

REPORT

Climate Action, Planning and Development

To: Mayor Cote and Members of Council **Date:** March 7, 2022

From: Emilie K Adin, MCIP **File:** 05.1035.10
Director, Climate Action, Planning and
Development

Item #: 2022-156

Subject: **Fraser Health Authority Community Health Specialist: Proposed New Role**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council endorse that the Fraser Health Authority Community Health Specialist be embedded in the Community Planning section of the Climate Action, Planning and Development Department and act as a resource to all City Departments.

PURPOSE

This report requests Council endorsement for the Fraser Health Authority Community Health Specialist to be embedded in the Community Planning section of the Climate Action, Planning and Development Department. The purpose of this proposal is to deepen the health lens and perspective in City policies, plans and strategies and to strengthen the City's working relationship with the Fraser Health Authority.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2011, application of a health lens in City policies, plans and strategies has been largely achieved through the New Westminster Healthier Community Partnership Committee. This committee is a partnership between the City of New Westminister, the Fraser Health Authority and School District #40. The Community Health Specialist is one of the principal representatives from the Fraser Health Authority on the New Westminister Healthier Community Partnerships Committee.

Embedding the Community Health Specialist in the Community Planning section of the Climate Action, Planning and Development Department will deepen the work of the New Westminster Healthier Community Partnership Committee and strengthen the City's relationship with the Fraser Health Authority.

BACKGROUND

On June 20, 2011, Council directed City staff to work with the Fraser Health Authority on the New Westminster Healthy Community Action Plan. The Council motion led to the formation of the New Westminster Healthier Community Partnership Committee (NWHCP Committee), which is a partnership between the City, the Fraser Health Authority and School District #40.

This NWHCP Committee is mandated to promote New Westminster as a Healthy Community. More specifically, it is intended to positively affect the health of New Westminster community members and is based on the premise that many health issues can be best resolved through collaborative, community-based initiatives. It also proposes to move the focus of health from treatment and remediation to promotion and prevention. The NWHCP Committee aims to ensure that City policies, plans, strategies, programs and services are analyzed with a health lens and perspective. The committee also facilitates the partnerships necessary to realize identified goals, actions and strategies. The Community Health Specialist is one of the principal representatives from the Fraser Health Authority on the NWHCP Committee.

The NWHCP Committee meets approximately four (4) times per year but has been paused since early 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic and a need for the City and Fraser Health Authority to focus on pandemic response. While the NWHCP Committee has been paused, the City has continued to work with the Fraser Health Authority to advance health goals, including with the Community Health Specialist.

EXISTING POLICY/PRACTICE

Existing policy is summarized within Attachment 1.

ANALYSIS

Proposed New Role for the Fraser Health Authority Community Health Specialist

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for increased collaboration across all sectors to support the health and wellbeing of community members. Building on the solid foundation established by the New Westminster Healthier Community Partnership Committee, staff propose that the Fraser Health Authority Community Health Specialist be embedded in the Community Planning section of the Climate Action, Planning and Development Department and act as a resource to all City Departments.

The role could include the following responsibilities:

- To work collaboratively with City staff to incorporate a health lens and perspective into City policies, plans and strategies, including the Affordable Housing Strategy, Extreme Weather Response Plan, Homelessness Action Strategy, Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan, Master Transportation Plan and others.
- To better align City and Fraser Health Authority objectives with regard to addressing health related issues, with an emphasis on promotion and prevention. This includes but is not limited to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mental Health Crisis, and the Opioid Epidemic.
- To connect and act as a liaison between City and Fraser Health Authority staff on health related matters, and to work to build understanding and consensus.
- To support and participate in needs assessments, project development and implementation, and strategic planning and evaluation, helping to ensure that these processes contribute to positive health outcomes and enhanced social equity.
- To conduct health related research and analysis to inform City policies, plans and strategies.
- To engage with Community Health Specialists in other jurisdictions to identify promising practices which may be applicable to New Westminster.
- To identify opportunities to reduce health and social inequities that contribute to negative health outcomes and opportunities to support City initiatives that relate to that goal.
- To work in the community, through participation on various committees, and to apprise City staff of health and social issues that are impacting residents, including the most vulnerable, and that the City can address or influence.
- To prepare information related to benchmarks and indicators to assist City staff in tracking and reporting health related outcomes associated with City initiatives.

The Community Health Specialist will continue as an employee of the Fraser Health Authority and as such, WorkSafeBC coverage will also continue under the Fraser Health Authority. The Supervisor of Community Planning will be the primary contact person at City Hall and will provide an orientation to the Community Health Specialist on City Hall general health and safety rules, fire, emergency evacuation and other information as directed by the City's Human Resources Department. The Community Health Specialist will also be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement prior to starting in their new role with the City.

New Westminster Healthier Community Partnership Committee

The Community Health Specialist will continue as a representative of the Fraser Health Authority on the NWHCP Committee, which is anticipated to resume in the fall of 2022. Fraser Health Authority is supportive of the proposed new role in addition to its ongoing

commitment to the NWHCP Committee. Embedding the Community Health Specialist in the Community Planning section of the Climate Action, Planning and Development Department will deepen the work of the NWHCP Committee and strengthen the City's relationship with the Fraser Health Authority.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

Staff have shared this report with the Human Resources Department, Engineering Department and the Parks and Recreation Department for information.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Community Health Specialist will continue as an employee of the Fraser Health Authority and there will be no financial cost to the City.

OPTIONS

The following options are presented to Council for consideration:

1. That Council endorse that the Fraser Health Authority Community Health Specialist be embedded in the Community Planning section of the Climate Action, Planning and Development Department and act as a resource to all City Departments;
2. That Council provide staff other direction.

Staff recommends Options 1.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Existing Policy/Practice

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner

This report was reviewed by:
John Stark, Supervisor of Community Planning

This report was approved by:
Emilie Adin, Director, Climate Action, Planning and Development
Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer