

COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: HERITAGE BURNABY UPGRADES AND BOOK SCANNING PILOT
PROJECT**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Council refer this report to the Finance and Civic Development Committee for consideration of an expenditure from Gaming Funds in the amount of \$50,000.00 (excluding GST) for upgrades to the Heritage Burnaby website and the implementation of the Heritage Book scanning pilot project.

REPORT

The Community Heritage Commission, at its meeting held on 2013 October 10, received and adopted the *attached* report outlining a proposed 2014 Heritage Burnaby work program including website upgrades and a Heritage Book scanning pilot project.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor C. Jordan
Chair

Councillor N. Volkow
Vice Chair

Councillor R. Chang
Member

Copied to:	City Manager Deputy City Manager (C. Turpin) Director Parks, Recr. & Cult. Services Director Finance Director Planning & Building Chief Librarian Chief Information Officer
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TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION

DATE: 2013 September 10

FROM: ACTING CITY CLERK

FILE: 1300-30
Reference: Heritage Burnaby Program

SUBJECT: HERITAGE BURNABY UPGRADES AND BOOK SCANNING PILOT PROJECT

PURPOSE: To outline a proposed 2014 Heritage Burnaby work program including website upgrades and a Heritage Book scanning pilot project

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** the Community Heritage Commission request approval for an expenditure of Gaming Funds in the amount of \$ 50,000.00 (excluding GST) for upgrades to the Heritage Burnaby website and the implementation of the Heritage Book scanning pilot project.
2. **THAT** this report be referred to the Finance and Civic Development Committee for consideration.

REPORT**1.0 BACKGROUND**

Burnaby City Council and the Community Heritage Commission have supported the development and implementation of the Heritage Burnaby program of services since its inception in 2006. As a result of this program, the mandate of the City Archives was expanded and a partnership was formed among civic heritage providers including the City Archives, Burnaby Village Museum, Heritage Planning Program and the Burnaby Public Library. This coordinated effort led to the development of the now multi-award winning and internationally recognized Heritage Burnaby website. The goal of this site was to create a comprehensive and interactive community history portal, bringing together individual and personal histories and creating a wider understanding of, and appreciation for, the city's collective memory. Since the launch of the site in 2008, and with the ongoing support of Council and the Community Heritage Commission, the civic heritage partners have successfully completed additional phases of the Heritage Burnaby program and have made new resources available online. To date, tens of thousands of photographs, artifacts, oral history recordings, landmark records, maps, textual records and other heritage assets have been digitized and made accessible to the public. By coordinating efforts to offer a consolidated approach to service provision, the heritage partners

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have made judicious use of previous funding, delivering each phase of the program on time and under budget. The site has received three Provincial and international awards and close to \$40,000.00 in external grant funding.

This report proposes a new phase for the Heritage Burnaby program and outlines a 2014 work plan including upgrades to the website and the launch of a heritage book scanning pilot project.

2.0 WEBSITE UPGRADES AND PILOT BOOK SCANNING PROJECT

2.1 Website Upgrades

When the Heritage Burnaby website was first launched over five years ago, it made use of the latest search features available at the time, providing an innovative “OneSearch” option that allowed researchers to search assets across multiple databases. Once a search was performed, users could click to open separate windows, displaying search results by category. Although advanced for its time, in the intervening years – particularly as search interfaces have improved in general – several limitations to this feature have been identified. Searches can only be done by keyword and OneSearch results simply include a count of records found in each database. In order to view the search results, users are required to open each database in a separate window(s). It is not possible to see, at a glance, related records from separate databases, nor does this type of search promote the discovery of new resources.

In addition, each media type has required the creation of a new landing page and separate search interface – a situation that has become more cumbersome as additional record types have been made available by the heritage partners. The searches offer no spelling corrections, facets or other features that have become common – and expected – to search engines in 2013.

For these reasons, it is proposed that the Heritage Burnaby website be upgraded to include the latest options available. It is recommended that a discovery interface style of search system be incorporated into the site. Users enter keywords to express roughly what they are looking for, then the system’s sophisticated search algorithms with automatic word stemming, spelling corrections and relevancy ranking, present relevant results. Users can refine their search through a faceted browsing process, in which they select subjects, date ranges, material types, and other key terms to limit their results set. This type of discovery searching has been widely accepted and has become the familiar style of searching that users expect from a web site in 2013.

Updating the search features on Heritage Burnaby will also afford the opportunity to upgrade other aspects of the site, allowing the heritage partners to change the static nature of the web pages to incorporate additional displays and content features not currently available. Staff will investigate the potential to include blog entries or recent events notices to the site and offer rotating or changing displays to add a dynamic element to the existing pages. Links to current events, articles and other heritage programs could be incorporated to inform citizens of the many initiatives being undertaken by City Council, the Community Heritage Commission and other heritage partners.

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From: *Acting City Clerk*
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2.2 Heritage Book Scanning Pilot Project

Streamlining the search and display options, as outlined in the previous section of this report, affords ample opportunity for Burnaby's heritage partners to add new resources to the current site. One such project that is proposed as part of the 2014 work plan is the digitization of Burnaby's heritage and history books.

The goal of the project is to create searchable PDF documents of historical resource books related to Burnaby. The project will scan the books from cover-to-cover, making their entire contents easy to search through key-word searches. The scanned PDF files of the books will be available on the Heritage Burnaby website and will make this historical reference material widely accessible to anyone via their computer. Many of these volumes are no longer in print and the earlier anecdotal books were often published without any indexing, making research difficult and time-consuming. Spearheaded by staff at the Burnaby Village Museum, a pilot list of 9 books has been identified for this project. The copyright to these books is owned by the City in 8 cases, and has expired in one case.

The books include:

George Green, History of Burnaby (1952)
Pixie McGeachie, Bygones of Burnaby (1975)
Pixie McGeachie, Pioneer Tales (1987)
Douglas Penn, Follow that Fire (1997)
Pixie McGeachie and Anne Burnaby McLeod, Land of Promise – Robert Burnaby Letters (2002)
City of Burnaby, Deer Lake Park Heritage Resource Inventory (1998)
Burnaby Centennial Anthology (1994)
Harry Pride, In the Shadow by the Sea – History of Barnet (2004)
Harry Pride, Life with the Moore family of Hart House (2002)

There are also two books for which PDF documents already exist, allowing them to be used without the need to create new versions for the website. These are:

City of Burnaby, Burnaby Heritage Inventory (revised 2011)
Pixie McGeachie, Tram Memories: In Celebration of the Restoration of Interurban 1223 (2007)

Once the pilot project is complete, staff can consider identifying other published material to feature as searchable PDF documents on the site in future work plans.

3.0 FINANCING

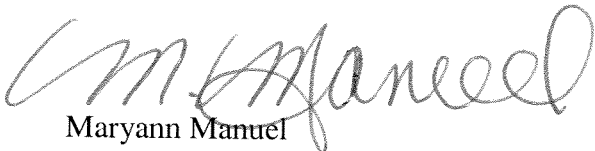
Staff have been in discussions with the City's Information Technology Department and website developers and have estimated the cost of the website and search upgrades – including the cost of creating the heritage book database and launching the scanning pilot project – at \$50,000.00

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(excluding GST). It is proposed that this amount be drawn from Gaming Funds to complete this program of work in 2014; the use of these funds being consistent with Council's guidelines in support of heritage, cultural and environmental projects.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In the past six years, the Heritage Burnaby program has reached thousands of people worldwide and has developed a reputation for providing unprecedented access to Burnaby's historic collections. To build upon these successes and to continue offering citizens new content and innovative features, it is recommended that the Community Heritage Commission approve the 2014 work plan outlined in this report and that the request for the expenditure of Gaming Funds in the amount of \$50,000.00 be forwarded to the Finance and Civic Development Committee for their consideration.



Maryann Manuel
ACTING CITY CLERK

MM:as

cc: Deputy City Manager (C. Turpin)
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Director Finance
Director of Planning and Building
Chief Librarian
Chief Information Officer