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**TO:** CITY MANAGER **DATE:** 2016 April 29  
**FROM:** DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING **FILE:** 73000 02  
**SUBJECT:** PROMOTION OF THE 2016 CENSUS  
**PURPOSE:** To provide information on the 2016 Census.

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **THAT** Council receive this report for information purposes.

**REPORT****1.0 BACKGROUND**

The next census of Canada will take place on 2016 May 12. The census determines a population count for Canada, as well as for individual provinces, territories and municipalities. The census will provide important population information for the City as well as Burnaby residents, businesses and community services providers. Information from the census is used when planning for new schools, roads, waterworks, public transit, police and fire services, current and future housing needs, healthcare, and child care. Population estimates obtained from the census are also used in determining transfer payments from the Federal Government to the Provinces and Territories, and from the Provinces to cities like Burnaby. It is also used to determine the number of representatives for the Federal House of Commons, the Senate, and for the Provincial Legislature.

In early May, all households in Canada will be mailed instructions about the census. At that time, households can choose to complete the census questionnaire online or request a paper copy of the questionnaire. Participation in the census is mandatory. Three out of four households will receive a short-form census with 10 questions, while one of four will receive the re-instated mandatory long-form census with 60 questions. The short-form census asks for basic household information such as address, marital status and number of children, while the long-form requests further information such as citizenship and immigration status, ethnic background, education, income, housing, child care and other support payments, and labour force participation and occupations. All personal information gathered from the census is kept confidential.

## **2.0 RE-INSTATED LONG-FORM CENSUS**

In the lead-up to the 2011 National Census, the Federal Government eliminated the mandatory long-form census and replaced it with a voluntary National Household Survey. In the 2006 Census, a completion rate of 94% was achieved for the mandatory long form. In 2011, despite the voluntary long form being sent to one in three Canadian households, an average completion rate of only 68% was achieved. Statistics Canada reported that in some communities the response rates dropped to 25% or lower.

The elimination of the mandatory long-form census particularly affected data quality at the municipal and neighbourhood level for the 2011 period. Municipalities draw on reliable and representative data that can be disaggregated to smaller geographies in order to respond to local and neighbourhood level trends, and to inform community planning and service programming. In Burnaby, response rates at the dissemination area level ranged from a low of 40.7% up to 94.7%, making it difficult to compare data across different areas of the city, as well as impacting the ability to develop trend analyses.

In 2011, the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) adopted a resolution calling for the immediate re-instatement of the long-form census. The resolution was forwarded to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) who wrote a formal request to Mr. Tony Clement, then Minister of Industry and the Minister Responsible for Statistics Canada. At its meeting of 2015 March 9, Burnaby Council re-iterated concerns regarding data quality from the National Household Survey and passed a similar resolution. The resolution was subsequently endorsed by the UBCM.

In 2015 December, the new Federal Government re-instated the mandatory long-form for the 2016 Census. Statistics Canada anticipates that the reinstatement will improve the level of data accuracy. It is aiming for a 98% response rate from all households contacted through the census, with 68% of responses received online.

## **3.0 PROMOTION OF THE 2016 CENSUS**

Statistics Canada is undertaking the following actions to promote the 2016 Census:

- an integrated communications strategy that includes the use of social media and paid advertisements on radio and television, including specific ethnic media;
- user-friendly access to the online questionnaire available for all types of technology including lap tops, tablets and smartphones and an easier to use application for people with visual impairments;
- outreach to ethnic associations to create awareness about the census;
- translation of the census questions in 22 languages (including First Nations languages); and
- staffing a Census Helpline (1-855-700-2016) with staff who speak many languages.

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Burnaby, like many cities, can participate in the census process by:

- promoting census participation on the City's website and through notices on social media such as Facebook and Twitter;
- distributing and displaying promotional materials such as posters and book marks at City Hall and the City's community centres and libraries; and,
- generally promoting the importance of the census and how citizens benefit from responding to the census.

Staff would again propose to undertake these actions to promote the census over the next four to six weeks of the census campaign. These efforts can be accomplished at little or no cost to the City, and can benefit the City by helping to ensure that accurate and complete census data is obtained.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

The 2016 Census will take place in May this year. The census provides important population information that is vital to planning for community services and determining transfer payments from senior governments. To assist in promoting the census, staff propose to undertake the actions outlined above. Once released, staff will prepare further reports to Council on the results and findings of the 2016 Census.

  
Lou Pelletier, Director  
PLANNING AND BUILDING

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cc: Deputy City Manager  
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services  
Director Engineering  
Director Finance  
Chief Librarian  
City Clerk

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