



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: September 12, 2006
Author: Mario Lee/Samara Brock
Phone No.: 604.871.6034/6036
RTS No.: 6043
VanRIMS No.: 11-2200-10
Meeting Date: September 28, 2006

TO: Standing Committee on Planning and Environment

FROM: General Manager of Community Services in consultation with General Manager of Engineering Services, Chief Constable of the Vancouver Police Department, City Librarian of Vancouver Public Library, General Manager of Vancouver Parks and Recreation, and Manager of the Office of Sustainability.

SUBJECT: City of Vancouver Social Development Plan Update

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive this report for information and circulate it to the Vancouver Park Board, Vancouver Library Board, Vancouver Police Board, and Vancouver Economic Commission.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services notes that the complexity and range of social issues is growing and that the City's many and varied contributions need to be systematically coordinated and aligned. This project, to date, has identified major social issue areas which now need to be affirmed through focussed consultation with key stakeholders. Once this step is complete, strategic directions and a plan to define priorities and focus the City's role will be developed.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager concurs that it is timely to develop a plan that co-ordinates the City's contributions to social sustainability. The Social Development Plan process has been done in partnership with the Vancouver Foundation and the United Way, who have generously

contributed to the research component. This project will help position the City to respond to present and future demands through the identification of strategic directions and actions. This plan will help the City maximize relationships with stakeholders, including other levels of government, and the voluntary and corporate sectors to address current and emergent issues.

COUNCIL POLICY

City Council has adopted policies, plans, and strategies that address social issues and/or guide social development activities. Examples (chronologically listed) from across the Corporation are noted below:

- Special Needs Residential Facilities (SNRF) (1983);
- Equal Employment Opportunity (1986);
- Employment Opportunities for Inner-City Residents, Solid Waste Management, Engineering (1992);
- Safer City Initiatives (1993);
- Civic Public Art Program (1994);
- City Plan (1995);
- Liveable Region Strategic Plan (1996);
- Transportation Plan (1997);
- Downtown Eastside Strategic Actions (1998);
- Vancouver Agreement (2000);
- Social Housing Policies (2001);
- Moving Forward Childcare: The Cornerstone of Early Childhood Development Services (2002);
- Sustainability Definition and Principles (2002);
- City Creative Task Force (2004);
- Police Athletic League, Youth Services (2004);
- Homeless Action Plan (2005);
- Downtown Eastside Housing Plan (2005);
- Mayor's Working Group on Immigration (2005);
- Definition of Social Sustainability (2005);
- Southeast False Creek ODP (2006)

SUMMARY & PURPOSE

This report provides an update of the Social Development Plan activities, to date, related to the work plan approved by Council on September 20, 2005. This includes an overview of the results of the corporate engagement process and research as well as the social development themes that emerged from these processes. The report also provides an overview of the internal and community social development work inventories that were developed, a summary of the literature review of municipal social development plans, and some highlights of a commissioned study on social issues.

The research and stakeholder consultation portions of this process are being carried out through a unique partnership with the Vancouver Foundation and the United Way of the Lower Mainland. The next step in the process includes focused internal and community consultation to confirm the issue areas and inform the development of strategic directions. It is anticipated that a draft Social Development Plan for the City of Vancouver will be

presented to Council in early 2007. The Social Development Plan will recommend a more clearly defined role and specific strategies for the City to address social issues.

BACKGROUND

On September 20, 2005, Council endorsed three distinct phases to be undertaken in the plan development:

Phase I - Background research and Corporate Engagement (completed):

Research on the current socio-economic and demographic information and a literature review of social plans and social visions from other municipal jurisdictions has been completed. As proposed, a City-wide inventory of programs, policies and strategies that support social development has now been created.

Phase II - Analysis and Recommendations (completed):

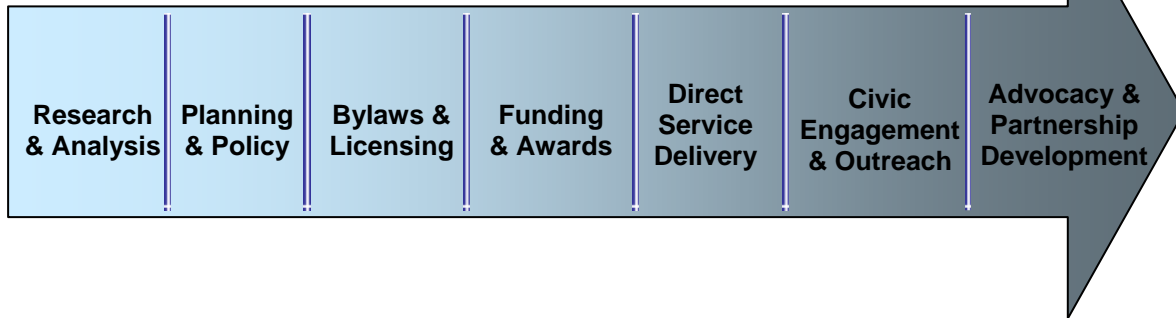
An analysis of the research and the inventory information has been completed. Themes or areas of social concern have been identified for review through a stakeholder consultation process.

Phase III -Stakeholder Consultation and Plan Finalization:

A stakeholder consultation process will now review the themes identified, to date, validate their importance and ensure key areas were identified. This feedback will inform the development of the strategic directions. Once the strategic directions are drafted, recommendations for actions will be developed and presented back to Council for further public comment and final approval.

The intent of a Social Development Plan is to plan, facilitate and/or partner with other levels of government and the community to develop responses appropriate to Vancouver's changing needs. The City, through its various departments and Boards, works to enhance the social sustainability of all citizens - whether it is through direct provision of policy or recreational programs or provision of funding and services such as space for day cares and non-profit grant programs. This plan would help the City to recognize, learn and expand upon the existing positive and innovative approaches that are already in place, as well as assist the City in identifying future roles and options for addressing social issues. Part of the exercise has been to identify key roles played by the City, including regulator, advocate, funder, facilitator and partner, in addressing social issues.

Figure 1: Roles of the City of Vancouver in Social Development
(Please see Appendix A for a list of roles with definitions)



Some of the potential challenges to achieving social sustainability include issues such as economic disparity, social exclusion of aboriginal peoples and new immigrants, lack of affordable housing, and the neighbourhood-based concentration of poverty. Clarification of roles and partnerships in addressing these challenges which face communities across Canada is being examined at many levels. For instance:

- The Vancouver Foundation, with local advisors, is part of the national Vital Signs Project, an annual report card that measures quality of life.
- The Province is currently engaged in projects under its Smart Development Partnerships that are aimed at integrating social, environmental and economic interests in partnerships with local governments.
- The Federal government's External Committee on Cities and Communities recently released a report that focused on the rapid changes that Canadian communities are facing and the need for communities to adopt long-term strategies that incorporate the interrelated economic, environmental, social and cultural dimensions of sustainability. The report, "From Restless Communities to Resilient Places: Building A Stronger Future For All Canadians", outlines the need for devolution of power to cities to deal with emerging sustainability issues.

It is important to note that many of the social issues being discussed are regional, provincial and/or national in nature. As the City's mandate and resources are limited, throughout the development of this plan, links to broader initiatives will be made and suggestions for working with other levels of government and community partners will be brought forward.

DISCUSSION

Phases I and II of the Work Plan have been completed, and a summary of the main activities is provided below:

1. Corporate Engagement and Inventory of City Programs and Services

1.1 Internal Launch

An internal launch of the Social Development Plan for Vancouver was held in October 2005, with staff members representing all service groups as well as the Public Library, Parks and Recreation, and Police. The launch fulfilled several purposes: to provide information on the Social Development Plan process; to gather input into the changing needs of Vancouver's population; and to identify staff contacts to build an inventory and assist with the continuing development of the Plan. Information gathered during this launch has informed the framework for the research projects and the draft themes.

1.2 Internal Social Development Inventory

An internal inventory of social development programs, policies and strategies has been compiled and includes information on activities and implementation from across the City related to social development. The connection between programs, policies and strategies with the three components of social sustainability (basic needs, individual capacity and community capacity) has been analyzed and included in the inventory. (Please see APPENDIX B for definitions).

An important benefit of the work is that all City staff will have electronic access to the inventory through an ACCESS database. Staff will be able to search for information and generate reports.

2. Research

The literature review, the community inventory, and the demographic trends research described below, have been conducted through an ongoing partnership with the United Way of the Lower Mainland and the Vancouver Foundation. The goal of this research partnership is to identify and deliver common research needs that support social sustainability in Vancouver and provide a better understanding of the issues within the context of the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD).

This collaboration strives to complement the work of the GVRD Social Action Team and other relevant initiatives in Vancouver and the surrounding region. Additionally, this initiative aims to create a long-term partnership that will continue to collaboratively conduct research that serves the three parties and potentially other organizations contributing to a social development and sustainability agenda.

2.1 Literature Review

A comprehensive literature review of social development and sustainability initiatives at the municipal level was contracted to the Vancouver Public Library's InfoAction Group. Some of the key findings include:

- Sustainability involves balancing and reconciling environmental, social, and economic sustainability concerns.
- Social sustainability is a relatively new concept for municipalities.

- The process around creating sustainability plans includes public involvement and consultation. Community engagement was a theme common to the plans. The more successful initiatives involved consultation that made the plans more relevant to the local community and created greater buy-in.
- Plans targeted at social sustainability tend to focus on key social development priorities, with associated objectives, measurable indicators, and actions. Several of the plans have a set of clear goals, with associated indicators and targets. These plans also tend to have clear timelines in place for regular reporting on progress towards meeting the set targets and have an assigned department to give feedback to Council on their progress.

In reviewing the sustainability work being carried out by other cities, it was apparent that Vancouver is one of the pioneers in developing and applying a social sustainability framework and utilizing partnerships in background research. Overall, it was found that the key themes revealed through the literature review were largely consistent with the themes from the internal launch and research already completed.

2.2 Selection of Themes

Key areas of interest/concern for the Social Development Plan were developed through an analysis of national social sustainability initiatives such as the Vancouver Foundation's Vital Signs, the GVRD's Social Issues Subcommittee's social sustainability themes, priority issues identified through the literature review, and top issues identified by our City Departments. Nine themes emerged that were used to shape the community inventory of key actors influencing social development in Vancouver. These themes will also be used to shape the final Social Development Plan. (Please see APPENDIX C for an overview of this process and a brief definition of the themes.) These themes are:

- i. Housing and Homelessness
- ii. Arts and Culture
- iii. Belonging and Citizenship
- iv. Safety
- v. Diversity and Intercultural Development
- vi. Learning/Education
- vii. Economy (gap between rich and poor)
- viii. Drugs and Substance Misuse
- ix. Healthy Living and Wellness

2.3 Community Inventory - Others who contribute to Social Development

The Social Planning Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) was contracted to complete a community inventory of key actors influencing social development in Vancouver. Based on the above themes, SPARC developed an inventory to capture activities and the funding sources that influence social development. The inventory includes other levels of government, the private sector, academic institutions, the faith sector and community-based voluntary sector agencies.

The inventory is in an ACCESS database format and is searchable through a number of categories: social development theme, social development activity, geographic area served, sector, and target population. Notably, 600 of the 900 organizations documented were part

of the non-profit sector. This highlights the key role that non-profit organizations play in social development on a broad spectrum of issues in this city. The majority of the organizations highlighted in the report, though they may be located in Vancouver, serve more than one municipality or the region in general. This highlights the fact that social sustainability and social development involves issues which, due to their scope and impact, often necessitate a regional focus.

This inventory will be a tool for the City and others to identify agencies and funders and the various roles they play in social development. It will also provide relevant information on complementary initiatives occurring in Vancouver and the region.

2.4 Demographic Trends and Social Issues

As part of a partnership among the City of Vancouver, the United Way of the Lower Mainland and the Vancouver Foundation, the Canadian Policy Research Network (CPRN) was contracted to independently research and review demographic trends and social issues in Vancouver and the GVRD. The report reveals emerging social issues as well as a review of social development initiatives from cities across Canada. A final copy of the report will be available in late September.

A number of key areas relevant to the Social Development Plan were highlighted. Identified as the most liveable city in the world in 2005, Vancouver also ranks high with respect to personal safety, health care, arts and culture, diversity, education, and infrastructure. Though Vancouver has much to celebrate, current and emerging social and economic trends pose challenges to Vancouver's social sustainability.

Despite the city's overall prosperity and positive economic outlook, the gap between the rich and poor is growing. Vancouver's aboriginals as well as the highly-educated immigrant population continue to face labour market exclusion. Housing is becoming increasingly unaffordable for low and middle-income individuals and families. Increased numbers of dual wage-earner and lone-parent families are heightening the demand for childcare. The increasing spatial concentration of low-income individuals and families in north-central and east side communities is also of concern. The consequences of an aging population will be felt in all aspects of life in the city - economic, social, and cultural. Also, an increasing proportion of the population comprised of immigrants, most of them members of visible minority groups, will offer both opportunities and challenges for Vancouver's social sustainability over time.

Many of the challenges posed by these trends have already been identified by City initiatives such as the Mayor's Working Group on Immigration, the Homelessness Action Plan and *Moving Forward: Childcare - A Cornerstone of Child Development Services*.

3. Next Steps

3.1 Focused Stakeholder Consultation - Internal and External

The next step is to present and refine the nine themes through a focussed stakeholder consultation process. This feedback will further inform the Social Development Plan which will be presented to Council early in 2007. These consultations will be carried out in partnership with the United Way and the Vancouver Foundation. Focus groups will be

convened, including representatives from the United Way and the Vancouver Foundation and their funded agencies, Advisory Committees to Council, funders of social development initiatives and other key community partners in cultural and social services. Stakeholders will be asked to review the themes generated through our research and identify any gaps that may be apparent. They will also be consulted regarding what they see as key goals and actions for social development.

Consultation will further articulate the social vision, key themes, goals and actions of the Social Development Plan. It will identify how current social development activities are addressing the changing social-demographic landscape and pressing social issues and generate recommendations on what needs to be done to move the city and region towards social sustainability.

Within the City, the internal stakeholder consultation will bring together existing City efforts and strategies dealing with each draft social development theme. There are many City initiatives that are already working towards addressing these themes and which have developed integrated approaches to social development issues with local, provincial and federal partners.

3.2 Developing Indicators

A key part of this phase will be identifying indicators with which to measure social development in Vancouver and the region. Staff will be working with and building on the present work of the GVRD's Social Action Team, the Vancouver Foundation's Vital Signs project and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities quality of life indicators initiative. Part of the Social Development Plan's work is to establish partnerships to track key indicators.

3.3 Continued Corporate Engagement

Staff will continue to work across the City to upgrade the internal social development inventory and to make it a useable tool for staff. This work will be coordinated and integrated within the larger sustainability agenda of the City and its environmental, economic, social and cultural components. Active research and collaboration, for example between Social Planning, the Office of Cultural Affairs, the Office of Sustainability, and others, will be undertaken on the inter-relationship between the different aspects of sustainability and how to integrate them. Staff will continue to actively integrate this work across all departments to ensure that the implementation of this plan will involve the corporation as a whole and will engage all departments in continuing and augmenting the social development work being carried out by the City.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications for 2006. Subsequent initiatives in response to strategic directions will be brought forward for consideration through the budgeting process.

CONCLUSION

This report provides an update on the work carried out on the Social Development Plan to date and on the upcoming stakeholder consultation. The City's Departments, Boards and Commissions have addressed local social issues for a number of years. A Social Development Plan will add value by building a coordinated, comprehensive, long-term strategy to guide the development of a socially sustainable city. A significant contribution to the city's liveability has been the City's development of a wide range of policies, strategies, plans and programs that address pressing social problems and improve the quality of life for all residents. These initiatives have been developed over time in partnership with a wide range of community groups, organizations and other levels of government. The ultimate aim of this work is to continue and build upon these past successes.

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Municipal Roles in Social Development

Advocacy and Partnership

Often the City will act as an advocate through providing options on a range of social development issues and will facilitate the involvement of other key actors (other levels of government, community members etc) to develop responses.

By-law and Regulation

Several by-laws in the city promote social development. This includes, but is not limited to: sections of the Zoning and Development By-law, the Building By-law, Private Property Tree By-law, Parking By-law, Sign By-law, Subdivision By-law, Land Title Act, Strata Property Act, SNRF, Standards of Maintenance and Liquor By-laws. The City also has guidelines for Childcare Design, Families Living at High Density Guidelines, In-suite and Bicycle Storage.

Public Involvement, Civic Engagement & Outreach

The facilitation of public involvement ranges from distribution of posters or other written information through to youth outreach activities. Civic engagement and outreach defines the areas of work that are one step beyond information provision. This refers to involving citizens in the idea generating and/or planning stages for their neighbourhood and involves a specific outreach plan to contact those people who may not normally participate in a process.

Community Capacity Building

Activities that assist in transferring knowledge and skills to the community and could include training, or funding that helps build resources in the community. Examples include the Youth Outreach Team, WEINN and Vision Implementation process.

Customer Service and Public Information

This is specific to the provision of information that helps the general public access quality services. Examples of this include the Enquiry Centre or the City Clerks Department.

Direct Service Delivery

The direct provision of a social service to residents of Vancouver. An example of this is the services provided in the Carnegie Centre or Gathering Place.

Facility Ownership/Management/Leases

Several City-owned or leased buildings provide housing, services or community amenities.

Funding and Awards

Grants, endowment funds and capital funding from a number of departments provide support to social development activities. This includes direct grants to service providers and funding for physical space. Awards include programs that are developed to publicly honour or award individuals who have contributed to social development.

Regulating and Licensing

The process of regulating standards and the formal issuing of a permit or license for specific activities.

Local Economic Development

Initiatives and programs that promote local economic development.

Planning and Policy

Through specific planning approaches and intent, social development practices are implemented through a combination of land use decisions and program development. Several departments develop policy and present options to City Council that direct the future direction of planning to support social development.

Program Design

The design and development of specific programs by city staff that are then implemented either by city staff or the community or by community groups.

Public Information

This refers to information that is provided to the public in an accessible and timely manner.

Research and Analysis

Research, analysis and monitoring specific to social development.

Training

This refers to specific training programs that have been developed by city staff for residents of Vancouver, or staff developed training programs for internal staff on issues related to social development.

Volunteer Program

Programs that are developed to provide meaningful volunteer opportunities in the community.

Urban Design

Applying the principles of social development into urban design. Consideration for public spaces and promoting pedestrian friendly environments would be included in this category.

Components of Social Sustainability

Social Sustainability: For a community to function and be sustainable, the basic needs of its residents must be met. A socially sustainable community must have the ability to maintain and build on its own resources and have the resiliency to prevent and/or address problems in the future. There are three components of social sustainability: basic needs, individual capacity and community capacity.

Basic needs of residents can continue to be met through:

- Appropriate, affordable housing, with flexibility to meet changing needs - the needs of those on low and moderate incomes, the needs of those with special circumstances such as physical and mental illness, and the needs of all as they age
- Appropriate, affordable health care available in the community
- Locally produced, nutritious food that is affordable
- Jobs that enable people to be productive and utilize their skills and abilities
- Sufficient income for people to be able to financially support themselves and their families
- Safe communities and workplaces

Individual capacity can be maintained and enhanced through:

- Opportunities to develop and upgrade skills
- A variety of local employment opportunities throughout the region
- Opportunities to develop and make use of creativity and artistic expression
- Appropriate, affordable formal and informal life-long learning
- Appropriate, affordable recreation, leisure and cultural facilities and programs
- A range of opportunities for individuals to contribute to the health and well-being of the community

Social or community capacity can be maintained and enhanced through:

- Support and encouragement for community economic development
- Community "identity" is reflective of community diversity
- Involvement in public processes and their results, and in government
- Opportunities and places for social interaction throughout the community
- Opportunities, resources and venues for a variety of arts, cultural and community activities
- Support and encouragement for community organizations and networks

Overview of Theme Selection for Social Development Plan

In order to generate themes appropriate to Vancouver's social development national and local initiatives were examined, a literature review was conducted and an internal consultation was held. Below is a summary of each step which led to the development of the themes for the Social Development Plan.

Project Themes:

Vital Signs 10 Core Indicators

Economy
Environment
Getting Started in our Community
Arts and Culture
Health and Wellness
Safety
Housing
Belonging and Leadership
Gap between Rich and Poor
Learning/Education

FCM Domains

Demographic & Background Information
Affordable, Appropriate Housing
Civic Engagement
Community and Social Infrastructure
Education
Employment
Local Economy
Natural Environment
Personal and Community Health
Personal Financial Security
Personal Safety

GVRD Themes for Social Sustainability

Living and working
Sense of Place
Playing
Engaging
Learning
Moving

Results from the Literature Review (both international and national)

Priority Issues:

Affordable Housing
Physical Health
Healthy Environments
Transportation
Education
Developing Community Services
Cultural Diversity
Arts/Culture/Heritage
Drug Use
Mental Health
Safety Issues
Childcare
Poverty
Substance Abuse and Addictions

Population Focus

Youth
Families
Seniors
Aboriginal people
New Canadians
People with disabilities

Summary of top issues for Vancouver (Internal City Launch)

Increasing economic disparity between the rich and the poor
Accommodating growth (complete communities, balance of jobs, housing and opportunities)
Crime and safety
Transportation
Revitalization of the DTES without displacement
Inclusively and connections within communities
Public Engagement
Diversity
Arts and Culture
Changing Demographics
Accessibility
Citizenship
Environment
Economy

CSG Strategic Direction Themes

Sustainability
Housing/Homelessness
Olympics
Enforcement & Compliance
Downtown Eastside
Cultural Services
Planning
Support Services/Human Resources
Technology and Communications

Consistent Themes Chosen for the Social Development Plan:

Housing and Homelessness

Initiatives that seek to increase safe, adequate, and affordable housing.

Arts and Culture

Programs supporting social development through cultural programming and arts funding.

Belonging and Citizenship

Initiatives that support social inclusion. Examples might include retrofitting buildings to be accessible for people with disabilities, or activities that reduce barriers to community participation for those who are typically excluded.

Safety

This theme includes areas of work that address issues of community safety and crime prevention, both at the municipal and neighbourhood level.

Diversity and Intercultural Development

Initiatives promoting cultural diversity within the community or address the needs of different ethno-cultural groups.

Learning/Education

Life long learning and education opportunities that develop individual and community capacity.

Economy (gap between rich and poor)

This broad theme includes initiatives that address poverty and the gap between the rich and the poor. Specifically, this theme includes employment issues and community economic development initiatives. This theme will also address community economic development initiatives that seek to increase employment opportunities in a given neighbourhood.

Drugs and Substance Misuse

This theme will include those initiatives that seek to assist those with substance misuse issues from a broad community-based approach.

Healthy Living and Wellness

This theme will include initiatives that are aimed at addressing a variety of health-related issues and approaches to physical, mental and emotional wellness.