

TO: MAYOR & COUNCIL

FROM: COUNCILLORS DHALIWAL, GU, SANTIAGO, TETRAULT, WANG

SUBJECT: **INCREASING PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCY IN THE OCP**

PURPOSE: To direct staff to plan for and mitigate the risk of extreme weather events, such as flooding and wildfire, in the Official Community Plan (OCP).

RECOMMENDATION

WHEREAS the risk of extreme weather events, such as flooding and wildfire, has increased significantly, and will continue to increase, due to climate change;

WHEREAS the Official Community Plan is an overarching land-use strategy for the next 25 years;

WHEREAS land-use designation as a tool should be utilized to increase preparedness, resiliency, and the mitigation of risk to people from hazards such as flooding and wildfire;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT staff identify the areas of the City of Burnaby that are at high risk of flooding and wildfire in the next 25 years and designate appropriate land uses in the Official Community Plan to prevent, to the largest extent possible, the risk to people and property;

THAT staff embed other forms of proactive, nature-based risk mitigation strategies within engineering and planning standards, prioritizing areas where people already live that are at high risk of flooding and wildfire; and,

THAT staff identify and report back to Council with other strategies to improve resiliency and preparedness, such as but not limited to leveraging Development Permit processes, rezoning requirements, and municipally owned land.

BACKGROUND

The risk of natural hazards, such as wildfire and flooding, is substantially increased due to climate change. For every 1°C increase in temperature, the atmosphere can hold at least 7% more water. In the winters, this has already resulted in heavier rainfall, leading to more frequent and intense localized and regional flooding. Areas such as the Central Valley and Big Bend are likely at future risk of flooding. Sea level rise may be an additional risk for certain areas of Burnaby. Due to drier and hotter summers, the risk of wildfire, particularly in the wildland urban interface (e.g. Burnaby Mountain, UniverCity) has increased substantially. Considering there is a “delay” in the effects that we see proportionate to the global temperature increase, over the next few decades, there is certainty that the residents of Burnaby will experience more extreme weather events induced by climate change. At the end of 2024, the global temperature increase was 1.55°C above pre-industrial levels – making 2024 the hottest year on record.

The Official Community Plan (OCP) is the City of Burnaby’s overarching land-use planning tool, providing guidance on the density and types of land uses within the City. The OCP was adopted in 1998. There is currently ongoing work to establish a new 25-year vision (Burnaby 2050 OCP).

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

Negligible in the short term. Costs to implement the strategies will be determined and approved by Council prior to the implementation.

DISCUSSION

The Burnaby 2050 OCP is an opportunity to proactively prepare for a substantially different climate – one that will, with certainty, bring an increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as flooding and wildfire. Land-use designation is one of the most significant tools that a municipality has. Therefore, the OCP, paired with other planning and implementation tools, will allow the City of Burnaby to proactively prepare for a safer future for the residents of Burnaby. Considering the timing of Burnaby 2050, it is critical that we do not miss the opportunity to embed within the Official Community Plan a climate adaptation lens to mitigate the risk to people, to the greatest extent possible.

Respectfully submitted,

COUNCILLORS DHALIWAL, GU, SANTIAGO, TETRAULT, WANG