

NO: R188

COUNCIL DATE: September 11, 2017

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **September 7, 2017**
FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture** FILE: **7800-01**
SUBJECT: **Surrey Legacy Book Project**

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommends that Council receive this report as information.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information relating to the new Surrey Legacy Book, *Surrey: A City of Stories*.

BACKGROUND

Surrey: A City of Stories is the legacy project proposed by the Surrey Heritage Advisory Commission in celebration of Canada 150. The Commission's aspirations were high: they hoped to create a book that would be an experience both a richly illustrated visual chronicle and a beautifully written tribute to Surrey and its citizens over time. In addition to proposing the project, the Heritage Advisory Commission contributed \$44,000 towards research and writing, and to purchase 160 copies for deposit in every school and library in Surrey. The remaining \$79,500 (writer fees, book design, printing costs, and marketing) required for the project was allocated in the City budget process in 2016 and 2017. K. Jane Watt was contracted in February 2016 to research and write the book. The Manager of Heritage Administration & Facilities was the project lead for the City.

DISCUSSION

Although the project had a very ambitious timetable, considerable effort was put into engaging the community about the project. In the late spring of 2016, a series of open houses were held to spread awareness about the project, to hear what the public felt was important to include in a new Surrey history book, and to gather content to shape the book. Each town centre hosted an open house which resulted in 165 people engaging with project staff. In addition, the project team delivered numerous presentations to Council Committees, including the Surrey Heritage Advisory Commission, Culture Development Advisory Commission, Diversity Advisory Committee, and community and historical groups such as the Civic Treasurers Committee, Surrey Historical Society, Friends of the Surrey Museum and Archives Society and the Heritage Services Community Advisory Board. Numerous meetings and interviews were also held with members of the community.

The book's content showcases the rich collections of the Surrey Archives and Surrey Museum, whose collective mandate is to preserve and share the stories and objects of the City and its diverse people. The vast collection of oral histories, documents, and artifacts under the stewardship of these two institutions has been generously built over time from donations by Surrey residents and organizations. In addition to Surrey's collections, material was sourced from other institutions including Library and Archives Canada, the BC Archives at the Royal BC Museum, Vancouver Archives, White Rock Museum and Archives, New Westminster Archives, Nikkei National Museum, Kwantlen Polytechnic University Archives, Kamloops Museum and Archives, the Land Title and Survey Authority of BC, and the Glenbow Museum. In addition, Surrey residents opened up family scrapbooks and photo albums and shared stories and insights which were included in the project.

A concerted effort was made to profile Surrey's Indigenous communities in the book. *Surrey: A City of Stories* profiles the City's Indigenous communities throughout the book, noting their ancient and ongoing ties to the land later known as Surrey. The first and last image one sees in the book is Phyllis Atkins' "Paddling through the Winds of Change," a public art piece that graces the 6th Floor Meeting Room in City Hall. The project team honoured this work by profiling it as the book's end sheets, serving as a symbolic anchor to the past, present and future of Surrey.

The book is of the "coffee-table" style, beautifully illustrated and presented with photos, maps, documents, artifacts and personal reminiscences. Together, these items illuminate many stories of our City. With limited narrative text, the book will appeal to a wide audience and offers multiple entry points for general readers and history experts alike. The book features a poignant and thought-provoking foreword and afterword. Chapters are organized by decade. In total, *Surrey: A City of Stories* features over 500 visuals (332 images, 40 maps, 73 artifacts, 61 documents), and includes 80 voices from Surrey's Oral History Collection.

Surrey: A City of Stories is officially launching to the public on the City's birthday, September 11. That evening, author K. Jane Watt will officially launch the book in a special presentation to Council at 7:00 pm. Mayor and Council will each be presented with a signed-copy of the book. Immediately after this presentation at City Centre Library, author K. Jane Watt will deliver an exclusive Author Talk at 7:30 pm. The Author Talk will provide those in attendance with a "behind the scenes" look at the vision and creative process involved in putting together the new book. Following the Author Talk, those in attendance can purchase copies of the book and have them signed by the author. After September 11, books can be purchased at the Historic Stewart Farm, Surrey Archives, Surrey Museum, Surrey Arts Centre, Surrey City Hall, and at various special events across the City. The book is priced at an accessible cost of \$25.00.

Of interest, the City will also present a signed-copy of the book to the Lt. Governor of British Columbia on September 9. The Lt. Governor is attending the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society's event to launch the "Connaught," a newly restored British Columbia Electric Railway tram, which represents the Society's signature Canada 150 project. The Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society invited the City to present the Lt. Governor with a signed-copy of *Surrey: A City of Stories*, as it was also a signature Canada 150 project.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The legacy book supports the Community Theme of “Inclusion” as identified in the City’s Sustainability Charter:

- DO1: Surrey welcomes, includes and embraces and values the diversity of people who live here, and;
- DO20: Surrey residents are proud of their community.
- DO21: All residents have the opportunities to be meaningfully engaged in civic issues to and to contribute to community life.

The legacy book also supports the Community Theme of “Education and Culture” identified in the City’s Sustainability Charter:

- DO 7: An enviable and vibrant arts and heritage sector contributes to Surrey’s citizen engagement, enrichment, economy, community livability and civic pride; and
- DO 10: Surrey celebrates, protects and promotes its natural and built heritage sites.

CONCLUSION

Surrey: A City of Stories is a significant and fitting legacy document for Surrey during Canada’s 150th anniversary. It is the first book of its kind, providing Surrey residents with an illustrated guide to their City’s history. The Surrey Heritage Advisory Commission, which proposed the project, had high aspirations for the book. *Surrey: A City of Stories* represents the fulfillment of those aspirations as it offers stories of this place in all their breadth and diversity, from the distant past to the modern day.

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