

REPORT  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
1990 NOVEMBER 13

THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF BURNABY  
COMMUNITY ISSUES AND SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR  
AND ALDERMEN:

REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY ISSUES  
AND SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

RE: ADAPTABLE HOUSING

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council receive this report for information purposes.

REPORT

The Community Issues and Social Planning Committee, at its meeting held 1990 October 24, received and adopted the attached staff report providing an update on the progress made to promote Adaptable Housing in Burnaby.

Respectfully submitted,

Alderman D.R. Corrigan,  
Chair

Alderman R.G. Begin  
Member

Alderman Egon Nikolai  
Member

Alderman F.G. Randall  
Member

Alderman J.M. Sawicki  
Member

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TO: CHAIRMAN & MEMBERS  
COMMUNITY ISSUES &  
SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

1990 OCTOBER 09

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING &  
BUILDING INSPECTION

OUR FILE: 17.908.1

SUBJECT: ADAPTABLE HOUSING

PURPOSE: To provide an update on the progress made to promote adaptable housing in Burnaby.

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT this report be received for information purposes.

R E P O R T

1.0 BACKGROUND

At its regular meeting of 1989 July 24, Council adopted a policy to encourage the provision of adaptable housing in multiple family developments in Burnaby's town centers. Since that time, staff have been working with developers, through the rezoning and preliminary plan approval process, to encourage the voluntary provision of 5 percent adaptable units in private multiple family developments.

In 1990 June, the Community Issues & Social Planning Committee requested that staff review the adaptable housing policy with a view to making the provision of adaptable housing units mandatory. This report provides an update of the actions taken to promote adaptable housing in Burnaby, and outlines existing actions being undertaken to further promote the provision of adaptable housing in Burnaby.

2.0 ADAPTABLE HOUSING

2.1 Features of Adaptable Housing

Adaptable housing is wheelchair accessible, and has both fixed and adjustable features that allow fixtures to be added, adjusted or removed as necessary to accommodate the needs of persons whether they are disabled or non-disabled.

Adaptable housing looks similar to other units, but is able to accommodate tenants who acquire a permanent or temporary disability, older people who want to continue living in their homes, and disabled persons who wish to live independently or with a non-disabled spouse or attendant.

The fixed accessible features make each adaptable unit usable by disabled people without undertaking structural changes such as building ramps, moving walls, or widening doors. The most important fixed accessible features of an adaptable dwelling include:

- . wide doors
- . no steps at entrances
- . low mounted switches and controls
- . levers and other easy to use handles
- . most rooms along an accessible route
- . clear floor space in entrance area, bathroom, bedrooms and kitchen for turning wheelchair
- . accessible route to and throughout all spaces in the building including parking, lobby, laundry room, decks, and common areas.

The following adjustable features allow an adaptable housing unit to be easily modified to meet the needs of both disabled and non-disabled occupants. The three principal adjustable features of adaptable housing are:

- . removable base cabinets installed in knee spaces under kitchen and bathroom sinks
- . segments of counters that can be adjusted from a standard height to a lower height
- . reinforced wall areas so grab bars can be attached at the bathtub, shower, and toilet areas as needed

These fixed and adjustable features of adaptable housing eliminate the special or different appearance associated with dedicated wheelchair units, and make the unit equally marketable to people who do not require some features that are intended for people with disabilities.

## 2.2 Need for Adaptable Housing

Two trends are contributing to increasing demand for affordable and accessible housing for persons with disabilities. These are the aging of the population and de-institutionalization. As the population ages, more elderly persons will become disabled in their own homes. With de-institutionalization and an emphasis on the integration of persons with disabilities into the community an increasing number of persons will seek accommodation within the community.

By incorporating adaptable features, adaptable units enable people who suddenly become disabled to remain in their homes. Adaptable units also expand options for the integration of persons with disabilities into the community by providing a variety of housing types at different locations in the Municipality.

The provision of adaptable units will help meet some of Burnaby's existing and future needs for housing that is suitable for persons with disabilities.

## 3.0 PROVISION OF ADAPTABLE HOUSING

Planning & Building Inspection Department staff encourage developers to consider the inclusion of adaptable housing units in their multiple family residential development proposals. No private market adaptable units have been constructed in Burnaby to date; however, some developers have expressed an interest in providing adaptable units in their multiple family developments. Staff anticipate that some adaptable units will be constructed in private market developments in Burnaby within the next year.

Accessible housing units have been provided under non-market housing programs funded by the Federal and Provincial governments. The most recent example is The Brambles Housing Cooperative located in the Edmonds Town Centre area which has 17 adaptable units.

The development of the Burnaby South, Cariboo, Oakalla and George Derby lands provide further opportunities to encourage the provision of adaptable housing units. Where appropriate, staff will encourage the 5 percent provision of adaptable units on Municipal land leased for market and non-market housing in the Cariboo development. With respect to the Burnaby South, Oakalla and George Derby lands, staff will raise this issue in discussions with the developers of the property and encourage the similar provision of adaptable units in market housing developments.

4.0 PROMOTION OF ADAPTABLE HOUSING

Over the past year, staff have undertaken a number of actions to raise awareness of the concept of adaptable housing, including:

- encouraging developers to consider the inclusion of adaptable housing units in their multiple family residential development proposals through the rezoning and preliminary plan approval process.
- collecting and maintaining background material on the design and construction of adaptable housing. Copies of key publications on this topic are available for viewing in the Planning Department Library.
- placing an article describing Burnaby's adaptable housing policy in the 1990 August edition of Information Burnaby.
- sending staff to community workshops on special needs housing and building standards for persons with disabilities.

To further raise awareness of the concept of adaptable housing, staff will be hosting a seminar on adaptable housing. The seminar will be given by an architect knowledgeable in the construction and design of such housing. The purpose of the seminar will be to explain the concept of adaptable housing, and to increase understanding of the benefits and constraints of building it. Municipal Council members, the Community Issues & Social Planning Committee, staff, developers, and groups representing persons with disabilities will be invited to attend.

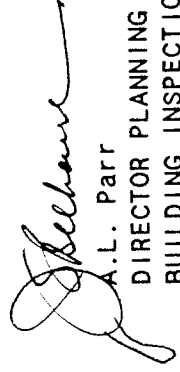
5.0 MANDATORY PROVISION OF ADAPTABLE HOUSING

At present, staff are of the opinion that it is premature to require the mandatory provision of adaptable housing units in multiple family developments.

After staff have had some experience with the provision of adaptable units through the voluntary policy, it will be possible to better evaluate the merits of a mandatory policy. This evaluation would incorporate the results of the seminar, which could contribute to the establishment of minimum standards for adaptable units in Burnaby.

In addition, the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) is preparing standards for barrier-free design (CSA B651 Barrier-Free Design) which will include a section on residential dwellings. The Barrier-Free Design standards being developed by CSA are expected to provide a uniform standard for accessible design of all types of buildings, including residential units. Parts of the standard, to be published early in 1991, are expected to be eventually incorporated into the National and Provincial Building Codes. This may provide for adaptable housing in Burnaby and other communities through the provisions of the Building Code.

Staff will continue to encourage the voluntary provision of adaptable units. It is expected that increased awareness and understanding of the concept of adaptable housing will result in greater acceptance of the adaptable housing concept by the development community. Staff will monitor the progress made in encouraging the voluntary provision of adaptable units, and will report back at a later date on the need for mandatory provision of adaptable units.

  
A.L. Parr  
DIRECTOR PLANNING &  
BUILDING INSPECTION

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