

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

DATE: 2020 September 08

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING **FILE:** 1750-20

SUBJECT: UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF
AFRICAN DESCENT

PURPOSE: To request direction from Council on the Social Planning Committee motion to develop an 'action plan' related to the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** the Committee request that Council direct staff on the work to be undertaken related to the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent, as outlined in *Sections 4.0 and 5.0* of this report.

REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Social Planning Committee, under the New Business portion of its Open meeting held on 2020 June 16, received a motion requesting the City of Burnaby to formally proclaim the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent, and to develop an action plan to implement the objectives of the Decade. The notice of motion was referred to staff. The motion is as follows:

THAT the Social Planning Committee request Mayor Hurley create a special committee on the International Decade for People of African Descent, and that the special committee be tasked with presenting an official Burnaby Action Plan on the International Decade for People of African Descent to Council by the end of 2020; and

THAT the Social Planning Committee request Mayor Hurley mandate the special committee on the International Decade for People of African Descent to use the "Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on its Mission to Canada" and "Nova Scotia's Action Plan in Response to the International Decade for People of African Descent" as guiding documents in the development of the Burnaby Action Plan; and

THAT the Social Planning Committee request Council direct City staff to assist with the hiring of a facilitator for the Task Force and to help with scheduling meetings; and

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THAT the Social Planning Committee request Council direct City staff to assist the special committee on the International Decade for People of African Descent with a budget that accounts for the proposed recommendations of the special committee's Action Plan, before the final Action Plan is adopted by Council.

The notice was waived, and the Committee adopted the following motion:

THAT this notice of motion be **REFERRED** to staff to provide recommendations at the next meeting on how to pursue issues in the notice of motion.

This report responds to the motion.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

The proposed development of an 'action plan' related to the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent 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

3.0 BACKGROUND

On 2017 February 7, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2015-2024 as the International Decade for People of African Descent (resolution 68/237) citing the need to strengthen national, regional and international cooperation in relation to the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights by people of African descent, and their full and equal participation in all aspects of society.

As proclaimed by the General Assembly, the theme for the International Decade is 'People of African descent: recognition, justice and development'. The main objectives of the International Decade are to:

- Promote respect, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by people of African Descent.
- Promote a greater knowledge of and respect for the diverse heritage, culture and contribution of people of African descent to the development of societies.
- Adopt and strengthen national, regional and international legal frameworks [...] on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and to ensure their full and effective implementation.

4.0 LOCAL CONTEXT

The City of Burnaby has long been committed to the pursuit and support of social and economic equity, and the full inclusion of all community members. This has been enshrined in policy since the 1990's including the Healthy Community Policy (1991) and the Equity Policy (1994). More recently this commitment has been solidified through the Social Sustainability Strategy (2011) and the Corporate Strategic Plan (2017).

The focus on inclusion has been actioned through a myriad of programs and initiatives, including:

- The City is a member of the UNESCO Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities (2012).
- The City is a founding member of the Burnaby Intercultural Planning Table (2007).
- The City is a founding member of the Burnaby Together: Organizing Against Racism and Hate Table (2017).
- The City is a founding member of the Burnaby Inter-Faith Network (2014).
- An Access Advisory Committee has provided advice and input to the City on access and inclusion issues related to persons with disabilities since 1998.
- Burnaby City Council formally recognized that Burnaby is on unceded Indigenous territory in 2019 June 2019 and approved beginning Government-to-Government relations with local First Nations in 2019 November.
- After a multi-year collaborative process, the Indigenous History in Burnaby Resource Guide was published in 2019¹.
- The City assisted in the set-up of Burnaby Pride, and provides financial and logistical support for an annual Pride event(s) which celebrates and provides visibility in relation to Burnaby's diverse LGBTQIA2S+ community².
- The City is undertaking an exercise to develop gender neutral and accessible signage for all City facilities.
- Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services are offering expanded culturally aware and diverse programming and performances.

¹ A copy of the Guide can be found at:
<http://www.burnabyvillagemuseum.ca/assets/Documents/Teachers~Guides/Indigenous%20History%20in%20Burnaby%20Resouce%20Guide.pdf>

² LGBTQIA2S+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersexual, Asexual, Two-Spirited and 'other'.

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- Burnaby Public Library is expanding the scope of its public programming, with explicit focus on equity, e.g. International Women's Day Event (March 2020), National Indigenous Day Event (June 2019), Introduction to Disability Justice Workshop (December 2019). Methods for continuing this work within the realities of physical distancing are being development. The library is also working to expand it's collection with a focus on BIPOC³ authors.

Specifically in relation to supporting the full and equal inclusion of Black community members and/or People of African Descent, the City has undertaken some efforts including:

- Providing subsidized City-owned office space to the local non-profit organization the National Congress of Black Women. The Congress focusses on programming for youth including leadership programs and social justice/ anti-racism symposiums.
- Offering grants, via the Festivals Burnaby Granting Program, to organizations and groups providing programming to recognize Black History Month (annually in February) including family-oriented programming.
- Organizing public library programming and resources compiled in recognition of Black History Month.
- Proclaiming Black History Month via Burnaby City Council.
- Developing public library resource compilations related to 'Black Lives Matter'.

5.0 DISCUSSION

A component of the Social Planning work program is to advance actions in the areas of 'Community Inclusion' (*Social Sustainability Strategy*), and 'An Inclusive Community' (*Corporate Strategic Plan*) (see *Section 2.0* of this report). This type of work is usually done in collaboration with other City departments and community partners. While the motion received by the Social Planning Committee specifically requested that the City of Burnaby develop an 'action plan' to proclaim and implement the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent, and to identify a process for doing this work, staff recommend that this work could be incorporated in staff's existing work program. Should the City wish to proceed with this work, the following are example activities that could be undertaken within the existing work program:

- Seek to better understand the current experience of Black community members and/or People of African Descent in Burnaby. This understanding could be pursued in collaboration with community partners including Burnaby Together: Coalition Against Racism and Hate and the Burnaby Intercultural Planning Table.
- Articulate both community success and areas where community-focused improvement is needed.
- Define roles for the City in addressing issues identified through the process above.
- Identify roles for non-profit organizations, community associations and others to address current experience.
- To describe areas of advocacy needed to higher levels of government.

³ BIPOC: Black, Indigenous and People of Colour

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Should the City wish to proceed, further work would be needed to develop an appropriate process to address this topic in order to ensure its alignment with both community and City priorities. As such, staff are seeking Committee and Council's direction to begin this more detailed work. Should this direction be received, a subsequent report will be brought forward to Committee and Council which would describe a proposed process in more detail, including budget and staffing implications. This second report will allow for further discussion and approval regarding how this work could be approached. The recommended approach to this work outlined in this report addresses many of the main components of the motion but proposes to align the work with the existing work plan, staff resources, and leverages community networks.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

Building upon Burnaby's long-standing commitment to social and economic justice and its ongoing focus on inclusion for all community members, it is recommended that the Committee request Council authorize staff to begin work on an 'action plan' related to the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent, as outlined in *Sections 4.0 and 5.0* of this report.


E.W. Kozak, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

RM/sa

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