

**Present:**

Chairperson – J. Villeneuve  
L. Alexander  
K. Ardawa  
S. Dooley  
M. Chatwin  
K. Kreis  
Dr. Z. Malik  
R. Mehta (alternate)

**Absent:**

Councillor Rasode  
D. Chattha  
L. Coyle  
G. Gill

**Staff Present:**

A. Murphy, Senior Social Planner  
E. Keurvorst, Communications Specialist, Office  
of the Mayor  
H. Dmytriw, Legislative Services

**A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

It was

Moved by Zambka Malik  
Seconded by Kuldip Ardawa  
That Social Planning Advisory Committee

Minutes of **April 23, 2009** to be approved.

Carried

**B. DELEGATIONS****1. Adrienne Montani, First Call Provincial Coordinator, provided a presentation on the Federal Government's Transportation Loan Program for Government Assisted Refugees (GARs).**

File No. 5080-01

The following information was provided:

- “At Home in Surrey? The Housing Experiences of Refugees in Surrey, BC” report was presented to this committee April 23, 2009 and to Council May 4, 2009.
- First Call BC Child & Youth Advocacy Coalition has 90 partners around the province.
- First Call covers an array of issues and releases an annual poverty report card for the province.
- First Call has a campaign underway to repeal the refugee transportation loan requirement. Proposed letter to Minister Diane Finley is attached as page 11 of the agenda package.
- The transportation program is charging GARs for the costs associated with transporting them to Canada, to a cap of \$10,000 per family, excluding those aged over 18, who are charged on their own. Those with disabilities, who require an aide to travel with them, are charged for the transportation costs of the aid. This has been a long standing policy of Canada. This policy works out well for Canada from a financial perspective as 90% of refugees pay off their loan. There is some forgiveness provided for some single parents of large families and for people with disabilities.

- All those being charged are refugees. On principle this is quite a shocking thing. It is embarrassing that the Canadian Government does this. The Vancouver Sun wrote an editorial in favour of eliminating this program. A capture from website <[www.ccrweb.ca/transportationloans.htm](http://www.ccrweb.ca/transportationloans.htm)> was provided on table as a backgrounder.
- Refugee households are already living in the lowest poverty level and this makes them take money away from food.
- Item H of agenda package (pg. 28) provides copy of the letter written in reply to the Resettlement Assistance Program National Network's letter calling on the federal government to terminate the transportation loan program. It quotes the cost of cancelling the transportation loan repayment program as amounting to 13-\$15 Million per year.

Committee comments:

- The policy has been in effect since 1951. The difference now is that the program applies to Government Assisted Refugees. These are people who are identified by the UN to be most in need of protection.
- The Government of Canada adopted the IRPA - Immigration and Refugee Protection Act in 2002.
- This issue should be ramped up with a lobby/poll for BC MLAs and MPs. It would be interesting to do a few stories about how the refugees benefit and progress after the transportation loan repayment program is terminated.
- The First Call Newsletter will be publishing on the actions that the City of Surrey is taking on this issue.

It was

Moved by K. Ardawa

Seconded by Dr. Z. Malik

That the Social Planning Advisory

Committee recommended that Council submit the following proposed resolution to the Lower Mainland Local Government Association:

**"TERMINATION OF THE TRANSPORTATION LOAN PROGRAM FOR REFUGEES**

WHEREAS Canada, as part of its national humanitarian program for Government Assisted Refugee (GAR) immigrants is one of the only countries worldwide that issues interest bearing loans to refugee immigrants to cover their pre-entry medical examination and transportation costs to resettle to Canada.

WHEREAS the burden of the transportation loans is having a detrimental impact on thousands of refugees and on Canadian society, undermining refugees' ability to integrate and to contribute to their full potential in their new homes.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of BC Municipalities urges the Government of Canada to immediately cancel all outstanding refugee transportation and pre-entry medical loan debt and to cease seeking repayment of the transportation and pre-entry medical costs for new Government Assisted Refugees coming to Canada."

Carried

Around table introductions were made to introduce Elizabeth Keurvorst, the new Communications Specialist from the office of the Mayor, to the committee members.

### C. DELEGATION REQUEST

1. Merlin Chatwin suggested that **Susan Papadionissiou, Office of Early Childhood Development**, Learning & Care, Surrey/White Rock be invited to present at the September 24, 2009 Social Planning Advisory Committee meeting. File No. 4750-01

Councillor Villeneuve met with Susan on June 24, 2009 to discuss the development of a Surrey's Children Profile that will highlight information on children and youth in Surrey. A media event to release the profile to the public and discuss its implications is being planned for November 2009. Susan mentioned how much work Aileen Murphy does and how appreciated she is.

It was Moved by L. Alexander  
Seconded by K. Kreis  
That the Social Planning Advisory  
Committee hear Susan Papadionissiou, Office of **Early Childhood Development**,  
Learning & Care, Surrey/White Rock at the September 24, 2009 meeting.  
Carried

### D. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

### E. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Surrey Housing Action Plan**  
File No. 4815-20

Aileen Murphy presented on "Affordable Housing in Surrey: Housing Demand & Supply" and the development of Surrey's Housing Action Plan (HAP). The following comments were provided:

- Helen Chan, Planner and Andrew Dong, Planning Analyst have been sifting through data on housing in Surrey.
- OCP update is underway in 2009-2010. The HAP will contribute to the OCP.
- Metro Vancouver has produced estimates of future housing demand in each municipality as part of the development of their new Regional Growth Strategy. Over the next 10 years it is estimated that Surrey will require 50,500 new housing units to accommodate growth. Based on current patterns of housing tenure and income distribution, 32,800 will be owners, 17,700 will be renters. 12,600 of the rental units will need to be affordable rentals for low to moderate income households.
- Metro Vancouver produced these estimates with the acknowledgement that in order to meet this demand, the provincial and federal governments will need to invest in housing. If the senior governments do not act, our current housing crisis will continue into the future.

- 2/3 of housing stock in Surrey is detached homes and 1/3 is multi-family.
- There are an estimated 2,450 manufactured homes and trailers.
- The proportion of the housing stock that is multi-family units (townhouses and apartments) has been increasing over the past decade.
- The loss of rental apartments doesn't seem to be a problem in Surrey. In 2008 in Surrey, 393 single family homes were demolished and only 8 multi-family units (in 1 building) were demolished (an exception).
- Small lot zones were introduced in 2000. New small lot zones with secondary suites and coach houses provides more affordable options and sustainable kinds of housing.
- The average household size in Surrey is 3, as compared to the regional average of 2.6.
- 7% of households in Surrey are multiple-family versus 3% in the Metro Vancouver region as a whole. 11% of households in Newton and Whalley (excluding City Centre) are multiple-family.
- 45% of City Centre households are non-family households.
- Tenure – 75% of Surrey households are owners and 25% renters – higher than regional average which is 2/3 owners and 1/3 renters.
- Whalley (37%) and Guildford (29%) have the highest percentage of renters.
- Housing continuum – emergency shelters, transition supportive housing, non-market rental housing, market rental, home ownership.
- Renters tend to have significantly lower incomes than owners. A recent Metro Vancouver study indicated that only 6% of renters could afford to purchase a home.
- Average income of renter households in Surrey (\$37,090) is half that of owners (\$72,552).
- The median income of one person households (\$30,007) and lone parent households (\$37,160) are lower than couple family households.
- 41% of renters have children and 30% live in one person households.
- Rental housing includes: non-market social housing and market rental. There are two categories of market rental - purpose built apartments; and secondary rental (secondary suites, condo units).
- Surrey has 7,043 social housing units. In February 2009, there were 980 Surrey applicants on the BC Housing waitlist.
- Construction of social housing: the majority of Surrey's stock of low income housing was built in the 1980's. The federal government stopped funding low income housing in the early 1990's. Since 2000, almost all of the new social housing is for seniors.
- Market rental – 2/3 of our renters live in secondary suites (estimated 19,000 suites). Under 20% are located in a zone that permits a secondary suite.
- Surrey has approx. 6,000 rental units in townhouses and low-rise apartments. Most of these units were constructed in the 1970's. It is more lucrative now to build strata units.
- Vacancy rates – just for the purpose of built rentals, 2008 vacancy rate was 2.1%, region is 3.5%
- CMHC has identified renter households facing housing affordability challenges. The core housing need “falls below norms of expectations of affordability and adequacy”. People are typically paying more than 30% of their income for housing. There is a subgroup of the *core housing* that pay over 50% of their income on rent and are termed *at risk of homelessness*.
  - 10,500 rental households in Surrey are *in core*;

- 3,935 renter households in Surrey are *at risk of homelessness*.
- Housing Action Plan Process :
  - Phase 1 – needs assessment
  - Phase 2 – solutions and strategies
  - Phase 3 – action plan development
  - Phase 4 – action plan adopted by Council
- Stakeholders group meeting: July 10, 2009.
- What does the Social Planning Advisory Committee think are the most important housing issues in Surrey?

Committee comments:

- Concentrating too much social housing in one neighbourhood creates more social problems (eg: Guildford has some very large low income housing projects).
- In the 1990's there was the co-op housing. It was a good model as it mixed, in one project; low income households and households paying market rent. In the 1990's BC Housing started building smaller projects (eg: projects with 30 or 40 units).
- Jim Green, a former Vancouver City Councillor and housing advocate has talked about mixed neighbourhood developments being a bit of a failure in that low income people could not afford the neighbourhood amenities in more expensive areas. The new Woodward's facility in downtown Vancouver is going to try to address some of this.
- Need to determine who the people *at risk* of homelessness are.
- A high proportion of the homeless on the streets are Aboriginal. This is a population that should be targeted to identify their unique needs and housing requirements.
- Affordability for renters is a big concern especially for new immigrants.
- Housing for young adults is needed. Whistler has "dorm style" housing for its workers. It would be interesting to consider this model for Surrey.
- Developers have not built rental housing since the early 1980's. Secondary suites have taken up that gap in a very strong way. The HAP needs to look at Surrey legalizing suites so tenants are better protected.
- It is hard to look at housing and homelessness without looking at all the other things that go with it: minimum wage, single family female run households.
- Social housing won't be developed or maintained unless the provincial and/or federal governments step up to the plate. The City can address secondary suites.
- The development of a Housing Action Plan is meant to be an exercise that ultimately each municipality in Metro Vancouver undertakes. To respond to the estimates of future housing demand in the new Regional Growth
- Update to be provided in September 2009.

It was

Moved by L. Alexander  
 Seconded by K. Ardawa  
 That the Social Planning Advisory

Committee recommend that Council receive the report as information.

Carried

## G. UPDATES

1. Elizabeth Keurvorst, Communications Specialist, Office of the Mayor provided the following update:
  - (a) **Rec for Kids Program** was launched as an initiative by Rotary Club, a non-profit organization, a few weeks ago. Sports equipment is revamped and recycled.
  - (b) **Composite Learning Index** measures lifelong learning: Learning to know, live together, learning to do, and learning to be.
    - An interesting measurement of learning.
    - The City is doing worse than two years ago. South Surrey scored 80 in 2006. The score now is 76.
    - It was noted that Beth Barlow, Chief Librarian, is tracking this as part of the Learning for Life Strategy.
2. Karen Kreis agreed to share the results of the Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities' **Newton Community** project at a future meeting.

## H. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Letter, dated April 15, 2009, from Chris Friesen, Immigrant Services Society of BC, to Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, regarding **eliminating the transportation loan to government assisted refugees (GARs)**.  
File No. 5080-01
2. Unofficial translation of the actual French language reply received by Chris Friesen, Immigrant Services Society of BC, from **Minister Kenny's** associate to the **April 15, 2009 letter**.  
File No. 5080-01
3. Letter dated May 28, 2009, from **Jane Dyson, Executive Director, BC Coalition of People with Disabilities** regarding use of cell phones and other handheld devices while operating a motor vehicle.  
File No. 4900-01

## I. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. **Corporate Report Ro91 regarding Implementation Measures with Respect to the Measuring Up Initiative**.  
File No. 8060-01
2. **"Building Diversity in the City of Surrey: The Future Lives Here"** article in Plan Canada's Special Edition on Welcoming Communities: Planning for diverse populations.  
File No. 6520-01

It was  
Moved by K. Ardawa  
Seconded by S. Dooley  
That the Social Planning Advisory  
Committee receive all the correspondence and information items as information.  
Carried

**J. OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

**K. NEXT MEETING**

It is proposed that the July meeting be cancelled.

It was  
Moved by K. Ardawa  
Seconded by S. Dooley  
That the Social Planning Advisory  
Committee meeting of July 15, 2009, be cancelled.  
Carried

The next Meeting of the Social Planning Advisory Committee is on September 24, 2009.

**L. ADJOURNMENT**

It was  
Moved by K. Ardawa  
Seconded by S. Dooley  
That the Social Planning Advisory  
Committee do now adjourn.  
Carried

The Social Planning Advisory Committee adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

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Jane Sowik, City Clerk

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Chairperson, Councillor J. Villeneuve  
Social Planning Advisory Committee