

AGENDA ITEM NO: 7-H-7

MEETING DATE: March 17, 2020

STAFF REPORT – COVER SHEET

SUBJECT: Chilliwack Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy, 2019-2029 DATE: March 6, 2020

DEPARTMENT: Planning & Strategic Initiatives PREPARED BY: Erin Leary / dp

1. SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

Based on available data and discussions with service providers, there is a severe shortage of accessible, high quality, affordable child care in Chilliwack. Addressing this need is critical to the reduction of poverty for families and children, removing barriers to employment and educational opportunities and providing early support and structure to children to address early childhood vulnerabilities.

Through this project, the City, in partnership with community stakeholders, has collected data and engaged the community to identify the various types of child care needs in the community, created an inventory of existing child care spaces and their attributes, identified child care space creation targets over the next 10 years and identified the role of various stakeholders in carrying out actions to meet the space creation targets. The plan, as drafted, will assist in raising awareness about the challenges and opportunities for child care space creation, identifying potential operators, and the amount and type of space necessary, and staffing supports that are required to operate child care facilities successfully.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation that the "Chilliwack Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy 2019-2029" be received for information."



David Blain
Director of Planning & Engineering

3. CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION/COMMENTS:

Supports recommendation.



Peter Monteith
Chief Administrative Officer

STAFF REPORT ON CHILLIWACK CHILD CARE NEEDS ASSESSMENT & STRATEGY, 2019-2029

PREPARED BY: Erin Leary DATE: March 6, 2020

POSITION: Senior Planner DEPARTMENT: Planning & Strategic Initiatives

1. DEFINITION OF ISSUE:

Based on available data and discussions with service providers, there is a severe shortage of accessible, high quality, affordable child care in Chilliwack. Addressing this need is critical to the reduction of poverty for families and children, removing barriers to employment and educational opportunities and providing early support and structure to children to address early childhood vulnerabilities.

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2. BACKGROUND:

On March 6, 2019, the City was awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Union of BC Municipalities to complete a Child Care Space Creation Action Plan. Based on the requirements of the UBCM grant, the attached plan includes an inventory of existing child care spaces, information regarding child care needs in the community, goals for the creation of additional child care spaces over the next 10 years and actions which can be taken by various stakeholders to meet these goals.

3. FACTORS:

3.1 Public Engagement Process

As per the requirements of the UBCM grant, an in-depth public consultation process was conducted in order to gain insight from the general public related to their concerns and experiences with child care in Chilliwack. Attempts were made to engage underrepresented groups such as young parents, single parents, parents of children with disabilities and minority groups throughout the community.

As an initial step, a steering committee was formed to guide the development of the plan in terms of overall content and layout as well as to function as a resource to promote and support any planned engagement activities. The committee included representatives from a variety of

organizations such as the school district, the Ministry of Children & Family Development, the YMCA, Chilliwack Community Services, the Fraser Valley Child Development Centre and the Fraser Health Authority in addition to local child care providers. This committee provided invaluable insights into the child care profession, the challenges the industry faces and the overall conditions of child care in Chilliwack. The information the committee provided has been integrated into the final plan and was utilized to help shape the recommended actions to be taken to improve child care over the next ten years.

Extensive public engagement activities were completed over the summer and into the fall of 2019 and included booths at the Children's Festival, hosted by Sto:lo First Nation, Party in the Park and the Chilliwack Safety Fair. In addition, 2 surveys were conducted, one for parents and/or guardians of children between the ages of 0-12 years and one for child care providers. Both surveys were available online on the City website or in paper at City Hall. Copies were also given to the steering committee to distribute within the personal and professional networks. The parent survey received 343 responses, while the child care provider survey received 60 responses. A full summary of the key findings from each survey is provided with Appendix A and B within the attached Plan.

In addition to the public events and surveys, 8 stakeholders interviews were conducted to provide an opportunity for more in-depth conversations regarding the key challenges child care providers are experiencing within the child care profession in general and Chilliwack specifically.

In the hopes of getting a better understanding of what children value and prefer, the City included engagement of children specifically through a voluntary drawing activity where children were asked to draw what they liked best about daycare. The child consultation drawing activity was designed with the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and best planning practice in mind to ensure all child participation was conducted appropriately. 32 drawing activity sheets were received. These drawings emphasized a high value for play, with a specific focus on physical play and outdoor activities.

3.2 Data Collection Process

To supplement the information obtained through the public engagement process, a comprehensive review of available data provided by various sources including Statistics Canada, BC Stats, the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), Fraser Health licencing, UBCM and the City of Chilliwack (population projections and business licencing data) was compiled to outline the current supply and demand for child care as well as project future need over the next ten years. This data was used to generate targets for child care space creation over the next ten years based on the projected population growth of children between the ages of 0-12 years and the number of facilities and associated spaces currently available.

3.3 Summary of Key Report Findings

As a result of the public engagement process, a number of key challenges were identified by both child care providers and parents and/or guardians of children between the ages of 0-12 years. The most prevalent issues mentioned by parents were affordability, lack of supply, limited hours of operation and lack of choice in terms of the facility their child attends. These challenges were emphasized throughout each engagement activity and reiterated within the survey. In support of

these challenges, the review of available data revealed that the access rate for Chilliwack is approximately 17.8%, which is below the provincial average of 18.6% and well below the national average of 27.2%.

In addition to the challenges identified by parents in the community, child care providers provided insight into the issues which affect the child care industry most significantly. The most prevalent issue raised by child care providers was the lack of qualified staff. The staffing issue is based on a number of factors including lack of educational opportunities, low wages and benefits resulting in a lack of desire to enter into the field, a stressful work environment leading to staff “burn out” and a lack of respect from the general public for the work child care professionals undertake. As a result of staffing shortages, child care facilities are not able to run at full capacity thereby reducing the number of spaces available for children within the community.

Based on the information gleaned from the data review and engagement process, the following space creation targets were created. These targets are based on both a 20% access rate, considered a moderate supply as well as a 50% access rate, as encouraged by the provincial government as the level necessary to provide universal child care. The 25% access rate is deemed a more reasonable goal to achieve within the 10-year timeframe and as such is included within the table below. Please note, the following table is based on a stable inventory as it does not consider the loss of current inventory which may occur over the next decade.

Age Range	2029 Projected Population	Current # of Spaces* (2020)	Total # of Spaces Needed for 20%-50% Access Rate	Additional Spaces Needed to Meet 20%-50% Access Rate	Total # of Spaces Needed for 25% Access Rate	Additional Spaces Needed to Meet 25% Access Rate
Under 36 months	3,696	421	739-1,848 Total Spaces	318-1,427 Additional Spaces	924 Total Spaces	503 Additional Spaces
3 to 5 years (excluding preschool)	4,048	780	810-2,024 Total Spaces	30-1,244 Additional Spaces	1,012 Total Spaces	232 Additional Spaces
3 to 5 years (only preschool)	4,048	580	810-2,024 Total Spaces	230-1,444 Additional Spaces	1,012 Total Spaces	432 Additional Spaces
School age - 12 years	9,756	692	1,951-4,878 Total Spaces	1,259-4,186 Additional Spaces	2,439 Total Spaces	1,747 Additional Spaces
All Children 0 to 5 years (excluding preschool)	7,744	1,201	1,548-3,872 Total Spaces	348-2,671 Additional Spaces	1,936 Total Spaces	735 Additional Spaces
All Children 0 to 12 years (excluding preschool)	17,600	1,893	3,520-8,800 Total Spaces	1,627-6,907 Additional Spaces	4,400 Total Spaces	2,507 Additional Spaces

*Current spaces for under 36 months spaces includes 45% of all multi-age (group and in-home) and family child care (223 spaces).
 Current spaces for 3 to 5 years (excluding preschool) includes 45% of all multi-age (group and in-home) and family child care spaces (223 spaces).
 Current spaces for school age -12 years includes 10% of all multi-age (group and in-home) and family child care spaces (50 spaces).

The following table outlines the associated floor area requirements (both indoor and outdoor) and staffing levels necessary to achieve the 20% and 50% access rates by 2029. These factors are relevant in the discussion regarding the creation of new child care spaces, as without the necessary staffing or locations, no new child care can be provided.

Table 9: Requirements of Child Care Space Targets*

Age Range	20% Access Rate for 2029 Projected Population					50% Access Rate for 2029 Projected Population				
	Additional spaces Needed	Additional Programs Needed	Estimate of Indoor Space Required	Estimate of Outdoor Space Required	Estimate of New Staff Required	Additional spaces Needed	Additional Programs Needed	Estimate of Indoor Space Required	Estimate of Outdoor Space Required	Estimate of New Staff Required
Under 36 months	318	27	1177 m ²	1908 m ²	81	1427	119	5,280m ²	8,562m ²	357
3 to 5 years	30	3	111 m ²	180 m ²	9	1244	104	4,603m ²	7,464m ²	312
School Age – 12 years	1,259	42	4,658m ²	7,554m ²	84	4186	140	15,488m ²	25,116m ²	280
All Children 0 to 5 years	348	30	1,288m ²	2,088m ²	90	2671	223	9,883m ²	16,026m ²	669
All Children 0 to 12 years	1627	72	6,020m ²	9,762m ²	174	6907	363	25,556m ²	41,442m ²	949

* Staff and Floor Area requirements are based on Fraser Health licensing minimum standards, not actual numbers. Estimates exclude preschool spaces, as they are not typically used for the purpose of allowing parents to work or attend school. Program and staffing figures were calculated based on maximum number of children allowed per program type and associated staffing ratios. The number of additional programs needed is based on calculations that have been rounded up to the next whole number, as programs do not operate over their approved capacity.

As shown in the tables above, the projected demand for child care is significant and will likely require a joint effort between the various levels of government, child care providers and other stakeholders to achieve these goals.

3.4 Strategic Directions & Possible City Actions

The four strategic directions included within the plan are as follows:

1. Identify Opportunities for Advocacy, Partnerships and Collaboration Related to City Child Care Systems
2. Support the Creation of Additional Child Care Spaces
3. Improve Access for all Families to ‘Child-Centric’ Child Care throughout the City
4. Establish a Child Care Monitoring, Reporting and Information Framework

Within the plan, each strategic direction is accompanied by a list of possible actions to be taken, the various stakeholders to be involved in each action, and a projected timeline for completion of the specific action.

Some initiatives which have been identified, which the City will take a role in are:

- Work in partnership with local organizations to promote access to child care resources and information and advocate to higher levels of government to increase wages for child care workers and increase educational and/or training opportunities.
- Review the Official Community Plan and other City Bylaws and policies to ensure that they support the creation of new child care spaces as part of future land use decisions related to community growth, multi-family housing development, child health and economic development.
- Explore criteria for allowing larger child care centres in residential neighbourhoods and consider development of a zone to support this as a potential permitted use in selected residential, commercial and institutional zones.
- Hosting, in conjunction with Fraser Health Community Care Facilities Licensing, a child care information session for those interested in operating a family daycare or in-home multi-age care operation.

A full listing of recommended actions is available in the attached plan.

4. **RECOMMENDATION & SUBSTANTIATION:**

Recommendation:

Recommendation that the “Chilliwack Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy 2019-2029” be received for information.”

Substantiation:

As there is a severe shortage of accessible, high quality, affordable child care in Chilliwack, addressing this need is critical to the reduction of poverty for families and children, removing barriers to employment and educational opportunities and providing early support and structure to children to address early childhood vulnerabilities. The attached Chilliwack Child Care Needs Assessment provides much needed information and guidance in regards to improving the condition of child care in Chilliwack and providing the necessary steps to achieve the goal of creating more affordable, quality child care for the community.

Attachments:

Schedule A – Chilliwack Child Care Needs Assessment & Strategy, 2019-2029

