

Physical Activity Strategy

BC on the move

WINTER 2010

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Photo: Skate to Whistler Promotion, Fort St. John (Active Communities Program) BC, Winter 2008, by E. Stanford.



BUILT ENVIRONMENT & ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION (BEAT)

BEAT the Winter Blues and Stay Active

Planning for the Long Term Can Make Winter Wonderful



A joint initiative of BC Recreation and Parks Association and the Union of BC Municipalities.

For more information, contact Cara Fisher, BEAT Coordinator at cfisher@bcrrpa.bc.ca or at 604.629.0965 x 255

Winter weather and the limited hours of daylight can bring out a natural instinct to hibernate and stay inside even in the most active person. If left to their own devices, many will shift their transportation choices away from active modes of commuting: getting around in slippery snow or cold and rainy conditions is certainly less appealing than the comfort of a warm vehicle or public transit.

However, a recent BCRPA Built Environment and Active Transportation Summit in Terrace brought winter communities together to address how they could keep their residents active and outdoors through a number of winter planning and design guidelines. By increasing the number of opportunities to be outdoors and minimizing the risks and inconvenience that snow, wind, ice and darkness present to pedestrians, municipalities learned they

could positively affect not only the ability of residents to be outside, but also their desire to be active throughout even the coldest of winters.

Winter definitely affects a pedestrians' ability to move around easily. Ensuring that the community's snow-clearing practices factor in pedestrians (not just vehicles) is an important policy consideration, especially for those regions that experience four to six months of snow each year.

Building on the fun and positive aspects of winter definitely maximizes the appeal to be outdoors for residents. Fort St. John put itself on the 'winter map' through its *Winter Lights* and *High on Ice* celebrations. *High on Ice* features professional and amateur international ice carving competitions, a curling bonspiel, ice fishing derbies, and other activities in

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BEAT

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a local park. The events generate not only a huge local following, but are a major draw for tourists. The District of Kitimat's *Winter Carnival* is extremely popular with youth. Snow cleared from the roads is used to create a snow park for snowboarding tricks and jumps. Terrace is organizing its *Skeena Christmas Festival*, as one way of ensuring there are activities and events for community members over the long winter season.

Some ways your communities can build on the positive aspects of winter:

- Review snow clearing policies to ensure pedestrians are considered
- Remove snow from popular multi-use trails for walking, running, etc.

- Plan activities and events during the winter to get community members outside and active
- Encourage public art using snow and ice
- Create multi-use surfaces for skiing, walking and biking compact snow
- Use city parks for activities such as ice-skating, sledding, snow shoeing, or hockey
- Promote winter tourism through special events and community festivals
- Complete a winter audit to identify areas needing improvement

View video and presentations from the *Planning for Winter Communities Summit* in Terrace at www.PhysicalActivityStrategy.ca (look under BEAT Summit). ●

WALK BC

Walking is an Adventure in Bella Coola!



Taking the First Steps to an Active, Healthy Life



A joint initiative of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon and the BC Recreation and Parks Association.

For more information, contact Lindsay Richardson, Walk BC coordinator, at lrichardson@bcprpa.bc.ca or at 604.629.0965 x 256

Photo: Bella Coola Walking Club, Summer 2009 by Donna Osborne, Bella Coola Parks & Recreation.

A Bella Coola walking club comprised of adults looking to become more active participated in an innovative walking program, funded by Walk BC. Not only did fitness consultant Janice Kyle lead 15 participants through instructions and techniques for Nordic walking and proper stretching routines, but a local archaeologist joined their weekly walks. One of the highlights over the three and a half month program was a hike to local petroglyphs, where their guide Ingi Hobler pointed their gaze to the weathered etchings carved into the rock front and gave everyone a sense of their meaning and their significance.

While the program goals were originally to encourage physical activity, provide a venue for social interaction and re-discover and enjoy the beautiful valley around Bella Coola, according to Donna, the program achieved all that and more. "After our last scheduled walk, I hosted a lunch in my home to discuss what to do to sustain this momentum and keep active both physically and socially."



The group decided to continue meeting every Tuesday at the fitness centre to maintain their physical activity during the winter. Janice introduced the group to the equipment in the gym, provided instructions on weight lifting and created a workout program for them to follow.

Monica Tutt and Donna Osborne at Bella Coola Recreation are thrilled that the walking program was the first step to an active lifestyle for 15 people. The social connections they made have kept them motivated and now have them pursuing other new activities. Several members of the group have now expressed an interest in going cross country-skiing together. Both Monica

and Donna say that future programs in Bella Coola will include the goal of “encouraging a life long love of physical activity”.

Visit www.walkbc.ca for information about how to start a walking program in your community and opportunities for funding to get it started. ●

EVERYBODY ACTIVE

Fireweed Takes the Lead!



It Takes a Whole Community to Get Everybody Active



A joint initiative of BC Recreation and Parks Association and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon.

For more information, contact Donna Lee, Everybody Active coordinator, at dlee@bcrpa.bc.ca 604.629.0965 x 257

Removing barriers to physical activity requires involvement from the whole community. In Fort St. James, the Fireweed Collective Society set out to develop a community plan that would reduce barriers to physical activity amongst low-income adults. Fireweed is a safe haven that offers services for women and children fleeing violence. They recognize healthy living and physical activity can form an important part of a personal development strategy for women recovering from physical, mental and emotional stress and working to rebuild their lives.

Fireweed surveyed low-income community members and physical activity service providers to better understand the issues. Fireweed ensured that support was available to help with completing the surveys when necessary. Participants received pedometers from Fireweed and free passes to a local fitness centre for taking part in the survey.

Participants indicated that financial barriers to participation do not exist in isolation. They also identified the need for support and education in recovery from addictions and healthy eating, constructive outlets to relieve stress, and the need for safe and supportive physical environments.

Fireweed understands that cooperation across sectors is needed to address such complex issues. Although service providers have connected informally in the past, this project helped formalize discussions. As a result, Fort Alcohol and Drug Services Society and

the College of New Caledonia are now working with Fireweed to develop nutrition programs that will be offered at their community kitchen.

Fort St. James is a resource-based community of approximately 1900 in north-central BC. An additional 3,000 people live in the aboriginal communities of Nak'azdli, Tl'az'ten, and Yekooche, and the surrounding rural area. During this project, Fireweed learned that the District had formally adopted an Active Communities Plan to increase community physical activity levels, so shared their survey results to help inform and enhance the official plan. They also presented a set of recommendations to the District of Fort St. James and the Interagency Group of service providers in November 2009 to keep healthy living initiatives for low-income people on the community agenda. Recommendations included:

- Investigating options to alleviate financial barriers to participation
- Addressing environmental concerns to improve the sense of physical safety
- Investigating options for inexpensive local transportation systems
- Supporting local daycare development initiatives
- Repairing and maintaining outdoor facilities (tennis courts, walking trails)
- Providing and supporting increased community education and information around healthy lifestyles
- Making all sporting and recreational events in District facilities alcohol and drug free

The recommendations were received for future consideration by the District and Interagency Group. Fireweed plans to convene a committee in the New Year to implement initiatives that will address barriers identified in the survey. ●



BC on the move

COMMUNITY BASED AWARENESS

Active Comox Valley – Active is Life!



M.A.P. Your Way to a Healthy, Active Community Campaign



A joint initiative of BC Recreation and Parks Association and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon.

For more information, contact Meredith Mundick, at mmundick@bcrpa.bc.ca or at 604.629.0965 x 253

Active Comox Valley used templates from BCRPA's Marketing Action Plan (M.A.P.) to reach 25,600 residents in their region on a \$2,922 budget. The goal of the campaign was to raise awareness about the many low or no-cost opportunities for physical activity in their region and the benefits of active living.

M.A.P.'s campaign materials were easily customized to fit the Active Comox Valley "Active is Life" theme and reached out to urban and rural residents to promote all of the recreation facilities, programs, trails and parks. "The M.A.P. activity prompts aid in getting our message across that activity can be easily incorporated into daily life," says Active Comox Valley Coordinator,

Robyn Butler. "There is real buzz in our community and we will continue to use the M.A.P. templates to help motivate and keep people active."

Active Comox Valley, (a partnership between the City of Courtenay, the Town of Comox, the Village of Cumberland and the Black Creek Community Association) and the Fanny Bay Community Association, along with health,

education and other community stakeholders, worked together to run a campaign that promoted free and low-cost activities available to residents between the ages of 35-54 who may otherwise not be able to afford to participate in recreation and physical activity programs.



Comox Valley Active is Life Brochure.

This campaign utilized a mixture of paid and unpaid media that fit their budget and included print ads, radio spots and live mentions, brochures, posters and banners. Five print ads highlighted activities in each community in the region. Customized radio spots and live mentions aired on local radio and were broadcast valley-wide and to regions on the North Island and Sunshine Coast. These will continue to air in the new year and encourages residents to pick up the brochure or visit the website for a chance to win a \$100 gift certificate from a local running and walking sports retailer.

Active is Life brochures were distributed to recreation centres, health centres, local businesses, and libraries. A page on the Comox Valley website was also created to promote local activities under \$5. Posters and a banner rounded out this first campaign and were displayed across the valley at events and public facilities.

Active Comox Valley will use the momentum gained from this campaign to build on their next campaign, *Spring Meltdown*, early in the new year. They will re-use the materials already produced like the *Active is Life* brochure and banner and can easily customize the radio spots, event posters, activity prompts and swag for the *Spring Meltdown* theme.

Developing and running a successful campaign can be expensive, and requires planning and diligence to implement. Using the tools contained in the M.A.P. allows communities to start small and expand over time according to their own budget and resources.

Visit www.physicalactivitystrategy.ca to find the ideal template that will inspire an active living campaign in your community. ●



An initiative of these BC Healthy Living Alliance Members



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