

From: **"Mochrie, Paul"** <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>

To: **"Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"**

Date: 7/8/2022 5:08:38 PM

Subject: **Council Memo - Punjabi Market Update - RTS 13413**

Attachments: **Memo to Mayor & Council - Punjabi Market Update - Next Steps - RTS 13413.pdf**

Dear Mayor and Council,

The attached memo from Theresa O'Donnell (PDS), Margaret Wittgens (Eng) and Sandra Singh (ACCS) provides an update on Punjabi Market. In particular, the memo:

- ☐ Shares information requested in the June 19, 2019 Council motion entitled **Punjabi Market at Fifty: Celebrating the Past and Planning for the Future** (RTS 13413) ;
- ☐ Provides a recap of recent work (2019-2022) undertaken in the Punjabi Market area by PDS, ENG and ACCS (RTS 14778);
- ☐ Outlines next steps related to work in Punjabi Market, in particular public realm activities, work to support area businesses (commercial area capacity building) (RTS 11638), and further work to celebrate the historical, cultural, and economic importance of this area (RTS 15128); and,
- ☐ Details connections to the interim report on the Historic Discrimination against People of South Asian Canadian Descent (July 5).

Should you have any questions, please contact any of the following:

Theresa O'Donnell (Theresa.o'donnell@vancouver.ca)

Margaret Wittgens (Margaret.wittgens@vancouver.ca)

Sandra Singh (Sandra.singh@vancouver.ca)

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
City Manager
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

July 7, 2022

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Maria Pontikis, Director, Civic Engagement and Communications
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office

FROM: Theresa O'Donnell, General Manager, Planning, Urban Design, & Sustainability
Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services
Margaret Wittgens, Deputy General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Punjabi Market - Celebrating the Past, Envisioning the Future – Update & Next Steps

RTS #: 13413

The following memo provides an overview of the City's recent work in Punjabi Market, undertaken in response to Council motions in 2016, 2019, and 2022, and provides an overview of anticipated next steps that support community-led efforts to revitalize the Market.

Following a series of engagement activities, analysis and subsequent discussions with the Punjabi Market Collective, staff will be undertaking the following additional activities throughout the remainder of 2022:

- Public realm and lighting improvements
- Commercial area capacity building / local economic development support

The estimated costs of \$285,000 will be funded through the existing 2022 Engineering Services budget (\$150,000), and 2022 PDS operating budget (\$135,000).

In addition, staff will be working to assess further potential activities in Punjabi Market in light of anticipated Vancouver Plan implementation work.

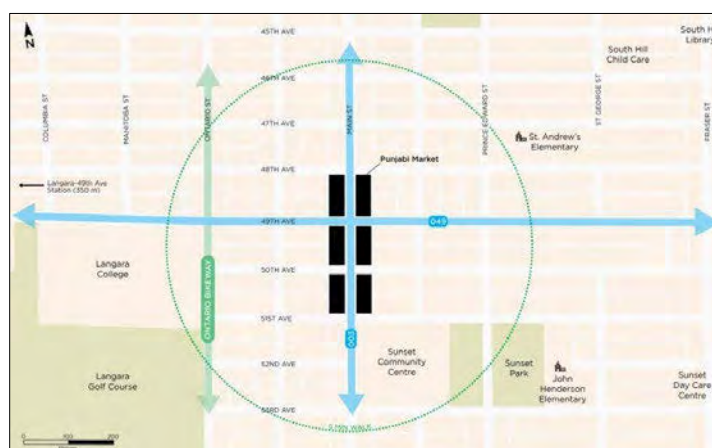
This memo provides background information outlining the rationale behind these next steps, and includes a number of shorter appendices that respond to specific requests for information identified in the Council motions, including:

- Work to date, including initial public realm assessments, retail analysis, and review of the Sunset Community Vision;
- Key learnings from the 2019-20 public engagement work with the community;
- Key public-realm “quick win” interventions delivered since 2020; and,
- Proposed next steps to support the regeneration of Punjabi Market, as requested in the 2019 Council motion.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

For over half a century, Punjabi Market (“the Market”) has represented an important cultural and commercial hub for Vancouver’s South Asian communities. In recent years, there have been a number of questions raised about the future of the Market and concerns about the long-term health of this area. The contents of the present memo, developed through close collaboration between City departments and members of the community, provides an overview of key issues and opportunities, including anticipated next steps to support the Market into the future.

The Sunset Community Vision defines Punjabi Market as a three-block commercial area located on Main Street between E 48th Avenue and E 51st Avenue.¹ It is located in the NW corner of the Sunset Local Area close to a number of amenities, including Sunset Park and Community Centre, and Langara College. It currently includes about 75-80 storefront businesses (115,000 sf of retail space), with some additional upper-floor offices and residential uses. The area is on two bus routes and is approximately a 1km distance from Langara/49th Canada Line Station.



Map 1: Punjabi Market (Sunset Community Vision)

The first Punjabi business in the area opened its doors in May 1970, and one year later there were a trio of shops. From there, the Market grew steadily to being an epicenter for South Asian business, social and cultural life in both the city and region, providing an array of goods and services, including clothing and fabrics, jewellery, foods, and other items. An overview of Market history can be found in Appendix E.

¹ While the policy-defined boundaries of Punjabi Market are comprised of the three blocks fronting Main Street, engagement in 2019-20 revealed that many community members feel that the geography of the Market extends beyond this area – with participants identifying areas either to the south, or north, or east of the commercial area, as being ‘part of the Market.’

In April 2016, following the rezoning of 6505, 6507, and 6541 Main Street, a Council motion directed staff to “*examine Chapter 23 (“Main Street Shopping Area/Punjabi Market”) of the Sunset Community Vision and research whether updates are required, and any subsequent consultations as required will be reported back to Council for consideration.*”²

Following this direction, a variety of studies and related activities were undertaken between 2016-2019. The key findings and directions include:

- Changing regional and local demographics, including the expansion of South Asian economic centres in other parts of Metro Vancouver, suggest a the need to reassess the role of Punjabi Market in terms of local-serving and destination retail.
- Existing policy for the commercial area (found in the Sunset Community Vision³) needs to be updated, a process that is expected to be supported by Vancouver Plan policy guidance for neighbourhood retail streets.
- Retail vacancy rates are improving, but are higher than ideal. Despite its strengths and history, the retail environment in the Market is challenged by a number of factors, including: an insufficient local population; a retail mix that is “insufficient to create a draw for locals, visitors, or tourists as similar retailers and products can be found elsewhere”; and, competition for local serving retail and services from other commercial areas.
- There are opportunities to explore changes to retail/service mix in order to include more daily/weekly needs (e.g. groceries, pharmacies), family-friendly products/services, medical services, food-related businesses, and products/services aimed at nearby residents and students (e.g. economical food, pubs).⁴ It is important to note that changes to retail mix could have implications for the Market. These implications would need to be explored in more detail, and included in future community and stakeholder engagement activities.

2019 COUNCIL MOTION AND SUBSEQUENT ACTIVITIES

In June 2019, City Council passed a second motion regarding Punjabi Market. This motion had a more specific focus on the then-pending 50th Anniversary (May 31, 2020) and directed staff to:

1. Identify public realm opportunities and other “quick wins” that could be delivered in advance of the 50th anniversary;
2. Create a collaborative community process to imagine the future of the Market;
3. Work with the Park Board, School Board, provincial and federal governments, and local First Nations to advance opportunities in the Market; and,
4. Apply a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens to this work.

To respond to this motion, staff created an interdepartmental working group and undertook a number of subsequent activities:

- Ongoing engagement and dialogue with the Punjabi Market Collective (PMC);
- Broad stakeholder engagement with Langara College, South Asian Arts & Culture Organizations, and the City’s Racial and Ethnocultural Advisory Committee, and others (on-going);
- Exploration of public realm, merchant supports, and other revitalization ideas with business owners and the community at large (Fall 2019);

² The full motion can be found in Appendix A. Subsequent Council motions from 2019 and 2022 can be found in Appendices B, C, and D.

³ An overview of Sunset Community Vision policies for Punjabi Market can be found in Appendix G.

⁴ An overview of the Punjabi Market Retail Study can be found in Appendix H.

- Testing proposed actions and next steps with Punjabi Market community members and business owners (January 2020);
- 50th Anniversary activities (May 2020);
- Public Realm quick wins (2020-2022); and,
- (Re)Engagement through COVID.

A more detailed timeline of these activities can be found in Appendix I, along with summaries of engagement activities (Appendices J-L), and a snapshot of public realm “quick win” interventions (Appendix M). In summary:

- **Stakeholder Engagement** – Staff have met regularly with the Punjabi Market Collective (PMC), a local organization spearheading a variety of initiatives related to the renewal of the Market.⁵ Staff have also held a number of internal and external stakeholder meetings with local community organizations, City Advisory Committees, and different levels of government.
- **Community Consultations** – In 2019 and 2020, a series of information and engagement sessions were held. Local residents and supporters of the Market provided input into potential strategies to revitalize the area. Both stakeholder and community consultation processes found strong support for proposed next steps outlined in this report.
- **Public Realm “Quick Wins”** – While COVID delayed the anticipated report-back to Council, the City was able to undertake and support a series of public realm interventions in the Market through existing programs. This included the installation of street furniture, landscaping improvements, and several public space initiatives (in collaboration with the PMC).

In addition to the aforementioned activities, the City is concurrently working to address its historic and ongoing role in perpetuating inequities and racism against South Asian community members. In 2019, Council approved the *Historical Discrimination against People of South Asian Descent* Motion. While this work is focused on the broader concerns of South Asian communities in Vancouver, recommendations related to the cultural and historic significance of Punjabi Market have also arisen through this process. This week, Council received a separate report, detailing the interim recommendations associated with this broader initiative. Actions identified in the report are aligned with those presented in this memo. .

STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

In responding to the various directions outlined in the approved Council motions, staff have identified a number of inter-related challenges and opportunities for the Market:

1. **The importance of Punjabi Market as a focal point for cultural redress** – Punjabi Market is a significant part of a broader City commitment to acknowledge and seek ways to redress past and ongoing discrimination against various Vancouver communities. As noted, a recent interim report on the Historical Discrimination against People of South Asian Descent has provided an update on discussions related to a potential apology and outlined next steps for actions for cultural redress, including specific recommendations related to Punjabi Market.

⁵ The Punjabi Market Collective (PMC), is a volunteer-based organization and registered non-profit formed in 2019 and comprised of community members, supporters, and local entrepreneurs. See: punjabimarket.ca.

2. **The importance of clarifying the role of Punjabi Market in terms of destination and local-serving retail functions** – The Market has diminished in its relative importance as a key cultural destination for South Asian communities due to the rise of other destinations in the region. Future work will have to explore what the options for the Market are and what role the City can play in helping the community achieve its goals. This effort to clarify local/destination functions reflects a similar need to create a vision for the future that *also* honours the Market’s important historical role as part of the city’s heritage.
3. **Limited business-to-business communications and capacity** – Creating a business-focused entity/organization or other mechanism(s) to support the implementation of a vision for the area was identified (through both engagement activity and retail study) as a necessary step for the Market to improve its economic and cultural resilience.
4. **An opportunity to refresh the Market’s public realm** – Many of the current ‘quick win’ improvements were supported through existing City programs, but relied on PMC and community fundraising and volunteer efforts. Some public realm improvements in the Market will require more substantial investment from the City. In particular, priority investments in creative and cultural lighting to support better public life and increase the appeal of the Market as a destination have been identified as early actions.
5. **The potential for a more comprehensive approach to the Punjabi Market area** – As noted elsewhere, there are several issues that go beyond the scope of the Council motions that are central to the future economic and cultural health of Punjabi Market. The surrounding low-density land use and its impact on foot traffic, transportation concerns (including pedestrian realm, transit access, access for older visitors), economic development and cultural heritage matters, all suggest that a broader area planning effort could be considered as one option for future work in the Market. While economic activity would increase as the result of more residents living in the adjacent neighbourhood, the impact on the South Asian businesses and whether the new residents would generate demand for new businesses that displace existing businesses, remains unclear. Resources for such work will also need to be assessed at a later date, and in light of future steps with the Vancouver Plan, which will be brought forward for Council consideration in July 2022.

FORTHCOMING ACTIONS

Based on the aforementioned considerations, staff propose to advance three key actions. The first two focus on placemaking, community economic development and capacity building:

- I. Strengthen a sense of place through placemaking, revitalized identity, and public realm opportunities; and,
- II. Support local economic development and small-business capacity building.

The third involves the exploration of further planning, aligned with the Interim Report on the Historical Discrimination against People of South Asian Canadian Descent, and subject to Vancouver Plan adoption and staff resources:

- III. Explore the steps and resources that would be needed for future area planning work, which could include formally recognizing Punjabi Market as a historically and culturally significant area.

The following provides a brief summary of each action.

I. Strengthen a Sense of Place: Placemaking, Identity, and Public Realm Opportunities

Recent discussions with the PMC have resulted in a ranking of community priorities related to public realm opportunities:

- i. **Lighting**, including creative lighting and improved street lighting;
- ii. **Public Gathering**, including a potential future plaza or parklet;
- iii. **Placemaking**, including additional initiatives such as murals, art installations, seating areas, etc.;
- iv. **Crossings**, including a creative crosswalk; and
- v. **Sanitation**, including improved public realm cleanliness.

Staff will continue to work with the PMC to advance additional improvements in these areas. Some of the improvements will be advanced through existing City programs; for example, staff are able to prioritize this area to test out a temporary pop up plaza or parklet. In addition, the Market is included in the city-wide LED roll-out Program, Signal Program, and Street Cleaning Grant Program which results in additional cleaning services for the Market. Placemaking initiatives can also be supported by existing City grant programs in both Arts & Culture and Street Activities (in Engineering Services).

To help advance the community and PMC's top priority, Engineering Services will allocate \$150,000 of existing placemaking capital budget to develop a creative and cultural lighting vision for the area. This work will be undertaken with the support of a lighting consultant, and in collaboration with PMC. This initial capital funding investment will likely cover a first phase of implementation, but a lighting vision for Punjabi Market will likely also require external or other City funding to contribute to ongoing operations or further capital investments.

II. Support local economic development, small-businesses, and community stakeholders with capacity-building work

A variety of opportunities for improved business/property owner/community connections and strategic planning have been identified through the present process and supported through previous studies. The following actions are intended to help strengthen these connections, while also providing the supports necessary for the development of a vision for the future of the Market. This work would:

- i. Support improved business-to-business collaboration, capacity building, and organizational development for businesses in the Market.
- ii. Create a clear strategy that articulates the goals and roles of Punjabi Market in terms of local and regional (or destination) customers, the supporting research that will determine the best mix of retail, services and supports to achieve this, and other strategic directions to support the Market.
- iii. Support the development of implementation tools, such as leasing strategies, marketing programs, and other local economic development supports.

Based on these goals, staff are proposing to allocate \$135,000 from the 2022 PDS operating budget to retain consultant support for this capacity building process, anticipated to involve three stages of activity.

III. Explore Further Planning Work in Punjabi Market and Area - *Future Work Item*

The draft Vancouver Plan is anticipated to be in front of Council in July 2022, and contains a number of relevant policies for the area, including provisions to recognize and secure the economic, social and cultural aspects of “Special Market Areas.”⁶ Subject to Council approval, and as part of a broader effort around implementing the Plan, staff will explore the potential for further planning work in and around Punjabi Market. It is important to stress that this work will need to be aligned with the overall implementation effort, and will need to be assessed in light of a broad array of priorities.

This work will be further guided by the recommendations contained in the interim report on Historical Discrimination against People of South Asian Canadian Descent (July 2022), which directs staff to explore “the steps and resources that might be needed to formally recognize Punjabi Market as a historically and culturally significant area.”⁷

With these caveats in mind, based on staff work to date, scoping of future area planning work could explore a number of topics:

- The appropriateness of a community plan as a tool to address the economic challenges of maintaining cultural heritage businesses in a changing neighbourhood and regional context;
- A culturally appropriate public engagement process;
- An appropriate planning geography;
- A process to identify areas of cultural significance (including tangible and intangible assets);
- Precedents and best practices related to the potential designation of Punjabi Market as a historically and culturally significant area;
- Relevant planning topics, including: land use, housing, transportation, public realm, local economic development, and other elements of complete neighbourhoods; and
- Additional opportunities to support cultural redress.

CONCLUSION

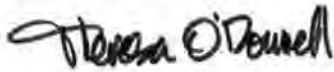
Punjabi Market continues to play an important role as a cultural and commercial “hub” for South Asian community members in the city and region. However, the Market has faced challenges over the past two decades, including demographic changes. Staff analysis, supported by both consultant research and community engagement, has identified a number of opportunities that are intended to strengthen the commercial viability of businesses in the area. These include public realm interventions, support for local capacity building, and the potential for future area planning guided by the policies in the Vancouver Plan, should it be adopted by Council.

Forthcoming actions outlined herein comprise an important next step in responding to Council direction and will support the objective of “a collaborative community process to imagine the future of the market.”

⁶ See Vancouver Plan draft policy 2.6.2 <https://vancouverplan.ca/economy/>

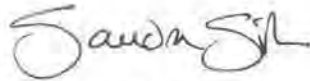
⁷ See Council Report, RTS 13368 – anticipated to be presented to Council on July 5, 2022. Link: <https://council.vancouver.ca/20220705/documents/r1.pdf>

Should you require further information on the contents of this memo, please contact Andrew Pask, Senior Planner, via andrew.pask@vancouver.ca



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION / APPENDICES:

- A – Council Motion - May 3, 2016 - Punjabi Market and Examining Sunset Community Vision for Updates
- B – Council Motion - June 19, 2019 - Punjabi Market at Fifty: Celebrating the Past and Planning for the Future
- C – Council Motion - July 23, 2019 - Historical Discrimination Against People of South Asian Descent in Vancouver
- D – Council Motion – March 29, 2022 - Placekeeping: Protecting and Supporting Cultural Food Assets and Other Forms of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Vancouver
- E – A Short History of the Punjabi Market Area
- F – Demographic Snapshot – Factors Affecting Punjabi Market
- G – Summary table – Sunset Community Vision – Punjabi Market Policies
- H – Summary of 2017-8 Retail Study of Punjabi Market
- I – Timeline of City Activities in Punjabi Market (2019-2022)
- J - Engagement Summary – October 2019 – Merchant Drop-In Activities
- K – Engagement Summary – October 2019 – Community Events
- L – Engagement Summary – January 2020 – Community Events
- M – List of Public Realm “Quick Win” Activities (2020-2022)

Punjabi Market and Examining Sunset Community Vision for Updates

Council Motion: May 3, 2016

WHEREAS

1. The consultation process for rezoning 6505, 6507, and 6541 Main Street, Has generated conversations on the historic resonance, present day importance, and lasting legacy of Vancouver's Punjabi Market;
 2. From consultation feedback, significant public interest was expressed regarding the commercial vibrancy of the Punjabi Market shopping area including beautification, cultural spaces, business diversity, and community engagement;
 3. Much of this information falls outside the scope of the rezoning application yet remains integral to the sustainability of the area;
 4. This valuable information needs to be collected from diverse stakeholders including community elders, business leaders, students, newly emerging ethnic communities, and current homeowners;
1. A robust plan needs to be in place to preserve and sustain Punjabi Market for future generations;
 2. The current policy for the Punjabi Market was written in 1998 as part of the Sunset Community Vision (Chapter 23).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT staff examine Chapter 23 ("Main Street Shopping Area/Punjabi Market") of the Sunset Community Vision and research whether updates are required, and any subsequent consultations as required will be reported back to Council for consideration.

Punjabi Market at Fifty: Celebrating the Past and Planning for the Future

Council Motion: June 19, 2019

WHEREAS

1. The first wave of South Asian immigration to Vancouver occurred in 1904. Despite many historic injustices and institutionalized racism, in 1947 South Asians were given the right to vote and become Canadian citizens.
2. The South Asian community in Vancouver is diverse in terms of its religions, ethnicities, identities and languages; and is growing. The South Asian community is the second largest visible minority group in the City and (according to Stats Canada and Census data) will make up the largest visible minority group in Canada within the next two decades.
3. The Punjabi Market is a 3-block commercial district along Main Street between 48th and 51st Avenues that has been a destination for South Asian culture and commerce since Sucha Singh Claire opened a sari and fabric shop in the area on May 31, 1970.
4. The Punjabi Market, also known as Little India was the first and largest South Asian Market outside of South Asia and has historically included several Indian restaurants, sweet shops, jewelry stores, clothing stores, grocers, as well as other businesses catering to the South Asian community, local neighbourhood and tourists.
5. Vancouver was home to the first and largest Vaisakhi celebration outside of Punjab, traveling between Ross Street Temple and Punjabi Market, at its height, there were over 300 shops in the area. Punjabi Market was the first place in the world (outside of South Asia) to have Punjabi on street signs.
6. In recent years, the Punjabi Market has been struggling, and new construction and residential development has the potential to transform the area. Community concerns with regard to public realm, street level retail, and built form called for more comprehensive and collaborative planning for the future of Punjabi Market.
7. In 2016, responding to community concerns, Vancouver City Council directed staff to examine Chapter 23 of the Sunset Community Vision – “Main Street Shopping Area/Punjabi Market” and noted “a robust plan needs to be in place to preserve and sustain Punjabi Market for future generations.”
8. In 2017 the City commissioned *Retail Business Study of the Punjabi Market Area of Vancouver* (LOCO BC, Masala) which was delivered in March 2018.
9. In April 2018, staff proposed an Area Management Plan that would include the creation of an area Statement of Significance (including heritage values and key character defining elements) along with a local working group and strategies and actions for regeneration of Punjabi Market.

10. In November 2018, Vancouver City Council directed staff to expedite the development of a City-wide planning process, that would help to determine the shape of our neighbourhoods, guided by inclusion, heritage, and enjoyable well-designed gathering places, among other things.
11. The health and vitality of Vancouver's communities is one of the reasons the city is considered one of the best places on earth to live. City staff routinely advise Council on policies, strategies, and initiatives that meet the needs of Vancouver's multicultural and diverse communities.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT

- A. THAT Council affirms that the Punjabi Market shopping area is an area with historic significance and present day importance.
- B. THAT the Mayor determine May 31, 2020, and the occasion of its 50th Anniversary as "Punjabi Market Day".
- C. THAT Council direct staff to review work to date, including the *Sunset Community Vision*, *Retail Business Study of the Punjabi Market Area of Vancouver*, and work to date on the Area Management Plan and report back by Q4 2019.
- D. THAT Council direct staff including Engineering, Arts Culture and Community Services, and Planning to consult with community, including the Khalsa Diwan Society and the Punjabi Market Association and identify quick-wins along with necessary budget, resources and potential partnerships to deploy in advance of the occasion of the 50th Anniversary, including but not limited to public realm improvements, and report back by Q4 2019.
- E. THAT Council direct staff to report back by Q4 2019, with budget and resources for the creation of a collaborative and participatory community process on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Punjabi Market and as part of the City-wide planning process: to imagine the future of the Punjabi Market.
- F. THAT Council direct staff to work with other governance bodies to support the advancement and opportunities in the Punjabi Market. This includes working with the Vancouver Park Board, Vancouver School Board, provincial and federal governments, along with the nations' lands on which we reside and work, (upon which the Punjabi Market is situated), including the, xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and the Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh).
- G. THAT Council direct staff to apply a diversity, equity and inclusion lens in undertaking the aforementioned work, considering issues of safety generally, but also specifically for ethno-cultural communities, indigenous people, women and the LGBTQ2S+ community, as well as accessibility for people with disabilities.

Historical Discrimination Against People of South Asian Descent in Vancouver

Council Motion: July 23, 2019

WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver strives to be an advocate for racial and cultural equity;
2. The history of Vancouver includes discrimination against people of South Asian Descent;
3. The City of Vancouver has an obligation to facilitate and promote cultural, emotional and material redress for historic wrongdoing;
4. The South Asian community in Vancouver is diverse in terms of its religions, ethnicities, identities and languages; and is growing. The South Asian community is the second largest visible minority group in the City and is projected to make up the largest visible minority group in Canada within the next two decades;
5. The first wave of South Asian immigration to Vancouver occurred in the 1890s. In 1907, all people from India not of Anglo-Saxon parentage were denied the right to vote in BC and later, throughout Canada, despite citizens of India being British subjects;
6. An amendment to the B.C. Elections Act was made to have South Asians added to other “Asian undesirables.” This meant South Asians were denied municipal and provincial contracts. They were denied professions in education, law, and pharmacy. They could not own property in Vancouver. They experienced racial stereotyping and physical abuse. They were denied their rights to cultural and religious expression, including being unable to attend a public cinema while wearing traditional headdresses⁸;
7. Despite many historic and ongoing injustices and the continuing impacts of institutionalized racism, in 1947, South Asians were given the right to vote federally and provincially and were eligible to apply for Canadian citizenship. In 1948, South Asians were given the right to vote in municipal elections;
8. In May, 2016, the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada formally apologized in the House of Commons for the Canadian government’s action in denying the Komagata Maru from docking on the shores of Canada in 1914. The ship carried 376 passengers of Sikh, Muslim, and Hindu faith who were seeking a better life in Canada. The Prime Minister also formally apologized for the subsequent exclusion of immigration of people of South Asian descent;
9. In May, 2008, the British Columbia Legislature offered an official apology for the treatment of South Asian passengers aboard the Komagata Maru after they were denied entry to Canada in 1914;

⁸ Henry, Frances & Carol Tator. *The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society*. 3rd ed. Toronto: Nelson Publishers, 2006. 71-73.

10. In April, 2018, the City of Vancouver officially apologized for the City's role in institutionalizing racism against citizens of Chinese descent and offered a recommendation report on how to move forward from these wrongdoings. The apology acknowledged the wrongdoings of past legislation, regulations, and policies of previous Vancouver City Councils;
- 11. In May 2019, Vancouver's current City Council passed the motion, Punjabi Market at Fifty: Celebrating the Past and Planning for the Future, which affirmed that the Punjabi Market shopping area is an area with historical significance and present day importance;**
12. In March 2019, Vancouver's current City Council showed its support for naming a civic asset in the Downtown near the Burrard Inlet after the Komogata Maru;
13. The City's apology and the implementation of the recommendations of the CoV report "Preliminary Research on Historical Discrimination Against Chinese People in Vancouver", is resulting in positive, inclusionary societal changes in the City of Vancouver;
14. The South Asian community, as targets of historic and ongoing discrimination and institutionalized racism, would value an initiative similar to which was offered to Vancouver's Chinese community;
15. Such an initiative would benefit the City of Vancouver by encouraging diverse, safe, healthy and respectful communities;
16. Vancouver City Council is considering launching a City Wide Planning Process, where prior, City Council has expressed key goals and objectives to guide a city-wide planning effort, which includes:
 - a. Maintaining Vancouver as a diverse and inclusive community;
 - b. Enhancing social well-being;
17. In June 2019, Vancouver City Council voted unanimously in favour of supporting efforts to revitalize Vancouver's Punjabi Market district (North America's oldest South Asian market). Moving towards reconciliation and a public apology to the South Asian community would promote and celebrate the inclusion, belonging and resiliency of the South Asian community.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to develop a report on historical discrimination against the South Asian community in Vancouver. In doing so staff should:

- i. Engage directly and work collaboratively with the South Asian Community in Vancouver, including but not limited to academics, historians, artists, Regular Council Meeting Minutes, July 23, 2019 48 professionals, business and community leaders, and community organizations;
- ii. Provide a summary of laws, regulations and policies of previous Vancouver City Councils that discriminated against the people of South Asian descent in the City of Vancouver from the late 1890s to the present;

- iii. Report back to Council with recommendations on steps and actions in support of reconciliation, including changes to resources and policies to acknowledge any of these wrongdoings, and also including plans for a public acknowledgement and formal apology to the South Asian community;
- iv. Prepare a proposed scope of work, budget, and timeline in Fall 2019 to ensure consideration in the 2020 budget process;
- v. Include recommended actions City Council could take or announce in tandem with the 50th anniversary of Vancouver's Punjabi Market on May 31, 2020;**

FURTHER THAT Council directs staff to connect this work to the development and implementation of the City-wide Plan.

Placekeeping: Protecting and Supporting Cultural Food Assets and Other Forms of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Vancouver

Council Motion: March 29, 2022

WHEREAS

1. Vancouverites continue to express concern about the loss of places of intangible cultural heritage, including beloved small businesses, restaurants and other cultural food assets. The threat of loss of these spaces is particularly acute for migrant and newcomer communities, and other equity-denied groups, because of the role that small local businesses play as an economic driver and the role that food plays in connections to culture, community and identity;
2. Intangible cultural heritage refers to the forms of culture that are important to groups of people, and are embedded in everyday life (for example Filipino/Pilipino food culture). Cultural food assets are a significant example of intangible cultural heritage, where intangible cultural heritage can be accessed, experienced and transmitted. Cultural food assets include many small businesses such as green grocers, restaurants, food courts, and venues or services which are significant to a community or neighbourhood. These spaces look and function in unique ways within different communities and may require different approaches to protection and promotion;
3. Long-standing Vancouver housing policy has limited new rental and multi-family housing to arterials, putting added speculative and development pressure on commercial stretches including many culturally significant small and local businesses and cultural food assets, representing a significant risk to the intangible cultural heritage of many of Vancouver's neighborhoods. Planner and past Vancouver Councillor Gordon Price refers to this intentional political and policy choice as the "Grand Bargain." Additionally, new ground floor commercial spaces tend to have larger floor plates that are less economically viable for many small, locally-owned businesses;
4. In recent decades the majority of new rental and multi-family housing has been built in low- and middle-income neighbourhoods, and neighbourhoods with a higher percentage of racialized and immigrant residents. These neighbourhoods are home to many small businesses significant to equity-denied communities, resulting in greater risk of displacement due to redevelopment;
5. COVID-19 continues to create significant financial pressure on small businesses, and existing inequalities have been exacerbated by the pandemic, creating additional pressure on small businesses, culturally focused non-profits, or food assets critical to a neighbourhood or a community's culture. Vancouver City Council and small business leaders have been calling for Split Assessment taxation as one tool to relieve pressure on small local businesses;
6. The COVID-19 pandemic has also uncovered systemic food insecurity within racialized and equity-seeking communities most impacted by unemployment, precarious or unsafe work. And has resulted in delays in a number of city programs, including continued work on increasing the financial accessibility and availability of food access and an update to the Vancouver Food

Strategy Report. In many neighbourhoods local food networks or non-profit organizations have stepped in to fill these gaps;

7. Grassroots community mobilization in a variety of Vancouver neighbourhoods have spearheaded the protection and revitalization of cultural food assets, and have been calling on the City of Vancouver to act to protect culturally significant food assets across the city:
 - a) Organizations such as hua foundation, Chinatown Concern Group, the City of Vancouver's Chinatown Legacy Stewardship Group, Youth Collaborative for Chinatown, and Yarrow Intergenerational Society for Justice have been supporting heritage business retention, intergenerational community building and affordability advocacy in Chinatown.
 - b) The Punjabi Market Collective is a group of passionate advocates, artists, students and entrepreneurs who are working towards revitalizing Vancouver's historic Punjabi Market by beautifying the market, developing and promoting businesses and creating a hub for arts and culture.**
 - c) The Joyce St Action Network is a group of Filipino/Pilipino and Chinese community organizers who have been working to support the retention of six Chinese, Korean and Filipino/Pilipino cultural food assets currently at risk of displacement near Joyce Station.
 - d) The Hogans Alley Society and Black and African diaspora residents have been working for cultural redress for the black community in North East False Creek, recognizing the historic displacement of the black community, including black agriculture and businesses. The Nora Hendrix TMH includes a culturally rooted food and herb garden for residents and the community.
8. The work of Vancouver's Taskforce on Implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), composed of elected officials from Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil Waututh Nations and the City of Vancouver, and engagement with Urban Indigenous communities is framed around four themes including "Social, Cultural and Economic Well-Being". The relationships between land, culture and heritage are an important part of this discussion, related to multiple articles of UNDRIP;
9. In March 2020, Vancouver City Council approved the Heritage Action Plan - Vancouver Heritage Program, which included a commitment to better integrate Truth & Reconciliation, Cultural Redress, and Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage;
10. In 2019, Council approved Culture|Shift: Blanketing the City in Arts and Culture, which included directions to prioritize intangible cultural heritage and promote cultural redress and to prevent displacement and support affordable, accessible, secure arts and culture spaces. Cultural Services is working with the Heritage Group on incorporating intangible heritage into Vancouver Heritage Register;
11. The City of Vancouver has a number of other important initiatives completed or underway that intersect with cultural food assets and intangible cultural heritage, including: The Chinatown Legacy Business Study; Spaces to Thrive: Vancouver's Social Infrastructure Strategy; a Chinatown

Cultural Heritage Asset Management Plan led by the Chinatown Transformation Team; the Downtown Eastside Special Enterprise Pilot Program, a Commercial Tenant Assistance Program through the Employment Lands and Economy Review; cultural redress within the North False Creek Plan, including supporting work of both the Black community and Chinatown community-led efforts around land trusts;

12. Municipal level policies and protections in other cities provide examples that Vancouver should explore for protecting cultural food assets and other forms of intangible cultural heritage:
 - a) Integrating tangible and intangible cultural heritage into Heritage Protection processes. This should begin with community-led identification of places or assets of community value, and tools for both protecting and/or promoting those places. Community groups should be appropriately resourced to do this work. Intangible heritage tools include the co-development of intangible cultural heritage criteria, an intangible cultural heritage registry, promotion of identified places, funding and business supports, and more. Similar approaches exist in London's recent Grassroots Music Venues Rescue Plan, and the advocacy and forward thinking which resulted in the protection of Toronto's historic Silver Dollar Room.
 - b) Developing protections for cultural food assets, assets of community value and other forms of intangible cultural heritage within the redevelopment process. This could include requiring new developments to demonstrate adequate community consultation and show a plan for preserving existing cultural food assets and other forms of intangible cultural heritage. Examples include San Francisco's Formula Business (chain store) restrictions which require Conditional Use authorization for all formula (chain) retail establishments within all Neighbourhood Commercial Districts or the Agent of Change Principle as seen within the Australian, Music Victoria 2014 Position Paper.
 - c) The development of Municipal Cultural Districts or Zones (that could include a Land Trust model). This would require working with community partners to identify eligibility criteria for determining what qualifies as a cultural district, as well as the particular needs for each district and the appropriate mechanisms necessary for the protection and promotion of intangible cultural heritage assets. Or could take a City-wide approach that could be adapted for different contexts and communities. Examples of this approach include the Bloor St. Culture Corridor in Toronto, Mississauga's Cultural Districts Implementation Plan, and San Francisco's Cultural Districts, as well as conversations already underway in Vancouver's Chinatown.
13. Intangible cultural heritage is traditional, contemporary and constantly adapting. Due to challenges in defining which food assets are considered culturally significant, the process and the mechanisms by which these assets are defined and supported should be community-led and resourced appropriately; and
14. The vibrancy of Vancouver neighbourhoods is created by the diverse communities who live and work here, and the small local businesses and intangible cultural heritage that have shaped and enriched them over time. As the city continues to change and grow, policies need to be in place

to protect these spaces, and ensure that Vancouver remains culturally diverse and welcoming to the many communities that call it home.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to explore and report back with recommendations on policy changes within City of Vancouver jurisdiction for protecting and promoting cultural food assets and other forms of intangible cultural heritage across Vancouver; 2 Policy basis for formula businesses (chain stores) in San Francisco.

FURTHER THAT this be cross-departmental work between Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability (PDS) and Arts, Culture, and Community Services (ACCS), building on existing city efforts, with the city's Equity Framework as a lens for where this work should be prioritized;

AND FURTHER THAT it consider policy approaches such as:

- i. Updating Vancouver's heritage protection processes to better account for protecting cultural food assets and other forms of intangible cultural heritage.
 - ii. Developing protections for cultural food assets and other forms of intangible cultural heritage within the redevelopment process.
 - iii. Developing mechanisms for identifying and protecting significant cultural assets through cultural zones or districts, cultural land trusts, or a special cultural program that is accessible city-wide.
- B. THAT Council directs staff to apply the city's Equity Framework to other food policy related work, including the promotion of cultural assets within the city's urban agriculture, small business incubation, and farmers market and community food markets strategies.
- C. THAT Council directs staff to work alongside relevant community organizations, specifically working with underserved and equity-denied groups, to do research and consultation regarding the implementation of an intangible cultural heritage protection and promotion strategy.

A Short History of Punjabi Market

Vancouver's First Nations, Indigenous Places

Vancouver is located on the traditional territories of three Coast Salish First Nations, the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh. While Punjabi Market was not settled on the site of a First Nations seasonal or permanent village, it is located relatively close to two Musqueam historic places along the Fraser River on today's East Kent Avenue South between Main and Fraser Street.

Settler History

The area currently occupied by Punjabi Market was platted in the early 20th Century as part of the municipality of South Vancouver, which had been incorporated as a municipality in 1892. For much of its early settler history, the Sunset Area saw an array of activities including timber extraction and farming. A street car line was established early in the 20th century, and throughout the 1930s and 1940s, the area's rural quality gradually transitioned into the present-day residential neighbourhood. This was intensified though successive waves of post-WWII (primarily European) immigration, and further enriched with the introduction of amenities such as Sunset Community Centre. At that time, residents and new arrivals were primarily of European descent.

For the purposes of this work, it is important to consider the nature and experience of European settler history in the Sunset neighbourhood within the parallel context of South Asian immigration to Vancouver, which began in the very early years of the 20th century and increased throughout the first decade. Unlike the social and political response to that many European immigrants received, the context of South Asian immigration was often quite different. For example, within a very few years following the arrival of the first South Asian newcomers (often dated to 1903), provincial and federal policy was enacted to restrict their rights and freedoms. This began with amendments to the *Vancouver Incorporation Act* in 1907 which removed the voting rights of South Asians and carried on through various head tax and immigration restrictions.

These were among the many instances where different levels of government introduced policies to exclude, marginalize or suppress the rights and mobility of non-European individuals and families. One of the most widely known expressions of these racist policies – as it pertains to the South Asian community – is found in 1914. This is the year that Komagata Maru, a ship carrying 376 emigres from the Punjab region, arrived in Vancouver, was refused moorage over the course of several weeks, and ultimately turned away. The structural racism inherent in the official policies and approaches of the colonial government was also often manifested in a variety of other forms of societal racism.

Thus, notwithstanding the many contributions of the South Asian community to the growth of the culture and industry of the city, province, and country, much of the early period of South Asian immigration existed under the shadow of racist and exclusionary policies, many of which remained in force throughout the first two thirds of the 20th century. As one example, the right to vote in federal elections was not returned to the South Asian community until 1947.

The Emergence of Punjabi Market

In the 1960s, Canadian immigration policies changed, and which lead to an influx of new arrivals from China, India, Korea, the Phillipines and Vietnam. The Sunset area, in particular, saw a number of new arrivals from the Punjab region who joined with other members of Vancouver's existing South Asian community in settling in this south Vancouver neighbourhood. Among these were the entrepreneurs who set up shop in the existing retail area along Main Street.

The first Punjabi business opened its doors in May 1970, and one year later there were a trio of shops. From there, the Market grew steadily to being an epicentre for South Asian business, social and cultural life in both the city and region.

At its peak in the 1990s, Punjabi Market is thought to have over 300 businesses operating⁹, and is thought to be one of the largest South Asian markets outside of South Asia. In 1993, the commercial area saw the introduction of distinctive bilingual "Punjabi Market" signs acknowledging and formalizing the area as the regional centre of Punjabi culture. In addition to its many shops and services, the Market has also hosted a number of cultural events in previous years, including the Vaisakhi Parade (held in April).

⁹ See: Dan Fumano. *North America's oldest Punjabi Market is fading. Is revival possible?* Vancouver Sun, June 19, 2019. <https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/dan-fumano-north-americas-oldest-punjabi-market-is-fading-is-revival-possible>.

Demographic Snapshot of Factors Affecting Punjabi Market

To understand the nature of demographic change in Punjabi Market and surrounding area, staff reviewed census data from the periods between 1986 and 2016¹⁰, covering the period both before and after the approval of the Sunset Community Vision (2002). A number of trends were identified – particularly in connection with respect to measures of ethnicity and cultural background. These offer some empirical support for the changes noted by community members in Punjabi Market. A few highlights are provided below.

Changing regional and local demographics. Over the last few decades a significantly greater number of South Asian residents and businesses have established themselves in Surrey, as well as other Metro Vancouver municipalities. Paralleling this regional shift, other economic centres have also emerged. Over the past decade, a growing number of South Asian businesses (including some originally located in Punjabi Market) have set up shop in and around 128th Street and 80th Avenue, in an area now referred to as Surrey’s “Little India.”

Chart 1. Top three South Asian Population Centres in Metro Vancouver, 2001-16¹¹

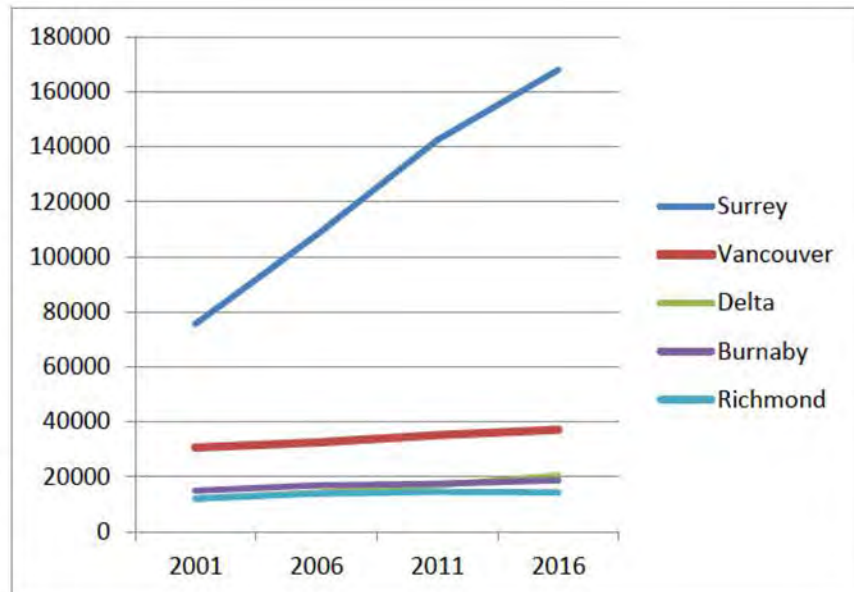
	2001 S. Asian Population	2016 S. Asian Population	% Change 2001-2016	South Asian residents as a proportion of total city population (2016)
Surrey	75,680	168,035	122%	33%
Vancouver	30,655	37,130	21%	6%
Delta	12,035	20,485	70%	20%

¹⁰ Four geographies of analysis were assessed – to understand local and larger-scale trends within South Asian-identifying communities and other residents. These were: (1) the region (GVRD municipalities); (2) Vancouver (city); (3) Sunset Local Area (and other local areas); and census tract (in particular CT 11 and CT12, which flank Punjabi Market (bounded by Cambie Street, Fraser Street, 41st Avenue and 57th Avenue). A key limitation to note, key ethno-cultural census categories have changed over time. For example “visible minority” is only gathered comprehensively starting in 1996. Punjabi, as a language, was first included in the census in 1986; Hindi was first included in 1996; Urdu in 2001. The charts contained in this section cover the longest period that each data set was available. Another limitation to note concerns the 2011 census and National Household Survey (which replaced the long-form census for that census period). Variations in methodology have led to Statistics Canada cautioning that the “differences can affect comparability between 2016 Census estimates and 2011 National Household Survey estimates for the visible minority and population group variables.” See: *Statistics Canada. Visible Minority and Population Group Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2016.* <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/guides/006/98-500-x2016006-eng.cfm>

¹¹ Source: “Visible Minority” populations, 2001 and 2016 Statistics Canada, Canadian Census.

Vancouver has the region's second-largest South Asian population (behind Surrey); however, substantial increases in the number of South Asian people living outside of Vancouver (notably in Surrey) have taken place over the last few decades.

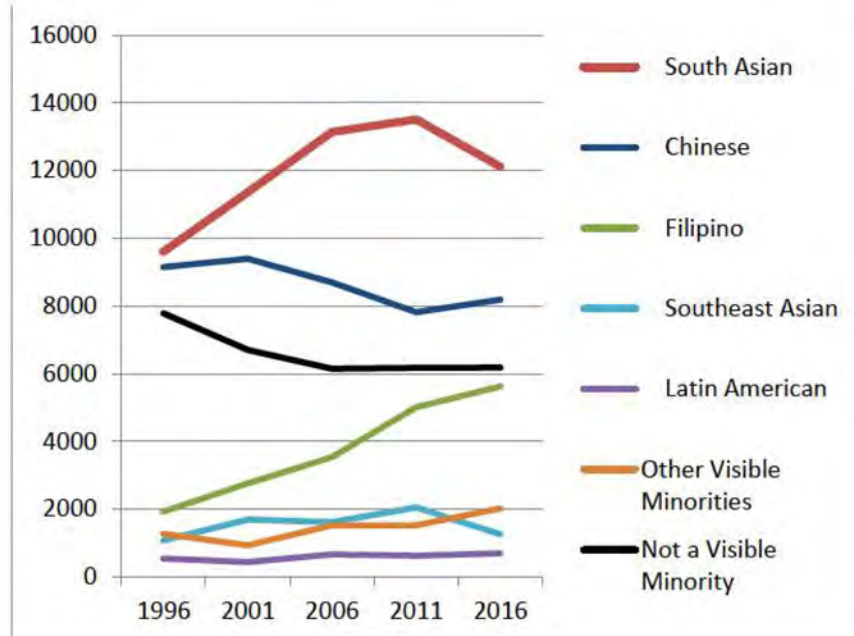
*Right:
Top 5 Metro Vancouver municipalities
by South Asian (visible minority)
population, 2001-2016*



The South Asian populations of Sunset remain the largest visible minority population in the local area; however, the most recent census showed a decline in these residents.

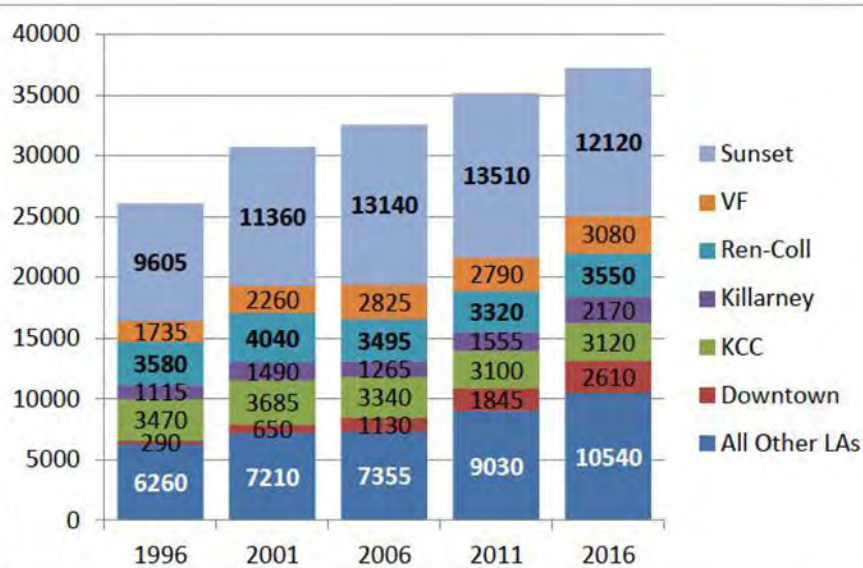
At the same time, the number of Chinese residents has increased between 2011-16 (following a decline between 2001-11). The number of Filipino residents has been increasing steadily between 1996-2016.

*Right:
Sunset Local Area, South Asian (visible
minority) population, 1996-2016*



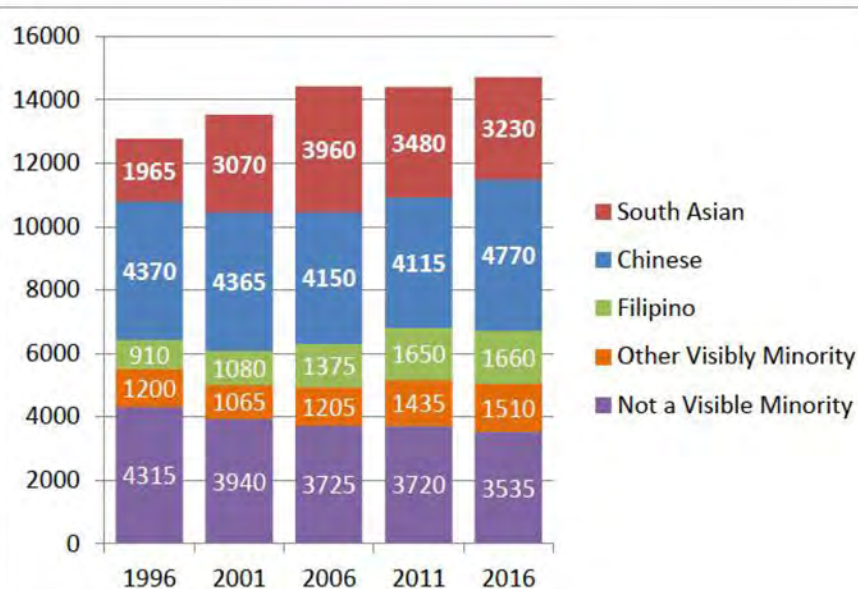
The city's South Asian overall population is increasing; with a greater number of residents living in different neighbourhoods. At the same time, the *proportion* of South Asian residents in the city has remained fairly constant (increasing 5.1% to 6.0% between 1996-2016) and the proportion that live in Sunset has declined from 40% in 2006 to 33% in 2016.

Right:
Top 7 Vancouver Local Areas by South Asian (visible minority) population, 1996-2016



Locally, the 3km² area that surrounds Punjabi Market (Census Tracts 11&12¹²) is showing signs of increased diversity. The relative proportion of different visible and non-minority communities is changing, with Chinese-identifying and Filipino-identifying residents increasing in number, while South Asian-identifying and Caucasian residents are decreasing.

Right:
Census Tracts 11&12, Aggregate totals, Top-3 visible minority populations, 1996-2016



¹² Census Tracts 11 and 12 are bounded by Cambie Street, Fraser Street, 41st Avenue and 57th Avenue

Sunset Community Vision (2002)

Chapter 23: Punjabi Market

17 policies (14 approved, 3 uncertain)

Policy #	Policy	Status	Implementation + Notes
23.1	Important Shopping Area - Main from 48th to 50th should be strengthened as a major neighbourhood shopping area and special community place.	Approved	<p>Limited. Activity by local merchants (including the Punjabi Merchants Association) and cultural groups such as Indian Summer Fest, have resulted in banners, historical signage, and other, primarily small-scale public realm enhancements over the years.</p> <p>Activities undertaken by the City and other levels of government following the completion of the Sunset Vision have had mixed results.</p> <p>Between 2004-08 (with additional work in 2018) - the Main Street Urban Transportation Showcase Project, funded by Transport Canada and involving a collaboration between Translink and the City of Vancouver, saw public realm improvements, transit improvements, and public art delivered in and around the Market area – all with the broad aim of supporting strategies around GHG reductions.</p> <p>In 2006, the redesign of Sunset Community Centre was completed, providing updated recreational and related amenities to residents in the Punjabi Market area.</p> <p>In 2006-7 there were initial discussions with area merchants aimed at looking at the creation of a BIA in the area; however, there was insufficient support to make this viable at the time.</p>

			<p>In 2008, the Province announced plans for the creation of an “India Gate” at Main and 50th – intended as a prominent gateway feature for Punjabi Market that would span Main Street and serve as an iconic marker for the area. The plan never materialized.</p> <p>From 2015-Present Rezoning activity on two sites have introduced opportunities for change, including higher density housing in the Market area. However, at the same time, the one site that has been built has replaced small-scale local retail with three national chain retail outlets – the implications of which could be interpreted in different ways.</p>
23.2	Northward Expansion of Shopping - The shopping area should expand northward, by extending commercial/ mixed use zoning for one or two more blocks.	Uncertain	No activity. The boundaries of the shopping area remain unchanged since the approval of the Sunset Community Vision. Engagement activity in 2019, suggested some interest in expanding the existing commercially-zoned area.
23.3	Shops and Services Continuous - In the shopping area, shops and services should be continuous along the ground floor of buildings. Ground floor frontage should not be interrupted by driveways, drive-throughs, parking lots, or building fronts that are not ‘pedestrian-friendly’.	Approved	Completed. For the most part, this condition has been in place in the Market for sometime, and has also informed two rezonings that have taken place in the Market. Further, the “drive through” element of the local Esso Station was removed when the gas station closed.
23.4	Special Indo-Canadian Focus - The Indo-Canadian focus of the area should be strengthened by having mainly Indo-Canadian retailers and restaurants. In this special role of ‘Punjabi Market’, the area should serve both local residents and people from elsewhere in the Vancouver area.	Uncertain	<p>Uncertain. The 2018 retail study noted that many businesses continue to be owned and operated by a Punjabi/South Asian entrepreneur – however, the nature of the local retail/service mix is changing. (See Retail Study summary).</p> <p>Detailed assessment of customer activity has not yet been undertaken, so it is unclear what proportion of business activity is local-serving or regional/destination-serving. The 2018 Retail Study does suggest that attention needs to be paid to ensuring</p>

			an appropriate mix of shop and service to meet both local and destination needs.
23.5	A Range of Shops and Services - While having an Indo-Canadian focus, the area should also meet the basic needs of all local residents. Additional auto-oriented services (e.g. gas stations, auto repair) should not occur.	Approved	<p>Uncertain. Comments received during the rezoning processes with 6505, 6507, and 6541 Main Street, the Retail Study, and City-led engagement activities in 2019, all suggest that there is interest in seeing improvements to the mix of shops and services – both for local serving and destination retail.</p> <p>No additional auto-oriented services have opened since the approval of the Sunset Community Vision. The one gas station in Punjabi Market (at Main and 50th) closed down many years ago.</p>
23.6	Supermarket Not Needed - There is no conventional supermarket in the Main Street shopping area. This need is met by two nearby supermarkets: Real Canadian Superstore on Marine Drive and Buy-Low on Fraser at 45th. Provided these supermarkets remain, there should be no actions to add a conventional supermarket in the Main Street shopping area.	Uncertain	<p>Completed. The Market is also home to four small grocery retailers – Polo Market (formerly Sultan Foods), and Persia Foods, both in the 6400-block; and Punjab Food Centre, and Sabzi Mandi (formerly Fruiticana) in the 6600-block – all long-standing shops in the area. Between the completion of the Sunset Vision and the present report, no actions have been taken to add a supermarket to the area.</p> <p>Comments received during the City-led consultations in 2019 indicated support for enhanced grocery retail, though the degree to which this request is about “conventional supermarkets” is unclear.</p>
23.7	Pedestrian Safety - It should be easier and safer for pedestrians to cross Main Street, so they can conveniently shop on both sides of the street.	Approved	Uncertain. Some improvements have been made to pedestrian safety, particularly as part of the Main Street Urban Transportation Showcase Project (see 23.1). The area has also seen the introduction of traffic bulges and countdown signals at 48 th Avenue. Staff note that pedestrian safety continues to be identified as a concern, and was identified as an issue in the 2019 City-led engagement work.
23.8	Control Sidewalk Merchandise - Merchandise displays on the sidewalk are a good thing, but should be limited in the	Approved	Completed.

	amount of sidewalk they take up. They should leave enough room for pedestrians (including wheelchairs and strollers) to pass each other, and should leave more sidewalk space at bus stops and crosswalks where more people gather. The limit should be enforced.		Of note: in the 2019 City-led engagement, staff received some comments encouraging more, rather than less, merchant displays, and more of a “market” feel to the area. Concerns about the control of sidewalk merchandise were not raised.
23.9	Street Trees and Sidewalk Improvements - Street trees should be planted on Main Street and the sidewalks should be improved by repairing cracked and crooked slabs and by filling in areas where the sidewalk does not extend to the curb.	Approved	Limited. Street trees that may have died are replaced by Parks Board. Substantial sidewalk rehab or streetscape project is required to install new tree pits. New redevelopment in 2019 has introduced new tree pits. The annual Sidewalk Trip Hazard Inspection, Sidewalk Fillet, and Sidewalk Special Adjustment programs fund inspection, repairs, and maintenance of City sidewalks. Tree pits are inspected as part of the Sidewalk Trip Hazard inspection program, with any resulting sidewalk hazard repaired within 7-10 days and tree related hazards directed to Parks Board to respond. Corner bulges were installed with plantings and trees in 2007. Redevelopment introduced new section of streetscape.
23.10	Weather Protection - There should be continuous weather protection for shoppers in the form of canopies or awnings on buildings.	Approved	Limited. Minimal redevelopment activity along the street has meant that opportunities to require weather protection have been minimal. The recently completed Orr building (SW Main and E48th) is included a canopy that runs along the portion of the building edge on Main and E 48 th fronted by commercial retail units.
23.11	A More Attractive, Usable Place - The shopping area’s appearance should be improved, and a distinctive ‘Punjabi Market’ character enhanced, through beautification by private owners, businesses, and the City.	Approved	Limited. Community-feedback during the rezoning of 6505, 6507, and 6541 Main Street, initial staff assessment of Punjabi Market in 2016-7 and subsequent engagement with the community in 2019, suggest that this remains a concern. See 23.1 for additional background on some of the initiatives that have been looked at over the years. Consideration of this

			direction is central to the activities and recommendations outlines in the present report.
23.12	A Cleaner Place - Sidewalks, gutters, lanes, storefronts, garbage areas, and loading bays should be kept cleaner and maintained better by both private businesses and the City.	Approved	<p>Limited. Community-feedback during the rezoning of 6505, 6507, and 6541 Main Street, initial staff assessment of Punjabi Market in 2016-7, and subsequent engagement with the community in 2019, suggest that this remains a concern. See 23.1 for additional background on some of the initiatives that have been looked at over the years.</p> <p>Public realm cleanliness – 2020 onward. The City worked with businesses for increased cleaning frequency around their premises (Main and 49th), made pocket ashtrays available to residents through the Sunset Community Centre, installed 4 additional litter bins on Main between 49th and 51st, and initiated regular micro cleaning under the annual Street Cleaning grant program. Micro cleaning service levels will further increase slightly in 2022.</p>
23.13	Convenient Parking - Convenient short-term parking, including curbside parking, should be available for customers to help keep the retail viable and reduce impacts on neighbours.	Approved	<p>Completed. Street parking remains available in the Market.</p>
23.14	Group Bus Parking - The Punjabi Market is visited by groups of schoolchildren and tourists. Parking space for school and tour buses should be provided in such a way as to minimize impacts on shoppers and neighbours.	Approved	No activity.
23.15	Sunset Community Centre Connection to Main Street - As long as they remain in their current locations, the Sunset Community Centre and Ice Rink should have more of a	Approved	Completed/In-process. Sunset Community Centre was redesigned in 2006, with the new facility being located closer to Main Street. In 2015, the Park Board approved a new Sunset Park Masterplan as a concept to guide future Park upgrades. The Masterplan identifies upgrades to the NW corner of the Park site

	presence on Main through better signage, a public art piece or other symbols.		(at Main and 51 st), including a skate park and ballcourt over the long term. In 2018, a public art piece <i>SeeSawSeat</i> (created by Germaine Koh and funded through the Main Street Urban Transportation Project), was installed in the vicinity of the Centre in 2018. In 2021, community-led placemaking (organized by the Punjabi Market Collective) created a small seating area and temporary art installation at the corner.
23.16	Sunset Nursery More Interesting from Main - As long as the Park Board Sunset Nursery stays in its current location, it should contribute more to street interest.	Approved	Completed/In-Process. In addition to changes noted above, the 2015 Sunset Park Masterplan plan calls for improved visibility of the heritage field house from E 51 st Ave.
23.17	If Sunset Nursery Moves or Downsizes - If, in the future, Sunset Nursery moves or is reduced in size, there should be broad community consultation about the use and design of the site.	Approved	Completed. In 2020, the City undertook additional engagement with regard to needed upgrades to the Sunset Nursery and Works Yard. Further information: https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/sunset-park-information-board.pdf

SUMMARY OF 2017-18 RETAIL STUDY OF PUNJABI MARKET

In 2017, a consultant team comprised of LOCO BC, Masala Consulting, DIG360, and Modus Planning and Design, was retained to undertake a retail study of the Punjabi Market commercial area. The following is a summary of key findings, and the complete study can be found at vancouver.ca/punjabimarket.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & METHODS

The intention of the study was to undertake a more detailed assessment of the changes that had taken place in the three-block commercial area, and to identify key steps that could be taken to improve the vitality of the Market. The study aimed to

- Produce additional baseline data on the demographic and planning context, and retail environment in the Punjabi Market area;
- Identify the key challenges being faced by the Market; and from these,
- Outline some initial strategies that could “improve the area’s economic vitality and business diversity while also protecting its cultural significance and heritage.”

The study used a variety of methods to do this, including initial engagement with a targeted group of area stakeholders, site visits, surveys and focus groups, and market analysis, to understand the historic and present day importance of the area.¹³

KEY FINDINGS

The study was completed in April 2018, and validated a number of the observations that had been noted made during discussion on the rezonings, and through the observations by City staff. Among the study’s key findings were the following:

- Confirmation of demographic changes in the vicinity of Punjabi Market – including a decline in the number of Punjabi speakers, and increase in ethnocultural ‘mix’ of surrounding communities in the area;
- A changing mix of commercial services – while the overall number of businesses remained fairly constant, the number of retail businesses declined by 48% between 2008-2017 (from 46 to 24). At the same time, Health & Lifestyle Services, and Professional Services have been steadily increasing for the previous two decades;
- Changes in the distribution of traditional retail categories - while South Asian fashion and jewelers have consistently comprised roughly half of all retail, the relative proportion of each is changing. While the number of jewelry stores has remained fairly constant, the number of fashion stores has declined by 55% between 2008 and 2017 (from 21 to 9);

¹³ LOCO BC, Masala Consulting, DIG360, and Modus Planning and Design. *Punjabi Market Retail Business Study: Findings and Next Steps*. April 2018. (p.4). References in this section draw substantively on material found on pp 17-21 of the report, which be found at vancouver.ca/punjabimarket.

- Other key findings included: a higher vacancy rate (approximately 14% at the time of the study), and an 84% increase in assessed value between 2008 and 2017 (\$225/ft² to \$415/ft²).¹⁴

The study noted that there were a number of related challenges to ensuring sufficient retail demand in the area:

- Insufficient population and growth in the trade area and immediate vicinity to sustain the commercial area;
- A retail mix that is currently “insufficient to create a draw for locals, visitors, or tourists as similar retailers and products can be found elsewhere”;
- Customer diversity - apart from residents, daytime population most likely to visit the market includes local business staff, students from Langara College and local/foreign tourists – but notes that these populations will not, in and of themselves, propel sufficient retail demand to sustain local business.¹⁵

According to the report, the challenges noted above are further exacerbated by other factors that include:

- The decline in pedestrian traffic (as noted earlier);
- Competition for local serving retail and services from the larger commercial area on Fraser St and for destination-based South Asian-focused retail and services from Surrey and Delta;
- Other, more macro-level changes in the retail sector including the role of online shopping, and changing consumer preferences

The Study also identified several key opportunities. It anticipated that some of these opportunities would be driven by the needs of local residents, as well as nearby students at Langara College. These included:

- Businesses likely to attract more frequent weekly purchases (e.g. groceries, pharmacies);
- Family-friendly establishments & children’s related product/services;
- Medical services for seniors and children;
- Businesses with products/services aimed at students (e.g. economical food, pubs);
- Food businesses with unique offerings for adventurous foodies and home cooks, especially ethnic food experiences or a ‘food attraction.’

¹⁴ Retail vacancy rates in the Market are improving, but are higher than ideal;. Initial 2016 assessments of the Market indicted an extremely high retail vacancy rate of 26% (21 vacancies among 81 CRUs). Subsequent City assessments between 2017 and 2021 have shown vacancy rates of 12-15%. A 10% vacancy is considered the upper threshold for a ‘healthy’ vacancy rate.

¹⁵ The focus of the assessment was based on the two census tracts that surround Punjabi Market (and which are bounded by E 41st Avenue, East 57th Avenue, Cambie Street and Fraser Street). The city and region both have a sizeable population of South Asian communities, and it is important to note that the Retail Study was not intended to provide a comprehensive exploration of opportunities present within either of these larger geographies (and related cultural or customer markets).

Other opportunities focus on enhancing the mix of local retail and services with offerings that contribute to local vibrancy. This could include the addition of

- In-demand, recognizable chains proficient at strong omni-channel offerings of in-stock, attractive, appropriately priced items
- Strong and knowledgeable independent retailers & restaurant/food concepts (established and emerging)
- Mix of categories reflecting a range of basics, weekly items through to specialists
- Strong and growing focus on food (grocery, and especially dining)
- Themed and complimentary retail nodes serving convenience or destination

Lastly, the consultant team held two workshops and created an online survey for merchants and commercial property owners. The discussions affirmed many of the findings to date. It also identified

- A deep emotional connection to the Market and a desire to maintain current connections, tell its story and highlight the contributions of early immigrants
- A need to strike a balance between history and the future, and the need to attract new businesses to revive the area while respecting the intangible heritage of the area – further engagement needed to develop this future vision
- The area is well positioned in terms of transit and amenities however further work is needed to improve the public realm and streetscape to make the Market more aesthetically pleasing and welcoming

Other challenges identified by merchants included the high costs associated with rents and taxes, the lack of visibility and promotion for the area, concerns over safety, and the desire for public art and public space improvements

With a view to balancing the cultural role of Punjabi Market with enhancements to the retail/commercial sustainability of the area, the retail study contained a number of recommended next steps:

1. Creation of a community working group
2. Preparation of a Historical Context Statement for Punjabi Market
3. Identification of historic features to retain into the future
4. Development of a Statement of Significance
5. Identification of strategies and actions for regeneration

OVERVIEW OF 2019-2022 ACTIVITIES IN PUNJABI MARKET

This section provides a timeline of the key City activities in Punjabi Market that were initiated as a result of the June 2019 Council Motion *Punjabi Market at Fifty: Celebrating the Past and Planning for the Future*.

- A. Ongoing engagement and dialogue with the Punjabi Market Collective (PMC);
- B. Broad stakeholder engagement with Langara College, South Asian Arts & Culture Organizations, and the City's Racial and Ethnocultural Advisory Committee, and others (On-going);
- C. Exploration of public realm, merchant supports, and other revitalization ideas with business owners and the community at large (Fall 2019);
- D. Testing proposed actions and next steps with Punjabi Market community members and business owners (January 2020);
- E. 50th Anniversary activities (May 2020);
- F. Public Realm quick wins (2020-2022); and,
- G. (Re)Engagement through COVID.

A short summary of each is contained in the following sub-sections.

A. Ongoing Engagement with Punjabi Market Collective

Since the initial 2016-2018 work, a number of important community efforts to celebrate the Market and improve the public realm have been spearheaded by the Punjabi Market Collective.¹⁶ These initiatives include a significant 50th Anniversary event held in May 2020, supported by the City. The associated events, including community clean-up days, placemaking and mural art, have helped to respond to some of the challenges noted above, and speak to an emerging and important local desire to revitalize the Market.

From August 2019 to the present, staff have had ongoing meetings with the PMC. The PMC and has continued to develop a program of ideas to support the regeneration of the area.

B. Broad Stakeholder Engagement (On-going)

Between summer 2019 and the present, staff have also held a number of internal and external stakeholder meetings with:

- Representatives of the former Punjabi Market Merchants Association and other merchants and property owners;
- the City's Racial and Ethnocultural Equity Advisory Committee;
- Representatives of a number of South Asian arts and culture organizations;
- The Langara College Board of Governors;
- Local MLAs (Michael Lee and George Chow) and MP (Harjit Sajjan), as well as staff from Multiculturalism BC about the City's work in Punjabi Market; and,

¹⁶ The Punjabi Market Collective (PMC), is a volunteer-based organization and registered non-profit formed in 2019 and comprised of community members, supporters, and local entrepreneurs. See: punjabimarket.ca.

- City staff from the Vancouver Plan, Chinatown Transformation Project, the City's Manager of Intergovernmental Relations, and the City's Indigenous Arts & Culture Planners.

Early meetings helped inform the engagement process approach, as well as the recommended next steps outlined in the Strategic Analysis.

C. Exploration of Public Realm & Related Revitalization Ideas (Fall 2019)

In October and November 2019, staff held six engagement events, three with area merchants and business property owners, and three with the broader community. The purpose of the events was to:

- Provide the community with more information about the 2019 Council motion and upcoming opportunities related to Punjabi Market's 50th Anniversary;
- Review ideas and priorities related to public space improvements for the Market area; and,
- Share thoughts on the future of Punjabi Market, with specific opportunities for merchants to discuss how they can work together to improve business conditions, and how the City can help build business capacity.

Materials were comprised of background information (translated into four languages), and engagement exercises. Approximately 75 representatives of the local business community and roughly 350 community members provided input. Key feedback included:

- Strong interest in the renewal and regeneration of the Market area, and in seeing the Market, as an epicenter of Vancouver's South Asian communities, honoured into the future;
- Commercial area opportunities, including matters related to enhanced retail and service mix, transportation, public safety, public spaces, beautification, and a number of other issues;
- Interest in business-to-business capacity building, and efforts to strengthen the business supports and stewardship opportunities for the Market area; and,
- Support for, and assistance with, the prioritization of potential public realm interventions.

The engagement exercise allowed staff to test possible public realm interventions, and revealed strong support for a creative and cultural (specialty) lighting features, along with interest in murals and banners, seating areas and parklets, and improved merchandise displays.

At the same time, a number of questions and considerations for future work also emerged in the course of the events:

- The potential to revisit and clarify the role of the Market's core commercial area vis-à-vis a diverse surrounding neighbourhood, changing local needs, and shifting daily and destination-serving activity. In addition, the need to investigate ways to support Punjabi Market as a cultural hub was raised;
- Opportunities to advance cultural redress and reconciliation, particularly in light of the Council motion on *Historical Discrimination Against People of South Asian Descent*; and,
- A commitment from the City to invest in long-term engagement with South Asian communities.

A summary of the engagement activities is available in Appendices J and K. Input from the six events was analyzed in late Fall 2019, and used to inform an initial set of recommended approaches.

D. Community Engagement - Testing Proposed Actions & Next Steps (January 2020)

Early in 2020, staff held two follow-up events with the community that tested support for four categories of future action:

1. **Previously approved initiatives**, including work to support local heritage, cultural grants (which had been awarded in advance of the 50th Anniversary), future Vancouver Plan community engagement;
2. **Near-term public realm improvements that could be delivered through existing programs**, including exploring opportunities for a parklet, street furniture, green streets improvements, as well as an assessment of street lighting;
3. **Near-term actions that would require Council endorsement and/or funding**, including a 50th Anniversary Proclamation, temporary visual art supported through the City's Mural Program, commercial area capacity building; and,
4. **Longer-term community stewardship** to support capital investments in decorative lighting.

There was strong community support for all four activities, combined with a desire for near-term implementation. A complete summary of the January events can be found in Appendix L.

E. COVID Interruption and Support for 50th Anniversary Celebrations

During the period following the January 2020 engagement, staff were in the process of preparing a report to Council on Punjabi Market when the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded. As a result, planning work was suspended as City staff pivoted to pandemic recovery work. Related restrictions on public gathering also meant that the proposed in-person celebration of Punjabi Market's 50th anniversary had to be cancelled. The Punjabi Market Collective instead created a virtual event. The City, through the External Relations and Protocol Office, provided support for this through a special 50th Anniversary webpage, social media promotion and by illuminating City Hall with orange lights on the day of the anniversary.

F. Public Realm "Quick Wins" (2020-2022)

While the broader City effort and report-back to Council was delayed by COVID-19, staff were able to undertake a series of public realm interventions through existing programs. Staff worked with the PMC to help refine and implement a number of "quick wins" including the installation of street furniture, landscaping improvements, and additional litter cans, as well as several public space initiatives. These included supporting the PMC with the creation of a "placemaking node" at Main and 51st, the funding and installation of four murals, new banner artwork (designed by Musqueam artist Debra Sparrow and PMC member and artist Jag Nagra), and adding garden beds into the volunteer-based Green Streets program.

These quick-wins are expected to be complemented by longer-term public realm improvements discussed in the next section. A summary of "Quick Win" activities can be found in Appendix M.

G. Engagement during COVID-19 (2021-2022)

In 2021, staff from Planning, Engineering and ACCS resumed on-line meetings with the PMC, restarting the planning process that had been paused when the pandemic first appeared. These additional meetings have allowed the City and PMC to undertake further review of the proposed actions identified in 2020, further refining and prioritizing the various actions.

H. Ongoing work to support cultural redress with the South Asian Community

The City is currently working to address its historic and ongoing role in perpetuating inequities and racism against South Asian community members, and in 2019 approved the *Historical Discrimination against People of South Asian Descent* Motion. This Council-approved directive acknowledges the City's obligation to facilitate and promote cultural, emotional and material redress for historic wrongdoings against people of South Asian descent.

City staff have begun working with diverse intersections of South Asian communities, including an external community advisory group, to put forward recommendations on steps and actions in support of redress and reconciliation. This includes changes to resources and policies to acknowledge these wrongdoings, as well as plans for a public acknowledgement and formal apology to the South Asian community. This report is focused on the concerns of the broad and diverse South Asian communities in Vancouver and is not focused solely on Punjabi Market. However, recommendations related to the cultural and historic significance importance of Punjabi Market may arise. This report will be presented to Council in Spring 2022.

Consultation Overview – Merchant Drop-in Sessions October 2019

City staff held three drop-in style events for merchants and property owners in Punjabi Market commercial area. Invitation letters for the events were dropped-off at all business along Main Street, and were also mailed to property owners.

Date/time	Location	Number of attendees
October 22, 2019 6pm-8pm	Roots Café	20
October 23, 2019 1pm-3pm	Himalaya Restaurant	45
October 24, 2019 9:30am-11:30am	Sunset Community Centre	15
TOTAL		80

The intent of these sessions was to:

- Learn more about the Council motion and upcoming opportunities related to Punjabi Market's 50th Anniversary;
- Review ideas and priorities related to public space improvement options for the Market area;
- Hear the ways that merchants can work together to improve business conditions, and how the City can help build business capacity.

The participants provided following feedback for improvement of public space and business conditions:

- Strong support for improvement and beautification of public realm through addition of decorative lighting (to reflect festivals and holidays, and to improve safety), planters, banners, painted sidewalks and/or crosswalks, seating, bike racks, and public art collaborations.
- Desire for increased parking, pedestrian safety and enforcement of traffic rules.
- Need for additional lights and security to improve the "run-down" look of the Market, and overcome theft and safety issues.
- Support for an improved retail mix (e.g. clothing stores, bridal shops, grocery stores, larger format retail or a mall, and affordable shopping places), and more service offerings (like bars, pubs, restaurants, billiards and board game cafes, and food carts).
- Desire for an enhanced diversity of businesses, while maintaining and building on the Punjabi character and identity of the Market, and increased representation of Indigenous people in the community.
- Opportunities to celebrate various South Asian festivals (like Diwali and Ganesh Utsav).
- Support for improved business to business collaborations, and City's help in capacity-building for merchants.
- Desire for lower property taxes (that might lead to lower commercial rent rates).
Need to increase tourism by placing the Market on tourism maps and partnering with Tourism Vancouver.
- Desire to see new buildings and development that creates positive change.

Consultation Overview – Community-at-Large October-November 2019

City staff held three open house events for the broader community. Residents were notified via postcards (translated into four languages: English, Punjabi, Chinese, Tagalog). Letters were hand-delivered to residents of the blocks under review and surrounding vicinity.

Date/time	Location	Number of attendees
October 29, 2019 5:30pm-8:30pm	Sunset Community Centre	125
November 2, 2019 11am-2pm	Himalaya Restaurant	75
November 3, 2019 10am-12:30pm	Ross Street Temple	150
TOTAL		350

The intent of these sessions was to:

- Learn more about the Council motion and upcoming opportunities related to Punjabi Market's 50th Anniversary;
- Review ideas and priorities related to public space improvement options for the Market area;
- Hear the community's thoughts on the future of Punjabi Market.

Feedback received during these sessions included:

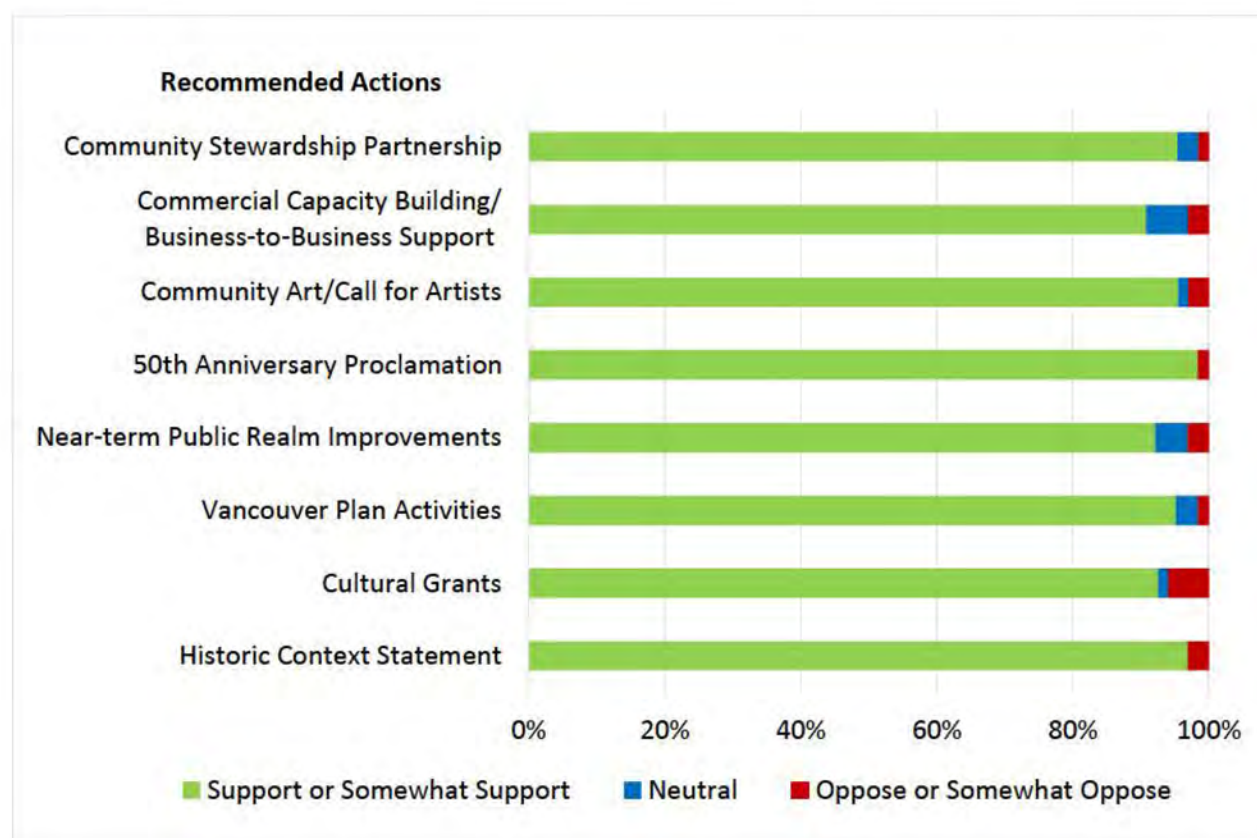
- Support for the continued provision of free parking, and need for an increased access to parking and sustainable transportation.
- Concerns that property taxes are hurting small businesses. Suggestions to provide property tax incentives and reduce rents for businesses.
- A strong desire to see a greater commercial mix in the Market, including a variety of shops and services (e.g. grocery stores, clothing shops, restaurants etc.) that cater to the daily needs of local community and younger demographic. Suggestions for improved store fronts.
- Support for a more decentralized and inclusive business association.
- Desire for public realm enhancements like a welcome gate identifying the entrance/exit of the Punjabi Market area, distinct cultural banners, Punjabi street signs, decorative lighting, places to sit and interact, public washrooms, flower beds, and public art features that reflect the culture and history of the Market and its surrounding community.
- Strong support for celebrating South Asian festivals, creating space for cultural offerings (including music, dance, historic teachings, literature, exhibits etc.), cultural centre (with social housing and seniors' services), event space for weddings and celebrations, car-free day events, and walking tour of the Market. Suggestions to make the Market representative of the whole South Asian population to broaden its appeal.
- Desire for a night market or farmers market within Punjabi Market.

Consultation Overview – Community-at-Large January 2020

City staff held two open house events to share the results of the October-November 2019 Engagement work, and to solicit feedback on the draft recommended actions. Residents were notified via postcards (translated into four languages: English, Punjabi, Chinese, Tagalog). Letters were hand-delivered to residents of the blocks under review and surrounding vicinity.

Date/time	Location	Number of attendees
January 9, 2020 5:30pm-8:30pm	Himalaya Restaurant	43
January 12, 2020 10am-12:30pm	Ross St. Temple	95
TOTAL		138

All the recommended actions received an overwhelmingly strong support from the participants, as shown below:



Public Realm “Quick Win” Activities (2020-2022)

Staff undertook the following activities:

- Installing 13 bike racks, including 5 art racks;
- Installing 5 benches in Sunset Park: 3 in the NW corner under the marigold installation and 2 elsewhere in the park (coordinating with Park Board staff);
- Repainting existing crosswalks;
- Installing 9 boulevard garden assets with renewed planting (corners at 50th and 51st);
- Encouraging and coming to an agreement with businesses for increased cleaning frequency around their premises (Main and 49th);
- Making Pocket Ashtrays available to residents through the Sunset Community Centre;
- Installing 4 additional litter bins on Main between 49th and 51st; and
- Initiating regular micro cleaning under the annual Street Cleaning grant program through the Priority Area program (2019).

Staff also supported the Punjabi Market Collective (PMC) to:

- Install a “placemaking node” at Main and 51st with marigolds in a tree, 3 picnic tables and posters attached to nearby fencing;
- Install 4 murals (PMC Partnership with Vancouver Mural Festival - City contributed \$10,000);
- Coordinate with the Green Streets program for planting plan and volunteers to maintain garden beds; and
- Introduce new banner artwork by Musqueam artist Debra Sparrow and PMC member and artist Jag Nagra (PMC Partnership with the Indian Summer Festival).

In addition to the aforementioned ‘quick wins’, City staff also anticipate a series of additional activities will take place in the coming years:

- Micro cleaning – Service levels will be increased slightly in 2022,
- Crosswalks – Main and 50th slated for pedestrian signal upgrade (>2 years), and
- Lighting – Standard upgrade to LED (Timing TBD).