

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

At the Regular Council meeting on June 11, 2019, Council referred the following motions to the Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities meeting on June 12, 2019, to hear from speakers, with a start time of 3pm.

Submitted by Councillor Fry

### WHEREAS

1. Sikhism is a religion that originated during the 15th century in the Punjab region of India. Today, over 150,000 Metro Vancouverites identify as Sikh;
2. The first wave of Sikh immigration to Vancouver occurred in 1904. Despite many historic injustices and institutionalized racism, in 1947 Sikhs were given the right to vote and become Canadian citizens;
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, jewellery 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 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 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Punjabi Market and as part of the City-wide planning process: to imagine the future of the Punjabi Market.

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