

Coquitlam

For Council

February 4, 2019

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To: City Manager

From: General Manager, Planning and Development

Subject: **Child Care Strategy: Proposed Scope and Process**

For: **Council**

Recommendation:

That Council authorize staff to undertake the development of a comprehensive child care strategy following the scope and process outlined in the report dated February 4, 2019 of the General Manager Planning and Development entitled "Child Care Strategy: Proposed Scope and Process."

Report Purpose:

This report outlines the proposed scope and process for the preparation of the City of Coquitlam's child care strategy and seeks Council's authorization to proceed with the strategy's development.

Strategic Goal:

Addressing the provision of high quality child care which facilitates child development, enables parents to work and contribute to the local economy, strengthens neighbourhoods and helps build a more attractive, stable and complete community. Developing a Child Care Strategy is a proposed "B" priority in the draft 2019 Business Plan.

Executive Summary:

It is recommended that the City develops a comprehensive child care strategy to enhance its support for child care in the community. The proposed scope and process for the child care strategy detailed in this report involves the preparation of a child care space inventory, conducting a needs assessment and the development of a new child care space creation action plan. Community engagement activities will be supported by the Tri Cities Early Childhood Development Committee and other community partners working in the area of child care.

Some of the proposed community engagement activities are being planned in collaboration with the cities of Port Moody and Port Coquitlam.

Background:

The City of Coquitlam began to better define its approach in supporting child care in the community in 2018 with a review to update the City's policies and regulations.

Background: cont'd/

That review is in process and it is anticipated that amending bylaws will be brought forward for Council's consideration prior to the summer of 2019. Consistent with the direction of the City's Business Plan, it is recommended that the next step involve the development of a comprehensive child care strategy to outline the City's role, working with other parties, in addressing future unmet child care needs. This report provides details on the proposed scope and process for the upcoming child care strategy.

Discussion/Analysis:

Scope and Process for Child Care Strategy

On January 14, 2019 during a Regular Meeting Council endorsed a staff recommendation to apply for \$25,000 to the Community Child Care Planning Program being administered by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). The Community Child Care Planning Program was established with bilateral support from the federal government to provide financial assistance to local governments that want to engage in child care planning activities. The proposed scope and process detailed in this report largely reflects the content of the City's grant application to UBCM's Community Child Care Planning Program. Much of the proposed child care strategy scope and process are required process and content elements of the UBCM funding.

In summary, the City of Coquitlam's child care strategy will be developed as follows:

1. Document existing facilities and programs;
2. Assess current and anticipated needs;
3. Establish targets for the creation of new child care spaces to meet unmet needs;
4. Determine the appropriate tool(s) to meet space creation targets;
5. Investigate the feasibility and implications of other actions that can be taken to improve access to child care in the community; and
6. Amend City policies and regulations such as the Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw to facilitate the recommended actions.

Further detail on each of these steps is provided below.

It should be noted that the cities of Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody have all applied to UBCM's Community Child Care Planning Program to further the child care planning activities within their respective municipalities. Staff from all three municipalities recognize that there are many common regional issues that impact planning for child care, that their planning processes will seek to engage many of the same community members and that they will gather input from many of the same informed stakeholders. Accordingly, staff consulted on the applications to UBCM prior to their submission and there are many elements of planned activities across the Tri Cities that are aligned and coordinated, particularly with respect to partnerships and planned community engagement activities.

Discussion/Analysis: cont'd/

It should also be noted that the City's preparation of a child care strategy is beginning just as the regional child care task force being coordinated by School District #43 is commencing activities. It is anticipated that the regional task force will have multiple opportunities to inform the child care planning activities that will be taking place in the Tri Cities.

Proposed Activities to Prepare the Child Care Strategy:

The following section provides additional detail on each of the proposed activities that will contribute to the development of the City's child care strategy.

1. Child Care Space Inventory: A Child Care Space Inventory of existing facilities, spaces and programs will be compiled using information and tools provided for this purpose by the Ministry of Children and Family Development. This information will be supplemented with data from Fraser Health – Child Care Licensing and the City's Business Licences. The intent behind the inventory preparation will be to assess the current state of child care provision in the City of Coquitlam at the level of local geographies, such as the City's planning neighbourhoods.
2. Needs Assessment: In this phase research will be undertaken into the anticipated need for child care. This will include a projection of what types of programs and services are likely to be required in each neighbourhood and how that need may evolve over time. Projections will draw upon the City's data regarding the location, intensity and character of planned development and the population growth associated with that development. Assessment of future need will also draw from enrolment projections prepared by School District 43; Early Development Instrument vulnerability data collected by the Human Early Learning Partnership; parent and provider data collected by the YMCA's Tri Cities Child Care Resource and Referral Program; and data regarding children with extra support needs from the Kinsight, Spirit of the Children and Step-by-Step non-profit societies.
3. Community Child Care Space Creation Action Plan: The development of a Community Child Care Space Creation Action Plan is a required element of the UBCM funding. The Action Plan will compare current service provision with anticipated future demand and will result in a gap analysis of future unmet needs. The assessment of future demand will also reflect on stakeholder patterns and concerns identified during the community engagement phase, how the needs of underserved populations can best be addressed, and the range of potential partners that can collaborate and support in meeting these needs.

Discussion/Analysis: cont'd/

The timing, location and character of the new child care spaces projected to address future unmet needs will result in short-term (1-2 years), medium-term (2-5 years) and long-term (5-10 years) new child care space creation targets by program and neighbourhood. The Community Child Care Space Creation Action Plan will also identify the actions that various levels of government, other stakeholders and the community can take to meet the space creation targets. The question of the City's role in possibly assisting in the creation of new spaces will be raised for Council's consideration and informed by an analysis of development incentives, such as incentives for child care facilities through possible density bonuses, opportunities for grants from senior levels of government and other sources and the financial implications and tradeoffs involved with these various options.

The Community Child Care Space Creation Action Plan will contain a number of optional approaches on the content noted above. The draft Action Plan will likely set out a potential expansion of the City's current policy and approach with respect to child care. Accordingly, it is being recommended that once a draft Community Child Care Space Creation Action Plan has been prepared that it be presented to Council for their consideration and discussion in a workshop format.

Community Engagement:

Community engagement to develop the strategy will entail gathering the perspectives of children, parents, providers, the general public and informed stakeholders on a range of child care issues such as the types of care and number of spaces available; the location of spaces; the potential for co-locating child care with other services and programs; the time and days that care is offered, etc. Proposed community engagement activities will include:

- On-line parent and child care provider surveys that will be hosted on the City's community engagement platform (Viewpoint) with opportunities made available for individuals to receive and complete hard copy versions;
- An open house that will provide an overview of child care provision in Coquitlam and generate input into factors influencing the location, programming and timing of new space creation;
- Visits to local child care centres to engage with parents and providers;
- Key informant interviews with the community partners noted later in this report on the specific issues facing their organizations;
- A Tri Cities child care solutions workshop co-hosted jointly by the cities of Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody. The workshop will be solutions-oriented, aimed at identifying ideas and potential actions to address child care gaps in the community. Attendees will be engaged in exercises identifying barriers to the expansion or creation of new facilities, as well as potential ways of overcoming those barriers; and
- Targeted meetings and interviews with parents of children requiring extra support needs and their child care providers as their perspectives are unique and their available time is highly constrained.

Discussion/Analysis: cont'd/

Partnerships and Community Support:

The City of Coquitlam will work with the membership of the Tri Cities Early Childhood Development Committee and other community partners to develop the Child Care Strategy. Organizations that have indicated their support for the project include:

- Fraser Health - Child Care Licensing;
- Kinsight;
- School District #43;
- SHARE Family & Community Services;
- Spirit of the Children Society;
- Step by Step Child Development Society;
- SUCCESS;
- Tri Cities Local Immigration Partnership;
- Westcoast Family Centres; and
- YMCA – Child Care Resource & Referral Program.

Next Steps:

Staff continue to consult with informed community stakeholders on the OCP and Zoning Bylaw amendments presented to Council-in-Committee on November 26, 2018. It is anticipated that amending bylaws will be submitted for Council's consideration of first reading prior to summer 2019.

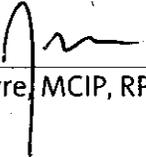
Should the City be successful in securing a grant from the Community Child Care Planning Program it will have one year to complete the project. A response on the City's application to the Community Child Care Planning Program is due within 90 days of the application deadline of January 18, 2019.

Financial Implications:

As noted above, the City of Coquitlam has applied to UBCM's Community Child Care Planning Program for the maximum available grant of \$25,000 to undertake the activities detailed in this report. Should a grant from UBCM not be forthcoming, or not be approved for the amount requested, it is anticipated that the development of the strategy can still be undertaken (though perhaps more focused) with existing staff resources and funded within existing budgets.

Conclusion:

Staff is recommending that the City of Coquitlam proceed with the development of a comprehensive child care strategy based on the scope and process noted in the subject report. Periodic updates and check-ins on the strategy's development will be provided to Council at key points in the process. It is anticipated that a draft child care strategy will be brought forward for Council's consideration by the first trimester of 2020.



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This report was prepared by Paul Penner, Social Planner and reviewed by Andrew Merrill, Manager, Community Planning.