

ITEM - 12
MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 70
COUNCIL MEETING Nov. 1/71

12. Re: Urban Structure

At its meeting of October 20, 1971, the Parks and Recreation Commission adopted the attached report from Commissioner Pride as its views on the Urban Structure plan and directed that this be forwarded to Council.

The Commission also directed that the personal comments from Commissioners Stusiak and Fabian be forwarded for Council's information.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT these comments of views be referred to the Planning Director for study and report at a convenient time.

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS ON "URBAN DEVELOPMENT"

by A. H. Pride.

1. I heartily agree with the principles set forth in the "Foreword" on Page 9, i.e.
 - Burnaby's environment is as yet unruined.
 - there will be a tremendous increase in population in this area over the next few decades.
 - create a master plan to facilitate "the creation of an urban environment that properly provides for a person's basic needs for shelter, movement, recreation, and work". (I would prefer that this statement of needs would include the "social needs more clearly").
 - the master plan would establish planning goals capable of dealing with change. (I would like to know in more detail how the Planning Department would prevent development of all low density areas into high density areas over the next 20 years.)
 - the political decision makers should arrange for circulation of "Urban Structure", discussion, feedback and dialogue (I would hope that a rather thorough "study and reaction" would be made by the social scientists with respect to avoiding aggravation of social problems which become so "contagious" in high density areas).

2. I also support strongly the "Summary Statement" on pages 11, 12, 13.
 - "we are able to prevent most of the obviously detrimental developments"
 - "it will be necessary to take positive actions"
 - "Extremely important to influence and manage trends"
 - "structure in such a way as to make it easier for each individual citizen to find self-realization according to his or her own value and life style ..."
 - "a basic structure or infrastructure can be devised to serve the well-being of individual people regardless of which social or economic organization ... they may adopt" (This is a noble aim which we should aspire to).
 - underlying the four systems (live, move, work, play) are the following objectives:
 1. Various styles of living within a visual distance
 2. Hierarchical transportation systems spaced in multiples of walking distance increments
 3. Continuous landscaped arterials spaced to connect with other systems
 4. A choice of various opportunities to make a living within convenient access.
 - these four objectives give us the four "shaping policies" that are the basis of the structure: settlement pattern, circulation, green space, employment location.

Recommendation

1. That the procedure of setting down limits and rules ahead of time to enable orderly development be strongly supported, but that the allowance of six metro towns of population 100,000 each is too high for Burnaby. This may be an acceptable density in highly populated U.S. and European centres but I do not believe it is desirable nor necessary for the future Burnaby resident. I believe that zoning regulations must be carefully developed and administered so as to prevent destruction of one of Burnaby's most desirable features, which is the freedom from over-population. Urban sprawl certainly can be a blight if allowed to develop without plan but it is not necessarily any less desirable for many thousands of B.C. residents than over-densely populated areas. It is agreed that the metro town concept has an inherent basic part to play in orderly urban structure but I believe we should set a population figure somewhat less than 200,000 for the conceived 5 to 10 square miles per metro town centre. The land use plan should provide for a police, fire protection, and health services that would realize the objectives of the town as a community.

2. That the Deer Lake Town Centre be taken out of the Urban Structure concept and that it be replaced with a large open area recreational complex providing a wide spectrum of activities. There is little likelihood that the Provincial Government will turn over the area, property to Burnaby for a reasonable price if the fact is given that it will be used in a gigantic real estate and construction project. Furthermore, if the area is built upon, it will destroy the Deer Lake watershed and virtually bring about the end of Deer Lake. The watershed must be protected.
3. That the Kapoor site on Burrard Inlet be preserved for park purposes and the zoning along the shore of Burrard Inlet not allow industries which will add abnoxious pollution to water and air.
4. That the concept of walking and riding (horses, bikes) trails be developed and extended so that the natural park amenities of Burnaby (lakes, rivers, streams, ravines, mountains, wooded parks) be easily accessible and be joined to provide a fairly continuous link.
5. Since "Urban Structure" is already having an impact on thinking and planning decisions in Burnaby, that the Municipal Council be urged to accelerate its programme of feedback and discussion and decide its policies regarding "Urban Structure" as soon as possible.
6. That the Planning Department give a report indicating the impact of various concentrations of population on demands for physical and social service (crime, mental health, social welfare) and seek to incorporate procedures and policies which will minimize the compounding of problems.
7. That the Planning Department indicate more clearly how the proposed low density areas (which surround the high density areas) can be kept as low density after the buildings have completed their life expectancy and must be replaced with new ones.

Respectfully submitted,

A. H. Pride.

After reading Urban Structures, it is my opinion that the position expressed therein comes very close to expressing my conception of Urban Design. Some specific suggestions are questionable but they are not major, and allowance is made in the proposal for adjustments to specific proposals.

SOME PERSONAL COMMENTS ON URBAN STRUCTURES:

1. The Statements of the Dynamics of Urban Growth are an accurate statement of results of Low Profile, Low Density Urban Pattern.
2. The Distance Standards. Side Yard, Front Yard set backs are a bad land use to achieve privacy and safety. Cost of servicing this space is very high and the purpose questionable.
3. I agree with the Statement on Environmental Standards. Urban Landscape is essential to create a pleasant environment for the everyday life of an urban dweller, whether passive or mobile, walking or driving.
4. The Statements on Gradual Commitments are good. This allows the overall concept to exist while allowing adjustments to exist for specific and narrowly defined problems that will develop.
5. The Statements on the Quality of a City are good and worth repeating. The city should be pleasant and gentle in appearance, vital, entertaining; with places for contemplation and retreat, as well as for involvement as the individual need or mood prevails. Effective and easy movement of people must serve this need.
6. A Moving Population. After serving the construction trades for years and watching the indiscriminate encroachment of Low Profile, Low Density sprawl, one must be most apprehensive of what will happen if this pattern of growth is allowed to continue. The population, however will continue to grow, and in a free society people will and should have the right to live where they choose providing that society has set out those Public Use spaces that the Urban Environment will require, i.e. Park Space, Trails, Commercial, Road Patterns, Schools. The many things that make the Lower Mainland attractive as a place to live will continue to be attractive, so population will continue to grow, but the available land space is constant. If we set aside the public land use spaces desired and required, the available land space left for dwelling units can only accept the increased population growth by compacting areas. The Metro Town Centre concept proposed in Urban Structures allows for this compacting without spilling out the exact shape of the dwelling unit that will evolve. Urban Structures also allows for the possible development of innovative types of dwelling units that new technology or new concepts might evolve.
7. The Metro Town Concept of the Grid System appears to be a very good concept to contain future growth. It also makes possible the future location for good high speed urban transit. The placement of the Town Centres has also made possible future planning of Road Patterns, not only in placement of the roads, but also a reasonable order of hierarchy.

SOME COMMENTS RE POLICY:

Policy #1. Settlement Pattern - Good if generally flexible

Policy #2. Circulation - same comments apply.

Policy #3. Urban Landscape. An excellent concept in my opinion. Particularly in that landscape continues and is not confined. At present, often there is no relief between one park or natural area and the next. I am very much in accord with the statements set out in "Kneading & Waiting" on Page 105 for procurement of connecting trails. This is now partially in effect in the Trails System and it should continue as a Park Commission Commitment. (and revise docs.)

Policy #4. Employment Locations. Generally in agreement but would enlarge the River Front Public Use area in the Big Bend, and recommend a larger Public Use involvement on Grand Island. Strongly recommend the purchase of the Kapos property and an intensive look at the appropriation of Park and Industrial zones. The boundaries and areas of industry should be subject to Urban Landscape and must ensure to work areas should be identified.

Respectfully submitted

V.V. Stasiuk

COMMENT ON URBAN STRUCTURE

by T. S. Fabien

In general Urban Structure has many merits. The planners give much food for thought. They propose different concepts of plans which do allow for variation. The planners must be complimented for the manner in which they have presented the Urban Structure.

Pages 74, 75, 114, 115, Example 2 Page 119, Pages 121, 126, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133 of extremely high density residential areas along the lakeshore of Deer Lake is unthinkable.

Reasons

1. To preserve Deer Lake and Burnaby Lake it is necessary to have major water sheds. If construction of buildings should take place here (Deer Lake shore), storm sewers would be installed and Deer Lake would be void of a water shed. This, therefore, would have serious consequences for the Deer Lake and, eventually Burnaby Lake, water tables.
2. The need to take advantage of excellent topsoil and forests for parks purposes is most essential in my opinion. Therefore, the inclusion of DLs 82, 83 and 84 for park purposes will inevitably enhance Deer Lake and Burnaby Lake, and I would recommend reconsideration of any dense population in the Deer Lake area.

It is my opinion, that consideration for a population of 600,000 for Burnaby would be completely out of line with the present system, with thoughts of present ratio of acres per thousand persons. To reduce this acreage per thousand would be contrary to all the recommendations and policies and national recreational principles. I would guess, judging from Vancouver's area, a population of three hundred thousand for Burnaby would be the maximum it could service at a reasonable standard.

Again, with present standards of planning residence, the pedestrian circulation system on page 98 is an excellent plan and should be a must for incorporation into our high rise plan.

The trail concept on page 101 is also an excellent plan and concurs in general with the parks long range plan.

Urban landscape (page 105) is a must and I would like to see a policy take effect in our next C.I.P.

In conclusion, roads should give way to residential and park areas. In the past roads were built in general,

- (1) the shortest distance between two points,
- (2) following the line of least resistance regardless of the disruption it caused to that area concerned.

We should have this policy changed even if it means greater costs for roads. It is claimed over 35% of available land area in one way or another is dedicated for the automobile in cities and is forever increasing. More effort should be put in the planning of a transit system preferably underground, especially the tube capsule principle as is considered for New York, Boston, etc.

Respectfully submitted,

T. S. Fabien.