

TO: CITY MANAGER

1997 JANUARY 07

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING

OUR FILE: 10.106

SUBJECT: PLANNING AND PROVISION OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

PURPOSE: To provide requested information on the planning and provision of school facilities arising from continued population growth in the City.

RECOMMENDATION:

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

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

At its meeting of 1996 December 16, Council gave authorization for a Rezoning Bylaw to be prepared and advanced to First Reading on 1997 January 06 and to a Public Hearing on 1997 January 21. This rezoning (Rezoning Reference #39/96) establishes general guidelines for the future residential development of the Weiser Lock lands included within the Powerhouse Creek Development Plan adopted by Council on 1996 August 26. The plan calls for the eventual development of 453 generally ground-oriented, multiple-family residential units within six development parcels.

As part of the discussion related to this subject, there was a discussion and a number of questions raised with respect to current and future enrolment issues. Generally, there was a request for information on the plans, strategies and initiatives in place to enable Burnaby schools to accommodate enrolment increases arising from continued population growth, increased residential development and demographic changes in the community. It was requested that this information be provided to Council prior to the Public Hearing for Rezoning #39/96 scheduled for 1997 January 21 at 7:30 p.m..

This report responds to the request received from Council.

2.0 POWERHOUSE CREEK DEVELOPMENT PLAN - ENROLMENT GENERATION ESTIMATES

The developers for the Powerhouse Creek Development have indicated a three to five year development program with construction of a first phase commencing in January 1998. This would suggest that occupancies for say, 60 of the first 130 to 150 units might be early fall of 1998. While enrolment generation figures are subject to a number of variables and opinions, best estimates from the School District would suggest about 18 elementary school children for the first 60 units and about 12 high school children. Using the same figures for the whole project when completed would result in a total of 136 elementary school children and 90 high school students.

The applicant for the Powerhouse Creek Development also developed the Tudor Grove project (one block north of the Weiser Lock site) which has a similar unit mix and demographic profile. In the Tudor Grove project, the applicant has indicated that only 10 percent of the purchasers had children, with the majority being first-time buyers in the 25 to 35 year age group. While acknowledging that many of these buyers may intend to start a family in the future, it is their view that most of the school-aged children would not begin to enter the school system until 2003.

3.0 SHORT AND LONGER TERM RESPONSES

In the shorter term, it is anticipated that the elementary aged children would be accommodated at Stride and/or Clinton Schools with provision made in the capital budgeting process for portables. In the medium term, some modest expansion of both schools may require some budget priority. The estimated 12 high school students associated with the first phase of the project would be accommodated at Burnaby South.

Past discussions with School District staff combined with some recent provisions in the revised Edmonds Town Centre Plan, indicate the following school related initiatives in the South Burnaby area:

3.1 Elementary Schools

- ▶ Reopening of Riverway West
- ▶ Acquisition and development of the city-owned elementary school site in the Edmonds Town Centre South area north of Mission Avenue and adjacent to Taylor Park
- ▶ Expansion of the Stride Community School in conjunction with the residential redevelopment of adjacent industrial lands as provided for in the Edmonds Town Centre Plan

- ▶ Likely dedication of an elementary school site in conjunction with the future redevelopment of the industrial lands bounded by 11th and 14th Avenues and 15th and 18th Streets as designated in the Edmonds Town Centre Plan

3.2 Secondary Schools

- ▶ Priority development of the North-East Secondary School at Lougheed and Gaglardi Way that will enable some adjustments to high school catchment areas throughout the district
- ▶ proposed reopening of the former Royal Oak school site with the possible provision for some secondary school use
- ▶ a review of the feasibility and desirability of converting the use of the future expanded Stride School/park site (about 13 acres) as a new secondary school site.

Included in the current 5 year capital budget submission to the Ministry is the re-opening of Riverway West School, acquisition of the new elementary school site in Edmonds Town Centre South, development of the North-East Secondary School and the re-opening of the Royal Oak and Marion School facilities. Provision for the development of the Edmonds Town Centre South elementary school and some modest expansion of the Stride and Clinton school facilities is anticipated to be included in a subsequent capital budget submission. These provisions should help address school needs associated with the eventual full development of the Powerhouse Creek development.

4.0 PLANNING AND CAPITAL FUNDING PROCESS FOR SCHOOL FACILITIES

Each September, the School District submits a five year Capital Budget Plan to the Provincial Ministry of Education for its capital requirements. Similar to the City's capital budgeting process, the first year of the plan is the subject of the most detail and priority focus. Based on a Province wide review of enrolment growth and capacity figures, the Ministry sets the priority for the various requests it receives and submits its capital requirements to the Treasury Board which provides a response to the School Districts in March or April of the following year.

Since 1995, there has been a freeze on capital expenditures with the exception of emergency requirements or where tenders have been awarded. The School District made its last Capital Budget submission in 1996 September and is of the understanding that the 1995 and 1996 requests will be blended and reviewed as a package. It is anticipated that about \$250 million is to be allocated in the current Provincial budget cycle for new school construction on a Province wide basis.

The priorities identified by the School District include the North-East Burnaby Secondary School, the re-opening of former Royal Oak Secondary School facility, school site acquisitions in the Edmonds and Brentwood Town Centres and the re-opening of the former Marion School facility. Not all of these capital requests are likely to be granted in 1997.

Over the past several years, the School District's ability to adequately respond to enrolment pressures has continued to be reduced as available school facilities are used to or beyond capacity. While school facility needs are being identified, the lead times involved in receiving Provincial funding and undertaking construction has resulted in an approach to providing for school facilities that is not easily responsive to emerging trends or new enrolment pressures. As a result, the current approach to planning and funding school facilities only enables the School District to respond to existing or projected needs on a year to year basis with limited certainty on the timing for capital funding. An added uncertainty is the projected timing of new development projects in the City as the rate and location of rezoning applications on an area by area basis is impossible to predict.

5.0 UTILIZATION OF EXISTING FACILITIES

In addition to seeking Provincial funding to build, expand and re-open schools, the Burnaby School District has actively pursued a variety of measures to accommodate increased enrolment demands with existing Burnaby facilities. For example, School District admission policies and procedures seek to ensure that every student that is enrolled in a Burnaby School actually resides in the City and is a legal resident of Canada. The student registration process requires the provision of acceptable documentation for age, citizenship and residency location. The registration process also seeks to ensure that school attendance boundaries, or catchment areas, are respected.

To further accommodate enrolment pressures, the District has undertaken to extend school hours to provide for early morning classroom blocks. Every secondary school now has scheduled early morning classes for courses where there are sufficient numbers of students to be registered and teachers available. The use of existing facilities has also been significantly extended through summer school programs and provision of adult and continuing education services.

At both the elementary and secondary level, the opening of a new school may provide an opportunity to adjust boundaries to relieve enrolment pressures in existing schools. For example, once the North-East Secondary School is built and Royal Oak re-opened, it will be possible to adjust catchment areas to somewhat reduce enrolment pressures at Cariboo, Central and South Secondary Schools.

6.0 LIAISON WITH THE BURNABY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Over the past several years, Planning Department staff have been meeting with School District staff on a regular basis to review development plans and provide estimated time frames for new development taking place in the City. Generally, this involves a sharing of progress on current area and town centre planning processes, as well as a project by project description of rezoning proposals that will likely involve future increases in school enrolments.

This review of upcoming projects has provided the School District with generally a two to three year lead time to plan for increases in enrolments. This approach has worked well in the past particularly when there was excess school capacities to accommodate new enrolment. More recently, however, new development proposals in certain parts of the City have presented greater challenges for the School District as enrolment levels approach or exceed capacity levels of available school facilities.

It has been recognized that with dwindling capacity in the school system and the adoption of the Livable Region Strategic Plan which calls for inner municipalities like Burnaby to accommodate increased levels of family accommodation, a new approach to school facility planning and capital funding will likely be necessary. Towards this end, City and School District staff have already initiated contact with the GVRD and the Ministry of Education to pursue exploration of possible innovative approaches to improve our ability to respond to enrolment pressures in a more timely manner. This may involve the use of Burnaby as a case study.

7.0 LIVABLE REGION STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The concern expressed by Council about the impact of growth on existing and future school infrastructure is timely in that enrolments in the District have consistently increased to the point that there is no large remaining capacity to accommodate significant levels of new enrolments, with some schools in the system already at or beyond recognized enrolment levels.

This issue has been the subject of ongoing discussions with School District staff with particular reference to the growth implications for Burnaby of the Livable Region Strategic Plan. The regional strategy promotes the provision of higher levels of family (ground-oriented) housing within the "Growth Concentration Area". There are many compelling reasons to continue to support the thrust of the regional strategy. However, at the same time, new solutions to arising infrastructure needs must be developed to appropriately accommodate this envisioned growth.

The issue of schools and other major infrastructure items has previously been raised with the Regional District as an area of specific concern to the City of Burnaby. The City's report to the GVRD in 1994 November indicated that our support for the Livable Region Strategic Plan was advanced **"with the clear understanding that appropriate mechanisms will be available to assist those areas with higher levels of population growth to provide the needed support facilities and services"**. Furthermore our subsequent report to the Board in 1995 June indicated that the City was prepared to support and implement the Livable Region Strategic Plan conditional to a number of factors including **"the issue of infrastructure and service provision for higher growth areas needs being addressed to assist municipalities in assessing possible amendments to the Official Community Plans"**.

Through its participation on the GVRD's Technical Advisory Committee, this department has raised the subject of better coordinating the provision of school infrastructure with the region's growth management objectives. As noted above, arrangements are being made for Ministry of Education, GVRD, School District and City to begin a series of discussions on new approaches to respond to school expansion needs particularly in the communities in the designated Growth Concentration Area of the region where new school sites are particularly difficult and expensive to assemble.

As well, the GVRD Strategic Planning Department has recently struck a technical committee to examine the financial implications of regional growth management aspects under the Livable Region Strategic Plan. With the help of a consulting firm, this committee will be reviewing the financial implications of the Livable Region Strategic Plan. This will involve reviewing possible weaknesses in current approaches in financial planning, structures of cost-sharing and methods of financing services. This recognizes that many of these approaches were developed in an era when the negative features of unmanaged growth were less understood and government resources to respond to arising needs were less constrained. It may be that cost sharing principles may need to be reexamined or that development cost charges extended to deal more effectively with the financial implications of facility and service needs arising from the implementation of the regional strategic plan.

This department is represented on this committee and has already indicated that it intends to raise the issue of school infrastructure within this context as an issue of specific concern.

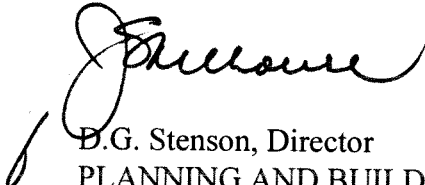
8.0 CONCLUSION

Planning and School District staff meet on a regular basis to review development proposals and project enrolment implications. On major projects such as the Simon Fraser University Development Plan, the Oaklands and the Edmonds and Brentwood Town Centres there is more focused discussion with the School District during the preparation of the plans.

It is recognized, however, that the School District's ongoing ability to appropriately respond to increasing enrolment pressures, through the established approaches to school planning and capital budgeting is of growing concern given the lack of any significant excess capacity in the Burnaby school system. Both Planning and School District staff believe that some systemic changes in the existing school planning and capital funding processes are needed to address existing needs in Burnaby and emerging trends being established through the Livable Region Strategic Plan. As indicated above, some steps towards this end are underway.

Rezoning Reference #39/96 which provides the initial rezoning for the Powerhouse Creek Development Plan in itself is not viewed as presenting an insurmountable problem. If the project proceeds consistent with the developer's schedule, it will result in some priority adjustments in the School District's next capital budget submission. This project, along with others in the City, has been reviewed and processed within the context of the existing framework provided to school District by the Ministry of Education. While it has provided an opportunity to focus discussion on the need to address this issue in Burnaby, in our view, the developer has proceeded on this project in good faith and on the basis of an adopted development plan.

Planning and School District staff share the concern raised by Council relative to this issue and have taken steps to initiate discussions with the GVRD and the Ministry of Education on the need to develop some structural changes in the school planning and capital funding processes.


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JSB/db

cc: Superintendent of Schools, District 41
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