

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE **DATE:** 2021 October 4

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING **FILE:** 13000 02

SUBJECT: CHILD CARE AT THE CHRISTINE SINCLAIR COMMUNITY CENTRE

PURPOSE: To seek Committee and Council approval to initiate a request for proposals (RFP) process to select an operator for a new child care centre at the Christine Sinclair Community Centre.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** Committee request Council to approve the proposed Request for Proposal process to select a non-profit operator of a new child care centre at the Christine Sinclair Community Centre, as outlined in *Section 7.0* of this report.

REPORT**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

At its meeting on 2020 May 25, Council approved a report seeking Council authorization for an expenditure of up to \$3,500,000 to finance a child care centre that would offer priority placement for City and Burnaby RCMP employees. The report also sought Council approval to consider the City-owned property at 6570 Deer Lake Avenue as a site for the child care facility.

Since that time, the City acquired the new Christine Sinclair Community Centre at 3713 Kensington and identified a space within the building that would be suitable for the child care centre. Also, during this time the City applied for and received a capital funding grant of \$2,280,000 from the Childcare BC New Spaces Fund to help finance the centre. This report provides an update on the project and seeks Committee and Council approval to initiate a Request for Proposals process to select an operator for the facility.

2.0 POLICY SECTION

The availability of quality child care aligns with the *Burnaby Child Care Action Plan* (2021), the *Corporate Strategic Plan* (2017), the *Social Sustainability Strategy* (2011), the *Economic Development Strategy* (2007) and the *Child Care Policy* (2000).

3.0 BACKGROUND

Finding quality, affordable child care is a challenge for many young families. For employers, such as the City of Burnaby, the availability of quality, affordable child care can help in the recruitment and

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retention of employees. In particular, as demonstrated in the COVID-19 pandemic, the accessibility and availability of child care services supports women to remain in the work force. With this in mind, the City, as part of the consultation process for its recently adopted Child Care Action Plan, surveyed City and Burnaby RCMP employees on their child care needs in 2019 November.

Of the 361 respondents to the survey, 197 employees responded that they have children ages 0 to 5 years old, and of those 73 percent indicated that they would use City child care services for a reasonable and affordable fee in the vicinity of City Hall and the City's Works Yard.

Based on the survey findings, staff explored sites and operating models for the centre. At its meeting on 2020 May 25, Council approved the recommendation that the City-owned property at 6570 Deer Lake Avenue be used for the centre and that a locally based non-profit operator be selected to operate the centre on terms similar to the City's existing child care centres. Council also authorized an expenditure of up to \$3,500,000 from Capital Reserve funds to finance the centre on the understanding that staff would apply to the Childcare BC New Spaces Fund to help finance the centre. Accordingly, staff applied for and received a capital grant of \$2,280,000 for the centre in 2021 June.

4.0 SITE CHANGE

As noted above, at its meeting on 2020 May 25, Council approved the recommendation that the City-owned property at 6570 Deer Lake Avenue be used for the City employee child care. Upon further investigation of the site, however, it was determined that the property at 6570 Deer Lake Avenue was not large enough to accommodate the child care centre.

In 2021 January, Council authorized the City's acquisition of the Fortius Sports and Health Centre at 3713 Kensington Avenue. At that time, staff identified space within the large centre that would be suitable for the child care centre. A preliminary design was developed for space in the southwest corner of the building that would accommodate 65 child care spaces (24 spaces for children 0 to 36 months and 41 spaces for children 30 months to school age), up from the 57 spaces originally proposed for the 6570 Deer Lake Avenue property. The City is currently seeking the services of a consultant to design and provide contract administration services during the construction of the child care centre.

5.0 OPERATING MODEL

In the 2020 May 25 Council report, it was recommended that the child care centre be operated by a locally-based non-profit child care provider on similar terms as the City's existing child care centres. These centres are provided to the operators on a rent-free basis but the operators are required to pay for all of their operating costs (e.g. heat, light and other utilities, regular maintenance, landscaping, cleaning, furniture replacement, staff wages and benefits, and insurance). This model allows the operators to charge reasonable parent fees while providing a competitive wage and benefits package to their employees.

As a condition of operating the centre it was also noted that the non-profit operator of the new centre would be required to opt-in to the Provincial child care fee reduction initiative. Through this initiative, a fee reduction is provided directly to the operator to reduce parent fees by \$350/month for infants and toddlers, and \$100/month for children 3 years to school age. Further, the operator would be expected to assist families in applying for the provincial Affordable Child Care Benefit and any other government support programs.

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As noted in the 2020 May 25 Council report, the child care centre will offer priority placement to City and Burnaby RCMP employees to support the City's and RCMP's ongoing efforts to recruit and retain employees. However, the operator will also be able to offer any vacant spaces to families in the wider community.

6.0 SELECTION OF AN OPERATOR FOR THE CENTRE

As noted above, the City is currently seeking the services of an architectural consultant to design and provide contract administration services during the construction of the child care centre. It is estimated that the centre would be ready for occupancy in late 2022. At this stage, it is considered timely to select the operator of the facility to enable the operator to have input into the design and layout of the centre. It is therefore recommended that locally-based non-profit child care providers be invited to submit proposals for the operation of the centre through a Request for Proposals process. The opportunity would be posted on the BC Bid website and advertised through the local newspaper and community networks (e.g. the City's Child Care Resources Group). As part of the process, an interdepartmental staff committee would develop the evaluation criteria for the proposals, develop interview questions for a short-list of qualified applicants, and make recommendations on a prospective operator.

6.1 Assessment of Submissions

It is proposed that submissions be evaluated against the following criteria:

- Non-profit status with experience in providing child care services in Burnaby;
- Demonstrated ability to operate a child care facility on a financially viable basis, without requiring operating subsidies from the City;
- Proven track record with respect to providing quality child care services;
- Intention and commitment to serve the target age groups; and
- Ability to manage a waitlist for services that gives priority placement to City and Burnaby RCMP employees but offers vacant spaces to the wider community.

6.2 Proposed Timeline for the Process

With Council approval of the Request for Proposals process, the following timeline for the process is proposed:

2021 November	Launch of Request for Proposals Process
2022 January	Deadline for Submissions
2022 February	Notification to Short-listed Applicants
2022 March	Interviews with Short-listed Applicants
2022 April	Report on Recommended Operator

7.0 CONCLUSION

A new child care centre is being developed in the Christine Sinclair Community Centre that will offer priority placement to City and Burnaby RCMP employees as well as spaces to the wider community. The centre will provide 24 spaces for children ages 0 to 36 months and 41 spaces for children ages 30

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months to school age. The City has received a capital funding grant of \$2,280,000 from the Childcare BC New Spaces fund to help finance the construction of the centre.

The City is currently seeking the services of an architectural consultant to design the child care centre. Occupancy is estimated to occur in late 2022. At this stage, it is considered timely to select the operator of the facility to enable the operator to have input into the design and layout of the centre.

It is therefore recommended that the Committee request Council to approve the proposed Request for Proposal process to select a non-profit operator of the child care centre, as outlined in *Section 7.0* of this report.



E.W. Kozak, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

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Copied to: Chief Administrative Officer
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Financial Officer
Chief Building Inspector
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