

NO: **R196**

COUNCIL DATE: **September 28, 2015**

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor and Council**

DATE: **September 11, 2015**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture**

FILE: **4900-01**

SUBJECT: **Avenues of Change – Guildford West Update**

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Forward a copy of this report to the Parks, Recreation and Sport Tourism Committee and the Social Policy Committee for their information.

BACKGROUND

The City of Surrey is a key partner in the United Way Avenues of Change Initiative; the United Way of the Lower Mainland (UWLM) is piloting this initiative in the Guildford West neighbourhood, as shown in **Appendix I**, by investing up to \$400,000 per year over five years in this collaborative, innovative and place-based initiative. The primary objective is to have more children ready to succeed by the time they start school.

Phase I launched in April 2014 with a broad community engagement initiative lead by Simon Fraser University - Surrey (SFU). SFU was tasked with implementation of the Phase I Business Plan that included highlighting and designing 3-5 pilot/innovation strategies in relation to Avenues of Change results and indicators. The Phase II business plan was approved by UWLM and the leadership team including SPARC, UBC and the Provincial Success by 6 representatives in December, 2014. Phase II implementation began in January 2015.

Key partners in this initiative include Ministry for Children and Family Development (MCFD), Fraser Health Authority, Surrey Libraries, School District #36, the City, Options Community Services, DIVERSEcity Community Resources, Child Development Centre, Children's Foundation, Alexandra Neighbourhood House, and others. "This project assumes that place matters and that the way in which children experience their neighbourhoods can have important and lasting impacts on development." *AoC Phase II Baseline Report*

DISCUSSION

Summary of Project Activities Completed in the Spring and Early Summer of 2015:

- To create focus on the most impactful strategies for change, Action Strategies were refined, and the goals and objectives for each Action Strategy were finalized.
- Four Action Strategies, and one Action Initiative form the basis of the project:

Early Childhood and Family Check-in (ECFC) Action Strategy:

This action strategy aims to create a Network comprised of a cross-disciplinary early childhood team that works together to provide an intentional, universal and consistent regular child and family check-in for support. The Network will be trained and supported to carry out a 'Check-in Tool' (tool to be developed), link families to other members of the network and to other Action Strategies as needed. A Leadership Team will be identified in the Fall of 2015. Public Partners will provide ongoing support in implementation.

Support On the Go Action Strategy:

This Action Strategy addresses families and caregivers need for easy access to stigma free drop in information on mental health: including referral to services, self-help and other ways to understand and address mental health questions and concerns of families with young children. A Mental Health Professional (Psychologist, Psychiatric Nurse) will be engaged to attend existing community sites that offer programs for children 0 to 6 years of age and their families. Options Community Services has been selected as the lead organization for this Action Strategy.

Early Years Health Promotion Peer Ambassadors Action Strategy:

A team of volunteer Peer Ambassadors will reach out and support parents and caregivers throughout the Guildford West neighbourhood. The volunteer participants will be provided with short training sessions on consistent health promotion of key messages on Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for parents of young children. DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society has been selected to undertake the responsibility for the recruitment, training, support and monitoring of the volunteer Peer Ambassadors.

Literacy Ambassadors – Milestones Story Kits Action Strategy:

Milestones Story Kits will contain age-appropriate high-quality picture books, puppets and toys created on themes of early childhood development materials that support healthy early childhood development goals, featuring themes regularly requested by families that visit the library. Library staff will train Literacy Ambassadors on how to use the kits effectively, implementing fun and easy early literacy strengthening strategies. The ambassadors will then share the kits and tips with families and caregivers throughout the community. DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society has been selected to undertake the responsibility for the recruitment, support and monitoring of the volunteer Literacy Ambassadors.

Thrive! A Neighbourhood Festival Initiative:

This initiative will provide a broad outreach and engagement to families with young children living in Guildford. This Action Initiative improves child and family connections to community services in the areas of: health, recreation, library, and city and enhances the neighbourhood's child and family friendliness. A local Non-Profit organization will oversee the development and implementation of this neighbourhood celebration.

- The role of local Surrey agencies has been at the forefront of a revised governance plan; a Joint Leadership Team consisting of public partners and Surrey agencies was established.
- The Q1 Financials were completed and submitted to the UWLM.
- Options Community Services (OCS) has been selected as the host agency for the Project Director position. The Project Director was hired in July 2015.
- The selection of organizations to conduct the work plans for three Action Strategies was completed on July 20, 2015.
- Options Community Services will be responsible for the Support On the Go Action Strategy activities.
 - DIVERSEcity Community Resources will be responsible for the Health Promotion Peer Ambassadors and Literacy Ambassadors and Milestones Story Kits Action Strategy support activities.
- Data Development Agenda: Consultant planning work around indicator development and initial drafting of a matrix aligning potential indicators with provincial early year's evaluation work and UWLM theory of change.

Current and Next Steps to be completed by the end of 2015:

- Complete the contracting process and implement work plans with the agencies responsible for the Action Strategies;
- Plan for the official Launch of the Avenues of Change, Guildford West Project with the anticipated date of October 16, 2015 at the Guildford Recreation Centre;
- Revitalize Facebook as a tool for communication - https://www.facebook.com/AofC.guildfordwest?ref=aymt_homepage_panel;
- Provide a second training on operationalizing collective impact work locally;
- Asset Mapping Initiative to be piloted for Guildford West in October 2015;
- Develop data indicators for all action strategies; and
- Profile Avenues of Change project on Citizen IBM blog site, showcasing how technology and data sharing help to align and support the project outcomes.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The Avenues of Change Action Strategies will assist in achieving the following Socio-Cultural Pillar action items in the City's Sustainability Charter:

SC5: Improve the Social Well Being of Surrey Residents

- Supporting the youngest and most vulnerable residents by making services more accessible to the unique needs of the Guildford West neighbourhood.

SC17: Crime Reduction Strategies

- Research shows that investing in the early years has the greatest collective impact on improving social outcomes for children and the residents of Surrey.

CONCLUSION

Avenues of Change, combined with Surrey's Smarter Cities Initiative, is an innovative initiative in the Guildford West neighbourhood that focuses on the community and partners working collectively to have more children ready to succeed by the time they start school. The collective impact approach and learnings, utilized in this pilot program will allow us to create long lasting change in the community.

Laurie Cavan
General Manager
Parks, Recreation & Culture

Appendix I – Map of Guildford West

Guildford West Map

