

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

C

SUBJECT: SITE REVIEW - TRANSITIONAL AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Council authorize staff to work with the Progressive Housing Society, Lookout Emergency Aid Society and B.C. Housing to review the suitability of potential sites for a transitional and supportive housing development in Burnaby.
2. THAT Council send a letter to B.C. Housing indicating support for the partnership amongst Progressive Housing Society, Lookout Emergency Aid Society, and B.C. Housing in planning for transitional and supportive housing, as outlined in this report.
3. THAT a copy of this report be provided to the Burnaby Task Force on Homelessness, Progressive Housing Society, Lookout Emergency Aid Society and B.C. Housing.

REPORT

The Community Development Committee, at its Open meeting held on 2006 October 17, received and adopted the *attached* report regarding a request from the Burnaby Task Force on Homelessness for City support in the review of potential transitional and supportive housing sites in Burnaby. The Committee advised that Progressive Housing Society and Lookout Emergency Aid Society have met with BC Housing to propose a concept for development that would include up to 25 units of transitional housing and up to 25 units of supportive housing. The Committee concluded by requesting that Council authorize staff to work with Progressive Housing, Lookout Emergency Aid Society and BC Housing to review potential sites proposed or identified by the partnership.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor Colleen Jordan
Chair

Councillor Dan Johnston
Vice Chair

Councillor Garth Evans
Member

COPY: CITY MANAGER
DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING
DIR. PARKS, REC. & CULT. SERV.
DIRECTOR ENGINEERING
DIRECTOR FINANCE
RCMP, OIC

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE

DATE: 2006 October 13

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING

FILE: 16000 20
Reference: Homelessness

SUBJECT: SITE REVIEW - TRANSITIONAL AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

PURPOSE: To provide an assessment and recommendations regarding a delegation's request for City support in the review of potential transitional and supportive housing sites in Burnaby.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** the Committee request Council to authorize staff to work with the Progressive Housing Society, Lookout Emergency Aid Society and B.C. Housing to review the suitability of potential sites for a transitional and supportive housing development in Burnaby.
2. **THAT** the Committee request Council to send a letter to B.C. Housing indicating support for the partnership amongst Progressive Housing Society, Lookout Emergency Aid Society, and B.C. Housing in planning for transitional and supportive housing, as outlined in this report.
3. **THAT** a copy of this report be provided to the Burnaby Task Force on Homelessness, Progressive Housing Society, Lookout Emergency Aid Society and B.C. Housing.

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

At the Community Development Committee meeting on 2006 September 26, a delegation from the Burnaby Task Force on Homelessness requested City assistance in identifying sites for a transitional and supportive housing development in Burnaby. The delegation noted that Progressive Housing Society and Lookout Emergency Aid Society had met with B.C. Housing regarding funding for such a development and had received encouragement to continue pursuing the concept. The delegation further noted that a partnership amongst many agencies is crucial to the success of its proposal. To this end, the delegation requested a letter indicating the City's support for the partnership between Progressive Housing Society, Lookout Emergency Aid Society, and B.C. Housing (hereafter referred to as the

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“partnership”) in planning for a potential transitional and supportive housing development in Burnaby.

Arising from discussion, the Community Development Committee requested staff to prepare a report regarding the delegation’s proposal. This report responds to that request.

2.0 DISCUSSION

2.1 Housing Matter B.C. – A Housing Strategy for British Columbia

On 2006 October 3, the Provincial Government announced *Housing Matters BC – A Housing Strategy for British Columbia*. The primary purpose of the Strategy is to ensure that B.C.’s most vulnerable citizens and those with low incomes have improved access to housing assistance. The six goals in the Strategy are:

- The homeless have access to stable housing with integrated services.
- B.C.’s most vulnerable citizens receive priority for assistance.
- Aboriginal housing need is addressed.
- Low-income households have improved access to affordable rental housing.
- Home ownership is supported as an avenue to self-sufficiency.
- B.C.’s housing and building regulatory system is safe, stable and efficient.

The key actions in the Strategy include:

- Establishment of a Rental Assistance Program to provide direct cash assistance to working families with annual incomes below \$20,000, who pay more than 30% of their income on rent, and have at least one dependent child under the age of 19;
- Issuing a one-time Call for Expressions of Interest to build an additional 450 units of new supportive housing under the Provincial Homelessness Initiative - these units will be subsidized at a cost of \$10.7 million a year for 35 years;
- Providing \$3.6 million over the next three years for homeless outreach workers (this funding is in addition to Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance funding announced earlier this year);
- Commitment to create 550 new assisted living units under the Independent Living B.C. program for seniors – these units will be subsidized at a cost of \$13 million a year over 35 years;
- Transfer of 2,600 units of existing non-market housing to the Aboriginal Housing Management Association;
- Establishing affordable home ownership strategies; and
- Developing a Modernization Strategy for a more consistent, coordinated building safety system including Building Code, Homeowner Protection Office, and Residential Tenancy Act provisions.

There are two key policy changes included the Provincial Strategy:

- Individuals or households with special housing needs (i.e. those with disabilities, mental illness, addictions, fleeing violence, and homelessness) will be given priority access to subsidized housing. This policy means that, over time, households whose problems are related only to low income will be directed to the private rental market. Low income working households may be eligible for rent supplements.
- Provincially-owned subsidized housing will be renovated to meet the needs of low-income households with special housing needs. Older, obsolete buildings on under-utilized land will be redeveloped over time to serve more households in need of housing assistance.

Progressive and Lookout have advised that they intend to seek funding under the Provincial Homelessness Initiative which released a Call for Expressions of Interest for 450 units as part of the *Housing Matters B.C.* Strategy announced by the Province on 2006 October 03.

2.2 Homelessness in Burnaby

Homelessness is a growing issue in the region and is more evident in some areas of the region. It is difficult to estimate the number of homeless people in Burnaby; however, the 2005 regional homeless count identified 40 homeless people in Burnaby – an increase from the 17 homeless people found during the 2002 regional count. The Progressive Housing Society Outreach Worker connected with 61 homeless people during an initial six month outreach project in 2005. Further, over the past year, RCMP and City staff working in the community report that they seem to be interacting with more homeless people.

2.3 Facilities and Services for Homeless People in Burnaby

Facilities and services for homeless people in Burnaby are limited. Fraserside Community Services Society operates Fraserdale which is a ten bed, short-term stay shelter in Burnaby for people with mental illness which is accessible on a referral basis. There are no minimal barrier emergency shelters in the City. The closest emergency shelters are in New Westminster or the Vancouver downtown eastside.

Homeless people are able to receive some meals in Burnaby through the Salvation Army Monday night soup truck program and the West Burnaby United Church Tuesday lunch program. The Progressive Housing Society has an outreach worker who connects with homeless people and refers them to needed services, housing and income assistance.

2.4 Local Initiatives to Respond to Homelessness

There have been several initiatives related to homelessness in Burnaby. The Progressive Housing Society completed a study on homelessness in the City in March 2001. The study provided the first documentation on the extent of homelessness in Burnaby and outlined possible responses to the issue.

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In January 2005, the Burnaby Task Force on Homelessness was organized with representation from the Fraser Health Authority, Provincial Government, service providers and faith groups. With the assistance of a consultant and the Progressive Housing Society Outreach Worker, the Task Force completed a study on the extent of homelessness in Burnaby. The study provided more information on the profile of homeless people in Burnaby and the services needed to help them. The Task Force established subgroups to focus on five key initiatives arising from the work completed:

- minimal barrier shelter;
- extreme weather response plan;
- basic needs (food, toilets, and showers);
- outreach work; and
- community awareness.

The Task Force provided information on these initiatives at the Community Development Committee in February 2006. The City is represented on the Task Force and staff are participating on the minimal barrier shelter and extreme weather response plan subgroups. In particular, the extreme weather response plan subgroup has obtained mats and blankets and arranged food services but is still searching for a location.

The Task Force originally identified an emergency shelter as one of its five key initiatives. In further investigating the matter, it realized that a co-located facility with an emergency shelter and transitional/supportive housing would be a preferable environment for providing homeless people with needed services and stability. This type of multi-service development has proven to be successful in Vancouver and on the North Shore.

2.5 Transitional and Supportive Housing Proposal

As indicated, the delegation to the Community Development Committee meeting on 26 September 2006 requested City assistance to review the suitability of potential sites for a transitional and supportive housing development in Burnaby.

Transitional or second stage housing provides accommodation for people upon leaving an emergency shelter and before they are considered ready for independent housing. Specialized services are usually provided to help residents gain stability in their lives. Residents can typically stay for up to two years and are expected to move to permanent housing once their living situation is stabilized. Supportive housing is permanent, affordable, independent accommodation that has added support services attached. Supports may include meals and skills training, assistance with housekeeping and banking, health therapies, counselling and crisis response.

The delegation noted that Progressive Housing Society and Lookout Emergency Aid Society have met with B.C. Housing to propose a concept for a development that would include up to 25 units of transitional housing and up to 25 units of supportive housing. Emergency

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shelter beds are not currently included in this proposal, although a small emergency shelter component of 5-10 beds could be considered depending on the site and availability of funding. The delegation requested that the Community Development Committee write to B.C. Housing indicating the City's support for the partnership in planning for this type of development in Burnaby.

As previously noted, the Province announced a new housing strategy, *Housing Matters B.C.*, on 2006 October 03. The Strategy includes funding for 450 units of transitional and supportive housing under the Provincial Homelessness Initiative. A Call for Expressions of Interest for all 450 units was announced with the Strategy. Under this program, B.C. Housing would make funds available for land and construction mortgage costs. Funding is also available under the Program for housing operations. These costs are typically funded through an agreement under which B.C. Housing provides a monthly subsidy to make up the difference between expenses and rent revenue for the operating agency.

City staff have confirmed with B.C. Housing that feasibility, capital, and operating funding is available for approved project proposals under the program. However, B.C. Housing officials caution that they will only provide funding for the housing component and any emergency shelter beds. The operating agencies, Progressive and Lookout Societies, would be expected to secure operating funding for any support service component (i.e. addictions counselling, job training, mental health support). For example, partnerships may be sought by these agencies with the Fraser Health Authority for case management, addictions counselling, and psychiatric care.

2.6 City Assistance in Reviewing Potential Development Sites

City staff can provide assistance to the partnership by reviewing potential sites that may be appropriate for the proposed development as brought forward by the partnership. B.C. Housing has advised that potential sites could include lands owned by B.C. Housing and/or the Province. Under the program, consideration may also be given to purchasing private land.

To assist the partnership in reviewing potential sites, staff would propose using the following as general guidelines when reviewing potential locations:

- a suitable site size for up to 25 individuals in transitional housing and up to 25 individuals in supportive housing;
- proximity to transit services;
- availability of supporting social services such as social and health services, training programs;
- proximity to local commercial services such as grocery stores, and affordable restaurants;
- a location that would not result in an undue concentration of facilities or services for marginalized populations;

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- a reasonable distance from schools, child care facilities, group homes or other emergency shelters;
- in an area where the development will not be in conflict with other uses or future plans for redevelopment;
- location and fit with an adjacent or subject neighbourhood area;
- applicability of prevailing Official Community Plan and Area Plan guidelines.

It is noted that the City would not have a role or responsibility to provide land, capital and operating funding for any transitional/supportive housing project by the partnership. In identification of a potential, suitable site, the City would provide whatever assistance it can to the proponent through the subsequent rezoning process

3.0 CONCLUSION

A just society recognizes that everyone has a right to adequate shelter. Unfortunately, some people do not have the resources to find suitable housing therefore a continuum of housing must be provided to help those in need. The continuum includes emergency shelter and housing for the homeless; transitional, supported and assisted living; independent social housing, private market rentals, and home ownership. The responsibility for housing those most in need belongs primarily to the Federal and Provincial governments. Local governments provide a broad range of services to the community but have limited resources for housing.

Progressive Housing Society and Lookout Emergency Aid Society are proposing a transitional and supportive housing development for Burnaby and are seeking City assistance in reviewing potential sites. This report has discussed the issue of homelessness in Burnaby, current initiatives to respond to the issue, and a request from the Burnaby Task Force on Homelessness for City assistance in reviewing potential sites. Given the foregoing, it is recommended that the Committee request Council to authorize staff to work with the partnership to review potential sites proposed or identified by the partnership in relation to the guidelines outlined in this report. In addition, it is proposed that the Committee request Council to send a letter to B.C. Housing indicating the City's support for the partnership to initiate planning for the proposed development as outlined in this report.

B. Luksun

B. Luksun
DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING

SF/sa

Copied to: City Manager
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
RCMP, OIC
Director Engineering
Director Finance

