

## Call to Interpretive Specialists – Expression of Interest

### *Place-Based Research and Dissemination of the History of Japanese Canadian Residents of New Westminster*



*M. Nishiguchi store picnic, clerks and family, [White Rock], July 23, 1933.  
New Westminster Archives, IHP8034-0185.*

The Japanese Canadian Legacies Society (JCLS) is supporting the City of New Westminster for the project titled *Place-Based Research and Dissemination of the History of Japanese Canadian Residents of New Westminster*.

The project aims to support a greater understanding of the legacy of Japanese Canadians in New Westminster through the documentation and presentation of their stories.

As a funding recipient, **the City of New Westminster Museum and Archives is looking to hire an experienced Interpretive Specialist to analyze research reports and produce content for site-specific interpretive panels about New Westminster’s historic Japanese Canadian community; with a particular emphasis on the development of this community prior to the Second World War.**

## **Budget**

The budget for this project is \$40,000.

## **Eligibility**

This opportunity is open to individuals eligible to work in Canada. The work will primarily take place in the Lower Mainland (New Westminister and surrounding areas) with some opportunity for remote work.

## **Timeline**

The funding provided to the City of New Westminister is regulated by a set timeline and all initiatives must be completed by December 31, 2026. Contemplated phases include but may not be limited to:

Phase 1– Contemplated work includes storyline and interpretive planning including thesis statement and major themes. Due on May 1, 2026.

Phase 2 – Contemplated work includes script writing, image, illustration, infographic selection and working with the interpretive team to refine initial drafts. Due on July 1, 2026.

Phase 3 – Contemplated work includes coordination with key staff and designers to produce finalized panel design. Due on September 15, 2026.

## **Background**

In 1942 during the Second World War, 22,000 Japanese Canadians living in British Columbia were forcibly uprooted and permanently stripped of their homes, businesses, and belongings and relocated to internment camps outside the coastal BC area and displaced across the country, with some exiled to Japan. The majority of the uprooted Japanese Canadians were born in BC.

Overnight, lives were shattered and entire communities eradicated. Japanese Canadians trusted they would one day return to their homes. Instead, their properties and possessions were sold without their consent.

After the war ended in 1945, the majority of Japanese Canadians were prevented from returning to the coast. They were ordered to either move east of the Rockies or to war-torn Japan. When the community was allowed to return to the coast in 1949, it had nothing to return to.

The history of what happened to Japanese Canadian communities in BC is still relatively unknown.

In recognition of this history, the Province of BC has supported the BC Heritage Sites program managed by the Japanese Canadian Legacies Society.

The purpose of the program is to assist local communities in promoting the legacies of Japanese Canadians in British Columbia through interpretive projects at sites of historical significance. These sites recognize a community who made important contributions to the building of this province, yet endured forced uprooting, incarceration, permanent dispossession, and displacement.

This program is intended to help make some of these now mostly invisible sites visible to new generations of British Columbians so that they may learn to appreciate the lasting legacies of Japanese Canadians in BC. Initiatives may include projects that promote memorialization, conservation and/or education of Japanese Canadian history tailored to a region within the province of British Columbia. These projects will have an enduring value.

Commemorating and celebrating our historic places—most of which remain under-recognized and underserved—is at the heart of the Japanese Canadian community’s work to rebuild connections to its heritage in British Columbia, and share this history and its lessons with all British Columbians.



*Group of children in front of a row of houses, [New Westminster], c. 1930s. New Westminster Archives, IHP8034-009.*

### **Summary of Work**

Using the research reports consisting of material gathered from archival sources, data, oral history interviews, and other written reports, completed as part of Phase 1, the interpretive specialist will seek to:

- Synthesize research material to identify key take-aways that can be developed into a thesis and themes for interpretive signage;
- Identify significant businesses, social or political organisations, people or family stories related to the thesis and themes;
- Identify locations within the city where interpretive signage would be appropriate for the researched subject period;
- Identify stories that will reintroduce the history of local Japanese Canadians and offer insights into the Japanese Canadian contribution to the fabric of the city;
- Collaborate with City staff and outside contractors to develop a look and feel for interpretive signage that will complement the narrative.

### **Deliverables**

1. Work with the research reports and researcher to understand the history and contributions of Japanese Canadian community in New Westminster.
2. Prepare a thesis statement for 10-12 interpretive panels to be located around the city, along with major themes that reflect the research.
3. Prepare a draft script for the interpretive signage and identify where panels would be most appropriately located.
4. Work closely with key City staff to refine the draft script.
5. Source accompanying images and prepare captions.
6. Work with graphic designers, fabricators, and City staff to create a cohesive design concept for the panels.

### **Requirements**

#### Key Qualifications:

- Working knowledge of Japanese Canadian history in British Columbia and Canada, including key pre-war communities, unjust wartime actions and experiences, and post-war impacts and legacies;

AND EITHER

- Hold a graduate degree, or be currently enrolled in a relevant graduate program in Public History or Museum Studies.

OR;

- Hold a completed and relevant undergraduate degree *combined with* demonstrated experience in exhibition development or an equivalent by way of a minimum of 5 successful projects of a similar socio-historic complexity and impact.

#### Key Skills & Competencies:

- Demonstrated skill in historical analysis including under recognized or marginalized histories;
- Understanding and experience with exhibition development process;
- Experience in writing text at an appropriate grade level for public spaces;
- Experience interpreting sensitive cultural information, including stories of individuals and/or descendants who have experienced or continue to experience injustice;
- Demonstrated practice in reflective empathy, cultural safety, and power analysis.
- Ability to effectively communicate exhibition concepts and design ideas (both written and oral).
- Ability to work independently and within a team structure;
- Ability to work with outside contractors;
- Linguistic aptitude in Japanese an asset, but not required.

#### Evaluation Criteria

Submissions will be evaluated and weighted by:

1. Key qualifications (40%)
2. Key skills, relevant experience, and competencies (60%)

#### Contract

The selected consultant will enter into a contract with the City of New Westminster. Appropriate insurance and WSBC (WorkSafe BC) clearance letters will be required. For an example of a standard consulting agreement, please click on this link:

[www.newwestcity.ca/business-and-economy/doing-business-with-the-city/procurement\\_policy.php](http://www.newwestcity.ca/business-and-economy/doing-business-with-the-city/procurement_policy.php)

#### How to Submit

Please submit a cover letter and resume detailing your relevant experience (in line with the evaluation criteria) to the project call.

Email – PDF emailed submissions are preferred (the City will confirm receipt of emails).

Please submit all required information in one (1) PDF file named “CNW JCLS Interpretive Specialist Call – [Applicant First and Last Name]” to [nwmasubmissions@newwestcity.ca](mailto:nwmasubmissions@newwestcity.ca).



*Mr. and Mrs. Kimura and sons. ca. 1930s.  
New Westminster Archives, IHP8034-072.*

### **Deadline**

11:59 pm on April 3, 2026 (PST)

### **Selection Process**

Submissions are part of a two-phase process. A Selection Panel of New Westminster Museum and Archives staff will review submissions and shortlist applicants for interview and further consideration.

### **Contact**

Questions?

Contact Heather Feeney, Curator

Email: [hfeeney@newwestcity.ca](mailto:hfeeney@newwestcity.ca)

Phone: (604) 515-3842