

From: **"Mochrie, Paul"**

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

Date: 1/17/2024 2:29:42 PM

Subject: Upcoming news release: Komagata Maru Place honorary signage (Jan 18, 2024)

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Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to inform you that the City will be issuing the below news release regarding the unveiling of the new, honorary signage for Komagata Maru Place.

Please keep this news release embargoed until it goes live from the City media email account on January 18.

Please note this news release will also be translated into Punjabi and Hindi. We look forward to seeing the Mayor and many of the councillors at the media/stakeholder event on January 18<sup>th</sup>.

This event is being live streamed for those not able to attend. The live stream link is: <https://youtube.com/live/9FIFS2lyBvg>

Maria will reply to this email with the relevant Vancouver.ca link and social media links, once these are live.

Best,  
Paul

**Paul Mochrie** (he/him)  
City Manager  
City of Vancouver



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwəxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

**City of Vancouver**  
**News release**  
**January 18, 2024**

## **Komagata Maru Place secondary street signs unveiled** **Canada Place given secondary, honorary name of Komagata Maru Place**

Today, Mayor Ken Sim and distinguished guests, including stakeholders from the South Asian Canadian community, gathered to unveil the honorary street signage for Komagata Maru Place in downtown Vancouver. The four street signs and matching eye-level storyboards were mounted by City staff early this morning.

The honorary naming and new signage is an outcome of a [May 2023 City Council decision](#) and is a further act of cultural redress for the City's role in the 1914 Komagata Maru tragedy. The steam ship Guru Nanak Jahaaz, more commonly known as the Komagata Maru, had an estimated 340 Sikh, 24 Muslim and 12 Hindu passengers onboard, including women and children, most from Punjab, British India. Their detainment, mistreatment, harassment, injury and loss of life marks a tragic period of systemic discrimination from all three levels of government.

The site for Komagata Maru Place was chosen for its historic significance, being the location closest to where the Komagata Maru ship was stationed in Burrard Inlet in 1914.

The new signage was created by artist [Jag Nagra](#), a queer, Punjabi, visual artist passionate about art accessibility, community development and combatting LGBTQ+ stigma in the South Asian community. The storyboards affixed to the lampposts at eye-level allow passersby to learn about the artwork and the history of the Komagata Maru tragedy. A QR code directs readers to a webpage ([vancouver.ca /komagata-maru](http://vancouver.ca/komagata-maru)) with more information.

On May 18, 2021, Vancouver City Council formally apologized for the role it played in discriminating against the passengers aboard the Komagata Maru in 1914, and officially declared May 23 as [Komagata Maru Remembrance Day](#).

City Council has also committed to recognizing the cultural and historic significance of the 2nd Avenue Gurdwara site in Kitsilano. In addition to being the site where the local South Asian community mobilized in 1914 in support of passengers aboard the Komagata Maru, it was an important social and cultural hub at a time when the community faced significant discrimination and hostility. It was also the first community owned Gurdwara (place of worship and learning) in Canada. Future initiatives will further explore other areas of historical and cultural significance to the South Asian Canadian communities in Vancouver.

“It was an honour to gather with members from South Asian Canadian communities this morning at Komagata Maru Place to reflect on this tragic chapter of our shared history,” said Mayor Ken Sim. “As a City, we are committed to learning from the past and building a more inclusive future. The honorary naming of Komagata Maru Place, and the impressive new signage designed by a talented local artist, Jag Nagra, is one important step in the City’s larger ongoing work to addressing historical discrimination towards South Asian communities.”

“Being able to share our community’s stories through art is something that’s so important to me and it’s an immense honour to have had the opportunity to create artworks for Komagata Maru Place,” said artist Jag Nagra. “My aim was to reflect the plight of the passengers and to humanize their stories, struggles, and the discriminatory practices they faced. The wrongs that have been committed against South Asians in Canada are longstanding, and these two pieces will serve as a physical reminder of our history and a call for greater equity and understanding.”

This secondary, honorary naming forms one part of the City’s larger commitment to cultural redress efforts for historical discrimination against South Asian communities.

The City wishes to thank and acknowledge the many individuals and community groups involved in the honorary naming and creation of the signage. These include, but are not limited to, the Komagata Maru Descendants Society; Khalsa Diwan Society; Punjabi Market Collective; the City of Vancouver’s artist selection panel of South Asian artists, curators and cultural workers; and the Historical Discrimination Against People of South Asian Descent Community Advisory Committee.

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