

**TO:** CHAIR AND MEMBERS  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 2020 August 31

**FROM:** DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

**FILE:** 1750 20

**SUBJECT:** UPDATE OF CITY OF BURNABY EQUITY POLICY

**PURPOSE:** To propose draft language for the City's updated Equity Policy.

---

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** the Committee request Council to approve the updated City Equity Policy, as outlined in *Section 5.0* of this report.
2. **THAT** the Committee request Council to approve the implementation framework outlined in *Section 6.0* of this report.
3. **THAT** a copy of this report be referred to the Social Planning Committee for information.

## REPORT

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

At its meeting of 2019 December 05, the Executive Committee passed a motion requesting staff to bring forward a report with a proposed update to the City of Burnaby's Equity Policy. Staff responded with a report received by the Executive Committee at its 2020 June 3 meeting, which proposed draft language to update the City's Equity Policy. This language was reviewed by the Committee and further referred to the Social Planning Committee for comment. The report was received by the Social Planning Committee at its 2020 June 16 meeting. *Section 5.0* below outlines the comments raised by the Social Planning Committee and proposed further amendments to the updated Equity Policy.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND

The existing Equity Policy was adopted by Council at its meeting of 1994 June 13, resulting from a discussion which took place at the time amongst Council, and in the wider community, regarding an expansion of City services and hiring practices to better reflect the broad diversity of the Burnaby community. The policy makes explicit the City's commitment to provide "equitable access to City services for all members of the community" and that "The City has a duty to its citizens to set a positive example and foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect among employees in the

workplace and the community at large”. Since this time the policy has guided and supported all aspects of City operations. However, understandings of diversity (in all forms) has expanded since the 1990’s and the policy would benefit from an update of language.

### 3.0 POLICY CONTEXT

The proposed update of the City’s Equity Policy is supported by the following policy context:

- ***Burnaby Social Sustainability Strategy***, approved by Council in 2011, includes a primary goal of ‘Community Inclusion’. This goal is particularly concerned with ensuring the City is “welcoming of all cultures, identities and abilities”, and focuses on “principles of economic and social security and justice”.

In addition to the policies noted above, the *Plan* supports a number of goals and sub-goals of the *Corporate Strategic Plan*:

- ***An Inclusive Community***
  - Celebrate diversity – Create more opportunities for the community to celebrate diversity
  - Serve a diverse community – Ensure City services fully meet the needs of our dynamic community
  - Create a sense of community – Provide opportunities that encourage and welcome all community members and create a sense of belonging
- ***A Thriving Organization***
  - Organizational culture – Ensure that our core values are reflected in our policies, programs and services delivery

### 3.0 LOCAL CONTEXT

In 1994, when the Equity Policy was originally adopted, the City of Burnaby had a population of approximately 159,000, with approximately 15 primary languages (other than English) noted in the 1991 Statistics Canada community profile. The 1990’s was a time of change and growth for Burnaby. This was especially so in terms of ethno-cultural diversity. For example, the percentage of Burnaby community members who self-identified as Chinese-Canadian expanded from 12.7% to 30.8% between the years 1991-1996.

Given this context, the original Equity Policy (see *Appendix I*) largely focussed on ethno-cultural diversity in its language, though it has been applied by subsequent Councils to other aspects of diversity. Today Burnaby has a population of approximately 232,755 and has become a hyper-diverse community. For example:

- Burnaby is only one of eight cities in Canada without a ‘majority ethnic group’<sup>1</sup>;

---

<sup>1</sup> Phrasing used by Statistics Canada which indicates that no particular ethno-cultural group accounts for more than 40% of the total municipal population.

- over half of those who live in Burnaby were not born in Canada;
- Burnaby is the third highest ‘refugee receiving’ city in BC and also receives a significant number of ‘refugee claimants’<sup>2</sup> each year;
- over 120 languages are spoken in Burnaby;
- the number of Indigenous persons living in Burnaby is increasing;
- approximately 11% of Burnaby’s population live with an activity or health limitation<sup>3</sup>;
- approximately 16% of Burnaby’s population is 65 years of age or older;
- it is generally estimated that approximately 2-5% of the Canadian population identify as LGBTQIA2S+<sup>4</sup>, including at a municipal level. These numbers have increased over time, and are higher among younger people. Approximately 10% of those aged 18 to 34 years self-report as LGBTQIA2S+;
- approximately 20% of all age-brackets of individuals living in Burnaby live with low incomes<sup>5</sup>; and
- at last count (2020), there were 124 homeless people in Burnaby, with more individuals uncounted or at risk of homelessness.

As described above, over the last quarter century, Burnaby has witnessed significant changes in its demographic profile. It has evolved from a suburban community to a significant urban centre that is demographically, socially, economically and culturally diverse.

#### **4.0 DRAFT UPDATED EQUITY POLICY**

Based upon the realities of Burnaby’s changing community, and to better reflect contemporary understandings of diversity, the following language was proposed in the 2020 June 3 report noted above as a draft update to the City of Burnaby’s Equity Policy.

The City of Burnaby celebrates the diverse nature of its community and recognizes that this diversity is a source of social, cultural and economic enrichment and strength.

Our Burnaby includes all community members regardless of ability, age, background, ethno-cultural identification, gender, gender identity, immigration status, heritage, life experience, living arrangement, sexual orientation, and other factors.

As such, the City of Burnaby reaffirms and is committed to ensuring that all community members are able to safely and equitably access City spaces, programs, employment opportunities, and services. The City has a duty to its citizens to set a positive example and foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect in its hiring practices and among its employees, patrons at its facilities, users of its services, and within the community at large.

<sup>2</sup> A ‘refugee claimant’ is defined as a person who is seeking Canada’s protection at the borders (arriving via air, over the border with the United States, via boat etc.) or within the country, rather than those who arrive in Canada already being recognized by the Federal Government as a refugee.

<sup>3</sup> Term used by Statistics Canada to refer to persons with self-reported disabilities.

<sup>4</sup> LGBTQIA2S+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersexual, Asexual, Two-Spirited and ‘other’.

<sup>5</sup> As defined by Statistics Canada: “those likely, based on place-based prices and circumstances, to spend 20 percentage points or more of income on food, shelter and clothing”.

## 5.0 FURTHER AMENDED PROPOSED UPDATED EQUITY POLICY

As noted above, a copy of the report containing the proposed update of the City's Equity Policy was forwarded to the Social Planning Committee for review and comment. While the Committee did not make any formally moved amendments, the following feedback was provided:

- that the updated Policy should have a greater focus on the most vulnerable members of our community; and
- that implementation plans for the updated Policy consider its alignment with other civic policies, operational plans, and services.

Based on this feedback, staff are proposing the following further amended language for the update of the City's Equity Policy (see *Appendix 2*). Language is repeated below, with changes noted in italics.

The City of Burnaby celebrates the *full diversity* of its community and recognizes that this diversity is a source of social, cultural and economic enrichment and strength.

Our Burnaby includes all community members regardless of ability, age, background, ethno-cultural identification, gender, gender identity, immigration status, *income*, heritage, life experience, *housed or unhoused status*, sexual orientation, and other factors.

As such, the City of Burnaby reaffirms and is committed to ensuring that all community members are able to safely and equitably access City spaces, programs, employment opportunities, and services *including the most vulnerable members of our community*. The City has a duty to its citizens to set a positive example and foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect in its hiring practices and among its employees, patrons at its facilities, users of its services, and within the community at large.

## 6.0 PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

The City's Equity Policy is currently implemented via the City's Social Sustainability Strategy and Corporate Strategic Plan, both of which provided wide-reaching and organization-wide direction on generating, animating, preserving and promoting a fully inclusive community. Updating the language of the Equity Policy provides an opportunity to widen this application, and to alert staff and the public to these changes. In order to ensure that the proposed updated Equity Policy continues to play a core role in shaping civic policy, programs and initiatives, the following supplementary implementation methods are proposed:

- Update the Corporate Strategic Plan to reference equity, and include reference to the Equity Policy;
- Refresh the Social Sustainability Strategy to confirm alignment with contemporary community needs and issues;
- Develop a toolkit and provide accompanying training on the toolkit, to provide support and direction for staff on how to apply the updated Equity Policy to their work; and

To: Executive Committee  
From: Director Planning and Building  
Re: Update of City of Burnaby Equity Policy  
2020 August 31..... Page 5

- Work with community partners to arrange public education and awareness opportunities (within physical distancing requirements) around understandings of equity and how it can be ‘lived’ in daily life.

Should this framework be approved, staff would provide subsequent reports to Council outlining these proposed implementation efforts in more detail, including staffing, departmental roles and responsibilities, and budget implications, for further discussion and approval.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

Burnaby is a highly diverse community. The City’s existing Equity Policy, originally approved by Council in 1994, has served the City well. However, the policy would benefit from a language update based upon contemporary understandings of diversity and equity.

As such, it is recommended that the Committee request Council to approve the updated City Equity Policy, as outlined in *Section 5.0* of this report. It is also recommended that the Committee request Council to approve the implementation framework as outlined in *Section 6.0* of this report.

Finally, it is recommended that a copy of this report be referred to the Social Planning Committee for information.

  
E.W. Kozak, Director  
PLANNING AND BUILDING

RM/sa

### *Attachments*

cc:	City Manager	Director Corporate Services
	Director Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services	Fire Chief
	Director Engineering	Chief Librarian
	Director Finance	OIC – RCMP
	Director Public Safety and Community Services	City Solicitor
	Director Human Resources	City Clerk

## **City of Burnaby Equity Policy**

Burnaby City Council recognizes that the diverse nature of its community is a source of social, cultural and economic enrichment and strength, and that local government is responsible and accountable to its community.

The City has established a Multicultural Policy and a Healthy Community Policy to help achieve an environment where all people are treated with dignity and respect and support one another to meet their common needs.

Burnaby City Council reaffirms and is committed to fairness in employment and to equitable access to City services. The City has a duty to its citizens to set a positive example and foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect among employees in the workplace and the community at large.

Burnaby City Council recognizes that individuals, groups and organizations may encounter barriers accessing City employment opportunities and services, and in receiving equal benefit from services provided.

Burnaby City Council therefore undertakes to define and implement measures to ensure:

- 1) Equality of opportunity in the workplace
- 2) Equitable access to City services for all members of the community

Adopted by Burnaby City Council 1994 June 13

## **City of Burnaby Equity Policy**

The City of Burnaby celebrates the full diversity of its community, and recognizes that this diversity is a source of social, cultural and economic enrichment and strength.

Our Burnaby includes all community members regardless of ability, age, background, ethno-cultural identification, gender, gender identity, immigration status, income, heritage, life experience, housed or unhoused status, sexual orientation, and other factors.

As such, the City of Burnaby reaffirms and is committed to ensuring that all community members are able to safely and equitably access City spaces, programs, employment opportunities, and services - including the most vulnerable members of our community. The City has a duty to its citizens to set a positive example and foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect in its hiring practices and among its employees, patrons at its facilities, users of its services, and within the community at large.

Originally adopted by Burnaby City Council 1994 June 13

Updated and Adapted Policy adopted by Burnaby City Council 2020 \_\_\_\_\_