

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

DATE: 2021 April 28

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

FILE: 13000 02

SUBJECT: DRAFT CHILD CARE ACTION PLAN

PURPOSE: To present the draft Burnaby Child Care Action Plan for the approval of the Committee and Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** the Committee recommend that Council adopt the Burnaby Child Care Action Plan *attached* (see *Attachment A*) to this report.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report and the Child Care Action Plan be forwarded for information to:
 - Burnaby's four Members of the Legislature
 - Burnaby School District 41
 - Fraser Health Community Care Facilities Licensing
 - The YMCA Burnaby-New Westminster Child Care Resource and Referral
 - The Burnaby Board of Trade
3. **THAT** a copy of this report and the Child Care Action Plan be forwarded to members of the City's Child Care Resources Group, along with a letter of appreciation from the Mayor acknowledging their participation in the development of the Action Plan.

REPORT**1.0 BACKGROUND**

At its meeting on 2019 February 11, Council authorized staff to submit a grant application to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Child Care Planning Program to support the development of a Burnaby Child Care Action Plan (CCAP). In 2019 March, the City was advised that it received a grant of \$25,000 to develop the plan. Over the last two years, the City has engaged in a community consultation process to develop the CCAP. This report provides information on the consultation process and the strategic directions and actions contained in the Plan. The draft plan is *attached* (see *Attachment A*) and presented for Council's endorsement.

2.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK

The development of the Burnaby Child Care Action Plan aligns directly with 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 (2016) supports the development of complete communities that are walkable, bikeable and transit-supported.

The development of the CCAP also aligns with the goals and sub-goals of the City's Corporate Strategic Plan (2017) including:

- ***A Connected Community***
 - 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
- ***A Dynamic Community***
 - Economic opportunity – Foster an environment that attracts new and supports existing jobs, businesses and industries.

3.0 DRAFT CHILD CARE ACTION PLAN

Quality child care services are critical to the social and economic well-being of our community. Research confirms the importance of child care not only to families, but also to the economy, gender equality, social inclusion, healthy child development and poverty reduction strategies.

The City has long been recognized as a leader among BC municipalities with respect to child care. Adoption of the CCAP will enable the City to build on and enhance its solid child care foundation. The purpose of the Plan is to identify priority child care needs and to recommend actions to address emerging child care needs over the next ten years.

3.1 Community Engagement Process

In addition to reviewing relevant data and literature, several methods were used to develop the CCAP including an extensive consultation process with key stakeholders, as outlined below.

Parent Survey

To elicit the views of parents and caregivers on their child care needs, an online survey was developed and posted on the City of Burnaby website from 2019 November to 2020 January. 1,156 responses were received. The questions covered personal characteristics (e.g., household composition, place of residence), child care arrangements, child care needs, satisfaction with various aspects of care, and suggestions for improvements. The results of the survey showed that 74 percent of respondents found it somewhat difficult or very difficult to find child care. Seventy-five percent of respondents also said they had been on a waitlist for child care with 57 percent waiting more than a year to find a space.

Child care Provider Survey

An online survey was also used to gauge the views of key staff involved with delivering child care in Burnaby (e.g., executive directors, managers and coordinators). Sixteen responses were received. The questions covered such matters as services being delivered, gaps in services, numbers and characteristics of children in the programs, and facility information.

Community Agency/ Vulnerable Group Consultations

Representatives of several community agencies were consulted to gain insights into the needs of vulnerable groups in the community (e.g., recent immigrants, single parents, parents with children with extra support needs, and others who could face barriers with respect to child care). In addition, with the help of community agencies, 25 people from the vulnerable populations were engaged in focus groups to discuss their child care situations and challenges.

Child Care Solutions Workshop

After the other community engagement processes had been completed, the City hosted two Solutions Workshops. The first was for staff from the City, School District, child care facilities, Community Care Facilities Licensing (CCFL), Ministry for Children and Family Development (MCFD), and community partner groups. Twenty-eight people attended. The second workshop was for elected officials and senior staff from the City and School District 41. Twenty people attended. The purpose of the workshops was threefold: 1) provide a status update on the project, 2) share highlights of the information gathered to date, and 3) hear participants' views on child care space targets and their ideas for potential recommendations for the Plan.

Stakeholder Consultation on Key Elements of Draft Action Plan

In 2021 March, before finalizing the Action Plan, a summary of key findings and recommendations was distributed to stakeholders and posted on the City website. The intent was twofold: 1) provide an update on the Plan preparation and 2) offer stakeholders an opportunity to share their comments and insights before the final version was completed and submitted to Council for adoption. Responses were received from the Burnaby School District, the B.C. Centre for Ability/Burnaby Supported Child Development, and the Burnaby Board of Trade.

3.2 Priority Issues

Through the review of data and literature and the community engagement process, four priority issues were identified:

Accessibility – Many Burnaby families experience challenges in securing child care for their children. Vulnerable groups (e.g., single parents, recent immigrants, low income families, families with children requiring extra support) often face additional barriers to securing child care.

- In 2020, there were 17.5 licensed spaces per 100 children aged 0 – 12 years in Burnaby.
- 74% of those responding to the Parent/ Caregiver Survey indicated that they were on a waiting list before securing a space for their child. 57% reported that they were on a waiting list for more than a year.

Affordability – Despite recent Provincial investments in child care, high costs continue to be a major barrier for many families seeking child care. High costs can limit access to child care, force families to rely on care arrangements that do not meet their child's needs, and cause financial stress for families. As with accessibility, vulnerable groups are particularly susceptible to affordability concerns.

- In 2016, 22% of Burnaby children under 18 lived in low income households.
- In 2020, fees for group child care in Burnaby ranged from an average of \$402 per month for school age care to \$1,151 per month for infant care.

Quality – Research has demonstrated that high quality child care is linked to positive outcomes for children, while poor quality care can have negative long-term effects. Respondents to the Parent/ Caregiver Survey repeatedly stressed their concerns for ensuring their children received quality care.

- Research shows staff with higher levels of education and training, who are well supported and appreciated, are critical to high-quality care.
- While many for-profit child care providers offer very good service, research has shown that, on average, not-for-profit and publicly operated child care facilities perform better on global evaluation scales and are more likely to remain in operation over the longer term. In Burnaby, 54% of the child care programs are delivered by not-for-profits or public agencies.

Partnerships – No one entity or level of government takes sole responsibility for child care. Many partners, playing various roles, need to be involved if positive outcomes are to be achieved.

- Burnaby has a history of pursuing partnerships to respond to child care concerns (e.g., establishment of the Child Care Resources Group, formalizing an agreement with the School District to facilitate child care space creation).

3.3 Space Creation Targets

A requirement of the UBCM Child Care Planning funding grant was for municipalities to identify child care space creation targets. While the creation of new spaces requires a partnership approach, space creation targets for the community help to identify priorities and serve to inform future child care planning and funding application processes.

Based on the consultation process with local elected officials and community partners, the following space creation targets for 2030 were identified for Burnaby:

- 33 spaces per 100 children under 3 years old, up from the current rate of 17.6;
- 50 spaces per 100 children aged 3-5 years, up from the current rate of 34.9; and
- 33 spaces per 100 children aged 6-9 years.

In total, the space creation targets identify a need for 4,412 new spaces over the next ten years.

It should be noted that in setting space creation targets for school aged children, targets were based on the projected number of children aged 6 to 9 years old, not 6 to 12 years. The rationale is that while 10 to 12 year olds are eligible and may require school age care (for example, children attending schools outside their home community, children with extra support needs), many would opt for recreation programs or other non-licensed after school activities.

3.4 Strategic Directions and Actions

The CCAP proposes a set of actions to address gaps in service and improve child care services over the next ten years. Recognizing that the City cannot address child care needs on its own, the draft CCAP also identifies various partners that will need to participate to put the actions into effect. The strategic directions and associated actions are organized according to the priority issues identified through the consultation process.

Strategic Direction 1 – Increasing Accessibility

Actions proposed for the City under this direction include:

- a review of existing policy documents and processes such as the Child Care Policy, Zoning Bylaw, Community Benefit Bonus Policy, and the child care approval process to facilitate and support the creation of new spaces;
- identification of existing sites and facilities that could be used for child care;
- identification of opportunities to create new spaces in future development proposals initiated by the City and others (e.g. new non-market housing developments); and
- creation of a dedicated staff position to assume overall responsibility for the City's child care policy and planning portfolio.

Strategic Direction 2 – Improving Affordability

This direction proposes actions for the City to:

- consider reducing or waiving City application fees for development of not-for-profit child care facilities; and
- consider establishing a child care grant program targeted to not-for-profit child care providers, e.g., to support smaller capital improvements, equipment purchases or professional development opportunities for child care staff.

Strategic Direction 3 – Enhancing Quality

This direction proposes actions for the City to:

- confirm a set of principles, values, criteria, and design guidelines to assist the City in the development of child care in civic spaces; and
- work with, support, and encourage the non-profit sector in enhancing the quality of child care services in Burnaby and in developing new facilities to meet the City’s child care space targets.

Strategic Direction 4 – Strengthening Partnerships

This direction proposes actions for the City to:

- support the Province in its “Early Care and Learning Recruitment and Retention Strategy” initiative to build up the child care labour force;
- Build on the City’s existing strong partnership with the Burnaby School District;
- Work with internal and external partners to develop after-school programs that support children aged 10-12 years;
- Continue to engage in dialogue with First Nations in Burnaby to help address the needs of Indigenous families/children;
- Enhance collaboration with the Child Care Resource and Referral Program and other community service organizations on training;
- Increase collaboration with the Board of Trade and other partners, to address child care needs;
- In partnership with Fraser Health Community Care Licensing, periodically host information sessions for groups and individuals interested in opening child care centres in Burnaby; and
- With the Child Care Resources Group (CCRG), hold orientation sessions and provide periodic briefings on child care matters to local elected representatives; and
- review the role, mandate, and governance/ reporting structure of the Child Care Resources Group (CCRG) to ensure the group is appropriately positioned to assist the City with the implementation of the CCAP.

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION

While the CCAP is directed towards the City, it is important to note that the City cannot address child care needs on its own. The City needs the support and cooperation of many partners – the Province, child care providers, businesses, the community and others. The CCAP positions the City to work with its partners to build on its strong child care legacy, increase the number of child care spaces, while continuing to focus on affordability and quality concerns. Upon adoption by Council, staff propose to develop concrete tools to measure progress on implementation of the Plan. Working with the Child Care Resources Group, staff propose to present annual progress reports to the Committee and Council with statistics and a discussion of successes, learnings and recommendations for adjustment to the Plan. After being considered by Council, these annual reports would be shared with the School District, other City partners, the child care community and senior levels of government.

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From: Director Planning and Building
Re: Draft Child Care Action Plan
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5.0 CONCLUSION

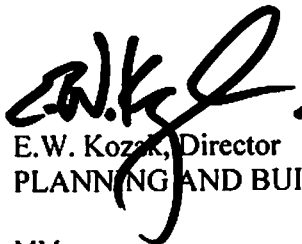
This report provides an overview of the consultation process and the strategic directions and actions contained in draft Child Care Action Plan.

It is recommended that the Committee recommend the Council endorse the Burnaby Child Care Action Plan *attached* (see *Attachment A*) to this report.

It is also recommended that a copy of this report and the Child Care Action Plan be forwarded for information to:

- Burnaby's four Members of the Legislature
- Burnaby School District 41
- Fraser Health Community Care Facilities Licensing
- The YMCA Burnaby-New Westminster Child Care Resource and Referral
- The Burnaby Board of Trade

Lastly, it is recommended that a copy of this report and the Child Care Action Plan be forwarded to members of the City's Child Care Resources Group, along with a letter of appreciation from the Mayor acknowledging their participation in the development of the Action Plan.



E.W. Kozak, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

MM:sa

Attachment

Copied to: Acting City Manager
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Director Finance
City Clerk

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