



Building Better Homes and Communities

www.actprogram.com

Affordability and Choice Today

ACT Solutions

Helping Municipalities Promote Green Development West Coast Environmental Law, BC

Issue

Smaller and midsized communities in British Columbia often lack the in-house legal and policy expertise to create the regulatory tools required to promote and implement sustainable development practices.

West Coast Environmental Law (WCEL), an organization that promotes community development that is in harmony with nature, works to fill that expertise gap. Through legal advice, education and advocacy, WCEL provides municipalities, organizations, and citizens with the knowledge, tools and innovative solutions needed to protect the environment and build sustainable communities.

Plan

WCEL obtained ACT funding to help deliver green infrastructure workshops to a broad range of stakeholders in BC, including representatives from local government, planning and design professionals, and the development industry.

The workshops drew from two documents recently published by

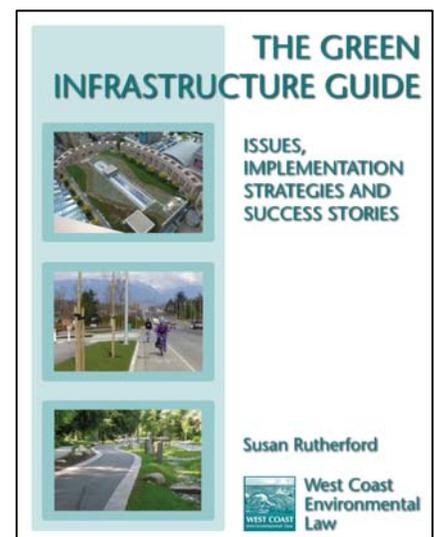
WCEL: *The Green Buildings Guide* (2006) and *The Green Infrastructure Guide* (2007) (shown opposite). The guides identify and explain the regulatory and policy tools available to local governments to encourage sustainable development at the community and site levels. These documents are available at www.wcel.org.

Project team

WCEL
Holland Barrs Planning Group
Canada Green Buildings Council
City of Burnaby
Aqua-Tex Scientific Consulting Ltd.
Smart Growth B.C.
University of Victoria
District of Squamish
Green Infrastructure Partnership
Windmill Developments

Results

From September 2006 to the end of May 2007, WCEL delivered 11 presentations in various parts of BC. Responses from attendees indicated that green infrastructure issues, tools and practices are of considerable interest. Highlights from some of the sessions follow.



WCEL's Green Infrastructure Guide addresses issues applicable to residential development.

Source: WCEL

- Water in the City Conference, Victoria — Emphasized governance, land use planning strategies and design tools to make BC communities and building construction practices more sustainable as they face increasing residential and other development pressures.

It could work for you!

Program Partners:



- Building SustainAble Communities Conference in Kelowna — Local elected officials and municipal staff, planning consultants, and design professionals heard about various strategies available to develop compact, complete communities that offer a choice of housing types and forms, locally available services, and transportation alternatives. WCEL was invited back to give another presentation at the 2007 conference.
- Greater Vancouver Regional District's Sustainability Community Breakfast — In collaboration with the Green Infrastructure Partnership (GIP), the presentation included bylaws and policy tools that emphasize low impact development standards for subdivisions, the incorporation of green infrastructure through design standards for parking, landscaping and screening, and the use of covenants, development cost charges and tax tools to encourage infill development or heritage preservation and redevelopment.
- Planning Institute of British Columbia Annual Conference — About 70 planning professionals from around the province expressed enthusiasm in learning about legal and policy tools available to stimulate green infrastructure.
- Community Meeting and Annual Conference of the Association of Kootenay Boundary Local Governments (AKBLG) at Golden, BC — In conjunction with the local chapter of Wildsight, WCEL staged a community workshop that discussed green design

approaches to development, to achieve lower environmental impact and less water and energy use. In addition, WCEL gave a plenary presentation to Mayors, Councillors and Board members at the AKBLG conference on the topic of "Building Green Communities."

- University of Wisconsin/Capital Regional District Storm Water Best Management Practices Continuing Education Conference in Victoria — At this conference, devoted to storm water best management practices, WCEL delivered the segment on regulatory issues. Conference participants consisted primarily of design professionals (landscape architects, engineers, etc.) and planners.

WCEL reports satisfaction that it was able to carry out a diverse and very successful outreach program during the latter part of 2006 and the first half of 2007.

WCEL believes that highlighting legal and policy tools encourages positive changes in communities around the province. Furthermore, WCEL says its green infrastructure and policy work is applicable to residential development anywhere and is designed to support and enhance consumer affordability and choice in housing.

Related documents

WCEL's *The Green Buildings Guide* (2006) and *The Green Infrastructure Guide* are available at www.wcel.org.

Contact

Susan Rutherford,
Staff Lawyer, WCEL
Vancouver, BC
srutherford@wcel.org
604-684-7378 or 1-800-330-WCEL

Affordability and Choice Today

Got a housing regulatory issue? ACT may already have a solution! Find out about ACT regulatory reform projects carried out across Canada:

www.actprogram.com

ACT Administration

c/o The Federation of Canadian Municipalities
Tel: 613-241-5221 ext. 242
Fax: 613-244-1515
E-mail: info@actprogram.com

The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements recognizes ACT as a top global best practice for improving the living environment.

ACT is sponsored by CMHC.

2007

It could work for you!