

A13 - Doing Things Differently 2: Innovative & Inclusive Communities

Presentation # 1 title: Measuring Up The North: A Unique Project of Northern British Columbia

Presenter:

Laurie Ringaert – Measuring UP The North

Abstract

Measuring Up The North (MUTN) is a unique project that began in Northern British Columbia in August 2007. The goal of the project is to assist 41 North Central Municipal Association communities to become livable, age-friendly, disability-friendly, universally designed communities for all citizens and visitors. The 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. The project is a partnership between the North Central Municipal Association and the BC Paraplegic Association with supporting partners, the BC Healthy Communities Initiative and 2010 Legacies Now. The project is designed to empower and build capacity in the communities. The Project uses a community participatory action, community development approach. Each participating community has two Project Liaisons - an NCMA 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. Measuring Up The North also 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.

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 already identified such areas as: sidewalks, public buildings, businesses, seniors and disability housing, market-rate housing, recreational areas, greenways, trails, tourism sites, restaurants, hotels and motels, transportation, playgrounds, and employment as areas to work on. The Project has been encouraging the communities to include MUTN Principles into their official community plans and several have begun this process. Most communities are continuing the process of deciding on priority areas. Three of the top areas that seem to be affecting all communities in our region are housing, transportation and lack of access into businesses. This presentation will show the progress and outcomes of this project that is unique in the world. There is no other project in the world that we know of that is involving so many communities and so many community people that are changing the face of their communities and the way they do their work and play. The presentation will provide case examples of community projects and changes that have been made. It will also show larger systemic regional changes that have been made as a result of the project.

Speaker Biography

Laurie Ringaert is a researcher, educator, consultant and occupational therapist who has been involved in universal design/access issues for over 30 years. She is the Project Director of Measuring of the North in Prince George, BC, working for the North Central Municipal Association and the BC Paraplegic Association. She is also a Senior Researcher for the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies and recently completed the first study on VISIBLE Housing in Canada and is a project lead there on projects on Aging and Disability and Farmers with Disabilities. She has also been involved in international projects with the Centre in Russia and the Ukraine. She also is a partner in DSL Design Consulting, Cary, North Carolina. She previously worked as the Director of the Center for Universal Design at NC State University, as the Director of the Universal Design Institute in Canada, as the Director of the Office of Research at the School of Public Health at UNC Chapel Hill and as a private consultant. She is an active member on codes/standards committees nationally and internationally. Laurie has worked with architects, developers

and the disability community on built environment issues through her training events and her research. She has been involved in several universal design projects and authored several articles and book chapters. Laurie has worked as a lead universal design consultant with the Canadian Department of National Defense/Canadian Forces and has served as an expert witness on major human rights cases in Canada.

Presentation # 2 title: Municipal Supported Agriculture - Richmond Farm School Initiative

Presenter:

Kent Mullinix - Kwantlen Polytechnic University - Sustainable Agriculture Specialists

Abstract

The City of Richmond, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, and the Richmond Food Security Task Force have developed a Richmond Farm School initiative using municipally owned land. We feel this model of 'Municipal Supported Agriculture' is a model that other cities should seriously look at as an answer to the issues access to agricultural land and food production in urban and peri-urban areas.

Speaker Biography

Kent Mullinix is Director- Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security with the Institute for Sustainable Horticulture (ISH) at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in British Columbia, Canada. At ISH he is engaged in research and development to advance sustainable agriculture industry and practice as well as regional food self-sufficiency. Mullinix earned a B.S. in Agriculture, M.S. in Horticulture and Ph.D. in Agriculture Education from the University of Missouri- Columbia. He also earned a Ph.D. from the University of British Columbia in Plant Science specializing in integrated pest management. Formerly Mullinix was the Endowed Joint Chair in Pomology at Washington State University and Director of Agriculture Programs at Wenatchee Valley College and prior to that a horticulture research specialist (fruit and nut crops) for the Universities of Missouri, Minnesota and Kentucky. His areas of professional/academic interest and work include advancement of sustainable, human scale urban/ peri-urban agri-food systems, biologically based-ecologically sound crop production methods, and family-based agriculture revitalization. Currently Mullinix is leading the develop a comprehensive ISH urban/ peri-urban agri-food system research and education program and working with broad stakeholders, including municipal government, non-government organizations and the private sector, to create viable, replicable urban/ peri-urban agri-food system models. Mullinix has developed many technical, incumbent workforce and undergraduate education programs. He has also developed and taught many courses in the plant sciences including Ecologically Based Pest Management and Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems. He has authored many scientific, technical, educational and lay publications and is frequently invited to speak on topics related to agriculture sustainability and food security.