

COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

SUBJECT: CHINESE CANADIAN HISTORY IN BURNABY PUBLICATION

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council approve the expansion of the timeline, scope and budget of the Chinese Canadian history in Burnaby publication project, to align the work with commemoration of the centenary of the Chinese Exclusion Act.

REPORT

The Community Heritage Commission, at its meeting held on 2022 June 09, received and adopted the attached report recommending expansion of the timeline, scope and budget for the City's Chinese Canadian History in Burnaby publication project to align with the centenary of the Chinese Exclusion Act.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor C. Jordan
Chair

Councillor J. Wang
Vice Chair

Copied to:	Chief Administrative Officer GM Corporate Services GM Engineering Acting Chief Financial Officer GM Planning and Development
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TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION

DATE: 2022 June 01

FROM: GENERAL MANAGER
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
GENERAL MANAGER
PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL
SERVICES

FILE: 3520 20

SUBJECT: CHINESE CANADIAN HISTORY IN BURNABY PUBLICATION

PURPOSE: To recommend expansion of the timeline, scope and budget for the City's Chinese Canadian History in Burnaby publication project to align with the centenary of the *Chinese Exclusion Act*.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** the Commission recommend that Council approve the expansion of the timeline, scope and budget of the Chinese Canadian history in Burnaby publication project, to align the work with commemoration of the centenary of the *Chinese Exclusion Act*.

REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Publication of a historical book documenting Chinese Canadian history in Burnaby was included in a multi-year research project approved by Council at its 2019 June 24 meeting. This report recommends expanding the timeline, scope and budget of the publication project, as part of a strategy to acknowledge the legacy and impact of the *Chinese Exclusion Act*.

The Community Heritage Commission's 2-year work plan for 2022 and 2023 includes advancing projects to recognize Burnaby's diverse community heritage through partnerships and interpretation. This work plan item supports the City's practice of advancing special projects that enable research of, and access to, community histories to Council through the Community Heritage Commission, as outlined in the 2020 June 18 Council report *Commemorating Diverse Community Heritage in Burnaby*.

This report recommends building on the City's work to recognize and interpret diverse histories by expanding the scope, timeline and budget of the project as a component of commemorating the 100th anniversary of the introduction of the *Chinese Immigration Act* of 1923. Also known as the *Chinese Exclusion Act*, this federal legislation was enacted on July 1, 1923 and prevented the immigration of people of Chinese origin to Canada, with the exception of a few categories (such as merchants, students, and clergy).

To: Community Heritage Commission
From: General Manager Planning and Development
General Manager Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Re: Chinese Canadian History in Burnaby Publication
2022 June 01Page 2

Funding of \$90,000 is required for implementation, and would be requested as part of the 2023 – 2027 Financial Plan following Council’s approval. It is noted that work of this nature would be eligible for funding through the Gaming Reserve as a potential funding source.

Development of the publication would be led by the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department through the Burnaby Village Museum, and development of a commemorative strategy to acknowledge the centenary would be advanced by staff through the Community Heritage Commission.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

Commemoration of Burnaby’s unique history and acknowledging the contributions of diverse community members are supported by several City policies, including the *Corporate Strategic Plan* (2017), the *Burnaby Social Sustainability Strategy* (2011) and the *Official Community Plan* (1998).

3.0 BACKGROUND

At its 2019 June 24 meeting, Council received a report from the Community Heritage Commission outlining three projects to research and share the history of Chinese migration to Burnaby and the contributions of Chinese Canadians to the development of the community. Council adopted the report’s recommendation to fund the projects through an \$85,000 contribution from the Gaming Reserve.

Two of the three projects identified in the report will be completed by the end of 2022. These include publication and distribution of a *Chinese Canadian History in Burnaby Resource Guide* for use in local schools and development and distribution of a Big Bend farm tour map that highlights the history of Chinese Canadian farms as part of Burnaby’s agricultural development.

The third project is the publication of a book that highlights the contributions and experiences of Burnaby’s many generations of Chinese Canadian community members. Work on this project is currently underway. This report recommends that publication of the book form a component of a strategy to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the *Chinese Exclusion Act* in 2023, and to expand the scope, timeline and budget of the publication project to produce a lengthier publication with a higher standard of printing and design.

4.0 CHINESE CANADIAN HISTORY PUBLICATION

As noted above, work on a book highlighting Chinese Canadian contributions to the development of Burnaby is in progress. New opportunities and challenges that have emerged since 2019 have provided the impetus to consider expanding the original scope of the publication and launching it in 2023 to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the introduction of the *Chinese Exclusion Act*.

Since the project was originally advanced in 2019, publishing costs for books have increased. While consumer demand for non-fiction remains strong, many readers now turn to online sources for information. Many of today’s buyers of non-fiction books are looking for well-designed products with full colour images and other design features when investing in a hard copy publication.

To: Community Heritage Commission
From: General Manager Planning and Development
General Manager Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Re: Chinese Canadian History in Burnaby Publication
2022 June 01Page 3

Locally, books such as the Burnaby Village Museum's *Our Stories at 50: Fifty Years at the Burnaby Village Museum* (2021), the Burnaby Art Gallery's *Anna Wong: Traveller on Two Roads* exhibition catalogue (2018) and *The Ornament of a House: Fifty Years of Collecting* (2017), the University of British Columbia's *Journeys of Hope: Challenging Discrimination and Building on Vancouver's Chinatown Legacies* (2018), and the Museum of Vancouver's *A Seat at the Table: Chinese Immigration and British Columbia* (2021) provide a level of design and publication quality that exceeds what was planned for this project in 2019.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has also shaped this project. The work of engaging with community members to develop content for the book was slowed by the pandemic, both because some community members were hesitant to participate in meetings and interviews and because some archival repositories were closed during the pandemic (in some cases for several months). Staff working on this project now have access to additional stories and historical information that has recently become available. An extension of time and resources would enable staff to incorporate this additional research.

COVID-19 also impacted the experiences of Asian Canadians, as Canada saw a rise in anti-Asian racism during the pandemic. A renewed urgency to acknowledge and address racism has developed over the past three years, including calls to recognize more diverse histories, to uphold values of diversity and inclusion, and to promote a sense of belonging for all community members. Providing additional resources to produce a more substantial publication is an opportunity for the City to demonstrate its commitment to raising public awareness about Burnaby's diverse past and to acknowledge the connection between past injustice and the ongoing experiences of racism and discrimination in the community.

The expanded project recommended in this report would feature a full colour publication that is professionally designed to create two bilingual publications: an English and Traditional Chinese edition, and a second edition in English and Simplified Chinese. The book would be approximately 15,000 English words in length with approximately 100 photographs printed in full colour. Content would be written in collaboration with community members and descendants of Burnaby's early Chinese Canadian families. Costing for this project is based on achieving a print run of 500 books (inclusive of both editions), which would enable distribution of complementary copies of both editions to all Burnaby public and school district libraries, in addition to providing copies to the book contributors and making the books available for sale to the general public.

Without additional resources, a much shorter publication of approximately 7,500 English words could be printed with interior pages printed in black and white. With a modest printing budget, a small print run of approximately 200 books could be achieved, with future print runs produced on a cost-recovery basis. This shorter publication could include text in English, traditional Chinese, and Simplified Chinese supported by 30 to 40 images.

5.0 COMMEMORATING THE *CHINESE EXCLUSION ACT*

Publication of the expanded book outlined in this report would take place in 2023, which is the centenary of the enactment of the *Chinese Exclusion Act* by the Government of Canada in 1923. This legislation followed earlier legislation that attempted to limit the immigration of people of Chinese origin to Canada, including the Head Tax. Federal exclusionary legislation was reinforced by a web of provincial and municipal legislation that shaped the lives of Chinese Canadians, including laws that disenfranchised Chinese migrants, prevented property ownership, limited the ability of people of

To: Community Heritage Commission
From: General Manager Planning and Development
General Manager Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Re: Chinese Canadian History in Burnaby Publication
2022 June 01Page 4

Chinese origin to work and earn a living, and allowed unequal treatment in workplaces, schools, and communities.

The 100th anniversary of the introduction of this legislation will be acknowledged and marked across Canada, and commemorative events are being planned locally by the Chinese Canadian Museum and other organizations. The Chinese Canadian Museum's historic Wing Sang building in Vancouver's Chinatown will be a venue for the "Paper Trail" exhibition curated by community history curator Catherine Clement and scheduled to open on July 1, 2023. The exhibition will tell the story of the impact of the *Chinese Exclusion Act* through personal stories and identity documents required following the introduction of the Act. A forthcoming OMNI Television series will explore the impact of the *Chinese Exclusion Act* on Chinese Canadians.

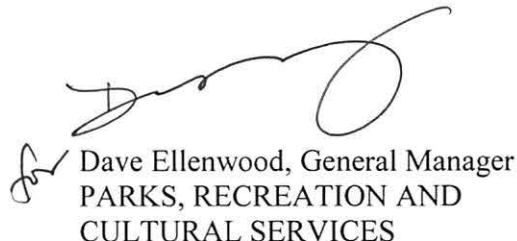
This report recommends that the publication of the Chinese Canadian history in Burnaby book be included in a strategy for the City to acknowledge the centenary of the introduction of the *Chinese Exclusion Act*. The estimated costs for the project include resources to develop a commemorative strategy in collaboration with community partners and stakeholders to mark this event and to acknowledge its legacy. While the majority of the project costs are required to achieve the design and printing of the book, \$15,000 of the funding would be allocated for development of a commemorative strategy and associated events.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

This report recommends the expansion of the approved Chinese Canadian History in Burnaby book project as part of a strategy to acknowledge and commemorate the centenary of the introduction of the *Chinese Exclusion Act*. Funding of \$90,000 is required for implementation, and would be requested as part of the 2023 – 2027 Financial Plan following Council's approval of this report's recommendation.



E. W. Kozak, General Manager
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT



Dave Ellenwood, General Manager
PARKS, RECREATION AND
CULTURAL SERVICES

LC:sa

Copied to: Chief Administrative Officer
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Financial Officer
General Manager Corporate Services
General Manager Engineering
City Clerk