



Wheelability

ASSESSMENT PROJECT

Uptown & Downtown New Westminster

Prepared: August 28, 2009

An Update on the 'Wheelability' Assessment Project

Background:

On March 2, 2009, City Council endorsed "a resolution indicating its full support of the project and a willingness to provide overall grant and financial management." Based on the endorsement, an application was made under the Built Environment and Active Transportation (BEAT) Community Grant Planning Program. On March 20, 2009, the City received word that its application had been approved for \$25,000.

Purpose and Objectives:

The purpose of the project is to improve mobility and enhance active transportation options for seniors who are reliant on scooters, wheelchairs, walkers, walking sticks and other mobility aids. While the project specifically targets seniors, it will benefit all people with mobility limitations or who utilize wheeled devices.

The project has the following objectives:

1. To assess the 'wheelability' of the Uptown and Downtown neighbourhoods (see page 2), which are home to 42% of the seniors in New Westminster. Of this population, 57% report having "difficulties with daily activities."
2. To involve the target population, City staff and elected officials in the assessment days to facilitate educational opportunities and knowledge exchange. An educational video will also be produced.
3. To prepare maps that incorporate preferred routes to key destinations for the two neighbourhoods in question. These maps will identify gradients, surface treatments, accessibility and safety features (e.g., curb cuts), and pedestrian conveniences (e.g., benches). The preferred routes will be identified as easy, moderate and difficult.
4. To share the results of the assessment days with the relevant City Departments. These results will inform City policies, practices and design decisions related to 'wheelability.'

Accomplishments to Date:

The following are some of the accomplishments to date:

1. Retained the services of 'Opus International Consultants,' to develop the assessment audit tools and to prepare all maps, and 'Manage the Impact of Aging,' to coordinate the two assessment days and the public forum.
2. Established a representative working group which had met on four occasions.
3. Developed, piloted and finalized the pre-assessment and assessment audit tools.
4. Prepared press release and placed ads in local newspapers.
5. Prepared and distributed a community survey and assessment registration form. To date, over 50 surveys have been received.
6. Commenced targeted marketing and volunteer recruitment campaign.



For more information, contact John Stark, Senior Social Planner, City of New Westminster, 604-515-3777

Next Steps:

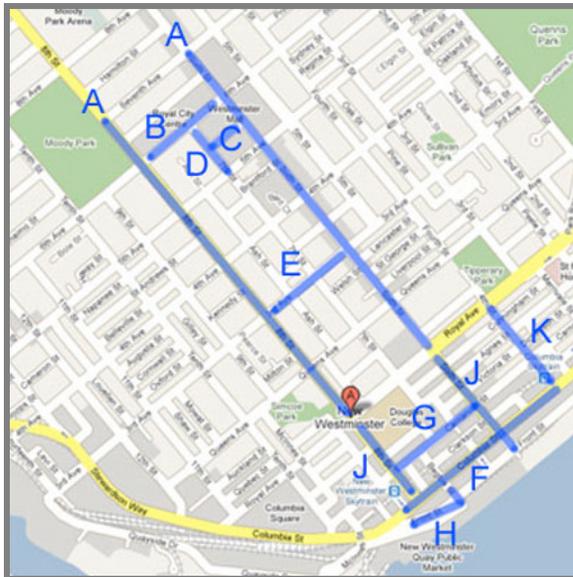
1. Conduct pre-assessment involving City staff (August 24 to September 11).
2. Collect and collate community surveys (August 28 to September 26).
3. Hold assessment days in Uptown (September 12) and Downtown (September 26). City Councillors and staff will be participating in the assessment days, with the Mayor participating on September 26.
4. Collect and collate information from pre-assessment and assessment (October).
5. Prepare draft maps with preferred routes and related information (October).
6. Hold a community forum to share assessment results and products. The forum will occur between 5:30 and 7:30 p.m. on October 21 at Century House.
7. Finalize products, including maps and video, and share the results of the assessment days with relevant City Departments (October and November).



Insert: Map of Pre-Assessment and Assessment Areas

Uptown: (September 12)

- A. Sixth and Eighth Streets between Royal and Seventh Avenues
- B. Sixth Avenue between Sixth and Eighth Streets
- C. Belmont Street between Sixth and Seventh Streets
- D. Seventh Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues
- E. Third Avenue between Sixth and Eighth Streets



Downtown: (September 26)

- F. Columbia Street between the two SkyTrain stations
- G. Carnarvon Street between Sixth Street and the McInnis Overpass
- H. Quayside, limited to the Begbie Street Crossing and the McInnis Overpass
- J. Sixth and Eighth Streets between Front Street and Royal Avenue
- K. Fourth Street between Columbia Street and Royal Avenue

Insert: Possible Mapping Products

The purpose of the map is to enable mobility users to make informed decisions about possible routes to key destinations prior to setting out. The map will have two sides. The front will provide information by route and/or route segment (see below example for the Beehave Trail in Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows). It will also provide an indication as to degree of

difficulty. The back will provide far more detailed information about the map, including the regulations governing mobility users (e.g., scooter users are permitted to use sidewalks); trip training tips (i.e., using transit to bypass difficult or steep sections of a route); and detailed locational information for pedestrian conveniences (e.g., accessible toilets, benches, transit stops) and potential obstacles.

Beehave Trail		Trail Length: 3.2 km [2 miles]	
		Total Elevation Change: 329 m [1080']	
	Inclination 10% Average - 47% Maximum		Trail Width 1422 mm [4'8"] Average 457 mm [1'6"] Minimum
	Cross Slope 10% Average - 34% Maximum		Obstacles 203 mm [8"] ruts 304 mm [1'] boulders 304 mm [1'] roots
	Surface Firm		



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