

COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: HERITAGE BURNABY WEBSITE/ONLINE DATABASE PROJECT
PHASE III COMPLETION & 2009 WORK PROGRAM**

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council approve the expenditure of Gaming Funds not to exceed \$72,500.00 (inclusive of 5% GST) to implement the 2009 work program for the Heritage Burnaby Website Online Database Project, as outlined in this report.

REPORT

The Community Heritage Commission, at its meeting held on 2008 October 21, received and adopted the *attached* report providing an update on the completion of Phase III of the Heritage Burnaby Online Database Project and seeking expenditure authorization to undertake the proposed 2009 work program.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor G. Begin
Chair

Councillor C. Jordan
Vice Chair

<p>Copied to: City Manager Director Finance Director Planning & Building Director Parks, Recr. & Cult. Services Chief Librarian</p>

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION

DATE: 2008 October 15

FROM: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND BUILDING

FILE: PC 3520 20
File Ref: HPOD

**SUBJECT: HERITAGE BURNABY WEBSITE/ONLINE DATABASE PROJECT
PHASE III COMPLETION & 2009 WORK PROGRAM**

PURPOSE: To update the Commission and Council of the completion of Phase III of the Heritage Burnaby Online Database Project and to request expenditure authorization to undertake the proposed 2009 work program.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** Council approve the expenditure of Gaming Funds not to exceed \$72,500.00, (inclusive of 5% GST) to implement the 2009 work program for the Heritage Burnaby Website Online Database Project, as outlined in this report.

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Heritage Burnaby Website Online Database Project was developed on the initiative of the Community Heritage Commission and Council to expand the mandate of the City Archives to include community records and to develop an online database to provide public access to the City Archives, Burnaby Village Museum collections and the Burnaby Heritage Register. Council approved funding for the project in three phases to create the online database: integrate content, create a website design, and to expand the textual records database system to incorporate all City Council reports and bylaws. The Heritage Burnaby website was launched for public access and use during Heritage Week in February, 2008. Work currently underway, as part of the Phase III program, has substantially increased the website's content and enhanced public service features.

This report provides a summary of the program completed to date, and seeks the approval of the Community Heritage Commission and Council to implement a proposed 2009 work program for the Heritage Burnaby Website Online Database Project.

2.0 PROGRESS REPORT

The following provides the Commission and Council with an update of the work completed and underway to implement the Heritage Burnaby Online Database Project.

2.1 Phase I: Database System and Context

This phase of the project involved the assembly of data from the Archives, Museum, and Planning Department collections into four separate databases – Photographs, Artifacts, Textual Records and Heritage Landmarks. A “One-Step” search engine was also created to cross-index all records. The system allows users to access the photographs by simple keyword or phrases and through the use of subject categories. *

The project also allowed for integration of a substantial amount of new content for the four individual databases including:

- Photograph Database: Over 5,000 photographs were scanned from the pioneer historic photograph collections collected by the Burnaby Historical Society and Burnaby Village Museum. Each photograph was comprehensively researched, identified, described, indexed and prepared in order to be made available online and integrated with the new database search screens.
- Textual Records Database: Over 10,000 files were made web-ready for the online Textual Records Database.
- Artifacts Database: Over 50,000 artifacts from Burnaby Village Museum were entered into the new system, and a sample set of artifacts was selected to be photographed and made available for viewing on the new website.
- Heritage Landmarks Database: This database includes the Burnaby Community Heritage Register of 49 Council adopted properties and the approximately 130 sites identified by “Burnaby’s Heritage”, the inventory completed in 2007. These have been indexed in the context of their historic Burnaby neighbourhood with their detailed history, architecture and available associated historic photographs, culled from the archives database.

2.2 Phase II: Website Design

A key component of Phase II of the project was the development of an integrated website design that would serve as the public interface of the databases and visually convey that this online collaboration represented all of the community assets, heritage services and historic collections managed by the City. The “Heritage Burnaby” word mark was created with the tag line: ‘Personal History - Collective Memory’. This tagline was coined to represent the unique personal stories told by the photographs, records, buildings and artifacts which in the whole create a collective memory for the City.

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2.3 Phase III: City Archival Services

The success of the Heritage Burnaby website prompted a third phase of the initial project, which was recommended by the Community Heritage Commission and approved by Council on March 3, 2008. This project phase is designed to take full advantage of the comprehensive data management utility of the new online system for all aspects of the city's internal and external archival services. In 2008, the City Archives completed a comprehensive program of scanning original photographs and documents and staff have indexed the following materials for retrieval through the online databases of Heritage Burnaby:

- 5,000 additional historic photographs have been researched, identified, described, indexed and scanned and are now accessible through the Photographs Database.
- 5,000 additional textual records from the City collection have been made accessible by description through the Textual Record Database.
- 12,000 City bylaws (1892-2008) have been made accessible with links to full text versions and made available through the Textual Records Database.
- 50,000 Council Reports and Minutes (1946-1996) have been made accessible with links to full text versions and made available through the Textual Records Database.

In addition to increasing the records available to the public, Phase III also seeks to actively encourage and foster community participation and engagement with the creation of "*Burnaby Exchange*." This online comments feature will allow members of the public to join in and share their knowledge about Burnaby's past and exchange ideas and swap memories with others in our community. This tool works to increase our knowledge about our collections – for instance, by allowing members of the public to identify individuals in the historic photographs – and gives them the opportunity to correspond directly with staff or other community members about topics in Burnaby history that interest them.

The launch date for this new website tool is set for late October 2008 and is progressing on schedule.

2.4 Summary Results

The completed Heritage Burnaby website now serves as a one-stop resource for all of the community's needs to access the City's extensive collections of heritage information, archives and artifacts. The website also provides a highly effective and central communication tool to highlight all of the Community Heritage Commission's programs and projects as support for its

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mandate: “To Provide opportunities for increased awareness and the conservation of the City’s unique natural, cultural, archaeological and built heritage.”

To date the Heritage Burnaby Website has logged over 10,000 online “visits” and provided citizens and users with access to a myriad of records, photographs, artifacts, and heritage sites which represent the rich cultural history of the city. The benefits to individual users and the community has been substantial and a significant and positive feedback has been generated by Burnaby residents and site visitors from outside the city, including many international visitors. The overall awareness of the city’s heritage and cultural resources has also been substantially increased.

In addition to serving residents, the website has substantially increased the profile and reputation of the City Archives. As a result of the website, significant new public donations of valuable historic records and photographic images of Burnaby have been received. The ease of use and access to the collections has resulted in efficient retrieval of data by both civic and public users. The Provincial Heritage Branch staff has designated the Heritage Burnaby website as a model of civic integration and partnership, recommending it as a model for other communities to emulate. The Heritage Society of B.C. too has recognized the significant success and achievement of the Heritage Burnaby website with a Provincial Award at their 2008 annual conference and the project was featured in the BC Historical Federation’s *BC History Journal*.

3.0 WORK PROGRAM -- 2009

The successful production and launch of the Heritage Burnaby website has provided new online databases which are now an integral research tool for both civic operations and for public access to information and collections. The City’s investment in this project through the use of gaming funds has provided the ability for the large quantities of photographs and textual records to be described, indexed, scanned and made available through Heritage Burnaby’s databases.

For 2009, the following work program items have been developed for the consideration of the Community Heritage Commission and Council:

- ***Community Archives Collection***

In 2007, the Burnaby Historical Society entered into an agreement with the City that resulted in the transfer of the Community Archives and its holdings into the City Archives. These holdings consisted of two main collections: the historic photograph collection and the Community Archives manuscript collection.

The proposed 2009 work program would complete the conservation and indexing work on the Community collections and make the manuscript records of the Community Archives available to the public. The records that were collected by the Historical Society during the past five decades provide a unique and invaluable history of our community and include such material as the papers of Drs. Blythe and Violet Eagles, the minute books and records of organizations such as the Burnaby Boy Scouts or the South

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Burnaby Garden Club, as well as personal journals, diaries, directories, postcards, letters, ledgers and minutes of various Burnaby residents, groups and businesses.

In addition to the material held at the City Archives, the Burnaby Village Museum has a similar community manuscript collection of important historic value such as the records of the Victorian Order of Nurses and the papers of former Member of Parliament Ernest Winch. The inclusion of these collections in the new database system would make these items immediately accessible to the community via the internet. In 2009, it is proposed that these manuscript collections be researched, indexed and published on Heritage Burnaby in 2009.

- ***Historic Photograph Collections***

In addition to the manuscript material, there remains a number of significant photograph collections held by the City Archives - including the Columbian newspaper collection, the Burnaby Fire Department collection, and the Burnaby School Board photographs which remain to be scanned and made available online. In 2009, it is proposed to complete scanning all 4000 of these images for uploading into the photograph database.

- ***Public Programming and Information***

With the launch later this month of “*Burnaby Exchange*,” we hope to begin building an online community that will provide past, present, and future Burnaby citizens the opportunity to share, explore, exchange, and research a myriad of topics and subjects covering all aspects of Burnaby history and heritage. In order to foster this community, we anticipate the need to produce additional promotional material that can be provided to members of the public and interest groups to help build this resource and use it to the fullest extent.

4.0 FINANCING

Staff have completed an assessment of the funding necessary to complete the scope of work as outlined in Section 3.0. This report seeks Council expenditure approval of Gaming funds for this project in the amount of \$72,500.00 inclusive of 5% GST. A sufficient capital allocation for this purpose is available in the approved 2009-2013 Annual Capital Program. The use of Gaming funds for this project is consistent with Council guidelines to support heritage, cultural and environmental projects.

5.0 NEXT STEPS

The launch of the new Heritage Burnaby website has enabled the City to make a substantial commitment and investment in providing citizens with access to historic records and information. The Heritage Burnaby website also provides the public with unprecedented access to their built and recorded heritage.

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With Commission and Council approval, the proposed work program outlined in this report will add to this resource in a substantial way with new content and a focus on public awareness and education. This important City Archives initiative will continue to be guided and supported with regular updates submitted to the Community Heritage Commission.



B. Luksun, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

JW:tn:sa

Copied to: City Manager
City Clerk
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Chief Librarian

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