

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

**DATE:** 2019 Jan 21

**FROM:** CITY ARCHIVIST

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

**SUBJECT:** CITY OF BURNABY ARCHIVES ANNUAL REPORT 2018

**PURPOSE:** To present the 2018 Annual Report of the City of Burnaby Archives

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

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

**REPORT**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

2018 was a prolific year at the City of Burnaby Archives (the Archives). A temporary increase in Archives staff meant that we were able to make significant improvements to our current archival record program as well as to our preservation program. The Archives was able to: develop a new strategy for unrestricted photographs that allows for the free download of high resolution images from Heritage Burnaby; process City record transfers on the day they were transferred to us (rather than adding them to our backlog); and make incredible progress in the development of our digital record preservation program.

The City continues to explore new ways of temporarily extending the life of the current archives facilities, and in 2018, off-site storage continued as the most viable short-term solution. It is important to keep in mind that the various options and alternatives considered and implemented do not preclude the need for more archival storage space as a permanent solution for preserving the City and community records.

The following report provides a summary of our operations throughout 2018.

## **2.0 POLICY SECTION**

### **Goal**

- A Connected Community
  - Digital connection –  
Provide online access to core City services and information
  - Partnership –  
Work collaboratively with businesses, educational institutions, associations, other communities and governments
- An Inclusive Community
  - Serve a diverse community –  
Ensure City services fully meet the needs of our dynamic community
- A Healthy Community
  - Lifelong learning –  
Improve upon and develop programs and services that enable ongoing learning
- A Thriving Organization
  - Organizational culture –  
Ensure that our core values are reflected in our policies, programs and service delivery
  - Human resources –  
Foster an environment for teamwork, efficiency and excellence to deliver customer service in alignment with our core values
  - Communication –  
Practice open and transparent communication among staff, Council and the community
  - Reliable services, technology and information –  
Protect the integrity and security of City information, services and assets
  - Technology and innovation –  
Support technology development and innovation to empower staff and to advance community objectives

## **3.0 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 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 1894 and can be searched online with full-text versions of the documents, now available from 1894 to the present. All City Bylaws, dating back to 1892, are 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 metres of textual records and over 10,000 photographs moved to the Archives facility in 2007.

#### **4.0 CURRENT ARCHIVAL RECORDS PROGRAM**

In a continued effort to improve efficiency and streamline processes, the Archives implemented a new strategy for providing access to images in 2018. Our goal, as always, is to ensure that we are making our holdings available to the largest community possible, without any unwarranted restrictions on their use.

In November, nearly 1,000 photographs on Heritage Burnaby were updated to have high resolution JPEGs (access copies) available for viewing and downloading by the public. The Archives is working to provide high resolution access copies online for photographs without privacy or copyright restrictions, and these photographs are the first phase of this project. All of the photographs updated in this phase belong to the Burnaby Historical Society Photograph Collection or are part of a fonds or collection previously in the custody of the Burnaby Historical Society (BHS). This phase also acts as a legacy project for the BHS who disbanded December 2018.

Eighty-eight boxes of permanent records that were newly transferred this year from the Legal Department, the Realty and Lands Division of the Public Safety & Community Services Department and the Planning Department were described using our automated system. These records have now been described and indexed according to the highest level of archival practices and standards, thus allowing the public and City staff quick, efficient, and direct access to this information.

#### **5.0 RECORDS PRESERVATION**

Archives staff must take explicit action in order to safely house and provide access to our records so that they will be meaningfully available in perpetuity.

For analogue records, this process is straightforward: they can be put in proper storage enclosures and kept in an environment with the correct temperature and relative

humidity to slow down deterioration and copies can be created to reduce the handling of originals. The Archives also receives preservation support from Burnaby Village Museum (BVM) conservation staff. This year BVM staff helped the Archives improve storage conditions for the maps and plans in our holdings.

For digital records, preservation is a much more difficult and tenuous job. Ongoing and evolving challenges such as hardware obsolescence, mechanical failure, and deterioration of digital media make digital records a highly vulnerable record group. In collaboration with the Information Technology (IT) Department, the Archives created a preservation system through a subscription to Archives Canada Digital Preservation Service (ACDPS) and began taking the first steps towards preserving digital records. This included establishing workflows, external media imaging and testing software. We addressed the digital records we hold on CD and DVD-ROMs, external hard drives, and USB flash drives. Archives staff are now utilizing two open-source software tools in our workflow: BitCurator, to create bit-for-bit copies (called "disk images") of this media, and Fixity, to verify the integrity of those copies.

The Archives is responsible for ensuring the ability to access authentic and reliable digital records over time and across changes in computing technology. By creating accurate disk images, we are mitigating the risks of storage medium failure and obsolescence common to external media, making these records accessible to researchers, and preparing them for long-term storage in our ACDPS preservation system.

## **6.0 OUTREACH**

The Archives hosted the spring session of the Lower Mainland Municipal Archivists Forum (LMMAF) in the Community Room at the McGill Branch, Burnaby Public Library. Archives staff provided a tour of the City's archival holdings and presented on last year's updates to the Heritage Burnaby website: 'Sort by Date' for all records, better search result navigation and linking associated reports (PDF) to their respective bylaws ([www.heritageburnaby.ca](http://www.heritageburnaby.ca)). The LMMAF provides an opportunity to discuss a wide range of common archival issues, share best practices and resources, discuss challenges, and discover areas of potential collaboration or cooperation. It was founded in 2016 by the City Archivist at Coquitlam, Emily Lonie, who identified a need for a mechanism to enable regular communication with other municipal archivists in the area.

In November, the Archives had a productive meeting with the City's Corporate Communications & Marketing Departments and the Archives now has a plan for two social media campaigns in 2019: celebrating Heritage Week in February and BC Archives Week in November.

The Archives also focused on increasing its profile within the City through presentations to Records Management Coordinators and to the Clerk's Department.

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From: City Archivist  
Re: City of Burnaby Archives Annual Report 2018  
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## CONCLUSION

Archives staff will continue to work in close partnership with the City's IT Department in 2019, focusing on the digital records currently in Archives' holdings and ingesting them into our newly acquired ACDPS preservation system.

Our 2019 work schedule also includes processing our backlogged records, and the continued pursuit of a solution to the Archives storage space shortage. You will also see the Archives on social media for the first time.

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 2019.

Respectfully submitted,



Rebecca Pasch  
CITY ARCHIVIST

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Copied to: City Manager  
Director of Corporate Services  
Chief Information Officer  
Director of Planning and Building  
City Clerk