



# Corporate Report

NO: R213

COUNCIL DATE: October 20, 2008

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: October 20, 2008  
FROM: General Manager, Planning and Development FILE: 0125-20  
0550-20-10  
SUBJECT: Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities -  
Delegation to Council

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## RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Development Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Authorize the City Clerk to forward a copy of this report and the related Council resolution to the representative of the Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities who appeared before Council.

## INTENT

The purpose of this report is to respond to a list of 13 issues presented by a representative of the Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities (SASC) to Council-in-Committee at its September 8, 2008 meeting.

## BACKGROUND

The SASC is an "umbrella group" for community associations in Surrey, which is involved in community development and asset building. Representatives of the SASC appeared as a delegation at the September 8, 2008 Council-in-Committee meeting and expressed appreciation to Council for the improvements that have been made in the past three years with regard to Council's accessibility to citizens, the Mayor's Community Association Advisory Committee and Council initiatives, such as the Sustainability Charter. The delegation, at that meeting, submitted a list of 13 general issues, which they asked to be addressed, to achieve more "openness" at City Hall.

The delegation also suggested that Surrey check with other municipalities with regard to the opportunities that other municipalities provide to the public in relation to input to City

decisions. The delegation expressed the opinion that planning consultation processes are too weighted in favour of developers in comparison to residents and these processes should be changed to reflect the SASC recommendations.

This report:

1. Summarizes and responds to the 13 issues that were raised by the SASC; and
2. Provides a summary of the results of a staff survey of other lower mainland municipalities related to several of the issues raised by the SASC.

A copy of the SASC submission presented by the delegation is attached as Appendix I to this report. A copy of the staff survey and a summary of the results are attached as Appendix II.

## DISCUSSION

Each of the issues raised in the SASC is listed in italics below and following each issue is a response.

1. Mayor's Community Association Advisory Committee

*While the SASC appreciates the creation of the Mayor's Community Association Advisory Committee, they would like to see this as a standing committee, advisory to all of Council, which would meet at least four times per year and receive minutes and responses to the issues it raises.*

The Mayor's Community Association Advisory Committee met most recently in mid-September. This Committee is intended to be a means by which the Mayor is able to meet with community representatives to discuss and learn about their issues and concerns in an informal setting. It sometimes meets on weekends to reflect the time commitments of Association members. This was not intended to be a formal Committee, duplicating the function of other formal advisory committees of Council

2. Response to letters

*The SASC requests that the City officially acknowledge and respond to all letters sent to Mayor and Council.*

Correspondence to the Mayor and Council is, in majority, received by email, but all correspondence, regardless of the media by which it is received, is handled in the same manner.

The correspondence is acknowledged, and the writer is advised where the correspondence has been directed for a response. All letters and emails addressed to Mayor and Council are forwarded to the Mayor and Council, with a note advising of where they have been referred for a response.

Some correspondence for the Mayor and Council is general information, and if no response is required, is forwarded to the Mayor and Council as information and is copied to each relevant City Department.

Invitations to Mayor and Council are forwarded to the Mayor and Council, and their staff responds directly to the organization making the invitation on behalf of and separately for each member of Council.

While some municipalities have correspondence items on their Council Agendas, the City of Surrey has not had correspondence on agendas for a number of years, as responses to writers can be processed more expediently by directing the correspondence to a Department immediately upon receipt, rather than waiting to list it on an agenda and have Council refer it.

3. Availability of Staff Reports

*The SASC requests that Council agendas, including staff reports with all appendices, be put on the City website on Friday afternoons, instead of 1:00 pm on Monday.*

Every Council agenda is on the City's website on the Friday afternoon prior to the Monday meeting of Council to which the agenda applies. Corporate Reports listed on the agenda are uploaded to the City's website on Monday (i.e., the date of the Council meeting). The uploading of Corporate Reports has on certain Mondays taken until early afternoon before all of the reports were on the City's website. Staff have now made adjustments to the process and are able to have the full agenda, including all Corporate Reports, on the website by 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning. Council has adopted Policy D-20 which states "Agenda packages shall be available to the news media after 8:00 a.m. on the day of the Regular Council meeting. This policy relates to the fact that the full Council agenda package is forwarded to Council on Friday evening of the week preceding the Monday on which the agenda will be considered at a meeting of Council. Council members have the weekend to read the agenda package and be in a position to answer questions about the information in the package on Monday in advance of its meeting. If the information was to be made available to the public and media at the same time as it was forwarded to City Council, Council members could, and in many cases would be, faced with inquiries about the items in the agenda package before they had a reasonable chance to read and consider them.

4. Improve the City's Website

*The SASC has requested that the City website include more community group information. They feel that the search engine and overall organization of the website should be improved to assist in accessing items of interest to their members.*

This is an issue common to many websites – especially large and complex sites where many customers are looking for a wide array of types of information. City staff are working continually to improve and update the website, to add more information to the site and to make it easy to understand and navigate. A recent

addition is the "Community Development" link, under the heading "Living in Surrey". This provides a link to information on plans, projects, social planning matters and many services provided by the City or by others. In the directory of services, there is a link to "Special Groups". This section of the web site provides a direct link to many groups and organizations in the City.

Staff will communicate with the SASC to collect their information for this link and to understand more clearly how the site could be improved.

5. Public Access to Council

*The SASC submission states that the public can only address Council at statutory public hearings or by requesting in writing to be a delegation at a later Council-in-Committee meeting. The SASC is requesting that Surrey adopt practices of some other municipalities of allowing the public to speak to specific agenda items as they arise at Council meetings, and/or by having a few minutes to address Council on any topic before a Council meeting officially starts.*

In Surrey, any group or individual can make a request to address Council through a written request to the City Clerk. These requests are placed on the next Council agenda, and Council then decides whether to hear the delegation and where the delegation is best heard (i.e., Council-in-Committee, Regular Council, Regular Council - Land Use, one of Council's Advisory Committees, or whether it should be forwarded to staff for attention). This system has generally worked well for Surrey over the years.

Some municipalities do have a public discussion period at either the beginning of the meeting or at the end of the meeting, where any member of the public can address Council. As the attached survey results show, the practices vary from municipality to municipality. Chilliwack, Delta, North Vancouver, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Richmond and Langley Township provide for this; however, New Westminster, Vancouver and Coquitlam do not. In most cases, municipalities have a set maximum time of five to ten minutes for speakers, a limitation on the number of speakers, and may require that requests to appear before Council be made in writing in advance.

6. Public Open Houses

*The SASC is pleased to see that Public Open Houses held for transportation, parks and planning matters frequently have scheduled staff presentations and question and answer sessions in addition to display panels. They support and encourage this approach, and also suggest that City staff should be the recipient of comments made at open houses as well as the proponents of a project.*

Staff presentations and question and answer sessions are now common elements of the City's open houses. For City-initiated plans and projects, all comments are submitted to City staff. In the case of preliminary information meetings held by proponents on development applications, staff agrees that it is appropriate that comments be received both directly by the proponents, and also by staff.

7. Input to the Final Plan

*The SCAC notes that there has been an improvement in holding public meetings early in the process, but the public should be allowed more time to comment on the final plan (e.g., planning, transportation and PR&C plans) before Council adoption. If a plan is circulated to the public, the final plan should not be adopted without knowing whether anyone took notice of our comments, e.g. Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and the amendments to the Semiahmoo Town Centre Plan.*

In presenting final reports to Council with regard to large and complex planning and consultation exercises, staff normally summarizes the public process, the input received from the public and the manner in which the input has been incorporated in the final product. These reports are available to the public for review either in hard copy form or online.

8. Non-statutory Public Hearings

*The SASC recommends that Council hold hearings for major projects and bylaws not subject to statutory public hearings, e.g. Tree Protection Bylaw, Sustainability Charter, Parks Master Plan and some development permits, as many other municipalities do.*

Policy and regulatory initiatives such as the Tree Protection Bylaw, the Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan and the Sustainability Charter are the subject of extensive public consultation processes where the public has an opportunity to provide input and raise issues and concerns during the process of developing the policy or By-law. Key stakeholders are identified and focus group meetings are typically held to explore elements of these initiatives and receive input from a wide array of sources. Public comments are reported to Council either as part of the interim reports on the item being prepared or as part of the final report to Council on the matter with the recommended final document.

A concern in holding "public hearings" after extensive community consultation, is that some parties may choose to not use the working consultation process, where interests and issues can be heard, explored and discussed, but rather wait until the end of the process and make their views known to Council through this hearing, which undermines the effectiveness of the previous processes. Council has the authority to decide, on a case-by-case basis, when further or direct input to Council is beneficial on any matter.

A survey of other municipalities within the region indicates that municipalities are almost evenly divided between those that hold public "hearings" for non-statutory items and those that do not.

9. Inclusion of Secondary Plans in the OCP

*The SASC states that all municipalities in the Metro Vancouver area that are subject to the Local Government Act, except Surrey, incorporate secondary plans*

*(area plans and neighbourhood concept plans) into the OCP by bylaw, after a public hearing. Surrey adopts secondary plans by resolution, without a public hearing, and amends the OCP when a rezoning application comes in for that individual parcel of land.*

*It is the SASC's opinion that Surrey's actions are skirting the intent of the Local Government Act, to have municipal development plans provide certainty rather than flexibility and with which the City capital expenditure programs are supposed to comply, and precludes input directly to Council. The SASC maintains that the public wants input into the whole, final plan before Council approves it, and certainty of the plan. The SASC recommends that Surrey's process for approval of secondary plans be changed to correspond with what all other municipalities in Metro Vancouver that are subject to the Local Government Act are doing.*

The attached survey of municipalities in the Lower Mainland shows that most municipalities that undertake Secondary Plans do adopt them by by-law and do not go through a public hearing. Vancouver, Burnaby and New Westminster advise that they adopt neighbourhood plans by Council resolution. It is noted that Vancouver does not have an Official Community Plan.

Surrey's approach, which provides for the adoption of neighbourhood concept plans by Council resolution, is outlined below.

Section 875. (1) of the *Local Government Act* states that an Official Community Plan is a statement of objectives and policies to guide decisions on planning and land use management, within the area covered by the plan, respecting the purposes of local government. The *Local Government Act* also provides for specific contents and policies statements in an Official Community Plan, and it sets forth very stringent public consultation and adoption/amendment procedures. However, the *Act* does not include similar provisions for adoption of secondary plans or neighbourhood concept plans.

Surrey's approach of adopting local area plans, neighbourhood concept plans, and secondary plans by Council resolution is clearly set out in Surrey's Official Community Plan under Division A, Section 5, Secondary Plans. The approval process, including a public consultation process is also specified in this section of the OCP.

Adopting a secondary plan or neighbourhood concept plan by by-law as an official community plan may have advantages, including:

- The plans would have the strength of an official community plan; and
- All amendments to the plans would have to go through the stringent consultation and by-law adoption process prescribed by the legislation; thus predictability and certainty of the plans could be enhanced. There would likely be fewer requests for plan amendments;

Disadvantages of the by-law approach and reasons for Surrey's use of the resolution approach include:

- Conceptually secondary plans and neighbourhood concept plans contain specific and very detailed land use and development policies and designations, including detailed servicing and implementation strategies that are beyond the general nature of an "official community plan". It is more appropriate that an official community plan provide for general policy guidance for the community;
- An official community plan is paramount, in that all land use decisions must not be in violation with its policies. A secondary plan or a neighbourhood concept plan provide some flexibility to account for uncertainties that cannot be identified based on information available during the plan preparation stage. Adopting secondary plans and neighbourhood concept plans by OCP by-law will not provide for this needed flexibility;
- A secondary plan or a neighbourhood concept plan provides very detailed land use and development policies, including a detailed plan of specific land uses, densities, road and pedestrian networks, and proposed subdivision lot layouts. In most cases, a development application will necessitate some adjustments to the adopted plan involving the minor adjustments to the boundaries between land uses, densities, road alignments, or lot configurations. Even if the secondary plans were adopted by by-law as part of the Official Community Plan, almost every land development application would require an amendment to the Official Community Plan. The purpose of an official community plan would be defeated and the land development process would become even more complicated than it already is.

10. Prior consideration of OCP Consultation Process

*The SASC letter states that Section 879 of the LGA requires local governments, when developing or amending an OCP, to consider whether consultation should be early and ongoing. Most municipalities bring a report to their Councils early in the application process, setting out the proposed consultation process, allowing a Council to order, for example, a wider circulation area or additional public meetings if it feels it necessary. The SASC submission states that Surrey only passes a resolution after the fact; when 3<sup>rd</sup> reading is being given, and wonders how a municipality can really consider if extra consultation is needed long after the consultation has been carried out. The suggestion is that Surrey modify its practices in this regard.*

Inclusive and effective community and agency consultation is an important component of the planning process, especially when considering the development of or amendment to an OCP.

Section 879 of the *Local Government Act* states that during the development, repeal or amendment of an OCP, the local government, "must provide one or more opportunities it considers appropriate for consultation with persons,

organizations and authorities it considers to be affected" and to "consider whether the opportunities for consultation ... should be early and ongoing" with boards, agencies, adjacent municipalities, first nations, school boards, and provincial and federal agencies.

The following procedures are followed by the City of Surrey.

- When undertaking any broad policy studies which may lead to an OCP amendment, Surrey staff reports to Council with a recommended planning process and draft terms of reference which outline the means by which consultation is proposed to be undertaken and the individuals and agencies that will be consulted. This consultation is typically extensive and includes groups that may have only a minor interest.
- With regard to development applications which will lead to an OCP amendment, staff undertakes the following:
  - A pre-notification letter is sent to all agencies that may have an interest in the application;
  - Notice is sent to adjacent municipalities where the application is proximate;
  - A pre-notification letter is sent to owners of all properties within 100 metres or three lot depths of the application. Where the application is significant, or the boundaries need to be expanded to include all properties which may have an interest, staff expands the notice area accordingly and reports such change to Council;
  - In the Land Use Report, prior to first and second reading of the by-law related to such application, staff advises Council with regard to the consultation process pursuant to Section 879 of the *Local Government Act*. Staff lists all agencies that have been consulted, and provides a summary of the feedback received from all referrals. In this way, Council is able to assess the extent of the consultation and determine whether it deems the nature and extent of the consultation to be appropriate, prior to initial consideration of an OCP amendment, and prior to the related public hearing and third reading; and
  - In the case of controversial applications, or applications which would lead to a significant departure from the OCP, staff prepares a preliminary (Stage 1) report to Council, which gives Council an opportunity to consider and provide direction on the processing of the application including the nature and breadth of the consultation.

The attached survey (Appendix II) shows that procedures in this regard vary by municipality. Some municipalities prepare a "new applications" report while others, like Surrey, consider the matter at first reading of the related by-law, and still others at second reading, but before public hearing. In one municipality, the matter of the extent of consultation is left to staff to determine through the planning process.



11. Composition of Community Advisory Committees

*The SASC states that there have been issues with the composition of community advisory committees set up to advise on the development of neighbourhood concept plans, e.g., in Grandview Heights. They suggest that every effort be made to choose participants who are altruistic and intending to remain in the area, rather than those wanting to sell their property for development at the highest value and leave the area.*

Effort has been made to provide a balance of participants in the formation of Citizen Advisory Committees (CACs). CACs are advisory to Council and staff in the development of neighbourhood concept plans. They are intended to be broadly representative of the community and work on a consensus basis. In all recent CACs there has been an effort to strike a balance between residents in the area, who have an intimate knowledge of the study area and of its history and members of the CAC who reside outside of the boundaries of the plan area. This latter group typically represents adjacent owners, neighbourhood associations and interest groups. It is recognized that the CAC members must put aside personal interests, and work toward the development of a plan for the future, based on the principles of good planning. Staff has been impressed with the commitment and hard work of CAC members in working toward plans that balance many complex issues and a range of ideas and opinions.

12. Consultation re: Development Applications

*The SASC notes that some longstanding community associations are automatically consulted regarding development applications, and suggest that this be extended to all established groups.*

Community Associations are often formed to deal with specific issues. Their memberships and key contacts change over time. As such, it has been difficult for staff to keep an up-to-date list of names and addresses for all Community Associations and other interest groups. However, staff is fully prepared to forward to any community association or other interest group any development applications that are received by the City within the group/association's geographic area of interest provided that the City is aware of the contact information for such group/Association. .

13. Planning Committee/Commission

*The SASC notes that some municipalities have a planning committee of councillors or a planning commission as an intermediary stage in the planning process, where people can express concerns in greater detail that may be practical before the whole of Council. The SASC suggests that Surrey consider this possibility.*

Municipalities vary widely in this regard as noted in the attached survey:

- Coquitlam, Langley Township and the District of North Vancouver do not have a planning advisory committee or commission;

- Vancouver has a Planning Commission but this commission does not review planning applications. Vancouver has a Development Permit Board that has the delegated power to approve development permits, which does not include any elected officials;
- Richmond has a committee of five councillors that review planning applications and a development permit panel of staff that receives delegations;
- Burnaby has established committees which consider planning matters, and an Advisory Planning Commission which considers all zoning by-law matters;
- Delta, the City of North Vancouver and New Westminster have Advisory Planning Committees;
- Port Coquitlam has a Community and Economic Committee with two members of Council on the committee that review all applications prior to Council consideration.

In the City of Surrey, development applications are considered by all of Council at Regular Council Land Use meetings, prior to the related public hearing.

In addition to, and prior to Land Use meetings of Council, there are numerous opportunities for other advisory committees and bodies to make recommendations and input into Council's decisions:

- In the case of major studies, policy initiatives and neighbourhood concept plans, Citizen Advisory Committees are frequently formed as part of the normal consultation process. In addition, plans and policies are reviewed by some or all of Council's formal Advisory Committees, including the Agricultural Advisory Committee, the Environmental Advisory Committee, the Heritage Advisory Commission, the Social Planning Committee, Parks and Community Services Committee and other committees, as directed by Council. The input from these committees is forwarded directly to Council through their minutes, and the comments are incorporated into staff reports to Council.
- Development applications are reviewed, where appropriate, by the Advisory Design Panel, the Agricultural Advisory Committee and the Heritage Advisory Commission before proceeding to the Land Use meetings of Council.
- In general, the current processes are considered to be working well without unduly complicating the systems of local government.

## **CONCLUSION**

This report addresses each of the 13 issues raised by the SASC, outlining Surrey's current practices and, where applicable, describing the practices and procedures of other Lower Mainland municipalities.

Based on the attached survey, it is clear that there is considerable variation across municipalities in the processes employed to receive input from the public. Overall,

Surrey's current practices and procedures are both transparent and within the spirit and intent of the *Local Government Act*, without being unduly complicated.

The report notes several areas where the City will work with the SASC to improve current approaches to communication.

It is recommended that Council receive this report as information and authorize the City Clerk to forward a copy of this report and the related Council resolution to the SASC as information and to initiate further consultation with City staff.

Jean Lamontagne  
General Manager  
Planning and Development

JM/kms/saw

Attachments:

- Appendix I Submission by the Surrey Association of Sustainable dated September 8, 2002
- Appendix II Survey of Lower Mainland Municipalities with regard to the SASC Submission and a table of responses



*Head Sept 7/08  
C.C. - Delgado  
R. Zelita*

### Delegation to City Council re Public Processes, September 8, 2008

The Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities is an umbrella group for community associations and groups and is also involved in community development and asset-building. As an organization, we are trying to be politically neutral and non-partisan. We seek to work with the City rather than against it. But there are still some issues that we feel we must raise with the City from time to time.

This presentation is regarding a number of issues related to public processes and public communication. We want to firstly express our appreciation to Council for the improvements that have been made in the last three years in this regard, such as the Mayor being accessible to citizens, the setting up a Mayor's Community Associations Advisory Committee, and work on a Sustainability Charter. But we have found 13 issues, most of which we have previously mentioned to Council, and which we had hoped would be addressed as part of the promises of "openness at City Hall" which were made at the last municipal election. We are respectfully requesting that these issues be resolved before the next election.

#### General Issues:

1. **Mayor's Community Association Advisory Committee.** While we very much appreciate the creation of this Committee, it has not met in 18 months (although we understand a meeting has now been scheduled for later this month). We would like to see this as a standing committee, which is advisory to all of Council, which meets regularly at least four times per year, and which receives minutes and responses to the issues it raises.
2. **Response to letters** We request that the City officially acknowledges and responds to all letters sent to Mayor and Council. Other municipalities do this, some by having a correspondence item at Council-in-Committee meetings, as many other municipalities do.
3. **Availability of staff reports** We would like to request that Council agenda details, including staff reports with all appendices, be put on the City website on Friday afternoons, instead of 1 pm on Monday, only 3 hours before these items may be discussed and decided by Council. I checked the websites of other Metro Vancouver municipalities and found they all make reports available several days before a Council meeting, not several hours before. I raised this matter with the City Clerk a few weeks ago and it seems there aren't any technical problems to Surrey doing this, but it may require a change to Surrey's procedural bylaw.

TO	CIC
	For Your Information
for	
for	CITY CLERK

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4. **Improve the City's website.** We requested a few months ago that it include more community group information. We also feel that the search engine and overall organization of the website should be improved, as our members have considerable difficulty accessing items they are interested in.
5. **Public access to Council** Currently, the public can only address Council at statutory public hearings or by requesting in writing to be a delegation at a later Council Committee meeting. Many other municipalities provide additional opportunities, for example by allowing the public to speak to specific items as they arise at Council Committee meetings, and/or by having a few minutes to address Council on any topic before a Council meeting officially starts. We are requesting that Surrey do the same.
6. **Public open houses.** With regard to public open houses, which are held for transportation and parks matters as well as planning, we are pleased that some recent open houses, as well as having display panels, have a presentation and general question and answer session at a preadvertized time. We support this very much, and would like to encourage this approach for all open houses. We also suggest that City staff should be the recipient of comments made at open houses as well as the proponents of a project.
7. **Input to Final Plan.** With regard to public consultation processes in developing planning, transportation, and PR&C plans, there has been an improvement in holding public meetings early in the process, but we feel that in many cases, the public should be allowed more time to comment on the final plan before Council adopts it. Too often, a draft plan is circulated to the public, comments are made, and the next thing we know, Council is approving the final plan without us knowing whether anyone took notice of our comments, e.g. Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and the amendments to the Semiahmoo Town Centre Plan.
8. **Non-statutory Public Hearings.** We recommend Council holds non-statutory public hearings for major projects and bylaws not subject to statutory public hearings e.g. Tree Preservation Bylaw, Sustainability Charter, Parks Master Plan and some development permits, as many other municipalities do. We have requested this of Council several times, without success.

**Planning Issues:**

9. **Including Secondary Plans in the OCP .** The Local Government Act requires that an Official Community Plan must be adopted by bylaw after a public hearing, about which there are various advertizing requirements. As far as I can discover from their websites, all municipalities in the Metro Vancouver area except Surrey that are subject to the LGA have interpreted it to mean that secondary plans (area plans and neighbourhood concept plans) must be incorporated into the OCP also, by bylaw, after a public hearing.

Surrey Council, on the other hand, only adopts secondary plans by resolution, without giving the public an opportunity to address Council on the topic. This, it is claimed allows for greater flexibility and a speedier process, and is legal because down the road, when a rezoning application comes in, the OCP is amended at the same time, for that individual parcel of land.

In our opinion, Surrey's actions are skirting the intent of the LGA, which is plainly to have municipal development plans provide some certainty rather than flexibility and with which city capital expenditure programs are supposed to comply. The LGA also provides for public input directly to Council on a plan for an area, which is denied the citizens of Surrey. Yet, input to the whole, final plan before Council approves it and certainty of the plan are what the public wants. We recommend that Surrey's process for approval of secondary plans be changed to correspond with what all other municipalities in Metro Vancouver that are subject to the LGA are doing.

10. **Prior consideration of OCP consultation process.** Section 879 of the LGA states that in developing or amending an OCP, the local government must consider whether consultation should be early and ongoing. Most municipalities bring a report to their Councils early in the application process, setting out the proposed consultation process. This allows a Council to order, for example, a wider circulation area or additional public meetings if it feels it necessary. Surrey, on the other hand, only passes a resolution after the fact, when 3<sup>rd</sup> reading is being given, that the consultation carried out complied with S. 879. Again while this approach may fall within the letter of the law, one wonders how a municipality can really consider if extra consultation is needed long after the consultation has been carried out. We suggest Surrey does what other municipalities do in this regard.
11. **Composition of community advisory committees.** There have been issues with the composition of community advisory committees set up to advise on the development of area plans and neighbourhood concept plans, e.g. in Grandview Heights. We suggest that every effort be made to choose participants who are altruistic and intending to remain in the area, to see it develop, rather than those wanting to sell their property for development at the highest value and leave the area.
12. **Consultation re Development Applications.** Some longstanding community associations are automatically consulted re development applications. We suggest that the City should extend this invitation to all established groups.
13. **Planning Committee/Commission.** A number of other municipalities have a planning committee of councillors or a planning commission as an intermediary stage in the planning process, where people can express concerns in greater detail than may be practical before the whole of Council. Perhaps Surrey should consider this also.

## **Conclusions**

It is our impression that despite the improvements made by this Council, Surrey is still probably the worst of the municipalities in Metro Vancouver in providing opportunities for public input to its processes. We suggest that Surrey checks this out with other municipalities and that its processes be changed for the better.

We realize, of course, that the planning process, in particular, is often not just an issue for the city and its citizens, but also for developers, who want the process to be as speedy as possible. Obviously a balance has to be found between the needs of all three parties. In our opinion, Surrey's current planning consultation processes are too much weighted in favour of developers, compared with other municipalities, and these processes should be changed to reflect our recommendations. We feel there is time to make these changes before the next election, if Council wishes.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Zelinka,  
Coordinator  
Surrey Association of Sustainable Communities

QUESTIONS FOR METRO VANCOUVER TAC MEMBERS:

1. Does your Council allow the public to address Council on items that are being discussed at a regular meeting of Council?

Yes  No

Please Specify:

2. Does your Council have a set time, for example just before a Council meeting, where the public has the opportunity to address Council on any topic?

Yes  No

Please Specify:

3. Does your Council regularly hold “public meetings” to allow the public to address Council on the passing of by-laws and policy documents which do not require a statutory public meeting?

Yes  No

Please Specify:

4. How does your Municipality adopt Secondary Plans (Neighbourhood Plans, Local Area Plans) by:

- Council resolution?  
 By by-law after a public hearing?  
 Are all Secondary Plans incorporated into your municipalities OCP?  
 Other? Please Specify:

5. At what point in the process does your Council pass a resolution under Section 879 of the *Local Government of Act* with regard to the extent of consultation on developing or amending an OCP?

Please describe:

6. Does your Municipality have a planning advisory committee, and planning commission or other body that reviews planning applications and projects and/or hears from the public prior to their consideration by Council?

Please specify.



**METRO VANCOUVER TAC QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES**

	<b>Does your Council allow the public to address Council on items that are being discussed at a regular meeting to Council?</b>	<b>Does your Council have a set time, for example just before a Council meeting, where the public has the opportunity to address Council on any topic?</b>	<b>Does your Council regularly hold “public meetings” to allow the public to address Council on the passing of by-laws and policy documents which do not require a statutory public meeting?</b>	<b>How does your Municipality adopt Secondary Plans (Neighbourhood Plans, Local Area Plans) by:</b>	<b>At what point in the process does your Council pass a resolution under Section 879 of the Local Government Act with regard to the extent of consultation on developing or amending an OCP?</b>	<b>Does your Municipality have a planning advisory committee, and planning commission or other body that reviews planning applications and projects and/or hears from the public prior to their consideration by Council?</b>
Burnaby	Yes- Delegations may submit requests through the City Clerk to present at any regular scheduled meeting of Council. Requests are accommodated in relation to space available on the Council agenda. Delegations are generally limited to 2 per Council meeting with speaking time of 10 minutes.	Yes-As one of the first items on the Council agenda.	No-Public meetings to specifically address Council on matters that do not require a statutory public meeting are not part of the established public input process. Public input on these matters usually occurs through a public review process carried out by staff through an established Council committee prior to the matter or issue being introduced to Council for formal consideration.	Council Resolution	Prior to advancement of the OCP By-law to 1 <sup>st</sup> reading.	Yes-Council has established Committee's, which considers planning matters. In addition, the city has an Advisory Planning Commission, which comment on all Zoning By-law matters.
Chilliwack	Yes-Council allows members of the public to ask questions about items in the agenda only.	Yes- There is a question period at the end of the meeting.	Yes-Council holds a public information meeting for every variance permit and for temporary commercial permits. Public information meetings are sometimes held for proposed by-laws too.	By by-law after a public hearing.	Prior to the introduction of the proposed amendment by-law.	Yes-We have a design review committee that reviews building designs for aesthetic considerations in designated areas of the community.

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Coquitlam	Yes-After the Council meeting is adjourned, members of the public may ask questions relating to meeting agenda items, though this practice is halted 30 days prior to municipal elections.	No	No-Typically handled at Committee of the Whole meetings.		At start of the OCP amendment process and the results are reported back before the proposed OCP amending bylaw is brought forward to Council for 1 <sup>st</sup> reading consideration.	No
Corporation of Delta	Yes-There is a question period prior to the Council meeting. (questions only, no comments).	Yes-Limited to three speakers and 15 minutes total.	No	By bylaw after a public hearing. All Secondary Plans are incorporated into our Municipalities OCP.	At the beginning of the process, in a “New Applications” report that is brought forward with every OCP amendment application.	Yes-All the OCP amendments, area plans and significant developments are forwarded to our Community Planning Advisory Committee for comment prior to Public Hearing.

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District of North Vancouver	Yes-They reserve 30 minutes at the start of each Council meeting for public input on any topic with priority given to items on the agenda (limit is 2 minutes each speaker). At each agenda item, a member of the public may sign up to speak – maximum 2 speakers (one for and one against), and time limit is 2 minutes.	Yes	No-No additional meeting however a member of the public may speak to those items at the public input period at the start of a Council agenda. In addition, Council has regular workshops (approximately twice/month) to discuss policy matters under development. These are open to the public to observe, but not to address Council.	By bylaw after a public hearing. All Secondary Plans are incorporated into our Municipalities OCP.	A staff report outlining the planning and consultation process to prepare/review the OCP or local area plans is forwarded for Council approval prior to proceeding with plan development and consultation. Draft directions/elements of OCPs and local plans are also forwarded for Council review at key milestones along with recommendations to proceed with public consultation. Once draft plans are prepared, they are forwarded to Council for referral to public consultation and to adjacent municipalities, the Province (i.e. Ministry of Transportation), TransLink, Metro Vancouver, First Nations and other agencies and organizations for comment depending on the scope of influence.	The District does not have a Planning Advisory Committee of Council. A Community Planning Working Group was recently established to give advice on the framework for the upcoming OCP Review process including: the elements of a vision (tenets or principles), strategic directions, and public engagements. As the CPWG's one year term is complete in March 2009, coinciding with the anticipated launch of public consultation for the OCP Review, it will also provide recommendations on a future role for the working group or other advisory body to help guide the OCP Review process. The Working Group includes approximately 30 community members with a wide range of interests and experience. For further information, see <a href="http://www.dnv.org/upload/documents/Council_Reports/00937.pdf">http://www.dnv.org/upload/documents/Council_Reports/00937.pdf</a> .

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New Westminster	YES - The Council agenda has an Open Delegation session at the beginning of each meeting.	NO - The Open Delegation session does this.	YES - Public consultation sessions on major initiatives are frequently held. Generally, the sessions are hosted by staff, but Council members typically attend. A recent example of this is the Public Meetings held to provide information about a proposed density bonus system.	Council Resolution - All Secondary Plans incorporated into our Municipalities OCP - We are moving to a system where neighbourhood plans would be adopted by resolution and then the components that impact an OCP matter (typically land use and some policies) would be incorporated into an OCP. At this time, we have a variety of systems including neighbourhood plans incorporated into the OCP, neighbourhood plans without any status and some adopted by resolution - Council Resolution - All Secondary Plans are incorporated into our Municipalities OCP.	The most recent 879 process involved a site-specific OCP amendment. The Council resolution was adopted after Second Reading and before the Public Hearing. Our preferred process for most OCP amendments including OCP reviews would be to outline the full public consultation process in a report to Council and include an appropriate 879 resolution at that time. This report would occur before the preparation of a Bylaw	Advisory Planning Commission; reviews planning applications and hosts delegations on specific applications. The neighbourhood notification process (signs and letters to surrounding properties) applies to the delegation sessions held by the APC.

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City of North Vancouver	YES - We allow up to five speakers for two minutes each. The time is firm. They must sign up in advance of the meeting. These are not treated as formal delegations or correspondence. Council does not question them or debate their input.	YES - This occurs right after the adoption of minutes at the very start of the meeting.	YES - Our DVPs usually have a public "meeting". We also have Policy and Finance Committee Meetings.	Other	With 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	Yes, we have an Advisory Planning Commission. We do not prohibit public input, but strongly discourage public input. It virtually never occurs. We sometimes get written submissions. The public can observe these meetings. We want that group's opinion, not have them run mini public hearings, which they are not capable of and is not their purpose.

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Port Coquitlam	NO - Not including public hearings or those agenda items calling for public input.	YES - After the Council meeting is either closed or adjourned, there is an open question period at which the public can ask questions of items on the agenda or other issues. This opportunity is not provided during the 6 weeks leading up to an election. The timing "after" is better than before as it allows for Council to make its decisions in a timely fashion. In addition, we also have a defined delegation process which is used at Council and Committee meetings. This allows members of the public to request a delegation appearance and requires them to provide information regarding the nature of the presentation and define the outcome they wish to obtain before they are placed on the	NO - While is does not hold public meetings, it does rely on staff development of a public consultation process appropriate to the issue. We typically will work with the applicable Committee and develop a public input process prior to bringing forward those bylaws and policies which may be of concerns to members of the public (and not otherwise require a public hearing).	All Secondary Plans are incorporated into our Municipalities OCP	It depends on the circumstances. Consultation can be as early as at the time of receipt of application (e.g. for a site adjoining City of Coquitlam we chose to follow their process to hold a public information meeting prior to resolution of staff concerns) to as late as when a report is taken forward directly to recommend amendment of the OCP bylaw (e.g. to amend the design guidelines when the amendment does not impact a property's land use designation). Also note: the public consultation process will be established by Committee, not Council. Typically, we require a neighbourhood meeting advertised by mail-out and advertisement in the local newspaper but we hold off on this step until any significant technical issues have been resolved - All Secondary Plans are incorporated into our Municipalities OCP.	Our Council operates with a Committee system. The Community and Economic Development Committee (CEDC), comprised of two members of Council, considers all applications prior to Council consideration. The BIA and Chamber of Commerce are represented at the table but do not have voting authority. Also, the CEDC has substantial delegated authority including issuance of all DP's. It is a very efficient and functional system, although my personal preference would be to have more substantive public input into the decision making process such as by having an Advisory Planning Commission or community members on the CEDC. To date, our Council has indicated it wishes to rely on its own understanding of the public concerns and interests and the advice of staff.

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Richmond	YES-Council resolves into Committee of the Whole to hear delegations 1) on agenda items, and 2) separately on non-agenda items and requires a written submission before-hand.	No	Yes	By by-law after a public hearing - All Secondary Plans are incorporated into our Municipalities OCP	Council has established an OCP Bylaw Preparation Consultation Policy (5043) (see attached) which establishes process for consultation. Prior to the first reading of an OCP bylaw council considers if additional consultation is required. The process is embedded within staff reports to Council.	1) Planning Committee (a standing committee of Council). 2) Development Permit Panel
Township of Langley	YES - Not during a meeting though; but rather at the beginning of all meetings, upon receipt of a request to appear as a delegation.	5 minutes at beginning of all meetings.	NO - Council expects staff to conduct public information meetings on such matters.	By by-law after a public hearing	No resolution-consultation with affected agencies and the regional board is done as part of the public consultation process completed by staff.	No

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Vancouver	NO - Requests to address Council are referred, if Council agrees, to a Standing Committee meeting rather than a regular Council meeting. All delegations are heard at Committee meetings.	No	YES - If people request to appear as delegations on any particular report, and if Council approves hearing these delegations, which they generally do, then the item is referred to a Standing Committee meeting where delegations are heard. For items which staff know have a lot of public interest, we often send the item directly to Committee instead of to Council, and we let everyone interested know that they can appear as a delegation. Sometimes we also have Special Meetings of Council for items which have a very great amount of public interest, instead of just tacking it onto a Committee meeting.	Council Resolution	We do not have OCPs under the Vancouver Charter	We have a Planning Commission, but their work is separate from reviewing planning applications. We have a Development Permit Board that approves major development permits and they have an Advisory Committee. We also have the Urban Design Panel. Our City Council does not approve development permits; that is delegated to the Director of Planning and Development Permit Board. If a permit application is especially contentious, the DP Board may refer it to Council for advice. Other than that, our Council only approves rezonings. For items that go to Council, people always have the opportunity to request to speak directly to Council, and I can't think of when Council has said no.