ITEM	23
MANAGER'S REPORT NO.	36
COUNCIL MEETING	94/06/13

TO: CITY MANAGER DATE: 1994 JUNE 8

FROM: DIRECTOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

SUBJECT: JOINT PROJECT BETWEEN BURNABY, BCIT AND PACIFIC AI REGARDING PLANNING FOR BURNABY'S TRANSITION FROM MAINFRAME COMPUTING TO NETWORKED PC'S

PURPOSE: TO SEEK COUNCIL'S APPROVAL TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH DR. JEFFREY SKOSNIK OF BCIT

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council approve the City of Burnaby entering into an Agreement with Dr. Jeffrey Skosnik of BCIT for consulting services and related reports.

REPORT

Since the early 1980's, Burnaby, like most municipalities has been automating much of its data processing by means of customized software running on a "mainframe" computer accessed by "dumb" terminals in offices and at workstations. This electronic data processing has been guided by successive strategic plans for Information Management the first of which was adopted by Council in 1984.

The most recent "Strategic Plan for Information Management for the City of Burnaby" was prepared by Sierra Systems Consultants and was adopted by Council on August 9, 1993. In the Hardware and Software Strategy section of that plan, the strategy proposed for the development of the City's hardware is:

- to use personal computers for the desktop workstation, provide users of these personal computers with PC based productivity tools and connect all personal computers to the City's computer network;
- to migrate away from the proprietary VAX systems to lower cost Open Architecture systems;
- to continue to enhance and develop the City's computer communications network.

To some extent this process is underway with most new workstations added to the system being PC's rather than "dumb" terminals. However, the migration plan to get from mainframe (proprietary VAX) systems to Open Architecture Systems (networked PC's) has not been laid out nor have any systems currently running on the VAX mainframe been converted to run on networked PC's.

To that end, Burnaby has received a proposal from Dr. Jeff Skosnik of BCIT to work with Burnaby to do just that. His proposal "describes how, in carefully measured steps, Burnaby can:

1. Determine what its true computational requirements are;

2. Implement a small pilot project to show how some of Burnaby's current computer operation may be moved from a large scale computer onto a network of personal computers;

3. Determine the costs of conversion for all computer services onto a network of personal computers, wherever this is technically feasible."

The costs to Burnaby are minimal - estimated at $30,000 out of pocket which would be spread over 1994 and 1995. Dr. Skosnik proposes to begin in September and he has had his workload at BCIT reduced to allow him to carry out this project. Furthermore, Dr. Skosnik has shared his proposal with a colleague at Stanford University in California who assesses it very favourably, concluding that "Burnaby should consider itself very fortunate indeed that you have chosen to undertake this project at what is really a negligible cost compared to what will ultimately be saved." In addition, Intel Corporation also "is interested in helping BCIT and Pacific AI pursue the Burnaby project."

In summary, Burnaby's Strategic Plan for computing as adopted by Council calls for migrating away from mainframe computing toward networked PC's. A migration plan will be needed and BCIT are willing to free up the time of Dr. Jeff Skosnik to work with Burnaby to develop such a plan. The costs to Burnaby are minimal ($30,000 out of pocket in 1994 and 1995). Intel Corporation and Stanford University are available to assist at no extra cost. Dr. Skosnik is prepared to begin in September, 1994.

Therefore, it is recommended that Council approve the City of Burnaby entering into an agreement with BCIT (Dr. Jeff Skosnik) and Pacific AI (Maggie Floeck) to carry out the project described above with estimated costs of $15,000 in 1994 and an additional $15,000 in 1995. A migration plan would be completed by year end 1995.

Director Administrative
and Community Services

Copy to:
Director Finance
Information Services Director

26 February 1994

PROPOSAL FOR A JOINT PROJECT BETWEEN BURNABY, BCIT, AND PACIFIC AI

by
Jeffrey Skosnik
Research Head/BCIT Automated Reasoning Laboratory
Maggie Floeck
President/Pacific Artificial Intelligence Systems Corp

Executive Summary

Having reviewed Burnaby's *Strategic Plan for Information Management for the City of Burnaby* (5 October 1992), the authors of this Proposal (Skosnik and Floeck) are concerned that Burnaby's *Strategic Plan* does not adequately describe how to achieve its announced goal of moving Burnaby's computer operations from large scale computers to networks of personal computers. This Proposal describes how, in carefully measured steps, Burnaby can:

1. Determine what its true computational requirements are;
2. Implement a small pilot project to show how some of Burnaby's current computer operation may be moved from a large scale computer onto a network of personal computers;
3. Determine the costs of conversion for all computer services onto a network of personal computers, wherever this is technically feasible.

There is no cost to Burnaby for the first phase of this project. In the event that Burnaby chooses to proceed with phase two of the project, its cost is $30,000. The third and final phase of the project is the development of a specific plan for downsizing Burnaby's computer operations, while maintaining and/or improving services. There is no cost for this final phase of the project. There would be a cost associated with *implementing* the recommendations contained in the downsizing plan. It is not possible to state in advance what that cost will prove to be. Indeed, it is the principal aim of this Proposal to establish both the technical feasibility and the cost of the conversion. However, it is completely reasonable to believe that the cost of conversion will be substantially less than the cost of perpetuating the present large scale computer operation into the 21st century.