



MID-ISLAND REGION CHILD CARE ACTION PLAN

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Regional District of Nanaimo endorse the recommended 2030 child care space targets in the Mid-Island Region Child Care Action Plan of
 - a. 50 spaces for every 100 children under 3 years,
 - b. 75 spaces for every 100 children 3-5 years not yet in school, and
 - c. 50 spaces for every 100 children under 10 years in school, and
 - d. support grant applications made by others for child care spaces.
2. That the Mid-Island Region Child Care Action Plan be considered as part of the Social Needs Assessment and Strategy and the Bylaw 500 review.
3. That child care as a community amenity contribution be considered in the preparation of a Community Amenity Contribution Policy.

BACKGROUND

The Mid-Island Region Child Care Action Plan (Action Plan) describes the current child care situation in the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN), and recommends targets for increasing the number of child care spaces, and actions for local governments to contribute to achieving these targets. The Action Plan was completed by the Social Planning and Research Council of BC (SPARC BC) through contract with the City of Nanaimo who was the primary recipient of the project funding grant.

On January 22, 2019, the RDN Board made the following resolution:

That the Regional District of Nanaimo authorize the City of Nanaimo to be the primary applicant to the UBCM Community Child Care Planning Program, to apply for, receive and manage the grant funding, on its behalf, to create a child care space creation action plan.

The Federal and Provincial governments are currently investing in child care space creation and associated supports. Completion of a child care needs assessment, or a plan is one of the eligibility requirements to receive funding through the Child Care BC New Spaces Fund. The most recent intake to this fund closed in November 2020 and no additional intake has yet been announced.

The Action Plan includes current data, projections and targets by ages and electoral area or municipality. In summary, there are currently 3,309 child care spaces for children under 10 years in the RDN and an additional 4,872 spaces need to be created by 2030 to meet the target coverage rate. Of these new spaces needed, 1,559 should be in the electoral areas and 3,313 in the municipalities (see Attachment 1 – Data Summary). There are 550 new spaces under development in the region at the time of writing the Action Plan.

The child care space targets recommended in the Action Plan are 50 spaces for every 100 children under 3 years (50% coverage), 75 spaces for every 100 children 3-5 years not yet in school (75% coverage), and 50 spaces for every 100 children under 10 years in school (50% coverage) by 2030. These targets are understood to be aspirational given the significant number of new spaces needed for them to be achieved but are grounded in best practices from the European Union and Quebec; there are no federal or provincial standards or recommendations for the number of child care spaces per capita. By endorsing these targets, the RDN acknowledges the need for child care spaces and strengthens its advocacy position to attract investment from higher levels of government.

The RDN does not currently operate any child care facilities or lease RDN-owned land or buildings for child care. The RDN Recreation Department plays an important role in child care in the Oceanside area through day camps and after school programs. These RDN programs are not included in the data or targets in the Action Plan as the Plan focuses on “licensed child care”.

The Action Plan is organized around four priorities, closely aligned with the Province’s 2018 report *Child Care B.C. Caring for Kids, Lifting Up Families: The Path to Universal Child Care*:

1. Increasing accessibility
2. Improving affordability
3. Focusing on quality
4. Strengthening partnerships

The Action Plan makes 32 recommendations for the RDN and member municipalities, with an additional four recommendations for RDN official community plans and zoning bylaws. Recommendations generally fall into one of three types of actions for the RDN:

1. Information, education and removing barriers in RDN bylaws and processes
2. Regional coordination / convening stakeholders
3. Leasing existing facilities, land or buildings and operating new facilities or programs for child care

A list of recommendations from the Action Plan (excerpted from pages 75-82) with highlighted boxes for those that can be undertaken with existing resources is shown in Attachment 2. The other recommendations will require additional resources and consideration of establishing a social planning service for which the Board may direct another report be prepared to outline options for resourcing. The Action Plan will be considered in the current Social Needs Assessment and Strategy project and the resulting recommendations to improve the overall social wellbeing in the RDN. Child care as a community amenity contribution should also be considered as part of the Community Amenity Contribution Policy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of the Action Plan was \$108,360 funded entirely from the UBCM Child Care Space Creation Program grant. Expanding the RDN’s role in child care will require additional funding for staffing, potential service

contract, capital expenses and/or creation of a social planning service. The range of expenses and funding options has yet to be identified.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

The RDN's future involvement in child care space creation was not specifically contemplated within the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan which contains a high-level goal of Social Wellbeing - Make the Region a safe and vibrant place for all, with a focus on children and families in programs and planning.

REVIEWED BY

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ATTACHMENTS

1. Data Summary
2. Tables of Recommendations
3. Mid-Island Region Child Care Action Plan