

NO: R100

COUNCIL DATE: June 15, 2020

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **June 11, 2020**

FROM: **General Manager, Planning & Development**
General Manager, Finance
General Manager, Engineering

FILE: **5801-01**

SUBJECT: **Reach Child and Youth Development Society**

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Development Department, the Finance Department, and the Engineering Department recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Direct staff to send a copy of this report to the Reach Child and Youth Development Society.

BACKGROUND

At Council-In-Committee on February 14, 2020, Renie D'Aquila, Executive Director, and Denis Horgan, Chair, of Reach Child and Youth Development Society ("REACH") appeared as a delegation. They provided information on REACH and requested support for the development of a new Surrey Centre for Autism and Child Development ("Autism Centre").

The support from the City requested by REACH included:

- Authorizing staff to work with REACH and inventory available locations for a new Autism Centre;
- Providing zoning assistance related to a new Autism Centre;
- Providing information on possible property tax exemption; and
- Creating awareness of the REACH Autism Centre in City communications.

DISCUSSION

REACH is a non-profit organization that serves over 1,200 children and youth in the South Fraser region, including 400 children and youth in Surrey. The Society has been providing autism-specific services for 30 years. In Surrey, it is estimated that 2,500 children have autism and 1,977 families have registered for autism-specific services.

REACH is seeking to build a new Autism Centre in Surrey to help improve the quality of life and provide support for children with autism and their families. REACH is seeking a location in the

Cloverdale area that provides 3,000 to 5,000 square feet of space in a location that is accessible to public transit.

The provision of health and social services is the responsibility of the federal and provincial levels of government; however, the City of Surrey recognizes the importance of these services to the overall health and vitality of the community. In principle, the City supports REACH's proposal to develop a new Autism Centre in Surrey. In response to the specific requests made by REACH for assistance from the City, information is outlined below as to how the City may aid non-profit organizations.

- *Planning & Development Department:* To assist REACH in the process of identifying a suitable location, Planning staff can provide feedback on the suitability of sites being considered, including information on zoning and land-use designations of sites, along with any other relevant land use considerations and providing guidance to the applicant's team on the development approval process.
- *Permissive Property Tax Exemptions:* Council may consider permissive tax exemptions for properties within the City that are owned by REACH, as a not-for-profit society, or alternatively, that are leased from the City, pursuant to Section 224 of the *Community Charter, S.B.C. 2003, Chap. 26* and in accordance with the City's Tax Exemption Policy (the "Policy"). Permissive tax exemptions are at the discretion of Council; there is no obligation to give an exemption. According to the City's Policy, considerations for non-profits to receive a permissive tax exemption include the following.
 - Exemptions may be considered for land or improvements that are owned or held by charitable or non-profit organizations, supported by public funds, and used exclusively for charitable or philanthropic purposes.
 - Non-profits applying for tax exemption must demonstrate that the services of their organization are open to and used predominantly by Surrey residents.
 - All applications must be consistent with municipal policies, plans, bylaws, and regulations.
 - Exemptions can only be considered after the building is constructed, given final occupancy approval by the City, and be occupied, operational, and compliant with all licensing and permits.

The support provided to non-profit organizations by the City does not generally include providing inventories of available properties. Rather, non-profits are encouraged to retain the services of a realtor to seek out suitable properties. Similarly, the City's communications do not generally include promoting or increasing awareness about specific social services and / or non-profit organizations; however, if the City receives an enquiry about services, staff will provide information on services and / or direct people to BC211. In addition, Surrey Libraries provides listings of community services available to Surrey residents.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The development of a new Autism Centre in Surrey by REACH supports the City's Sustainability Charter 2.0 themes of Inclusion and Health and Wellness. Specifically, this project supports the following Desired Outcomes ("DO"):

- Diversity and Accessibility DO₂: Surrey is a caring and compassionate city that supports its residents of all backgrounds, demographics and life experiences.
- Age-Friendly Community DO₁₆: All children and youth have access to enriching programs, services, green space and opportunities for indoor and outdoor play that promote healthy development.
- Social Infrastructure and Innovation DO₂₄: Surrey has a strong social infrastructure that supports the needs of its diverse and growing population.
- Health Services and Programs DO₁: Surrey has a full range of high quality, community-based health and social services and programs that address health and wellness.
- Health Services and Programs DO₃: Surrey has the health services and programs to meet the current and changing needs of its diverse and growing population.

CONCLUSION

The REACH Society is planning to develop a new Autism Centre in Surrey. A Surrey Autism Centre will be a positive addition to Surrey's social infrastructure and enable Surrey children with autism and their families to receive supports in their own community.

Original signed by
Jean Lamontagne
General Manager, Planning & Development

Original signed by
Kam Grewal, CPA, CMA
General Manager, Finance

Original signed by
Scott Neuman, P.Eng.
General Manager, Engineering

AM/ss/vs