

CITY OF BURNABY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT &
TOURISM STRATEGY COMMITTEE

HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS

Re: 1997 and 1998 Burnaby Tourism Program

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Council approve the Burnaby Tourism Program for 1998 as outlined in the attached report.
2. THAT provision be made in the 1998 Annual Budget to cover the costs of the 1998 Tourism Program as outlined in Section 5 of the attached report.

REPORT

At its meeting on 1998 January 26 the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy Committee adopted the attached report providing a review of the 1997 Burnaby Tourism Program and recommending that the Program be continued through 1998 in a similar manner. The main components of the 1998 Program include the operation of a seasonal tourist information centre in the Metrotown retail complex, a tourist information service in City Hall and a marketing and promotion plan.

In response to the Committee's discussion of this matter, staff will pursue a suggestion that the Burnaby Visitor's Guide be placed in hotel rooms throughout the City, acquainting guests with Burnaby's attractions and facilities in a friendly and convenient manner. Staff will also investigate the Committee's proposal that the Guide be distributed through the Washington State Ferry system or another alternative means of effectively increasing Burnaby's exposure within Washington State. This last initiative could result in a need to increase funds required for promotion and marketing and would, therefore, be the subject of a further report to the Economic Development Committee and Council.

In order to continue to achieve the benefits derived from the tourism industry the Economic Development and Tourism Committee recommend Council approve the Burnaby Tourism Program for 1998.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor D.N. Johnston
Chair

Councillor D.R. Corrigan
Member

Councillor C.M.H. Redman
Member

COPY - CITY MANAGER
- DIRECTOR FINANCE
- DIRECTOR PLNG. & BLDG.
- DIRECTOR PARKS, REC. &
CULT. SERV.

**TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM STRATEGY
COMMITTEE**

1998 January 06

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

SUBJECT: 1997 AND 1998 BURNABY TOURISM PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy Committee approve the Burnaby Tourism Program for 1998 as outlined in this report.
2. **THAT** provision be made in the 1998 Annual Budget to cover the costs of the 1998 Tourism Program as outlined in Section 5 of this report.

R E P O R T

1.0 SUMMARY:

This report provides a review of the 1997 Burnaby Tourism Program and recommends that the Program be continued through 1998. The main components of the 1998 Program include the operation of a seasonal tourist information centre in the Metrotown Retail Complex, a modest tourist information service in City Hall and a marketing and promotion plan.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On 1995 February 13, Council approved the first City based Tourism Strategy Implementation Program for the 1995 calendar year which was based on its review of the Burnaby Tourism Strategy Report. The City's Tourism Program has now been in operation for three consecutive years and the 1997 Program is summarized in this report.

3.0 1997 TOURISM PROGRAM - SUMMARY:

The 1997 Tourism Program included the following main elements:

3.1 *Burnaby Tourist Infocentre - Metrotown:*

The Burnaby Community Information Booth is located on the pedestrian walkway linking Eaton Centre Metrotown and Metrotown Centre and operated exclusively as the "Burnaby Tourist Infocentre" from May 01 through September 30 seven days per week during peak visitor hours generally between 11:00 am and 5:30 pm.

Four Auxiliary City employees staffed the Infocentre on a shift basis. Two of the four staff also worked at the Infocentre in the summer of 1996 and one since 1995. Two are graduates of BCIT, one from VCC (all in tourist related programs) and another has worked part time at the Burnaby Village Museum and Carousel for a number of years.

Staff at the Infocentre provided information, advice, suggestions, directions etc. on a variety of tourist related topics covering Burnaby events, attractions, facilities, as well as those around the Lower Mainland and the Province.

The Infocentre was clearly identified as the "Burnaby Tourist Infocentre" with large banners and a wide selection of key Burnaby and Province-wide tourist brochures, information items, attractions materials, maps, ferry and bus schedules, etc. that were racked and dispensed free of charge. Burnaby-related attractions, brochures, the Burnaby Visitors' Guide were allocated to the most visible sections of the display areas.

Additional brochures and posters promoting community and regional events including the 1997 B.C. Summer Games were also prominently displayed at the Tourist Infocentre.

3.2 *Tourist Information Service - City Hall:*

This is a limited tourist information service that was introduced in 1995 September at the Information Desk on the main floor of City Hall and has continued on a year round basis since that time.

This service is provided by existing City staff at the Information Desk whose primary responsibility is to respond to a variety of general City related enquiries by phone and in person. Thus, the extent of service provided to visitors is considerably less than at the Metrotown Infocentre due to the current allocation of staff resources and the limited demand for visitor services at City Hall.

Visitor information services at City Hall focus primarily on Burnaby events and attractions. Enquiries on events and attractions outside of Burnaby are most often referred to other related agencies such as Tourism Vancouver, Tourism B.C., etc. who are better equipped to respond to such enquiries.

Promotional materials, brochures, etc. are displayed in a brochure rack located next to the information desk which has been supplied by Interwest Brochure Marketing Inc. at no cost to the City or to the parties displaying their promotional materials.

3.3 *Marketing and Promotion:*

One of the key promotional elements of the 1997 Program was the distribution and display of the 1997 Burnaby Visitors' Guide (copy of brochure *attached*)

A total of 150,000 copies of the all new, full-colour Burnaby Visitors' Guide (3rd edition) was produced in 1997 by the City and distributed and displayed as follows:

- a. At approximately 270 established tourist outlets throughout the Lower Mainland for a six month period (May through October), to selected Tourist Infocentres around the Province, to the Vancouver International Airport Tourist Infocentre for a 12 month period from February '97 through February '98 and to the Cruise Ship Terminal at Canada Place from May 15 through September 15. Distribution was provided by Interwest Brochure Marketing Inc.
- b. On the three most heavily-travelled B.C. Ferry routes between Nanaimo and Tsawwassen, Swartz Bay and Tsawwassen, and Horseshoe Bay and Nanaimo. Distribution was provided by Vancouver Island Tourist Services Ltd.
- c. At all Burnaby Libraries, Recreation Centres and other community facilities. Distribution was provided by the City.
- d. To hundreds of members of the public (residents and non-residents), and various organizations and associations who requested copies of the brochure for upcoming events, for friends and relatives and their own travel purposes. Distribution was provided by the City.

The Burnaby Visitors' Guide continues to be a useful, multipurpose brochure in view of the number that have been picked up from the various tourist outlets in the region and from the City's Tourist Infocentre. The current supply of Burnaby Visitors' Guides (150,000 copies) is expected to last through 1998 and will thus reflect a reduction in 1998 Annual Budget covering the Tourism Program.

The five month operation of the Metrotown Tourist Infocentre which served many thousands of tourists as well as Burnaby residents provided the other key promotional role in the 1997 Program. Its highly visible location in the Metrotown Retail Centre which has a significant regional profile as a shopping and visitor destination, continues to provide a useful service to tourists and local residents. Promotion of the Metrotown Tourist Infocentre was also included in the 55,000 copy May issue of the "Focus" newsletter published and distributed by Eaton Centre Metrotown.

3.4 *Tourism Coordination:*

The overall coordination function continued to be provided by existing City staff from the Planning and Building Department who have worked together with other relevant City Departments and external organizations including Tourism Vancouver and the Provincial Government.

4.0 METROTOWN INFOCENTRE VISITOR PROFILE:

4.1 The Metrotown Tourist Infocentre operated for a 5 month period from May 01 through September 30 during 1996 and 1997. In terms of visitor volume, June, July and August are traditionally considered the "peak" visitor period while May and September, constitute the "shoulder" period when visitor volume slows down.

Infocentre staff maintained a daily tabulation of customers who were provided with service at the Infocentre. Many customers received personalized service where staff provided detailed information, brochures, maps, etc. while others simply picked up brochures and pamphlets from the display racks without asking questions of staff.

Customers also obtained pamphlets and brochures during other mall hours (in the early morning and evening) when the Infocentre was not staffed. Thus, the statistics outlined do not necessarily include the total number of Infocentre customers.

4.2 *1997 Visitor Statistics - Five Month Period (May - September):*

During the May 01 through September 30 period, an average of approximately 94 people per day received personalized service from Infocentre staff, for a total of approximately 14,342 people over this five month period.

An average of approximately 332 people per day used the Tourist Infocentre (including those who may have only picked up various brochures but did not specifically request information or assistance from staff) with a total of approximately 50,800 people over this period.

Approximately 54.2% or just over half of the Infocentre users originated from outside of the Lower Mainland. The origin of visitors from outside of the Lower Mainland is outlined as follows:

- 28.2% from other parts of B.C
- 16.7% from other parts of Canada
- 16.4% from the USA and Mexico
- 18.5% from Asia/Oceania
- 18.6% from Europe
- 1.4% from other parts of the world

4.3 *1997 Visitor Statistics - "Shoulder" Months (May and September):*

During the months of May and September, an average of 87 people per day received personalized service from Infocentre staff with a total of approximately 5,307 persons over these two months.

An average of 300 people per day used the Tourist Infocentre (including those who may have only picked up various brochures but did not specifically request information or assistance from staff) with a total of 18,327 during this two month period.

Approximately 51% or just over half of the Infocentre users originated from outside of the Lower Mainland. Visitor origin from outside of the Lower Mainland is as follows:

- 30.1% from other parts of B.C.
- 15.6% from other parts of Canada
- 13.8% from the USA and Mexico
- 22.4% from Asia/Oceania
- 16.7% from Europe
- 1.3% from other parts of the World

4.4 *General Comments:*

As outlined above, the total number of people provided with service at the Metrotown Tourist Infocentre for the five month period (May through September) is estimated at approximately 50,800 or approximately 332 people per day. This represents a 20% increase over the 1996 figures.

The number of people serviced on a daily basis during the "Shoulder" period (May and September) was only slightly less than the June through August period which suggests that the Infocentre continues to provide a well used service during the "Shoulder" months of May and September.

Infocentre statistics also illustrate that a slightly greater percentage of Infocentre users were non-local in 1997 (54.2%) than in 1996 (51.8%). While the Infocentre continued to provide services to visitors from around the world, more non-local Infocentre users originated from other parts of B.C., USA and Mexico in 1997 than in 1996 and less from other parts of Canada, Asia/Oceania and Europe.

5.0 **PROPOSED 1998 BURNABY TOURISM PROGRAM:**

- 5.1 The 1997 Burnaby Tourism Program continues to provide a valuable service to the City's tourist industry by providing residents and visitors with considerable tourist related information and advice. It also assists in raising Burnaby's profile as a visitor destination.
- 5.2 The Burnaby Visitors' Guide and the Metrotown Tourist Infocentre are the two cornerstones of the program. The operation of the Metrotown Infocentre from May 01 through September 30 continues to provide a useful service to the many residents and visitors who were provided with information and advice during both the peak and shoulder periods. It is therefore recommended that the Metrotown Infocentre operate again from May 01 through September 30 during 1998.

5.3 The Tourist Information Service at City Hall should also continue to operate in 1998 as described in Section 3.2 above by offering limited services during regular City Hall office hours and focusing primarily on providing information about Burnaby facilities, attractions and events. Requests for more detailed information or information related to attractions, events, etc., outside of Burnaby should be referred to Tourism B. C., Tourism Vancouver or other relevant agencies that are best equipped to provide such services.

5.4 *Burnaby Visitors' Guide:*

As referenced above, 150,000 copies of the new full-colour version of the Burnaby Visitors' Guide was produced this year which should satisfy the City's needs through 1998. As a result, the proposed 1998 Annual Budget for the City's Tourism Program can be reduced by approximately \$20,670 as reflected in the Program Budget Summary table outlined below. However, costs of the brochure design and reprinting will be reflected in the 1999 Provisional Budget.

5.5 *Proposed 1998 Program Budget - Summary:*

The proposed budget for the 1998 Tourism Program compared with the approved 1997 Annual Budget is outlined below.

PROGRAM ELEMENT BUDGET COSTS

PROGRAM COMPONENT	APPROVED 1997 PROGRAM	PROPOSED 1998 PROGRAM
Metrotown Tourist Infocentre (Staff and operating costs)	\$24,000	\$22,330
City Hall Tourist Service	\$0	\$0
Marketing and Promotion (Visitors Guide production and distribution)	\$25,000	\$ 6,000
Public Relations and Association Membership	\$1,000	\$1,000
TOTAL COSTS	\$50,000	\$29,330

The amount of \$29,330 has been included in the 1998 Provisional Operating Budget that was approved by Council 1997 December 08. With adoption of the recommendations of this report, staff will maintain this provision in the 1998 Annual Operating Budget submission as well.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS:

- 6.1 The City's 1997 Tourism Program continues to provide a valuable support service to the local tourism industry which represents an important business sector of Burnaby's local economy. The Program provides a useful service to Burnaby residents planning to travel around the Province and to local residents and visitors who are provided with information about facilities, attractions and events found within the City of Burnaby. Tourism has many direct benefits on the local business community and also provides numerous positive spinoffs on the local arts, culture and recreation pursuits throughout Burnaby.

- 6.2 In order to continue to achieve the benefits derived from the tourism industry, it is recommended that approval be given to the proposed 1998 Tourism Program as outlined in this report and make the necessary provisions in the 1998 Annual Budget to cover the costs of the Program.



D. G. Stenson,
Director Planning and Building

PS/ds

Attachment

cc: City Manager
Director Finance
Director Recreation and Cultural Services