

**From:** ["Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca)  
**To:** ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)  
**Date:** 5/30/2023 2:05:12 PM  
**Subject:** Upcoming news release: City to give secondary street name of Komagata Maru Place to Canada Place (May 30, 2023)

---

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to inform you that the City will be issuing a news release today that announces the decision to give a secondary, honorary street name "Komagata Maru Place" to "Canada Place". This forms part of the City's ongoing efforts to redress historical discrimination against South Asian communities, acknowledging the systemic discrimination marked by the Komagata Maru incident in 1914.

The City's commitment to recognize and redress historical injustices extends to the recognition of the cultural and historic significance of the 2nd Avenue Gurdwara site in Kitsilano, and future initiatives aimed at exploring other areas of historical and cultural significance to the South Asian Canadian communities in Vancouver.

The City will share the news release via social media once it has been issued to the media.

Best,  
Paul

**Paul Mochrie** (he/him)  
City Manager  
City of Vancouver  
[paul.mochrie@vancouver.ca](mailto:paul.mochrie@vancouver.ca)



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

**City of Vancouver**  
**News Release**  
**May 30, 2023**

**City to give secondary street name of Komagata Maru Place to Canada Place**

Today, Vancouver City Council has announced that "Canada Place," will be given a secondary, honorary street name of "Komagata Maru Place." This decision forms part of the City's ongoing efforts to redress historical discrimination against South Asian communities and is informed by community input and support.

The site for the honorary naming was chosen due to its historical significance, being the location closest to where the Komagata Maru ship, also known as Guru Nanak Jahaaz, docked in 1914. The ship had 340 Sikh, 27 Muslim and 12 Hindu passengers onboard. They were mostly from Punjab, British India, and most were denied entry into Canada, marking a significant historic incident of systemic discrimination.

"Today's decision is a meaningful step towards acknowledging and rectifying our city's historical missteps," said Mayor Ken Sim. "By designating 'Komagata Maru Place' as a secondary name for 'Canada Place,' we look to honour those affected by the 1914 incident and renew our commitment to learn from the past and build a more inclusive future."

"Cultural redress is a complex and ongoing process that the City is undertaking with South Asian communities — and this work needs to continue to be done with the understanding that these communities are not a monolith. The secondary street renaming and the historical account of the partial history shared in this report are a first step in recognizing historical discrimination and holding our City to account," said Monica Cheema, community researcher and story teller. "I'd like to express my deepest gratitude to the members of the South Asian community who have been involved in this difficult process. We look forward to continuing to address historical discrimination and untold histories as part of the City's larger work with South Asian communities."

City Council has also committed to recognizing the cultural and historic significance of the 2nd Avenue Gurdwara site in Kitsilano, known for its importance to South Asian communities. This is an historically significance location in relation to the Komagata Maru incident as this was the site where the local South Asian community mobilized to support the passengers. Future initiatives will further explore other areas of historical and cultural significance to the South Asian Canadian communities in Vancouver.

Upon approval of these recommendations, the City will initiate a community process for the design of the sign for "Komagata Maru Place" and creation of public education materials. Efforts will also be made to enhance the monument at Harbour Park, and an unveiling ceremony is expected for late 2023.

The City will work with local South Asian community members, businesses and organizations, xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) as the broader work to address historic discrimination toward South Asian communities moves forward.

For the full report on the "Komagata Maru Place" secondary street renaming, [please follow this link](#).

## Background

On May 23, 1914, the Guru Nanak Jahaaz, (Komagata Maru), sailed into Vancouver's Burrard Inlet, bearing 376 passengers from Punjab, British India, seeking a brighter future. Despite possessing valid travel documents and complying with a large discriminatory \$200 head tax,

the passengers, who were of Sikh Muslim and Hindu faith, were denied entry into Canada.

Passengers were trapped on board for two difficult months, enduring in poor, unsanitary conditions. They often went without food and water for days. Despite reaching out for help, including writing letters to the Mayor of Vancouver, the local authorities ignored their pleas. South Asian communities raised funds to pay for the expensive legal fees of the passengers who were fighting their deportation orders, as well as for food, water and medication, supplies that they attempted to get to passengers. There are also accounts of local Indigenous peoples attempting to get supplies to passengers, but they were unsuccessful as the Government restricted access to the ship.

A legal challenge of the deportation order ensued, spearheaded by passenger Gurdit Singh and lawyer Joseph Edward Bird and backed by the local South Asian community, which was unsuccessful. The ship was escorted by the Canadian military from Canadian waters and returned to India, where those on board were labelled as political disruptors. This led to a tragic aftermath where 19 passengers were killed by British Indian troops, numerous were injured, and many more were imprisoned.

In 2021, Vancouver City Council issued an official apology for its role in this historical incident as part of its ongoing commitment to redress past wrongs and counter racism faced by the South Asian community.

For more information related to the Komagata Maru incident, [please visit this website.](#)