



## MEASURE UP PRINCE RUPERT

### October 31, 2008 FINAL REPORT, PHASE 1



In late 2007, Prince Rupert City Council appointed a 12-member citizen work group to explore opportunities and recommend priorities that would help the community improve access and inclusiveness to allow residents of all physical and mental abilities to participate in and enjoy the benefits of recreation, civic involvement, mobility and cultural events. This work group met every two weeks for the first two months to inventory challenges and recommend solutions

that would make Prince Rupert not only more accessible and inclusive for the people who live here but also for the tens of thousands of visitors to our community annually.

The members of the work group came from a diversity of backgrounds and life experiences, many of which include personal physical and mobility challenges. [A list of work group participants is at the end of this report]. The co-chairs of the group, Julie Kirkbright and Grainne Barthe, know all too well the challenges faced by residents and visitors in our community. A car accident twenty years ago left Julie a wheelchair-bound paraplegic and Grainne has been 75% deaf since birth.

The work group recognized that the City of Prince Rupert, with its island topography and renowned weather patterns, make mobility particularly challenging. With this in mind, the work group spent its first several meetings taking inventory of buildings, sidewalks and crosswalks, transportation, housing, and parking, often drawing on their personal experiences maneuvering around our community. The group looked not only at what was lacking but what really works in our community for people with physical and mental challenges.



Among the amenities identified as positive in our community are: the new elevator at Prince Rupert Mall; some sidewalks and ramps; W/C accessible washrooms at Atlin Terminal, the Aquatic Centre, the Tot Lot and Mariners Park; the Millennium Walkway along the waterfront; the NWCC Facility; the Public Library (large format and audio books); some city busses are equipped to receive wheelchairs/walkers; Greyhound Buslines has some buses with W/C washrooms; the new wheelchair accessible Taxi (funded in part by the City); Handi-Dart; the Northern Health Bus; the Earl Mah Aquatic Centre (pool ramp and aquafit programs); the Lester Centre (ramp and seating area for W/C); the Citizens of Prince Rupert are very helpful/accommodating; the Butze Rapids Trail Short

Route is W/C accessible; some doctor's offices have ramps; the Hospital (automatic doors/elevator); some Seniors Apartment Housing (Helsmen's, Sunset Villa) and the Inn at the Harbour—all have W/C accessible room(s) and unit(s); Pineridge and Lax Keen Elementary Schools (all one level); Museum of Northern BC (added an elevator); Grocery Stores (Safeway has W/C accessible public washroom); and the Digby Island Ferry/Airport Access.

The group next created a list of challenges and opportunities facing Prince Rupert from an accessibility perspective. Those opportunities identified include: installing Chirp (audible) crosswalk indicators at major intersections; installing an elevator at the Civic Centre; requesting that the Via Rail station install a passenger ramp; add W/C accessible washrooms at the waterfront; extend the Millennium Trail; Playgrounds need to become more accessible; Recreation Programs are needed for W/C bound youth and adults; Swimming Pool needs private shower/change rooms; Handicap Parking stalls around town are not large enough to accommodate unloading; need more Senior Housing; Curling Rink not W/C accessible, Bowling Alley could be improved; Cinemas could move W/C seating to be closer to the screens; Sidewalks/Stairs need better marking, better curb cutouts; some streets are missing sidewalks; stricter enforcement of accessibility building codes; more stores and restaurants need to be accessible; Transportation (more buses need to be W/C accessible and more bus stops); Snow removal at bus stops and sidewalks needs to be faster and perhaps a return to former city practice of stockpiling snow in centre lane than along sidewalks/parking areas; Signage needs to be improved (way finding, parking); More paved trails.

Individuals in the group next voted for the top three priorities that they would like the work group to focus on during its 6 month mandate with an objective of charting real progress and results in these areas:

- 1. Source and install Chirp (audible) crosswalk indicators at major intersections**
- 2. Fundraise for the installation of an Elevator at the Civic Centre**
- 3. Make recommendations to City Council on Sidewalks and Stairs that need repairs or better marking, parking space enhancements and better or new curb cutouts**

The Measure UP Prince Rupert Work Group worked out some details and costs and began looking for grant and corporate funding to help the City address the priorities identified. The Elevator Project at the Civic Centre, for example, was expected to carry a \$150,000 price tag. **The Measure UP Prince Rupert workgroup asked city staff to submit a federal grant application under the Enabling Accessibility Fund, to make the elevator project possible. This grant application was not successful.**

Of the five traffic signals in town, four are operated by the Ministry of Highways (Highway 16) with one operated by the City of Prince Rupert. Installing Audible Chirp Signals is expected to cost between \$1000-\$2000 per intersection. **The Measure Up Prince Rupert Work Group allocated \$2000 toward the installation of audible chirp signals for the city managed intersection at 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Fulton Street.**



Curb cut outs, like the new one pictured below were identified as priorities. In response the City of Prince Rupert moved quickly to complete the cutout (pictured below) on McBride Street at Second Avenue. These modification can cost anywhere from \$500-1000 depending on the circumstances. The need for this particular cut-out was identified by this work group and shared with Chief Engineer for the City, Bob Thompson who saw an opportunity to work it into another sidewalk upgrade project in the vicinity.



Update on each of the three Priority Areas:

### **Audible Crosswalk Chirp Signals**

The group has sourced a company in the lower mainland that manufactures a variety of ACS devices. To purchase the hardware would cost between \$1200-\$2400 per intersection depending on the sophistication of the device. Bob Thompson, who attended one of the work group meetings, said he would contact his colleagues at Ministry of Highways to see if there was any interest in cost sharing those intersections under their jurisdiction. The Work Group is fairly confident it can find local service organizations and businesses willing to contribute to installing devices at the only City controlled intersection adjacent City Hall.

**The Measure Up Prince Rupert Work Group allocated \$2000 toward the installation of audible chirp signals for the city managed intersection at 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Fulton Street.**

(The price above does not include the cost of installation and getting electrical service to the devices. Bob Thompson, the City's Engineer has committed city funding to cover installation costs for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave/Fulton Intersection if the Prince Rupert Work Group allocated funds to cover the cost of the four devices needed).

### **Elevator at the Civic Centre**

The group secured several quotes from BC elevator companies for the cost of the elevator equipment [KONE Elevator: **\$89,585.00**; Garaventa: **\$79,450**) and contacted local contractors to provide quotes for the preparation work required to construct the elevator shaft. It is expected that the total cost of this project will exceed \$150,000. The Measure Up Prince Rupert initiative had already received a \$20,000 grant for the evaluation and reporting process from 2010 Legacies Now. The work group elected not to initially spend any of this money and instead wished to divert this grant funding to offset the cost of the elevator project. In addition, the Work Group authorized city staff to apply for a federal grant "Enabling Accessibility" for an additional \$50,000. The elevator is primarily needed to enable access to the second floor seating area in the ice arena, though it would also help residents better access meeting and craft rooms.

**The Measure UP Prince Rupert workgroup asked city staff to submit a federal grant application under the Enabling Accessibility Fund, to make the elevator project possible. This grant application was not successful. The City expects to reapply later in the Fall during a second round of funding. The Measure UP Prince Rupert workgroup made a recommendation to the city to set aside**

**\$50,000 in its 2009 Budget to be used as matching funds should a second round application to the Federal Government's Enabling Accessibility Funding program be successful.**



During the course of this work, an opportunity and an idea arose to create a portable viewing platform and ramp for the Civic Centre Ice Arena to enable residents and visitors in wheelchairs to better spectate ice events in the arena. **The Prince Rupert Measure Up Work Group authorized the design and expenditure (\$4,710) to have this platform/ramp manufactured and installed.**



The platform and ramp has been used extensively ever since. The idea for this viewing platform originated with Julie Kirkbright and Val Wiley [Julie and Val's son Tanner are pictured right]. The concept was quickly manufactured and installed just in time for wheelchair bound residents to catch the season opening home game of Prince Rupert's new Men's CIHL Senior Hockey League, *The Rampage*.

## **Sidewalks, Stairs, Parking**

The group quickly identified that a curb cutout was needed on the Courthouse side of McBride at Second Avenue. [Pictured right]. This and other locations (listed below) were shared with Bob Thompson, the City's Engineer who was able to immediately install this first cutout as it complemented other work being done in that vicinity.

- Sloan Ave at Pilsbury St has no sidewalk (1800 block). As this is a



school zone (Pineridge) a sidewalk is needed.

- There are no sidewalks on Gull Crescent nor in the Silversides subdivisions. There is concern that the new subdivision also doesn't appear to be allowing for sidewalks either. The group wished to know if there are provincial requirements for new development if there are not municipal requirements.
- On 7<sup>th</sup> Ave East, the sidewalk is badly damaged from frost heave in places making it dangerous and impassable by wheel chairs. The same was reported for sections on Crestview and Kootenai Avenues.
- For areas where no sidewalk exists and residents may have landscaped the curb portion of the 7 feet of city property, it was suggested that neighbours might band together to give consent for the installation of a city sidewalk through sections of a neighbourhood identified as priorities for sidewalking.
- The Prince Rupert landfill is not accessible for those in wheelchairs because of a high retaining wall though it was noted that staff has assisted wheelchair bound residents in the past.
- At Rupert Square Mall, the sidewalk approach to the mall on First Avenue abruptly ends across from Wayne's Place. There is not a crosswalk and traffic converges here to access and exit Philpot and the upper mall parking lot. It was suggested that representatives from Measure Up Prince Rupert contact the Mall owners and see if a resolution might be investigated.
- At Rupert Square Mall where the sidewalk travels past Pizza Hut [see right], there is no curb cutout and the sidewalk ends abruptly. This location was identified by the Prince Rupert Measure Up work group as critical as it was the only curb impediment remaining on a significant pedestrian/tourism migration route from the cruise ship terminal to the shopping mall.
- The steps to the lower level in the Ocean Centre Mall are poorly marked and/or improperly lighted resulting in numerous accidents. As this is also a privately owned building, members of Measure Up Prince Rupert may send a letter or otherwise contact the building management/owner.
- The group discussed sending letters to other businesses and entities such as VIA Rail and BC Ferries to explain the Measuring Up process and to highlight deficiencies and opportunities for their facilities to become more accessible, but ran out of time.



There are a number of sidewalk curb cuts throughout town that try to service two crosswalks with a single cut, such as this one pictured left. This forces wheelchairs to enter vehicle traffic to align with the cutout. When and where possible, the city should augment these cutouts to accommodate both crosswalks in a head-on orientation.

On April 22, 2008, members of the Measure Up Prince Rupert workgroup met with the Measure Up the North regional coordinator, Laurie Ringhart, and took her around the community to look at some of the accessibility challenges and opportunities the group has been examining.

In October, Grainne Barthe and Michael Curnes had an opportunity to attend a regional conference for all communities involved in Measuring Up the North, in Prince George. This two day conference provided Prince Rupert an opportunity to share with other municipalities the challenges and accomplishments achieved in our community and to listen to the projects underway in communities across the northern region.

The Measure Up Prince Rupert Work Group, was initially assembled for a period of 6 months, and planned to make its final report to City Council on or around June 23, 2008 complete with its assessment, projects update and recommendations for future enhancements to our community; however due to a delay in learning the funding decision from the Federal Government on the Enabling Accessibility/Elevator project application, the group elected to extend its mandate to incorporate the outcome of this funding application into its final report. When the work group learned that the application was denied at the beginning of October, it met to reallocate the remaining funds from the original 2010 Legacies Now Grant (\$20,000) in order to achieve smaller projects in the community.

### Final Project Funding Allocations:

#### Handicap Accessible Door Openers:

- \$4,000 Lester Centre for the Arts
- \$4,000 Prince Rupert Public Library
- \$4,000 Civic Centre Front Door

#### Audible Chirp Signals

- \$2,000 Third Avenue & Fulton Street (would not cover installation of devices)

#### Curb Cut Outs

- \$790 1<sup>st</sup> Ave and 3<sup>rd</sup> St, Pizza Hut side of the intersection, need cut out into mall parking lot. (This single cut allows continuous sidewalk travel from cruise ships to the mall for wheelchairs/strollers) with additional monies left over from this cutout to be used toward other curb cutout projects by year end 2008.

(Continued)

## Handicap Parking

- \$500 Create Handicap Parking Space inside City Hall parking lot for easier access to City Hall, Post Office and businesses

\$15,290 TOTAL FUNDS ALLOCATED AT THIS MEETING

\$4,710 FUNDS PREVIOUSLY ALLOCATED FOR ARENA VIEWING PLATFORM/RAMP

\$20,000 ORIGINAL GRANT FROM 2010 LEGACIES NOW

In addition to making these final funding allocations, the Prince Rupert Working Group made recommendations that the following occur:

- Ask Council to commit \$50,000 in match funding in its 2009 Budget in order to continue to pursue grant funding to undertake the installation of an elevator in the Prince Rupert Recreation Complex. Michael Curnes directed to resubmit funding application in December 2009.
- Ask Council to consider this Prince Rupert Measuring Up Committee as potential advisors in future development planning. The group agreed to meet anytime there was a project or plan that desired its input.
- Send final report to City Council and 2010 Legacies Now, culminating this phase of the initiative.

## *PRINCE RUPERT MEASURING UP WORK GROUP 2008*

Grainne Barthe	622-8959	70% Hearing Impaired	1345 Piggott Place
Michael Curnes	624-6707	Staff Liaison to the Measuring Up Work Group	1207 Beach Place
Vena Hackevich	624-6452	NWCC Accessibility Coordinator	1219 Omineca
Simona Ionita	622-8522	Home Care Support Worker for Seniors Uses cane/wheelchair, is an accessibility	1857 11th Ave East
Antoinette Jonai	624-2910	advocate	1106-200 Sherbrooke
Nelson Kinney	624-9116	City Councillor	1426 2nd Ave West
Julie Kirkbright	624-2335	Uses wheelchair	1970 11th Ave East
Larry Oickle	624-4298	Uses wheelchair	1063 Hays Cove Ave
Brent Patriquin	627-4738	BC Ambulance, emergency responder	1773 Sloan Ave
Lila Peterson	627-1886	Senior, has Glaucoma	14-1251 Hays Cove Ave
Marjorie Rochon	627-7383	Legally blind	1792 Sloan Ave.
Garry Updegrove	624-3609	Uses Scooter, has Multiple Sclerosis	431 6th Ave East
Bill White	627-7423	Urban Haida Society, Elder	728 Lotbiniere St
Brian Wick	624-9889	Uses wheelchair, paraplegic business owner Son Tanner has Cerebral Palsy and uses	408-100 2nd St
Val Wiley	624-6827	wheelchair	236 Cormorant Road





## MEDIA RELEASE

April 2008

Last Fall, Prince Rupert City Council appointed a 12-member citizen work group to explore opportunities and recommend priorities that would help the community improve access and inclusiveness to allow residents of all physical and mental abilities to participate in and enjoy the benefits of recreation, civic involvement, mobility and cultural events. This work group has been meeting every two weeks to inventory challenges and recommend solutions that will make Prince Rupert not only more accessible and inclusive for the people who live here but also for the tens of thousands of visitors to our community annually.

The members of the work group come from a diversity of backgrounds and life experiences, many of which include personal physical and mobility challenges. The co-chairs of the group, Julie Kirkbright and Grainne Barthe, know all too well the challenges faced by residents and visitors in our community.

A car accident twenty years ago left Julie a wheelchair-bound paraplegic and Grainne has been 75% deaf since birth. "We live fulfilling lives," says Barthe, "but there is no doubt we have to work harder at it than most people." Barthe likes to remind people that not all disabilities are visible. Her own long hair usually conceals her hearing aids.

The City of Prince Rupert, with its island topography and renowned weather patterns, make mobility particularly challenging. With this in mind, the work group spent its first several meetings taking inventory of buildings, sidewalks and crosswalks, transportation, housing, and parking. The group looked not only at what was lacking but what really works in our community for people with physical and mental challenges.

Among the amenities identified as positive in our community are: the new elevator at Prince Rupert Mall; some sidewalks and ramps; W/C accessible washrooms at Atlin Terminal, the Aquatic Centre, the Tot Lot and Mariners Park; the Millennium Walkway along the waterfront; the NWCC Facility; the Public Library (large format and audio books); some city busses are equipped to receive wheelchairs/walkers; Greyhound

Buslines has some buses with W/C washrooms; the new wheelchair accessible Taxi (funded in part by the City); Handi-Dart; the Northern Health Bus; the Earl Mah Aquatic Centre (pool ramp and aquafit programs); the Lester Centre (ramp and seating area for W/C); the Citizens of Prince Rupert are very helpful/accommodating; the Butze Rapids Trail Short Route is W/C accessible; some doctor's offices have ramps; the Hospital (automatic doors/elevator); some Seniors Apartment Housing (Helsmen's, Sunset Villa) and the Inn at the Harbour—all have W/C accessible room(s) and unit(s); Pineridge and Lax Keen Elementary Schools (all one level); Museum of Northern BC (added an elevator); Grocery Stores (Safeway has W/C accessible public washroom); and the Digby Island Ferry/Airport Access.

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Individuals in the group next voted for the top three priorities that they would like the work group to focus on during its 6 month mandate and these priorities are:

**Chirp (audible) crosswalk indicators needed at major intersections**

**Elevator needed at the Civic Centre**

**Sidewalks/Stairs need better marking, better curb cutouts**

The Measure UP Prince Rupert Work Group has been busy working out details and costs and has begun looking for grant and corporate funding to help the City address the priorities identified. The Elevator Project at the Civic Centre is expected to carry a \$100,000. Of the five traffic signals in town, four are operated by the Ministry of Highways (Highway 16) with one operated by the City of Prince Rupert. Installing Audible Chirp Signals is expected to cost between \$1000-\$2000 per intersection. Curb cut outs, like the new one pictured above and just recently completed on McBride Street at Second Avenue, can cost anywhere from \$500-1000 depending on

the circumstances. The need for this particular cut-out was identified by this work group and shared with Chief Engineer for the City, Bob Thompson who saw an opportunity to work it into another sidewalk upgrade project in the vicinity.

Anyone with an interest in helping the Measure Up Prince Rupert Work Group identify and secure funding for any of the above projects, is encouraged to contact Michael Curnes, Director of Recreation & Community Services, who is providing staff support for this volunteer initiative.

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For more information contact:

Michael Curnes  
Director of Recreation & Community Services  
City of Prince Rupert  
250.624.6707  
[mcurnes@princerupert.ca](mailto:mcurnes@princerupert.ca)

Grainne Barthe  
Measure Up Prince Rupert, Co-chair  
250.627.8959  
[gbncts@citytel.net](mailto:gbncts@citytel.net)



FOR IMMEDIATE MEDIA RELEASE

October 2008

The Prince Rupert Measuring Up Work Group appointed by City Council last fall, has wrapped up Phase I of an initiative to help the community improve access and inclusiveness to allow residents of all physical and mental abilities to participate in and enjoy the benefits of recreation, civic involvement, mobility and cultural events.

This 15-member volunteer work group met continuously during the past nine months to inventory challenges and recommend solutions that will make Prince Rupert not only more accessible and inclusive for the people who live here but also for the tens of thousands of visitors to our community annually. Among the many priorities identified

early on in this process, the group found agreement in making three areas their focus during this first phase:

**Chirp (audible) crosswalk indicators needed at major intersections**

**Elevator needed at the Civic Centre**

**Sidewalks/Stairs need better marking, better curb cutouts**

The Measure UP Prince Rupert Work Group researched best practices, gathered details, wrote letters, and determined costs to help the city begin to make improvements in these priority areas. A \$20,000 grant from 2010 Legacies Now had been received to support the work of the local committee but the group elected not to spend \$1 on its own administration but use the grant funds to leverage other funding that would be needed to hopefully complete the installation of an elevator at the City's Recreation Complex. When the group learned the city was not successful in its grant application to the federal government to undertake this project this year, the group decided this week to reallocate the \$20,000 grant to achieve smaller but necessary projects around the community.

Among these projects is the new viewing platform and ramp in the Jim Ciccone Civic Centre Ice Arena that was manufactured and installed in September, just in time for wheelchair bound spectators to take in Rampage and Minor Hockey games. (See attached photos).

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Funding has been designated by this group to install automatic door openers for The City Library, The Lester Centre for the Arts, and on the main entrance of the Jim Ciccone Civic Centre.

The work group designated funds to purchase audible chirp signal devices that the city will install at the intersection of Third Avenue and Fulton Street. Audible chirp signals help the sight impaired to know when it is safe to cross an intersection. This is the only traffic light intersection that the city manages as the other four traffic lights are on Highway 16 and under the management of the Ministry of Highways. The city has started discussions with the Ministry to see if audible chirp signals can also be installed on their traffic lights along McBride Street and Second Avenue.

The Prince Rupert Measure Up Work Group allocated funding to complete one and possibly two more curb cut-outs in locations that limit wheelchair travel. (See attached photos). Earlier this Spring, the city was able to respond quickly to undertake a curb cut-out that this Work Group had recommended, (Second Avenue on the Provincial Courthouse side of the street) as the cut-out complimented other work already being done in the area. Previously, a cut-out on one end of the cross walk had allowed wheelchairs into the cross walk only to encounter a rigid curb on the other side. The curb cut-out adjacent to Pizza Hut will allow for continuous, uninterrupted sidewalk travel for persons in wheel chairs from Cow Bay and the Cruise Ship Terminal to the Rupert Mall.

Lastly, there was still funding from this grant for the city to create an offstreet handicap parking space in the City Hall parking lot. From this space, people in wheelchairs will be able to more easily access City Hall, the Post Office and other businesses in the vicinity of City Hall.

The Prince Rupert Measure Up Work Group has now completed the first phase of this initiative but wishes to remain available as an advisory resource to the City for any future planning or project questions that might benefit from greater accessibility. The group will also support the city in filing a second federal grant application in December to undertake the installation of an elevator in the Recreation Complex.

Michael Curnes, Director of Recreation & Community Services for the City, was the Council-appointed staff liaison to this Work Group and wishes to personally thank each of the members for their extraordinary levels of commitment to this project and for making Prince Rupert more accessible and inclusive for everyone.

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For more information contact:

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BC Healthy Communities  
People. Place. Potential.



British Columbia has all the ingredients to become the most accessible and inclusive place to live, work and visit in the world. Growing awareness on disabilities, an increasingly diverse and aging population, a booming economy, labour shortages, the coming 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, the election of a Mayor with a disability and the Province of British Columbia's commitment "To build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, special needs, children at risk and seniors." These combine to make this the most opportune time for communities to advance and become leaders of accessibility and inclusion.