



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Committee

From: Marie Fenwick
Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services

Re: **Steveston Heritage Sites Update**

Date: October 4, 2019

File: 11-7000-01/2019-Vol
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Staff Recommendation

That staff develop a Steveston Heritage Sites Interpretive Plan to guide the future conservation, interpretation, exhibit and program development of City-owned heritage sites in Steveston, as described in the staff report titled "Steveston Heritage Sites Update," dated October 4, 2019, from the Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services.

Marie Fenwick
Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services
(604-276-4288)

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS:
APPROVED BY CAO	

Staff Report

Origin

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the status of Steveston's Heritage Sites, including the work completed to date and next steps related to the following referrals:

The April 24, 2019 referral motion:

That staff update the London Farm Master Plan and investigate the cost, and potential, of reconstructing a timber barn, similar to the barn re-constructed, with a barn raising event, in Ladner by Delta Municipality.

The March 26, 2019 referral motion:

That governance of Steveston Heritage sites be reviewed to consider: (1) the establishment of an overall Steveston Heritage Sites Board including London Farm, Britannia Shipyard, Steveston Museum, and Gulf of Georgia Cannery Societies, with possible representation from the Heritage Commission; (2) the responsibility of the Steveston Historical Society be expanded to include the Steveston Tram and Branscombe House; and (3) the responsibility of the Britannia Heritage Shipyard Society be expanded to include the Phoenix Net Loft and new moorage float, Imperial Landing Float, Garry Point Pilings, and Scotch Pond.

The February 26, 2019 referral motion:

That staff examine the current status of City-owned facilities in Steveston Village and make recommendations to ensure these facilities are developed, maintained, managed and operated in an holistic and complementary manner. The response should address: (i) London Heritage Farm, Britannia Shipyards, Phoenix Net Loft, Steveston Tram, Steveston Museum, Imperial Landing Floats, Garry Point Park Pilings and potential pier, Scotch Pond and Branscombe House; (ii) The facilities current operations and management structure; (iii) The status of currently approved and future capital projects; and (iv) The status of relevant existing referrals and how they relate to the work that is currently underway.

The February 11, 2019 referral motion:

That staff look into the potential for charging admission to the Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site.

The January 30, 2018 referral motion:

That staff examine the potential to incorporate First Nations' house posts at the entrance of the First Nations Bunkhouse at Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site and report back.

The January 30, 2018 referral motion:

That staff examine removing the caretaker suite from Point House at Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site and install exhibits and display First Nations' stories and report back.

The May 25, 2016 referral motion:

That staff examine options to restore The Fleetwood as an indoor civic art project using the City's Public Art Reserve Fund and report back.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #3 One Community Together:

Vibrant and diverse arts and cultural activities and opportunities for community engagement and connection.

3.2 Enhance arts and cultural programs and activities.

3.4 Celebrate Richmond's unique and diverse history and heritage.

Analysis

Background

Richmond is a city that proudly celebrates its past and has invested in the preservation and ongoing operations of its heritage sites. While much has been done, there remains significant opportunity for further conservation, interpretation, exhibit and program development of the heritage sites. In order to maximize the impact of current and future investments in these sites, it is critical that future initiatives be developed and implemented in a coordinated manner.

The Museum and Heritage Year in Review 2018, received for information by Council on April 8, 2019, highlighted many of the recent initiatives at the heritage sites.

Much has happened in 2019, both from a public-facing perspective, and behind the scenes, to advance previously approved Council strategies and referrals.

The status of this work is summarized below.

Steveston Heritage Sites Governance

There are a number of groups currently involved in the ongoing operations of City-owned Steveston Heritage Sites. The current status of each organization and its relationship to the City is as follows:

- The Britannia Heritage Shipyard Society entered into its most recent operating agreement with the City in 2016. The City maintains a good working relationship with the Board. The Board has expressed an interest in reviewing its role at Britannia Shipyards and updating the operating agreement accordingly.

- The Steveston Historical Society Board of Directors approved entering into a new operating agreement with the City in October 2019 and staff are currently working to execute this agreement. The Society contributes to programming at the Steveston Museum and receives an annual subsidy to support the operation of the Post Office. They have taken the lead on increasing collaboration with the other heritage societies in Steveston.
- The London Heritage Farm Society has recently gone through a significant reexamination of its role at London Farm. The Society has ceased operating the tea room, coordinating rentals and events. The Board has expressed an interest in continuing to be involved in the coordination of the community gardens, maintaining the heritage gardens, and in playing an advisory role in regards to future programming at London Farm. Staff are in the process of collaborating with the Society on a revised agreement that reflects this role and will report back to Council.
- The Scotch Pond Heritage Cooperative continues to operate Scotch Pond based on the terms of the 1993 License to Occupy Agreement.

The following actions have been taken to advance the March 26, 2019 referral motion to review the governance of Steveston Heritage Sites.

- The Chair of the Steveston Historical Society, in collaboration with City staff, has taken the lead on opening a dialogue with Britannia Heritage Shipyard Society and the London Heritage Farm Society. Discussions include increasing collaboration between the three sites in both the short and long term, as well as considering the potential benefits of one board for all the City-owned heritage sites in Steveston. Traditionally, each of these organizations has focused on the operation of their individual sites. In recent years, there has been an increase in discussion within the boards internally and with each other regarding opportunities for greater coordination and collaboration.
- These three societies are collaborating with staff to plan a facilitated session before the end 2019 to explore the future of their organizations and the overall management of the Steveston Heritage Sites. There is a great deal of pride and commitment within these organizations for their individual sites. A steady, but measured approach will help to ensure that this community-driven process remains positive for all parties.

Staff will provide regular updates to Council as this process moves forward.

2019 Steveston Heritage Sites Highlights

In addition to the actions outlined in the Museum and Heritage Services Year in Review 2018 a number of initiatives from the Council-approved Britannia Shipyards Strategic Development Plan, and other existing plans and strategies, have been implemented in 2019.

Living History - The *Living History* program was launched at Britannia Shipyards, London Heritage Farm, Steveston Museum and the Steveston Tram. This program involves costumed staff and volunteers offering hands-on demonstrations and activities. Ninety costumes were designed and produced for a variety of “characters” across the sites. This volume was required to

meet the needs of a variety of staff and volunteers and to represent a diverse mix of individuals from Steveston's rich history. There are 8-12 Living History demonstrations being offered across the sites daily. The launch of a new *Living History* volunteer initiative was key to the success of this program. Volunteers are coordinated across sites, rather than at each site individually. Thirty nine active volunteers have contributed over 700 hours to the *Living History* program since its launch in spring 2019. This is in addition to special events and other volunteers who continue to remain active at the sites.

School programs - Are now coordinated across all the Steveston Heritage Sites, creating greater consistency and more efficiencies in the development and delivery of these programs. School program participation has increased by 40 percent with over 2,500 students participating in school programs this year to date. Several new school programs address gaps present in the previous program slate. Additionally, with the Tram restoration complete, this site is more suitable for the delivery of educational programs. To provide better customer service, new online school program booking procedures were developed and implemented, and training materials and sessions for program facilitators were standardized.

New educational programs include:

- Steveston Tram;
- All Aboard Tram Car 1220;
- Rails Across Richmond; and
- Facing Change in Richmond (at Britannia Shipyards).

Wooden Boat Programming - For the first time, the Silver Ann traveled to the Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival to represent the Britannia Shipyards and the City of Richmond. The boat was well received by festival attendees.

Winter in the Village - In order to provide enhanced programming and a draw to Steveston Village in the slower winter months, the Steveston Heritage Sites are taking the lead on building on the success of the 2018 *Winter in the Village* initiative.

New activities for 2019 will include:

- Winter Window Display Contest with the merchants in Steveston Village;
- Singing Trees in Town Square Park, sponsored by Tourism Richmond. This activity will include interactive lights that will change colours to voices, instruments and sounds. This will be a highlight during the Songs in the Snow event happening over three Saturday evenings in December;
- More lights will be brought into Steveston Village;
- Steveston History Hunters Scavenger Hunt for Children under 12; and
- Registered programs at London Heritage Farm include making ornaments, garlands, yule log centre pieces and wreaths.

2019 Research/ Data Collection - Visitor surveys continue to be collected across the sites to ensure data is continually up to date to help inform future planning. Over 1,500 visitor surveys

have been collected year to date. Results from the surveys will be compiled and presented in the 2019 Museum and Heritage Services Year in Review.

Site Improvements - Site improvements are ongoing throughout the Steveston Heritage Sites. 2019 projects to date include:

- Significant exhibit work was done throughout the Britannia Shipyards site to allow for an improved self-guided experience. This work included additional interpretive signage, securing of artefacts and the addition of visually-appealing barriers where required for safety purposes;
- Revitalizing the “festival field” in the centre of the Britannia Shipyards site;
- Revitalizing Murakami Garden based on archival images of the original garden site;
- Removal of uninviting chain link fence and installation of safety fence and other barriers to improve safety at Britannia Shipyards;
- Clean-up and staging of the Richmond Boat Builders making the space useable for programs and events; and
- Planning work for the London Farm house envelope project approved in the 2019 capital program is underway.

Operational Review - Through a comprehensive operational review, staff determined that within existing positions, work could be organized across sites as opposed to staff focusing on all the functions at a single site. School program development and delivery, volunteer coordination, site programming, social media/marketing and special events are all functions that now are coordinated across sites. This has helped improve organization and created efficiencies that allow the same size staff team to deliver an increased level of service to the community.

Partnerships and Collaboration - Much of the work that has been completed has involved consultation and collaboration with other groups in addition to the City-affiliated societies.

- The heritage sites are currently working with Tourism Richmond on the development and implementation of a Steveston Tourism Strategy, in addition to other initiatives.
- The Steveston Merchants Association continues to be a key collaborator with the *Winter in the Village* program.
- Staff continue to coordinate and collaborate with the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site on many initiatives, including the *Steveston Heritage Experience* tour.

Proposed Steveston Heritage Sites Interpretive Plan

Steveston is home to five City-owned heritage sites which are currently open to the public and offer exhibits, programs, and a variety of passive and interactive interpretive opportunities - London Heritage Farm, Britannia Shipyards, Steveston Tram, Steveston Museum and Branscombe House. While each site tells an important part of the Steveston story, a comprehensive interpretive plan has never been developed.

Interpretive plans are the foundational documents at heritage institutions and other informal learning facilities that provide the vision for future visitor experiences and recommend the best ways to achieve this vision. They guide the further design and development of the facilities and are a resource for conservation, landscaping, exhibit design and program planning. Interpretive plans are the initial step in the planning and design process. They set the framework for making constructive decisions on how to communicate key messages and information to audiences through meaningful experiences, site management and business planning.

An interpretive plan will:

- Establish a set of goals;
- Identify target audiences; and
- Develop themes.

The conservation, interpretation, exhibit and program development at Steveston's Heritage Sites has been implemented with a project-based approach. There has never been an overarching interpretive plan for the sites collectively, or for each site individually. As noted above, there are three individual societies that have partnered with the City to support program development and delivery. While there has been some degree of collaboration, each Society has naturally focused on its own site.

Through an integrated interpretive planning process, the heritage sites and other assets in Steveston, including the waterfront and natural areas, can be developed and managed in a more holistic manner. The development of a comprehensive Interpretive Plan for Steveston Heritage Sites will inform all future site planning, exhibit development, interpretive and way finding signage, conservation-related projects, school programs, public programs events and governance models for heritage sites.

An Interpretive Plan will provide a vision for future visitor experiences and recommend the best way to achieve this vision. It will guide the further design and development of the facilities and will be a resource for conservation, landscaping, exhibit design and program planning. This plan will set the framework for making constructive decisions on how to communicate key messages and information to audiences through meaningful experiences.

Additional information related to the current status of individual heritage sites, the status of the existing referrals, and both approved and anticipated capital projects are outlined below.

London Heritage Farm

- Funding for improved park signage was approved and will be addressed in the Interpretive Plan.
- As per the referral, a London Heritage Farm Park Masterplan, including a potential barn, will be addressed in the Interpretive Plan.

Britannia Shipyards

- Planning for the Phoenix Net Loft conservation is underway and will be the subject of a future Report to Council.
- The key short-term recommendations of the Britannia Shipyards Strategic Development Plan (Strategic Development Plan) endorsed by Council July 9, 2018, are currently and will continue to be implemented. In the short and medium term (2018-2022) the Strategic Development Plan recommends focusing financial and human resources on completing the heritage conservation and exhibit development at the site, as well as investing in program development. As per the Council approved Strategic Development Plan, charging admission should be considered after the site's remaining buildings have been completed and programming is further developed.
- Staff have initiated conversations with local Indigenous communities and others to discuss the conservation and exhibit and program plans for First Nations Bunkhouse and Japanese Duplex. House posts will be addressed in the Interpretive Plan.
- A plan for boats at the Britannia site, including the Fleetwood, Burnaby, Silver Ann, Portage Queen, Iona and Starliner, will be addressed in the Interpretive Plan.
- The landscape plan including arrival points, visitor flow, soft and hard landscaping, wayfinding and interpretive signage throughout the site including on the docks and floats, will be addressed in the Interpretive Plan.

Steveston Tram

- The feasibility of operating the tram in Steveston is being reviewed and is the subject of a future report to Council anticipated in Q4 2019.
- Funding for exterior signage is approved and will be addressed in the Interpretive Plan.
- Enhanced interior exhibits should be considered and will be addressed in the Interpretive Plan.

Steveston Museum

- Potential exhibit updates/changes and additional program opportunities will be considered and addressed in the Interpretive Plan.

Branscombe House

- Enhancing the space through exhibit development and additional programming will be addressed in the Interpretive Plan.

Scotch Pond

- As this is not currently operated as a publically accessible community space, planning for the future of Scotch Pond will require a slightly different approach than the other sites but will be considered as part of the Interpretive Plan.

- Scotch Pond continues to be managed by the Scotch Pond Heritage Cooperative and provides moorage and storage for members of the Cooperative. Members of the Cooperative have brought the need for dredging to the City's attention. A review of the condition of the site and facility, including floats, piles and the net shed facility will be undertaken in order to understand the current and future capital investments that will be required in order to maintain this facility.

In addition to the more site-specific items noted above, a comprehensive wayfinding and interpretive plan that connects and interprets these sites and other points of interest throughout Steveston Village will be addressed in the Interpretive Plan.

Next Steps

Staff will continue to build on the current offer of programs and activities at the Steveston Historic Sites based on existing Council direction and within current resources.

A priority for Q4 2019 will be to support the historic societies in their expressed goal of working more collaboratively across sites and engage them in the development of the Interpretive Plan. This collaboration will be key to both the successful development and execution of the Interpretive Plan. The development of the plan will be a complex process requiring the input of multiple local community groups, Indigenous communities and individuals.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact at this time. Any recommendations of the Interpretive Plan that require additional funding will be the subject of future reports to Council and the annual budget processes.

Conclusion

Developing a Steveston Heritage Sites Interpretive Plan will guide future conservation, interpretation, exhibit and program development of City-owned sites in Steveston in a holistic manner. This will ensure that Steveston's historic sites continue to be a valued community asset.



Marie Fenwick
Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services
(604-276-4288)