

COMMUNITY ISSUES AND SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

Re: METROTOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD FAMILY SERVICES CENTRE

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council be requested to:
 - a) give support in principle to the efforts of the Metrotown Neighbourhood Services Planning Committee to establish a neighbourhood family services centre at 6050 Sussex Avenue.
 - b) authorize staff, once a cash-in-lieu fund and a Negotiated Amenity Space Policy are in place, to explore with developers longer-term opportunities for the provision of dedicated, purpose-designated space for a neighbourhood house/neighbourhood service centre type of facility in Metrotown and/or in-lieu funds to support the development of such a facility.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to the Metrotown Neighbourhood Services Planning Committee.

REPORT

The Community Issues and Social Planning Committee, at its meeting held on 1998 November 25, received the *attached* report providing recommendations regarding the City's support for the establishment of a neighbourhood family services centre in Metrotown.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor C. Redman
Chair

Councillor N. Volkow
Vice Chair

<p>: COPY - CITY MANAGER - DIRECTOR ENGINEERING - DIRECTOR FINANCE - DIR. PLNG. & BLDG. - DIR. PARKS, REC. & CULT. SERV. - OFFICER-IN-CHARGE, R.C.M.P.</p>
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TO: COMMUNITY ISSUES AND
SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

1998 NOVEMBER 19

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

OUR FILE: 17.230

SUBJECT: METROTOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD FAMILY SERVICES CENTRE

PURPOSE: To provide the Committee with recommendations regarding the City's support for the establishment of a neighbourhood family services centre in Metrotown.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council be requested to
 - a) give support in principle to the efforts of the Metrotown Neighbourhood Services Planning Committee to establish a neighbourhood family services centre at 6050 Sussex Avenue.
 - b) authorize staff, once a cash-in-lieu fund and a Negotiated Amenity Space Policy are in place, to explore with developers longer-term opportunities for the provision of dedicated, purpose-designed space for a neighbourhood house/neighbourhood service centre type of facility in Metrotown and/or in-lieu funds to support the development of such a facility.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to the Metrotown Neighbourhood Services Planning Committee.

R E P O R T

1.0 BACKGROUND

At its meeting of 1998 September 23, the Committee received a delegation from an informal coalition of service providers (the Metrotown Neighbourhood Services Planning Committee) interested in establishing a neighbourhood family services centre in the Metrotown neighbourhood. The delegation, led by the Executive Director of Burnaby Family Life

Institute and the Co-ordinator from Maywood Community School, provided the Committee with information regarding the need for such a facility and requested that the City provide support to the Services Planning Committee to assist it in realizing its vision. The Committee directed staff to report back on the advisability and feasibility of establishing a neighbourhood family services centre in Metrotown, and to provide recommendations to Council pertaining to the City's possible support for the project. This report responds to that directive.

2.0 THE METROTOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD FAMILY SERVICES CENTRE PROPOSAL

The need for some type of neighbourhood-based service centre in Metrotown has been the focal point of discussions among the members of the Metrotown Neighbourhood Services Planning Committee since February 1998. The Committee was established at that time to develop a plan to meet the needs of immigrant and single-parent families with pre-school children into Metrotown. As a first step, the agencies represented on the Services Planning Committee agreed to collaborate on a number of ad hoc programs to address the issues of language skills, poverty and unemployment, and social and cultural isolation with which many of the families were struggling. The programs, which have been offered at a variety of venues around the neighbourhood, have included English language classes, a clothing exchange, a community kitchen, a free lunch program, parenting support groups, pre-school activities, and an immigrant women's support group. For the longer-term, however, the Services Planning Committee has a vision of a non-denominational, flexible, multi-purpose space that would easily accommodate many different kinds of programming needs for a variety of groups and organizations.

One opportunity to establish such a facility has arisen with an offer from the West Burnaby United Church to lease the ground floor of its hall at 6050 Sussex Avenue. However, about \$160,000 worth of renovations and equipment would be required before the space could function as a neighbourhood service centre. The Services Planning Group plans to develop a campaign to raise the required capital funds. It has asked the City to support the development of the neighbourhood family service centre, and has identified nine actions it believes the City could take in providing that support. The feasibility and advisability of the City's providing the support requested by the Metrotown Neighbourhood Services Planning Committee are discussed below. Other potential steps the City could take to assist in the development of a neighbourhood service centre in Metrotown are also discussed .

3.0 POTENTIAL ACTIONS TO DEMONSTRATE CITY SUPPORT

3.1 *City support in principle for the project*

The Services Planning Committee is seeking recognition from the City that there is a need in the Metrotown community for a neighbourhood service centre and that the establishment of such a facility in the hall at 6050 Sussex Avenue will benefit the families in the area. It seeks assurance that the City will work collaboratively with it on technical matters requiring City involvement, and keep communication lines open.

Based on the observations of service providers in the Services Planning Committee, it seems clear that the social service needs exist. In fact, in 1992, the Metrotown Social Planning Program identified similar needs, and made recommendations designed to facilitate the provision of child care, and youth, seniors, special needs, family, educational and information services in Metrotown. Progress on realizing many of the needed services has been slow, largely due to the high cost of land in Metrotown. While some of the needs identified in 1992 have been addressed - in particular child care, and youth and seniors' services - many of the services do not meet the specific needs of the present-day population of low-income, non-English-speaking families. Based on both present observations and the needs forecast in 1992, staff believe it would be appropriate for the City to acknowledge the needs in the area and to support in principle a community-based effort to establish a family services centre in response to them.

A number of questions remain outstanding, however, as to the ability of a neighbourhood service centre at 6050 Sussex Avenue to meet the needs of the low-income and immigrant families living in the Metrotown area. For example, despite efforts to project service needs and space requirements in the planning process, actual demand could potentially exceed these projections. As well, commitments to offering programs out of the space have been made by only two or three agencies, and decisions as to both the partnership model for offering services and the entity which would assume the legal responsibility for operating the space have not yet been made. It is also difficult to know whether residents of the Maywood apartment area, where most of the needy families live, would venture past the Skytrain line and across Kingsway to access services, and whether the church hall, now renamed the Metrotown Neighbourhood Resources Centre by the congregation of the West Burnaby United Church, would have the non-denominational appeal critical to ensuring that people of all religions feel welcome.

3.2 *Appointment of a staff liaison person to liaise with Burnaby Family Life Institute and the Metrotown neighbourhood services planning committee regarding the project*

The Services Planning Committee is requesting that a staff person be assigned to facilitate the project's progress through city requirements such as parking, traffic management, building code compliance, and licensing. This staff person could assist by flagging City-related issues which need to be resolved, and ensuring that the appropriate City staff are accessible to the project co-ordinators.

Unlike for-profit developers of residential and commercial properties, most non-profit groups are not knowledgeable about the municipal approvals process. To assist the Services Planning Committee, and enable its members to focus on service delivery, staff believe it would be appropriate to assign a Social Planner to facilitate the project through the City's approval processes.

3.3 *Waive permit and licensing fees*

Existing zoning for the church hall at 6050 Sussex Avenue is P1 (Neighbourhood Institutional). Rezoning would not be required for the proposed use, which could be permitted as an adjunct use. The project would, however, likely require a building/occupancy permit for the interior renovations and fire and safety upgrades, and a preliminary plan approval to document the addition of the use. Licensing and servicing requirements, such as enhanced water, storm and sanitary services, have not yet been assessed. The Services Planning Committee is requesting that the City waive any fees for such permits and licenses.

The City Solicitor advises that with September 1998 amendments to the Municipal Act, the City now has the power to provide assistance, in the form of exemptions from taxes, fees or charges, for purposes benefitting the community. The City does not, however, have a policy identifying the conditions under which these new powers might be used. The City's legal authority to waive fees aside, staff question whether Council would wish to entertain the appropriateness of such a move, given the precedents it might set. Staff believe it preferable, should the City wish to support the neighbourhood service centre project financially, to provide a grant to offset some or all the costs through the Community Grants Program.

3.4 Letters of support for the capital campaign

Members of the Services Planning Committee believe that if the City were to provide a letter of support for the capital campaign for the proposed project, the initiative would enjoy greater credibility and, as such, might better attract other potential contributors.

In staff's view, the adoption by the Committee and Council of the recommendations in this report would suffice as public notice of the City's support for the establishment of a neighbourhood service centre in the Metrotown area. Those spearheading any capital campaign could readily refer to the steps the City has taken to help facilitate the project in any correspondence with potential contributors.

3.5 Make it possible for representatives of the project to meet with developers and/or union representatives to enlist financial contributions and/or furniture, equipment, services-in-kind, etc.

The Services Planning Committee is aware that, from time to time, the City negotiates with developers of large projects through the rezoning process for community amenities. The Services Planning Committee is requesting that its needs be represented in future negotiations with developers of projects in Metrotown. Through the negotiations, the Committee would like to obtain financial or in-kind contributions, such as equipment and services to support the establishment and operation of the neighbourhood service centre at 6050 Sussex Avenue.

The requested action poses a problem in that the City does not, at present, have a fund into which contributions for social amenities can be funneled. In fact, municipalities do not have the authority under the Municipal Act to assess development levies for social amenities. Numerous resolutions to the Provincial government from the Union of British Columbia Municipalities over the past several years regarding the need for such authority have not resulted in the desired changes to the Municipal Act. While the Municipal Act is currently being reviewed by the Province, it is not known whether the amended version will enable municipalities to collect development levies for social amenities.

In future, the City may be able to accept cash-in-lieu from developments which are granted a density bonus. The development of a cash-in-lieu fund is planned as phase 2 of Burnaby's Community Benefit Bonus Program. However, legal advice to date is that the City cannot accept cash-in-lieu contributions without acquiring special powers under the Municipal Act. There are plans for Burnaby to apply for such special powers, which are expected to be in place by the end of 1999.

Another possible step the City could take is to negotiate with developers of construction projects in Metrotown for a dedicated, purpose-designed space for a neighbourhood house/ neighbourhood service centre type of facility. As with negotiating in-lieu funds through the Community Benefit Bonus Program, this action represents a longer-term solution and would not respond to the immediate needs of the vulnerable families in the Metrotown area. Staff is currently working on a Negotiated Amenity Space Policy, which should provide more consistent and effective guidelines for such negotiations in future.

Assuming means are found to respond to current social needs in the Metrotown area now, the City could consider negotiating with developers for either a purpose-built facility or cash-in-lieu as a longer-term response to the social service needs in Metrotown. The latter could only be done once the City has established a cash-in-lieu fund. Staff believe that negotiations for actual space should be done within the context of the forthcoming Negotiated Amenity Space Policy.

3.6 *Allow representatives of the project to design an informational flyer/letter of appeal which could be circulated to City employees during the United Way campaign.*

The Services Planning Committee indicates that the goal of this request would be to raise awareness for the project so that people who live and work in Burnaby could find out that pledging their donation to the project is available as a choice through the United Way employee campaign. The Committee is requesting that the City cooperate with it in making City employees aware that they could target their United Way contribution to the organization sponsoring the capital campaign for the proposed neighbourhood service centre.

It is acknowledged that the United Way pledge cards give employees the option of designating all or a portion of their donations to agencies of choice - regardless of whether the agencies are affiliated with the United Way. Nonetheless, it is not considered appropriate for the City to actively promote designated donations for the subject family services centre for the following reasons:

- the City supports the United Way, which exists, in part, to lessen competition among service agencies for scarce funds. Any action by the City to target a particular agency for staff support during the Campaign would tend to undermine the purpose of the United Way.

- there are numerous worthy causes in Burnaby which could put additional funds to good use, such as women's shelters, a safe house for sexually-exploited youth, and the South Burnaby Neighbourhood House. The City should not be seen as identifying "favourite" causes.

Notwithstanding these points, the City has endorsed various charitable fundraising efforts in addition to the United Way over the years (e.g. Jeans Day, Christmas Bureau). It should thus be considered appropriate for the Services Planning Committee to distribute promotional materials to elicit donations from City staff, provided the timing did not coincide with the United Way Campaign.

3.7 *Become a partner in the project or provide a community grant towards start-up costs*

By requesting that the City become a partner in the neighbourhood service centre project, the Services Planning Committee is asking that the City take any steps available to it to help facilitate the project.

The designation of a City staff person to facilitate the proposal through the City's approval processes, as discussed above, would satisfy this request.

As for the City's provision of a community grant towards start-up costs for the centre, members of the Services Planning Committee are aware of the City's Community Grants Program and have been advised by staff of the process and deadlines for applying for 1998 funding.

3.8 *Lobby for Provincial and Federal Funding Assistance*

The Services Planning Committee is looking for support for its applications for any capital funds which might be available from either senior level of government. At this time, the Committee has not identified specific federal or provincial funds or reviewed application criteria.

From staff's perspective, it may be inappropriate for the City to directly lobby either senior level of government for funding for the proposed neighbourhood service centre on Sussex Avenue. However, as noted above, adoption by the Committee and Council of the recommendations in this report should suffice as public notice of the City's support for the establishment of a neighbourhood service centre in the Metrotown area. Applications for federal or provincial funds from the Services Planning Committee could refer to steps the City has taken to support the project.

3.9 Provide guidance, expertise and consultation as required

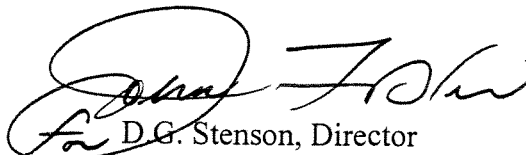
The guidance, expertise and consultation requested by the Services Planning Committee would, as noted above, fall within the scope of work for a designated staff person.

4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Services Planning Committee for the proposed Metrotown Neighbourhood Family Service Centre has approached the City for assistance in realizing its vision of a non-denomination, flexible, multi-service facility to serve the needs of low-income and immigrant families in the Metrotown area. The Committee has identified nine actions it believes the City could take to support the project, the advisability and feasibility of which are discussed above. Some of actions are not within the City's jurisdiction to take, for legal reasons. Others are deemed inappropriate by staff. However, to support this community-based effort to respond to social needs in Metrotown, staff recommend that the City take the following actions:

- give support in principle to the efforts of the Metrotown Neighbourhood Services Planning Committee to establish a neighbourhood family services centre at 6050 Sussex Avenue.
- authorize staff, once a cash in-lieu fund and a Negotiated Amenity Space Policy are in place, to explore with developers longer-term opportunities for the provision of a dedicated, purpose-designed space for a neighbourhood house/neighbourhood service centre type of facility in Metrotown and/or in-lieu funds to support the development of such a facility.

Additionally, if the Committee and Council support the forgoing, the Planning Department would be prepared to assign a Social Planner to work with the Services Planning Committee to facilitate the proposed Metrotown Neighbourhood Family Service Centre through the municipal approvals process.


D.G. Stenson, Director
PLANNING & BUILDING

JS:sa

cc: City Manager
Director Engineering
Director Finance
Director Parks, Recreation, & Cultural Services
OIC - RCMP

