



New Westminster

Council in Committee of the Whole
November 16, 2009



Outline of Presentation

This presentation will address the following areas:

- **Changing Face of New Westminster**
- **Experiences of Newcomers**
- **Concept**
- **Challenge and Opportunity**
- **WICWP Program**
- **Community Partnership Development**
- **Process**
- **Funded Projects**
- **Community Benefits**



Changing Face of New Westminster

- **New Westminster is experiencing increasing immigration, with the majority of recent immigrants arriving from Asia and South Asia and the majority of refugees from Africa.**
- **The face of the City is changing, with more people reporting visible minority status and more people speaking a multitude of languages.**
 - **31.7% of the population are immigrants**
 - **29.6% of the population have visible minority status**
 - **23.1% of immigrants have less than five years of Canadian residency**
 - **46.8% of immigrants speak a language other than English**
 - **3.17% of the population report having aboriginal identity**

Experiences of Newcomers

■ Based on an Access New Westminster Immigrant Survey (May 2007), which involved 243 respondents, new immigrants and refugees face a number of challenges, including:

- finding suitable employment
- learning a new language
- locating adequate housing
- securing child care
- adapting to a new culture and values
- dealing with incidences of discrimination and racism



■ They also have far lower participation rates in elections, groups and organized activities, including sports.

Concept

- There is no one definition of what constitutes a welcoming and inclusive community; however, there is a growing body of knowledge as to some of the key elements. For example,
 - a **welcoming community** has a strong desire to receive newcomers and to create an environment in which they can feel at home
 - a **welcoming community** ensures that newcomers are able to participate in all aspects of community life
 - a **welcoming community** ensures that newcomers have access to a full range of programs and services and can find meaningful employment

Concept

- In a recent research paper by Andy Wachtel, in which he summarizes the collective body of work on welcoming and inclusive communities, he included the following definition:
 - **Welcoming** is a set of community features and actions that provide the impetus for newcomers to choose to come there.
 - **Inclusive** refers to community attributes and actions that encourage newcomers to put down roots and stay.

Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces Program Research Framework, September 2008



Challenge and Opportunity

- Given the changing face of New Westminster, given the challenges faced by newcomers, and given the significant social and economic contributions that they can make to the City:
 - the **challenge** became: How do we create a more welcoming and inclusive community; one where newcomers choose to come?
 - the **opportunity** was a new program which would enable agencies and organizations to come together, collectively plan and develop initiatives in support of a more welcoming and inclusive community. This program also came with funding attached to make the vision a reality.

WICWP Program

- In June 2007, the Province of BC announced **Welcome BC**.
- As part of this initiative, a new program, entitled **Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces (WICWP)**, was launched.
- The primary goal of this program was to work towards communities where immigrants can realize their full potential, racism is eliminated, and cultural diversity is valued and celebrated.



Community Partnership Development

- As a first step to becoming a more welcoming and inclusive community, a representative **working group** was established.
- The City, on behalf of the working group, successfully applied for a **Community Partnership Development Grant**, under the WICWP Program,
 - to engage a broad range of sectors and stakeholders
 - to foster collaboration and partnership building
 - to develop a common vision
 - to prepare a preliminary action plan in support of the vision
 - to establish a formal collaborative partnership

Process

- The working group met on seven occasions to develop a common vision, preliminary action plan, and indicators in order to measure success.
- The above information formed part of a Community Partnership Development Charter. Family Services of Greater Vancouver was selected to be the Lead Proponent, which, if successful in its proposal, would sign the contract with the Province and be responsible for all deliverables, including by sub-contractors.
- The working group also held an open house on April 18, 2009, which was attended by about 60 people. At this event, participants informed the vision and provided feedback to the action plan.
- Based on the Charter, the working group submitted an expression of interest which was titled **Reach Out New Westminster ... Greet, Inform and Connect**

Funded Projects

- The expressions of interest were ‘green-lighted’ and detailed proposals were submitted for the following projects under the ‘demonstration’ and ‘public education’ intake streams. On October 22, 2009, the proposals were approved for a total of \$365,389, with an additional \$50,000 available under the ‘knowledge development and exchange’ intake stream.

- The funded projects are:

Demonstration:

- **Green** – Welcome Ambassadors Program (\$126,909)
- **Inform** – Newcomers’ Guide to New Westminster (\$59,490)
- **Connect** – Immigrant Mentorship Program (\$98,990)

Public Education:

- Newcomer Youth Popular Theatre Project (\$50,000)



Community Benefits

- **The Community Partnership Development Charter provides a blueprint for creating a more welcoming and inclusive community. It will also assist the working group in accessing additional funding.**
- **The funded projects involve multiple agencies, which will contribute to increased agency collaboration and coordination of services.**
- **The funded projects complement each other and will assist newcomers to more successfully integrate into the community.**
- **The funded projects will raise community awareness about the challenges faced by newcomers and the benefits of immigration, which will contribute to a more receptive and welcoming community.**