

**TO:** CHAIR AND MEMBERS  
COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION

**DATE:** 2017 January 11

**FROM:** CITY ARCHIVIST

**FILE:** 2410-20  
*Reference: Community Heritage  
Commission*

**SUBJECT:** CITY OF BURNABY ARCHIVES ANNUAL REPORT 2016

**PURPOSE:** To present the 2016 Annual Report of the City of Burnaby Archives

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **THAT** this report be received for information.

**REPORT**

**INTRODUCTION**

2016 was a busy and productive year at the City of Burnaby Archives.

A temporarily expanded archives staff meant that we were able to tackle 60% of our initial City record backlog. All open 1970s Council records are now directly accessible online as full-text pdf documents, as are thousands of newly added photographs, through Heritage Burnaby ([www.heritageburnaby.ca](http://www.heritageburnaby.ca)).

This year also included the completion of the Burnaby Community Heritage Commission initiated 'Burnaby Mountain Oral History Project' which was shortlisted for the 'Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Community Programming.'

Although allotting staff time to explore new ways of extending the life of the current archives has had a positive effect, it is important to keep in mind that the various options and alternatives that have been considered and implemented will not in themselves preclude the need for more archival storage space as a means of preserving the City and community permanent records and history.

The following report provides a summary of our operations throughout 2016.

**HISTORY OF ARCHIVAL RECORDS PROGRAM [OVERVIEW]**

The City of Burnaby Archives opened in the new McGill Library in 2001 and functions as a division of the Office of the City Clerk. The Archives is the official repository for all inactive

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civic records of permanent administrative, legal, fiscal, historical, evidential and/or informational value to the City of Burnaby. Archival material is preserved as evidence of the functions, legal rights, obligations, policies, decisions, procedures, accountabilities, and operations of the City. It is the responsibility of the City Archives to ensure the preservation and accessibility of these vital records by providing proper facilities, environmental controls and professional management resources to maintain the archival material in perpetuity.

Our City record description and digitization program has produced a current index of all Council minutes and reports dating back to 1934 and can be searched online with full-text versions of the documents, now available from 1970 to the present. All City Bylaws, dating back to 1892, are also available as full-text pdf documents online as are descriptions and finding aids for all files and records in our holdings.

In addition, the Archives has supported the protection and preservation of the City's documentary heritage by way of its expanded collections mandate and the incorporation of the Burnaby Historical Society Community Archives collections into the City's holdings. This transfer saw over 100 meters of textual records and over 10,000 photographs moved to the Archives facility in 2007.

## **CURRENT ARCHIVAL RECORDS PROGRAM**

Archives staff began the year by completing the work of gathering quantitative data of its entire holdings, including backlogged records. Data measured includes how much space the physical records in the Archives' holdings occupy, which City departments regularly transfer their records of permanent value (and which do not), and which record types are frequently requested. This data was required to assist in making decisions about storage space requirements, and how the Archives will operate going forward. To facilitate this work Archives staff participate in bi-monthly meetings with the Records Management division of the City on an on-going basis.

Information Technology staff have been successful in working together with Archives staff to develop a more efficient, automated process for the transfer of City records. This newly implemented system has cut City record processing time in half.

Due to the extra capacity coming from temporary positions within the Archives, over 4,000 City-generated photographs were processed from appraisal, accession, through to description and rehousing and 1,000 more were updated with access jpegs. All descriptions have been written to RAD (Rules of Archival Description) standard and include the same sophisticated name, subject and geographic indexing utilized for all other photographs, landmarks and artefact descriptions currently online at [heritageburnaby.ca](http://heritageburnaby.ca). As well, all open Council records from 01 January 1970 through 31 December 2014 are now immediately accessible. This is a great benefit, as it reduces the staff time required to respond to requests for this record set by as much as 92%.

Backlogged permanent records processed this year include those from the Planning Department, Manager's Office, Mayor's Office, Office of the City Clerk, Parks, Recreation and Cultural

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Services Department and Engineering Department. We have also described backlogged records originally transferred to us from the Royal BC Museum & Provincial Archives.

As well, 61 newly transferred records boxes from the Legal Department, the Office of the City Clerk and the Planning Department were described using the new automated system.

These records have now been catalogued and indexed according to the highest level of archival practices and standards, thus allowing the public and City Officials quick, efficient and direct access to information stored within them.

## **HERITAGE BURNABY & PUBLIC PROGRAMMING**

In February, the Heritage Burnaby Website Upgrade Project received a 2016 Heritage BC Award for Heritage Education & Awareness at the Recognition level. The upgraded website is a user-friendly finding aid for City Council records, Community records, bylaws, heritage landmarks, oral histories, digitized film footage, digitized publications and more held at the City Archives, the Burnaby Village Museum, and with the Burnaby Heritage Planning Program.

The Burnaby Mountain Oral History Project formally launched on Heritage Burnaby in April. This CHC initiated project, which focused on the many uses that take place and are accommodated within the boundaries of Burnaby Mountain, was short-listed in August for the '2016 Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Community Programming.'

The fall brought three more opportunities for outreach; in September the Archives participated in the Burnaby City Hall and RCMP Open House, in October we were part of the Burnaby Public Library's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at the McGill Branch, and in November we provided transfer training internally to City staff.

## **CONCLUSION**

Our 2017 work schedule includes processing both our backlogged [existing] and newly transferred holdings through accessioning, arranging and describing of records, in order to provide record access and research assistance to both City staff and the public. Archives staff will continue to work closely with the Information Technology Department in 2017, as we collaborate on preservation management for the digital records currently in Archives' holdings.

Our priority remains the continued pursuit of a solution to Archives space shortage.

The regular operating budgeted positions of one full-time archival assistant and one part-time auxiliary clerk typist have been integral to the success of our archival records program.

The 2016 addition of two stabilization-funded positions; one temporary full-time archival assistant (August-December) and one auxiliary clerk typist (March-December) allowed us to gain significant ground on our City record backlog and implement our automated processing system.

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Under the continued guidance and support of the Community Heritage Commission and Burnaby City Council, we look forward to building on these successes as we move into 2017.

Respectfully submitted,



Rebecca Pasch  
CITY ARCHIVIST

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cc: City Manager  
Deputy City Manager  
City Clerk  
Director of Planning and Building