

CITY OF BURNABY
FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS

Re: Burnaby Tourism Program: Year 2000 and Proposed 2001

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Council approve the Burnaby Tourism Program for 2001 as outlined in this report.
2. THAT provision be made in the 2001 Annual Budget cover the costs of the 2001 Tourism Program as outlined in Section 5 of this report.
3. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to the Burnaby Board of Trade.

REPORT

At its meeting on 2000 December 11 the Finance and Economic Development Committee adopted the *attached* report providing a review of the 2000 Burnaby Tourism Program and recommending that the Program be continued through 2001 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 that includes the "Burnaby Visitors' Guide, the Metrotown Tourist Infocentre and the City of Burnaby Web Page.

As set out in Section 5.2 of the attached report an all new redesigned Visitors' Guide is proposed for 2001. The redesigned Guide will include reference to the Deer Lake Park Heritage Walking Tour brochure recently produced by the Community Heritage Commission. It is further proposed, as outlined in Section 5.3, to upgrade the Metrotown Tourist Infocentre making it more useable and drawing more attention to the Centre.

In order to continue achieving the benefits derived from the tourism industry, it is recommended that approval be given to the proposed 2001 Tourism Program and make the necessary provisions in the 2001 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.

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE 2000 December 01

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

SUBJECT: BURNABY TOURISM PROGRAM: YEAR 2000 AND PROPOSED 2001

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT the Finance and Economic Development Committee recommend that Council approve the Burnaby Tourism Program for 2001 as outlined in this report.
2. THAT provision be made in the 2001 Annual Budget to cover the costs of the 2001 Tourism Program as outlined in Section 5 of this report.
3. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to the Burnaby Board of Trade.

R E P O R T

1.0 SUMMARY:

This report provides a review of the 2000 Burnaby Tourism Program and recommends that the Program be continued through 2001. 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 six consecutive years and a summary of the 2000 Program is provided in this report.

3.0 2000 TOURISM PROGRAM - SUMMARY:

The 2000 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. For the first time, the Infocentre operating hours were extended to 8:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday evenings on a trail basis.

Three Auxiliary City employees staffed the Infocentre on a shift basis. All three were students of BCIT in the Marketing and Tourism Management Program.

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 and 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 are referred to other agencies such as Tourism Vancouver and Tourism B.C. who are better equipped to respond to such enquiries.

Promotional materials, brochures, etc. are displayed free of charge in a brochure rack located near the information desk. The brochures and display rack are supplied by a private company that provides a brochure distribution and display service throughout greater Vancouver and the Pacific Northwest.

3.3 *Marketing and Promotion:*

Burnaby Visitors' Guide

The display and distribution of the Burnaby Visitors' Guide (copy of brochure *attached*) was a key component of the 2000 Program.

Approximately 150,000 copies of the full-colour Burnaby Visitors' Guide (1999, 4th edition) were distributed and displayed during 2000 as follows:

- At approximately 270 established tourist outlets throughout the Lower Mainland for a six month period (May through October).
- To selected Tourist Infocentres around British Columbia.
- At the Vancouver International Airport (Domestic and International Terminals) for a 12 month period.
- At the Cruise Ship Terminal at Canada Place from May 15 through September 15.

* Distribution for the above items was provided by Interwest Brochure Marketing Inc.

- On the three most travelled B.C. Ferry routes; Nanaimo-Tsawwassen, Swartz Bay-Tsawwassen, and Horseshoe Bay-Nanaimo from January through December. Distribution was provided by Vancouver Island Tourist Services Ltd.
- At all Burnaby Libraries, Recreation Centres, Burnaby Village Museum and Carousel and other community facilities. Distribution was provided by the City.
- In selected Burnaby hotel lobbies and rooms.
- 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.
- 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.
- The I-5 Corridor in Northwest Washington State which 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). Distribution was provided by Interwest Brochure Marketing Inc.

Staff explored the display of the Burnaby Visitors' Guides on the Amtrak "Cascades" Route which currently extends from Eugene Oregon through to Vancouver. However, since there was very limited opportunity for the effective display of brochures on the trains and within their train stations, staff did not pursue this venue.

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 Infocentres. The current supply of Burnaby Visitors' Guides is expected to last through 2000. However, reprinting the brochure will be required for 2001.

b) 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 2000 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 2000 May issue of "Information Burnaby" produced by the City and distributed to every business and household in Burnaby.

c) City of Burnaby Web Page

"Tourist Services" was added to the City's Web Site in early 1999 and has become a very significant part of the site with an average of approximately 30,404 "hits" per month from 2000 June through October. This figure has increased over 100% from the previous year and the Tourist Services section represents approximately 12% of the total Burnaby Web Page user sessions.

3.4 ***Tourism Coordination:***

The overall coordination function was provided by 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 ***General Comments:***

The Metrotown Tourist Infocentre operated for a five month period from May 01 through September 30. 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 interacting with staff.

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

4.2 *2000 Visitor Statistics - Five Month Period (May - September):*

During the May 01 through September 30 period, an average of 125 people per day received personalized service from Infocentre staff, for a total of approximately 19,151 people over this five month period.

An average of 590 people per day used the Tourist Infocentre (including those who may have only picked up various brochures during Infocentre operating hours but did not specifically request information or assistance from staff) with a total of approximately 90,210 people over this period.

Approximately 47% or just under half of the Infocentre users originated from outside of the Province. The origin of visitors from outside of the Province is outlined as follows:

- 20% from surrounding regions (Western Provinces, Pacific Northwest States and Alaska)
- 29% from the rest of North America
- 31% from Asia/Oceania
- 16% from Europe
- 4% from other parts of the world

4.3 *2000 Visitor Statistics - "Shoulder" Months (May and September):*

During the months of May and September, an average of 99 people per day received personalized service from Infocentre staff with a total of approximately 6,033 persons over these two months.

An average of 432 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 26,349 during this two month period.

Approximately 43% of the Infocentre users originated from outside of the Province during this shoulder period. Visitor origin from outside of the Province is as follows:

- 24% from surrounding regions (Western Provinces, Pacific Northwest, States and Alaska)
- 27% from the rest of North America
- 27% from Asia/Oceania
- 19% from Europe
- 3% from other parts of the World

4.4 *General Conclusions:*

The Metrotown Tourist Infocentre recorded its highest visitor volume during 2000 since the facility opened in 1995. Visitor volumes have increased consistently each year since 1995. The total number of people provided with service at the Metrotown Tourist Infocentre for the five month period (May through September) which was approximately 90,210 or 590 people per day represents a 10% increase over the 1999 figures.

The number of people served on a daily basis during the "Shoulder" period (May and September) was approximately 432 per day for a total of approximately 26,349. While this is less than the June through August period, the Infocentre continues to provide a worthwhile and significant service during the "Shoulder" months of May and September. It is recommended that the Tourist Infocentre continue to operate in May and September in 2001.

The statistics illustrate that the Infocentre continues to serve a large number of visitors originating from outside of British Columbia with the largest contingent from "Asia/Oceania" followed by "rest of North America" and "surrounding regions (Western Provinces, Pacific Northwest States and Alaska)". The greatest visitor growth was from "rest of North America" when compared with 1999 figures.

The extended Infocentre operating hours on Thursday and Fridays (until 8:30 p.m.) is considered to provide a worthwhile service. Of the total number of customers served during the entire day on Thursdays and Fridays for the five month period, an average 21% were served during the extended hours of operation (6:00 to 8:30 p.m.) which represents approximately 24% of the total daily operating hours. It is recommended that these extended operating hours be continued at the Tourist Infocentre during 2001.

The distribution program for the Burnaby Visitors' Guide has been very successful and the more recent expansion into the Pacific Northwest via the Washington State Ferry and I-5 Corridor components provides an important venue for attracting American visitors.

5.0 PROPOSED 2000 BURNABY TOURISM PROGRAM:

5.1 *General Comments:*

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 and brings considerable economic benefits to the community.

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 2001 to include extended hours of operation on Thursday and Friday evenings.

The Tourist Information Service at City Hall should continue to operate in 2001 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.

5.2 *Burnaby Visitors' Guide Production and Distribution:*

As outlined in Section 3.3 above, approximately 150,000 copies of the full-colour Burnaby Visitors' Guide brochure were distributed in the year 2000 which satisfied the City's needs through the year based on the current distribution program. An all new redesigned Visitors' Guide is proposed for the 2001 program. It is recommended that a total of 150,000 copies be printed to meet the projected volume required for the proposed distribution program. Information regarding the Burnaby's "Heritage Walking Tour" which was recently considered by the Community Heritage Commission and the Finance and Economic Development Committee will also be included in the redesigned brochure.

Expanding the distribution program further into the Pacific Northwest using the I-5 Corridor program for the first time this year is considered to be a worthwhile effort and complements the distribution of the Visitors' Guide on the Washington State Ferry System. Together, these two distribution components will provide good exposure to those residents and visitors to the northwest United States who will be encouraged to visit Burnaby's various attractions while enjoying a favourable exchange on the dollar. It is recommended that we employ this distribution program in Washington State along with all of the other distribution components outlined in Section 3.3a in the 2001 program.

5.3 *Metrotown Tourist Infocentre Upgrade:*

Since opening in 1995, the Metrotown Tourist Infocentre, located on the pedestrian walkway between the Metrotown Centre and Metropolis at Metrotown retail complexes, has utilized a number of removable vinyl banners for identification purposes. These banners have served the Infocentre well over the years, but have become slightly worn and outdated. It is recommended that the banners be replaced with a new and improved identification system that will provide greater vitality and flair and draw more attention to the Infocentre. A removable and storable system is proposed along with some minor additional lighting. The

cost of these improvements is estimated at \$3,000 and has been included in the proposed budget outlined below.

5.4 Proposed 2000 Program Budget - Summary:

The proposed budget for the 2001 Tourism Program compared with the approved 2000 and 1999 Annual Budgets is outlined below.

PROGRAM ELEMENT BUDGET COSTS

PROGRAM COMPONENT	APPROVED 1999 PROGRAM	APPROVED 2000 PROGRAM	PROPOSED 2001 PROGRAM
Metrotown Tourist Infocentre (Staff and operating costs)	\$21,815	\$21,815	\$24,140
City Hall Tourist Service	\$0	\$0	\$0
Marketing and Promotion (Visitors Guide production and distribution) including new Infocentre banners and associated lighting	\$32,000	\$45,000	\$ 46,500
Public Relations and Association Membership	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
TOTAL COSTS	\$54,815	\$67,815	\$71,640

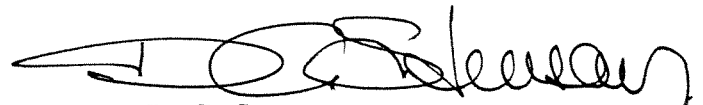
An amount of \$70,140 has been included in the 2001 Provisional Operating Budget for the Tourism Program. With adoption of the recommendations of this report, staff will revise this provision in the 2001 Annual Operating Budget submission.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS:

6.1 The City's 2000 Tourism Program continued to provide a valuable support service to the local tourism industry which is 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 and around British Columbia. Tourism has many direct benefits to the local business community and 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 2001 Tourism Program as outlined in this report and to the necessary provisions in the 2001 Annual Operating 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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