11.0 Social Planning

11.1 Context

The 1987 OCP recognized the importance of incorporating social, economic and environmental considerations into its land use planning process. A fundamental premise of the OCP and, indeed, Burnaby’s overall approach to planning, is that planning is a comprehensive and integrated process which links physical, economic, environmental and social factors.

Since the last OCP was prepared, the Provincial Government strengthened the legislative framework for social planning in BC municipalities, adding the following two sections to the Municipal Act in 1994:

- **Section 530:**
  A Council may provide for social planning to be undertaken, including research, analysis, and coordination relating to social needs, social well-being and social development in the municipality, and

- **Section 878 (1)[a]:**
  A community plan may include . . . policies of the local government relating to social needs, social well-being and social development.

The City has also strengthened its social planning capacity in recent years through the establishment of the Community Issues & Social Planning Committee of Council, adoption of various social planning policies, and pursuit of numerous social planning initiatives in accordance with the social planning framework set forth in the 1987 OCP.

While acknowledging that planning needs to occur in a comprehensive, integrated manner, it is important that the social component be explicitly articulated and understood. To this end, this section of the OCP outlines the directions for social planning in Burnaby.

11.2 Social Planning Goal

**Goal: Social Planning**

To facilitate the development and ongoing sustainability of a community which enhances the physical, social, psychological and cultural well-being of Burnaby residents.
now than it was in the past given such trends as:

- overall anticipated growth of the population and the inherent planning challenges this poses;
- increasing urbanity, diversity, and complexity of society;
- decreasing senior government commitment to social program funding and related downloading of responsibilities to the local level;
- a continued total increase in the 65+ age population;
- changing family structures and roles (e.g., single parent and blended families);
- an increasingly mobile and transient population;
- an increasing growth in labour force participation of women with children;
- an increasingly multicultural, ethnically diverse population;
- continued integration of the mentally and physically disabled into the community; and
- rising and increasingly sophisticated expectations from the public within a “do more with less” environment.

### 11.3 Directions

The 1987 OCP articulated a set of directions or underlying values for Burnaby’s social planning efforts. These directions have generally stood the test of time and, with minor adjustments, are reconfirmed for the updated OCP. They are as follows:

- **Accessibility and Inclusion:**
  Services, programs, facilities, and neighbourhood environments should be accessible to all Burnaby residents irrespective of their physical, economic, social or cultural characteristics.

- **Appropriateness:**
  Services, programs, and facilities should be of an appropriate type, scale, design, and location to serve individuals and the community.

- **Choice:**
  To the extent practical and reasonable, Burnaby residents should have an opportunity to choose the types of services, programs, and facilities they wish to use.

- **Cooperation:**
  The planning and provision of services, programs, and facilities should be done on a cooperative basis, involving appropriate agencies, groups, and individuals in the process.

- **Efficiency and Effectiveness:**
  Services, programs, and facilities should be delivered in an efficient, effective manner, with their outcomes being evaluated from both a social and economic perspective.

- **Equity and Fairness:**
  The planning and distribution of services, programs, and facilities should occur in a fair and equitable manner.

- **Independence:**
  Services, programs, facilities, and the built environment should be designed to enable people to function at their maximum level of independence.

- **Integration:**
  Unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise, providers of services, programs, and facilities should adopt a policy of integration in serving the public, with segregated service delivery only occurring in special cases, as warranted.

- **Interdependency:**
  The City, other levels of government, agencies, groups, and individuals should be encouraged to acknowledge their important and interdependent roles in contributing to the community’s well being.
The Framework

Social Planning

The framework for social planning activities in Burnaby is generally oriented around four broad objectives relating to social policy and advocacy, the physical environment, special needs housing, and human services planning.

11.4.1 Social Policy and Advocacy

The objective of the City’s social policy and advocacy work is to develop policies and make recommendations to senior levels of government to address identified social needs in Burnaby. The City has adopted a number of social policies in recent years, such as the Burnaby Multiculturalism Policy, Civic Youth Strategy, Equity Policy, Child Care Policy, Healthy Community Policy, and Adaptable Housing and Group Home Policies. The City has been and will remain a strong advocate to senior levels of government for introductions of or improvements to various social programs and policies (e.g. introduction of a National Child Care Plan).

In performing its social policy and advocacy role, the City is committed to:

- monitoring social needs in Burnaby on an ongoing basis and, as appropriate, developing City policies or recommending actions by senior levels of government;
- maintaining liaison with the Burnaby Inter-Agency Council, community groups, and other appropriate parties to gather information on emerging social policy or advocacy needs; and
- developing implementation strategies for adopted City policies and ensuring that the policies are actively pursued.

11.4.2 Physical Environment

The objective of social planning for the physical environment is to ensure that social needs are recognized and, as appropriate, addressed in the planning of the built environment. Social needs are conceived of broadly. For example, they may include basic needs which can be addressed through provision of facilities and services (e.g., child care facilities and office or program space for non profit human service providers). They may also include such “quality of life” concerns as ensuring that developments are safe, sufficiently accessible, pedestrian-friendly and conducive to social interaction.

An emphasis will be placed on strengthening the integration of the City’s social and land use planning processes. The recently established Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) review process for development plans and rezonings is an example of efforts to improve this integration. Priority will also be placed on preparing policy guidelines for obtaining facilities and other amenities through the rezoning process with reference to the geographic area and scale of development proposed.

11.4.3 Special Needs Housing

Special needs housing refers to housing for people who, for varying reasons, cannot have their housing needs met through the traditional housing market. A person may have a special need for such reasons as a physical disability, mental handicap, or family situation (e.g. spousal abuse). Examples of special needs housing include group homes, units that are accessible or adaptable for physically disabled occupants, and continuing care facilities. Planning
for special needs housing is part of the City’s overall residential framework. It is discussed separately as a social planning matter, however, because of its distinctly social character. Specifically, the human service and shelter requirements of people with special needs are interrelated, and the line between the two is often blurred.

The objective of planning for special needs housing is to facilitate development of housing for Burnaby residents who have special needs. The City is committed to pursuing this objective by:

- preparing policies relating to development of various forms of special needs housing (e.g., the City currently has a Group Home Policy and Adaptable Housing Policy);
- encouraging private developers to include adaptable dwelling units and accessible designs in multi-family housing developments;
- working with the Continuing Care Division of the Simon Fraser Health Region in preparing plans for future continuing care facility developments in Burnaby;
- making adjustments to the Burnaby Zoning Bylaw and other regulations to accommodate new forms of housing for seniors in Burnaby’s residential communities (e.g., Abbeyfield housing and other small scale group living options);
- designating sites for special needs housing in future community plans; and
- seeking special needs housing units from private developers through the development approval process (e.g., using bonus zoning arrangements or other mechanisms).

### 11.4.4 Human Services Planning

Human services encompass a range of services intended to meet the distinctly social, as opposed to property, needs of the population. Examples include child care, education, counseling, and immigrant settlement. With the exception of services offered by the Parks and Recreation Department, the City is generally not a direct provider of human services. Rather, its role is usually that of advocate, funder, or partner.

The objective in planning for human services is to ensure that an appropriate level and variety of human services are available to meet the needs of the local population. The City seeks to meet this objective through such means as:

- advocating to senior levels of government for establishment of needed services and programs;
- working with government departments and non-profit agencies in needs identification and service planning;
- making space available to human service providers at the City’s Community Resource Centres, recreation centres, and other venues;
- forming partnerships with other human service providers in the funding or delivery of services (e.g., cost-sharing the budget for Burnaby’s Community School program with the School District);
- providing Community Grants to qualifying non-profit agencies; and
- addressing human service requirements in community plans (e.g., encouraging developers to include space for human service agencies in major new developments).

### 11.5 The Future

The next decade will present challenges. The population is projected to grow in size, as well as in diversity and complexity. Also, senior government funding is expected to become increasingly difficult to secure, causing uncertainty about necessary expansion of services and facilities to support the anticipated growth.

It is difficult to predict which social issues will require the greatest priority attention over the life of this OCP. Nonetheless, in the future, Burnaby’s social planning activities will continue to focus on the four substantive areas identified above [i.e., social policy and advocacy, physical environment, special needs housing, and human services planning] in its efforts to improve the social environment in which we live, play and work.
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