

Tacoma Chinese Reconciliation Park

Project Chronology

(Last Updated: March 14, 2019)

August 1991 Request for Reconciliation

Dr. and Mrs. David Murdock submitted a citizen's request to the City of Tacoma on August 22, 1991, suggesting that an historical monument and park be built to commemorate the historic tragedy of the 1885 Chinese expulsion and to heal the old wounds.

September 1992 Citizens Advisory Committee

The City responded by forming a Citizens Advisory Committee on September 24, 1992 to develop a recommendation on how to proceed with the reconciliation process. The Committee studied background information and documentations, including "The Tacoma Method" (referred to by historians as the organized crime committed by the community leaders in expelling its entire Chinese populace from Tacoma in 1885). The Committee developed strategies for reconciliation and forwarded its recommendations to the City Council in November 1993, and resolved to transform itself into the non-profit Chinese Reconciliation Project Foundation.

November 1993 Resolution No. 32415

On November 30, 1993, the City Council adopted the milestone Resolution No. 32415, acknowledging that the 1885 Chinese expulsion was the most reprehensible occurrence; indicating that a National Guard site on Ruston Way was in the process of being transferred to the City and that a portion of the site could be used for a memorial facility; and endorsing the Citizens Advisory Committee's efforts to plan for the park construction, to create cultural programs, and to pursue funding.

June 1995 Groundbreaking (site preparation)

A groundbreaking ceremony for the cleanup of the site for the future Chinese Reconciliation Park was held on June 13, 1995.

October 1996 Park Site Transferred

The City Council adopted Ordinance No. 25968 on October 22, 1996, accepting the National Guard Property on Ruston Way, based on the Memorandum of Understanding entered into by the City and the U.S. Government on August 30, 1994. Of the 6.7 acres on the property, 3.9 acres were dedicated for the future Chinese Reconciliation Park.

October 2001 Master Site Plan

A master site plan for the development of the future Tacoma Chinese Reconciliation Park was developed and presented to the City Council at a study session on October 2, 2001, and subsequently served as the blueprint for the design and construction of the park, the implementation plan referenced in grant applications, an essential element of promotional and educational materials, as well as an inspirational vision for the community.

August 2005 Groundbreaking (construction)

As grant funds were becoming available for construction, a groundbreaking ceremony was held on August 19, 2005, ten years after the first groundbreaking.

2007 – 2009 Phase I Construction

Items installed included the Sojourner's Room, the Path through the Expulsion, the Dragon Mound with landscaping rocks, the String of Pearls Bridge, the Grotto of the Tides, interpretive signs, landscaping, Chinese artifacts, waterfront trails, and shoreline protection.

2009 – 2011 Phase II Construction

Items installed included beach restoration and stabilization, additional trails and pathways, interpretive signs, furnishings, Chinese garden landscaping, and the concrete foundation for the Fuzhou Ting.

2010 – 2011 Fuzhou Ting Construction and Dedication

The Fuzhou Ting (Ting being the Chinese word for "Pavilion") was donated by Fuzhou, China, a sister city of Tacoma. Design, materials and construction guidance were provided by Fuzhou, and construction was carried out by local contractors. Construction began in September 2010 and, after the Fuzhou advisory team left in late October, continued through July 2011. The Fuzhou Ting Dedication Ceremony and Grand Opening was held on September 22, 2011. The Fuzhou Ting Project was honored at the Sister Cities International's 56th Annual Conference in Florida on July 14, 2012 and at the 2012 China International Friendship Cities Conference in Sichuan, China on September 12, 2012.

July 2013 Phase III Grant Awarded

The City received \$400,000 of the State Historical Society's 2013-2015 Heritage Capital Projects Fund for the Tacoma Chinese Reconciliation Park Phase III Project. The project would install a parking lot, fencing with Chinese motif, interpretive and wayfinding signage, lighting near the Fuzhou Ting, and landscaping and irrigation system improvements.

July 2014 Master Site Plan Update

The City updated the Master Site Plan of 2011, identifying three options (Options 1, 2, and 3) for the ultimate and phased build-outs of the park and cost estimates associated with the design and construction of individual improvement features. The City preferred Option 3, the most fiscally responsible and sustainable strategy. The Chinese Reconciliation Project Foundation agreed that Option 3 would fulfill the "minimum requirements" for the park and was the least costly, but felt that the Multicultural Pavilion included in Option 1 was an essential feature to the park and should remain forefront in the park development, and therefore preferred Option 1.

2015 – 2016 Phase III Design and Construction

Design for Phase III improvements (funded with the State 2013-2015 Heritage Capital Projects Fund) began in early 2015. Construction began in May 2015 and was mostly completed by August. Invasive bamboos were also removed as part of the project, per Shoreline Development Permit requirements. Installation of signage was delayed until spring of 2016 due to issues with the design and fabrication of some of the signs.

September 2015 Fuzhou Ting Repair

During mid-August to mid-September 2015, Fuzhou delegated a 4-person team (two of them were in the original team that built the Fuzhou Ting in 2010) to assist Tacoma in repairing the weathered and damaged Fuzhou Ting. Work included repairing the roof, restoring delicate wooden components that had been vandalized, and repainting the structure. Fuzhou's assistance exemplified the friendship between the two sister cities and was bestowed also in preparation for the potential visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping. President Xi eventually visited Lincoln High School on September 23, 2015, but did not stop in the park.

November 2016 Phase IV Design Partially Funded

Design effort for the Phase IV development of the park began in March 2016. Given the limited resources available, the Chinese Reconciliation Project Foundation recommended that the schematic design for the Multicultural Pavilion be the priority focus of the design effort. The City reassessed a preliminary scope of work for such work that had been developed in February 2010 and concluded that the overall cost would be approximately \$150,000-\$200,000. The City Council adopted Resolution No. 39597 on November 29, 2016, authorizing the use of City Council Contingency Funds, in the amount of up to \$90,000, towards the Chinese Reconciliation Project Foundation's schematic design of a multicultural pavilion as outlined in Phase IV of the Chinese Reconciliation Park Master Site Plan.

September 2017 Park Service Agreement

The City of Tacoma and Metro Parks Tacoma entered into a Memorandum of Understanding on September 6, 2017, whereby Metro Parks agreed to maintain and operate the Tacoma Chinese Reconciliation Park including the Fuzhou Ting in good order, condition and repair and the City would provide the funds necessary to perform the services.

February 2019 Multicultural Pavilion Schematic Design

Led by the Chinese Reconciliation Project Foundation, the schematic design for the Multicultural Pavilion was completed in February 2019 that included a conceptual site plan, options of the main floor arrangement, and design features of the structure.

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