



# SOCIAL PLAN

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY**

**(Housing Section to be revised in 1999)**

**Adopted by Council September 14, 1998**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction to the Social Plan**

In May 1997, the City of North Vancouver initiated a process to develop a Social Plan to respond to current and future community issues. In the intervening months, two documents have been produced. The Social Plan Background Document (November 1997) reviewed the history of social planning in the City, the context within which social planning operates, and the issues to which City policy and programs have been developed.

The Social Plan (March 1998) was drafted as a framework to focus social planning work, and City programs and initiatives responding to community issues. The Goals and Objectives of the Plan acknowledge the challenges facing a City in addressing community concerns, as well as the opportunities for the City to work together with individuals and community groups to improve quality of life.

The process of developing the Social Plan has provided the City with an opportunity to define a vision of its social future. The City's achievements in addressing social issues and supporting community endeavours summarized in the Background Document were the basis for determining the goals and strategies contained in the Social Plan.

### **1.2 What is a Social Plan and “Why do one”?**

The City of North Vancouver has addressed local social issues for a number of years, and to an increasing degree more recently. This has been due to a number of factors including the withdrawal of federal and provincial governments from many social programs, increasing requests for municipal assistance from community agencies and growing complexities in social issues as society experienced change.

The City response to a range of social issues has included three primary roles, including the provision of staff assistance, funding, and buildings and land. While Council has been committed to responding to community concerns and quality of life issues, the City is challenged by its limited resources. The Social Plan is a strategic response which defines the most appropriate ways in which the City can respond to current and future community concerns, while recognizing its limitations.

The Plan focuses on the important City roles of continuing to provide professional staff support, funding, land and buildings. The Plan emphasizes the strengths, knowledge and experience of community members and service providers. The value of partnerships with residents, service providers and business in joint initiatives to achieve the Goals of the Social Plan is recognized. Through shared responsibility and resources, improved communication and understanding, the City

will continue to be an effective key player in addressing community concerns. Pro-active services and positive opportunities for community members to avoid development of problems are highlights of the Plan.

In summary, the Social Plan will provide overall direction for the City's response to social concerns, and guidance in terms of its social planning function. "Process" has been an essential feature of the Plan's development, and is included as an ongoing element in the "product", the Plan.

The Social Plan reflects a comprehensive information gathering process, including consultation with community members and service providers. As the issues, trends, resources, challenges and opportunities reported in the Social Plan Background Document evolve, and new changes occur, the Social Plan will require revisions and updating.

The process of updating the Social Plan will also involve consultation and liaison with community organizations and residents to ensure that the Social Plan, and its implementation strategies, continually reflect and fit the changing factors affecting this community. This flexibility is required to effectively address social concerns within the broader context of change that has emerged over the past decade. The importance of linkages of the goals and objectives of the Social Plan to other municipal plans to ensure effective use of City resources, is also highlighted.

### **1.3 How the Social Plan Developed**

With the assistance of a planning grant from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the process to develop a Social Plan began in the late spring of 1997 (Appendix 1). One of the initial staff tasks was to establish a citizens committee to assist in the main phases of the Plan development. The 6 person Social Plan Working Group included a representative from the Advisory Committee on Disability Issues and the Social Planning Advisory Committee. The Working Group began meeting in July 1997. The working group provided feedback on drafts of the Social Plan Background Document, developed the Vision and the Value Statements which were the basis of the Social Plan, and participated in defining the consultation methods. They also reviewed and edited drafts of the Social Plan, and were involved in the Open House at City Hall which displayed the draft Social Plan Goals and Objectives for public input. Working Group presentations to Council included two special sessions on the Social Plan Background Document, and the Vision and Value Statements, and presentation of the draft Social Plan to Council.

Community input has occurred at two intervals during the development of the Social Plan. During the initial drafting of the Plan sections, the early contribution of key professionals and interested individuals greatly assisted staff and the Working Group. Subsequent review and comments on the first draft of the Social Plan were

obtained through presentations and discussions with target groups, focus groups and meetings with staff representatives of key community service/advocacy agencies. Comments were also received on drafts circulated to individuals and organizations. To inform and solicit input from the general public on the Social Plan, a two-week open house was hosted at City Hall.

Due to the short time-frame in which to produce a Social Plan, the extent and type of process with the community was abbreviated. This limitation was compounded by the numerous intensive consultation processes occurring in the community at the same time as the development of the Social Plan. The primary ones included the reorganization of health services and service providers, restructuring of several provincial Ministries under the Ministry for Children and Families, together with the implementation of a new system of service contracting. As a result, the Social Plan consultation relied on key stakeholders primarily, with fewer in-depth consultations with specific target groups and the general public, than initially planned.

## **1.4 Legislative Support for Social Planning**

The revisions to the Municipal Act, enacted in July 1994, known as Bill 25, gave local governments the legal basis from which to address social concerns. Prior to this legislative change, many municipalities, including the City of North Vancouver, had been involved in addressing social issues to varying degrees. Other municipalities were reluctant to take on more responsibilities than those mandated under the Act.

The Municipal Act now specifically identifies social planning as a legitimate municipal function or role, but does not direct how comprehensive the roles might be:

**Section 698.1** *The council may provide for social planning to be undertaken, including research, analysis and coordination relating to social needs, social wellbeing and social development in the municipality.*

Revisions to the Municipal Act also noted the inclusion of social planning aspects within the Official Community Plan of a municipality:

**Section 945 (2.2)** *A community plan may include policies of the local government relating to social needs, social wellbeing and social development.*

This recent empowering of municipalities for social concerns is another stage in the evolution of provincial / municipal roles and relationships. Permitting municipalities

to respond to social issues does not, however, address the ability of municipalities to respond.

## **1.5 City of North Vancouver Context**

The City of North Vancouver is a relatively small urban centre of approximately 41,000 population, occupying less than five square miles. It is located at the heart of the North Shore region on the Port of Vancouver, bounded by the District of North Vancouver on three sides (see Figure 1 following).

Its woodland/waterfront setting determined much of its historical importance, firstly as an industrial centre (logging and lumber, shipbuilding) and, more recently, as the North Shore sub-regional town centre. The City is a centre of employment (Lions Gate Hospital, Insurance Corporation of British Columbia, B.C. Rail), and transportation hub (SeaBus terminus, BC Transit regional bus exchange, the water terminus of CN Rail, B.C. Rail, Highway #1). The City is commercially diverse, and is a notable service centre with a wide array of medical and community services. The City also has the bulk of the rental and most affordable housing stock available on the North Shore, while offering a range of residential neighbourhoods. The City's urban nature results in a range of issues and community concerns.

## **1.6 Overview of the Social Plan**

The Social Plan consists of two main components. The first includes the Vision and Value Statements which have been developed to guide the initial development and subsequent updates of the Social Plan Goals, Objectives and Actions.

The Vision sets out the ultimate goal to which the City is working toward while the Value Statements are the principles of the Social Plan.

The second component, the Goals, Objectives and Actions for each issue area, identify what the City will do to achieve the Vision. The actions are prioritized by ongoing, short-term and long-term time frames for implementation.

## **1.7 Evaluation Process**

An important component of the Plan will be the evaluation process used to determine the effectiveness of the actions taken to achieve the Goals and Objectives. This process has not been developed at the time Council adopted this Plan but will be one of the priorities pursued by staff in implementing the Social Plan. The evaluation process used will involve consultations with community service agencies and people involved in the community and will ensure appropriate linkages with existing evaluation processes in the community.