

COMMUNITY ISSUES AND SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS

RE: SOCIAL PLANNING IN METROTOWN - PROGRESS REPORT

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council receive this report for information.

REPORT

The Community Issues and Social Planning Committee, at its meeting held on 1995 September 27, adopted the *attached* staff report providing an overview of progress in the last three years on key issues identified in the Metrotown Social Planning Program. The report also identifies priority issues for future attention, proposing that renewed staff attention be devoted to addressing Metrotown's social planning concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor C. Redman
Chair

Councillor D. Johnston
Vice Chair

:COPY - CITY MANAGER
- DIRECTOR ENGINEERING
- DIRECTOR FINANCE
- DIRECTOR PL. & BLDG.
- DIRECTOR REC. & CULT. SERV.
- MEDICAL HEALTH OFFICER
- O.I.C., RCMP.

TO: COMMUNITY ISSUES &
SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

1995 SEPTEMBER 19

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING

OUR FILE: 17.822

SUBJECT: SOCIAL PLANNING IN METROTOWN - PROGRESS REPORT

PURPOSE: To provide an update on progress in implementing the Metrotown Social Planning Program adopted by Council in 1992 October and to identify priorities for future attention.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the Committee receive this report for information.

R E P O R T

1.0 BACKGROUND

In 1992 October, Council endorsed the revised Metrotown Social Planning Program. The Program emerged from a comprehensive community consultation process which took place in late 1991, and replaced the Program for Social Planning in Metrotown adopted in 1989.

The revised program identifies 36 objectives and more than 160 actions to be pursued by City staff. The objectives and actions are categorized within the five subject areas of human services, housing, humanizing elements, movement and crime prevention.

This report provides an overview of progress made in the past three years on key issues identified in the Metrotown Social Planning Program. It also identifies priority issues for future attention, proposing that renewed staff attention be devoted to addressing Metrotown's social planning concerns.

2.0 THE ISSUES

The most critical social planning issues identified during the 1991 consultation process, in order of priority, were:

- ▶ **availability of human services** (e.g., education and information services; services and facilities for seniors, children, youth, families, persons with disabilities; and affordable office space for service agencies).
- ▶ **attention to "humanizing" aspects of Metrotown development** (e.g., arts and cultural opportunities, aesthetics and design, signage, promotion of public amenities, open space, community identity).
- ▶ **crime prevention and concerns for personal security**
- ▶ **attention to pedestrian orientation**

- ▶ **accessibility for persons with disabilities and special needs**
- ▶ **convenience and efficiency of public transit system** (e.g., bus service from North Burnaby, transportation of bicycles, wheelchair accessible service).

Housing, which was not identified as a top priority issue, has become an increasingly important issue since the consultation process. Of particular concern is access to affordable housing which is suitable to families, persons with disabilities and households with low-to-moderate incomes.

3.0 OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS

The following are some of the highlights with regard to addressing priority social issues in Metrotown over the past three years.

3.1 Human Services

3.1.1 Seniors

- ▶ Bonsor Recreation Complex collaborates with Metrotown shopping centres on special events for seniors such as a mall walking program, flu shot clinics and seniors' days.

3.1.2 Youth

- ▶ Staff, volunteers and the teen committee at Club Metro cooperate with external agencies in community events and to provide youth with resources on such topics as health and lifestyles, safety and crime prevention, youth employment, and recreation and socialization.

3.1.3 Affordable Office and Meeting Space

- ▶ Despite a shortage of affordable office space in Metrotown, small community organizations heavily utilize community meeting rooms in Eaton Centre, Metrotown Centre and the Bob Prittie Branch of the Burnaby Public Library.

3.1.4 Information Services

- ▶ The information kiosk in Metrotown Centre is used in summer for dispensing tourist information and in the off-season by non-profit community groups and City departments for promoting their programs. Group usage of the kiosk is moderate.
- ▶ "Focus" newsletter, containing a community calendar and profiles of community leaders and events, is produced six times yearly by Eaton Centre Metrotown, Rogers Cantel Tower, and Metrotower II.
- ▶ Some City departments are producing information for the public in "plain English" and are including short phrases in languages other than English to indicate that help is available to translate information.
- ▶ In 1995, Burnaby's Healthy Community Initiative will publish a "Citizens' Guide to City Services" to assist citizens to access City services they require.

3.1.5 Other

- ▶ Staff continue to monitor the impact on Metrotown of Vancouver's 3,000 unit Collingwood Village development, adjacent to the Joyce Street SkyTrain Station. Most of the Phase 1 700 residential units will be completed by December 1995. The community amenity building housing the new Collingwood Neighbourhood House, is completed. A gymnasium and child care centre are included in the building but are not yet operational. Phase 1 park space is not yet complete.

3.2 "Humanizing" Elements

3.2.1 Arts & Cultural Opportunities

- ▶ The Metrotown shopping centres actively promote arts and culture through support for events like "Reading Week", "Metrotown Run for Heart", and Burnaby Art Centre's "Artscape Contest". Eaton Centre Metrotown, in partnership with Rogers Cantel Tower and Metrotower II, hosts a summer music series in the landscaped plaza on Central Boulevard
- ▶ Heritage protection and appreciation in Metrotown has been given a boost with the restoration of Jubilee Arch in Central Park, the installation in three locations of plaques commemorating the Central Park Tramline, the production of a pamphlet describing the tramline, the designation of houses at 3762 Thurston Street and the corner of Boundary Road and Burke Street as heritage structures, and the registration of a Section 215 covenant to protect the Andy Johnson House. (Under Section 215 of the Land Title Act, conditions can be registered against the title of a property to ensure continuation of a particular circumstance into the future.)

3.2.2 Signage

- ▶ Staff continue to promote the use of international symbols in signage wherever possible. Simplified, integrated emergency vehicle signage for the three Metrotown shopping centres will be installed in autumn 1995.

3.2.3 Recreation and Entertainment Opportunities

- ▶ New zoning requirements and locational guidelines for pool halls and amusement arcades will help to maintain a balance of entertainment establishments in Metrotown area. Concerns with the mix of entertainment establishments in Station Square have been mitigated with the departure of the casino. Station Square management continues to co-operate in attempts to reduce potential negative impacts deriving from the remaining entertainment establishments.

3.3 Crime Prevention

3.3.1 General

- ▶ Burnaby's Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) booklet, published in 1994, outlines the basic CPTED principles for professionals involved in designing buildings and open spaces. Due to heavy demand from police departments, municipalities and professional organizations throughout British Columbia and Washington state, the booklet was updated and reprinted in 1995.

- ▶ Considerable improvements have been made to security in underground parking areas in Metrotown through addition of surveillance cameras, security gates, and regular patrols by security force and RCMP bike squads.

3.4 Movement

3.4.1 Pedestrian and Bicycle Orientation

- ▶ Burnaby's Urban Trail system identifies three trails for Metrotown - B.C. Parkway trail, Nelson trail, and Patterson trail. A subcommittee of the City's Bicycle Advisory Committee is working with neighbouring municipalities to identify potential improvements to signage, curb ramps and surfacing of the heavily-used B.C. Parkway. The adjacent railway corridor is also being examined for potential reuse as a bikeway.
- ▶ The Metrotown bike loop has been approved in principle and is scheduled to be operational by summer 1996, assuming a satisfactory design and adequate funding are in place.
- ▶ The City's bicycle rack program will see bicycle racks with advertising installed on street fronts in commercial areas by spring 1996.
- ▶ B.C. Transit has piloted bicycle racks on buses serving suburban areas but it is unknown whether the program will be extended to inner-City bus routes.

3.4.2 Barrier Free-Environment

- ▶ A lift has been installed in Station Square to make the pedestrian bridge to Eaton Centre accessible to persons with disabilities.
- ▶ The Metrotown Accessibility Review was completed by the Burnaby Access Advisory Committee in 1993, with the report reviewed by Council in 1994. The review identifies accessibility barriers posed by inappropriately designed or signed curb ramps and walkways, parking spaces, building entry points, washrooms, and equipment such as banking machines and telephones, and by traffic lights and pedestrian crossings. Shopping centre management has co-operated to a high degree in addressing priority barriers on their property by relocating or signing designated parking spaces, reconstructing or repairing curb ramps, and requesting that telephones and bank machines be replaced with standard wheelchair accessible equipment. They have also requested that more telephones be equipped with volume controls for hearing impaired persons. Some general shopping centre signage has been improved and some is under review.
- ▶ Despite barriers, Metrotown remains one of the most accessible shopping areas in the Lower Mainland. The shopping centres will continue to address identified barriers as budget permits or as redevelopment facilitates some of the required structural changes.
- ▶ The two main City facilities in Metrotown - Bonsor Recreation Complex and Bob Prittie Metrotown Library - are entirely wheelchair accessible. Around the Metrotown core, many problematic curb ramps have been rectified, and City crews will address others and some walkway problems as budget is available or as reconstruction or reconfiguration of intersections is undertaken.

- ▶ The first audible traffic signal for sight-impaired people was installed at Willingdon Avenue and Maywood Street in 1991. Audible signals are now also located at Royal Oak and Imperial Street, Wilson Avenue and Grange street, and at all intersections but one on Central Boulevard. Two audible signals are expected to be installed on Nelson Avenue in 1995; others will be installed on a "by request" basis as budget permits.
- ▶ As a result of the Metrotown Accessibility Review, the "Burnaby Access Guidebook", first produced in 1991, has been updated. The second edition, to be published in autumn 1995, provides updated access information for 25 City-operated buildings as well as the three major shopping centres in the Metrotown core.

3.4.3 Public Transit

- ▶ Metrotown continues to be served by four wheelchair accessible bus routes during normal operating hours (Routes #49, 106, 130 and 144). Late "night owl" accessible service has been added with Route #112.

3.5 Housing

3.5.1. General

- ▶ Metrotown currently offers 352 affordable non-market housing units - 40 for low-income seniors and 312 for low-to-moderate income families and singles. Including units in the Oaklands development on the fringe of Metrotown, an additional 95 units for low-to-moderate income families will be occupied in 1996, along with 17 additional units for low-income seniors. A seniors' equity co-op in the Oaklands development will provide 36 new non-market homes for moderate-income seniors in 1996. An additional 20 units of non-market family housing is planned for the Oaklands, but has yet to be allocated by the Province.
- ▶ The City's adaptable housing policy has been revised to better encourage developers to provide for accessibility in residential developments. The policy is under review by the Housing Committee.

4.0 FUTURE PRIORITIES

As the preceding section reveals considerable progress has been made in addressing social planning concerns in Metrotown in recent years. While acknowledging this progress, it should be noted that social planning staff have had limited time to devote to Metrotown issues, due to other work program priorities. Given the strategic importance of Metrotown for Burnaby, and the complexity of the issues to be addressed, social planning staff propose to refocus their energies on Metrotown concerns for the foreseeable future.

The key future social planning priorities for Metrotown are summarized below.

4.1 Community Amenities

- ▶ Staff continue to negotiate for community amenities, particularly landscaping and treatment of open space, through the rezoning process. However, opportunities for acquiring large amenities such as affordable office space for non-profit groups, a community police station, adaptable housing units, and secure rental and/or non-market housing units are few. In developing a strategy to guide the future redevelopment of older multiple family housing stock in Metrotown, staff propose to examine the use of bonus zoning as a means to acquire community amenities.
- ▶ Staff will continue to monitor the Province's position on requests from the Union of B.C. Municipalities to change the Municipal Act to allow the use of development cost charges for services other than "hard" infrastructure.
- ▶ The proposed Burnaby Foundation could assist in the provision of community amenities, if the mandate of the Foundation were developed to ensure funding for services provided by non-profit agencies as well as capital projects were eligible.
- ▶ Staff will continue to monitor and assist, where appropriate, the progress of three local churches in developing a project which will enhance community well-being in Metrotown.

4.2 Crime Prevention

- ▶ Social Planning staff will be available to work with the District 4 Community Policing Team on the development of a public consultation process and establishment of a citizen advisory committee, and on such issues as youth in shopping centres and improved lighting in selected areas of Metrotown.

4.3 Pedestrian Orientation

- ▶ As a result of requests to increase the duration of pedestrian "walk" lights in Metrotown, staff propose to engage in public education regarding the amount of time available to cross the street after the light has changed.
- ▶ Staff will work on the establishment of a variety of pedestrian amenities such as benches, fountains and landscaping.

4.4 Accessibility

- ▶ Staff will continue to ensure the barriers identified in the Metrotown Accessibility Review are addressed. Difficult issues remain: hydro/telephone poles, electrical boxes, and trees on sidewalks; islands in intersections; the passerelle from Eaton Centre to the Metrotown SkyTrain Station; the enforcement of designated disabled parking. Staff will work with the Burnaby Access Advisory Committee on its priority issues: accessible transit, designated parking enforcement, awareness-raising among the business community of the needs of disabled consumers, and identification of barriers to access in Burnaby's other town centres.

4.5 Housing

- ▶ Metrotown's affordable rental housing stock is occupied by people living on fixed or low incomes - senior citizens, young families, single parents, and young singles working in the service sector. Much of the stock, particularly in the Maywood area, is approaching the end of its useful life cycle and the pressure to redevelop is mounting. In the absence of senior government assistance to maintain or replace this affordable stock, staff propose to work on a strategy for redevelopment of the area using bonusing and any other means available to ensure affordable rental and non-market housing remains available in the area.

4.6 Community Identity

- ▶ Given the development of the past 10 years, Metrotown now has the potential to begin to mature as a community. Events/amenities such as a "mainstreet" atmosphere, an annual Metrotown event or a Metrotown theme have been identified as opportunities for forging a sense of identity and community in Metrotown. Staff will monitor the emergence of any Metrotown-based citizen or community groups which may be able to advise on or co-ordinate such opportunities.

5.0 CONCLUSION

As outlined in Section 3.0 of this report, considerable progress has been made in implementing the revised Metrotown Social Planning Program since its adoption in 1992. However, important issues remain to be addressed. Given the comprehensive and complex nature of the Program, not all objectives have been tackled at once. Moreover, staff from departments other than Planning, are responsible for initiating or co-ordinating many of the actions, with Planning staff serving to facilitate or comment on the initiatives.

The report acknowledges that over the past three years, social planning staff have had limited time to address Metrotown concerns, due to other work program priorities. Given the renewed need to address social needs in Metrotown, staff propose to refocus their energies on the area's social planning concerns for the foreseeable future.

Staff will continue to work on Program implementation, with particular attention to the priorities outlined in Section 4.0. Progress reports to the Community Issues & Social Planning Committee and Council will be submitted at regular intervals.


D.G. Stenson, Director
PLANNING & BUILDING

JS/db

cc: City Manager
Director Engineering
Director Finance
Director Recreation and Cultural Services
Medical Health Officer
Officer-in-Charge, RCMP