

CITY OF BURNABY
COMMUNITY ISSUES AND SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS

RE: METROTOWN ACCESSIBILITY REVIEW

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council receive the attached report for information.

REPORT

The Community Issues and Social Planning Committee, at its meeting held on 1994 April 27 received and adopted the attached staff report to present the results of the accessibility review of Metrotown.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor C. Redman
Chair

Councillor D. Evans
Vice Chair

: COPY - CITY MANAGER
- DIR. ADMIN. & COMM. SERV.
- DIRECTOR ENGINEERING
- DIRECTOR FINANCE
- DIR. PLNG. AND BLDG.
- DIR. REC. & CULT. SERV.
- MEDICAL HEALTH OFFICER

TO: COMMUNITY ISSUES &
SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

1994 MARCH 25

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING

OUR FILE: 17.908

SUBJECT: **METROTOWN ACCESSIBILITY REVIEW**

PURPOSE: To present the results of the accessibility review of Metrotown.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** this report be received for information.

REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In 1993 April, Council approved a proposal of the Community Issues & Social Planning Committee to undertake a review of accessibility for persons with disabilities in the core business district of Metrotown.

This report summarizes the initial findings of the review, and outlines a process to address identified issues.

2.0 REVIEW PROCESS

The Metrotown review was undertaken in cooperation with the Burnaby Access Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee is composed of Burnaby residents who are disabled, and City staff.

Key components of the review included:

- a site survey of the physical elements within the public areas of the Metrotown core, including items such as curb cuts, walks, ramps, parking spaces, washrooms, etc.
- collection of information from the public through notices in local newsletters, newspapers and other publications.
- discussions with mall managers and input from local service providers.

This part of the review concludes the collection of information of perceived accessibility barriers in Metrotown. Necessary next steps for the review include:

- an evaluation of each of the issues identified to determine appropriate solutions or actions;

- a determination of the feasibility of addressing issue in relation to other constraints, including; costs, public safety, traffic management, development plans, etc.; and
- development of key priorities and time-frames for improvements.

Staff will be contacting each of the agencies involved to facilitate progress on these next steps in the review process.

3.0 SUMMARY OF REVIEW FINDINGS

In general, the Metrotown core business district is very accessible for persons with disabilities. The recent construction of the shopping malls, Bonsor Recreation Centre and the Bob Prittie Metrotown Library, and application of the accessibility requirements of the B.C. Building Code, has resulted in a town centre that appropriately meets many of the needs of persons with disabilities.

However, as with any detailed review, the accessibility review of Metrotown did identify a range of barriers that may prevent easy access in and around the town centre. Examples of the types of accessibility barriers identified in the review include:

- **Curb Ramps** - in some cases, curb ramps are not provided. In other cases, curb ramps are considered too steep, have an abrupt drop to the street level, or have utility poles or other obstacles located in the centre of the ramp.
- **Walks** - a few sections were identified where the sidewalk is not provided, has broken concrete, or is interrupted by stairs or blocked by utility poles, newspaper boxes or other obstacles.
- **Traffic Lights/Pedestrian Crossings** - in some cases, pedestrian crossing times were perceived as being too short. A need was also identified for audible pedestrian signals at all major crossings in Metrotown.
- **Directional Signs** - in the malls, directional signs were identified as being difficult to find and use. Also, a need was identified for signs to direct people with mobility impairments around the inaccessible pedestrian link to the SkyTrain station.
- **Parking Spaces** - some parking spaces were identified as too narrow, not properly signed or subject to abuse.
- **Doors** - the survey identified a need to provide automatic entrance doors in the malls and to improve access through washroom doors.
- **Bank Machines** - several bank machines were identified as being difficult to use for people in scooters or wheelchairs.

- **SkyTrain Access** - it was noted that access to the Metrotown SkyTrain Station is not provided through the pedestrian overpass across Central Boulevard. Related to this, several requests were received for a mid-block crossing of Central Boulevard from the SkyTrain station elevator to the bus loop at Eatons Centre. Currently, pedestrian crossings of Central Boulevard near the SkyTrain station are provided at McKay and the Eatons Centre underground parking entrance.
- **Telephone Service** - the survey found that only half of the telephones in the area are equipped with a volume control. In addition, there are no public telephones that can be used by the Deaf - TTY/TDD (Telephone Device for the Deaf).

In summary, the review of Metrotown found that the area is very accessible to persons with disabilities. At the same time, there are a range of barriers in the Metrotown core that can significantly impede access for persons with disabilities.

4.0 NEXT STEPS

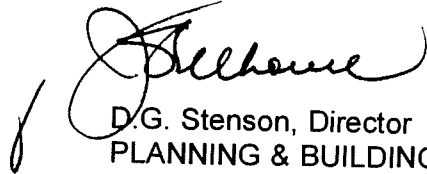
Staff are in the process of contacting each of the agencies responsible for the various areas of Metrotown to convey the information collected on reported barriers. Staff will request each of the agencies involved to review the issues identified to determine the feasibility of addressing barriers on a priority basis. Specifically:

- City of Engineering staff are currently evaluating and prioritizing improvements to curb cuts, walkways and pedestrian crossings, and will be undertaking appropriate improvements as funds permit. Engineering staff will also liaise with the Ministry of Transportation and Highways to review pedestrian crossings at Ministry signals.
- Social Planning staff will meet with the management of Station Square, Eatons Centre and Metrotown Centre to discuss the comments received on directional signs, parking spaces, and automatic doors, and will request that they undertake appropriate improvements as part of their continuing efforts to maintain and upgrade their facilities.
- As appropriate, staff will also forward the comments directed to B.C. Transit, B.C. Tel and other organizations for information with a request for improvements as necessary.

It is also anticipated that the information collected during the review could contribute to the development of an 'Access Guidebook' for the area. In 1991 April, the Burnaby Access Advisory Committee collected similar information for the Burnaby Access Guidebook to City facilities. This review of Metrotown presents an opportunity to expand the guidebook and to update the information on City facilities.

Staff will consult with the business community in Metrotown to ensure that facilities and services that are available for persons with disabilities are included in the guidebook. The guidebook would also note any anticipated accessibility improvements in the area. Funds for the printing of the guidebook have been included for consideration in the 1994 Annual Budget.

This report is presented for information purposes.


D.G. Stenson, Director
PLANNING & BUILDING

LP/db

cc: City Manager
Director Administrative & Community Services
Director Engineering
Director Finance
Director Recreation & Cultural Services
Medical Health Officer

