

CITY OF BURNABY

FINANCE AND CIVIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

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**RE: PROPOSED CITY SUPPORT FOR BURNABY INTER-AGENCY COUNCIL
POVERTY INITIATIVE**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council authorize the Planning Department, in collaboration with the Social Issues Committee, to expend up to \$25,000 for development of the proposed Community Asset Mapping System, as described in Section 4.0 of this report.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be sent to the Poverty Initiative Steering Committee of the Burnaby Inter-Agency Council (BIC), c/o Ms. Jeanne Fike, Burnaby Family Life Institute, 17 - 250 Willingdon, Burnaby, B.C. V5C 5E9, along with a letter indicating that, as its contribution to the BIC Poverty Initiative, the City is prepared to undertake development of a comprehensive Community Asset Mapping System for Burnaby.

REPORT

The Social Issues Committee, at its Open meeting held on 2003 March 26, received and adopted the attached report providing an assessment and proposed response to the Burnaby Inter-Agency Council's request for funding assistance for its Poverty Project.

The Finance and Civic Development Committee at its Open meeting held on 2003 March 27, received and adopted the recommendations contained in the report.

Respectfully submitted,

Mayor D.R. Corrigan
Chair

Councillor D. Johnston
Vice Chair

Councillor N. Volkow
Member

COPY: - CITY MANAGER
- DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING
- DIRECTOR FINANCE
- DIRECTOR PARKS, REC. & CULTURAL SERVICES

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

2003 March 20

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

OUR FILE: 17.831

**SUBJECT: PROPOSED CITY SUPPORT FOR BURNABY INTER-AGENCY COUNCIL
POVERTY INITIATIVE**

PURPOSE: To provide an assessment and proposed response to the Burnaby Inter-Agency Council's request for funding assistance for its Poverty Project.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** the Finance and Economic Development Committee be requested to ask Council to authorize the Planning Department, in collaboration with the Social Issues Committee, to expend up to \$25,000 for development of the proposed Community Asset Mapping System, as described in Section 4.0 of this report.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be sent to the Poverty Initiative Steering Committee of the Burnaby Inter-Agency Council (BIC), c/o Ms. Jeanne Fike, Burnaby Family Life Institute, 17 - 250 Willingdon Avenue, Burnaby, B.C. V5C 5E9, along with a letter indicating that, as its contribution to the BIC Poverty Initiative, the City is prepared to undertake development of a comprehensive Community Asset Mapping System for Burnaby.

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

At its meeting of 2003 January 22, the Social Issues Committee (SIC) received a delegation from the Burnaby Inter-Agency Council (BIC) Poverty Initiative Steering Committee. The delegation provided an overview of the work of the Burnaby Poverty Initiative to date and discussed its plans for the next phase of the project. The Steering Committee requested a grant of \$47,750 from the City to assist with the next phase of its work. It also presented a budget explaining how the grant, if received, would be spent. In response to the delegation's request, the Committee directed staff to prepare a report on the advisability and feasibility of providing the requested funding for the Poverty Initiative.

This report responds to the Committee's request. It consists of four sections, as follows: a) background on the Poverty Initiative, b) an assessment of the funding request, c) a discussion of the proposed community asset mapping component, and d) conclusions and recommendations.

2.0 POVERTY INITIATIVE

In September 2000, BIC initiated an examination of the poverty situation in the city. Two phases of the Poverty Project have occurred to date. As part of its first phase, the group invited various speakers to address the topic at its regular meetings in late 2000 and early 2001. It also planned and hosted a community forum on poverty in June 2001. The City agreed to contribute up to \$2,000 towards the forum. Also, staff assisted with the forum planning, and the Chair of the then Community Issues and Social Planning Committee and staff gave presentations at the event.

Following the Poverty Forum, a sub-committee from BIC developed a grant application, requesting United Way to provide \$15,000 for the second phase of work on the Poverty Initiative. United Way approved the grant request in 2001 December. In early 2002, BIC struck a steering committee (the Poverty Initiative Steering Committee) to coordinate the poverty work. The Committee consisted of representatives from various agencies, the School District, the City (Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department), and several people who are experiencing poverty directly. The Committee's key focus involved preparation of the *Beyond Statistics* document. The document reviewed existing statistical data on poverty in the city and presented personal stories of low income Burnaby residents from various backgrounds.

The *Beyond Statistics* report was released in the fall of 2002 and distributed to community agencies, service providers, religious organizations, the City, the School Board and other interested parties. In addition, members of the Steering Committee made presentations regarding key findings of the report to the media, various community organizations, and City Council. In their presentation to Council on 2002 November 4, Steering Committee members requested City support for holding follow up consultations in the community and advocating to senior levels of government on poverty issues. They also requested additional assistance from the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission. At Council's request, the SIC and the Commission reviewed the requests. The two groups submitted a joint report to the 2003 January 27 meeting of Council which, among other things, recommended that the City confirm its willingness to provide support and assistance towards the Poverty Initiative, as appropriate and feasible. The recommendation was adopted.

BIC has now initiated the third phase of its Poverty Initiative, entitled "Mobilizing Community Actions to Address Poverty in Burnaby". The two main goals of this phase are to: a) strengthen the community's ability to address poverty through collaborative action and community development; and b) develop and begin to implement a community plan to address poverty. The work planned for the third phase is budgeted at \$76,500 and is expected to take about a year to complete. To date, BIC has received funding commitments

of \$26,500: \$25,000 from United Way and \$1,500 from the Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion. As noted, at the 2003 January SIS meeting, BIC requested \$47,750 in City funding to support its project. In subsequent discussions, BIC revised its City funding request to \$25,000. The group is also seeking funding from VanCity Savings Credit Union, the Vancouver Foundation, and other community foundations.

3.0 ASSESSMENT OF FUNDING REQUEST

To help with the assessment of the request for City funding for the Poverty Initiative, staff arranged two meetings with representatives of BIC. Our aim was to gain a better understanding of the goals and proposed components of the work, obtain more specific information on budget requirements, and explore elements that would particularly merit City support.

Through the discussions, BIC members confirmed that the broad goals of the current phase of the project would involve a) strengthening the community's ability to address poverty through collaborative action and community development; and b) developing and beginning to implement a community plan to address poverty. The BIC members confirmed their need for City funding support to help realize these goals. They indicated that, in conjunction with other grant monies, City funds would be used to cover the costs of a project consultant, meetings, printing, and other expenses. Key elements of this phase of the BIC's poverty work would involve:

- a) participating in a community asset mapping exercise (described in more detail in Section 4.0 of this report)
- b) preparing a draft community-based plan or strategy for addressing poverty in the city
- c) holding a community forum to share findings of the research and gain comments on the draft plan or strategy
- d) revising, publishing, and beginning to coordinate implementation of the plan or strategy.

After reflecting on the BIC's request, staff have concluded that the most practical and viable support that the City could offer would entail coordination of the community asset mapping exercise. Our reasons for this conclusion, and further information on the elements of community asset mapping, are provided in Section 4.0 below.

4.0 COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING

The community asset mapping exercise would entail:

- gathering information on the location, program offerings, and other relevant aspects of a range of community programs and facilities in Burnaby (e.g., recreation centres, libraries, non-profit agency offices, community care facilities)
- entering the information, in conjunction with demographic, social, and economic data, into the City's Geographical Information System (GIS)
- utilizing the GIS data for spatial analysis to determine a) where, on a geographic basis, community assets or deficits exist in Burnaby, and b) possible explanations for such patterns
- publishing the information in a Community Asset Mapping document.

The reasons for proposing that the City offer to assist the Poverty Initiative through development of the community asset mapping system, rather than provision of a grant, are as follows:

- a) *Building block for Poverty Initiative:* The information expected to be gathered through the community asset mapping exercise would provide a crucial "building block" for BIC's Poverty Initiative. As noted, the community asset mapping work would help to identify areas of the city that appear to have strong assets or resources, and which ones face gaps or deficits. Also, through an examination of spatial relationships amongst the social, economic, and community asset data, the mapping work should also provide additional insight into the patterns that emerge. The information should thus prove vital to the Poverty Initiative - particularly with respect to development of a community-based action plan regarding poverty concerns.
- b) *Coordination with UBC Early Child Development Mapping (ECDM) Project:* The proposed community mapping exercise would complement work presently taking place in Burnaby through the Early Child Development Mapping (ECDM) Project. As part of the ECDM Project, coordinated by researchers from UBC, Burnaby kindergarten teachers recently completed a questionnaire focusing on the developmental health of each of their current students.¹ In addition to the

¹ Similar data are being collected throughout B.C. as part of the UBC ECDM Project. Thirty-five school districts are participating in the project in 2003. The project aims to provide school districts and communities with information about their preschool population. Specifically, it is intended to help in a) measuring readiness to learn in children, b) assessing effectiveness of early childhood interventions, and c) predicting how children will do in elementary school.

questionnaire information, the ECDM project team plans to undertake its own community asset mapping work, focusing specifically on community resources relevant to child development (e.g., the location and capacity of licensed child care facilities in Burnaby). The ECDM Project team has indicated its willingness to share its data with the City, as well as offer limited technical support. The ECDM project thus provides a valuable opportunity for collaboration, reducing the resource requirements of the City and ECDM, while yielding richer sets of data for both parties.

- c) *Heavy resource requirements:* Despite its merits, the proposed community asset mapping work is not part of the Planning Department's current work program. Undertaking the work would involve a heavy commitment of staff time, involving such tasks as system design and testing; data collection, entry, and analysis; and report preparation and distribution. To maximize the utility of the information for the Poverty Initiative, substantial progress will need to be made on the system before the fall. Further, as no funds have been budgeted for the work, it would be prudent to allocate additional funding for associated potential project expenses (e.g., consultant support, data acquisition, computer software or hardware, printing). It is estimated that the work could entail up to 120 person days of staff time (about six months of combined professional and support staff time), plus up to \$25,000 in funding for associated project costs. It is anticipated that these associated costs would be drawn from the Stabilization Fund. Considering the staff and associated cost requirements, the total City project contribution could be in the range of \$50,000.

- d) *Sustainability:* A key concern with the community asset mapping work will be to develop a high quality *system* that can be updated and improved over time (i.e., there is limited merit in devoting resources to a one-time "snapshot" of Burnaby's community assets). Development of the system should not only benefit the Poverty Initiative; it should also prove useful for planning efforts of various other parties (e.g., government ministries, the Fraser Health Authority, the School District, community agencies). Further, the system would yield ongoing benefits for the City. For example, aspects of the data could eventually be included in Burnaby's web map internet utility, such as demographic information which is currently not available in a GIS format. Having the demographic and other community asset mapping data available in a GIS format would also prove valuable for future City planning initiatives, such as Official Community Plan updates, community planning processes, and park or recreation service planning efforts.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has assessed the BIC's request for City funding to assist with the current phase of its Poverty Initiative. After reviewing the request with members of BIC, staff concluded that the most appropriate form of City support for the initiative would involve coordinating a community asset mapping exercise. The reasons for this conclusion were that the community mapping work would:

- provide a crucial building block for the BIC's proposed action plan on poverty concerns
- provide an opportunity for the City to collaborate with the UBC ECDM project, enabling us to pool information and resources, and thereby improving the breadth, value, and quality of the information both for the City and ECDM
- entail a heavy resource commitment from the City which would exceed the value of the funding request made on behalf of the Poverty Initiative
- provide a "sustainable" resource that should, over time, benefit the Poverty Initiative, the City, and a range of other groups.

It is understood that the BIC will still need to acquire additional funding to continue to retain its project consultant and meet the various goals it has established for the project. That said, it is believed that the community asset mapping work, if approved, will constitute significant support for the initiative. While it is proposed that the City coordinate the community mapping exercise, it is hoped that BIC will assist us with the effort. In particular, BIC can play a valuable role in identifying data needs and sources and assisting staff with data acquisition (e.g., information on community agency programs and services).


Before closing, it should be acknowledged that, as the level of government closest to the people, the City is acutely aware of and affected by the presence of poverty in the community. Therefore, independent of the Poverty Initiative, Burnaby has demonstrated its strong concern for the needs of low income residents through various policies, programs, and actions. Examples include:

- making City land available on a long term lease basis for affordable and special needs housing projects
- in conjunction with the Burnaby School District, providing funding and related support for the Burnaby Community School program
- monitoring the impacts of the Provincial Core Review process on Burnaby residents and calling for changes, accordingly

- requesting senior governments to make program and policy changes on such matters as child care, affordable housing, seniors' benefits, and health care.
- developing and implementing City policies with respect to child care, multiculturalism, group homes, and supportive housing
- stipulating that a percentage of the residential development on large publicly-owned sites (e.g., Cariboo, George Derby, Oaklands) consist of non-market or affordable housing
- encouraging developers to include amenities in their projects which benefit the community - especially people with lower incomes (e.g., child care facilities, rental accommodation, community agency office and program space, community meeting rooms)
- requiring developers to build and/ or fund construction of three state of the art group day care centres, which are owned by the City and operated by non-profit societies
- implementing the Service Credit Program, whereby low income residents receive annual credits to be used for Parks & Recreation programs
- providing community grants to service providers

Despite these contributions, as noted in previous reports on the matter, Burnaby lacks the mandate and resources to play a major ongoing role regarding poverty. Therefore, while it is proposed that the City continue to play a supportive role with respect to the Poverty Initiative, it should not be assumed that the City will be able to commit to additional potential roles that may be identified as part of the BIC work.

Given the foregoing, it is recommended that the Finance and Economic Development Committee be requested to ask Council to authorize the Planning Department, in collaboration with the Social Issues Committee, to expend up to \$25,000 for development of the proposed Community Asset Mapping System. It is also recommended that a copy of this report be sent to the BIC Poverty Initiative Steering Committee, along with a letter indicating that, as its contribution to the Poverty Initiative, the City is prepared to undertake development of a comprehensive Community Asset Mapping System for Burnaby.


for J.S. Belhouse, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

JF/MM:sa

cc: City Manager
Director Finance
Director Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services

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