

COMMUNITY ISSUES AND SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

RE: MULTICULTURAL INITIATIVES: 1995-1999

RECOMMENDATION:

1. *THAT* Council receive the attached report for information.

REPORT

The Community Issues and Social Planning Committee, at its meeting held on 1999 May 26, received and adopted the attached report providing an overview of multicultural initiatives undertaken by the City from 1995 to the present.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor D. Johnston,
Chair

Councillor N. Volkow,
Vice Chair

: COPY - CITY MANAGER
- DEP.MGR.-CORP. SERV.
- DEP. MGR.-CORP. LAB. REL.
- DIRECTOR ENGINEERING
- DIRECTOR FINANCE
- DIR. PLNG. & BLDG.
- DIR. PARKS, REC. & CULT. SERV.

TO: COMMUNITY ISSUES &
SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

1999 MAY 10

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

OUR FILE: 17.912.1

SUBJECT: MULTICULTURAL INITIATIVES: 1995 -1999

PURPOSE: To provide an overview of multicultural initiatives undertaken by the City from 1995 to the present.

RECOMMENDATION:

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

REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

At its 1999 March 24 meeting, the Community Issues & Social Planning Committee (CISPC) asked staff to prepare a report on multicultural initiatives undertaken by the City from 1995 to the present. This report responds to that request. It begins with an overview of Burnaby's multicultural initiatives from 1986 to 1994, then focuses on initiatives from 1995 to the present.

2.0 INITIATIVES FROM 1986 - 1994

Burnaby has been active in the area of multiculturalism for several years. The Burnaby Multicultural Policy, adopted in 1986, has provided the foundation for these efforts (see Appendix 1, *attached*). An inter-departmental body, the Multicultural Staff Working Group (MSWG), was struck in 1986 to coordinate the initial implementation of the Policy. The MSWG submitted regular reports on its work program and Multicultural Policy implementation to the Community Issues & Social Planning Committee. The group was in place for about eight years before disbanding in 1995.

A selected list of Burnaby's multicultural initiatives from 1986 to 1994 is as follows:

- **Training:** In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the City offered numerous staff training sessions on multiculturalism. The sessions were open to interested staff at all levels within the organization. Their aim was to help City employees to 1) increase their cross-cultural sensitivity and 2) develop improved skills in serving an increasingly diverse public. In 1993, the City also initiated a mandatory diversity training program for all Burnaby's senior management staff. The rationale was that, if the City was to be successful in promoting more equal access and participation, senior managers needed to be understanding and supportive of the efforts.

- **Awareness Raising:** In implementing the Multicultural Policy, an initial thrust involved efforts to raise employee and public awareness of the diversity and richness of Burnaby's cultural groups. These efforts primarily focused on Multicultural Week and International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. They involved such activities as arranging for guest speakers, musical and theatrical performances, craft demonstrations, and art displays. Further, the City included a presentation on Burnaby's Multicultural Policy and the MSWG in its orientation workshops for new employees.
- **Collaboration:** In addition to an internal focus, the City worked closely with external organizations in pursuing its multicultural objectives. For example, staff participated in, and gave presentations at, various forums on multiculturalism in Burnaby and other municipalities in the region. Staff also served on the planning team for a 1994 Provincial forum entitled, *Forum for Collaboration on Multiculturalism in Municipalities: A Collaborative Approach*. The forum was attended by municipal elected officials, senior staff, and community agency representatives from throughout BC. Burnaby was invited to serve on the planning committee because of the leadership and innovation it has displayed in the area of multiculturalism.
- **Orientation:** Working with the Burnaby Multicultural Society and other non-profit agencies, the City conducted multi-lingual tours of City Hall for groups of recent immigrants. The tours involved visits to all City departments, along with explanations of departmental functions and structures. Their purpose was to help recent immigrants gain a better understanding of, and feel more comfortable contacting, City Hall.
- **Communication:** In 1988, the City established its Staff Language Bank. The Language Bank is a registry of Burnaby employees who speak or write languages other than English. It is intended as a resource for staff who experience difficulties in serving clients due to a language barrier. For example, if a Finance Department representative could not understand a Spanish-speaking person wishing to buy a dog license, the employee could call an appropriate contact from the Language Bank for assistance. The Language Bank is updated regularly, with the current listings printed in the City's Internal Telephone Directory.
- **Welcoming and Inclusion:** In the early 1990s, the City began displaying multilingual "welcome" stickers on entry doors at City Hall, recreations centres, and other City facilities. This initiative was intended to make people of diverse cultural backgrounds feel welcome and comfortable in using City facilities. Also, the City arranged multilingual sessions at the public meetings to launch the Edmonds Town Centre community planning process in 1993. The sessions were facilitated by staff

who understood the planning issues, and could converse in the language of their break out group participants. Through these efforts, the City sought to ensure that its planning processes were open and inviting to all members of the community, regardless of their proficiency in English.

3.0 INITIATIVES FROM 1995 - 1999

As indicated, the Multicultural Staff Working Group disbanded in 1995. The reason for disbandment was that the group had met its key objective: coordinating the initial implementation of the Multicultural Policy. Over the years, as City employees improved their knowledge and abilities in serving a diverse public, individual departments showed increasing initiative in the area of multiculturalism. The need for the MSWG thus diminished over time, with the group ultimately working itself out of a job.

Despite the disbandment of the MSWG, Burnaby has continued to be active in the area of multiculturalism. Selected examples of the City's multicultural initiatives from 1995 to the present are provided below.

- **Training:** The Parks, Recreation, & Cultural Services Department has conducted several diversity training sessions for its staff. The Department has also sent employees to diversity training sessions sponsored by outside organizations. The training has been designed to help Departmental staff improve their knowledge and skills in serving a diverse public.
- **Collaboration:** An example of the City's collaborative efforts involves its support for seniors whose needs were not being met through two Burnaby senior centres. In one instance, employees from the Edmonds Senior Centre helped a group of south Asian seniors in forming the South Asian Friendship Society. In another, staff from Confederation Senior Centre helped some Chinese seniors to form the North Burnaby Retired Society. The societies were able to obtain external funding to hire staff to assist them in developing recreation programs to meet their own particular interests and needs. Both societies are self sufficient and operating without City funding. Their programs are open to their own members and to the broader membership of the Edmonds and Confederation Senior Centres.
- **Communication:** The City has been increasingly translating key information into selected languages. For example, last year, it translated the Citizens Guide to City Services into five languages. It has also translated informational brochures (e.g., concerning the Animal Control Bylaw, the Waste Reduction Program, and Official Community Plan). Further, the Parks, Recreation, & Cultural Services Department developed a "Common Use Phrases" directory to help Departmental staff and

community members communicate on such basic matters as locating a washroom or advising that a program has been canceled.

- **Inclusion:** At election sites in the 1996 Civic Election, the Clerk's Department provided instructions on voting procedures in five languages. Also, the Planning Department continued to provide interpretation services at various public meetings, enabling non-English speaking residents to participate in key planning processes (e.g., concerning the Official Community Plan, Lougheed Town Centre Plan, and Royal Oak Community Plan).
- **Outreach:** The City has been making a concerted effort to reach out to its ethnically diverse communities. To this end, the Human Resources Department recently participated in Aboriginal Job Fair, providing information about employment opportunities with the City. Also, Engineering Department representatives have spoken to adult ESL classes regarding Burnaby's Waste Reduction Program. Parks, Recreation, & Cultural Services employees have attended newcomer orientation sessions organized by Burnaby elementary schools, providing information about the Department's programs specifically, and the value of recreation generally. Further, in 1995, City staff participated in the Burnaby Multicultural Society's Civic Participation Project - a project aimed at raising the understanding of recent immigrants about the political and decision making processes in Burnaby and Canada. Burnaby staff conducted the Municipal Government component of the session.
- **Programming:** The Parks, Recreation, & Cultural Services Department has strived to develop programs that respond to the needs and interests of Burnaby's diverse ethnic communities (e.g., Chinese brush painting, tai chi). The Department has also organized special events to recognize important occasions for various segments of the community (e.g., Chinese New Years, Robbie Burns Day, Canada Day, a native pow wow).

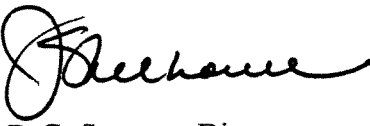
4.0 CONCLUSION

This report has provided an overview of the City's multicultural initiatives from 1986 to 1994, and from 1995 to the present. The overview is not intended to be exhaustive; rather, it aims to provide a selective sampling of the varied multicultural initiatives that Burnaby has pursued over the years.

This is the first summary report submitted on the City's multicultural initiatives since 1995. As the report reveals, despite disbandment of the MSWG, Burnaby has continued to be active in the area of multiculturalism. Key areas of focus involve training, collaboration, communication, inclusion, outreach, and programming. The

trend in recent years has been for individual City departments to assume increasing responsibility for their own multicultural initiatives. Indeed, over time, delivering services and developing policies in a multiculturally-sensitive manner has come to be a “standard way of doing business” in Burnaby.

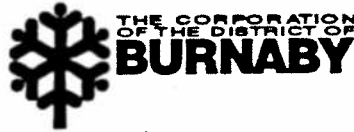
This report is provided for the Committee’s information.


D.G. Stenson, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

JF\tn

Attachment

cc: City Manager
Deputy City Manager - Corporate Services
Deputy City Manager - Corporate Labour Relations
Director Engineering
Director Finance
Director Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services



BURNABY MUNICIPAL MULTICULTURAL POLICY

- 1. Burnaby recognizes that it is a culturally diverse society in which multiculturalism is a source of enrichment and strength.**
- 2. Burnaby supports equality and the rights of all citizens to access Municipal services.**
- 3. Burnaby promotes understanding, sensitivity and positive attitudes towards people of all ethnic origins, amongst Municipal staff and in the community.**
- 4. Burnaby does not condone discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, color or religion.**
- 5. Burnaby promotes the participation of citizens from all ethno-cultural backgrounds in the development of Municipal bylaws, policies, programs and services.**
- 6. Burnaby reflects these multicultural values appropriately in Municipal bylaws, policies, programs, and promotion and delivery of service.**
- 7. Burnaby encourages and assists staff, boards, commissions and committees of the Municipality to meet these multicultural objectives in the performance of their duties.**

**Original Multicultural Policy adopted by Council on 1986 April 21;
amended policy, presented above, adopted on 1990 July 23.**

