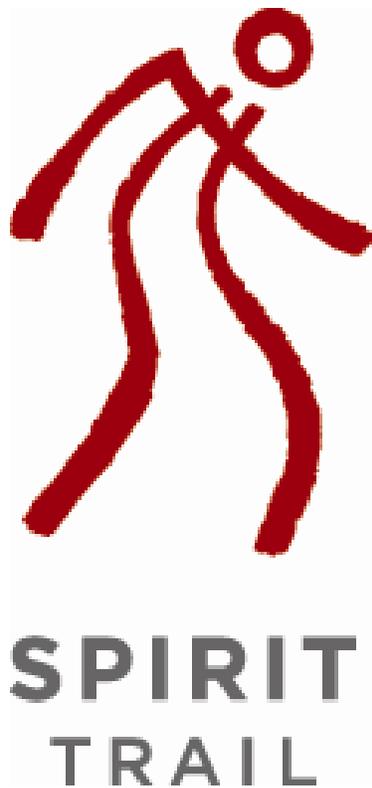


# **SPIRIT TRAIL GREENWAY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**



**Working Group Report & Recommendations**

July 2009

## Chairman's Introduction:

In a career that has spanned 30 years, I've had the pleasure of working on a wide variety of construction projects in all four corners of the world. However, I can honestly say that I have never been involved with a project that not only has so much ground level support, but that, more importantly, has the inherent capacity to positively affect the way we interact with each other in our community.

Everyone I speak to, without exception, looks forward to using the Spirit Trail. As designed, it will neither eliminate our very important view corridors nor cast shadows on existing private and public spaces. Furthermore, by offering a safe route for alternative modes of transport, it will potentially reduce parking requirements in several of the municipality's more congested areas.

It is somewhat ironic then that community backlash was the impetus for municipal staff's wise decision to convene the Spirit Trail Working Group in the first place. But if initial opposition was the cloud, the silver lining has to be that through this initiative we have been able to lay the foundation for a legacy that will affect citizens of all generations, for generations.

I would be remiss in not mentioning a personal legacy. Through the chairmanship of this Working Group, I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with 7 outstanding West Van citizens. Your contribution of time, energy and passion has made chairing this Working Group an absolute joy. Your presence and hard work has been instrumental in moving this project forward and for that I, and I'm sure all the citizens of West Vancouver, are eternally grateful.

I've strolled and rollerbladed on the new section of the Spirit Trail several times already. As enthusiastic as I am, I never pass up the chance to speak to those I meet. Asked for their thoughts on the 'Spirit Trail', 'just get it done' remains the number one response. I couldn't agree more and shall look forward to doing what I can to see that this indeed happens.

Rick Gregory, Chair  
Spirit Trail Working Group  
July 2009

**Spirit Trail Greenway Community Engagement Strategy  
Working Group Report & Recommendations  
July 2009**

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## ***1.1 Spirit Trail Greenway Overview***

The Spirit Trail Greenway (Spirit Trail) is a multi-use pathway identified in the District's *Cycling Network and Greenway Plan*, which was adopted at the Council Meeting of June 25, 2007.

The District's Spirit Trail is part of a larger vision of a North Shore Spirit Trail that will connect Horseshoe Bay to Deep Cove, thereby serving other communities, including District of North Vancouver, Squamish Nation, City of North Vancouver, and Tsleil-Waututh Nation. See **Appendix A** for proposed routing across the North Shore.

In West Vancouver, the Spirit Trail is a multi-use greenway to be used for all self-propelled modes of transit, including wheeled mobility aids. It will also serve as the backbone of our local cycling network, and will provide a continuous and relatively flat connection between the Lion's Gate Bridge and Horseshoe Bay. An upper lands mountain path is in the conceptual stage and will eventually provide a second way to traverse the District at a higher elevation.

The Spirit Trail has broad appeal. At community planning workshops for the development of the Cycling Network and Greenway Plan, the greenway was the most requested bicycle route. Because of its safe design away from busy roads, and its convenient routing close to the waterfront, parks, shopping areas, and major community facilities, the Spirit Trail will be an attractive facility for cyclists, pedestrians, in-line skaters, and other users.

Funds to develop the Spirit Trail are being sought from several public and private sources. To date funds have been secured from the Provincial Local Motion (\$2M) and Climate Action Programs (\$750,000) as well as TransLink (\$500,000). In March 2009, an additional \$490,503 in Provincial and Federal funding was announced for the construction of a 1.4-km paved Trail connection between Park Royal Shopping Mall, the Lions Gate Bridge, and the District of North Vancouver, as part of the Local Motion program. In April 2009, Park Royal Shopping Centre also announced a \$500,000 donation to the Spirit Trail. The total funding to date is more than \$4.2 Million.

As of the publication of this report, the first West Vancouver portions of the Spirit Trail, from Park Royal Shopping Centre through Ambleside Park to Pound Road are nearing completion. It is expected that the next section of the Trail to be designed and implemented by 2010 will run across the Capilano River, under the Lion's Gate Bridge, along Welch Road to the Municipal border. It includes the construction of a pedestrian bridge to span the Capilano River. This section is being prioritized given its proximity to the high use Lion's Gate Bridge area, and strong support from the Squamish Nation and Park Royal Shopping Centre.

## ***1.2 Working Group Terms of Reference***

The task of the Spirit Trail Working Group was to design a strategy for engaging the

citizens of West Vancouver in a creative dialogue to implement this “2010 Legacies Now” project, with the support of the North Shore Spirit of BC Committee. This North Shore Committee is dedicated to strengthening arts, literacy, sport and recreation, physical activity and volunteerism in communities throughout BC leading up to and beyond the 2010 Winter Games.

At this initial stage, the task of the Working Group (WG) was primarily to design the strategy for citizen engagement – its recommendations are to be implemented by District staff, as the project progresses. The strategy specifies a step-by-step community engagement framework for Trail segments, together with associated communications tools.

The WG was tasked with the following duties:

- **Core Values:** Identify a set of essential *core values* for the Community Engagement Strategy, such as **safety, inclusion and respect for all users**. These will be reflected in all phases of the Trail’s development (route selection, route design & features, construction) and when completed, will be embedded in a “culture of ownership” among citizens.
- **Trail Segments:** Review the scope of the Spirit Trail to identify its physical and societal challenges, and **define manageable Trail segments** relevant for the routing, design and construction phases, and subsequent utilization. Segments may be characterized by factors such as: *topography:* easy/difficult; *safety issues:* high/low; *clear routing:* no issues; *routing issues:* adjacent properties/apartments; *anticipated use*.
- **Consultation Options:** Consider **consultation options for engaging the West Vancouver community** in creative dialogue relative to each Trail segment. It is expected that consultation processes and related communications may differ, depending on the phase of Trail development (routing, design, construction), anticipated use, and Trail segment.
- **Report:** Produce a report to Council describing the recommended Spirit Trail Community Engagement Strategy. The report will include: core values, development phases, Trail segments, consultation processes, and communications components.

The Spirit Trail Community Engagement Strategy was undertaken by the District of West Vancouver during the spring of 2009, and was led by a Working Group of West Vancouver residents:

- |                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| ▪ Sue Bunten           | ▪ David Jardine           |
| ▪ Bart Copeland        | ▪ Bill Miles              |
| ▪ Rick Gregory (Chair) | ▪ Alissa Reder            |
| ▪ Caroline Helbig      | ▪ Alan Smith (Vice-Chair) |

Councillor Bill Soprovich was the Council Liaison; Raymond Fung & Tamara Shulman represented Engineering while Linsey Keats represented the North Shore Spirit of BC Committee.

## 2. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### 2.1 Core Values for Community Engagement and the Spirit Trail

Core values are essential to guide the planning process as it relates to both Community Engagement and the Trail itself. The Working Group proposes that the following vision statement be used as additional context for the Core Values:

*The North Shore Spirit Trail is envisioned as a waterfront and family oriented multi-use greenway that will provide pedestrians, cyclists, inline skaters and people with wheeled mobility aids access across the North Shore. Once complete, it is anticipated the Spirit Trail will span North Shore communities from Horseshoe Bay to Deep Cove.*

Core Values for both the Community Engagement and the Trail itself are listed below.

#### Community Engagement Core Values

- **Transparency**  
Ensuring the effective and full exchange of factual information
- **Inclusiveness**  
Opening lines of communication and welcoming ongoing community input
- **Objectivity**  
Maintaining respect for minority views while not losing sight of the benefits to the greater community
- **Urgency**  
Building momentum towards project completion
- **Continuous Improvement**  
Exposing issues and solving problems

#### Trail Core Values

- **Multi-use**  
Encouraging all ages, all abilities and all modes of self-propelled transport, including wheeled mobility aids
- **Safety**  
Instilling a sense of security and well-being
- **Connectivity**  
Building a continuous recreational and transportation link from Horseshoe Bay to North Vancouver
- **Sustainability**  
Promoting a healthy lifestyle and reducing our carbon footprint
- **Community**  
Creating a vibrant backbone through the community and fostering a sense of civic pride

## 2.2 Segments for Community Engagement

The information framework for Spirit Trail segmentation was based on:

1. Currently proposed Spirit Trail routing as presented by District staff.
2. Working Group members walking the entire proposed routing to gain a feel for varying character of neighbourhoods the Trail will be passing through and an understanding of the physical challenges and possible routing alternatives.

The 13 segments listed below in Table 1 were determined to ensure a manageable and appropriate community engagement process. The four major groupings match the proposed construction phases and reflect some geographic and topographic cohesion. See **Appendix B** for the corresponding Spirit Trail Segment Map.

More detailed Trail Segment Descriptions can be found in **Appendix C** while detail on initially proposed Routing is located in **Appendix D**.

**Table 1 – Spirit Trail Segments for Community Engagement**

<b>1</b>	<b>A</b>	Capilano River to 13 <sup>th</sup> Street (construction)
	<b>B</b>	13-24 <sup>th</sup> Streets Highest commercial and residential density
	<b>C</b>	24-25 <sup>th</sup> Streets High commercial density (Dundarave) and some residential
	<b>D</b>	25-31 <sup>st</sup> Streets Residential and possibly some rail right-of-way
	<b>E</b>	Capilano Pedestrian Bridge to Municipal border (design)
<b>2</b>	<b>A</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> Street to Sunset Avenue Along railway right-of-way through Westmount
	<b>B</b>	Sunset Avenue 0.75 km road of residential on south side
	<b>C</b>	End of Sunset Avenue to Piccadilly North Railway right-of-way plus one residential block on Sharon Road
<b>3</b>	<b>A</b>	Piccadilly North to Keith Park Mainly residential - Clovelly Road and Walk, McKenzie, Keith or railway
	<b>B</b>	Keith Park to Seaview Walk Railway right-of-way
<b>4</b>	<b>A</b>	Seaview Walk Established 2.5 km walking & bike path with an average 2.5m width
	<b>B</b>	Seaview Walk to Horseshoe Bay A mix of residential, school, and park
	<b>C</b>	Horseshoe Bay Mainly commercial; some residential

## 2.3 Community Engagement

Community Engagement is a critical component to the Spirit Trail planning process. The successful and timely completion of the Spirit Trail will to a great degree hinge on the municipality's ability to effectively communicate with and systematically engage the public.

A Community Engagement Framework is recommended by the Working Group as a guide for developing the Spirit Trail community engagement process. It outlines the four steps for public participation with the desired outcome of creating vision and achieving results.

**Table 2 – Community Engagement Framework**

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Outcome
	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Implement
<b>Overall Intent</b>	Communicate Plan	Collect Feedback	Clarify Concerns	Resolve Issues	Move Forward Quickly
<b>Public Participation Goal</b>	Provide the public with information	Identify concerns important to the public	Clarify the issues raised by the public	Work with the public to find solutions	Communicate the public's choices to the decision makers
<b>Commitment to the Public</b>	Keep the public informed	Listen to the public	Make sure the public's concerns are understood	Work with the public	Strive to implement what the public wants
<b>Example Techniques</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• website</li> <li>• event info/display booths</li> <li>• North Shore news</li> <li>• fact sheets &amp; posters</li> <li>• open house presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• surveys</li> <li>• emails from public</li> <li>• phone calls from public</li> <li>• comment forms</li> <li>• open house feedback</li> <li>• use professional facilitator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focus groups</li> <li>• workshops</li> <li>• world cafes</li> <li>• interviews</li> <li>• use professional facilitator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• charrettes</li> <li>• kitchen table meetings</li> <li>• Working Groups</li> <li>• use professional facilitator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reports</li> <li>• recommendations to council</li> <li>• presentations to council; open to the public</li> </ul>

## General Community Engagement Guidelines

1. The number of steps required in the process will be determined within each area of engagement. Some segments may need all four steps; others may reach decisions leading to implementation sooner in the process.
2. Research indicates that effective usage of steps one and two in early stage engagement can greatly reduce potential resident apprehensions and may eliminate late stage confrontational engagement. See **Appendix E** Case Studies that highlight the processes and outcomes of multi-use Trails within communities. For example, housing values appear to be positively impacted by having a multi-use Trail built in close proximity.
3. All communication to the public should include the vision statement for the Spirit Trail (see Section 2.1) to reinforce understanding of the initiative and promote civic pride. In a similar vein, the Core Values should form the backdrop for all public engagements.
4. Prior to embarking on the community engagement program, staff should have complete and accurate Trail recommendations – as referred to in Section 3 – to present to the public, while emphasizing that these are proposed plans and that input is welcome and actively being sought. For example, using dotted lines for potential Trail routing rather than a solid line helps minimize anxiety that routes are cast in stone.
5. The intent of community engagement is that the public and staff partner, to varying degrees in developing the routing and design features within the context of the Core Values (see Section 2.1). Effective engagement of a large and diverse number of residents will help ensure that the Spirit Trail meets the needs of the residents of West Vancouver.
6. In conjunction with the engagement process it will be helpful to get endorsement of the Trail by key staff members and prominent groups or individuals in the community and publicize via newspaper articles, presentations at events, grand openings etc.
7. When engaging the public regarding specific segments of the trail it is important to engage not just residents local to the segment under consideration but community-wide as well, since all residents will be affected by Trail outcome.
8. It is not the intent of this report to restrict engagement on a section-by-section basis. Indeed, it is recognized that it may be more efficient to combine sections for the purposes of engagement.

## Step 1 – Inform

Creating awareness, understanding, and interest in the Spirit Trail by informing the public about the initiative is a mandatory first step. While many residents have heard “bits and pieces” about the Trail, it is important that they receive accurate and timely first hand information from the municipality.

1. District-wide communications explaining the project should be disseminated to all residents. This update should include information about the Spirit Trail as well as an outline of the community engagement process and timeline. The website should be updated to include the same information.
2. As the project progresses and successive segments are identified for development, regular updates – through communications tools including the website and Tidings – will be required to communicate upcoming community engagement opportunities.
3. The website and Tidings will be important tools to inform the public about Trail progress in general and details about developments and engagement in specific phases and/or segments.
4. The municipality has the perfect opportunity to create a positive “buzz” about the project by publicizing the completion of the Park Royal segment. This could be considered an official “kick-off” to the Spirit Trail initiative in conjunction with a mass communication effort. See **Appendix F**, Communications Strategy for General Community Engagement, for additional promotion ideas.

## Step 2 – Consult

While Step 1 can be described as information flow going out from the municipality to the public, Step 2 provides a forum for feedback from the community back to the municipality. As above, the Working Group deems this step to be mandatory in the community consultation process.

1. Through various engagement tools such as Open Houses, the municipality’s goal in the stage should be to obtain broad public feedback on various elements of Trail development as outlined in Section 3.2.
2. The municipality should carefully consider the questions posed to the public and how this feedback will/can be used.
3. The feedback in the stage should highlight concerns and aspirations expressed by residents.
4. In this stage, the importance of residents sense that they have had an opportunity to express their opinions and have been listened to should not be underestimated. Ultimately this inclusion factor may be more important than accommodating all concerns and aspirations.

### Step 3 – Involve

While Steps 1 and 2 can be described as one-way communication, Step 3 is the first stage that begins an active dialogue between the municipality and community members. This step enables public impact on the decision making process. It recognizes that additional engagement is necessary to compile the information obtained through Step 2, clarify concerns and expose and prioritize the relevant issues. The Working Group recommends that Step 3 be used in limited cases where issues require highly in-depth engagement with smaller groups, or even individual residents.

1. The municipality could engage with interested members of the public using targeted tools such as focus groups and workshops to delve more thoroughly into previously identified issues.
2. While listening to concerns continues to be important, it is crucial in this stage for the community members involved, to feel that their input is actively being reflected in alternatives developed and has helped shape the decision(s).
3. Depending on the scope of issues and complexity of engagement tools used, the municipality might consider hiring a professional facilitator.

### Step 4 – Collaborate

The final stage in the public participation continuum recognizes the need, in some circumstances, to partner with the public in an extremely involved and detailed manner. The Working Group recommends that Step 4 be used selectively for segments where significant thematic concerns and/or aspirations were identified in Step 3.

1. Staff and select members of the public work together in an iterative manner to discuss ideas, create mutually acceptable alternatives and implement solutions.
2. Tools in this stage are often extremely “personalized” using a format that is most conducive to collaborative working such as kitchen table meetings.
3. As in Step 3 above, it may be desirable to engage the services of a professional facilitate or to lend a measure of perceived objectivity and skill in conflict resolution.

### Outcome – Implement

There must be a balance between the community engagement process and creating action. **As guided by Council, staff should ensure that timelines are developed for the process and that there is a goal set for Trail completion.** An effective engagement process using a framework as described above will not only ensure that Mayor and Council render decisions that reflect the needs and desires of the residents of West Vancouver, but also that the Spirit Trail is implemented in a timely manner so existing funding can be utilized.

## Tools of Engagement

Given that the consultation process and related communications may differ, depending on the phase of Trail development, the Working Group identified a wide array of Tool Options in **Appendix G**. These should be used in conjunction with the Framework of Public Participation and have been categorized using the corresponding steps. Each tool is also described within the context of a West Vancouver Spirit Trail application.

The Tool Options provide staff with numerous options within each step of the engagement process. The diversity of the tools ensures that core value goals are met, particularly inclusiveness. A large and diverse group of residents can be expected to participate in the process if there are appropriate engagement opportunities and outreach mechanisms. For example, different demographics will be reached by providing information in multiple formats –hard copy, computer web alerts, and social media, such as twitter.

As some tools are rather complex, or may be less familiar to staff, a Public Participation Tool Box from the International Association of Public Participation, **Appendix H**, provides more thorough descriptions and outlines benefits and challenges of each. Although it is beyond the scope of the current Working Group's analysis, staff must also consider the cost and timeline for implementation of the various tools.

The Working Group has determined that it would potentially be restrictive to make recommendations that prescribe specific engagement tactics for each segment. It is impossible to predict how engagement will evolve as the process is applied to different phases. Community engagement is an iterative process, and as such, better tackled by using a model that is flexible in accommodating various scenarios within each engagement segment.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **1. Proceed with Urgency**

The Spirit Trail Working Group wishes to convey to Council that a sense of urgency is of the essence for both the engagement and the construction processes. All members of the Working Group have been asked by members of the public – after they learn we are part of this planning – when the Trail is going to be finished? We believe the Trail has the support of the vast majority of residents and that, while opinions may differ about the route, there is no doubt that these residents want the Trail as quickly as possible.

#### **2. Public Engagement Procedure**

Public engagement should follow the step by step process of Inform, Consult, Involve and Collaborate, as summarized in the Community Engagement Framework for Public Participation. (Table 2 p. 5)

#### **3. Community Engagement Package**

The engagement package should include:

- a. A brief description of the Spirit Trail Working Group and its role;
- b. A description of the Trail specifications including widths, maximum grades and surface materials as it relates to each section;
- c. A description of the Trail routing, both preferred and alternatives within each segment. It should also be clearly indicated where the Trail is to be completely segregated from traffic versus integrated onto existing roads;
- d. A realistic budget for each segment and an indication of associated financing currently in place; and
- e. An ambitious schedule indicating the specific time frames for each activity, including: community engagement steps, design and construction for each segment.

#### **4. CN/Government Agreements**

Agreements/understandings should be pursued with CN with respect to routing within the rail corridor, prior to engagement. It would seem counterproductive to engage the public on railroad routing without having active and positive dialogue underway with the railroad stakeholders.

#### **5. Spirit Trail Community Engagement Implementation Working Group**

A Spirit Trail Community Engagement Implementation Working Group should be convened and tasked to provide oversight as the community engagement sessions get underway. By assisting in the overview of the preparation and overview of the community engagement phase, interested members of the 2009 Spirit Trail Working Group – as well as other residents – can continue to influence a positive outcome on this project. Residents that served on this Working Group would be willing to meet with the Community Engagement Committee, come September, to provide input on the next Terms of Reference.

## **6. Set Completion Date**

Council should work with staff to come up with an aggressive completion date for the Trail.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

**While the Working Group was tasked with developing a Community Engagement Strategy, there must be a balance between the community engagement process and creating action. A deadline for Trail completion is paramount.**

The completed Spirit Trail will be a huge asset to both residents and visitors of West Vancouver. It will provide safe, multi-use experiences for people of all ages and abilities. The Trail is an extremely important initiative in promoting healthy lifestyles, creating recreational and commuting opportunities, connecting communities and instilling community pride. The project should be moved forward as quickly as possible.

The Working Group is confident that with an effective public engagement process that embodies the core values, and the positive momentum created by completion of early segments, the Spirit Trail will be enthusiastically embraced by this community.