

Report Number PFC2020-0802 is a Notice of Motion for the Renaming of James Short Park and James Short Parkade. It was passed by Council on July 20, 2020.

After the Notice of Motion was passed, The City commissioned additional research on James Short, his role in establishing Calgary's educational system, his practice as a lawyer and his racist opinions regarding Chinatown and the Chinese. Considering this research, The City acknowledges that the Notice of Motion includes the following claims that cannot be verified:

- No evidence could be found to support the claim that James Short was a member of, or lawyer for, the Anti-Chinese League that formed in 1892.
- While James Short was the lawyer for a group of citizens who opposed the location of the current Chinatown in 1910, no evidence could be found to support the claim that the Anti-Chinese League still existed in 1910 and was the citizen group involved in this dispute.
- No evidence could be found to support the claim that James Short said, "Chinese Canadians would lower property values." That quote was attributed to A.J. McArthur MPP.
- No evidence could be found to support the claim that James Short's attitude toward Chinese Canadians changed later in life.

The historic record is not something one can access for all answers; rather, it is a collection of related artifacts, documents and other records (newspaper articles, photos, school records, etc.) that historians can use to piece together a history of a place, person, event, etc. We know that collections within archives reflect the values of the society that created and managed them.

In Western Canada, our archives are filled with artifacts that were valued by the majority population of the time. They primarily tell the stories of powerful, successful Caucasians – the same people who established the museums and organizations that house these archives. Today, society values diversity and inclusion and we are starting to collect artifacts and histories that capture different stories from different voices and perspectives.

February 2022



**Report Number:** PFC2020-0802

**Meeting:** Priorities & Finance Committee

**Meeting Date:** 2020 July 14

## NOTICE OF MOTION

**RE: Renaming James Short Park and James Short Parkade**

**Sponsoring Councillor(s):** Councillor Druh Farrell

---

WHEREAS The City of Calgary is the steward of municipal property naming and regularly exercises this authority to recognize prominent Calgarians, places, and events;

AND WHEREAS global movements are exposing and tackling systemic racism within our societies, with City Council recently adopting Calgary's Commitment to Anti-Racism through motion C2020-0715;

AND WHEREAS a part of those movements is the renaming, reinterpretation, or removal of symbols that honour figures who contributed to the discrimination and oppression of racialized communities;

AND WHEREAS continued official honouring of figures and movements with racist pasts, without their full context, is counter to The City of Calgary's duty to promote a diverse and inclusive city;

AND WHEREAS City Council previously renamed the Langevin Bridge to Reconciliation Bridge to address the actions of namesake Hector-Louis Langevin against Indigenous peoples;

AND WHEREAS James Short Park and James Short Parkade (Short Site) are located just south of Calgary's Chinatown on the site where the Central School formerly stood;

AND WHEREAS the Short Site's namesake, James Short, served as Principal of the Central School and as lawyer for the racist Anti-Chinese League;

AND WHEREAS Short petitioned City Commissioners to prohibit Chinese Canadians from establishing the third and current location of Chinatown, making the claim that Chinese Canadians would lower property values and the further contention that "it is for you to take up the question and set the Chinese in one section of the city as you would an isolated hospital";

AND WHEREAS there is some evidence to suggest Short's attitude toward Chinese Canadians shifted later in life and that, as a lawyer, he eventually took Chinese Canadian clients;

AND WHEREAS The City of Calgary is currently in the process of working with the community to create a new cultural plan and culturally informed local area plan for Chinatown through the Tomorrow's Chinatown project;

NOTICE OF MOTION

AND WHEREAS the Chinatown Context Paper, prepared as part of the Tomorrow's Chinatown; identifies the Short Site as an "excellent opportunity" to interpret the broader story of the Anti-Chinese League's roll in opposing the relocation of Chinatown;

AND WHEREAS residents and Chinatown organisations have indicated a desire to rename the Short Site to address Short's discrimination against Chinese Canadians and the Anti-Chinese League's opposition to the existence of the current Chinatown, with a preference for the community to determine new names through the Tomorrow's Chinatown project;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that City Council directs City Administration, through the Tomorrow's Chinatown project and with support from Arts and Culture, to engage the Chinatown community to discuss the history of the Short site, the roles of James Short and the Anti-Chinese League in Chinatown's history, the relocation of Chinatown, and the resiliency of the Chinese community in Calgary;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that City Council directs City Administration to report back with new names for the Short Site that are recommended by the community through Tomorrow's Chinatown, with particular consideration of names recognizing historical Chinese Canadian contributions to Calgary, as well as with an action plan for further programming and/or physical installations that interpret the historical learnings from the community discussions;

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that City Council requests that the Mayor write to the Calgary Board of Education to encourage the name change of the James Short Memorial School, and interpretation of Short's past, for the same reasons as detailed above.