



Item.....
Meeting.....2010 Mar 15

COUNCIL REPORT

TO: CITY MANAGER **DATE:** 2010 March 08

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING **FILE:** 15500 01
Reference Senior Citizens - General

**SUBJECT: APPLICATION TO UBCM
SENIORS' HOUSING AND SUPPORT INITIATIVE**

PURPOSE: To seek Council's authorization to submit a funding application to the Union of B.C. Municipalities to conduct an accessibility assessment of key pedestrian routes in the Edmonds Town Centre.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council resolve to support the subject proposal and authorize staff to submit an application to the Union of B.C. Municipalities' 2010 Age-Friendly Community Planning and Project Grants, as outlined in section 3.0 of this report.
2. **THAT** copies of this report be forwarded to the Social Issues Committee, Burnaby Access Advisory Committee, and the Voices of Burnaby Seniors.

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

In 2010 February, the Seniors' Housing and Support Initiative of the UBCM announced new 2010 Age-Friendly Community Planning and Project Grants. Up to \$20,000 from the Initiative is available to local governments to support community planning initiatives and/or community projects that promote age-friendly communities and the ability of seniors to age in place. Staff have consulted with the Chair of the Social Issues Committee, members of the Burnaby Access Advisory Committee¹ and members of the Voices of Burnaby Seniors Task Force² to identify a potential project that would be of value to the city and meet UBCM's funding criteria. Based on this consultation, it is proposed that the City apply for a UBCM grant of \$20,000 to fund an accessibility assessment of key pedestrian routes in the Edmonds Town Centre, as outlined in section 3.0 below.

¹ BAAC is an advisory body to the Director of Planning and Building. It is comprised of Burnaby residents who have disabilities and/or are familiar with disability issues and City and Fraser Health Authority staff.

² VOBS is a community-based task force comprised of Burnaby seniors and representatives of agencies that serve Burnaby seniors. The City is represented on the Task Force by Councillor Calendino and City staff from Planning, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services and Citizen Support Services.

2.0 2010 AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY PLANNING AND PROJECT GRANTS

The 2010 Seniors' Housing and Support Initiative (SHSI) is intended to assist local governments to develop and implement policies, plans and projects that facilitate the creation of age-friendly communities and enable seniors to age in place. The UBCM makes reference to the World Health Organization's definition of an age-friendly community as a community where policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environment are designed to support and enable older people to live in a secure environment, enjoy good health, and continue to participate fully in society.

Applications for SHSI grants are required to reflect the following guiding principles:

- *Community-driven* – projects are based on local priorities and community partnerships are clearly indicated;
- *Action oriented* – community planning initiatives are catalysts that enable local governments and community partners to enhance and improve services for older adults;
- *Focused on Priorities* – activities are focused on key priorities with focused outcomes;
- *Coordinated* – activities of government and community partners are coordinated to avoid duplication among programs and projects; and
- *Sustainable* – community planning activities contribute to improving the lives of older adults over time.

Eligible activities must be new community planning and/or community projects undertaken by a local government that address the guiding principles and focus on one (or more) of eight age-friendly community components:

- outdoor spaces and buildings;
- transportation (including traffic safety);
- housing;
- respect and social inclusion;
- social participation;
- communication and information;
- civic participation and employment; and
- community support and health services.

To receive a grant, local governments must pass a resolution indicating support for their proposed project and willingness to provide overall grant management including financial accounting, project evaluation and progress and final reports.

3.0 PROPOSED PROJECT

3.1 Context

A growing body of research indicates that the design of a neighbourhood is a good predictor of the health and well being of its population. Neighbourhood design plays an important role in the lifestyle, physical activity and social connections of its residents. For older adults, particularly those who do not drive or have had to stop driving, an accessible and safe pedestrian environment is critical both as a means of transportation to the basics of life and as a way to remain physically active and connected to the community.

In a survey of Burnaby seniors completed by the Voices of Burnaby Seniors in 2007, over one third of the 659 respondents indicated that they walk or take public transit to their destinations. In recognition of the importance of an accessible and safe pedestrian environment for Burnaby seniors and the broader community, it is proposed that the City apply for \$20,000 from the 2010 Age-friendly Community Planning and Project Grants to conduct an accessibility assessment of key pedestrian routes in the Edmonds Town Centre. The project would take place in partnership with the Burnaby Access Advisory Committee (BAAC) and the community-based Voices of Burnaby Seniors (VOBS) Task Force.

3.2 Project Description

Staff propose to conduct the accessibility assessment in the Edmonds Town Centre because of its concentration of seniors housing (e.g., New Vista, Hall Towers, the Mulberry) and its street-oriented access to destinations of importance to seniors including services, shops and recreation facilities.

The assessment would focus on key pedestrian routes between seniors housing and commercial and recreational destinations. The assessment would focus primarily on City infrastructure including curb cuts and ramps, sidewalk conditions, crosswalks and pedestrian control signals and push buttons, trash receptacles, pedestrian conveniences (e.g., benches, access to public washrooms, bus stop shelters) traffic calming measures, and bus stop lighting and accessibility. If the project is approved, a consultant would be hired to assist staff in the completion of specific components of the assessment project, as detailed below.

3.2.1 Collection of Information

Selection of a Working Group – A working group made up of Planning and Engineering staff, members of BAAC and VOBS, and seniors and/or persons with disabilities from the Edmonds Town Centre area would be established to oversee the assessment project including identification of routes and the assessment process.

Development of an assessment tool – In consultation with the working group, an assessment tool and recording template would be developed for the assessment. The assessment tool would contain a checklist of accessibility features against which to record

information on existing conditions. Recent research on best practices in accessibility would be used to develop the assessment tool.

Identification of key pedestrian routes – The working group would identify routes between seniors housing and key destinations in the Edmonds Town Centre that would be assessed for their accessibility.

Pre-assessment of identified routes – Staff would do a preliminary assessment of the identified routes to record objective information about the routes such as gradient on route segments, location of curb cuts, pedestrian crossings and permanent street furniture, pedestrian crossing times, surface treatments and width of curb cuts and sidewalks.

Community assessment – Members of the working group, along with older residents of the Edmonds area who walk or use public transit to reach their destinations, and City staff would conduct an experiential assessment of the identified routes. Participants would be given an orientation prior to actually walking (or wheeling) the identified routes to familiarize them with the assessment tool. To create awareness of the importance of community accessibility, the assessment days would be timed to occur around Access Awareness Day on Saturday June 5, 2010. Members of City Council would be invited to attend an event showcasing the assessment process on part of an identified route.

3.2.2 Analysis of Information

Consideration of the findings – A Power Point Presentation would be prepared to summarize the findings from the community assessment. The presentation would include photographs and video clips to document specific findings. A review of the findings would be undertaken by the working group, coordinated by staff, to develop a plan of action to address key barriers and issues. Potential accessibility improvements would be categorized by those which could be made within existing operating budgets and/or cost-shared with applicable agencies (e.g. TransLink) and those to be considered at the time of future redevelopment or as part of other processes.

Development of a Model for Accessibility – The findings would also be used to improve accessibility in other areas of the city. For example, the approach would include the development of accessibility guidelines that could be incorporated into City practices such as community plan reviews and regular maintenance and upgrading schedules.

Preparation of an Accessibility Map – Another product of the assessment would be a map showing accessibility features of the assessed pedestrian routes in the Edmonds Town Centre. The map would be available in print form at recreation and seniors centres, online on the City's web site and in the next version of the Burnaby Access Guidebook.

Final Report – A final report to Council would be prepared on the findings of the accessibility assessment.

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From: Director Planning and Building
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4.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The UBCM has announced 2010 Age-friendly Community Planning and Project Grants. The funding is intended to assist local governments prepare for an aging population. The funding may be used to develop and implement policies, plans and projects that promote the creation of age-friendly communities and enable seniors to age in place.

It is recommended that the City indicate its support for an accessibility assessment of key pedestrian routes in the Edmonds Town Centre and authorize staff to apply for \$20,000 in funding from the UBCM to conduct the subject project, as outlined in section 3.0. Due to the deadline for grant applications, there was insufficient time to forward the proposal to the Social Issues Committee. However, staff have discussed the proposal with the Chair of the Committee and he concurs with its advancement to Council.

Given the foregoing, it is recommended that Council authorize staff to submit an application to the UBCM for an Age-Friendly Community Planning and Project Grant.

If funding is awarded, staff would pursue the next steps of the project including the development of a proposal call to select a consultant to assist with project implementation. Staff would also undertake overall grant management including financial accounting, project evaluation and progress and final reports to the UBCM.

It is further recommended that copies of this report be forwarded to the Social Issues Committee, Burnaby Access Advisory Committee, and the Voices of Burnaby Seniors.



B. Luksun, Director

for PLANNING AND BUILDING

BSI
MM:sa

cc: Director Engineering
Director Finance
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
City Clerk