
TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION

DATE: 2022 May 11

FROM: GENERAL MANAGER
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

FILE: 1650 01

SUBJECT: CONSERVATION OF THE EAGLE FORD NEON SIGN

PURPOSE: To recommend conservation and reinstatement of the Eagle Ford neon sign as a heritage landmark on Hastings Street.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** the Commission request that Council approve the conservation and reinstatement of the Eagle Ford neon sign as a civic heritage landmark, as outlined in *Section 4.0* of this report.

REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

At its 2012 September 17 meeting, Council approved the Commission's recommendation to acquire the Eagle Ford neon sign. The report noted that acquisition of the sign was for the purpose of its conservation and re-instatement as a heritage landmark within the City. The sign was subsequently acquired and stored in a City warehouse pending implementation of a plan for its conservation and installation at an appropriate location.

At its 2021 February 11 meeting, the Community Heritage Commission received correspondence from the Heights Merchants Association expressing interest in working with the City to reinstate the Eagle Ford neon sign on Hastings Street as a heritage landmark. The item was referred to staff. Continued review of the feasibility of restoring and reinstating the sign on Hastings Street as a protected heritage resource was subsequently included in the Community Heritage Commission's 2 year work plan for 2022 and 2023.

This report recommends the conservation of the sign and its installation on Hastings Street as a civic heritage resource.

Funding of \$110,000 is required for implementation of this project, with \$5,000 available in the 2022 Planning and Development Department operating budget and \$105,000 to be requested as part of the 2023 – 2027 Financial Plan following Council approval. It is noted that work of this nature would be eligible for funding through the Gaming Reserve as a potential funding source.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

The protection of heritage resources is supported by several City policies, including the *Corporate Strategic Plan* (2017) and the *Official Community Plan* (1998), and the *Burnaby Social Sustainability Strategy* (2011) supports the enhancement of neighbourhood character through recognition and promotion of iconic architecture and historical monuments.

3.0 BACKGROUND

In 2012, the City purchased the Eagle Ford sign from a private collector. The sign was originally located at the showroom of the Eagle Ford car dealership at Carleton Avenue and Hastings Street (present day Carleton Square at 4161 Hastings Street), where it was installed circa 1950 (*Attachment #1*).

The sign consisted of a large double-sided neon eagle, measuring over 13 feet (3.96 m) tall and almost 9 feet (2.74 m) wide. It was a well-known landmark on Hastings Street (*Attachment #2*).

In addition to featuring the eagle on its sign, Eagle Ford featured the silhouette of an eagle in its advertising, and on its car badge.

The recession of the 1980s took its toll on Eagle Ford, and the business closed in 1985. The neon sign made its way into a private collection shortly after. The collector stored the sign indoors, and it is in good condition, though in need of repair including restoration of paint and replacement of neon tubing (*Attachment #3*). The sign has been stored and maintained by Burnaby Village Museum since 2012.

4.0 CONSERVATION AND RE-INSTATEMENT OF THE EAGLE FORD NEON SIGN

A review of the feasibility of conserving and re-instating the Eagle Ford neon sign has been completed by staff, including identification of appropriate locations for installation of the sign, review of logistics associated with mounting the sign and providing electrical service, and identification of consultants to plan and complete the repair and conservation work required.

The estimated cost for the project is \$110,000, which includes development of a conservation plan, public consultation, transportation, conservation and repair, and the design, fabrication and installation of a post and mounting bracket. The work will also include installation of electrical service to the sign, installation of the sign, and development and installation of an interpretive sign.

Funding for completion of a conservation plan (\$5,000 of the total project cost of \$110,000) has been provided in the City's 2022 operating budget, and work on the conservation plan would be initiated following Council's adoption of the recommendation in this report.

Further work would take place following inclusion of the remaining \$105,000 of \$110,000 project funding in the City's 2023 – 2027 Financial Plan. With project funding assigned, a report recommending designation of the sign as a civic heritage resource would be advanced to Council through the Community Heritage Commission. The report would provide detailed information including the proposed conservation works, the location of the sign, and a summary of project costs and estimated operating costs.

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It is noted that ongoing maintenance costs of the Eagle Ford neon sign may be comparable to those for the Swinging Girl neon sign, which includes an annual maintenance contract of \$1,996 per year. The Swinging Girl neon sign is a designated heritage landmark, owned by the City of Burnaby and located at 4142 Hastings Street. Repairs have been required infrequently, with costs provided for through the City's operating budgets for maintenance of civic heritage resources. The costs of electricity for the Swinging Girl neon sign are paid for by the Heights Merchants Association, who have indicated they would pay for the costs of the electrical service to the Eagle Ford neon sign. Further conversations with the Heights Merchants Association would follow Council's adoption of the recommendation of this report.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION

This report recommends that the Commission request that Council approve the conservation and re-installation of the Eagle Ford neon sign as a designated civic heritage feature on Hastings Street.

Funding of \$110,000 is required for implementation, with \$5,000 available in the 2022 Planning and Development Department operating budget and \$105,000 to be requested as part of the 2023 – 2027 Financial Plan following Council approval of this report's recommendation.



E.W. Kozak, General Manager
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

LC:sa

Attachments

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

Attachment #1



The Eagle Ford neon sign at its original location on Hastings Street circa 1970-1985. CBA 537-580



The yellow rectangle is the approximate location of the original Eagle Ford neon sign, represented on a 2021 aerial photograph.

Attachment #3



The Eagle Ford neon sign when it was purchased by the City of Burnaby in 2012. Burnaby Village Museum BV016.18.2