



March 8, 2022

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Donnie Rosa - General Manager, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT : **Commemoration Policy Update – Board Briefing Memo**

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to provide an introduction to the current and ongoing efforts by Park Board and City staff in the development of a shared, city-wide Commemoration Policy.

In response to recent events in Vancouver and across Canada that further emphasized the importance of developing a comprehensive, city-wide commemoration policy as an immediate corporate priority, staff have initiated a phased interdepartmental policy-development framework, led by a collaborative team comprised of staff from the City's Arts, Culture & Community Services (ACCS) Cultural Services team, and from the Park Board's Decolonization, Arts and Culture team.

Background / Guiding Direction

On January 11, 2016, the Park Board [adopted eleven reconciliation strategies](#) in response to the Calls to Action provided by the Truth and Reconciliation of Commission of Canada. One of the strategies calls for the review of "the donation of monuments, memorials, and public art processes and policies to ensure integration of Indigenous history, heritage values, and memory practices."

Development of a shared, city-wide commemorative policy for monuments and memorials was identified as one of key implementation actions in both the Park Board's [VanPlay Playbook](#) (G.8.2) approved in October 2019, and in the City's [Culture|Shift](#) (D3.G3.A3) the City's 10 year cultural strategy, approved by Council in September 2019. Both call for Park Board and City staff to work together to develop a joint monuments and memorials framework to guide the criteria and process for commemoration.

Overview

In the absence of a shared, city-wide commemorative policy framework, the Park Board's and City's current programs and practices rely on donations, and favour communities that have access to decision-makers and funding, resulting in an incomplete and often inaccurate commemorative landscape. Existing policies are not equipped to support truth and reconciliation, decolonization, or cultural redress.

A comprehensive commemoration framework will aim to guide the review and development of civic memory practices, commemorative works, and names which celebrate, honour, or memorialize specific events, ideas, or persons. The framework will further reflect Park Board and City commitments to decolonization and reconciliation, the living histories of xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səliłwətaʔ; and the living histories of Urban Indigenous people and equity-denied communities.

Scope

The initial scope of this work will establish a primary focus on the tangible commemoration realm including monuments, memorials and naming. Subsequent work may include commemorative



planting, Indigenous design principles, and wayfinding, as well as cultural heritage practices, or commemorative events. This policy will not include fundraising and development programs.

Values & Priorities

Drawing from the extensive engagement undertaken through the development of [VanPlay](#), the [Truth-Telling: Indigenous Perspectives on Working with Municipal Governments](#) report, and the City’s [Reconciliation Framework](#), [Equity Framework](#), and [Culture|Shift](#) policies, staff are developing a preliminary set of proposed values and priorities to consider in the preliminary, dedicated consultation and engagement phase. These values and priorities will, in turn, shape the development of further research, engagement, and policy development phases.

Timeline

The following table outlines the anticipated timeline of the overall project deliverables, including proposed Board and Council touch points.

Period	Phase	Deliverable	Council/Board Review
Q1-Q2 2022	Preliminary Planning	Draft Vision, Values, Priorities	June 2022
Q3-Q4 2022	Research + Engage	Research Summary; Engagement Plan	November 2022
Q1-Q2 2023	Consult + Engage	Consultation + Engagement Findings	July 2023
Q3-Q4 2023	Draft + Present	Commemoration Framework; Policies: a) Monuments and Memorials; b) Naming	November 2023

Next Steps

Staff have commenced the work on the Preliminary Planning phase, and will seek feedback through consultation meetings with the Host Nations, relevant City Council Advisory Committees, and stakeholder focus groups with members of the public. Throughout this phase, staff will provide draft materials related to context, problem and objective, and values and priorities in order to determine and test whether the engagement findings from prior City and Park Board policy development are correctly shaping the focus for the current commemoration framework and policy development.

Staff are aiming to present preliminary research and engagement findings, along with a proposal for the comprehensive research and engagement phases, to both the Council and Park Board in June 2022.

Final Remarks

Guided by Park Board and City commitments to Reconciliation and redress, a city-wide, shared Vancouver commemoration policy is key to building a future where civic memory can reckon with difficult histories and combat erasure, equitably celebrate and honour significant figures and



events, and memorialize that which should never be forgotten. Staff will continue to keep the Board apprised of commemoration policy research, findings and further development.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Donnie Rosa (*they/she*)
General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

/jh/rs/clc

Copy to: PB Leadership Team
Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services
Branislav Henselmann, Managing Director, Cultural Services, ACCS
Eric Fredericksen, Senior Cultural Planner, ACCS
Julia Hulbert, Arts & Culture Planner, PB DAC