and the Project Director was asked to provide a key informant interview on the subject to the consultant. From the community level, however, some of our communities have successfully engaged aboriginal people into the process. In particular, the Hazeltons have shown leadership in this area. Engaging aboriginal communities is an important area that should be pursued in the future. One important outcome to highlight however, is that Winton Global Homes has convinced a local First Nations community to build visitable homes and it appears that they will be considering this for a proposed large development in the North.

**OBJECTIVE EIGHT: HOLD TWO FACE TO FACE MEETINGS OF ALL PARTICIPATING PROJECT LIAISONS TO SHARE LESSONS LEARNED, SUCCESSES, WHAT WORKS, WHAT DOESN'T, AND DISCUSS NEXT STEPS**

RESULTS: We have met this objective.

We did hold our workshop in October as well as the large Conference in April 2009 where all the project liaisons had time to share achievements and lessons learned. Some Liaisons met together at our NE Regional Meeting and some met together at the NCLGA Convention (if they were NCLGA Liaisons). The Liaisons all say that meeting face to face, as a service offered by the Initiative, is one of the most valuable aspects for them. These meetings provide camaraderie on an important topic, provide new ideas, help solve mutual problems, and provide friendly competition. It must be remembered that not only is working on these concepts relatively new in many of these communities, many of these people are “new” to these concepts. At this time there is no other local, regional or provincial network of this kind.



Village of Burns Lake MUTN Team: Lyle Graham, Community Liaison, Councillor Lianne Olson, Thomas Pfister, NCLGA Liaison Regional District Bulkley Nechako, Representative from the Lakes Economic Development Association

➤ **OBJECTIVE NINE: CONTINUE TO DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL STAKEHOLDERS TO ASSIST IN REGION-WIDE POLICY DEVELOPMENTS, COORDINATE EFFORTS**

RESULTS: We have met or exceeded this objective.

- MUTN was influential in the development of six resolutions that have potential impact on provincial and municipal stakeholders. Three of these resolutions were passed at the 2008 NCLGA AGM and then were passed by UBCM in December 2008. Three more were passed by at the 2009 NCLGA AGM and have been forwarded to UBCM.
  - 2008 Resolution on incentives for universally designed housing
  - 2008 Resolution on accessible transportation
  - 2008 Resolution on incentives for businesses to become accessible and inclusive
  - 2009 Resolution on Official Community Plans
  - 2009 Resolution on using the CAN-CSA-B651 Accessibility of the Built Environment Standard instead of just the BC Building Code
  - 2009 Resolution on continuation of the Measuring Up The North Initiative
- Over this past year we have established relationships with several entities. We established stronger relationships with Northern Health, the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport (who have both become official supporting partners and on our Steering Committee since September 2008). We have been engaging in several meetings with the Age-Friendly Communities Initiative, Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport). We have also engaged with Smart Growth BC (we contributed to the Healthy Communities Initiatives publication); and with the Fraser Basin Council: Smart Planning.
- We invited Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation BC and BC Housing to dialogue at our April Conference and this helped raise awareness with these entities about visitable housing. We also developed relationships with the Canadian Home Builders of the North, the City of Prince George, and the Prince George Council of Seniors as well as the Real Estate Institute of Northern British Columbia. By our raising awareness about visitable housing at a Canadian Home Builders Meeting, one of the builders, Winton Global Homes, became quite excited about visitable housing. As a result, they changed how they were designing and marketing their homes. They also were highly involved with our conference and hosted a tour of their manufacturing plant to showcase the design changes they had made. The BC Northern Real Estate Board was also highly involved with our conference including planning and presenting.

- We have also been strengthening our relationship with 2010 Legacies Now with regular meetings including sharing of ideas and planning, contributions to the development of their new MUP tool and accessible tourism and parks tools and on mutual community participants.
- As a result of our April Conference, an **Age-Friendly/Disability-Friendly Official Community Planning Tool** sub-committee was struck from our Steering Committee that includes the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, 2010 Legacies Now, UBCM, The Seniors' Secretariat and Smart Growth BC. This Committee will be developing tools that all BC communities can use to incorporate age-friendly, disability-friendly, universal design concepts into their official community plans. Incorporation into the official community plans is critical so that these notions are carried out in all aspects of the community planning.
- We worked together with Smart Growth BC and Northern Health on a workshop: **"Linking Planning and Health"** that occurred in September 2009. It was a tele-workshop occurring in Prince George, Terrace and Dawson Creek sites. The intent was to bring together our MUTN Liaisons, planners and health professionals to understand the link between health and the built environment.
- We established a good relationship with the BC Recreation and Parks Association-Active Transportation and invited them to provide a workshop at our April conference.
- We established stronger relationships with the City of Prince George in the following ways:
  - The Project Director was asked to assist the City Social Planner, Chris Bone with focus groups and with development of a survey on seniors housing
  - The Project Director was invited to attend a workshop engaging Seniors in Dialogue with the City in November 2008
  - The Project Director attended the Smart Growth on the Ground –Prince George Sessions in the Spring of 2009
  - Members of the Core Project Team attended a meeting on homelessness organized by the City Social Planner
  - The Social Planner worked closely with MUTN in planning of the April Conference (serving on the Conference Planning Committee) and was able to use the capacity building provided by the conference to full fill one of her mandates. The City contributed funding toward the conference.
  - The Core Project Team worked with the City Transit Analyst who provided free low floor bus transportation for our April conference tour to Winton Global Homes
  - MUTN received an award of recognition from the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee



Village of Telkwa: NCLGA Liaison Councillor Jim Hiltz, Mayor Carmen Graf, and a MUTN Committee Member.

➤ **OBJECTIVE TEN: PARTICIPATE IN RELEVANT CONFERENCES TO PROMOTE THE PROJECT, NETWORK AND ALSO TO LEARN NEW IDEAS TO BRING TO THE PROJECT**

RESULTS: We have met this objective.

The Project Director attended and/or presented at the following conferences in 2008-09:

- Presenter & Exhibitor: UBCM Annual Conference Penticton, Sept 08
- Participant: Council of Seniors of BC Conference Vancouver, Sept 08
- Presenter & Exhibitor: NCLGA Annual Conference Dawson City, May09
- Presenter: 2009 Land Summit Conference, Whistler, May 09
- Accepted Abstract: European Union Accessible Tourism Conference, Vienna, Austria Sept 09 (did not attend)

The Core Project Team and Steering Committee also attended a variety of conferences and meetings during the course of their own business and often discussed the Initiative wherever they attended.

➤ **OBJECTIVE ELEVEN: CONDUCT ON-GOING AND PERIODIC EVALUATIONS VIA MONTHLY ON-LINE REPORTS AS WELL AS ONE YEAR COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION**

RESULTS: We have met this objective.

We have instituted a continuous evaluation process for the communities' progress as well as a program evaluation of MUTN Phase I occurring August-October 2009.

Continuous Community Evaluation: We set up a regular on-line reporting mechanism using a survey tool called Zoomerang. This allowed us to have an on-line survey where results could be easily aggregated for analysis. The service also creates PowerPoint presentations. We used this tool to assist us with the Livable-Inclusive-UD Report Card 2009 ©, an evaluation that took place in 2008 with our Liaisons as well as a planned evaluation for August-September 2009. One of the limitations is that these surveys are voluntary and we usually get only a small number participating. We offered a prize for them to participate with the Report Card and received a very large number of respondents. So prizes work!

Program Evaluation Phase I: We have developed an Evaluation Framework for our planned evaluation activities for August-October 2009. WE will be conducting a survey, conducting a limited number of interviews, analyze past reports, data records, past on-line community surveys, etc. This information will be invaluable for our strategic planning to be held in September-October 2009.

- **OBJECTIVE TWELVE: WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER INITIATIVES TO JOIN FORCES AND DOVETAIL MUTN ACTIVITIES SO AS NOT TO CONFUSE COMMUNITIES, BUT RATHER TO ENHANCE ACTIVITIES TO CREATE BETTER COMMUNITIES FOR ALL**

RESULTS: We have met this objective.

Our communities can be overwhelmed by the variety of initiatives that are occurring in their communities. One of our main goals is to “connect-the-dots” not only with the various Provincial Initiatives but also encouraging the communities to do this as well. For instance, we have brought together BC Healthy Communities, 2010 Legacies Now -Measuring UP and Accessible Tourism and Parks, The Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport including Age-Friendly Communities, and Northern Health to work together in partnership with us. A great result of this partnership was the April 2009 Conference: one of the goals of the conference was to bring together many concepts to show how they can all work together. As mentioned before we also have been influencing and bringing together Smart Growth BC, Fraser Basin Council-Smart Planning and BC Recreation and Parks-Active Transportation. We really feel that the message and principles of MUTN need to be “mainstreamed” into all of these initiatives: that there is a critical “tie-in” between all of these initiatives and age-friendly, disability-friendly, universal design is a pivotal component. As a result of our work, our MUTN Liaisons will be at the table at the “Linking Health and Planning “ Workshop hosted by Smart Growth BC , Northern Health and MUTN and they will also be important event planners and contributors to the Fraser Basin Council Sustainable Transportation Workshop in October. We were also very pleased to see the incorporation of MUTN principles and contribution into the “*Creating Healthy Communities Initiatives*” publication by Smart Growth BC in collaboration with the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport. This publication will be highlighted at the “Linking Health and Planning” workshop in September.



**Tatlayoko Lake Grand Opening August 2008:** Shown are several of the community members who helped build the site, several members of the Bracewell family including Alex Bracewell, Kary Fell, MUTN Community Liaison Cariboo Regional District, Laurie Ringaert, Project Director and Pat Harris, Core Project Team member.

## B) EVALUATION OF MUTN BY KEY STAKEHOLDERS

### INTRODUCTION

*“Without Measuring Up The North, certainly, we would have done none of this.”*

The evaluation plan was developed by the MUTN Evaluation Sub-Committee including Theresa Healy, Jodi Mucha, and Laurie Ringaert, using material generated at the onset of the project and through subsequent meetings and conversations over email.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of the MUTN Initiative in achieving its goals in its Phase I (2007-09) including effectiveness of the central services as well effectiveness at the community level. The evaluation determined goals for Phase II (2010-2012) and assisted with the MUTN Strategic Planning for Phase II. The evaluation also provided information to our current funders as to the outcomes, issues and successes of the Phase I. The Evaluation documents the activities and achievements of the MUTN initiative across Northern BC, assesses barriers and facilitators to community achievements within the MUTN initiative and supports the case for sustainability for the MUTN Initiative.

### METHODOLOGY

#### Methods:

- On-Line Survey to Liaisons, committee members, key community leaders and broader organizational leaders
- On-Line survey to Steering Committee members
- Key Informant Interviews of sample of Liaisons, key community leaders and Steering Committee members representing a range of perspectives and experiences
- Focus group of sample steering committee members to develop a collective retrospective and analysis
- Review of MUTN on-line surveys including monthly reports, Livable-Inclusive Communities report card tool survey, 2008 evaluations; workshop evaluations, Director’s reports, reports to funders, data collected on communities re: funding sources, participation in MUTN Events, etc.

**Sample:** All Liaisons were invited to participate in the on-line survey. We asked them to invite committee members and their Mayors and Councils and any key community leaders to also participate (snow ball technique). Key informant Interviews consisted of in-depth interviews with five liaisons. One focus group was held with a sub-set of the Steering Committee.

#### **Key Questions Addressed:**

- Did MUTN meet its objectives?
- What has been the level of involvement of the communities with MUTN?
- What are the key changes/outcomes/successes that have been made as a result of the MUTN Initiative globally as well as at the community level?
- How has MUTN assisted in making these changes in the North? What has been most helpful?
- What impact has the Initiative had on persons with disabilities or older adults?
- What impact has the Initiative had on the livability and economic development of the communities?
- What was a highlight of the Initiative to date?
- What did we learn?
- What is changing/what are we going to do differently, as a result of the learning?
- What's the buzz? i.e. what have people said or we have heard about the Initiative?
- What are the key indicators of success for you?
- What changes in behaviour, policies, practice, decision-making, social actions have occurred?
- What have been the constraints/issues/challenges? What needs to change?
- How can MUTN continue to be sustainable both at the central level as well as at the community level over the next 2-5 years?
- What recommendations can be made to improve or to others wanting to follow this model?
- If MUTN was not funded after December 2009, what would be the impact to the Northern communities?
- What unexpected or unintended improvements resulted from the work of the MUTN initiative?

**Instruments:** A semi-structured interview guide was developed. The evaluation subcommittee developed the interview guide and survey and received feedback from the rest of the Sub-Committee and the Steering Committee. The survey was placed on line via a web-based survey tool called “Zoomerang” (zommerang.com). Interviews were conducted by Dr. Theresa Healy. Preliminary Analysis was conducted by Laurie Ringaert and Theresa Healy.

**Limitations:** This stakeholder evaluation was limited due to time and resources. We were only able to do a small sample of interviews and were limited in our time with our voluntary survey to the liaisons. As well, we conducted the interviews and focus groups in August-September which may limit response rates. Our plan is to do a more in-depth and broader-based evaluation as a research project in the future if we are able to find funding. Interviews and focus groups with other groups such as Mayors and Councils, business people, town staff such as planners, code inspectors, public works, community groups, and economic development groups would provide a more robust evaluation in the future.

## **FINDINGS OF PARTICIPANT EVALUATION OF MUTN PHASE I**

### ***What Were MUTN’S Main Accomplishments?***

- **Tangible Changes in the Communities**
- **Raised Awareness of Issues facing Older People and Persons with Disabilities**
- **Provided a Credible Voice**
- **Created Positive Energy**
- **Created Local Government Changes**
- **Created Partnerships**
- **Made an Impact on Policies and Practices**
- **Increased Participation and Contribution of Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities**

## Tangible Changes in Communities

Respondents indicated that one of the key successes of MUTN was that there already positive changes made in the communities with “on-the-ground-results”. Some commented on actual projects in progress or completed. People discussed positive changes they were seeing in businesses, trails, walkways, seniors’ centres, local government buildings. One person felt that many communities had been “transformed” while another praised MUTN for helping to “create places and spaces where which all people can use”. One person commented that there is a shift now in communities as they see what they can offer tourists and ultimately improve their economies. Many positive changes were seen due to funding that was received:

*“many communities capitalized on funding opportunities suggested by MUTN that made a difference across the communities.”* Another person indicated that many businesses have made changes over the past two years. Prior to MUTN, *“they wanted to make changes but did not know how to do it or what was needed.”* Another person commented that their town projects focusing on MUTN principles has not only helped persons with disabilities, it has also raised the overall profile of their community as they have created better facilities.

***“We are changing the community so that people can go anywhere”***

***“Communities have been transformed!”***

***“People are motivated to make a difference”***

***“We are making a difference”***

## Raised Awareness of Issues facing Older People and Persons with Disabilities

***“There is a huge change in awareness and attitudes across the NCLGA region”.***

***“So many of us didn’t know anything about the issues before”***

***“I learned a tremendous amount about day to day issues facing persons with disabilities and older persons”***

Raised Awareness of accessibility and inclusion issues was a major theme discussed by respondents. Many felt there had been no or very little recognition of these issues by elected officials and many citizens that prior to Measuring Up The North. Many discussed a change in awareness and changes in attitudes in their communities and many said that they were seeing elected officials raising the questions to developers and others in Council meetings. Many expressed that they had not realized the economic need to address these issues in the community prior to MUTN. Others discussed that they were seeing changes in planning-related and building organizations such as Smart Growth, Fraser Basin Council as a result of MUTN. Those who had more provincial ties, indicated that they had seen an increase in the provincial government awareness to the issues due to the work of MUTN. “Accessibility and Universal design was included in the “Creating Healthy Communities Guide

produced by the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport/Smart Growth”. Provincial departments were also gaining an awareness of what local governments can achieve.

One respondent who had their awareness raised by the Initiative indicated the positive changes they were making *“I made my own home visitable and began changing policies at my own workplace”*

### Provided a Credible Voice

An important outcome of the Initiative expressed was that many community members now felt that they had a “credible voice” and a legitimate platform and process to voice their concerns. The MUTN model with the partnership of the local government and the community working together appears to be a key ingredient for success. Many felt that their voices were not heard before and for many communities, this was the first time that many felt that the voices of older people and persons with disabilities were “heard”. One respondent commented that now there was a shared common vision between the local government and the community.

### Created Positive Energy

The theme of “positive energy” was expressed by several of the respondents. They discussed that they were now hearing Positive comments heard from government staff, elected officials, provincial government staff, MLA’s. Two key statements made were that it was felt that people across the North were feeling like they were *making a difference* and that they were *motivated to make a difference*. They said that there is now a realization that

*“We can do something to make change happen”*. One person indicated that the positive energy generated *provided hope that we can make a difference”* Respondents felt that MUTN provided the momentum and positive energy from its central processes. One person commented that many feel a *“sense of pride”* for what they have done in their communities.

*“We now believe that we can make a change”*

*“We have a sense of pride”*

### Created Local Government Changes

Positive changes in local government practices as well as in actual projects carried out by local governments were highlighted by many of the respondents.

*"We are seeing actual results"* Many were seeing the development of elected officials as local champions for the issues. Both community and elected official respondents indicated that they were seeing changes in awareness and changes in commitment at the local government level. Many indicated that MUTN had moved them toward incorporating ideas of accessibility and inclusion, age-friendliness and disability-friendliness into their strategic plans and official community plans. Some commented that they were impressed with the number of local governments that had come on board with MUTN. Many said they had benefited from being part of the MUTN as they had won awards and obtained grants as a result. As one respondent expressed: *"MUTN put the issue on the radar of our local government."*



### Created Partnerships

Many discussed the creation of partnerships as an indicator of MUTN's success. According the respondents this occurred in many ways:

- Partnership were created at the local level both between the local governments and community members but also with various agencies, organizations, businesses, Chambers of Commerce, etc.
- Partnerships were created centrally due to the MUTN Steering Committee structure
- MUTN linked with other Initiatives such as Smart Growth BC, BC Healthy Communities, Age-Friendly Communities, BC Parks and Recreation, 2010 Legacies Now and others and this translated down to the communities who were working with these groups as well

Respondents indicated that MUTN brought together people from all different levels to work together which was positive. Partnerships established within the Steering Committee were highly valued as MUTN is recognized provincially. One person indicated that the MUTN Initiative *"helped balance power imbalances."*

Others indicated that there were now seeing organizations working together and now have accessibly as part of their goals, while another person indicated that new partnerships between seniors and youth have been developed in their community as a result of MUTN. One town

staff person indicated that new partnerships were developed as their town has partnered with private and public agencies to coordinate the development of accessible buildings and recreational areas. *“Helped us link to other initiatives: i.e. physical activity is an important area in our community and now we have linked to accessibly and increased both.”*

### **Made an Impact on Policies and Practices**

Many of the respondents felt that MUTN had had a positive impact on policies and practices. They highlighted the NCLGA resolutions that had been put forth to the UBCM, how Local government staff and elected officials have changed the way they think and do things; as well as changes seen in local government policies and strategic plans. Some felt that MUTN also had a positive impact by bringing together various housing policy groups, working with builders and “lobbying” the provincial government on issues. Some also felt that MUTN’s efforts had influenced business practices as they were seeing the economic benefits now.

However, one Community Liaison indicated that there was still a “ways to go” as she told the story of a plan reviewer in one of the local governments:

*“She looked at our plans for the new entrance to the building which was now a no step entrance. The first thing she said was ‘where are the steps for everyone else?’ I could not believe what I was hearing”*

Other Liaisons have also indicated during various phone calls of continued difficulties due to lack of knowledge on the part of various building officials with the local government as well as with private developers. This indicates there is still an educational process that needs to occur.

However, the Project Director was invited to a MUTN Committee meeting at one site where they had invited the local building code inspector. He indicated that he really appreciated having the local MUTN Committee now as he had a place to bring his questions and *“bounce ideas off of before mistakes are made”*.

### Created Increased Participation and Contribution of Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities

We asked the respondents what impact MUTN had had on persons with disabilities and older adults. They indicated the following areas:

- More recreation and leisure options
- Allows them to move about the town/city easier
- Improved access to businesses, municipal buildings, parking
- Better communication with seniors and persons with disabilities
- In addition to infrastructure, that they now have a “voice”
- More seniors housing, and private housing being developed
- More info and awareness
- More participation in community including going shopping, going to events, and more participation with local government on these issues

One community liaison commented that they had now become more involved with their community as a result of MUTN.

### How Did MUTN Assist the Communities?

We asked the respondents how they felt MUTN assisted the communities. Responses regarding MUTN’s assistance were clustered as follows:

- A catalyst which provided momentum and motivation: *“we could see that we could make things happen”*
- A provider of a network and structure to link communities so they could learn from each other
- A provider of support
- A teacher/facilitator: *“showed us how to work together in our communities rather than taking an adversarial approach”*
- A teacher/facilitator: *“taught us to discuss the economic approach to make changes rather than from a charity model”*
- Provided inspiration
- Provided information on funding
- Provided events to train, inspire and network
- Provided opportunities for camaraderie and sharing of progress from other communities
- Helped the Northern communities become “an organized group” on the issues
- Provided resources, a forum, provided valuable info, assisted with planning
- Kept us on task
- Provided “visual/hands on things”

Motivation provided by the Project Director was commented on frequently as important: *“Laurie gave us a ‘Yes we can attitude’”*. One Liaison commented that the *“liaisons learned from each other and helped each other to keep motivated.”* One person commented on how MUTN provided a directed focus:

*“Accessibly was not on the City’s radar before MUTN. MUTN brought a focused and directed change: better sense of what can and cannot be done”*

Another commented on how working together in the MUTN initiative was very effective:

*“We could have done some on our own but not as quickly. It never makes sense to tackle issues like this on your own: Professional associations and UBCM take this collaborative approach as well”*

**The Liaison network that MUTN created was highlighted by several as important to their success. According to the respondents, it allowed communities to connect, it allowed liaisons from various communities to connect and get motivated by their achievements and enthusiasm. They found that they were dealing with the same issues and setting many of the same goals. They liked sharing ideas with “like-minded” individuals. One person commented that the network would not have occurred without MUTN.**



### **What the Respondents Thought Made MUTN Work**

It was important to find out perceptions of what made MUTN work so that others can learn from MUTN Phase I. The areas discussed were:

- **Having NCMA as partner**
- **The Approach**
- **Local champions are Key**

- **Unity of sectors working together**
- **Central MUTN Hub**
- **Other Funding Support**

#### **Having NCLGA as partner**

- Local governments need the encouragement of their association to take part and engage in the change process
- Having elected official support

#### **The Approach**

- Community development approach
- Principle of embedding accessibly into community plans, capital projects, local governments and community working together
- Multi-sectoral collaborative approach

#### **Local champions are Key**

#### **Unity of sectors working together**

- Networking and resources: working toward common goal
- Best practices sharing
- Exposure to what others had done provided motivation, lessons learned

#### **Central MUTN Hub**

- Indirect funding support thru MUTN: for meetings, training, etc
- Provides a direction and focus for change
- Offered support, ideas for funding opportunities
- MUTN educated us so we can talk publicly to the community and to local government
- Provided expertise, resources, networking opportunities to help move concept forward that was not familiar
- Keeping us focused
- Keeping us accountable
- Fostered info sharing between northern communities

- Served as a hub between the northern communities and wider provincial networks. Gives northern communities a louder voice at the municipal, provincial and federal levels
- Bi-weekly news and updates
- Funding for the Initiative from a variety of sources

#### **Other Funding Support**

- Funding from Towns for Tomorrow, Local Motion
- Funding for other projects but include accessibility
- Funding from Legacies Now

#### **What Were The Key Indicators Of Success According to the Participants?**

Several indicators of success were highlighted by the participants. These were categorized into the following themes: **Changes to the Community, Changes to Council, Changes in Planning and Policy, Business Changes, and a miscellaneous category of “Engagement, Action, Results”.**

- **Changes to the Community**
  - On-the-ground projects completed or in progress
  - Reduction of barriers
  - Infrastructure changes
  - Increased tourism in the CRD
  - Expressions of excitement and appreciation from the communities we serve
  - noticing changes in people’s ideas about disability
- **Changes at Council**
  - Communities have expressed commitment to accessibility and inclusion
  - Structural changes: forming official committees,
  - Having our council ask on their own initiative about ways we can improve accessibility
- **Changes in Planning and Policy**
  - Inclusion of accessibility/inclusion issues in planning and local govt pubs produced by other parties

- Incorporation into OCP's
- Changes in Policies
- Changed bylaws and priorities for the town
- Incorporation into strategic plans
- **Business Changes**
  - Improved accessibility in many businesses
  - Increased business for a local home builder
- **"Engagement, Action, Results"(actual quote)**
  - Attitudinal changes
  - Grants offered to communities
  - Partnerships built
  - Recognition received
  - More focuses efforts/change
  - Greater sense of what is possible

### Participants Views: "My MUTN Highlight"

We asked the respondents to identify a highlight of the Initiative for them. They provided the following:

- *"Hearing from the people what they were doing and learning"*
- *"Connections made with other communities"*
- *"Seeing the momentum grow and the passion that the individuals and community leaders display"*
- *"Excitement from the communities"*
- *"New Partnerships"*
- *"Visitable housing"*
- *"Appreciation from businesses about simple things they can do"*
- *"Increasing my own education"*

### What Were the Constraints/Challenges?

The respondents cited various constraints and challenges. For many liaisons, both community and NCLGA Liaisons, time can be a major factor especially when a community does not have funding to hire a paid coordinator or if the role was not seen as part of the job of the town staff person as it was in some of the cases. Many are concerned about future funding of local committees and projects so that the momentum can continue. One constraint mentioned was relying on volunteers which can create problems when there is no paid coordinator for instance.

Centrally for MUTN, financial constraints were also seen as having limited the project somewhat and were going to have an impact on the future of the Initiative.

Two important events occurred during the time of MUTN that had somewhat of an impact: 1) Elections: there was both a local government and provincial election in 2008-09 which resulted in changes in personnel particularly at the local government level which some cited as a constraint. The other issue was the world economic recession that occurred in 2008-09 which also had a critical impact on the British Columbia economy and some felt would have an impact on MUTN as less resources and initiatives from the provincial government were becoming evident.

Other challenges cited were the need to obtain funding to help businesses make changes, lack of transportation in some cases for persons with disabilities to attend committee meetings, dealing with different levels of government and some felt there was a lot of information to “digest” that had been provided by MUTN. More time was needed to take it all in “*if you are not involved regularly in this kind of work*”

### What Were the Lessons Learned?

The following are the key lessons learned as expressed by the respondents:

- *“Small communities have a strong capacity to get things done”*
- *We need to ask others for advice and guidance, listen to others experience*
- *Make accessibility the norm from the beginning*
- *“We will now look at everything from a different perspective”*
- *“Many people do not want to leave their communities. Small simple changes can make a difference (like visitable housing)”*
- *“We still have a long way to go!”*

## What is Needed Next?

We asked the respondents what they felt were next steps for MUTN. Many felt that they had just begun, had good momentum and were definitely not finished. They discussed that relationships take time to build and much of the MUTN work is based on relationship building. As well many felt that more work needs to be done at the local government and the provincial government levels to change policies. Some felt that it would still take more time to ingrain the ideas into councils and regional districts. Some commented that their committees are moving forward with accessible awards, visitable housing, accessible transportation, working with businesses and builders and planning to work on their official community plans. One person suggested that the communities that were more ahead could serve as *mentors* for other communities. Another person felt that a key ingredient to move forward was the right people in the communities: *“People with passion will be a key”*

However they felt that provincial funding for local level committees and projects as well as for the MUTN centrally was needed to continue the momentum. Many still wanted to have the services that MUTN had offered including providing the central support, more tools, liaison conference calls and serving as a hub for the communities. *“We need to make MUTN a hub for info coming from and going to the communities”*

Many felt that the NCLGA was ideal to continue as the umbrella organization but it had to make this “a major issue, not just a sideline issue”. Some felt that the MUTN Initiative had become a model and should “go provincially”. One person emphasized: *“The North must continue to be a force for positive change.”*

***“We just got started, but we have good momentum”***

*“The North must continue to be a force for positive change.*

***“Communities that are ahead can be mentors”***

***“We are not Finished!”***

***“We are making a difference  
but there is more to be done”***

***It is coming along, but we  
need more time, more  
policies”***

### Centrality of support (analysis done and written by Dr. T. Healy)

One of the major contributors to the success of the MUTN initiative was embedded in the skills, expertise and personality of the Project Director. Ms. Laurie Ringaert was hired by the Steering Committee in spite of her geographical location, because of the passion and dedication she brought to the project. Ironically, communities in Northern BC are generally very reluctant to embrace “outsiders”. Laurie’s credentials and her personality combined to overcome any of the hesitation or reluctance that might have been expected.

The talents the Steering Committee identified and hired included her long and well respected track record which was it appears, well received

*I expected communities to react to the fact she wasn't from the north, or even BC. But, in a weird way it is like people, including members of the Steering Committee are so proud that our little project attracted her attention. She got it. She saw and tells everyone how unique what we are doing is and how important. We got to see what we are doing in a bigger light. And we are paying her peanuts. She did this because she believed in it, not because we were paying her big bucks, cause we weren't.*

at the community level.

*And look at what she brought, all the pieces about construction and real estate where places we might not have gone without her. Her experiences in disability issues at an academic, practical, advocacy and community levels were invaluable to the Steering Committee.*

Community members appreciated Laurie for something extra she brought to the project that could be called personality but which actually spoke to the importance of role modeling for communities, that they were well equipped to act on the issues. She was able to translate and transmit skills that enhanced local actions

*Laurie has been a huge driving force. She has expressed that feeling to the rest of us – yes we can attitude and the support of other communities. We ask what we can do together? It is not just taking; the issue to Council and saying what are you going to do, but it is about saying what is it we can do about it. Many other groups go with petitions and protest etc. and council gets taken aback. When we go, we get comments that we are nicer, easier to work with. It's more effective this way. Sometimes what I think is a solution and it isn't and council is able to explain why it isn't. Then we have to think of something else together. Each time its credibility gained. We are working well now. We did have the mayor's disability committee before Measuring Up The North and they have been working together. It is important to have the tools that Measuring Up The North have given us.*

*We have to find the funding to keep Laurie. She is amazing. I did a tour of the North with her, 6 communities in 2 days. I watched how passionate she is and how she sets others on fire. I have grown so much because of her, watching her. Also, we get it done in the North. It is amazing how communities, how small even from the beginning, we are just gelling together and getting to a highly productive state. I worry for new communities just coming on, what are they thinking. They just get signed on and we are done? We have to continue to motivate, continue to build hope and knowledge, we have to continue to be the force for change.*

Appreciation for Laurie's work came from all sides:

The Project Director put a great deal of time and effort into keeping the communities connected – a difficult task given the fact the region is larger than France. Teleconference calls with a choice of times monthly, web based feedback and face to face visits were all mentioned as crucial to communities staying connected with a corresponding shift in local attitudes towards both the issues and towards individual community members.

*I see changes in attitudes, especially in the community. I am seen as more credible. I feel more capable of being able to go to the committee and to the community, than I did before. That credibility has made a big change with people we work with, like seniors. People are sitting up and taking notice not just in our community but in other communities. When I share at the MUTN table other communities say, "Oh, why can't we do that here?". It has been so valuable. My big fear is that if we don't have MUTN, communities won't stay connected. There won't be Laurie making the calls. There won't be Laurie as the role model doing this.*

*The other big thing is people with disabilities have somewhere to go. Up until now they have not been heard. They had no voice, especially with elected officials – until now. Now they are connected, they can take issues, such as a building they can't get into and want to, to their MUTN Committee. They can seek out grant opportunities and Laurie's help has been instrumental in this. Before the MUTN such approaches were not appreciated, people with disabilities were considered complainers, it was said they "whined a lot." Now their input is sought after and appreciated.*

This change for individual members was an unexpected positive outcome for the project work:

The Project Director was also able to do a similar job of weaving connections at a provincial level.

*From the provincial perspective it is the greater awareness of these issues, a greater awareness of what local government can do. The project has done a remarkable job of pulling together all the initiatives. There are so many and there hasn't been a good job made of integrating these for communities. MUTN has gone a great distance in integrating a wide diversity of agencies and approaches from Smart Planning to Health Authorities to healthy communities to community capacity building. I can't think of any other project that has made a good a job on the ground as the MUTN in tying all these pieces together. The benefits of this, of working with all the players, for communities is the opening of doors. They can get access to funding they would not have known about. And they have been successful in accessing funds that have made changes on the ground. And there have been a number of recognitions of this – for example, the Green City Awards; some of our communities scored really high on the age friendly / senior friendly criteria and they had to be acknowledged even though the focus of the awards was green city. . The communities were scoring so high on those criteria, even with the major focus on the promotion of sustainability. Communities have been transformed. I have seen this and I am not even in the North. I have seen a similar transformation for towns ho have been able to access the infrastructure grants*

Overall, while the role of Project Director was crucial to the success of the initiative, the persona of the Project Director has been key to role.

*LR has been a key to the success and has a gift for inspiring the communities. She doesn't go on telling people what to do; she goes in to listen and understand and then helps them understand. LR is a great part of the success. There are three resolutions about the MUTN going forward to UBCM; there were 3 last year also. This is an audience of at least 1500-2000 from around the province. They are hearing about it when the resolutions are brought forward. That is a lasting legacy too. Unfortunately sustainability is tied to funding and that is our reality. A lot of this can be discussed at the strategic planning session. Still, keeping Laurie even if only very temporary (perhaps twice a year visits tied to a conference) is essential – we need to keep communities motivated and inspired*

The importance of the role of a central and accessible face for the MUTN project is clear when the successes attributed to the incumbent are analyzed. While physical barriers must be identified and addressed, it appears there were many invisible barriers that could have hampered, delayed or even prevented, project progress. As it stands, the many invisible barriers that exist in community – such as fear of ridicule and staying silent on the side of those living with the impacts of physical barriers in the community, and the attitudes and assumptions of those who do not, could have been major stumbling blocks. Laurie’s clarity and gentle approach was successful in mitigating and overcoming these equally exclusionary elements.

### **C) EVALUATION OF STATUS OF COMMUNITY LIVABILITY-UNIVERSAL DESIGN-INCLUSION**

An evaluation of the status of how livable, age-friendly, disability-friendly the participating communities were was conducted using the Livable-Inclusive-UD Communities Report Card© Developed by L.Ringaert (2009). The survey seeks to determine livable and inclusive are we for persons with disabilities, older adults, travellers and parents with young children. An overall assessment of the community is determined using 18 questions. The intention is that the Report Card will provide:

- Baseline Information
- Provides a way to set goals
- Provides a way to measure progress
- May provide a method for a community rating system

Topics included in the 18 question questionnaire are: (See Appendix for Complete List of Questions)

- Great Place to Come To?
- Official Community Plan
- Standing Committee
- Municipal Properties
- Websites
- Transportation
- Housing: Single/Multi
- Business/Retail Sector
- Hospitality Sector
- Tourism/Cultural Venues
- Religious/spiritual Venues
- Public Realm
- Employment
- Education
- Outdoor Recreation
- Marketing
- Town Services

**RESULTS:**

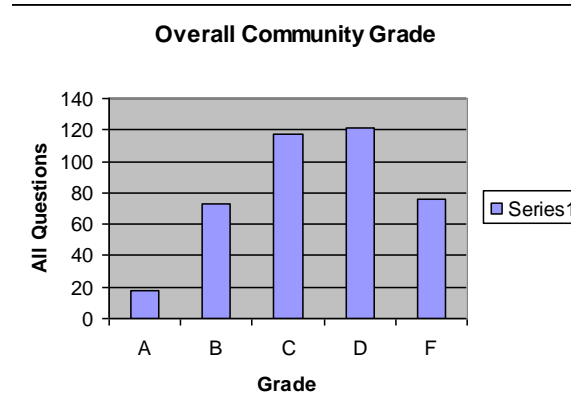
The Livable-Inclusive-UD Communities Report Card© (L.Ringaert, 2009). on-line survey administration occurred for six weeks between April and May of 2009. The invitation to participate was sent to all of the MUTN Liaisons. Participants were invited to send out the invitation to complete the survey to community members and to elected officials or other interested parties in their towns/cities. Twenty-three responses were received from 16 communities. In six communities, more than one person participated in the survey. See results below.

- Burns Lake (3)
- Chetwynd
- Dawson Creek
- Fort Nelson
- Fort St. John
- Houston
- McBride
- McKenzie
- Quesnel (2)
- Regional District Fraser Fort George
- Stewart
- Taylor (2)
- Terrace
- Tumbler Ridge (2)
- Prince George (2)
- Williams Lake (2)

**Key Findings:**

Responses to the 18 questions were categorized by frequency into the A-F categories for the 23 completed surveys. The following summarizes the most frequently found findings:

No.	Question Topic	Most Frequent Grade
1	Great Place to Live	D
2	Official Com Plan	C
3	Standing Committee	A-B
4	Municipal Properties	B-C
5	Accessible Websites	D
6	Transportation	F
7	Single Fam Homes	F
8	Multi-Fam Homes	F
9	Retail Business	C-D
10	Hospitality	C-D
11	Tourism Cultural	C
12	Religious-Spiritual	C
13	Outdoor Recreation	D
14	Public Realm	D
15	Education	B
16	Marketing	D
17	Town Services	C-D
18	Support Services	C-D



The survey showed that the best scores went to establishment of a Standing Committee (A-B); the Municipal Properties (B-C) and to Education (B). The next highly graded areas were the Official community plan, Tourism-Cultural, Religious-Spiritual areas which were all graded at the “C” level. The next categories in the “C-D” range included Retail-Business, Hospitality, Town Services and Support Services. These were followed by those graded in the “D” range and included Great Place to Live, Accessible Websites, Outdoor Recreation, Public Realm and Marketing. The areas receiving the lowest grade of “F” included accessible Transportation, Single Family Housing and Multi-Family Housing.

Results were tallied for each question to obtain an overall frequency of responses in each category for each question. The overall grade for the 16 communities in the Livable-Universal Designed Communities Report Card was in the C-D range with 117 C's and 121 D's; followed by 76 F's and 73 B's. There were only 18 A's given overall. Thus the respondents generally graded their communities in the C-D range.

**Recommendations:** These results clearly indicate that the communities are not finished yet. There is still a great deal of work to do in the communities. Over-all for the North, priority attention must be paid to housing and transportation as well as to town and business websites, outdoor recreation, the public realm as well as to marketing of the work that has been done. The next level of focus must be on the retail-business sector, hospitality, town services and support services. It will be interesting to conduct this survey on an annual basis to track progress not only within each community but also for the North broadly. This has been the first use of this survey and serves as a pilot for further validation of the instrument.

**Limitations:** One of the limitations of this survey was that bias could be present depending upon the person who answered the survey from the community. Ideally, this survey should be answered on a consensus basis by the MUTN Committee, for instance to provide an overall picture of the community. However, it can also be answered individually within a community and responses aggregated. In this way the survey could be sent out broadly and a community could get an idea of how the community grades itself.

#### D. REFLECTIONS ON WHAT MADE MUTN WORK

In October 2009, members of the Core Project Team and the Steering Committee reflected on MUTN Phase I and discussed about “what made MUTN work?”. In our summation from the evaluation results as well as from the experience over the past two years, all of the following ingredients were necessary to see the social changes that we have seen in the communities.

- NCLGA as umbrella organization: the “glue” for the Local governments involved, could talk about MUTN at meetings where they gather, helped with friendly competition, could bring collective issues together (six Resolutions)
- BCPA: catalyst to engage volunteers with disabilities on Committees and as Liaisons
- Project Director: her broad knowledge, community-development, empowerment approach, innovation, coaching approach, personality, gentle supportive approach, positive feedback and encouragement
- Empowerment: Moderate to low intervention (due to resources): forced many of the communities to take the Initiative up and engage deeper; lack of prescriptive way of doing things: MUTN provided guidance and promoted a “ground-up” approach
- Economic Benefit Message
- Emergence of Champions in communities
- The Community-Local Government Partnership Model: in many cases first time these issues have a proper place to be worked “together” on, better understanding between the community members and the Local government and vice versa: move away from old “adversarial model”
- Asset-Based Community Development Approach
- Funding support to bring communities to workshops and meetings to network and to learn
- Funding support for monthly conference calls
- Tools: website, E-news, development of tools, resources, forum

- Positive Feedback to the Liaisons and to the Local Government as positive changes seen. Became a positive feedback loop and enticed them to keep working in more projects
- Tangible changes seen in the community: many initiatives are “theoretical” whereas this one shows tangible results
- Lots of Media and Press at the community level: showcased achievements and energized the local groups
- Collective Effect: Communities felt part of a larger “effort”, “group”: had T-shirts, had brochure and business card templates with same logos, placed MUTN Logo on their materials, websites, got together and networked
- Many grants available from Provincial Government, 2010 Legacies Now and some generic grants indicating that if their project included age-friendly, disability-friendly aspects, more likely to get the grant (Towns for Tomorrow, Local Motion)
- Provincial Atmosphere of Support: Many other efforts working together in same direction in the Province: Age-Friendly Community Initiative, 2010 Legacies Now: MUP and Accessible Tourism/Parks, SPARC BC (produced various tools)
- Accountability: “checking in” at monthly meetings, providing updates on on-line surveys, making presentations at workshops
- Connecting-the-Dots with other Initiatives and developing partnerships
- Don’t Take a Unilateral Approach: Taking a broader livable communities approach and include both disability and age-friendly approaches along with accessible tourism, economic imperative, smart planning, active living by design, inclusive approaches

## 6. CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

### Challenges

- The Initiative was stretched in terms of human and financial resources at the central level. We carried out all of these activities with the Project Director, less than one EFT Project Assistant, and considerable in-kind contributions from the Core Project team and their staff and resources at the NCLGA and the BCPA.
- The Participating Communities are also feeling stretched at the community/local government level especially if they do not have funds for a coordinator position
- The NCLGA area is a broad territory. This makes bringing participants together challenging
- This past year has been challenging with major global, provincial and local economic turndowns. This means that there is less provincial and foundation money available to fund MUTN projects at the community level as well as at the central Initiative level.
- We were faced with two elections this year: at the local government and provincial government level. This created many changes in terms of key stakeholders, changes in ministries, and budgetary issues.
- Keeping up with all of the provincial initiatives and convincing them to work together with us can be challenging and time consuming yet very rewarding



- Many previous Provincial granting programs that were available to local governments are no longer available and previous supporting initiatives such as 2010 Legacies Now MUP and Accessible Tourism programs will soon end
- Since the Initiative was “voluntary” for the communities/local governments, they had no obligation to make reports, join calls or to attend meetings. This was both beneficial as well limiting as it made it difficult to track issues and progress in many cases

### Lessons Learned

- At the Central program level, having an umbrella association of local governments (i.e. NCLGA) as a key partner is essential for positive action to occur across a region as well as in individual communities.
- At the central program level, having a partnership with an umbrella association of persons with disabilities (such as BCPA) and with a similar association of older adults is critical as it provides ready access to persons within the community who are known to the organization already, who are most likely to get on board. This saves a great deal of time and effort in building the partnerships between the local government and the community. This partnership is also essential at the community level.
- Partnerships at the central program level are essential. Having the supporting partners, 2010 Legacies Now, BC Healthy Communities, Northern Health, and the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport have proven critical for the great success of the Initiative.
- Multiple funding agencies are also critical to success both centrally as well as at the local level
- Having local governments endorse the Initiative within their own communities through positive actions such as council resolutions, establishment of a council endorsed committee, developing a line item for MUTN Activities within their communities, incorporation of the MUTN Principles into the OCP, etc are essential

- For a variety of reasons, communities will adopt (get on board) at various stages: some are early adopters while others are just getting on board now, while others have not fully engaged. Some may wait to see progress before they get on board, while others do not have the right “players” or opportunities in place. This on-going development must be considered in program planning.
- Change does not happen overnight. Many of the MUTN concepts are “new” to many and it is interesting to watch the various stages of “a ha” moments occur in the various sectors in the various communities. Accessibility and inclusion changes will take time as the communities are facing existing policies and infrastructure that needs change over time.
- A “champion” from the local government or community is usually needed that will ensure that the Initiative starts and carries through. In some cases, there is a “community” champion and in others, there is a “local government” champion.
- Having the partnership model of having the NCLGA Liaison and the Community Liaisons (best to have one person with a disability and one older person), working with a committee representing diverse interests works very well and assists in understanding and knowledge building between the community and the local government
- Funding for a coordinator position in the community is extremely helpful and often essential in ensuring that the Initiative is carried out
- Supportive funding from the provincial and federal governments (such as Local Motion, Towns for Tomorrow, -which all indicate requirements for age-friendly, disability-friendly concepts are critical. Other programs such as UBCM’s Age-Friendly Planning Grants and Seniors Dialogues Funding have also been very important.
- An umbrella organization such as MUTN centrally is critical to success of each of the communities. Communities have provided feedback that having the monthly phone calls, coaching sessions, collecting of monthly reports, the central website, technical information, coaching service, information on funding opportunities, site visits, meetings where they come together face to face to share, and capacity building events have all been critical to their success. As well having an “expert” such as the Project

Director, assists them in moving business and local government forward, especially when she comes to town and meets with them or provides “talks” or “workshops”.

- A non-prescriptive approach works well. The communities themselves need to figure out their own priorities and their pace of work rather than having the central organization dictate.
- The development of a network is very important. The network should include on-line, teleconference and face to face opportunities for sharing of lessons learned, best practices, camaraderie and friendly competition
- Friendly competition seems to work as communities strive to become better and better at accessibility and inclusion. Most successful communities have high support and involvement from Mayors and Councilors who share their successes with other mayors and councils at various meetings



## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

MUTN has now completed Phase I of the Initiative. It is clear from the evaluation that not only is there still a great deal to do in the communities, but that the communities themselves want to have continued support from a central hub such as was provided by MUTN Phase I. At this time (December 2009), there is no more funding available for the position of the Project Director, the Project Assistant and for the majority of central services that were offered. BC Paraplegic Association has indicated that they will no longer be able to be part of the Initiative. We have been told that 2010 Legacies Now will be winding down their activities by June 2010.

MUTN Phase II will continue. It will involve a different structure. Many of the communities will continue with the momentum that has been started. MUTN Central will now operate solely under the umbrella of the NCLGA. The current steering committee structure will dissolve.

NCLGA will continue a number of central aspects with limited funds: to maintain the MUTN website, will invite community success stories in its monthly newsletter, will showcase community achievements at its yearly conference, will continue to collect ideas for collective resolutions, and will establish an awards program to recognize the achievements of its constituents. We are looking for ways for the communities to continue their monthly phone calls as they have found this highly valuable. One very inexpensive way this may be done is through Skype if we do not find a sponsor. In the new structure, the NCLGA will seek out funding for continued support of the Initiative. Should funding be found it is clear that there needs to be a concentrated effort on the communities that are just beginning the process or have not started. However support must continue with the active communities so that their activity level does not wane. It has been suggested that the active communities could serve as mentors for some of the other communities which would be a very good model to consider. The evaluation also showed that efforts should concentrate particularly on housing, transportation, websites, public realm, local government services, support services, outdoor recreation sites and marketing. The NCLGA will also seek funding to conduct more in-depth project evaluation including a possible longitudinal evaluation over time. We are very interested in conducting research in this area.

We have also made recommendations to provincial leaders that the concepts and lessons learned from MUTN should form a framework for a provincial focus and the NCLGA will continue with these discussions. The BC Provincial government has done so much over the past few years in this area of creating age-friendly, disability-friendly communities. Incredible changes have occurred and momentum has been begun, there is need to continue this effort and for British Columbia to continue to be a leader in this area. One of the critical needs is for the Provincial Government to continue to provide both targeted local government funding for such initiatives as well as “imbedded” funding such as was done with the Towns for Tomorrow and Local Motion grants where preferred eligibility went to those making age-friendly/disability-friendly changes. Embedding these principles into all funding that the Province provides would then provide a more “universal” approach and ensure continued progress to reshape our communities as great places to live and visit for all people.

## SUMMARY

We feel that the MUTN Initiative (Phase I) has been highly successful. Our focus has been on capacity building as well as continuing support for all participating communities. We have also had a special focus on community empowerment, partnerships and bringing together various provincial initiatives as well as developing resolutions and tools (i.e.: the Official Community Planning Tool) that will have broad impacts. Incredible changes have been shown at the local government level in terms of changes in attitudes, practices, policies, changes in public

buildings, parks, downtown areas, cultural and spiritual venues, tourism venues, etc. Many community “champions” have emerged and incredible changes have been seen in participation and contributions to society by persons with disabilities and older adults.

The communities themselves have expressed that MUTN has been highly successful so far but at the same time say there is a long way to go. They have expressed that they are concerned without the continued support of MUTN centrally, that further success may be dampened or may not occur across the North.

This Initiative owes its success to its partners, supporting partners, funders and especially to the local government , community leaders and our project Liaisons on the ground who are making great things happen.



Tatlayoko Lake: Pat Harris, Core Project Team Leader having coffee with Marty Bracewell