
TO: CITY MANAGER **DATE:** 2008 April 08

FROM: DIRECTOR PARKS, RECREATION, AND CULTURAL SERVICES

SUBJECT: CIVIC SQUARE/METROTOWN PUBLIC EVENTS

PURPOSE: To propose a program of outdoor performances and playground service at Civic Square/Metrotown from June to August 2008.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council approve a pilot program of outdoor performances and events and expand the playground service at Civic Square/Metrotown as outlined in this report.
2. **THAT** an allocation of \$13,300 be approved for this pilot program for 2008.

REPORT

Under the New Business portion of the Open Council meeting held on 2008 January 21, Council adopted a resolution that "Burnaby Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services prepare a report on the feasibility of offering some organized community events at Civic Square/Metrotown for the Spring to Fall 2008 season".

Civic Square/Metrotown is an outdoor stage and assembly area adjacent to the Bob Prittie Library that is conducive to performances and events that can entertain small crowds. It has been used occasionally for these purposes since its construction; to date a regular drop-in summer playground program has been offered one afternoon per week with approximately 80 participants each time.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

There are a number of issues and opportunities that arise in relation to increasing activity at this site:

- The outdoor venue can accommodate smaller crowds during good weather.
- A large population base is in the immediate neighbourhood, and the area attracts many to the library and mall.
- A few very successful events currently take place in the venue including the library summer reading medal program, and a one day per week summer playground program.

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- There is a culturally diverse and new immigrant population in the vicinity.
- Some transient and homeless people frequent the space and personal safety concerns deter some people from using the square.
- The stage area does not have full amenities such as dressing rooms, washrooms, etc. which place limitations on the types of presentations possible.
- Controls on sound levels are needed to respect area residents and library users.
- Partnerships with area businesses are possible for support services (food/beverage) and promotion.
- Free parking is available nearby.

PROGRAM IDEAS

Given the modest crowd sizes that can be accommodated, and that performances should be acoustic or low-amplification, a pilot program for summer activities at Civic Square is proposed. Proposals to date include:

1. Introduce a concert series for local artists and performers

To initiate the program, it was determined that every Sunday from June to end of August would be programmed from 12:00 noon - 3:00 p.m., with three or more acts appearing. A program manager would ensure that acts would be recruited, screened, contracted and scheduled to appear. Public announcements and on-site signage would promote the events. An MC would monitor the site for set up, performances and take down and introduce the performers.

A variety of acts would be engaged including musicians, singers, dancers, multicultural talent, variety acts, children's entertainers, etc. and would perform for no charge or for an honorarium or fee.

A staff person could provide overall program support and a community non-profit group such as the Burnaby Arts Council could provide coordination and talent recruitment support. Lists of community performers are available through the Burnaby Village Museum, Shadbolt Centre for the Arts and community arts staff as well.

2. Expand the existing playground service

Currently Community Programs run a playground service at Civic Square one day per week. This service could be expanded to more days per week at a cost of \$200 per day which includes basic supplies and staff support.

Expansion of this existing program by two additional days per week for seven weeks would be seen as very beneficial to the area as it would increase the service to the area as well as increase the presence of positive activity in the park. This would result in a total cost of \$2,800 for the additional two days per week.

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ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Burnaby Public Library is a vital part of the success of such a program. A coordinated approach between Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department and the Bob Prittie Library will ensure a successful pilot season. Further discussions with the Burnaby Arts Council will ensue as to the role of the non-profit community group in supporting the program. Fees would be set aside for engaging performers and for site support and clean up and cooperation with other partners would be sought for program promotion.

Other activities such as outdoor yoga, pilots, fitness classes, tai chi, etc. may be accommodated. Consideration will be given to adding some picnic tables to the site for the season.

The programming of Civic Square/Metrotown is also in harmony with the objectives of the Burnaby Community Spirit Committee for the celebration and presentation of local creative talent. As well, this is a welcomed addition as another attraction for tourists to Burnaby.

CONCLUSION

The programming of Civic Square/Metrotown will provide an added venue to showcase local talent outdoors and provide for a free admission event series for audiences. It will "people" the site and generate positive interest in and attendance at this urban venue. It can encourage increased visits to the library as well.

Estimated costs for the thirteen week pilot program include \$3,400 for program coordination; \$1,100 for site maintenance; \$5,500 for performer fees and honoraria; \$2,800 for expanded playground programs; and \$500 for promotion and site signage.

It is recommended that Council approve the pilot program for Civic Square/Metrotown as described above and allocate \$13,300 from 2008 annual operating contingency for this purpose. It is also recommended that discussions continue with the Burnaby Arts Council for their coordination support.



Dave Ellenwood
DIRECTOR PARKS, RECREATION, AND CULTURAL SERVICES

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cc: Chief Librarian
Assistant Director-Cultural Services
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