
Coquitlam Archives is outgrowing its space

The need for a permanent space to house Coquitlam's growing archives continues to be top of mind for the city's top clerk and chief archivist.

[Janis Cleugh](#) / Tri-City News

FEBRUARY 5, 2018 07:01 PM



A panoramic photo of the congregation of Our Lady of Fatima (Notre Dame de Fatima) gathered around the travelling statue of Our Lady of the Cape (Notre Dame du Cap) in 1950. The image was recently donated to the city.

Photograph By COQUITLAM ARCHIVES

The need for a permanent space to house Coquitlam's growing archives continues to be top of mind for the city's top clerk and chief archivist.

At today's council-in-committee meeting, where archivist Emily Lonie delivered her fifth annual report, city clerk Jay Gilbert and Lonie made clear the current ground-floor area where [Coquitlam Archives](#) operates at city hall is at a premium —and they're having to find creative ways to store the historical records.

Lonie said she's been forced to safeguard materials at locations around the city including at the Innovation Centre, which shares a building with the Evergreen Cultural Centre. "We are certainly looking forward to the day for a more permanent facility," she told the committee.

Gilbert said little has been done since the archives division was created in 2013 despite the boom in collections and the digital access to it: The numbers for Quest - [the online search portal for Coquitlam Archives](#) — continues to rise while donations also pour in.

Last year, for example, Lonie received eight major acquisitions including:

- 12 bound print editions of *The Tri-City News* from 1997 to 2000;
- two historic maps of the city of Coquitlam (courtesy of Archibald Moir and Co.);
- and fonds from the Coquitlam Skating Club — a hot topic given one of its members, Larkyn Austman, is now at the winter Olympics in Korea to compete, Lonie said.

"There's a commitment and an ethical requirement" for the city to have the infrastructure to store the donated materials, Gilbert told council. "People are handing over their memories. We have to prove our reputation."

Added Coun. Craig Hodge, a former [Coquitlam Heritage Society](#) board president: "These are gifts from the past for the future generations."

Gilbert cautioned the archives division may have to slow down the public contributions should additional space not be found.

Still, there may be some relief next year, he said, if part of the old library space at city hall — currently used by archives and engineering — becomes vacant: About 2,220 sq. ft. of it is now being leased to an RCMP integrated unit as part of a five-year deal.

Lonie said an upcoming goal for Coquitlam Archives is to partner with School District 43 to allow students learn about local history on field trips. “We want them to feel the experience and history up close,” Gilbert said.

Another 2018 goal is to present quarterly online exhibits. This month, Lonie said, Coquitlam Archives will begin a show about the various scrapbooks in its collection, and discuss the history of scrapbooks as a medium and their preservation.

jcleugh@tricitynews.com