

File No.: 04-1000-20-2024-686

December 2, 2024

s.22(1)

Dear s.22(1)

Re: **Request for Access to Records under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (the "Act")**

I am responding to your request of November 19, 2024 under the ***Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*** for:

**Letters of support that Councillor Zhou referred to in the closing comments to the motion "Establishing a South Asian Cultural Centre of Excellence in Vancouver" at the Standing Committee of Council on City Finance and Services on November 13, 2024.**

All responsive records are attached. Some information in the records has been severed (blacked out) under s.22(1) of the Act. You can read or download this section here: [http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws\\_new/document/ID/freeside/96165\\_00](http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/96165_00).

Under Part 5 of the Act, you may ask the Information & Privacy Commissioner to review any matter related to the City's response to your FOI request by writing to: Office of the Information & Privacy Commissioner, [info@oipc.bc.ca](mailto:info@oipc.bc.ca) or by phoning 250-387-5629.

If you request a review, please provide the Commissioner's office with: 1) the request number (2024-686); 2) a copy of this letter; 3) a copy of your original request; and 4) detailed reasons why you are seeking the review.

Yours truly,

Kevin Tuerlings, FOI Case Manager, for

*[Signed by Kevin Tuerlings]*

**Cobi Falconer, MAS, MLIS, CIPP/C**  
**Director, Access to Information & Privacy**

If you have any questions, please email us at [foi@vancouver.ca](mailto:foi@vancouver.ca) and we will respond to you as soon as possible. You may also contact 3-1-1 (604-873-7000) if you require accommodation or do not have access to email.

Encl. (Response package)

:pm

**From:** [Pall Beesla \(via Google Drive\)](#)  
**To:** [Zhou, Lenny](#)  
**Cc:** [Grewal, David](#)  
**Subject:** Folder shared with you: "SACoE - Zhou motion 2024"  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 12, 2024 9:42:52 PM

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Hi David and Lenny. This folder contains 10 support letters spanning 3 different municipalities: vancouver, burnaby, surrey. thank you for putting this motion forward.

 SACoE - Zhou motion 2024  
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# SOUTH VANCOUVER NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

6470 Victoria Dr., Vancouver, BC V5P 3X7 ph: 604-324-6212 fax: 604-324-6116 website: [www.southvan.org](http://www.southvan.org)

Welcome Bienvenue Chào mừng Quý Vị Bienvenidos 환영합니다 ਜੀ ਆਇਆ ਨੂੰ

Mayor and Council  
City of Vancouver  
453 West 12th Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

Dear Mayor Sim and Members of Vancouver City Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for the motion to establish a South Asian Centre of Excellence in Vancouver. This important initiative is the result of nearly a decade of community engagement and reflects the ongoing commitment of the City of Vancouver to address systemic inequities faced by the South Asian community.

The foundation for this motion was laid by Councillor Louie's 2016 motion to revitalize Punjabi Market, emphasizing the need for "commercial vibrancy," "cultural spaces," and "community engagement." These goals have guided our advocacy ever since. The 2017 retail study highlighted the community's desire for a cultural hub, and subsequent motions from Councillors Fry and Boyle have reinforced the need for spaces that foster inclusion, heritage, and community connection.

The 2021 South Vancouver Neighbourhood House study and the HDSA report in 2022 both highlighted gaps in social infrastructure, particularly the lack of cultural gathering spaces. Councillor Zhou's 2024 motion represents the culmination of these efforts and an opportunity to act on years of community-driven research and advocacy.

The South Asian Centre of Excellence should be more than a museum—it must be a vibrant hub for culture, education, and collaboration. We envision a space for the arts, innovation, youth engagement, and partnerships with local institutions like Langara College. This Centre will not only serve the South Asian community but will enhance Vancouver's cultural fabric and attract visitors, as outlined in the Punjabi Market Committee's tourism strategy.

We acknowledge the provincial government's engagement with the South Asian community and respectfully ask that the City incorporate this feedback in the development of the Centre. Vancouver's South Asian population continues to grow, and this Centre will provide the infrastructure needed to support this dynamic community. On behalf of South Vancouver Neighbourhood House (SVNH) and many grassroots organizations, I urge the City to pass this motion and move forward with creating a space that will benefit all Vancouverites for generations to come.

Sincerely,  
Mimi Rennie  
Executive Director

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Building Better Neighbourhoods Together Since 1977





November 12, 2024

Mayor Ken Sim, Vancouver City Council  
453 West 12th Avenue Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

Dear Mayor Ken Sim and Vancouver City Council Members,

On behalf of Mabuhay House Society, I am writing to express our full support for the motion to establish a South Asian Cultural Centre of Excellence in Vancouver. As the chairperson of Mabuhay House Society, a dedicated organization committed to developing a provincial Filipino cultural center, I recognize the profound impact that such spaces have on empowering communities, fostering cross-cultural connections, and celebrating the diversity that enriches our city.

The South Asian community's contributions to Vancouver's cultural, social, and economic life have been invaluable, and the establishment of a dedicated cultural center would serve as a vital space to honor these legacies. This centre would not only support South Asian cultural preservation, education, and celebration but would also contribute significantly to our city's infrastructure of multicultural engagement, tourism, and community-building initiatives.

At Mabuhay House Society, we have observed other communities with cultural spaces that have played a transformative role in fostering belonging, pride, and cultural exchange. We stand united with the Punjabi Market Collective in support of bringing their vision to life. The envisioned South Asian Cultural Centre aligns with Vancouver's dedication to inclusivity and diversity, reinforcing the city's global reputation as a cultural destination and a beacon for multiculturalism. Establishing such a centre within Vancouver, near prominent neighborhoods like Punjabi Market and well-connected transit hubs, will ensure its accessibility to all Vancouverites and visitors from around the world, broadening the scope of cultural tourism and partnerships.

We support the City of Vancouver's proposed commitment to funding one-third of the capital costs if the centre is located in Vancouver, as outlined in Councillor Zhou's motion. This commitment will be an important step toward making this long-held vision a reality. We hope Council will continue to advocate for this initiative and engage with provincial partners to realize a space that will strengthen the social and cultural fabric of Vancouver and beyond.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important endeavor. We look forward to seeing Vancouver embrace this opportunity to honor its diverse heritage and build a more inclusive and interconnected community. If there are any questions or concerns about this support letter please feel free to contact me at [chair@mabuhayhouse.ca](mailto:chair@mabuhayhouse.ca) or 604-334-1800.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sammie Jo Rumbaua".

Sammie Jo Rumbaua  
Chairperson, Mabuhay House Society

CC: Jag Nagra, Chair, Punjabi Market Collective  
Pall Beesla, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Punjabi Market Collective



Jag Nagra

[jag@punjabimarket.ca](mailto:jag@punjabimarket.ca)

Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**To: Mayor and Council  
City of Vancouver  
453 West 12th Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4**

Dear Mayor Sim and Members of Vancouver City Council,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to express my strong support for the motion to build a South Asian Centre of Excellence in Vancouver. This important step is the culmination of nearly a decade of thoughtful consultation, community engagement, and invaluable contributions from the South Asian community. I would like to take a moment to recognize the City of Vancouver's ongoing commitment to listening to the voices of our community, especially those who have long faced systemic inequities.

Over the years, we have seen continuous efforts by the City to engage with the South Asian community, and this motion reflects a deep understanding of the needs and aspirations of our people. I would like to thank our current Mayor Sim, past and present Council members, and the dedicated staff for your work in studying, documenting, and responding to these needs through a series of thoughtful reports and motions.

The 2016 motion introduced by Councillor Louie, which highlighted the public's desire for a revitalized Punjabi Market area, laid the foundation for many of the conversations that followed. As noted in that motion, the community expressed a strong desire for "commercial vibrancy," "cultural spaces," and "community engagement." These goals have remained central to our advocacy throughout this process.

The 2017 retail study commissioned by the City of Vancouver provided further clarity on the community's needs. It revealed a level of distrust among some area merchants, stemming from prior engagements with the Provincial Government that did not lead to the fulfillment of promises such as the "India Gate" proposal. That same study emphasized the need for "distinctive architectural features" and "public spaces and neighbourhood gathering places," underscoring the community's desire for a cultural and heritage hub that celebrates the rich diversity of Punjabi experiences. These insights continue to resonate with us today.

In 2018, Vancouver City Council's recommendation to guide development "by inclusion, heritage, and enjoyable well-designed gathering places" further demonstrated a commitment to preserving and promoting the cultural fabric of our neighbourhoods. Similarly, Councillor Fry's 2019 motion, which





acknowledged the significant contributions of the South Asian community, underscored the importance of the Punjabi Market as a cultural landmark.

In 2021, the South Vancouver Neighbourhood House (SVNH) study helped shed light on some of the critical gaps in social infrastructure in the South Vancouver and Marpole areas, particularly the lack of gathering spaces such as cultural centres. The HDSA report in 2022 further emphasized the need for community partnerships and investments in cultural initiatives, echoing the call for spaces that reflect the community's needs and values.

Councillor Boyle's 2023 motion, addressing inequities in social infrastructure, brought attention to these ongoing challenges, while Councillor Zhou's 2024 motion represents the culmination of years of engagement, dialogue, and community-driven research. This motion is not only a reflection of the community's persistent advocacy, but also an opportunity for action—an opportunity to deliver on a promise made to our diverse and vibrant South Asian population.

We have heard from community members, organizations, and grassroots leaders that what is needed is more than just a museum. We need a true "Centre of Excellence" that serves as a hub for cultural, social, and educational activities. This should be a space for the arts, innovation, and collaboration, where we can engage with post-secondary institutions like Langara College, just down the street from Punjabi Market; as has been identified by this motion. Let this Centre be a place where non-profits can operate, where our youth can thrive, and where we can build community.

We also recognize the work that has already been done by the provincial government, which has conducted its own engagement with the South Asian community to understand what a cultural centre should look like and where it should be located. We respectfully request that the City of Vancouver also incorporate the data and feedback collected through these initiatives to help inform the design and development of the Centre for Excellence.

South Vancouver is a historically meaningful location for a South Asian Centre of Excellence, given the longstanding presence and contributions of the South Asian community here. Many of the earliest South Asian immigrants settled in Vancouver in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, finding work in sawmills. South Vancouver quickly became a focal point where these pioneers set down roots, forming one of Canada's earliest South Asian communities. Despite restrictive and racist immigration policies, this community persevered, actively contributing to Vancouver's social and economic growth. Establishing a center of excellence here would honor and preserve the area's historical significance, commemorating the resilience and achievements of the South Asian community.

Another important facet of South Vancouver is the Punjabi Market commercial district—North America's first "little India" which has played a vital role in community building, drawing South Asian businesses, entrepreneurs, and families to the area. For over 5 decades, Punjabi Market served as a vital community, arts and cultural hub,

The Kitsilano Gurdwara, or Khalsa Diwan Society Sikh Temple, is a foundational piece of Vancouver's history. Built in 1908, it served as a vital center for South Asian immigrants navigating a new life in



Canada, often amid racial discrimination and economic hardship. Beyond being a place of worship, it offered essential social services, such as shelter, food, and employment assistance, providing both refuge and solidarity for newcomers.

The Gurdwara was also central to the community's advocacy during the 1914 Komagata Maru tragedy. Members rallied in support of the passengers who were denied entry, organizing funds, food, and legal assistance in an effort to defend their right to stay in Canada. Although the government ultimately sent the ship and its passengers back, the Gurdwara's efforts embodied the resilience, unity, and dedication of Vancouver's South Asians. While the original Gurdwara no longer stands in Kitsilano, its absence is a reminder of the erasure of many stories and histories of this community in Vancouver.

Today, South Vancouver remains one of the city's most ethnically diverse areas, with a vibrant and sizable South Asian population. This enduring presence underscores the community's strong connection to the region, making South Vancouver a relevant and accessible site for a museum dedicated to South Asian culture and history. A museum here would serve as a cultural touchstone, enhancing community pride and ensuring that future generations remain connected to their heritage.

The time has come for Vancouver to act on this shared vision and provide the necessary infrastructure to support the community's growth, creativity, and connection.

The proposed South Asian Centre of Excellence is not just a matter of preserving cultural heritage—it's about creating a space where innovation, entrepreneurship, and collaboration can flourish. It will enhance tourism, as identified in the Punjabi Market Committee's tourism strategy, and benefit not just the South Asian community, but all Vancouverites and visitors who will come to appreciate our rich cultural heritage.

On behalf of many grassroots organizations, including the Punjabi Market Collective (PMC), I wholeheartedly support the construction of the South Asian Centre of Excellence. This Centre will be a beacon of pride for our community and a lasting testament to the City's commitment to equity, inclusion, and cultural vitality.

I urge the City of Vancouver to pass this motion and take the necessary next steps to ensure that this vision becomes a reality. We are ready to work together to build a space that will uplift our community for generations to come.

Thank you again to the City of Vancouver, and to all those involved in this process, for your dedication, care, and tireless efforts in creating a more inclusive and vibrant city.

Sincerely,

Jag Nagra, Chair

Punjabi Market Collective



November 10, 2024

Mayor Sim and Members of Vancouver City Council,

On behalf of the South Asian Arts Society, I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for the motion to establish a South Asian Centre of Excellence in Vancouver. This initiative is a direct reflection of years of community consultation and engagement, and we commend the City for its proactive approach in addressing the needs of the South Asian community.

Since the introduction of Councillor Louie's motion in 2016, advocating for the revitalization of the Punjabi Market, the City has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to enhancing cultural spaces, fostering community engagement, and revitalizing our neighborhoods. The 2017 retail study highlighted the importance of "distinctive architectural features" and "public spaces" as essential elements to showcase the area's cultural richness. Additionally, reports from organizations such as SVNH and the HDSA have further underscored the pressing need for dedicated cultural gathering spaces, particularly in South Vancouver and Marpole, making the South Asian Centre of Excellence a critical priority.

Over the years, motions from Councillors Fry, Boyle, and more recently, Councillor Zhou, have reinforced the need for a community-driven space that goes beyond the traditional model of a museum. This Centre should be a dynamic, multifaceted hub—one that celebrates the arts, innovation, cultural exchange, and community collaboration. It will offer youth opportunities to engage with their heritage, provide a platform for local non-profits, and create a place for Vancouver residents to connect across cultures. Given its proximity to Langara College, the Centre will also present exciting educational opportunities and strengthen ties between the local community and institutions of learning.

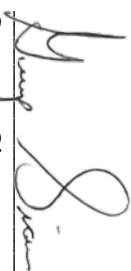
We are also mindful of the provincial government's consultations with the South Asian community on this issue, and we strongly encourage the City to incorporate this valuable feedback as it moves forward with planning. While there may be misconceptions about the South Asian community dispersing to other parts of the Lower Mainland, Vancouver's South Asian population continues to grow. This makes it even more essential for the City to invest in infrastructure that reflects and supports the needs of this vibrant, diverse demographic.

The South Asian Centre of Excellence will not only preserve and promote cultural heritage, but it will also become a beacon of creativity, entrepreneurship, and collaboration. It will enrich the cultural fabric of Vancouver, foster economic growth, and serve as a testament to our City's ongoing commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

On behalf of the South Asian Arts Society and numerous other community organizations, we wholeheartedly support the creation of the South Asian Centre of Excellence. We urge the City Council to act swiftly in making this vision a reality. We look forward to working with the City to ensure that this Centre becomes a source of unity, pride, and cultural vitality for generations to come.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gurpreet Sian", written over a horizontal line.

Gurpreet Sian  
Executive Director, South Asian Arts Society



# HINDU TEMPLE BURNABY

Hindu Cultural Society and Community Centre of B.C.  
5420 Marine Drive, Burnaby, B.C. V5J 3G8 Tel: 604.299.5922  
www.hindutempleburnaby.com



Ramesh Bakshi  
Hindu Temple Burnaby  
5420 Marine Dr, Burnaby, BC V5J 3G8  
s.22(1)

Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Mayor Sim and Members of Vancouver City Council,

On behalf of the Hindu Temple Burnaby, I am writing to offer our enthusiastic support for the motion to establish a South Asian Centre of Excellence in Vancouver. This motion is the result of years of community feedback and engagement, and we commend the City for responding thoughtfully to the needs of the South Asian community.

Since the introduction of Councillor Louie's motion in 2016, which called for a revitalized Punjabi Market, the City has demonstrated a consistent commitment to enhancing cultural spaces, encouraging community involvement, and renewing the vibrancy of our neighbourhoods. The 2017 retail study emphasized the importance of "distinctive architectural features" and "public spaces" to reflect the cultural richness of the area. Subsequent reports, including those from SVNH and the HDSA, have highlighted the critical need for cultural gathering spaces, particularly in South Vancouver and Marpole, further demonstrating the importance of this Centre.

Over the years, motions from Councillors Fry, Boyle, and now, Zhou have consistently reinforced the need for a community space that goes beyond being a simple museum. This Centre should serve as a dynamic space for arts, innovation, cultural exchange, and community collaboration, where youth can engage, non-profits can flourish, and local residents can connect. Given Langara College's proximity, this Centre would also create valuable educational partnerships that will enrich both the immediate neighbourhood and the city as a whole.

We are aware of the provincial government's engagement with the South Asian community on this topic, and we strongly encourage the City to integrate this important feedback as it continues with its planning. Vancouver's South Asian population continues to grow, despite misconceptions that community is moving to other parts of the lower mainland, making it imperative for the city to invest in the infrastructure necessary to support this diverse and thriving demographic.

This Centre is not only a space for preserving cultural heritage—it will also be a hub for creativity, entrepreneurship, and collaboration that will benefit all residents of Vancouver. It will enhance tourism, contribute to economic development, and serve as a powerful symbol of Vancouver's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

On behalf of the Hindu Temple Burnaby and many other community organizations, we fully support the creation of the South Asian Centre of Excellence and urge City Council to act swiftly in bringing this vision to fruition. We are eager to collaborate with the City to ensure this Centre becomes a lasting beacon of unity, pride, and cultural vitality for generations to come.

Thank you for your continued support of our community.

Sincerely,  
Ramesh Bakshi  
President

Hindu Temple Burnaby





## Heritage Vancouver

www.heritagevancouver.org  
info@heritagevancouver.org  
604 254 9411

C/O UBC Learning Exchange  
612 Main Street, Vancouver, BC  
Canada, V6A 2V3

November 12, 2024  
Mayor Sim and Vancouver City Council  
Vancouver City Hall  
453 West 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver BC V5V 1V4

Re: Establishing a South Asian Centre of Excellence in Vancouver

Dear Mayor and Council,

The Punjabi Market Collective (PMC) reached out to us about the motion to establish a South Asian Centre of Excellence in Vancouver. We have been friends and colleagues of PMC for a number of years, supporting their efforts to sustain the cultural heritage of Punjabi Market and create vibrancy for the neighbourhood through arts and culture, connecting Vancouverites and anyone else interested with the history, culture and experiences that Punjabi Market offers.

As mentioned in their letter, this opportunity comes through a culmination of efforts to realize a vision for recognition, inclusion and revitalization to acknowledge the contributions of the South Asian community through a number of City of Vancouver motions, studies and meetings. We have been fortunate enough to work with PMC in some of these important motions and initiatives and understand how significant this opportunity for a South Asian Centre of Excellence somewhere in Vancouver is. It is not just significant to their work and mission, but also to the community members, organizations and leaders passionately engaged in equity and inclusion work for the South Asian community, and the people, whether of South Asian heritage or not, who appreciate and wish to experience South Asian cultural heritage. We would like to extend our support to this motion which attempts to realize such an important place for the South Asian community.

Sincerely,

Bill Yuen

Executive Director  
Heritage Vancouver Society



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# KHALSA DIWAN SOCIETY

## GURDWARA SAHIB

(Established 1906)

8000 Ross Street, Vancouver BC V5X 4C5 • Tel: 604-322-5610 or 604-324-2010  
Fax: 604-322-0504 • Email: kdsross@live.com



November 10th, 2024

Mayor Sim and Members of Vancouver City Council,

On behalf of the Khalsa Diwan Society Vancouver (KDS), I am writing to express our strong and enthusiastic support for the motion to establish a South Asian Centre of Excellence in Vancouver. This motion is the result of years of thoughtful consultation and community engagement, and we commend the City for its responsiveness to the needs of the South Asian community.

Since the 2016 motion introduced by Councillor Louie, which highlighted the desire for a revitalized Punjabi Market, the City has consistently prioritized enhancing cultural spaces, fostering community participation, and revitalizing key neighbourhoods. The 2017 retail study further emphasized the need for "distinctive architectural features" and "public spaces" that celebrate the cultural identity of the area. Additionally, studies by organizations such as SVNH and the HDSA report have underscored the critical gap in cultural gathering spaces in South Vancouver and Marpole, reinforcing the importance of this Centre as a community anchor.

Motions from Councillors Fry, Boyle, and Zhou have highlighted the need for a community gathering space, which should go beyond a museum to serve as a dynamic space for arts, innovation, and cultural exchange. This Centre should foster opportunities for collaboration, where youth can thrive, non-profits can flourish, and residents can connect with one another. With Langara College nearby, the Centre also has the potential to develop valuable educational and creative partnerships that will benefit both the local community and the city as a whole.

We are aware of the provincial government's engagement with the South Asian community on this topic, and we strongly encourage the City to incorporate this valuable feedback as it continues its planning. Vancouver's South Asian population continues to grow, slowly but steadily, with an increasing number of communities, including those from Sri Lanka and other parts of South Asia, making it even more crucial for the City to invest in infrastructure that will support and nurture this diverse, vibrant population.

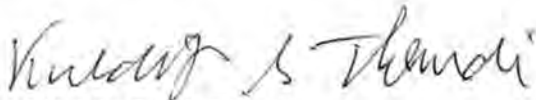
This Centre is more than just a space to preserve cultural heritage—it will be a vibrant hub for creativity, entrepreneurship, and collaboration that will benefit all Vancouver residents. Not only

will it contribute to tourism and economic development, but it will also serve as a visible testament to Vancouver's commitment to inclusion, cultural diversity, and equity.

On behalf of Khalsa Diwan Society Vancouver (KDS) and many other grassroots organizations, we fully support the creation of the South Asian Centre of Excellence and urge City Council to take prompt action to make this vision a reality. We are ready to collaborate with the City to ensure this Centre becomes a proud symbol of unity, cultural vitality, and community pride for future generations.

Thank you for your continued support of our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kuldip Singh Thandi". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a dark ink on a white background.

Kuldip Singh Thandi

Khalsa Diwan Society Vancouver (KDS) - President





# Khalsa Wrestling & Culture Club Association

13880 Grosvenor Road, Surrey BC, V3R-5G1

*"Pursuit of Excellence"*



November 10, 2024

Mayor Sim and Members of Vancouver City Council,

I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for the motion to establish a South Asian Centre of Excellence in Vancouver. This initiative is a direct reflection of years of community consultation and engagement, and we commend the City for its proactive approach in addressing the needs of the South Asian community.

Since the introduction of Councillor Louie's motion in 2016, advocating for the revitalization of the Punjabi Market, the City has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to enhancing cultural spaces, fostering community engagement, and revitalizing our neighborhoods. The 2017 retail study highlighted the importance of "distinctive architectural features" and "public spaces" as essential elements to showcase the area's cultural richness. Additionally, reports from organizations such as SVNH and the HDSA have further underscored the pressing need for dedicated cultural gathering spaces, particularly in South Vancouver and Marpole, making the South Asian Centre of Excellence a critical priority.

Over the years, motions from Councillors Fry, Boyle, and more recently, Councillor Zhou, have reinforced the need for a community-driven space that goes beyond the traditional model of a museum. This Centre should be a dynamic, multifaceted hub—one that celebrates the arts, innovation, cultural exchange, and community collaboration. It will offer youth opportunities to engage with their heritage, provide a platform for local non-profits, and create a place for Vancouver residents to connect across cultures. Given its proximity to Langara College, the Centre will also present exciting educational opportunities and strengthen ties between the local community and institutions of learning.

We are also mindful of the provincial government's consultations with the South Asian community on this issue, and we strongly encourage the City to incorporate this valuable feedback as it moves forward with planning. While there may be misconceptions about the South Asian community dispersing to other parts of the Lower Mainland, Vancouver's South Asian population continues to grow. This makes it even more essential for the City to invest in infrastructure that reflects and supports the needs of this vibrant, diverse demographic.

The South Asian Centre of Excellence will not only preserve and promote cultural heritage, but it will also become a beacon of creativity, entrepreneurship, and collaboration. It will enrich the cultural fabric of Vancouver, foster economic growth, and serve as a testament to our City's ongoing commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.



I along with numerous other community organizations, we wholeheartedly support the creation of the South Asian Centre of Excellence. We urge the City Council to act swiftly in making this vision a reality. We look forward to working with the City to ensure that this Centre becomes a source of unity, pride, and cultural vitality for generations to come.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our community.



Gurdeep Beesla  
Vice President  
Khalsa Wrestling & Culture Club Association





**We Serve**

November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Mayor Ken Sim  
Councillor Mike Klassen  
Councillor Sarah Kirby Yung  
Councillor Christine Boyle  
Councillor Pete Fry  
Councillor Adriane Carr  
Councillor Rebecca Bligh  
Councillor Lisa Dominato  
Councillor Peter Meiszner  
Councillor Lenny Zhou  
Councillor Brian Montague

Dear Mr. Mayor and Councillors:

Re: **Support for South Asian Centre of Excellence in Vancouver**

On behalf of the Vancouver Lions Club, I am writing to express our full support for the motion to establish a South Asian Centre of Excellence in Vancouver. This initiative reflects years of community input and engagement, and we commend the City for its thoughtful response to the needs of the South Asian community.

Since the introduction of Councillor Louie's motion in 2016, advocating for the revitalization of the Punjabi Market, the City has shown a steadfast commitment to enhancing cultural spaces, fostering community involvement, and renewing the vitality of our neighborhoods. The 2017 retail study highlighted the significance of "distinctive architectural features" and "public spaces" as key elements to represent the cultural richness of the area. Further reports, including those from SVNH and the HDSA, have underscored the pressing need for cultural gathering spaces, particularly in South Vancouver and Marpole, further reinforcing the importance of this Centre.

Over the years, motions from Councillors Fry, Boyle, and more recently, Councillor Zhou, have consistently emphasized the need for a community space that transcends the concept of a traditional museum. This Centre should serve as a vibrant hub for arts, innovation, cultural exchange, and community collaboration—where youth can engage, non-profits can thrive, and local residents can connect. Given the proximity of Langara College, the Centre would also provide valuable opportunities for educational partnerships, benefiting both the local community and the city at large.



**We Serve**

-2-

We are aware of the provincial government's consultations with the South Asian community on this matter and strongly encourage the City to integrate this important feedback as it moves forward with its planning. Despite misconceptions that the South Asian community is relocating to other areas of the Lower Mainland, Vancouver's South Asian population continues to grow, making it all the more essential for the City to invest in infrastructure that supports this dynamic and diverse demographic.

This Centre will not only serve as a space for preserving cultural heritage, but it will also become a center for creativity, entrepreneurship, and collaboration, benefiting all Vancouver residents. It will enhance tourism, contribute to economic growth, and stand as a powerful symbol of Vancouver's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

On behalf of the Vancouver Lions Club and numerous other community organizations, we wholeheartedly support the creation of the South Asian Centre of Excellence. We urge the City Council to move swiftly in turning this vision into a reality. We look forward to collaborating with the City to ensure that this Centre becomes a lasting source of unity, pride, and cultural vitality for generations to come.

Thank you for your continued support of our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dave Pasin', written in a cursive style.

Dave Pasin  
President  
Vancouver South Lions Club

Gurbux Singh Sidhu  
Indo Canadian Seniors Society

s.22(1)

Nov. 10th, 2024

Mayor Sim and Members of Vancouver City Council.

I am writing on behalf of the Indo Canadian Seniors Society, which gathers at Sunset Community Centre, to express our strong support for the motion to build a South Asian Centre of Excellence in Vancouver. This motion is the culmination of nearly a decade of consultation and community input, and we commend the City for its ongoing commitment to addressing the needs of our community.

The South Asian community has consistently called for a space that fosters cultural, social, and economic vibrancy. Starting with Councillor Louie's 2016 motion, which highlighted the community's desire for a revitalized Punjabi Market, the City has listened to and acted on these needs. The 2017 retail study, for example, identified the desire for "distinctive architectural features" and "public spaces" that reflect the cultural richness of the area. Further studies, including those by SVNH and the HDSA report, underscored the lack of cultural and gathering spaces, particularly in South Vancouver and Marpole.

Through the years, motions from Councillors Fry, Boyle, and now, Zhou have all pointed to the pressing need for a community space, echoing the community's call for a space that goes beyond a museum. This Centre should serve as a hub for arts, innovation, and collaboration, where local youth can thrive, non-profits can operate, and cultural programming can flourish. With Langara College just down the street, this Centre can also serve as a catalyst for educational and creative partnerships.

The provincial government has conducted its own engagement with the South Asian community, and we ask the City to incorporate this data as it moves forward with its plans. As Vancouver's South Asian population continues to grow at a slow and steady pace, the time is now to invest in the infrastructure that will help our community continue to contribute to the city's cultural and economic vitality.

This Centre is not just about preserving heritage—it is about creating a space for innovation, entrepreneurship, and collaboration that will benefit all Vancouverites. It will enhance tourism, contribute to economic development, and become a proud symbol of Vancouver's commitment to inclusion and cultural diversity.

On behalf of the Indo Canadian Seniors Society and many grassroots organizations, I fully support the motion to create a South Asian Centre of Excellence and urge Council to take the next steps in making this vision a reality. We stand ready to work with the City to ensure that this space uplifts our community for generations to come.

Thank you for your continued support of our community.

Sincerely,



Gurbux Singh Sidhu  
Indo Canadian Seniors Society - President