

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

DATE: 2021 February 18

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

FILE: 1750 20

SUBJECT: CHILD CARE RESOURCES GROUP UPDATE FOR 2021

PURPOSE: To provide a summary of activities of the Child Care Resources Group during 2020 and propose a work plan for 2021.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** the Committee request Council to endorse the proposed 2021 Child Care Resources Group work plan.
2. **THAT** the Committee request Council to approve an expenditure of \$400 from the 2021 Boards, Committees and Commissions budget to support the activities of the Burnaby Child Care Provider Appreciation event in 2021 May, as detailed in *Section 4.0* of this report.

REPORT**1.0 BACKGROUND**

The Child Care Resources Group (CCRG) was established in 1990 as an advisory body to the City on child care matters. It is comprised of representatives from non-profit child care societies operating in Burnaby, as well as Fraser Health Community Care Facilities Licensing, the Burnaby School District, the Burnaby-New Westminster Child Care Resource and Referral Program, and the City's Planning and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Departments.

As outlined in its Terms of Reference and Burnaby's Child Care Policy, the mandate of the CCRG is to:

- serve as an advisory body on child care matters;
- assist with the development of Burnaby child care policies, services and programs; and,
- act as an advocate for child care services and programs in Burnaby.

In accordance with the Child Care Policy, the CCRG has prepared update reports on its activities for the Social Planning Committee and Council. This report provides an overview of activities in 2020 and proposes a work plan for the CCRG for 2021.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

Over the years, the CCRG has assisted staff in monitoring the child care environment and identifying and providing advice to address emerging issues in child care. It was instrumental in developing the City's Child Care Policy, adopted in 1994 and revised in 2000. The Policy's vision states that the City is committed to:

- assisting with the creation of a comprehensive and inclusive child care system in Burnaby;
- supporting families and children in their search for child care options; and,
- working with the Board of Education, government ministries, child care providers, community service providers, and others in pursuing the City's child care objectives.

Further, the Child Care Policy states that the City will work to improve the availability, accessibility, and affordability of child care by providing appropriate and sufficient opportunities for the establishment of child care facilities within the context of the Official Community Plan, community plans, the Burnaby Zoning Bylaw, and other City regulations.

These policy statements are also identified as key objectives in the City's Social Sustainability Strategy, adopted in 2011. The Strategy recognizes the role child care plays in people's economic security and its contribution towards the development of complete communities (communities with a range of housing, services, transportation options and amenities within their own boundaries). Similarly, the City's Environmental Sustainability Strategy supports the development of complete communities that are walkable, bikeable and transit-supported. City policies recognize that while the provision and regulation of child care is the responsibility of the Provincial government, the City can play a supportive role.

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

A Connected Community

- Social connection – Enhance social connections throughout Burnaby
- Partnership – Work collaboratively with businesses, educational institutions, association, other communities and governments

An Inclusive Community

- 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 Dynamic Community

- Economic opportunity – Foster an environment that attracts new and supports existing jobs, businesses and industries
- Community development – Manage change by balancing economic development with environmental protection and maintaining a sense of belonging

3.0 KEY ACTIVITIES OF THE CCRG IN 2020

3.1 Social Sustainability Strategy Action Related to Child Care

In 2020, the CCRG provided advice related to Action #2 in the Burnaby Social Sustainability Strategy:

Continue to advocate to the federal and provincial governments for a comprehensive and integrated child care plan which establishes an early care and learning system that is universal, publicly funded, inclusive, affordable, and of high quality.

The CCRG has continued to track child care policy and programs at the Provincial and Federal level. In 2017, the Provincial government committed to building a universal child care system for BC that would address the critical shortage of quality, affordable child care spaces. The 2018 Provincial budget contained a three-year implementation plan that focused on the affordability of child care (a fee reduction and subsidy program for parents), creation of new spaces through a major capital funding program, and initiatives to increase the number of qualified Early Childhood Educators to work in the sector. The City has benefitted from the Province's new spaces initiatives: in 2019 January the City was awarded a capital grant of \$1 million each for the development of the Montecito and Capitol Hill child care centres. The Montecito facility opened in 2020 September and the Capitol Hill facility will open in 2021 March.

In addition, through the Federal and BC Governments' Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Agreement, the Province, through the UBCM, awarded the City a capital grant of \$1million in 2020 February for the Stride child care centre. The Stride facility, currently under construction, will provide 12 infant/toddler (0 to 36 months) spaces and 25 spaces for children aged 3 to 5 years. As with the Montecito and Capitol Hill facilities, the Stride facility is being developed as part of the City and School District Child Care Facilities Memorandum of Agreement. The Stride facility will be constructed and owned by the City, managed by the School District, and operated by a locally-based non-profit child care provider.

The Federal-Provincial ELCC Agreement has also directed funding to over 50 prototype sites in BC to test the funding and operational models required to move BC towards a universal child care program. Families at prototype sites pay \$200 or less per month per child for full-time child care. Four of the prototype sites are located in Burnaby and provide a total of 136 licensed spaces. Two of the prototypes sites are operated by CCRG members: the Fair Haven Children's Centre is operated by the Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion and the Burnaby South Child Care Centre for young parents is operated by Burnaby Family Life. Insights gained from the prototype sites will be instrumental in advancing the work to create a universal, publicly funded, quality early care and learning system in BC.

To assist with child care planning, the Province has also provided funding through the UBCM to offer local governments grants to develop community-based child care needs assessments and action plans. The City applied for and received a \$25,000 grant from the UBCM in 2019 March. As detailed below, the CCRG has provided direction and support for the City's needs assessment and action plan processes.

3.2 Child Care Needs Assessment and Action Plan

The process to conduct the needs assessment and develop an action plan includes the following steps:

- development of a child care space inventory that identifies the number of existing spaces by type (group or home-based) and location;
- a stakeholder engagement process with parents, child care providers and other relevant stakeholders that has included surveys, focus groups and workshops;
- a needs analysis including utilization rates, trends in usage, gaps in service and a policy review of relevant documents; and,
- development of an action plan to address child care needs.

To date, the CCRG has provided valuable advice in the design of the parent and child care provider surveys, assisted staff in recruiting focus group participants from vulnerable populations, and helped to promote and distribute links to the online surveys¹.

In 2020 July, CCRG members, along with other child care providers from across the city, participated in a Solutions Workshop to review the results of the engagement process and identify space creation targets and strategies to address the community's child care needs over the next ten years. A similar workshop was held with City Council, the Burnaby Board of Education and staff from both organizations in July as well. In the fall 2020, the CCRG reviewed a preliminary draft of the action plan.

3.3 Child Care Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the entire COVID-19 pandemic, child care services have remained open while other services, including schools, were closed in the early stages of the pandemic. In BC, child care programs were encouraged to remain open and provided additional funding so that essential workers from other sectors could access child care. As the pandemic has progressed, economic recovery plans, including those of the Province and the Burnaby Board of Trade, have highlighted the critical role child care will play in supporting economic recovery.

The relationships established over the years by CCRG members have proved invaluable during the pandemic. In the early stages, CCRG members held weekly online meetings to share information and resources as they adapted their programs to meeting evolving Provincial health orders. The Minister of State for Child Care and Burnaby-Lougheed MLA Katrina Chen attended one of these meetings to learn how CCRG members were adapting their services as well as to hear their disappointment that frontline child care workers were not eligible for Provincial "pandemic pay". Fortunately, some providers who received temporary emergency funding for child care services were able to use this funding to top-up the wages of child care workers.

¹ The survey of parents and guardians was open from 2019 December 5 to 2020 January 17. 1,156 responses were received. Three focus groups with vulnerable or underserved populations took place in January 2020. The child care provider survey was open from 2020 February 3 to March 10.

The CCRG continues to meet monthly to share information and resources as the child care situation continues to evolve during the pandemic.

3.4 Child Care Month

In recognition of the important role quality child care plays in the social and economic well being of the community, the CCRG celebrates child care month in May each year. Activities include the Child Care Appreciation event for child care providers from home-based, private and non-profit child care centres throughout Burnaby. The event includes a dinner and a professional development component. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, the 2020 Appreciation event was cancelled.

Fortunately, Burnaby Council proclaimed May as Child Care Month and the Mayor recorded a video message expressing the City's appreciation for the essential role child care providers were playing during the pandemic. The video message was shared widely and was much appreciated by the child care sector.

4.0 THE YEAR AHEAD – 2021

4.1 Finalization of Child Care Needs Assessment and Action Plan

The CCRG's main activity for 2021 will be to provide ongoing support and direction for the completion of the child care needs assessment and action plan. In 2021 March, stakeholders including the School District, Fraser Health Community Care Facilities Licensing, the Burnaby-New Westminster Child Care Resource and Referral, the Burnaby Board of Trade, child care providers, parents and other stakeholders will be asked to provide their feedback on the draft action plan. Once this step is completed, the final draft will be forwarded to the Social Planning Committee and Council for adoption. The draft action plan includes actions to complete in the short, medium, and long-term. Once adopted, the CCRG will support implementation of the action plan.

4.2 Celebration of Child Care Month

In addition to the work above, the CCRG proposes to celebrate Child Care Month in May 2021 by:

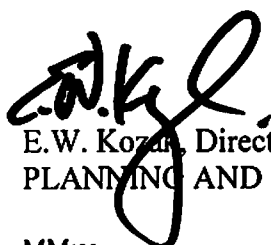
- requesting Burnaby Council to proclaim child care month, and,
- working with the Burnaby Early Childhood Development (ECD) Table in sponsoring the Child Care Provider Appreciation event on 2021 May 13. Since the 2020 Child Care Provider Appreciation event was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 event has taken on increased importance as a way to recognize the work of the child care sector during these challenging times. The 2021 event will use a video conferencing format and include a professional development component. Registered participants will receive craft supplies in advance that they will learn to use at the event and can use afterwards in their centres. To support this event, it is proposed the Social Planning Committee request Council to approve an expenditure of \$400 to assist with the materials needed for this event.

To: Social Planning Committee
From: Director Planning and Building
Re: Child Care Resources Group Update for 2021
2021 February 18..... Page 6

5.0 CONCLUSION

This report provides an overview of the CCRG's key activities in 2020. It also proposes a work plan for the CCRG for the year ahead. Specifically, the CCRG proposes to provide ongoing support and direction for the work involved to complete and implement the child care needs assessment and action plan for Burnaby.

It is also recommended that the Committee request Council to approve an expenditure of \$400 from the 2021 Boards, Committees and Commissions budget to support the activities planned for the Child Care Provider Appreciation event in 2021 May, as detailed in *Section 4.0* above.



E.W. Kozan, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

MM:sa

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