

## COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

### 2. Addressing Ongoing Inequities by Improving Social Infrastructure and Access to Services Across South Vancouver and Marpole Neighbourhoods

Submitted by: Boyle

#### WHEREAS:

1. South Vancouver is made up of distinct neighbourhoods, including Killarney, Victoria-Fraserview, and Sunset (Population total: 100,920), bordered by Marpole (27,852) to the South West. South Vancouver makes up the largest geographical region of Vancouver as well as the most racially diverse, with many languages spoken and many residents living in multigenerational homes. According to the 2021 data from Statistics Canada:
  - 80% of South Vancouver residents self-identify as visible minorities in comparison to the City of Vancouver as a whole at 55%, making it one of the most racialized areas of Vancouver;
  - Over half the residents in South Vancouver identify as immigrants (53% of the catchment's population);
  - South Vancouver has the highest population with a non-English first language (64% vs 46% in Vancouver overall);
  - South Vancouver has a higher average household size than the City average (2.7 vs. 2.1);
  - South Vancouver has a lower median personal income (\$35.6k vs. City's average of \$42k);
  - One fifth (20%) of Vancouver's child and youth population (ages 0-19) live in South Vancouver;
  - 18% of Vancouver's seniors live in South Vancouver, and 15% of South Vancouver seniors are low-income;
  
2. These vibrant neighbourhoods are a draw for families and newcomers, but are also under-resourced. According to a 2021 study by the South Vancouver Neighbourhood House (SVNH) and Simon Fraser University (SFU) Urban Studies and Health Sciences, titled the *South Vancouver & Marpole Neighbourhood Equity Report*, South Vancouver and Marpole experience inequities in various areas, including:
  - Social infrastructure grants and funding;
  - Mobility, including active transportation and public transit;
  - Healthcare services;
  - LGBTQ2S+ services;
  - Immigrant and newcomer services;
  - Childcare services;
  - Support for families, youth, seniors, and people with disabilities;

3. In 2021, SVNH launched the *Reframing South Vancouver Initiative* to elevate the historically underrepresented voices of South Vancouver residents through a series of engagement activities and the creation of Neighbourhood Advisory Committees. The *Reframing South Vancouver Initiative* has engaged over 2000 South Vancouver residents and stakeholders, and organized or participated in over 50 community engagement events since the start of the Initiative;
4. Some of the findings of the *Reframing South Vancouver Initiative* include:
  - South Vancouver consists of 3 distinct catchments and 12 micro-neighbourhoods;
  - South Vancouver is experiencing significant social inequities compared to the City of Vancouver as a whole;
  - South Vancouver is diverse in every way and its residents face numerous barriers to community engagement, such as distrust in authority, fear of political participation, and limited and high-barrier ways to engage with the City of Vancouver;
  - Strategic approaches are required to engage with South Vancouver residents, thus a lot of time, person power, resources and flexibility are needed from staff when conducting engagement sessions;
  - The creation of Neighbourhood Advisory Committees is an effective strategy for capacity-building;
  - Working within the hub of SVNH, Neighbourhood Advisory Committees are now poised to partner with City of Vancouver staff liaison in order to ensure a level of equity in resource allocation and service delivery that these neighbourhood houses have not historically been offered;
5. All of this work requires funding and support to be successful. The *Reframing South Vancouver Initiative* received one-time funding in 2021 from Vancouver Foundation, WES Mariam Assefa Fund, Real Estate Foundation and the BC provincial government, totaling \$559,000. The Initiative also received funding from SFU's Community-Engaged Research Initiative (CERi) and in-kind support from SFU Urban Studies and Health Sciences for community-engaged research and knowledge sharing;
6. Youth are often disproportionately impacted by social infrastructure inequities and overlooked in urban planning processes. In 2021, SVNH collaborated with SFU to launch the Youth.hood study, which engaged 42 racialized youth from across South Vancouver to identify features of their neighbourhoods that help or hinder their connectedness, prioritize issues to address, and advocate for neighbourhood improvement. Results from the study tell a compelling story of the critical role that social infrastructure plays for youth social connectedness, cultural identity, and resilience—and how lack of active transportation infrastructure, poor neighbourhood upkeep, and shortage of quality public spaces in South Vancouver are major barriers to their social wellbeing;

7. SVNH has been actively engaging with representatives from local First Nations and urban Indigenous communities as well as Indigenous residents in South Vancouver. This aligns with the City's commitment to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the framework of reconciliation;
8. SVNH's homelessness initiative, youth prevention effort and placemaking projects such as sidewalk improvements, among others, are all in support of community safety and wellbeing;
9. The Marpole community was included in the South Vancouver & Marpole Neighbourhood Equity Report, and its statistics were included in the findings. The Marpole Neighbourhood House is now well positioned to conduct Marpole specific engagement to identify and address neighbourhood's specific issues and inequities in the neighbourhood, including:
  - Marpole is home to many vulnerable residents including isolated seniors, families living below the poverty line and a growing number of unhoused and precariously housed individuals;
  - The neighbourhood includes many older three and four storey walk-ups on the south side of 70th between Cambie and Granville, home to many long time renters worried about displacement;
  - Ongoing development continues to bring thousands of new residents to the area, increasing the need for secure and affordable housing as well as more social infrastructure and support;
10. The work and recommendations with *Reframing South Vancouver* and the *South Vancouver & Marpole Neighbourhood Equity Report* align with Vancouver's Healthy City Strategy, the Vancouver Food Strategy, Vancouver's Social Infrastructure Strategy, as well as additional city strategies and priorities.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- A. THAT Council direct staff to review the work of the *Reframing South Vancouver Initiative*, the Neighbourhood Advisory Committees, and Youth.hood participants; and to use it to inform engagement processes, neighbourhood improvements, and policy and funding allocation decisions at the City of Vancouver.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to work in collaboration with South Vancouver Neighbourhood House to support the continued work of the *Reframing South Vancouver Initiative* and to ensure the voices of residents across South Vancouver neighbourhoods are heard at City Hall. Including consideration of:

- i. Creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan that is action-oriented, resident-led, supported by City staff, and honours existing community assets;
  - ii. Ensuring the work is adequately funded, and having SVNH and City staff report back to Council on the progress at least once per year.
- C. THAT staff work with Marpole Neighbourhood House and community partners to initiate similar community engagement work to the Reframing Initiative led by SVNH.
- D. THAT Council direct staff to bring any further recommendations to Council in future Operating and Capital Budgets to address the historic under resourcing of neighbourhoods across South Vancouver and Marpole. Including consideration of:
  - i. Grants and investments, particularly related to addressing food security challenges, increasing park and public space amenities for all age groups and abilities—including water parks, skateboarding parks, public washrooms, covered area green space, lighting, flowers and gardens, and quiet spaces to retreat off the main or noisy streets;
  - ii. Improved coordination of and access to warming and cooling spaces during extreme weather events;
  - iii. Opportunities for improved public transit, traffic calming, and safe pedestrian and active transportation infrastructure;
  - iv. Neighbourhood specific plans that increase housing options for all incomes and bring additional neighbourhood amenity funding to the area.
- E. THAT Council request the Mayor write to Provincial and Federal partners outlining concerns from South Vancouver residents about limited access to healthcare services, and request consultation with the community about improved health services, including the scheduled closure of the only Community Health Clinic in South Vancouver.

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