

COUNCIL MEMBER'S MOTION

3. **Placekeeping: Protecting and Supporting Cultural Food Assets and Other Forms of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Vancouver**

Submitted by: Councillor Boyle

WHEREAS

1. Vancouverites continue to express concern about the loss of places of intangible cultural heritage, including beloved small businesses, restaurants and other cultural food assets. The threat of loss of these spaces is particularly acute for migrant and newcomer communities, and other equity-denied groups, because of the role that small local businesses play as an economic driver and the role that food plays in connections to culture, community and identity;
2. Intangible cultural heritage refers to the forms of culture that are important to groups of people, and are embedded in everyday life (for example Filipino/Pilipino food culture). Cultural food assets are a significant example of intangible cultural heritage, where intangible cultural heritage can be accessed, experienced and transmitted. Cultural food assets include many small businesses such as green grocers, restaurants, food courts, and venues or services which are significant to a community or neighbourhood. These spaces look and function in unique ways within different communities and may require different approaches to protection and promotion;
3. Long-standing Vancouver housing policy has limited new rental and multi-family housing to arterials, putting added speculative and development pressure on commercial stretches including many culturally significant small and local businesses and cultural food assets, representing a significant risk to the intangible cultural heritage of many of Vancouver's neighborhoods. Planner and past Vancouver Councillor Gordon Price refers to this intentional political and policy choice as the "Grand Bargain".¹ Additionally, new ground floor commercial spaces tend to have larger floor plates that are less economically viable for many small, locally-owned businesses;
4. In recent decades the majority of new rental and multi-family housing has been built in low- and middle-income neighbourhoods, and neighbourhoods with a higher percentage of racialized and immigrant residents. These neighbourhoods are home to many small businesses significant to equity-denied communities, resulting in greater risk of displacement due to redevelopment;
5. COVID-19 continues to create significant financial pressure on small businesses, and existing inequalities have been exacerbated by the pandemic, creating additional pressure on small businesses, culturally focused non-profits, or food assets critical to a neighbourhood or a community's culture. Vancouver City

¹ <https://viewpointvancouver.ca/2019/10/17/the-grand-bargain-illustrated/>

Council and small business leaders have been calling for Split Assessment taxation as one tool to relieve pressure on small local businesses;

6. The COVID-19 pandemic has also uncovered systemic food insecurity within racialized and equity-seeking communities most impacted by unemployment, precarious or unsafe work. And has resulted in delays in a number of city programs, including continued work on increasing the financial accessibility and availability of food access and an update to the Vancouver Food Strategy Report. In many neighbourhoods local food networks or non-profit organizations have stepped in to fill these gaps;
7. Grassroots community mobilization in a variety of Vancouver neighbourhoods have spearheaded the protection and revitalization of cultural food assets, and have been calling on the City of Vancouver to act to protect culturally significant food assets across the city:
 - a. Organizations such as hua foundation, Chinatown Concern Group, the City of Vancouver's Chinatown Legacy Stewardship Group, Youth Collaborative for Chinatown, and Yarrow Intergenerational Society for Justice have been supporting heritage business retention, intergenerational community building and affordability advocacy in Chinatown.
 - b. The Punjabi Market Collective is a group of passionate advocates, artists, students and entrepreneurs who are working towards revitalizing Vancouver's historic Punjabi Market by beautifying the market, developing and promoting businesses and creating a hub for arts and culture.
 - c. The Joyce St Action Network is a group of Filipino/Pilipino and Chinese community organizers who have been working to support the retention of six Chinese, Korean and Filipino/Pilipino cultural food assets currently at risk of displacement near Joyce Station.
 - d. The Hogans Alley Society and Black and African diaspora residents have been working for cultural redress for the black community in North East False Creek, recognizing the historic displacement of the black community, including black agriculture and businesses. The Nora Hendrix TMH includes a culturally rooted food and herb garden for residents and the community.
8. The work of Vancouver's Taskforce on Implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), composed of elected officials from Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil Waututh Nations and the City of Vancouver, and engagement with Urban Indigenous communities is framed around four themes including "Social, Cultural and Economic Well-Being". The relationships between land, culture and heritage are an important part of this discussion, related to multiple articles of UNDRIP;
9. In March 2020, Vancouver City Council approved the Heritage Action Plan - Vancouver Heritage Program, which included a commitment to better integrate

Truth & Reconciliation, Cultural Redress, and Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage;

10. In 2019, Council approved Culture|Shift: Blanketing the City in Arts and Culture, which included directions to prioritize intangible cultural heritage and promote cultural redress and to prevent displacement and support affordable, accessible, secure arts and culture spaces. Cultural Services is working with the Heritage Group on incorporating intangible heritage into Vancouver Heritage Register;
11. The City of Vancouver has a number of other important initiatives completed or underway that intersect with cultural food assets and intangible cultural heritage, including: The Chinatown Legacy Business Study; Spaces to Thrive: Vancouver's Social Infrastructure Strategy; a Chinatown Cultural Heritage Asset Management Plan led by the Chinatown Transformation Team; the Downtown Eastside Special Enterprise Pilot Program, a Commercial Tenant Assistance Program through the Employment Lands and Economy Review; cultural redress within the North False Creek Plan, including supporting work of both the Black community and Chinatown community-led efforts around land trusts;
12. Municipal level policies and protections in other cities provide examples that Vancouver should explore for protecting cultural food assets and other forms of intangible cultural heritage:
 - a. Integrating tangible and intangible cultural heritage into Heritage Protection processes. This should begin with community-led identification of places or assets of community value, and tools for both protecting and/or promoting those places. Community groups should be appropriately resourced to do this work. Intangible heritage tools include the co-development of intangible cultural heritage criteria, an intangible cultural heritage registry, promotion of identified places, funding and business supports, and more. Similar approaches exist in London's recent Grassroots Music Venues Rescue Plan, and the advocacy and forward thinking which resulted in the protection of Toronto's historic Silver Dollar Room.
 - b. Developing protections for cultural food assets, assets of community value and other forms of intangible cultural heritage within the redevelopment process. This could include requiring new developments to demonstrate adequate community consultation and show a plan for preserving existing cultural food assets and other forms of intangible cultural heritage. Examples include San Francisco's Formula Business (chain store) restrictions which require Conditional Use authorization for all formula (chain) retail establishments within all Neighbourhood Commercial Districts², or the Agent of Change Principle as seen within the Australian, Music Victoria 2014 Position Paper.³

² Policy basis for formula businesses (chain stores) in San Francisco.
<https://sfplanning.org/project/policy-basis-formula-retail-chain-stores>

³ https://www.musicvictoria.com.au/wp-content/uploads/bsk-pdf-manager/2019/07/MV_positions_and_priorities2014.pdf

- c. The development of Municipal Cultural Districts or Zones (that could include a Land Trust model). This would require working with community partners to identify eligibility criteria for determining what qualifies as a cultural district, as well as the particular needs for each district and the appropriate mechanisms necessary for the protection and promotion of intangible cultural heritage assets. Or could take a City-wide approach that could be adapted for different contexts and communities. Examples of this approach include the Bloor St. Culture Corridor in Toronto, Mississauga's Cultural Districts Implementation Plan, and San Francisco's Cultural Districts, as well as conversations already underway in Vancouver's Chinatown.
13. Intangible cultural heritage is traditional, contemporary and constantly adapting. Due to challenges in defining which food assets are considered culturally significant, the process and the mechanisms by which these assets are defined and supported should be community-led and resourced appropriately; and
 14. The vibrancy of Vancouver neighbourhoods is created by the diverse communities who live and work here, and the small local businesses and intangible cultural heritage that have shaped and enriched them over time. As the city continues to change and grow, policies need to be in place to protect these spaces, and ensure that Vancouver remains culturally diverse and welcoming to the many communities that call it home.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to explore and report back with recommendations on policy changes within City of Vancouver jurisdiction for protecting and promoting cultural food assets and other forms of intangible cultural heritage across Vancouver;

FURTHER THAT this work be cross-departmental work between Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability (PDS) and Arts, Culture, and Community Services (ACCS), building on existing city efforts, with the City's Equity Framework as a lens for where this work should be prioritized;

AND FURTHER THAT it consider policy approaches such as:

- i. Updating Vancouver's heritage protection processes to better account for protecting cultural food assets and other forms of intangible cultural heritage;
 - ii. Developing protections for cultural food assets and other forms of intangible cultural heritage within the redevelopment process; and
 - iii. Developing mechanisms for identifying and protecting significant cultural assets through cultural zones or districts, cultural land trusts, or a special cultural program that is accessible city-wide.
- B. THAT Council directs staff to apply the city's Equity Framework to other food policy related work, including the promotion of cultural assets within the city's

urban agriculture, small business incubation, and farmers market and community food markets strategies.

- C. THAT Council directs staff to work alongside relevant community organizations, specifically working with underserved and equity-denied groups, to do research and consultation regarding the implementation of an intangible cultural heritage protection and promotion strategy.

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