

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2025-045**

**Acknowledging Historical Injustices and Stating an Ongoing Commitment to Healing the Injustices to the Chinese American Community.**

**The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:**

- A. Chinese people have been buried at Lone Fir Cemetery since at least 1868 and approximately 2,892 Chinese and Chinese Americans were once buried in Block 14 at Lone Fir Cemetery. Many of those bodies were disinterred and sent back to China for reburial, either individually or in large-scale disinterments that occurred from the 1880s onward. At this time, it is unknown where more than half the people of Chinese descent were buried in Lone Fir Cemetery, but of those records that have been found, more than 90 percent were buried in Block 14. That space continued to be the location of Chinese burials in Lone Fir Cemetery through the 1940s.
- B. Lone Fir Cemetery began as privately owned land, but in 1928, Multnomah County took ownership and halted burials, cultural practices, and use of Block 14. In 1947, Multnomah County officials proposed exhuming the remaining Chinese burials from Block 14 and repurposing the parcel for other uses, including for economic and logistical convenience. Multnomah County notified the Chinese American community of this plan and told them to disinter hundreds of human remains from Block 14 themselves, or that Multnomah County would do so on their behalf.
- C. In July of 1948, Multnomah County workers exhumed the remains of 265 individuals from Block 14 using a bulldozer from the Road Department and heavy diesel equipment to remove Chinese American Ancestors. Most remains were shipped to China; those that were not repatriated were to be reburied elsewhere in Lone Fir Cemetery, as part of the agreement made with the Benevolent Association. No other known portions of the cemetery or communities were impacted in this manner.

- D. During the removal of interred Chinese Americans at Block 14, Multnomah County failed to record proper names of individuals who were disinterred and failed to identify and account for at least 106 children who were known to have been buried at Block 14, leaving their final resting place unknown. In addition, during the decommissioning of Block 14, Multnomah County failed to account for damaged and/or destroyed culturally significant historic artifacts.
- E. In 1953, Multnomah County constructed the Morrison Building upon Block 14 and paved over the remainder of the block for use as a parking lot. The building and parking lot would cover the footprint of Block 14 for the next 50 years.
- F. When the County transferred ownership of the cemetery to Metro in 1994, it retained the southwest corner of the cemetery. It planned to demolish the Morrison Building and sell the land for development. In 2004 the Buckman Neighborhood Association, Friends of Lone Fir Cemetery, and the Oregon Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association informed the County that they believed the site still contained human remains. In 2005, upon demolition of the Morrison Building, an archaeological investigation confirmed the presence of human remains and cultural artifacts beneath the Morrison Building and parking lot. The property was deeded to Metro in 2007, reconnecting it to the cemetery. Between 2005 and 2025, the site remained undeveloped and poorly maintained, leaving remnants of buried building demolition materials.
- G. Multnomah County signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Metro and the city of Portland in 2005, committing to work together to see that the site is appropriately developed to create a proper entrance to the Lone Fir Cemetery, to create a potential memorial to the Chinese workers who were buried on the site, and/or other uses appropriate to its history, location and circumstances. The MOU states that Metro shall be responsible for all costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the property; Multnomah County stands ready as a collaborator in actions that contribute to healing the injustices.
- H. Multnomah County recognizes the enduring harm caused by these historical injustices and acknowledges its responsibility to repair and preserve the history and dignity of the Chinese American community.

**The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Resolves:**

1. On behalf of Multnomah County, the Board of Commissioners issues a formal apology to the Chinese American community for the historical injustices committed at Block 14;

2. Further, Multnomah County supports the display of this formal apology at the Block 14 memorial and in the public record;
3. An ongoing commitment to healing the injustices to the Chinese American community. This may include Board approved proclamations, hosting memorial events, contributing funds toward a Block 14 Memorial, and supporting an exhibit at the Portland Chinatown Museum.

Dated this 26th day of June, 2025.



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

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Jessica Vega Pederson, Chair

REVIEWED:  
JENNY M. MADKOUR, COUNTY ATTORNEY  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By 

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Jenny M. Madkour, County Attorney

Submitted by: Jessica Vega Pederson, Chair