

Present:

Councillor Locke, Chair
G. Bremault, Vice-Chair
M. Cheema
A. Dhillon
N. Chima
C. Mohr
N. Nastoh
S. Kular

Absent:

A. Begalka
S. Andhi Bilkhu
A. Willis

Staff Present:

K. Patten, Social Planner
L. Blake, Administrative Assistant

A. ADOPTIONS**1. November 6, 2019 Agenda**

It was Moved by G. Bremault
Seconded by N. Chima
That the agenda of the November 6, 2019
Social Equity and Diversity Committee meeting be adopted as presented.
Carried

2. October 2, 2019 Minutes

It was Moved by M. Cheema
Seconded by N. Chima
That the minutes of the Social Equity and
Diversity Committee meeting held October 2, 2019 be adopted as presented.
Carried

B. DELEGATIONS**1. Marika Albert, Policy Director, BC Non-Profit Housing Association**

Marika Albert, BC Non-Profit Housing Association, provided a PowerPoint presentation outlining information and research regarding homelessness and housing and highlighted the following information:

- The BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA) was formed in 1990 with 150 members. Currently, BCNPHA's member organizations have 60,000 units of affordable housing in 2500 buildings across BC.
- Three main causes of homelessness have been identified that are based on research, interviews and broader social studies: structural factors, system failures and personal circumstances.

- Homelessness costs the Canadian economy an estimated \$7 billion per year. A variety of research in the US and Canada has shown that monthly costs to house an individual, whether in independent housing or social housing with supports, are considerably less than costs for emergency or institutional responses such as shelters or hospital stays for those experiencing homelessness. There are also social costs associated with homelessness to be considered such as impacts to families, the community and lack of productivity.
- It is important to understand what homelessness is so that it can be identified, studied and addressed. The Metro Vancouver Point in Time Homeless Count defines a homeless person as someone who does not have a place of their own where they can expect to stay for 30 days. The Homelessness Count is conducted every three years across Canada to identify minimum numbers regarding homelessness. Metro Vancouver has contracted BCNPHA to conduct the Homeless Count; BCNPHA works with local community groups to administer the count. The Count includes data from shelters, transition houses, hospitals, jails, detox centres, as well as the street count. The count is conducted by over 1200 volunteers. Demographic information is obtained from homeless people, to provide an understanding of trends for decision-makers; the count also serves as a community building exercise. However, it is acknowledged that point in time counts are widely regarded as undercounts of the actual numbers of people experiencing homelessness. There are challenges counting individuals experiencing hidden homelessness (such as couch surfers) and specific demographics such as youth and women fleeing violence.
- The 2017 count identified 3506 homeless individuals in Metro Vancouver, which was a 30% increase since 2014 despite the implementation of temporary housing solutions. 21% of individuals were 54 years or older, 34% identified as Indigenous and 21% indicated they had full- or part-time employment.
- The 2017 count in Surrey identified 602 homeless individuals, which was a 49% increase since 2014. This increase was higher than the regional average. 52% of respondents had lived in Surrey for 10 years or longer, 57% had two or more health conditions and 24% were seniors, which is higher than the regional average.
- BCNPHA also coordinates Home Front, a collaborative initiative focused on Metro Vancouver with a shared commitment and coordinated set of actions to understand who is experiencing homelessness and facilitate evidence-based decision making. Their vision is to make homelessness a rare, brief and one-time experience in Metro Vancouver.
- BCNPHA uses census data to create the Canadian Rental Housing Index, which can compare rental information across communities, view demographic data and help identify hot-spots. Of the 48,940 renters in Surrey, 37% reported they were spending over 30% of their income on rent and utilities and almost one in five were at a crisis-level of spending over 50% of their income on rent and utilities. These individuals are often

forced to make difficult financial decisions, such as being able to buy groceries or pay rent.

- The Provincial government has pledged a \$6 billion investment over 10 years towards affordable housing and homelessness reduction. The Federal government is implementing the National Housing Strategy and Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy. Local government can help alleviate housing and homelessness issues through land use, facilitating partnerships between private developers and non-profit organizations, protecting existing rental units and fast-tracking affordable housing developments.
- An extended homeless count will be piloted in one city in Metro Vancouver for 2020. The city for the pilot count has not yet been selected.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Albert advised that individuals residing in their cars or RVs are considered homeless and included in the count if they can be contacted.

The Committee noted that the number of homeless individuals is likely much higher than the count indicates and that more realistic numbers are required in order for Surrey to receive the appropriate amount of funding towards housing and homelessness.

The Committee discussed issues related to students living in student housing and their risk of homelessness. It was suggested that the Committee could recommend that the BC Non-Profit Housing Association could include a count of students living in student housing, as they could be at high-risk of homelessness.

The Committee provided the following suggestions to increase inclusion in the homeless count:

- Contact the School District to reach homeless students;
- Utilize Surrey Crime Prevention or the Business Improvement Association bicycle patrol to hand out information cards; and
- Hang posters in high-traffic areas, such as laundromats and coffee shops.

The Committee also suggested that any handouts should include definitions of homelessness and at-risk homelessness.

It was

Moved by G. Bremault

Seconded by M. Cheema

That the Social Equity and Diversity

Committee request that the BC Non-Profit Housing Association select Surrey as the pilot city for the extended homeless count.

Carried

C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS**1. Homelessness Issues in City Centre – Bonnie Burnside**

The Committee continued the discussion with Ms. Burnside from the October 2, 2019 meeting regarding the need for a welcoming community hub for unhoused residents. Ms. Burnside suggested that the Youth Lounge in Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre could be used during the day while students are at school and that service providers could be present to assist individuals if requested.

It was

Moved by N. Chima

Seconded by G. Bremault

That the Social Equity and Diversity

Committee recommend that the General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture explore the possibility of implementing a pilot program in the youth lounge at Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre that would provide daytime gathering space for unhoused residents and include access to outreach resources.

Carried

In response to a separate question from the delegation, Councillor Locke advised that she will raise the issue of the loss of North Surrey Recreation Centre washroom facilities for public use.

2. Update on the City of Surrey signing onto the UNHCR's #withrefugees campaign

Kristin Patten, Social Planner, advised that Mayor McCallum has signed the UNHCR's #withrefugees campaign.

D. NEW BUSINESS**E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL****F. CORRESPONDENCE****G. INFORMATION ITEMS****1. Modular Supportive Housing Resident Outcomes: Summary Report & Surrey Temporary Modular Buildings Report**

<https://www.bchousing.org/research-centre/library/transition-from-homelessness/modular-supportive-housing-resident-outcomes>

2. Surrey Housing Profile

<https://www.surrey.ca/files/Surrey%20Housing%20Profile%20FINAL.pdf>

3. **Canadian Rental Housing Index**

<http://rentalhousingindex.ca/en/#intro>

4. **Social Equity and Diversity Committee: Housing and Homelessness**

The Committee requested that staff provide highlights of data reports. The Committee noted the limits of the City's current social planning team due to its size. As Surrey is expanding at a rapid pace, there will be more work regarding social planning issues to be addressed.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

It was Moved by M. Cheema
Seconded by C. Mohr
That the Social Equity and Diversity
Committee recommend to Council that additional staffing resources be allocated to the Social Planning team to properly address the City's growing population and social challenges.

Carried

H. OTHER BUSINESS

1. **2020 Social Equity and Diversity Committee Schedule**

It was Moved by N. Nastoh
Seconded by M. Cheema
That the Social Equity and Diversity
Committee adopt the 2020 meeting schedule as presented.

Carried

2. **Delegation Request: Addressing Urban Heat in Surrey: Health, Vulnerability, and Climate Action**

The Committee requested that the delegation provide information regarding climate change refugees.

It was Moved by M. Cheema
Seconded by A. Dhillon
That Erin Desautels, Sustainability Planner,
City of Surrey, be approved to present at the December 4, 2019 Social Equity and Diversity Committee meeting.

Carried

3. **Upcoming Agenda Items**

The Committee requested information regarding how the newly amended *Highway and Traffic By-law, 1997, No. 13007* is anticipated to be enforced and the resources that are available for individuals affected by enforcement.

4. Committee Member Updates

No updates were provided.

I. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Social Equity and Diversity Committee will be held on Wednesday, December 4, 2019 at 4:00 p.m. in 2E Community Room B.

J. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by G. Bremault
Seconded by S. Kular
That the Social Equity and Diversity

Committee meeting do now adjourn.

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Jennifer Ficocelli, City Clerk

Councillor Brenda Locke, Chair

**SOCIAL EQUITY AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE
RECOMMENDATION INDEX
Wednesday, November 6, 2019**

1. Social Equity and Diversity Committee: Housing and Homelessness

That additional staffing resources be allocated to the Social Planning team to properly address the City's growing population and social challenges.