

CITY OF BURNABY

FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR  
AND COUNCILLORS

Re: 1999 and 2000 Proposed Burnaby Tourism Program

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. THAT Council approve the Burnaby Tourism Program for 2000 as outlined in this report.
2. THAT provision be made in the 2000 Annual Budget cover the costs of the 2000 Tourism Program as outlined in Section 5 of this report.

**REPORT**

At its meeting on 2000 February 07 the Finance and Economic Development Committee adopted the *attached* report providing a review of the 1999 Burnaby Tourism Program and recommending that the Program be continued through 2000 in a similar manner. The components of the 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 including the "Burnaby Visitors' Guide.

As set out in Section 5.4 of the attached report it is proposed to increase production of the Visitors' Guide in order to meet public demand for the brochure which has exceeded original projections and to provide for an expansion of distribution of the brochure further into Northwestern Washington, via Amtrak and the Interwest I-5 Corridor.

In order to continue to achieve the benefits derived from the tourism industry, it is recommended that approval be given to the proposed 2000 Tourism Program and make the necessary provisions in the 2000 Annual Budget to cover the costs of the Program.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor D.R. Corrigan  
Chair

Councillor D.N. Johnston  
Member

Councillor N.M. Volkow  
Member

COPY - CITY MANAGER - DIRECTOR FINANCE - DIRECTOR PLNG. & BLDG.
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TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE FINANCE  
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

2000 January 11

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

SUBJECT: 1999 AND 2000 PROPOSED BURNABY TOURISM PROGRAM

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. THAT the Finance and Economic Development Committee recommend that Council approve the Burnaby Tourism Program for 2000 as outlined in this report.
2. THAT provision be made in the 2000 Annual Budget to cover the costs of the 2000 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 1999 Burnaby Tourism Program and recommends that the Program be continued through 2000. The main components of the 2000 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 operated 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 operated for five consecutive years and the 1999 Program is summarized in this report.

**3.0 1999 TOURISM PROGRAM - SUMMARY:**

The 1999 Tourism Program included the following components:

**3.1 *Burnaby Tourist Infocentre - Metrotown:***

The Burnaby Community Information Booth, located on the pedestrian walkway linking Eaton Centre Metrotown and Metrotown Centre, operated exclusively as the "Burnaby

Tourist Infocentre" from May 01 through September 30 seven days per week generally between 10:00 am and 6:00 pm which are the peak visitor hours.

Four Auxiliary City employees staffed the Infocentre on a shift basis. Three were students of BCIT in the Marketing and Tourism Management course and the fourth has previously worked at another tourist infocentre.

Infocentre staff 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 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 may be referred to other related agencies such as Tourism Vancouver and Tourism B.C. who are better equipped to respond to such enquiries.

Promotional materials, brochures, etc. are displayed in a brochure rack located near the information desk.

3.3 *Marketing and Promotion:*

Burnaby Visitors' Guide

The display and distribution of the Burnaby Visitors' Guide (copy of brochure *attached*) continued to be an essential component of the 1999 Program.

A total of 150,000 copies of the full-colour Burnaby Visitors' Guide (1999, 4th edition) were produced, distributed and displayed as follows:

- a. At approximately 270 established tourist outlets throughout the Lower Mainland for a six month period (May through October).
- b. To selected Tourist Infocentres around the Province of B.C.
- c. At the Vancouver International Airport (Domestic and International Terminals) for a 12 month period.
- d. At the Cruise Ship Terminal at Canada Place from May 15 through September 15.  
  
\*Distribution for items "a" through "d" provided by Interwest Brochure Marketing Inc.
- e. On the three most travelled B.C. Ferry routes; Nanaimo-Tsawwassen, Swartz Bay-Tsawwassen, and Horseshoe Bay-Nanaimo. Distribution was provided by Vancouver Island Tourist Services Ltd.
- f. At all Burnaby Libraries, Recreation Centres, Burnaby Village Museum and Carousel and other community facilities. Distribution was provided by the City.
- g. In selected Burnaby hotel lobbies and rooms.
- h. Over 3,000 brochures were sent to various organizations and associations who requested copies for upcoming events, and to individuals (residents and non-residents) for friends and relatives and for planning personal travel.
- i. On the complete Washington State Ferry System which includes all ferry runs and terminals with display facilities from April 01 through September 30. Service provided by Certified Folder Display Service Inc. This was the second time that the brochures were displayed on this venue and the display service provider reported that the Burnaby Visitors' Guide continued to be very well received with considerable consumer interest.

The Burnaby Visitors' Guide continues to be a popular, multipurpose brochure in view of the number that have been picked up from the various tourist outlets in the region, the City's Tourist Infocentres and the request for brochures from numerous Lower Mainland organizations and local hotels.

#### Metrotown Tourist Infocentre

The five month operation of the Metrotown Tourist Infocentre which served many thousands of tourists as well as Burnaby residents provided another important promotional role in the 1999 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 1999 May issue of "Information Burnaby" produced by the City and distributed to every business and household in Burnaby.

#### City of Burnaby Web Site

"Tourist Services" was added to the City's Web Site in early 1999 and has become the most visited section of the site. Average monthly visits to the tourist services section since 1999 June is 379.

### 3.4 *Tourism Coordination:*

The overall coordination function continues to be provided by existing City staff from the Planning and Building Department who work together with other relevant City Departments and external organizations including Tourism Vancouver and the Provincial Government (Tourism B.C.).

### 4.0 METROTOWN INFOCENTRE VISITOR PROFILE:

- 4.1 The Metrotown Tourist Infocentre operated for a five month period from May 01 through September 30 since 1996. 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 tends to decrease.

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

Customers were also able to pick up pamphlets and brochures from the Infocentre display rack during other mall hours (in the early morning and evening) when the Infocentre was not staffed. Thus, the statistics outlined below do not necessarily include the total number of Infocentre customers.

4.2 *1999 Visitor Statistics - Five Month Period (May - September):*

During the May 01 through September 30 period, an average of approximately 118 people per day received personalized service from Infocentre staff, for a total of approximately 18,113 people over this five month period.

An average of approximately 534 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 81,690 people over this period.

Approximately 53% or just over half of the Infocentre users originated from outside of the Province. The origin of visitors from outside of the Province is outlined as follows:

- 27.8% from surrounding regions (Western Provinces, Pacific Northwest States and Alaska)
- 16.9% from the rest of North America
- 30.2% from Asia/Oceania
- 20.5% from Europe
- 5.4% from other parts of the world

4.3 *1999 Visitor Statistics - "Shoulder" Months (May and September):*

During the months of May and September, an average of 96 people per day received personalized service from Infocentre staff with a total of approximately 5,867 persons over these two months.

An average of 457 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 27,853 during this two month period.

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

- 21.4% from surrounding regions (Western Provinces, Pacific Northwest, States and Alaska
- 17.4% from the rest of North America
- 31% from Asia/Oceania
- 23.5% from Europe
- 6.7% from other parts of the World

4.4 ***General Conclusions:***

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 81,690 or approximately 534 people per day. This represents a 4.3% increase over the 1998 figures.

The number of people serviced on a daily basis during the "Shoulder" period (May and September) was approximately 22% less than the June through August period but 12.39% higher than the 1998 "shoulder" period. This suggests that the Infocentre continues to provide a worthwhile and increasing level of service during the "Shoulder" months of May and September which is becoming almost equal to the peak months of June through August.

Infocentre statistics also illustrate that the Infocentre continues to serve a large number of customers from outside the Province (over 50%). The Infocentre continued to provide services to visitors from around the world with an increasing number of non-local Infocentre users originated from Europe, Asia/Oceania and other parts of the world when comparing 1999 with 1998.

5.0 **PROPOSED 2000 BURNABY TOURISM PROGRAM:**

- 5.1 The current 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 2000.

5.3 The Tourist Information Service at City Hall should also continue to operate in 2000 as described in Section 3.2 above by offering limited services during regular City Hall office hours and focussing 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 Production and Distribution*

5.4.1 As outlined in Section 3.3 above, 150,000 copies of the full-colour Burnaby Visitors' Guide were produced in 1999 which was originally intended to satisfy the City's needs through 2000 based on the current distribution program. A new edition of the Visitors' Guide is proposed to be produced for 2001. However, since the brochure has been in great demand beyond our original projections, more than half of the supply (approximately 90,000 copies) has been used so far. Thus, the remaining brochure supply will not likely be sufficient for the entire year 2000 if we employ the current distribution program.

5.4.2 Upon recent consideration of the proposed Tourism Program for 2000, the Finance and Economic Development Committee requested staff to investigate the feasibility of expanding the distribution of the Burnaby Visitors' Guide into the United States and specifically to include the Rest Stops along the I-5 corridor and on the portion of the Amtrak line which operates into British Columbia.

5.4.3 In reference to the Rest Stops on the I-5 corridor, there are currently 4 northbound locations in Washington and 6 in Oregon which are provided with brochure display services by Storeyco Inc. which is based in Renton Washington. This display service is based on a 12 month contract and costs \$15.00 US per month per location. The total cost for the 10 locations in the two states would be approximately \$3,000 CDN including shipping and taxes and would require a supply of 20,000 brochures. Eliminating some of the rest stop locations would reduce the costs accordingly.

5.4.4 The Amtrak "Cascades" Route which currently extends from Eugene Oregon through to Vancouver has minimal opportunity for the display of tourist promotion brochures on their trains. However, the Vancouver, Bellingham, Seattle and Portland stations have limited brochure display facilities which can be used at no charge. As such, staff will make arrangements to display the Burnaby Visitors' Guide on the Amtrak Cascades route as is available.

5.4.5 Interwest Brochure Marketing, which is currently used for the distribution and display of the Burnaby Visitors' Guide in the Lower Mainland and around B.C. as outlined above, also provides a similar distribution and display program for the I-5 corridor in Washington State.



This program extends through Bellingham and Seattle and includes approximately 200 display locations at hotels, visitor centres and car rental agencies throughout northwest Washington (excluding the I-5 Rest Stops). The cost of this service is \$515 per month for a minimum of 6 months or a total of approximately \$3600 (including shipping and taxes) and requires 20,000 brochures.

- 5.4.6 Expanding the current distribution of the Burnaby Visitors' Guide further into the Pacific Northwestern portion of the United States can take advantage of the prevailing currency exchange rate differential which favours visitors from the United States and will attract more visitors from this region to Burnaby. However, the proposed budget will need to be adjusted to cover the costs of the expanded brochure display, shipping and additional printing. As outlined above, the current supply of brochures will not meet the needs of the current program and will require minimum printing of 30,000 additional brochures to add to the remaining supply of 60,000. Expanding the promotional program will require further brochure printing and associated costs which are outlined below.
- 5.4.7 Burnaby should take advantage of the promotion opportunities that are available with the Amtrak Cascades Route which will have a minimal cost impact. However, if the City wishes to aggressively expand its promotional efforts along the I-5 Corridor, the Interwest Program which extends south through Bellingham into the Seattle area is recommended. While this program may be slightly more expensive than display at the Washington and Oregon Rest Stops on the I-5, it provides a more intensive coverage of Northwest Washington and will reach a greater number of potential visitors.
- 5.4.8 It is therefore recommended that the distribution program to include Amtrak and the Interwest I-5 Corridor Northwest Washington Program be approved and that authority be given to print an additional 50,000 brochures. Total additional costs of this expanded distribution program will be approximately \$14,000 (including additional brochure printing and distribution). The 2000 Provisional Budget for the City's Tourism Program is \$53,815 which would be increased to \$67,815 and is summarized below. Monies to cover this additional cost is available from the Millennium Fund.
- 5.4.9 The guide brochure and distribution network may also be used as a means to inform tourists and residents of activities, festivals and destinations related to planned Millenium events in the year 2000. In this regard, an information sheet outlining the proposed Millenium events could be inserted in the brochure and included in the year 2000 distribution network. Staff would be pleased to facilitate this effort.

5.5 *Proposed 2000 Program Budget - Summary:*

The proposed budget for the 2000 Tourism Program compared with the approved 1998 and 1997 Annual Budgets is outlined below.

**PROGRAM ELEMENT BUDGET COSTS**

PROGRAM COMPONENT	APPROVED 1998 PROGRAM	APPROVED 1999 PROGRAM	PROPOSED 2000 PROGRAM
Metrotown Tourist Infocentre (Staff and operating costs)	\$24,000	\$21,815	\$21,815
City Hall Tourist Service	\$0	\$0	\$0
Marketing and Promotion (Visitors Guide production and distribution)	\$25,000	\$32,000	\$ 45,000
Public Relations and Association Membership	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$54,815</b>	<b>\$67,815</b>

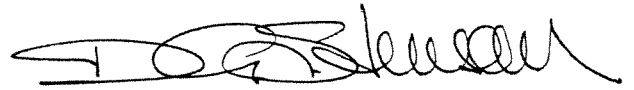
The amount of \$53,815 has been included in the 2000 Provisional Operating Budget. With adoption of the recommendations of this report, staff will adjust this provision in the 2000 Annual Operating Budget submission as recommended.

6.0 **CONCLUSIONS:**

6.1 The City's 1999 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 2000 Tourism Program as outlined in this report and to make the necessary provisions in the 2000 Annual Budget to cover the costs of the Program.



D. G. Stenson  
Director Planning and Building

PS/ds  
Attach.

cc: City Manager  
Director Finance  
Director Recreation and Cultural Services

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