



Chinese Canadian Reconciliation Project Community Engagement Final Report – September 2024

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Background	2
Apology Processes in Other Jurisdictions.....	2
Project Deliverables.....	2
Historic Discrimination Against Chinese Residents of Burnaby	3
Summary of Discriminatory Actions	3
Impact on Burnaby’s Present-Day Chinese Communities.....	4
Summary of Community Engagement.....	4
Community Dialogue Sessions	4
Focus Groups.....	5
Storytelling Sessions	6
Mary	7
Nelson.....	7
Madison	8
Curtis	8
Frances	9
Julie Lee (nee Jung)	10
Apology Framework.....	11
Framework.....	11
Content.....	12
Language.....	12
Apology Format.....	12
Key Themes from Community Engagement	13
Education	13
Representation and Accessibility	14
Reconciliation and Cultural Sharing	14

Belonging and Community Safety.....	14
Priority Actions	15
Priority Actions	15
Other Supported Actions	16
Next Steps	187
Recommendations.....	18
Conclusion	18

Background

In February 2023, Burnaby City Council approved a process to review, acknowledge and apologize for its historic discrimination against people of Chinese descent, with the goal of advancing reconciliation with the Chinese Canadian community. Burnaby Family Life as the host of the Burnaby Intercultural Planning Table (BIPT) was contracted to host conversations with community members and leaders in 2023 and 2024 as per the Communications and Engagement Plan developed by the City. Outreach and engagement was delivered in Chinese languages as well as English across diverse groups reflecting the diversity of Chinese Canadian communities in Burnaby.

Apology Processes in Other Jurisdictions

Government of Canada (2006)

- Formal apology for Head Tax and exclusion policies
- Head Tax redress funds offered to surviving individuals who had paid the head tax and their spouses

City of New Westminster (2010)

- Formal apology for historic discriminatory actions
- Legacy projects to raise awareness, and commemorate events and places of significance to New West’s Chinese Canadian community

City of Vancouver (2018)

- Formal apology for historic discriminatory legislation, policies and practices
- Commitment to legacy actions to advance reconciliation (creation of Legacy Working Group, pursuing a UNESCO designation for Chinatown, creation of a Chinatown plan, and redesign of Keefer Memorial Square)

Project Deliverables

The outreach and engagement sessions conducted by BIPT were:

1. Community Dialogues - Two sessions (October 2023 and May/June 2024) with up to 130 people per session.
1. Focus groups - 6 focus groups with participants reflecting a range of ages, languages, length of time in Canada and connection to historic families; 3-8 participants per focus group. Focus groups were conducted in English, Mandarin and Cantonese.
2. Storytelling sessions - 6 sessions with one individual per session.

An Advisory Group was recruited and convened by the City of Burnaby to provide input on the engagement process. BIPT held 7 Advisory Group meetings between September 2023 and September 2024 to shape the engagement work we delivered.

Historic Discrimination Against Chinese Residents of Burnaby

Prior to embarking on the community engagement, City staff had conducted research to uncover the historic discriminatory actions of the City between 1892 and 1947 that targeted Chinese Canadians, and in some cases impacted other racialized communities in Burnaby. The community engagement process was an opportunity to explore the level of awareness about these actions among current residents, the legacy and ongoing impacts of those actions for Burnaby's Chinese Canadian communities, and potential actions for reconciliation the City could take moving forward.

Summary of Discriminatory Actions

Between 1892 and 1947, Burnaby introduced discriminatory bylaws and regulations and engaged in practices that restricted opportunities available to Chinese Canadians. Burnaby's Municipal Council endorsed resolutions from citizens, organizations, and other local governments that advocated for discrimination against Chinese and other Asian immigrants. By endorsing these resolutions, the Council voiced their support for restrictions on Chinese immigration and land purchases, and for measures to limit Chinese-owned businesses.

It was difficult for Chinese Canadians to purchase land in Burnaby, due to practices such as private landowners placing covenants on land title that restricted Chinese and other racialized groups from owning land. There are examples of the municipality taking measures to prevent Chinese owners from purchasing land from the municipality, and historic land records show an almost complete absence of sale of municipally-owned land to purchasers with surnames consistent with Asian immigrants. Chinese residents and business owners in Burnaby frequently had to lease land from European landowners to have access to land for farms, piggeries, and other businesses.

Burnaby also introduced restrictive bylaws that prevented Chinese Canadians from being employed by the municipality, as well as preventing their employment by businesses that were contracted by the Municipality. Bylaw 4, introduced in 1892,

barred the employment of people of Chinese and Japanese descent in the municipality or by contractors of the municipality.

The Province of British Columbia passed legislation barring Chinese and other Asian residents from voting in any municipal election from the 1890s to 1948. This disenfranchisement was also used by the province and municipalities, including Burnaby, to prevent Chinese Canadians from accessing services and certifications that were based on eligibility for voting, including being able to run for public office. Disenfranchisement prevented Chinese Canadians from being admitted into professional associations such as law, pharmacy, and medicine.

Impact on Burnaby's Present-Day Chinese Communities

Burnaby today is home to descendants of early Chinese migrants who were directly impacted by the web of discriminatory laws and practices enacted by the Government of Canada, provincial governments, and municipal governments (including the Municipality of Burnaby) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The impact of these discriminatory actions still resonates with Burnaby's historic families, particularly as the contributions and resilience of their ancestors is not widely recognized.

The City could honour the experiences of the historic families and the legacy of historic discrimination by:

- 1) recognizing the presence of descendants of these historic families within the present-day community and the contributions their parents and grandparents made to Burnaby;
- 2) acknowledging the legacy left by Burnaby's discriminatory treatment, along with the resilience of early Chinese Canadian residents in the face of such discrimination; and
- 3) recognizing that this history of discrimination in some cases paved the way and shapes discrimination directed at Chinese immigrants who came to Burnaby after 1947, as part of systematic discrimination.

Summary of Community Engagement

Community Dialogue Sessions

BIPT held two Community Dialogue sessions to bring together community members across Burnaby to discuss the proposed apology and gather suggestions for specific actions that the City could take towards reconciliation with Burnaby's Chinese Canadian communities. Extensive outreach was conducted by the BIPT team, with support from City staff and a community-based Advisory Group, to engage as many residents as possible at these events. Interpretation in both Mandarin and Cantonese was provided to ensure that the dialogues were accessible to those who did not speak English. At

each session, participants had opportunities to engage in deeper conversations at their table with other participants, guided by a facilitator and notetaker.

The first Community Dialogue was held on October 17, 2023, from 6 pm to 7:30 pm at the Bonsor Recreation Complex. About 130 residents, the majority of whom self-identified as Chinese Canadian, participated in this dialogue. City staff provided an overview of the historic context of discrimination against Chinese Canadians in Burnaby and presented on the City's Chinese Canadian Reconciliation Framework which provides the foundation for the work. This was followed by a hosted conversation at each table. The aim of the first Community Dialogue was to understand why participants were interested in this process, gather perspectives on the impacts of historic discrimination against Chinese Canadians in Burnaby, and to generate ideas on what true and meaningful reconciliation would look like. Participants also had the opportunity to sign up for focus group sessions to provide further feedback.

The second session was held on June 11, 2024, from 6pm to 7:30pm, also at the Bonsor Recreation Complex with approximately 100 participants, many of whom had attended the first Community Dialogue. City staff presented the key themes, actions, and recommendations that had emerged through the first community dialogue, and from the focus groups and storytelling sessions held between December 2023 and April 2024. A proposed apology framework for how the formal apology would be given was also shared. The presentation was followed by a hosted conversation at each table where the participants provided further feedback on the apology framework and proposed actions. Participants were also asked to identify locations of historical and cultural significance to the City's Chinese communities.

Focus Groups

Between December 2023 and April 2024, BIPT held six focus groups with 3-8 participants per focus group. The purpose of the focus groups was to:

- Gather feedback on the impact of the historic discrimination against Chinese Canadians, discuss a proposed apology framework, and suggest actions the City could take towards reconciliation for its historic discrimination against Chinese Canadians;
- Gain a lived experience perspective and speak to harder to reach demographics through facilitated small group discussions; and
- Tap into unique knowledge that is difficult to capture through larger gatherings.

These sessions were held both in-person and online and were organized to capture key segments of the Chinese communities in Burnaby. Outreach was conducted by BIPT, with support from community organizations, to reach residents beyond those who had expressed an interest in participating in a focus group at the first Community Dialogue.

The focus group sessions were as follows:

1. Adult participants from Community Dialogue #1: 12 December 2023 (English)
2. Newcomers (less than 5 years in Canada): 2 February 2024 in partnership with SUCCESS (English, Mandarin, Cantonese)
3. Seniors #1: 23 February 2024 in partnership with MOSAIC (Cantonese)
4. Youth: 13 March 2024 in partnership with the Burnaby Public Library (English)
5. Educators: 2 April 2024 identified with support from City Staff (English)
6. Seniors #2: 11 April 2024 in partnership with Burnaby Neighbourhood House (Cantonese, Mandarin)

Following the focus groups, members from historic families and the Advisory Group were invited to a joint session for an in-depth conversation. City and BIPT staff presented a draft apology framework for discussion, along with a summary of what had been shared at the first community dialogue and the focus groups. This event provided an opportunity for members of historic Chinese families in Burnaby to discuss how their families were impacted by historic discrimination, and to suggest actions for reconciliation that would be meaningful to them.

Storytelling Sessions

The purpose of these storytelling sessions was to:

- Follow up with individuals who had attended the community dialogue sessions and focus groups, and other community contacts, to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of families directly impacted by historic discrimination and its legacies.;
- Gather more in-depth feedback regarding the legacies of the web of historic discriminatory policies and practices implemented by all levels of government, including specific legislation and acts of discrimination perpetuated by the City of Burnaby; along with present day experiences of Chinese Canadian communities in Burnaby; and
- Give participants the opportunity to share information in a confidential, anonymized, and private session to gather information that participants may not have otherwise felt comfortable sharing.

Between May and August 2024, we conducted five storytelling sessions and reviewed the story of one individual from existing City archives - for a total of six stories. Stories and key points from each session have been shared below with each participant's permission. The names of participants who shared their stories have been changed for privacy. A sixth story (Julie Lee) is based on historical research that Mrs. Lee and her family have shared with the City previously. It is presented with her permission.

Mary

Mary is a third-generation Chinese Canadian resident of Burnaby. She grew up in Vancouver and moved to Burnaby in the 1980s. Mary grew up in Strathcona and Chinatown in Vancouver. She felt lucky to grow up in a Chinese community; the strength of the community there made it far easier to deal with the racism Chinese people faced on a daily basis.

Mary's Strathcona neighbourhood changed in the 1960s, when Vancouver began expropriating parts of Chinatown to widen the streets and gentrifying Chinatown through new developments. Mary attended a protest against the planned expansion of the Georgia Viaduct through Chinatown and was against other expropriation projects. Though the Georgia Viaduct project was rerouted, other land expropriations went forward. The population of Chinatown dropped as people moved to surrounding communities, including Burnaby.

Mary moved to Burnaby as it was difficult to find housing suitable for young adults in Vancouver, and Burnaby was more affordable; she made sure to choose a place far from a bridge, highway, or tunnel, as she feared having her land expropriated. She finds Burnaby generally more accepting than it used to be and thinks community events that bring together different cultural groups have had a significant impact in making the city more accepting. However, anti-Chinese discrimination has simply become more covert, whereas it was more overt a few decades ago, and much of the racism she experienced over the years persists. She notes that stereotypes persist, and she hears them commonly, such as stereotypes that Asians are all wealthy and are making the city unaffordable, or that they are loud and uncouth in public.

Nelson

Nelson was born in China and immigrated to Canada as a child. He has lived and worked in Burnaby for most of his life and works as an immigration consultant helping mostly Chinese immigrants come to Canada and adjust to life here.

Nelson emphasized the salience of language and language barriers in propelling much of the discrimination that he sees in Burnaby. Though Burnaby has a large Chinese population and lots of resources to help newer immigrants, negative racial stereotypes persist and those who have limited English fluency often face significant challenges with stereotyping and accessing resources.

The Covid-19 pandemic had a massive impact, and immigration still has not recovered due to the restrictions on movement between Canada and China. More recent Chinese immigrants or prospective migrants are warier about Canada, especially regarding political stability, anti-Asian discrimination, and their economic prospects. While the

migrants he met 10-15 years ago were more narrowly focused on education and the general living environment, and tended to know less about Canada, more recent migrants tend to have a higher level of education and see migration as sometimes not economically beneficial given the high cost of housing, living expenses, and challenges in the job market. Most of the more recent immigrants he encounters have little to no knowledge of Canada's and Burnaby's history of discrimination towards early Chinese migrants but have a growing awareness of present-day discrimination towards Chinese immigrants.

Madison

Madison is a second-generation Chinese Canadian born and raised in Coquitlam, and a current Burnaby resident and educator. Her parents immigrated to Canada from Guangzhou. Her great-grandfather and other relatives on her maternal side migrated to Canada during the Exclusion Era¹. Since her immediate family only migrated after the end of Chinese Exclusion, Madison does not feel that the history of the Exclusion Era is part of her history but identifies with the history particularly as it contextualizes much of the everyday racism she witnesses. She had heard about the history of early Chinese migrants to Canada briefly from her family, but only discovered it after pursuing tertiary education.

Recent events including the Exclusion Act centenary, the racist rhetoric associated with Covid-19 pandemic, and the Atlanta spa shootings have made her rethink her childhood and her everyday experiences. Madison observed that the Covid-19 pandemic brought more anti-Chinese and anti-Asian racism to the surface, and she no longer feels as safe in Burnaby as she did previously. While Madison has observed that Burnaby is very diverse and has a large Chinese and Asian population, she does not feel this diversity is often reflected in the City's official programming or in the education setting. She feels that the concerns of the community are not taken seriously, and that the community's cultural and socioeconomic diversity is frequently unacknowledged.

Curtis

Curtis is a third-generation, mixed-ethnicity Chinese Canadian born and raised in Burnaby, as well as a current Burnaby resident. A member of a historic family, his family came from China over 100 years ago and settled in Burnaby, where they ran a green grocery store.

¹ Exclusion Era in this story and elsewhere in this report refers to the period between 1923-1947 when immigration of Chinese into BC and Canada was severely curtailed
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/multiculturalism-anti-racism/chinese-legacy-bc/history/discrimination/federal-exclusion-act>

Properties in the block where the store was located were acquired by the Municipality of Burnaby in the early 1960s for an urban renewal project. Owners who were unable to reach a sales agreement with the Municipality had their land expropriated.

In a 1967 newspaper article, Curtis' grandfather indicated that he felt the compensation being offered to him was unfair, and that the Municipality was participating in unfair negotiating tactics. He was quoted in the article as saying "I am deeply hurt that this is the treatment the Municipality feels justified to impose upon a pioneer of the Municipality."

Losing the land where the store was located resulted in the business permanently closing. Curtis recalls that his grandfather pursued a court challenge over the compensation but was not successful.

The loss of the store was only one impact on the family. Curtis learned about his family's history and the expropriation case in bits and pieces throughout the stories his family told. However, he recalls that his family rarely talked about the loss of their land, or of racism faced by Chinese Canadians. The harm caused by the loss of the business created a painful memory, resulting in a loss of family history being passed down to future generations.

Since Burnaby's school system did not include much education on Chinese Canadian history or culture when he attended it (other than a brief mention of the head tax), he did not learn about Burnaby's historic anti-Chinese discrimination. He only recently learned more of the details underlying his family's case and of Burnaby's historic discrimination towards Chinese Canadians.

Frances

Frances is a fourth-generation Chinese Canadian woman. Born in a municipality in metro Vancouver; she moved to Burnaby in the 1980s and has been living and working in Burnaby for decades. Both of her parents were born in Canada and grew up during the Exclusion Era.

Frances shared stories of her family's resilience and challenges to the institutionalized discrimination they faced. Frances's father lived in a neighbouring municipality to Burnaby; when he was a child, he fought off a group of white children who twisted his ankle so hard that it continued to trouble him throughout his life. Frances's mother learned early to be proud of her culture and to fight back, which she passed on to her daughter.

Her parents opened a coffee shop on a major highway in Langley. At the time, Langley barred Chinese land ownership adjacent to main thoroughfares². To operate the coffee shop, Frances's parents had to challenge the municipality in court, and were successful, so the coffee shop stayed open.

National and local Chinese Canadian history were absent from her education and Chinese culture and history has not been represented throughout Frances's time living in Burnaby. But her experience growing up in Whalley and the example set by her mother and other family members toughened her, which helped her navigate stressors such as the Covid-19 pandemic as a resident of Burnaby.

Julie Lee (nee Jung)³

Julie Lee has generously shared her family's history with the staff at the Burnaby Village Museum, and allowed her family stories and photographs to be published in *Rooted: Chinese Canadian Stories in Burnaby*. The information below is based on information she has provided, and is included here with her permission.

Julie Lee's grandparents, Jung Chung Chong and Jung Gee Shee ran a farm and piggery in Burnaby at Douglas Road and Still Creek. Most of the neighbouring community was comprised of white, European farmers, though there were a few other Chinese market gardens and farms in the area. The farm and piggery also employed Chinese workers, who socialized with the family.

In the early 1900s, Burnaby targeted piggeries, including the one that belonged to Julie's grandparents, claiming that they were a public health nuisance⁴. Her grandparents continued to farm their land but had to stop raising pigs. Historical records from the time show that the majority of enforcement of the bylaw was focused on Chinese-owned piggeries.

² Local governments throughout BC, including Burnaby, placed restrictions on businesses owned by Chinese business owners, and some also restricted businesses owned by other Asian community members.

³ Julie Lee's (nee Jung) story is based on historical research that Mrs. Lee and her family have previously shared with the City of Burnaby and is reproduced here with her permission.

⁴ In 1921, Burnaby introduced a bylaw that regulated where pigs could be raised, and how many pigs could be kept. Though there were piggeries in Burnaby that were operated by non-Chinese owners, historical records show that most of the enforcement was focused on Chinese-owned piggery businesses.

Apology Framework

Participants in the second community dialogue session were broadly supportive of the proposed apology framework outlined below. The framework was developed with input from members of Burnaby's historic families and the community-based advisory group.

Attendees at the community dialogue and members of historic families expressed appreciation for the City's commitment to the apology. Some also expressed sadness that an apology could not have taken place earlier, when the generation directly affected by the City's historic discrimination would have been alive to receive it.

Framework

Based on community outreach, the apology should adhere to the framework of:

Acknowledge, Recognize, Apologize, and Commit.

To ensure the apology adheres to the guidance developed through community outreach, it should:

- **Acknowledge** the linguistic diversity of Chinese Canadian communities in Burnaby; it should be delivered in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, and possibly a village dialect;
- **Recognize** that historic discrimination has a legacy (including intergenerational impacts, and low visibility of Chinese Canadian history in Burnaby)
- **Recognize** the resilience of Chinese Canadians and those who pushed back and advocated for inclusion;
- **Recognize** the contributions Chinese Canadians have made to Burnaby despite barriers and unfair treatment;
- **Recognize** that members of other cultural communities, including other Asian migrants, people of colour, and Indigenous peoples have also faced discrimination
- **Apologize** for the specific historic discriminatory actions of the City, including a direct apology to the historic families and descendants whose families were impacted by the municipality of Burnaby's historic discrimination;
- **Commit** to ensuring the City never again perpetuates such harms again
- **Commit** to actions to address ongoing impacts and to reconcile with the Chinese Canadian community; and
- **Commit** to installing a physical monument or memorial to mark the event

Content

Community members who participated in the engagement events expressed that the apology should:

- Reference specific discriminatory bylaws and policies to highlight Burnaby's historic discrimination;
- Be specifically addressed to Burnaby's historic Chinese Canadian families and their descendants,
- Acknowledge that historic discrimination has an ongoing legacy: Chinese Canadian residents and newer migrants that are part of the Chinese diaspora continue to face anti-Asian racism and discrimination
- Be action-oriented and include future commitments alongside an acknowledgement of the past;
- Recognize the resilience of Chinese Canadians in the face of discrimination;
- Acknowledge and draw connections between the histories and experiences of other marginalized groups in Burnaby; and
- Refrain from using sanitized or vague language.

Language

Respondents expressed support for the apology to reflect the linguistic diversity within the community by being delivered in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Descendants of historic families and members of the Community Advisory Group also reiterated that the apology should include Taishanese (Toisanese)—the Cantonese dialect that most early Chinese migrants to Burnaby spoke. Many felt that the linguistic diversity of the Chinese Canadian communities goes frequently unacknowledged.

Apology Format

Respondents felt that the presentation of the apology was as important as the content. Suggested methods of delivery included:

- To be a public, possibly more formal event such as a banquet, that can include celebrations of Chinese culture (e.g. dragon dancing, parade, etc.);
- Take place in a location significant to the present-day or the historic community; suggestions included the Kingsway area, Central Park, the Big Bend;
- To take place on a date significant to Chinese Canadian community members (e.g. on the anniversary of the Chinese Exclusion Act, during Asian Heritage Month, or on an anniversary of a specific piece of legislation passed by Burnaby). Could be presented in partnership with a cultural organization such as Burnaby Village Museum or the Chinese Canadian Museum;

- To be delivered by the organizations that perpetuated the discrimination. In this case, as historic discrimination was perpetuated by Burnaby's local government, the apology should come from Mayor and Council; and
- To be commemorated, e.g. with a tangible memorial to be located at Burnaby City Hall or in another significant location.

Key Themes from Community Engagement

Based on the feedback BIPT received from the community engagement sessions between October 2023 and August 2024, several key themes emerged, with associated potential actions for reconciliation.

Education

Education regarding Chinese Canadian culture and history emerged as a key theme. Many noted a lack of instruction in the education system on Chinese Canadian culture and history and the lack of visibility of Chinese culture and language as factors leading to lack of knowledge about the history of Chinese migration to Canada, of historic discrimination, and of the resilience of early Chinese settlers.

Older adults who had been raised in the Canadian school system frequently reported never having been taught anything about Chinese Canadian history, culture, or identity throughout their formal education. Younger generations were more likely to report having learned more about segments of Chinese Canadian culture and history, such as the head tax or Lunar New Year, but these individuals still reported having few in-depth opportunities to learn about their culture and history in formal or informal settings.

Members of Burnaby's historic Chinese Canadian families tended to know slightly more about the ways in which Burnaby's restrictions on land usage and discriminatory bylaws had affected their family. However, elder generations often found it difficult and traumatic to discuss the impacts. The descendants frequently had to conduct their own research to understand the nature of Burnaby's historic discrimination and the systemic barriers faced by early Chinese residents.

Respondents were supportive of proposed actions related to public educational programming on Chinese Canadian culture and history. They expressed support for multigenerational programming open to both Chinese and non-Chinese residents. Many were also supportive of working with local institutions, such as the Burnaby Village Museum, to spearhead educational programming, as many felt positively about the work of Burnaby's community organizations and institutions.

Representation and Accessibility

Respondents felt that the City is lacking in Chinese visibility even though a large percentage of the City's population is part of the Chinese diaspora. Support was expressed for the City to ensure that its governing bodies include Chinese Canadians and reflect Burnaby's community makeup; and for City staff to be trained in working with new immigrants and members of cultural communities

Respondents were also supportive of facilitating more access to translators and translated materials for both Mandarin and Cantonese speakers to facilitate access to City services and resources.

Reconciliation and Cultural Sharing

Under the framework of reconciliation, respondents expressed support for highlighting the intersection between Chinese Canadian reconciliation and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Some of Burnaby's early Chinese migrants had lived alongside the Musqueam people on their lands: Chinese farmers were welcome to farm on Musqueam lands during the time when Chinese Canadians were largely excluded from owning land and had to rent or lease.

Many were also supportive of intercultural initiatives to share cultural traditions between cultural groups, including between diverse Chinese diasporic cultural and linguistic groups. They expressed that the diversity of the Chinese diaspora's many communities often goes unacknowledged. Future reconciliation work could also emphasize the shared history of discrimination that Chinese Canadians share with other Asian Canadians and racialized groups in Burnaby.

Belonging and Community Safety

There was a split between respondents who felt welcomed and supported in their cultural and racial identity in Burnaby, and those who did not. Those who felt welcomed often cited the size of Burnaby's Chinese population and community organizations that help with forming community ties and that assist new immigrants adjusting to life in Canada (such as S.U.C.C.E.S.S).

Respondents who did not feel welcome in Burnaby sometimes cited personal experiences of racist discrimination. Many pointed to the anti-Asian racism and stereotyping associated with the Covid-19 pandemic as contributing significantly to feeling unwelcome.

Some respondents expressed feeling generally safe in Burnaby, while other respondents felt unsafe; these latter respondents expressed feeling anxious and on

edge while walking around the City especially at night. These anxieties ranged from feeling stressed about the potential to experience racial discrimination or racist language directed at them, to feeling concerned about their personal and physical safety. These respondents frequently cited the Covid-19 pandemic and the 2017 murder of a Chinese Canadian teenager as events that had made them reconsider their safety. Several expressed a desire for the City to take more seriously the issue of community safety.

Priority Actions

From the first Community Dialogue and the Focus Groups, a series of actions were recommended. Broadly these actions could be grouped around three key themes:

- **Theme 1 – Visibility:** sharing Chinese Canadian history and culture in public spaces
- **Theme 2 – Cultural Preservation:** Facilitate activities to preserve and share Chinese Canadian culture and history
- **Theme 3 – Inclusion:** Reduce barriers and encourage inclusion

Each theme contained five to six proposed actions, for a total of 16 proposed actions.

At the second Community Dialogue event, participants were presented with all the proposed actions and given an opportunity to provide feedback, add additional proposed actions, and vote on priority action areas. Actions related to improved visibility and representation of Chinese Canadian history and cultures; anti-racism and community safety; and educational programming were identified as priorities by the participants.

Priority Actions

The actions that emerged as having the highest priority were:

- **Community safety and anti-racism:** support anti-racism work in the community including work to address anti-Asian racism;
- **Document and share histories of Chinese Canadians in Burnaby:** preserve and commemorate Chinese Canadian history, including collecting artifacts, photographs, oral histories, and other materials that document Chinese Canadian history in Burnaby;
- **Events:** support and facilitate cultural celebrations, such as parades, performances, and markets that highlight Chinese cultural traditions; and

- **Community gathering spaces:** support the development of community gathering spaces where cultural activities can occur and where greater awareness of Chinese culture for Chinese and non-Chinese residents of Burnaby could be fostered.

Identifying community safety and anti-racism as high priority reflects both the legacy of historic discrimination and the increased stressors that Burnaby's Chinese communities have faced in recent years, such as the Covid-19 pandemic

Some of the participants in the community engagement shared that continuing anti-Asian racism is affecting their ability to feel safe and welcomed in the City. The lack of awareness of the contributions of Chinese Canadians to Burnaby is informing negative stereotypes and rhetoric, such as comments that Chinese people should "go back to their country" and the idea that they do not have solid, long-lasting roots in Burnaby or Canada.

Other Supported Actions

- **Intercultural, intergenerational education:**
 - Facilitate and create opportunities to share culture and language across generations, and with other cultural groups.
 - Develop educational resources accessible to community members, educators, and the public such as printed materials or exhibits.
- **Language and translation:**
 - Translate relevant/important City resources into Chinese languages.
 - Provide and fund language and translation support for community members engaging with City services and resources.
 - Fund and support the preservation of Cantonese dialects spoken by early Chinese Canadian settlers.
- **Commemorate locations:**
 - Identify, recognize, and interpret locations of significance to Chinese Canadian communities in Burnaby, including places of historical significance
 - Encourage public art that is representative of Chinese Canadian culture and history in new developments and public spaces.
 - Include Chinese Canadian names when naming or renaming streets.
- **History and reconciliation:**
 - Develop and share learning resources about the historic relationships between early Chinese Canadian settlers and Indigenous communities.
 - Create opportunities for Chinese Canadian settlers to engage in reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.
- **Representation and internal City training:**
 - Provide training to City employees on how to engage with cultural communities and new immigrants.

- Encourage membership in Burnaby's governing bodies that reflects the community's cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity.
- **Capacity building:**
 - Consider how the City can support and fund community organizations that serve Chinese Canadian community members.

Next Steps

The Advisory Group met in early September 2024 to review the themes and priority actions. The members recommended the following guidelines for shaping the City's actions to be consistent with the priorities identified through community engagement:

- **Recognizing** the work that local organizations have done in addressing anti-racism; providing translation services; celebrating Chinese culture and holidays; reducing systemic barriers;
- **Contextualizing** educational programming and public art, and taking programming outside of “traditional” spaces; and
- **Working with** local Chinese Canadian organizations, institutions, and community members to build capacity, support their continuing work in the community, and develop programming around the apology.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the community engagement and discussions with the advisory board, the BIPT Team recommends:

- The City continue to engage with community-based agencies and multi-partner tables such as Burnaby Intercultural Planning Table and Burnaby Together - Coalition Against Racism and Hate through the process of the apology and reconciliatory actions;
- Ensuring that the linguistic diversity of Burnaby's Chinese Canadian communities is reflected in all communications about the apology and reconciliation process, including in print and on the website;
- Collaborating with community agencies that serve Chinese Canadian communities in Burnaby to invite diverse groups to any meetings/consultations/events;
- Continue to engage the Advisory Group as the process unfolds for the announcement of the apology and reconciliation actions;
- Utilize this community engagement process as an exemplar for any future engagement with diverse racial and cultural communities in Burnaby - having a community advisory group to guide the process, hosting larger community dialogues, smaller focus groups and one-on-one storytelling sessions to create safer spaces for participants, all engagement in multiple languages including the posters/outreach for the engagement, partnering with community agencies that serve specific harder to reach groups such as seniors and youth; and
- Find ways to socialize the learnings from this project and the value of broad community-led and community-driven engagement for other processes that the City is undertaking.

Conclusion

Participants in the community engagement process were broadly enthusiastic and supportive of the City's proposed apology, reconciliation framework, and commitment to future actions. Participants felt that their voices were being heard throughout the engagement outreach, and that the City was making a good faith effort to take their feedback into consideration. Moving forward, participants expressed the desire to continue engaging with the City on this work. Support for ongoing actions to reconcile with Burnaby's Chinese Canadian communities as well as future reconciliation and anti-racism work was expressed.