

CITY OF NEW WESTMINSTER APOLOGY TO THE COMMUNITY, FAMILIES AND DESCENDANTS OF THE KOMAGATA MARU

Acknowledgement and Formal Apology – September 27, 2021

On March 1, 2021 New Westminister City Council received a report detailing actions of the City during the 1914 Komagata Maru incident. This work was undertaken at the request of Raj Singh Toor of the Descendants of the Komagata Maru Society. The report revealed that Council's actions of the day were discriminatory and racist. This prompted a motion that the City offer an apology to the community, families and descendants of those who were impacted negatively by the actions and words of the Council of New Westminister during the incident.

The City of New Westminister acknowledges, based on a review of City records covering the period from 1912 through 1916, that it acted in a discriminatory manner towards people of South Asian descent.

The City of New Westminister acknowledges that its formal support of discriminatory, racist and exclusionary legislation contributed to the plight of the passengers of the Komagata Maru, both in Canadian waters and upon their return to India.

The City of New Westminister acknowledges that for over 100 years the South Asian community has been a socially supportive and active part of New Westminister's community. City actions of the day would have made its South Asian residents feel unwelcome and unsafe in their community. Currently, about 5,790 people of South Asian ancestry continue to call New Westminister their home.

The past actions of Council are not consistent with current Council values and strategic priorities around Reconciliation, Inclusion and Engagement. To this end, the City has committed to naming both the docks of the Q to Q Ferry and the Queensborough River Walk in memory of the Komagata Maru; to act as a reminder its past harmful acts to the South Asian community and to foster respect and understanding for their histories.

The City of New Westminister formally apologizes to the South Asian community and the descendants of the survivors of the Komagata Maru for its past actions which resulted in discrimination and exclusion. The City looks forward to working together inclusively; in the spirit of friendship, community and co-operation to build strong bonds and lasting relations.