



The west side of New Westminster Child Development Hub Needs Assessment



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Executive Summary

This needs assessment indicates a clear need for a Child Development Hub on the west side of New Westminster. The New Westminster Child Development Public Partners (City of New Westminster, Fraser Health, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, School District #40, United Way of the Lower Mainland) have been working to support the development of four Child Development Hubs in New Westminster; one hub (Queensborough) is underway, one is at the planning stage (Uptown/Downtown) and one has had a needs assessment completed (Eastside).

This report is the needs assessment for the final area of New Westminster, the west side of the city. This report will demonstrate that the west side of New Westminster is a family orientated neighbourhood with a healthy population of children and families; there is clear research supporting the benefits of Child Development Hubs and access to a variety of family strengthening facilities, programs and services; and there is a lack of local public facilities and programs for residents in this area of New Westminster.

Family Oriented Neighbourhoods

68.8% OF
HOUSEHOLDS
ON THE WEST
SIDE OF NEW
WESTMINSTER
HAVE CHILDREN

62% OF SURVEY
RESPONDENTS
HAVE TWO OR
MORE CHILDREN

32.7% LIVE IN
SINGLE FAMILY
DETACHED
HOUSING

Clear Research Supporting Benefits of Child Development Hubs:

Child Development Hubs act as focal points for the neighbourhood and support families to access a continuum of services tailored for their individual needs. In New Westminster, a Child Development Hub is defined as a place with at least two child development or family strengthening services, one of which is a licensed child care program. Benefits of Child Development Hubs include: a reduction in childhood vulnerability rates and contribute to improvement of outcomes such as school readiness and success. They are also supportive of economic development by enabling a greater participation of parents in the work force, reduce worker absenteeism and stress and support the development of connection and social support networks in the community.

Current Lack of Facilities, Programs and Services:

Through identification of community assets and the public consultation process, it is clear there are a lack of public facilities, programs and services on the west side of New Westminster for child development and family support.

THE WEST SIDE HAS LESS THAN 175 LICENSED
CHILD CARE SPACES TO SERVE OVER 430
CHILDREN AGED 0-4

SURVEY RESPONDENTS GAVE THE WEST SIDE THE
LOWEST RATING FOR "ADEQUATE NUMBER OF
CHILD CARE SPACES"

THERE ARE CURRENTLY NO
YEAR-ROUND, ALL-AGE FAMILY
DROP IN PROGRAMS, LITERACY
PROGRAMS, LIBRARIES,
FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS
OR FAMILY COUNSELLING
PROGRAMS ON THE WEST SIDE



Clear Research Supporting Benefits of Child Development Hubs:

Local residents are very supportive of this initiative and eager to see a Child Development Hub in their neighbourhood. The following quote sums up the wish list of local residents:

“I would like to see an indoor drop-in community centre with play space near Tweedsmuir or 12th St. It doesn’t need to be large, but an indoor public space with a few activities for kids and resources (and coffee!) for parents would be fantastic. I would like to see something like a satellite community centre, with a small lending library, common area with seating for parents to chat and a small play area for children. I would love to see some programming in this space (storytime, maybe scheduled crafts) but even an unstructured space available for community groups would be fantastic.”



Definitions:

Child Development Hub: A place that offers two or more child development or family strengthening services, one of which is a licensed child care program.

Needs Assessment: A systematic process to acquire an accurate, thorough picture of a system’s strengths and weaknesses, in order to improve it and meet existing and future challenges.

Child Care Provider: Any adult who provides care for children aged 0-18 at least two days a week.

Licensed Child Care: Licensed Child Care programs must operate according to provincial legislation and requirements in order to maintain their licenses. Regulations include building code to safety requirements; criminal record checks for child care staff; and minimum child/staff ratios. These establishments are subject to regular inspections.

Unlicensed Child Care: Child Care arrangements that are not licensed by the provincial legislation.

Introduction

Across the province and around the world there is a growing trend towards the use of Child Development Hubs; defined in New Westminster as having at least two child development or family strengthening services, one of which is a licensed child care program. These hubs enable families to access a continuum of services and provide greater exposure to information about other services and programs available in the community. Child Development Hubs can contribute to economic development of communities, by attracting new families to the area and retaining existing families. They may also impact the business communities' decisions of where to locate their operations, as access to licensed child care and other child development services can impact their ability to attract and retain workers. "The model for service delivery is grounded in a community development philosophy – one that emphasizes building family capacity, empowering families, facilitating participation and supporting community-based initiatives. They are founded on a spirit of collaboration, partnership building and integration between different sectors."

In New Westminster, the Public Partners Child Development Committee, with representation from the City of New Westminster, Fraser Health, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, School District #40 and the United Way of Lower Mainland, has been working on supporting the creation of four Child Development Hubs; Queensborough, Uptown/Downtown, the Eastside, and the Westside.

In Queensborough, a Child Development Hub is a part of the new community centre, scheduled to open in April 2013. This new community centre will house licensed child care for 25 children aged from 30 months to school age, a play-based preschool program, a branch library with literacy programs, and flex office space. A multipurpose space for other child development and family strengthening programs will also be present in the new Queensborough Community Centre. (New Westminster Parks, Culture & Recreation) The hub also operates in conjunction with Queen Elizabeth Elementary Schools StrongStart Early Learning Centre¹ and out of school care program and other programs and services present at the community school.

In Uptown/Downtown, In Uptown/Downtown, Child Development Hubs are proposed as part of the Neighbourhood Learning Centres which are being considered for the St. Mary's and John Robson sites. A potential hub could include group child care facilities, before and after school care programs, multi-purpose rooms, community kitchens, and flex offices. Further updates on the project are expected throughout 2013.

On the Eastside a needs assessment has been conducted and a report produced. It is available here: <http://kidsnewwest.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/City-of-New-WestminsterEastside-Hub-Needs-Assessment-2012-25-Final-LOW-RES.pdf>.

This Hub Report for the west side of New Westminster is the last needs assessment to be conducted and is in response to the needs of the community and the currently lack of public space and services in the area. The Public Partners, with funding from the United Way of the Lower Mainland, retained Hyack Interactive to conduct a needs assessment and produce this report.

This report outlines the following:

- Profile of the west side of New Westminster including geographic, population, development, social demographic and existing community resources
- Community needs based on the public consultation process
- Research in support of development of hub on the west side of New Westminster
- Operational needs for Child Development Hubs
- Opportunities for potential locations
- Potential partners and funding opportunities

¹ Strong Start is a provincial program. Details can be found here: http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/strongstart_bc/

Methodology

In addition to research about the west side of New Westminster and its current growth and development patterns, a consultation process was undertaken to speak with child care providers throughout the area. An essential component to this consultation process was a survey of parents (and other care providers including grandparents or other extended family) regarding their perception of the west side of New Westminster as a neighbourhood, the availability of programs and services, and the challenges in accessing those programs, services, and desired components for a Child Development Hub. The survey was distributed both as an online survey as well as a number of printed paper copies.

Members of the Hyack Interactive team input paper copies manually. In total, 121 responses were collected through four channels, or “collectors”. The fairly equal division across the collectors represents a good variety and cross section of respondents.

| POINT OF COLLECTION | RESPONSES |
|---|-----------|
| In-person presence at a community event (Summerfest in Grimston Park) | 23 |
| Facebook advertising | 24 |
| Website embedding ² | 44 |
| Media mentions | 30* |

* This includes City Page and articles written.

The survey experienced a very high rate of completion – 113 of 121 started surveys were completed, for a rate of 93% completion.

The results of this survey were presented to the community via a PowerPoint presentation and individual conversations at a community event on Friday October 26th at Lord Tweedsmuir Elementary School. Feedback on the survey from the community was very positive. Overall, residents expressed their support for this project.

² Manually entered surveys from in-person surveying events other than Summerfest are included here.

Profile of the Community

For the purposes of this needs assessment, the west side of New Westminster includes two neighbourhoods; Connaught Heights and the West End³. The whole area is bordered by 10th Street to the north, Fenwick Ave to the west, Stewardson Way and 6th Avenue to the south and 12th Street to the east. Additionally, some survey takers identified themselves as being from the west side from surrounding neighbourhoods such as Brow of the Hill.



Figure 1: Map of the west side of New Westminster

Population and Development Activity

New Westminster is in a period of growth, bringing new demands for programs and services to the City. In particular, New Westminster is attracting families due to its accessibility to the rest of the Lower Mainland, its relatively affordable housing prices in comparison to Vancouver and Burnaby, and its small community atmosphere.

The City of New Westminster estimates the population will increase from its current population of 65,976 in the 2011 census to approximately 76,000 residents by the year 2021 (The City of New Westminster, 2011). A significant portion of the population growth is in individuals who are between the ages of 25 to 34 and “at an age when they are more likely to have a spouse and/or children”. The City of New Westminster reports that “since 1981, the City has experienced a 60 percent increase in the children under 10 years old”.

The west side of New Westminster also has a slightly higher percentage of children aged 0-4 and 5-9 (the primary age where child care services in particular are needed) than the rest of New Westminster.

On the west side of New Westminster, there has been a population increase of 10.1% from the 2006 Census to the 2011 Census. The current population of the west side of New Westminster is 8,261 and is expected to grow to 8,990 by 2021, an 8.8% increase.

³ Various sources used in this report refer to this area as “Connaught Heights” or “The West Side.”

The Socio-Demographic Profile

The socio-demographic profile of the west side of New Westminster paints a picture of a very family orientated neighbourhood. Census data from 2011 indicates a **higher level of households with kids in the west side of New Westminster than in other places in New Westminster**; 68.8% of households with children versus 56.1% for New Westminster as a whole. There is also a higher percentage of lone parent households on the west side of New Westminster (17.4% for the west side of New Westminster versus 15.9% for New Westminster as a whole), which may also indicate a higher need for some child development services, particularly child care. With regards to language, in the 2006 census, 17.2% of children in Connaught Heights speak a language other than English or French at home.

In addition to the high percentage of families with children in the west side of New Westminster, there is also a large supply of family-oriented housing. On the west side of New Westminster, **32.7% of the housing is single family houses**, versus 15.5% for New Westminster as a whole. The west side of New Westminster also has a relatively low percentage of apartment-style housing (which tends to be smaller and less conducive to attracting families to the area) at 25.5% versus 63.9% for the rest of New Westminster. The population on the west side of New Westminster is also quite stable, with 72.0% of the west side of New Westminster residents owning their home, versus 53.8% for New Westminster as a whole. Based on 2006 Census data, this area also tends to see a lower percentage of movers than New Westminster as a whole (17.4% versus 19.4% for the rest of New Westminster).

As a part of the survey completed by 121 area residents, there were a number of questions asked about the livability of the area from the perspective of parents and other caregivers. Of those who took the survey, 55% live in the West End and 26% live in Connaught Heights. The majority of residents surveyed indicated they strongly agree the west side of New Westminster is a good place to raise a family, is friendly, and is safe. The factor survey takers rated the lowest was “has an adequate number of child care spaces”. As one survey respondent said; “**Child care is desperately needed**. We currently have to drive to the opposite end of New Westminster for child care...and it ends next March.” The other factor that received a lower rating than the rest was “meets most of my daily needs.”

Overall, the residents here are long term, stable residents who are investing long term in their community.

The theme of lack of programs and services for family located in the West End was a consistent theme throughout the survey and consultation process.

⁴ New Westminster percentage of 0-4 year olds in the 2011 Census was 4.94% versus 5.2% for the west side of New Westminster. New Westminster percentage of 5-9 year olds in the 2011 Census was 4.02% versus 5.57% for the west side of New Westminster.

⁵ “Connaught Heights” as defined in the cited report includes both the communities of Connaught Heights and the West End, which are referred to here as the ‘west side of New Westminster.’

⁶ This trend seems to be changing across the country however, due to rising house prices. Families are considering living in condo’s or apartments due to their lower cost. (Yelaja, 2012)

Existing Resources

In addition to considering which programs and services do not exist on the west side of New Westminster, it is also important to consider which programs and services are available to residents. The survey indicates that overall, residents feel the west side of New Westminster is a good place to raise a family, is friendly and safe.

The west side of New Westminster does have attributes that make it a family friendly area. These attributes can act as a starting point in the conversation about hub development. In the following illustration, we have plotted the amenities and facilities into a map of the area.

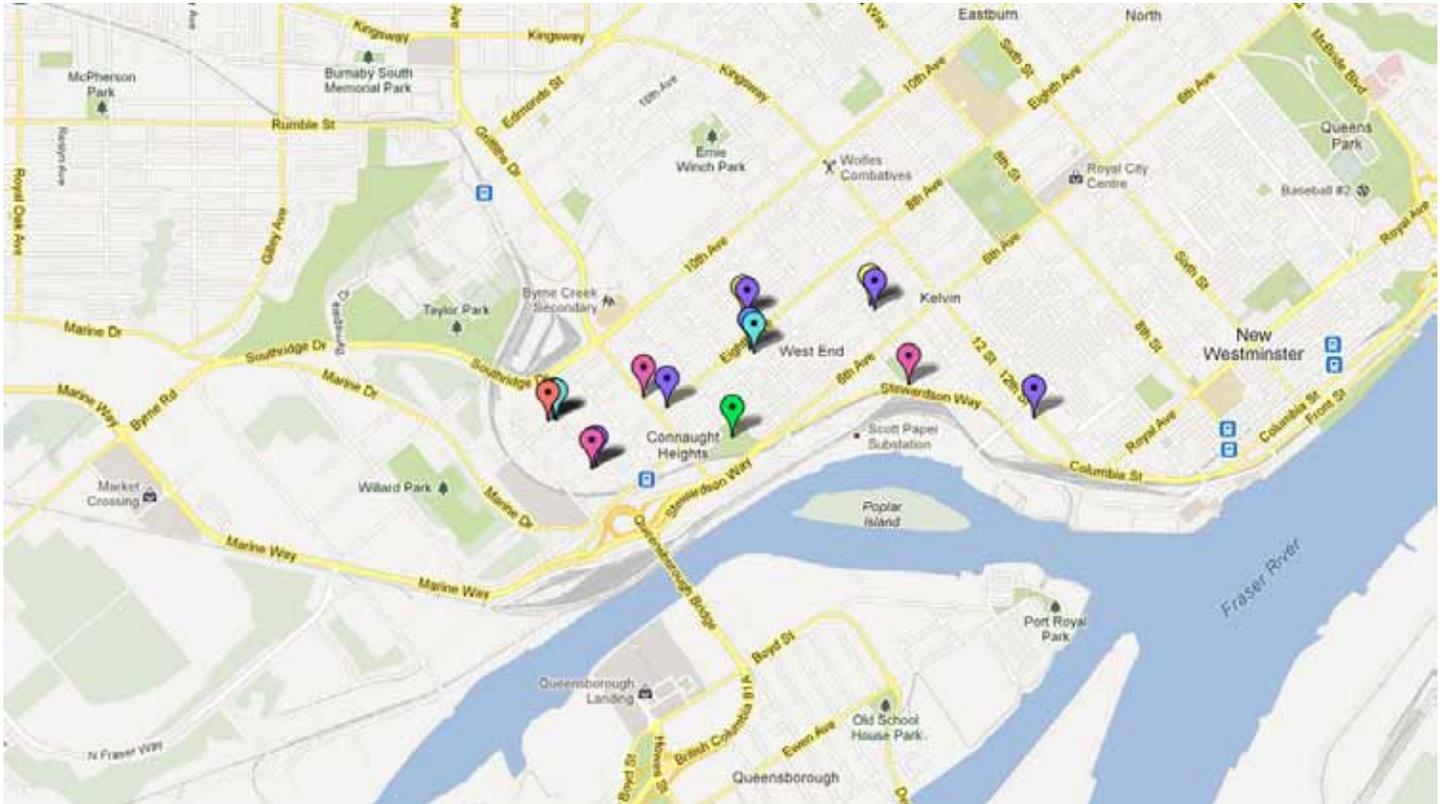


Figure 2: Child and Community Amenities on the west side of New Westminster

- **Schools:**
 Connaught Heights Elementary (K-7) at 2201 London Street
 Lord Tweedsmuir Elementary (K-7) at 1714 Eighth Avenue
- **Child care programs:**
 Angel Child Care at 2201 8 Avenue
 Fraser Montessori Daycare at 1408 Fifth Avenue
 Precious Early Years Childcare at 810 20th Street
- **Kids Programs:**
 Tiny Tots Playtime at Connaught Heights Elementary
 Strong Start at Connaught Heights Elementary
- **Before & After School Programs:**
 Westminster After School Care at Lord Tweedsmuir School
 Dragons' Grove at Connaught Heights
- **Faith Based Organizations:**
 Presbyterian Church at 1320 Seventh Avenue
 Unity in Action at 1630 Edinburgh Street
 St. Gheorghe Romanian Orthodox Church at 1932 Eighth Avenue
 Connaught Heights Pentecostal Assembly at 2201 Eighth Avenue
 Calvary Worship Centre at 260 12 Street
- **Parks and Community Space:**
 Grimston Park near 7th Avenue between 18th and 20th Streets
- **Preschool programs:**
 Seeds and Roots Montessori Preschool at 1630 Edinburgh Street
 Somewhere to Grow Montessori Preschool at 1320 Seventh Avenue

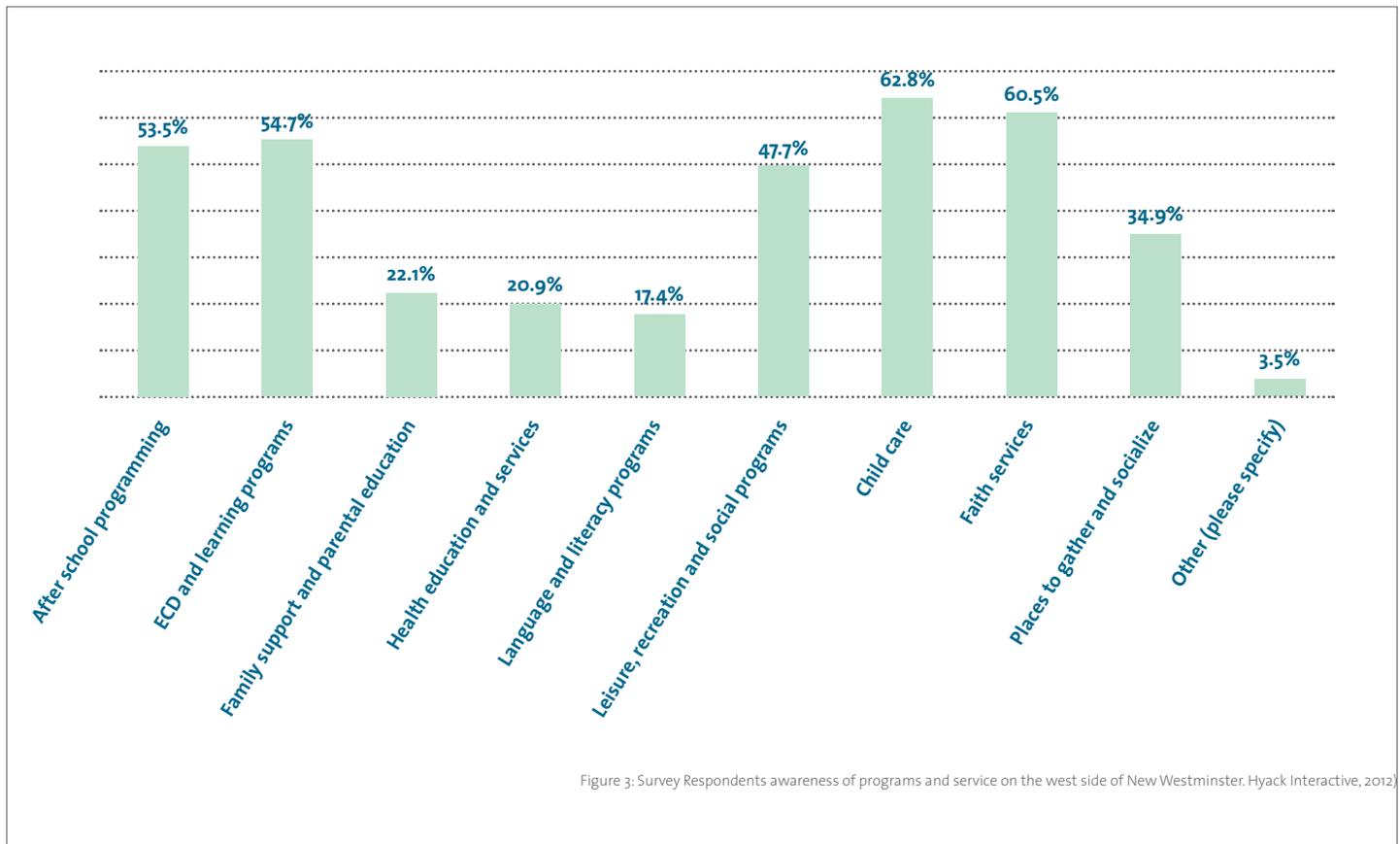
*There are an additional six licensed in-home Family Child Care or Multi-age Child Care providers, which each provide spaces for 7-8 children, not listed on this map.

The above community assets match closely with the perception of survey takers awareness of community services. While most survey takers indicated there are not enough child care spaces, they are aware of the child care services that do exist, with 62.8% indicating awareness. (See figure 3 below). It should be noted that while it may appear that the West Side has a good number of child care providers for the area, the reality is that there are less than 175 full time child care spaces⁸ for the 430 children 0-4 on the west side of New Westminster identified in the 2011 census. Within those 175 spaces, one should also consider other barriers to access, including restrictions on the age of the children the facility will accept, hours that may not be flexible enough or long enough to accommodate parents that work outside the New Westminster area, and the likelihood that some children from other areas are accessing the few available spaces in the west side area. When these factors are taken into account, the options are few in terms of full time child care spaces for children under four years old.

Faith services also ranked high in community awareness, as did after school programming, and early childhood development and learning programs. Within the sample, very little awareness existed for language and literacy programs, family support and parental education and health education and services.

This is reasonable, as there are currently no family drop in programs, literacy centres, libraries, family support programs, parenting or counselling programs in the west side of New Westminster.

This is likely due to a lack of a community facility to house these services and draw attention to their existence, a benefit that a hub would provide. Many of these services are located outside of the west side of New Westminster, making access more difficult to for families on the west side of New Westminster.



⁷ Referred to in this source as "Connaught Heights"

⁸ The number of 175 was estimated by adding up the child care spaces from the six licensed in home family child care and multi-age child providers and the three group child care facilities listed as licensed on the Fraser Health website. <http://www.healthspace.ca/fha/childcare>

Community Needs Based on the Consultation Process

As a part of this needs assessment, a survey of parents was conducted in the summer of 2012 where 121 responses were collected. When asked about the challenges in using programs and services on the west side of New Westminster, excluding child care, survey respondents clearly communicated that there is a lack of facilities and community services on the west side of New Westminster. A common refrain from survey respondents was the desire for an indoor community space, typically a community centre or pool. The concern over lack of facilities was closely followed by a corresponding lack of programs. These two needs go hand in hand; when there is a clear lack of facilities it follows that there is a lack of space to house programs and services.

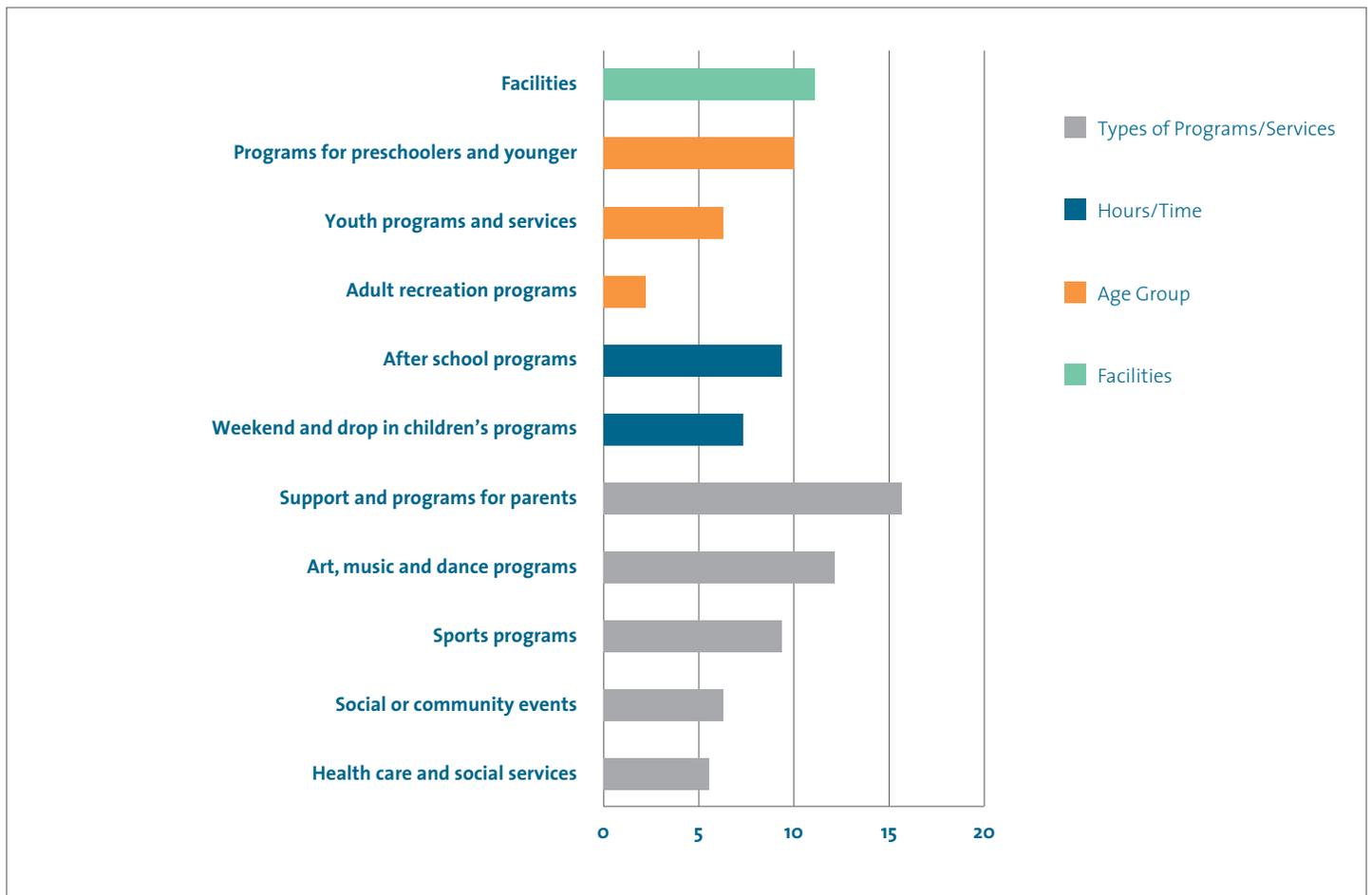


Figure 4: Survey response to question about needed programs, services, or facilities for the west side of New Westminster. (Hyack Interactive, 2012)

Feedback

The following is a breakdown of the most common feedback received through the survey.

Where: Facilities

When survey respondents were asked about what programs, services and facilities were needed on the west side of New Westminster the trend of communicating the lack of community facilities continued. When the comments of the survey were analyzed and categorized, 12% of all responses were regarding the lack of facilities in the area. Comments included:

“To my knowledge there are only two facilities available for public or private use and these regularly fully booked (ie: Tweedsmuir Elementary and Connaught Heights Elementary).”

“[I would also like to see] a ‘tot lot’ park closer to 13th Street (Grimston is too far to walk with kids in tow!)”

When the survey results were presented to the community, those we spoke to echoed the comments recorded in the survey results. Parents in the area are very eager to see this project go forward and are very concerned with the lack of facilities in the neighbourhood.

Who: Age Groups

Respondents to the survey indicated that the two age groups in most need of programs and services were preschool age and younger (0-4 year olds) (11% of responses) and youths (10-14 year olds) (6% of responses). This is understandable given that the west side of New Westminster reports a population of 5.2% for 0-4 year olds in the 2011 census. We also heard about lack of programming for children aged 5-9, including this from one parent: “Any after school programs that are offered at Connaught Heights elementary are offered for ages 6 and up. Very frustrating.”

The majority of respondents to the survey (62%) reported having two or more children; which increases the need for having availability of programs for different aged children at the same time, so that parents can take more than one child to the same location at the same time for programming. This need was communicated in the comments of the survey; “I want to have some programs I can come to when my older daughter is at kindergarten.”

What: Programs or Services

A majority of responses (52%) to the survey question regarding which programs and services were needed were about specific types of programs care providers would like to see. The most common request for programming was programs which support parents, at 16% of responses to this question. Parents want to see programs that support them to deal with challenges with their children, including learning challenges and helping their children through divorce.

Survey respondents also wanted to see more art, music, dance (13% of responses) and sports programs (9% of responses). The community also communicated a need for social gathering places and/or community events.

When: Hours of Availability

Overall, the survey respondents communicated a need for programs available afterschool (9% of responses) and weekends and/or drop in (8% of responses) service. As one parent said, “A number of school-age children’s activities in New Westminster in general are offered shortly after school and thus are inaccessible to parents who only get home from work around 5:30-6.” This communicated need is supported by the findings of the 2008 Child Care Needs Assessment concerns about the lack of flexible hours in child care arrangements, cited in the research section of this report.

Research in Support of Hub Development

Previous Needs Assessments in support of creating Child Development Hubs in New Westminster have thoroughly reviewed various literature and research available regarding potential benefits of hubs. The following information was adapted from the East Side Needs Assessment, as the implications for the west side of New Westminster are very similar.

Previous Research:

Early Childhood Development Mapping Project

This resource, prepared by the University of British Columbia Early Learning Partnership (HELP), maps out data collected using the Early Development Instrument (EDI). The EDI measures developmental changes in populations of children and is mapped by neighbourhood. This information can be used to support decision making on community programs, services and schools. The EDI looks at Kindergarten-aged children and rates them on five developmental scales; communication, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development and physical health and well-being. The tool then maps a vulnerability score, which identifies a portion of the population which, without additional support and services, may experience challenges in school and society.

Findings

Data for New Westminster has been collected since 2000 and there have been four waves of data collection. The fourth and most recent wave was collected in 2011. Overall for New Westminster, 28% of children have been identified as vulnerable on one or more of the five development scales. The most common development scale for children to be vulnerable on in New Westminster is Communication (15%) and the least common is Language and Cognitive Development.

In comparison, Connaught Heights (which by the study's classification includes the West End and is therefore representative of the whole the west side of New Westminster), has a higher than average rate of children measuring vulnerable on one or more development scale at 30%. Only Downtown (34%) and Queensborough (39%) had a higher rate of vulnerability. In Connaught Heights, the most common developmental scale for children to be identified as vulnerable is Communication (17%) and the least common is Emotional Maturity (9%).

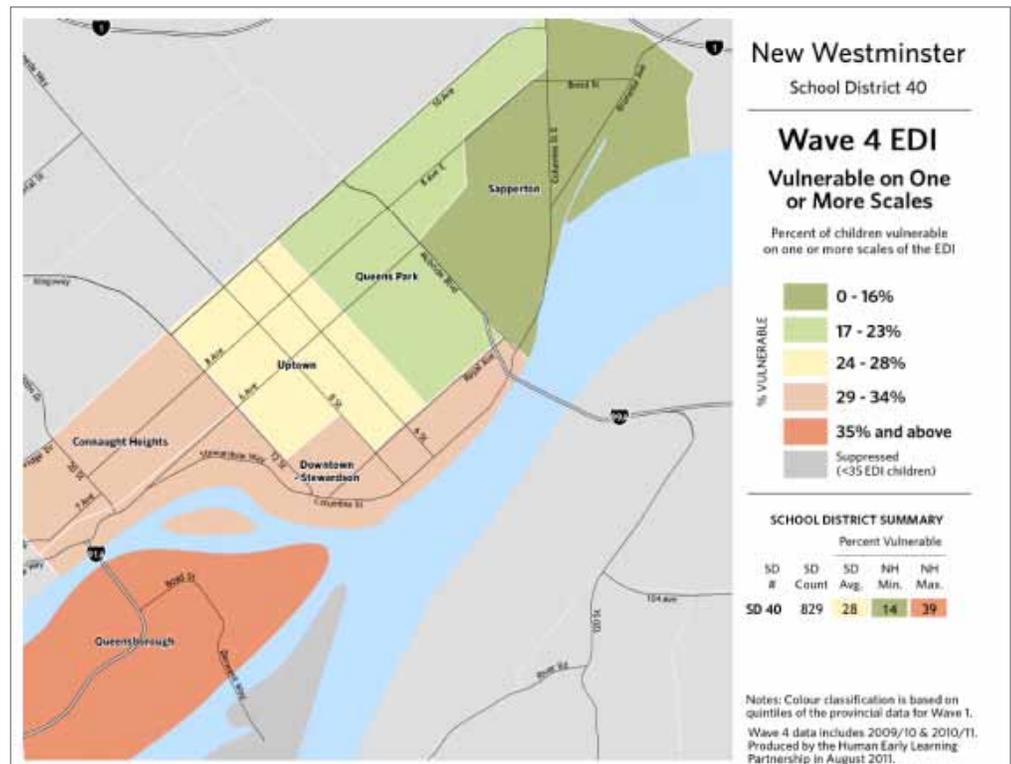


Figure 5: Wave 4 EDI Data for New Westminster Childhood Vulnerability Rates



Child Care Needs Assessment, 2008

Prepared by the City of New Westminster with the Child Care Strategy Task Group and was adopted by Council in February 2009. Progress reports have been released in March 2010 and January 2012.

Findings

This consultation process identified findings consistent with what was communicated in the west side of New Westminster parent survey; most parents are reporting a shortage of child care spaces. This city wide consultation included a survey, completed by 428 parents and representing 732 children between the ages of 0 to 12 years. In addition to child care space, the top reported needs were as follows:

- Shortage of child care spaces across New Westminster resulting in 40% children, whose parents utilize non-parental care arrangements, find themselves using unlicensed care. The care types most in need are infant/toddler (0-3 years) and out of school care (6-12years).
- Quality child care spaces were also reported as a challenge. Quality can be a subjective term, but a number of key criteria were identified related to ensuring quality: educated child care staff, low student to caregiver ratios, well-structured programs and a facility with is well equipped and designed for the needs.
- Cost of care is also a major issue; with the average of survey respondents indicating that they allocate an average of 16% of their income to child care costs. While 23% of parents surveyed are receiving some subsidy, 47% indicate that subsidy is not enough to make up the difference between what they can afford and the cost of their current child care arrangement.
- Flexibility in hours is the fourth area reported as of concern. There are currently no licensed child care options which provide service outside of typical business hours. This means that parents who work evenings, weekends, holidays, shift work, or drop-in emergency care have few, if any, options. The report indicates, "In fact, 51% of questionnaire respondents reported that the lack of suitable, including flexible, child care arrangements limited their ability to work.". Non-standard work weeks are becoming more common in Canada. Statistics Canada reports that, "In 2005, approximately 28% (4.1 million) of the 14.6 million employed Canadians worked something other than a regular day shift." (Williams)



Understanding the Early Years: New Westminister Community Report, 2010

Understanding the Early Years (UEY) is a national initiative to enable communities to better understand the needs of families with young children in order to better determine programs and services to meet those needs. The host agency for this project is the Lower Mainland Purpose Society. The full report can be found here: <http://kidsnewwest.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/FinalUEYReport1.pdf>

Findings:

There were a number of important findings in this report that relate to hub development on the west side of New Westminister. Some of those findings are included in other sections of this report and cited as such. A few are noted here, along with their possible implications.

- According to Fraser Health, “In 2004/2005, 19.2% of New Westminister kindergarten students spoke English as a second language.” In the 2006 census, 17.2% of children in Connaught Heights speak a language other than English or French at home. “In spite of many programs employing interpreters and the availability of translated materials, families without any knowledge of English are often unable to access community programs.” This is significant as it ties in with both the vulnerability scale from the Early Childhood Development Map, as well as the lack of language and literacy programs available in the community.
- The report also finds that; “In 2006, 66% of New Westminister residents worked outside the city, 15% worked within New Westminister, 5% worked at home and 12% had no fixed work place.” The impact of this figure is that when parents work outside the home and have to commute outside the city (as a majority of New Westminister residents do) there is a greater need for flexible child care that is available for sufficient hours during the day- as commuting in the Lower Mainland can be unpredictable and take additional time.

Middle Childhood Inside and Out: The Psychological and Social World of Children 9 to 12, 2008

This report was prepared by the University of British Columbia and the United Way of the Lower Mainland and was a precursor to the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) Middle Development Indicator (MDI), which is now being administered in a number of school districts. The MDI was completed in New Westminister in 2011/2012, but there was insufficient data for Connaught Heights and therefore that report is not included in this needs assessment. The following findings are based on data from 1266 children in grades 4 to 7 in seven school districts in Metro Vancouver.

Findings:

- Children benefit significantly from participating in structured activities after school.
- Being highly connected with their parents allows children entering adolescence to function best.
- Children’s relationships with peers and adults in their community and school are important for emotional and social competence.

Operational Considerations for a Hub

In the process of planning a Child Development Hub, a number of operations considerations should be taken into account in order to evaluate opportunities as they arise. This includes the type of space needed, the physical requirements for the space and model of the hub itself. These considerations are explored in this section.

Dedicated versus multi-purpose spaces

Given the space challenges of the west side of New Westminster, development of a hub will need to consider the use of dedicated versus multi-purpose spaces. Dedicated spaces include those which are designed areas for core services. Those services typically operate on a daily basis. In the context of a Child Development Hub, the licensed child care and needs dedicated equipment, furnishings, toys and other facilities, which much adhere to provincial licensing regulations for child safety and security.

However, other child development or family strengthening services may not need a dedicated space. For other service providers without a need for dedicated space, flexible multipurpose spaces can be developed, thereby increasing the ability for a wider variety of community programs and services to be housed in the Child Development Hub. In addition, service providers can also share office space or even consider job sharing arrangements to reduce costs and increase cooperation. These opportunities can create both efficiency and mutually beneficial agreements to share space and resources.

Spatial Requirements

Provincial regulations for child care licensing provide an outline of the spatial requirements needed. The following information is adapted from the East Side Child Development Hub Needs Assessment. (Public Partners Child Development Committee, 2011)

| CORE CHILD CARE SPACES | SQUARE FEET |
|---|-------------|
| Infant/Toddler Care (12 spaces) | 1800 |
| Three to Five Care- 30 Months to School Age (25 spaces) | 1800 |
| Out-of-School Care and Secured Storage (25 spaces) | 1400 |
| Administrative and Flex Office Space | 350 |
| Information and Referral Services (Resource Library) | 250 |
| Public/Disabled Toilets | 200 |
| TOTAL | 5800 |

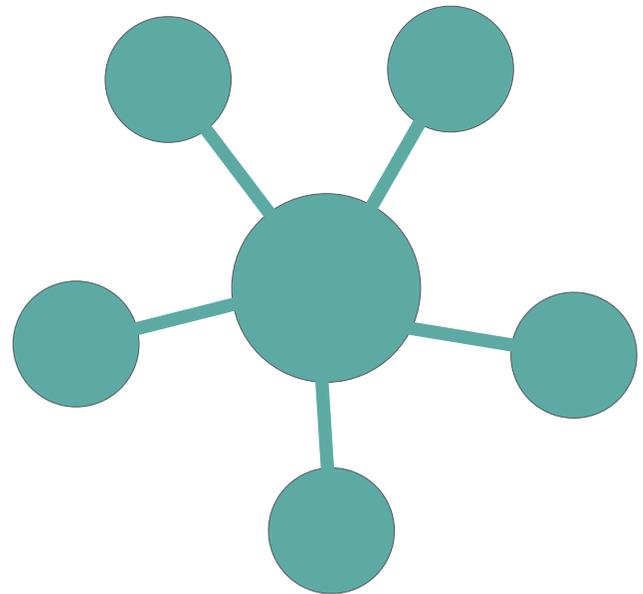
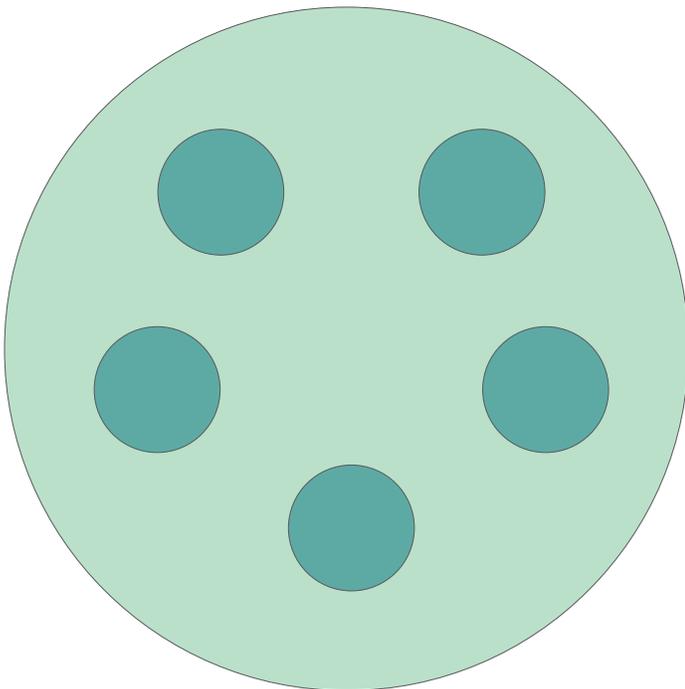
| COMPLEMENTARY / SUPPORT | SQUARE FEET |
|--|-------------|
| Community Living Room (Lounge) | 500 |
| Community Kitchen | 300 |
| Flex Office/Small Meeting Room Space (Dividable) | 200 |
| Multi-Purpose Space (Classroom or Drop-In) | 800 |
| Secure Storage | 200 |
| Additional Public/Disabled Toilets | 200 |
| TOTAL | 2200 |

Centralized Versus Decentralized (Campus) Models

Another consideration in hub development is whether a centralized or decentralized model is more suitable for the west side of New Westminster. A centralized hub is when all programs and services are located on a single site, whereas a decentralized model is where programs and services are provided in multiple locations/facilities with close proximity to each other. Within New Westminster, both models are present with Uptown/Downtown hub development following the centralization model and Queensborough following the campus model.

The Neighbourhood Learning Centres proposed for Uptown/Downtown at both the elementary school on the St. Mary's site and as part of the middle school on the Job Robson site, are being planned using the centralized model. This allows for multiple programs and services to run independently of each other on the site, but has the benefit of encouraging development of mutually beneficial relationships amongst child development service and program providers. Efficiencies may be available which could reduce costs for all of the variety of non-profit and public program and service providers operating in the centralized model. When the space is available to house multiple programs and services in one location, this model is ideal.

The Queensborough Child Development Hub is operating on a decentralized model. Licensed child care for 25 children from 30 months to school age, a play based pre-school program, a branch library with literacy programs and flex office and multipurpose space for other child development and family strengthening programs will be present in the new Queensborough Community Centre. The hub also operates in conjunction with Queen Elizabeth Elementary School StrongStart⁹ Early Learning Centre and out of school care program and other programs and services present at the community school.



⁹ Strong Start is a provincial program. Details can be found here: http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/strongstart_bc/

Opportunities for Potential Locations

Features of an Ideal Location:

The actual location of a hub will likely be opportunity based.

Given the many factors that must come together to get a child development hub open on the west side (finding a location, securing funding, identifying and securing programs and services to be available at the hub, etc.) it is unlikely that holding out for the perfect location will meet the needs of the community. As such, it is reasonable that some concessions will need to be made in order to get the project up and running on the west side of New Westminster. Despite this, it is important to consider the features of what an ideal location for this neighbourhood would look like. This will provide a framework and criteria for assessment of any potential location opportunities as they arise. There are a number of key criteria to consider:

Transit access:

The hub should be accessible by transit as well as by car.

Within the west side of New Westminster area, the most prominent transit feature is the 22nd Street SkyTrain station, which is stroller accessible from the train platform. However, as the SkyTrain has only one stop on the west side of New Westminster, this transit feature would not be likely to be used by local parents to take their children to a hub located nearby. Rather, local transit use is most dense around the perimeter of the west side of New Westminster and the single bus route through the middle of the neighbourhood. From the map below, it is clear that the west side of New Westminster has a lack of public transit running through the neighbourhood, particularly north/south anywhere East of 12th Street. This poses some significant challenges to the goal of having a hub which is transit accessible, particularly given the steep topography of the neighbourhood running north/south. As one survey respondent indicated, their ideal hub location would be, “well connected to transit, and located where it can be accessed easily across busy roads such as 20th St.” (Hyack Interactive, 2012)



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Figure 6: Frequent Transit Network Walkshed Map (Cote, 2012)

¹⁰ Walkshed refers to the area conveniently reached on foot from your house. This map is used to demonstrate which areas of New Westminster are within walkshed of the skytrain and frequent transit bus stops (bus stops with service every 15 minutes to better throughout the day).

Topography:

To facilitate accessibility of a hub location for pedestrians, **the ideal location would be one of relatively level topography and good infrastructure** (pedestrian crossings, etc.). The west side again, has a number of challenges in this regards.

It is important to note that in spite of all these transit routes, the steep topography of New Westminster often makes it difficult for families with young children to navigate the streets with strollers, especially in the winter. According to the New Westminster Community Literacy Plan (2007), “many people express the concern that services are too spread out, they lack the money for buses, and that bus use is difficult with children in tow, especially in the rain”. (Committee, 2010)

This experience was echoed in comments from survey respondents, including: “We do visit the Strong Start centre in Connaught occasionally, but it is not easily accessible by transit from my location, so I only go when I’m up for a long uphill walk.”

Amongst local residents and survey respondents, it should also be noted that there are challenges cited with crossing 20th Street, as many parents have to do to access the services at Connaught Heights Elementary. Parents express they feel that roadway presents both a safety concern and a psychological barrier to accessing services available.

“I often feel unsafe crossing 20th even at a controlled intersection because drivers just don’t seem to be watching for pedestrians. While I like taking my kids to Connaught’s Strong Start program, I have often chosen to travel across town to McBride instead, because it has better bus access and more child-friendly street crossings.” (Tomkinson, 2012)

Proximity to other community features:

Another important consideration for a potential hub location is **proximity to other community features**. Many parents have children of multiple ages, so locating child care within walking distance of the two elementary schools in the area is something to be considered. This is also important as elementary schools often host other child development programs, particularly if the west side of New Westminster hub ends up as a campus model, rather than a centralized model. Similarly, walking distance proximity to the area’s main park, Grimston Park, would also be ideal. This could support the regulatory needs that licensed child care must have at least 7 square meters of outdoor play space. (British Columbia, 2012)

Within the west side of New Westminster, the most commercially viable area is 12th Street. Considering the proximity commercial centres is also important for hub development to support the busy needs of parents to access multiple services within one trip. However, many parents in the area are likely to access shopping areas in Burnaby or other areas of New Westminster, given the current business profile of 12th Street. This limits the value of 12 Street as an option.

Proximity to population:

Lastly, **proximity to population** is also an important consideration. Currently, the population on the west side is relatively spread out, with perhaps a small concentration of population around 12th Street where housing is slightly denser. However, if there is development around 22nd Street SkyTrain station, as has been suggested, that may significantly shift the population density to the south, rather than the north, part of the neighbourhood. (Stark, 2012)

Future Location Options

The biggest challenge to development of a hub on the west side of New Westminster is finding and securing a location for the hub. “There are limited opportunities for hub development related to civic facilities on the west side of New Westminster. Currently there are no major civic facilities on the west side of New Westminster and none are proposed at this time” (Stark, 2012). However, there are a number of opportunities that should be considered in this discussion.

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|---|---|
| <p><i>Civic, Government or School Facilities</i></p> | <p>Gasworks Site: The Gasworks site, which is located on the east side of lower 12th Street, is a potential location for a Child Development Hub. While it is technically in the Brow of the Hill community, it is close enough to be considered a potential hub location that would provide service to the west side of New Westminster. In 2009, a land use study of the 45,650 square feet site was conducted by Ramsay Worden Architects. Included in the study is the suggestion that the site could be used for “a community centre, possibly related to the site being a “community hub” which may include child care facilities.” (Ramsay Worden Architects, 2009) The study also includes “the idea of creating a community hub could lend itself to including a centre for health and social services, as well as community gathering and meeting places.” (Ramsay Worden Architects, 2009) The potential drawback of this location is that according to city planning staff, the development is likely years away. (Stark, 2012). It is also located east of the community, and topography presents a major barrier to access for pedestrians travelling north/south.</p> |
| | <p>Connaught Heights or Lord Tweedsmuir Elementary Schools: The upcoming move of Grades 6 and 7 students to the new middle school, expected to be complete sometime after 2014, may free up some space in either Connaught Heights or Lord Tweedsmuir schools. (Grant, 2012) Locating a hub with one of the two elementary schools in the area would allow a close proximity between the child development hub and other community amenities already provided through the elementary schools. It would also be helpful to parents with children of multiple ages that may have both a child in elementary school and in child care. However, locating a hub in either of the already in use elementary schools may have limitations in the amount of space needed for certain programs and may lack the purpose build design of a newly developed space. This may impede which programs and services could be available and restrict the project’s ability to meet all the community needs.</p> |
| <p><i>Existing Buildings or Spaces</i></p> | <p>Connaught Heights Pentecostal Assembly (8th Ave.) or Calvary Worship Centre (12th St.): While there are few buildings in the west side of New Westminster that could accommodate a hub, “Connaught Heights Pentecostal Assembly on 8th Avenue and the Calvary Worship Centre on 12th Street are two such buildings. The former, which houses a licensed child care program, is used for faith purposes. As such, it is likely not an option. The latter is currently going through rezoning process to develop a much larger building. While this building, if the rezoning is approved by Council, will meet faith and community needs, a hub is not a consideration at this time.” (Stark, 2012)</p> |
| <p><i>Amenity Contributions through Development</i></p> | <p>22nd St. Sky Train Development: Given that development of the 22nd Street SkyTrain area is within the scope of current New Westminster community planning there is a potential for future development on this site. “If such redevelopment occurs, there is the potential for increased residential density in select locations and the establishment of a local commercial and community service hub for the area. The latter could be anchored by licensed child care and possibly include other child development or family strengthening services.” (Stark, 2012)</p> <p>However, city planning staff indicate that redevelopment of this area is likely years away. “Regardless, hub development, possibly through an amenity contribution, should be a consideration when and if redevelopment occurs in the area served by the 22nd Street SkyTrain station.” (Stark, 2012)</p> <p>12th St. Development: The possibility of a Child Development Hub on Upper 12th Street is also a consideration and would fit in with the City’s Strategy for Upper 12th Street through its Development Permit Area #1 Objectives: “Promote 12th Street as a pedestrian friendly neighbourhood commercial centre; Promote a wide range of pedestrian-orientated commercial uses; Encourage residential use on the upper floors” (The City of New Westminster, 2011). This area has good transit access, particularly north/south where the topography presents the greatest challenge for local residents. However, the area is currently completely privately owned, meaning any opportunity for a hub would need to come through re-development, which may not happen in a timely manner to coincide with community needs. (Stark, 2012)</p> |

Potential Partnerships and Funding Opportunities

The New Westminister Public Partners Child Development Committee is committed to developing five hubs. The Partnership includes a number of partners, who are already working towards this goal. They include the City of New Westminister, Fraser Health, Ministry of Children and Family Development, School District #40 and the United Way of Lower Mainland.

The vision of the Public Partners is to ensure “healthy children and youth supported by nurturing families and child, youth and family-friendly neighbourhoods in New Westminister.” The Public Partners have signed an updated Memorandum of Understanding on April 6th, 2011 which includes the following objectives:

- “to coordinate the planning of the five organizations to meet the identified needs and opportunities of the community as related to hub development”
- “to identify and access funding and other resources in support of hub development” “to support and advocate on behalf of hub development in New Westminister.” (Lisa Spitale, 2011)

Sources of Funding used by other Hubs in New Westminister:

In considering potential sources of funding for a Child Development Hub on the west side of New Westminister, it make sense to look at the sources of funding that the two New Westminister Child Development Hubs which are already underway have used.

The new Child Development Hub in Queensborough has benefited from the following sources of funding:

- Amenity contribution of \$100,000 from Port Royal Village Developments (New Westminister News Leader, 2011)
- “\$6.2M in funding through the Development Assistant Compensation agreement between the City, Province of BC, BC Lottery Corporation and Gateway Casinos. The total project value is \$7.67 million.” (New Westminister Parks, Culture & Recreation)
- “Over the past four years, Ministry of Children and Family Development provided further financial support (\$96,000) through three different funding streams towards the development of the Queensborough hub.” (Lisa Spitale, 2011)

The Uptown/Downtown hubs are also in the process of obtaining funding. The Downtown hub has a location as part of the new elementary school on the St. Mary’s site and funding for capital costs related to construction. The Uptown hub is likely to be located as part of the new middle school on the John Robson site. The Public Partners informed a submission in support of funding from the BC Ministry of Education’s Neighbourhood Learning Centre (NLC) program. This submission would see three NLCs developed as part of a capital project plan for three new schools in New Westminister.” (Lisa Spitale, 2011).

Given the support in the community and the diversity of funding partners already seen for other hub developments there seems to be good potential for funding options. Depending on the location and opportunities that arise in the west side of New Westminister, funding could come from a variety of municipal, provincial, non-profit or commercial sources.



Conclusions and Next Steps

“Child care, which is often perceived as a social issue, has significant economic implications for the future prosperity of New Westminster. It enables parents to work and to contribute to the local economy; it alleviates dependence on income assistance; and it facilitates early childhood development and later school success which is vital to developing a skilled workforce for the future. It is also a major factor in the location and relocation decisions of both families and businesses and is a key determinant in recruiting and retaining parent employees.” (Child Care Strategy Task Force, 2008)

Child Development Hub creation is aligned with the City of New Westminster’s current commitment to meeting the needs of children, youth and families. Over the past four years, the City had developed a Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy (Child Care Strategy Task Force, 2011) and this Needs Assessment for the development of a hub on the west side of New Westminster supports that strategy.

The benefits of a Child Development Hub are clear; better access to programs and services that will increase the success of children on the west side of New Westminster. This report has demonstrated that there is a lack of community services on the west side of New Westminster and a clear desire amongst residents to see a hub created.

In terms of next steps, there are number of things that the Public Partners Child Development Committee will strive to do:

- >> **Bring this assessment to the attention of their respective boards and elected bodies**
- >> **Continue to build awareness and support need for hub on the west side of New Westminster**
- >> **Continue to work collectively**
- >> **Seek out new partners**
- >> **Identify and realize external funding sources**

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January 2012

