

# FINAL REPORT

Bilingual Public Engagement Session on  
the City of Ottawa's Commemoration  
Development Project



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# Project History

As part of its cultural development mandate, the City of Ottawa has been working with community partners to engage the public in order to guide its commemorative programs and activities in Ottawa since 2012. Capital Heritage Connexion (CHC) has been partnering with the Cultural Development and Initiatives (CDI) unit with the City of Ottawa on commemoration since late 2017 and has successfully hosted two bilingual public engagement events (2018 and 2023), and facilitated the hiring of an emerging heritage professional to support the work of the Secretariat for the Municipal Commemoration Policy Development Project and its Advisory Group. These activities were all in keeping with the Renewed Action Plan for Arts, Heritage, and Culture in Ottawa (2013-2018).

In regards to the most recent engagement session, CDI entered into a Purchase of Service Agreement with CHC in December 2022, to co-present a half-day, bilingual and accessible community engagement session to further the development of an updated, comprehensive municipal commemoration policy. This would be the final public engagement session to take place before the development of a close to final draft policy for further elaboration by involved City staff and submission to the City Council for approval.

# Bilingual Public Engagement Session

## Proposal Summary

The Bilingual Public Engagement Session (the Session) proposed to capture feedback from the diverse population of Ottawa on the City's Municipal Commemoration Policy Development Project, to revise and improve before submission for final steps towards approval. The public, including organizations, communities, groups, or individuals among all Ottawa residents were targeted and invited to actively participate in, and lead the discussions. CHC ensured the participation and representation of people from the Anishinabe Algonquin Host Nation, the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis residents of Ottawa, and the equity-deserving communities of the city, among others, in the event.

## The goals of this session were to:

1. Present an inclusive, bilingual engagement session on the Municipal Commemoration Policy Development Project of the City of Ottawa.
2. Collect quality feedback on the Municipal Commemoration Policy Development Project that represented the diverse communities of Ottawa.
3. Make the session fully accessible both in person and online, with simultaneous translation and opportunities for written submissions following the session.

# Bilingual Public Engagement Session

## Description of Activities

The Session was held on Monday, March 20th 2023 from 9AM until 1PM. The in-person session took place in Council Chambers at Ottawa City Hall. The virtual session was held simultaneously via Zoom.

### **The Session was divided into three main parts:**

The first consisted of introductory remarks by speakers including Anishinabe Algonquin Nation Elder Annie Smith St. Georges, Mayor Mark Sutcliffe, CHC Executive Director Ruby Edet, City of Ottawa Municipal Commemoration Policy Development Project Sponsor Dan Chenier, followed by the main presentation of the Commemoration Policy Development Project Proposed Approaches by Project Lead Yadollah Parmoun. Please see the Proposed Approaches document and presentation slides included in Appendix A, along with other documents provided to Session attendees.

Following a break, the second part of the session saw attendees divided into breakout groups for facilitated discussions of five questions developed by the Cultural Development and Initiatives unit at the City of Ottawa. The in-person session hosted 2 groups, and the virtual session hosted 4 groups.



# Bilingual Public Engagement Session

## Description of Activities

The questions posed were as follows:

1. What does commemoration mean to you?
2. To what extent do you think the proposed approaches to municipal commemoration presented today are on the right track? How would you improve them? What would you add, change, or remove?
3. How can the City of Ottawa effectively support commemoration efforts in its communities?
4. The establishment of a Commemoration Committee is being considered to guide City of Ottawa commemoration programs and initiatives. Should the City determine that such a Committee is beneficial, how would you suggest that individuals be selected to serve as Committee Members?
5. What is the best way to encourage Ottawa residents to engage in commemoration - to express their ideas, interact with municipal monuments, memorials, and names, and suggest themes for new commemorations?

Finally, following a second break, everyone gathered to hear discussion group reports delivered by each facilitator. The facilitators highlighted key topics of discussion in their groups, sharing thoughts, suggestions, and ideas that were expressed during the breakout sessions.

Following the session, attendees were sent a Google Form containing the same 5 questions as discussed during the session itself, as well as a comment section to allow attendees to express any additional feedback they might have had.

# Bilingual Public Engagement Session

## Description of Activities

### Registration Data

| Session   | English | French | Total |
|-----------|---------|--------|-------|
| Virtual   | 29      | 9      | 38    |
| In Person | 15      | 2      | 17    |
|           |         |        | 55    |

### Attendance Data

| Session   | English | French | Total |
|-----------|---------|--------|-------|
| Virtual   | 22      | 2      | 24    |
| In Person | 6       | 1      | 7     |
|           |         |        | 31    |



# Community Feedback

## Methodology

The findings below are based on community feedback, both from community members who attended the Session and from those who submitted online feedback. Common themes in the answers for each question were identified, representing the community's thoughts and recommendations. The more groups that gave the same answer, the greater the importance that that feedback may hold for the community. In the graphs below, percentages indicate the percentage of groups that mentioned each point - for example an idea with 75%, means that 75% of groups mentioned this in response to the question.

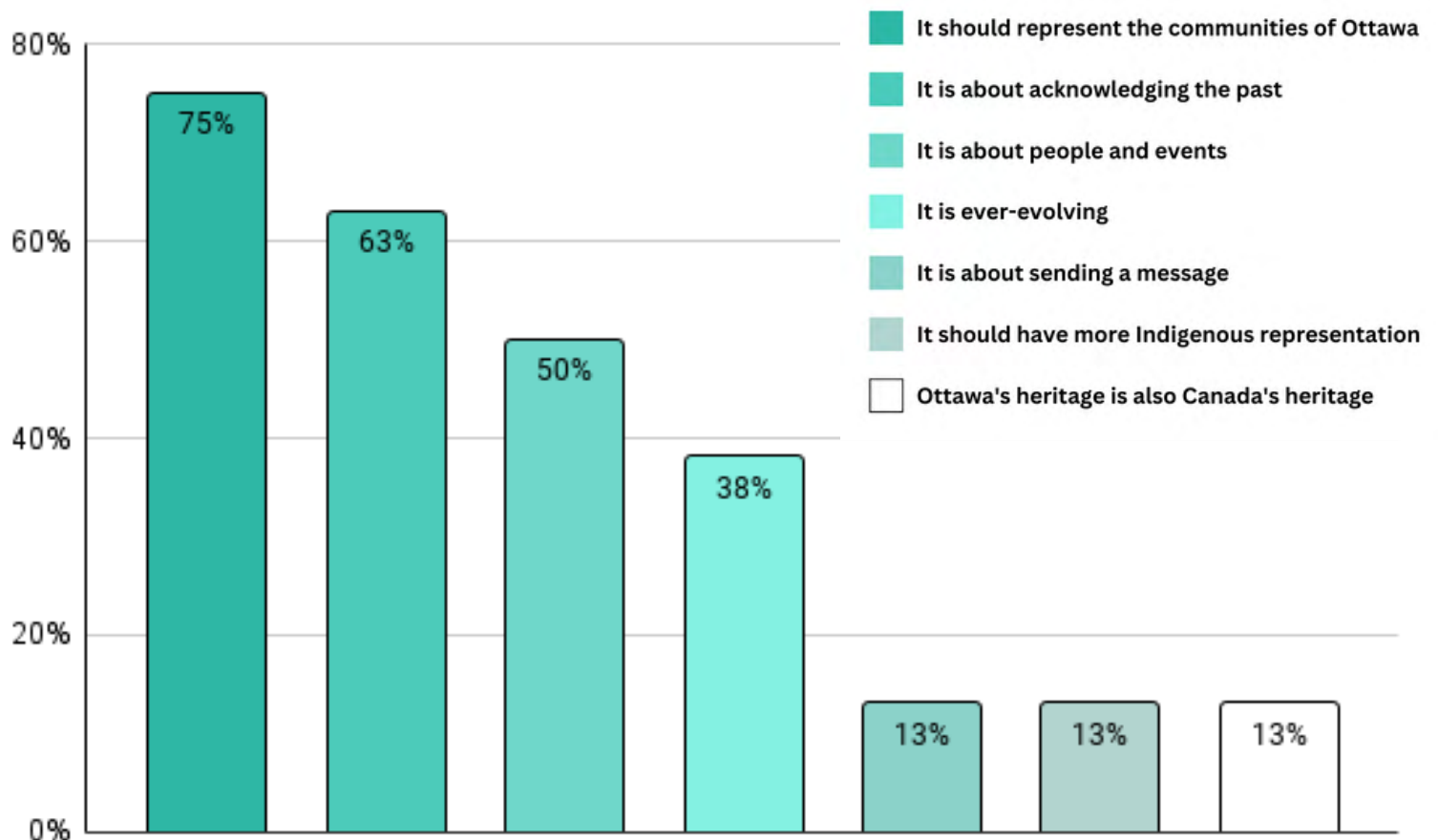
The notes from which this feedback data was pulled are included in Appendix C. These notes were redacted of any personal information of participants. We'd also like to note that based on the individual note-taker each note document takes a different format and style.





# General Findings & Recommendations

## Question 1: What does commemoration mean to you?



### What we heard:

*“Honouring appropriately and effectively”*

*“Commemoration is an ongoing commitment”*

*“Putting a bookmark on collective history”*

# General Findings & Recommendations

## Question 1: What does commemoration mean to you?

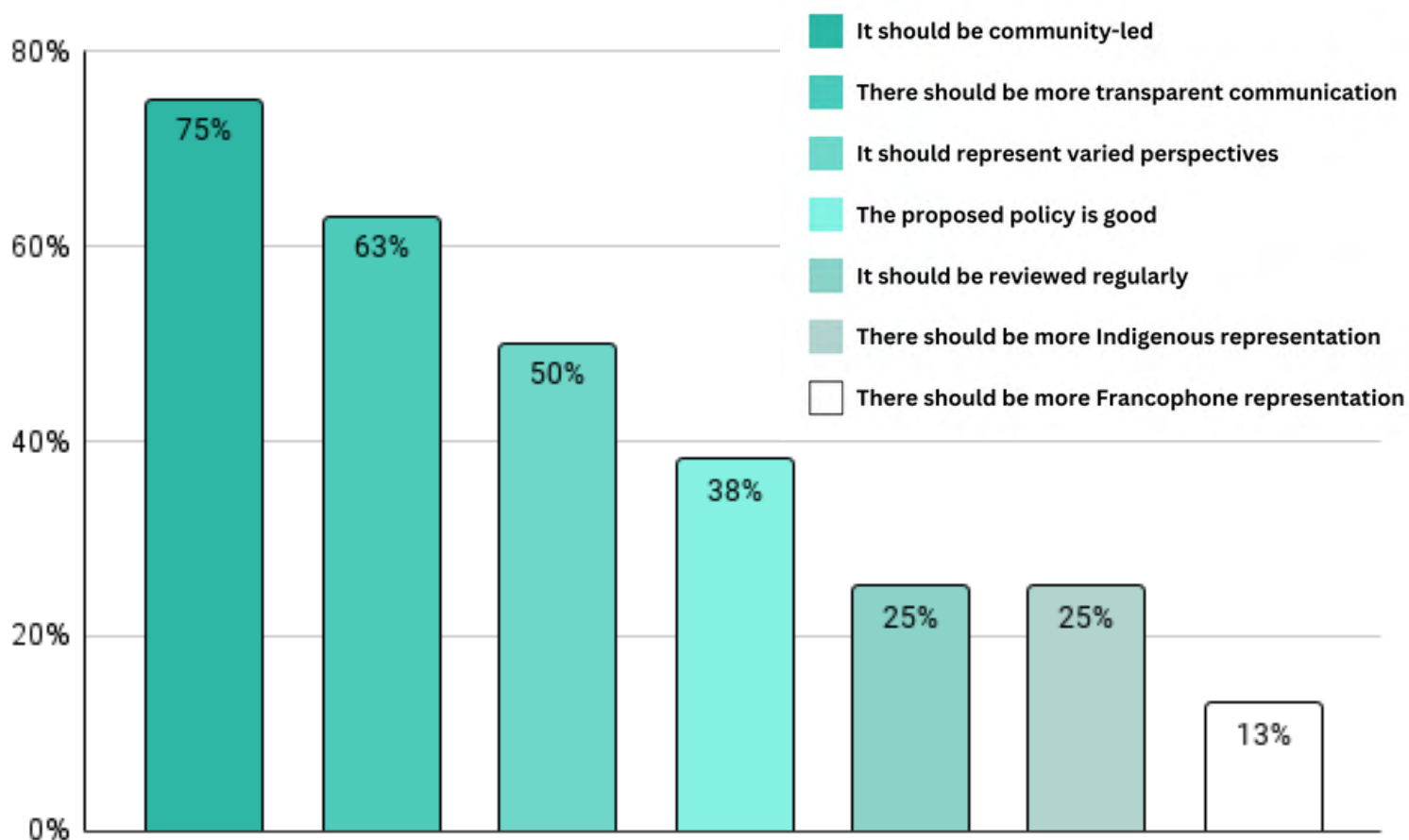
A common theme throughout the entire Bilingual Public Engagement Session was the need for commemoration to represent the diverse population and communities of Ottawa. This was expressed in regards to all five questions that were posed, whether it was in regards to what is required in the policy itself or what should be considered if a Commemoration Committee is formed. Diversity, varied perspectives and representation (especially of Francophone and Indigenous communities) was repeated as a necessary aspect of commemoration.

For the first question, community members responded overwhelmingly (75%) that commemoration should represent the population and communities of Ottawa. Acknowledging the past and commemorating people and events also scored highly, with the former being mentioned by more than half of the breakout groups. The changing nature of commemoration was acknowledged by the community, with further recommendations that the policy should reflect this by being flexible and regularly reviewed.



# General Findings & Recommendations

**Question 2:** To what extent do you think the proposed approaches to municipal commemoration presented today are on the right track? How would you improve them? What would you add, change, or remove?



## What we heard:

*“Commemoration is always evolving, and so our approach to commemoration must evolve too”*

*“Good commemoration can only come from the community level”*

*“Focus on Ottawa as a community”*

# General Findings & Recommendations

**Question 2: To what extent do you think the proposed approaches to municipal commemoration presented today are on the right track? How would you improve them? What would you add, change, or remove?**

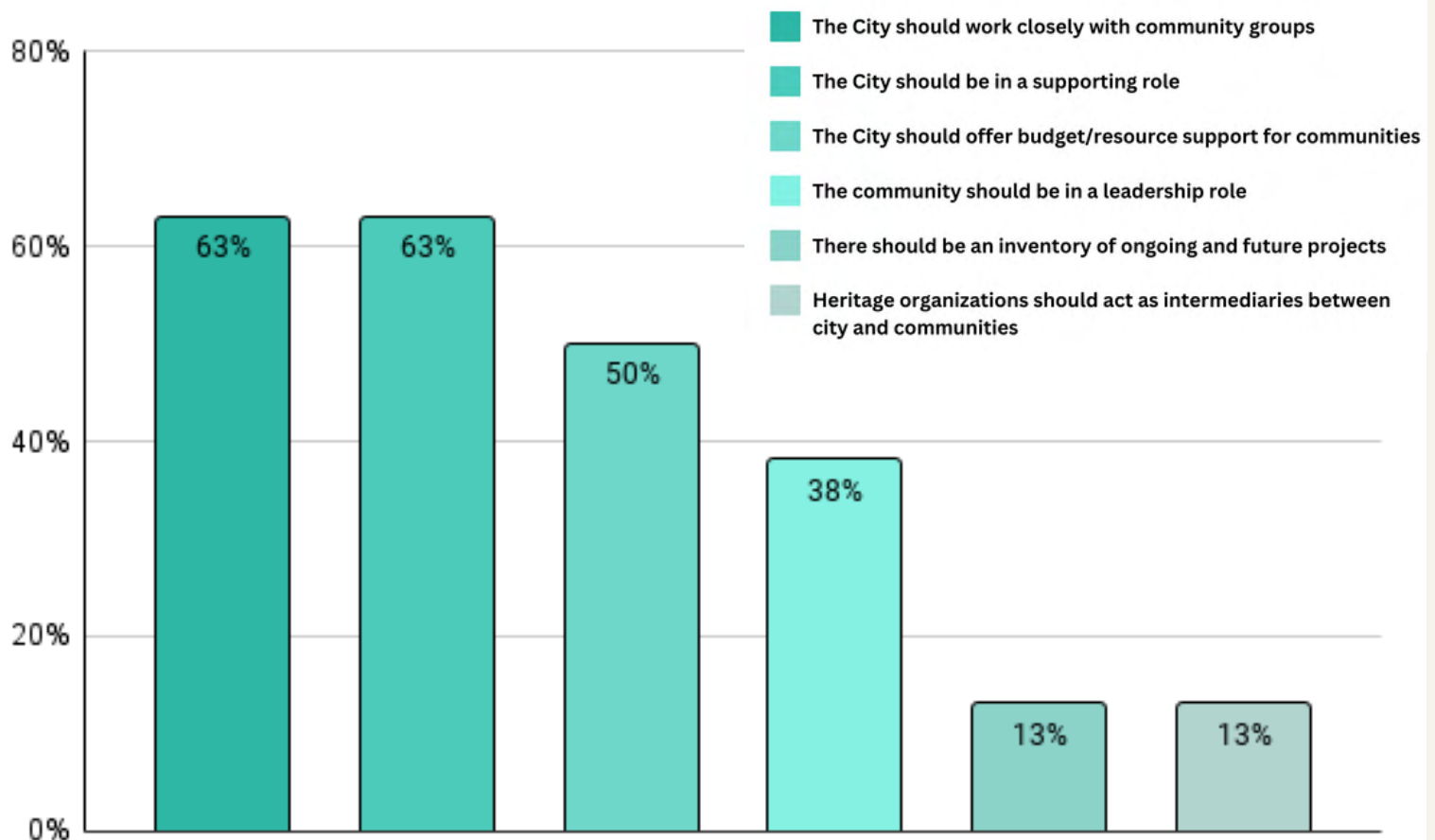
Responses to the policy were positive, with 38% of breakout groups overtly stating that the policy was good. Again, there were calls for increased diversity through the representation of varied perspectives and the inclusion of Indigenous and Francophone perspectives. The idea of a community-led commemoration process appears to be a key issue, as 75% of groups expressed a desire for it. They cited the need for the City to reach out to community associations, grassroots organizations, and community leaders to help engage those communities.

Many participants commented on the nature of a policy as a dynamic document that should be reviewed often, and that this process and the communication about it should be as transparent as possible. Suggestions were made to review the policy every few years and to keep this revision process more consistent and more frequent than “every 7-10 years”. While only 25% of groups recommended that the policy be reviewed regularly, these community members were particularly emphatic about the importance of regular review.

Another notable request was for the commemoration process to be made more transparent, which would allow for better community involvement. In relation to the process of reviews, participants want the City to involve community members, remembering “nothing about us without us”.

# General Findings & Recommendations

## Question 3: How can the City of Ottawa effectively support commemoration efforts in its communities?



### What we heard:

*"Ask community leaders what's important to their communities"*

*"Good representation of Francophone, Indigenous, and all communities in City of Ottawa"*

*"Community should have a leadership role"*

# General Findings & Recommendations

## **Question 3: How can the City of Ottawa effectively support commemoration efforts in its communities?**

Community members recommended that the best way for the City of Ottawa to support commemoration efforts is by working closely with community groups in a supporting role, coming together to assess progress on commemoration. The development of this relationship between the City and communities was expressed by 63% of participants in relation to Question 3, but was also a pervasive concept across most questions and broader discussions.

One suggested way that this support could be offered is through financial and resource support, including offering workshops on the commemoration process and how to approach commemoration.

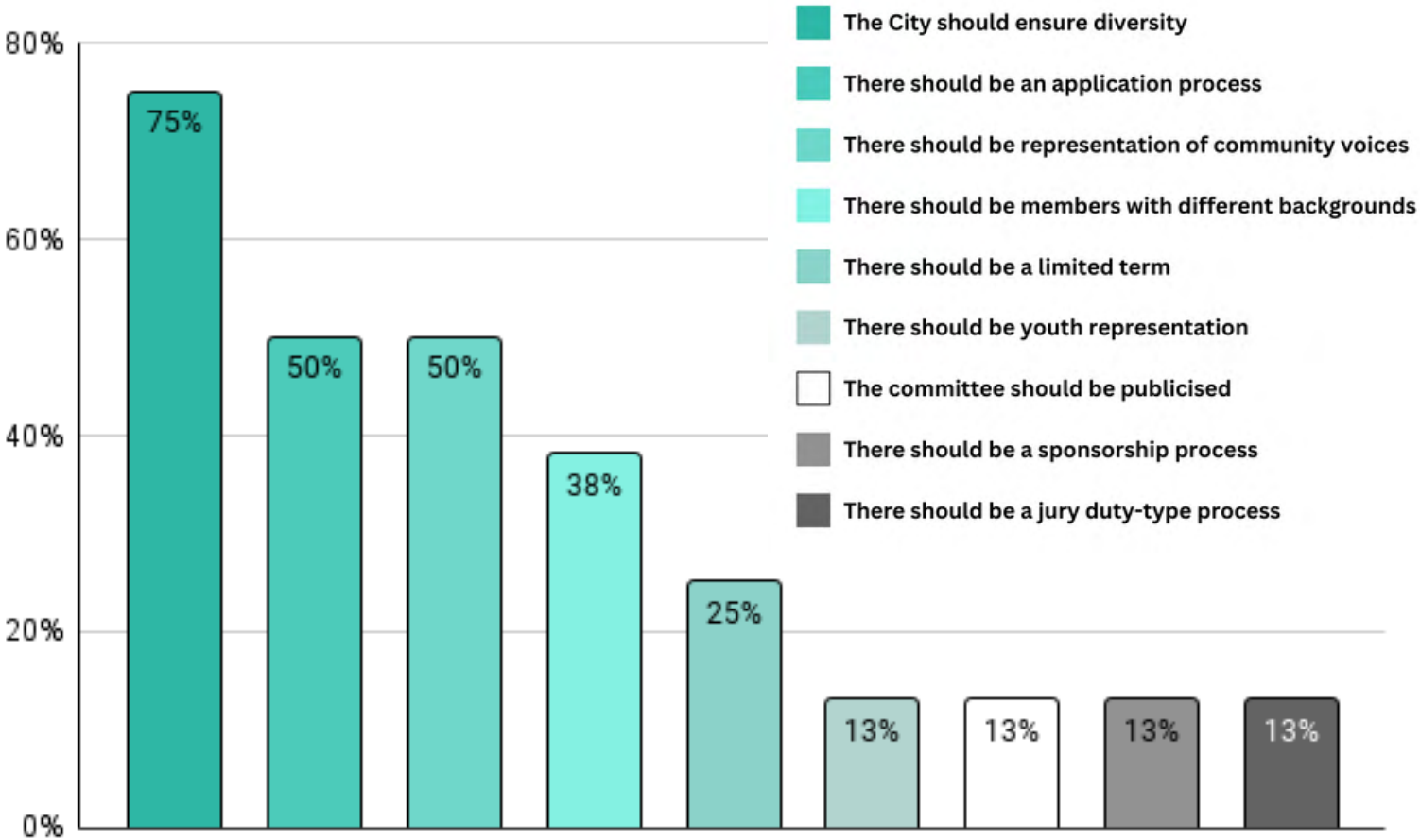
Community members were firm on the role of the community as leaders in the process of commemoration, with the City in a supportive role, providing administrative support, resources and budgetary support.





# General Findings & Recommendations

Question 4: The establishment of a Commemoration Committee is being considered to guide City of Ottawa commemoration programs and initiatives. Should the City determine that such a Committee is beneficial, how would you suggest that individuals be selected to serve as Committee Members?



## What we heard:

*“Representation matters”*

*“Continuity is important, but so is renewal”*

*“Expertise and experience in both the making and the study of commemoration”*

# General Findings & Recommendations

**Question 4: The establishment of a Commemoration Committee is being considered to guide City of Ottawa commemoration programs and initiatives. Should the City determine that such a Committee is beneficial, how would you suggest that individuals be selected to serve as Committee Members?**

Participants had a variety of suggestions for the selection process, as well as member terms and Committee makeup. One pervasive general comment was that the Committee must be diverse and represent the communities in today's Ottawa. Indeed, community members valued diversity as the top consideration for the proposed Commemoration Committee. Participants specifically cited the inclusion of members from Francophone communities, Indigenous groups, and youth representation (which was described as “vital”), while also recognizing the diverse cultural groups in the city.

Participants also felt that the committee could include elected officials like city councilors, and City staff members to provide well rounded perspectives, alongside community members and heritage professionals.



# General Findings & Recommendations

**Question 4: The establishment of a Commemoration Committee is being considered to guide City of Ottawa commemoration programs and initiatives. Should the City determine that such a Committee is beneficial, how would you suggest that individuals be selected to serve as Committee Members?**

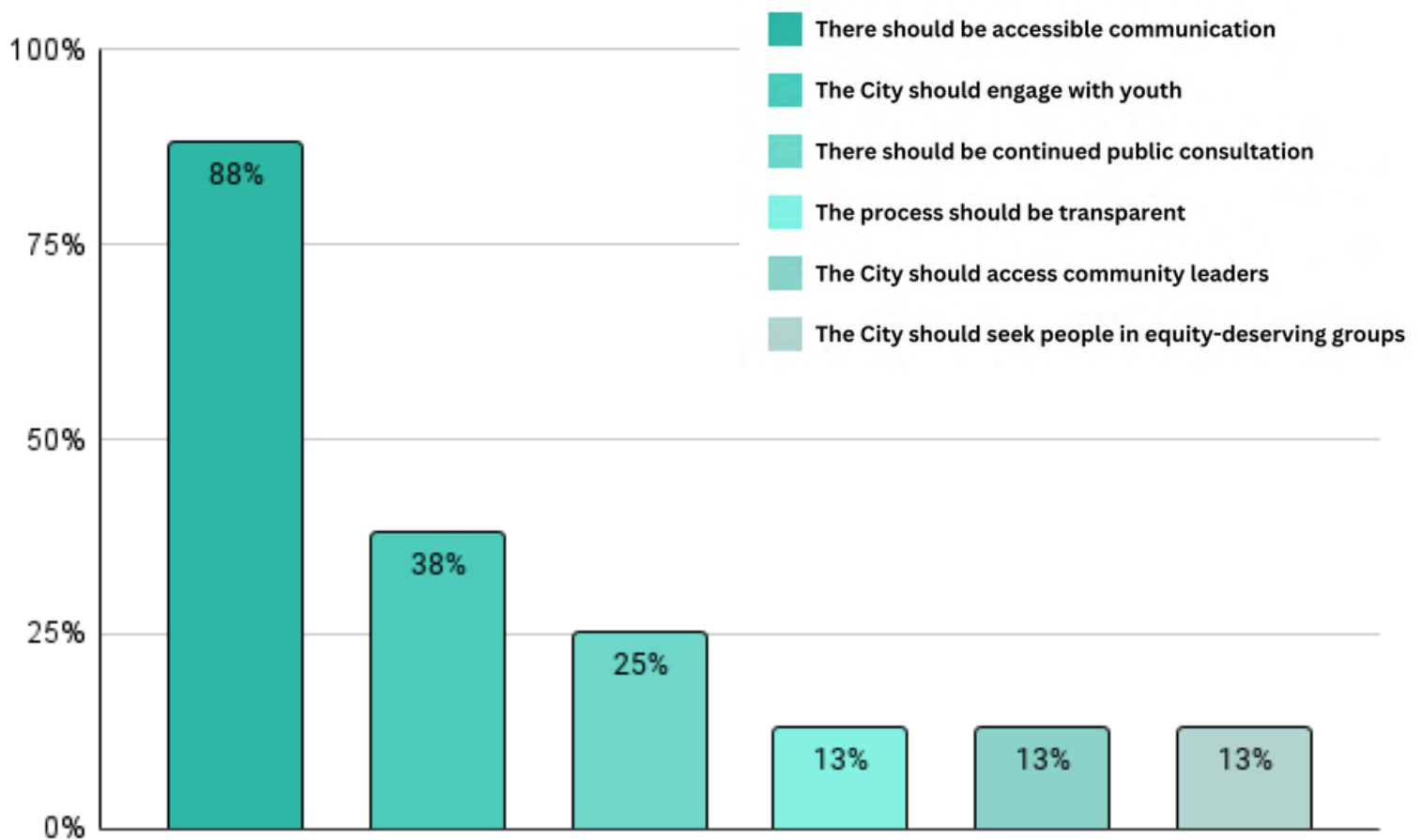
Community members discussed the importance of an application process to ensure that committee members have expertise (and more importantly) interest in commemoration. This would enable people to express their desire to join the committee and give some relevant examples of their experience that would benefit the committee via a resume, CV and or cover letter.

Others suggested a selection process similar to the jury selection process, or a sponsorship process where a candidate applies and shows that they are supported by a community group(s).

Lastly, in regards to committee member terms a number of participants suggested that members of the committee have limited terms in order to ensure diverse community voices have the opportunity to engage in the process, and to prevent stagnation of ideas. The suggestion of a public annual meeting to discuss commemoration initiatives was also suggested to encourage continuous engagement, education and transparency.

# General Findings & Recommendations

**Question 5: What is the best way to encourage Ottawa residents to engage in commemoration - to express their ideas, interact with municipal monuments, memorials, and names, and suggest themes for new commemorations?**



## What we heard:

*“Diversify the channels of communication”*

*“People want to be involved, but need to know how and why, and how long”*

*“There is a need for new ways to communicate”*

# General Findings & Recommendations

## **Question 5: What is the best way to encourage Ottawa residents to engage in commemoration - to express their ideas, interact with municipal monuments, memorials, and names, and suggest themes for new commemorations?**

Community members overwhelmingly spoke in favour of accessible communication, and providing both digital and in-person means of being involved with the commemoration process. Over 45% of participants cited accessibility as the key to engagement. Participants referenced digital and in-person activities, as well as the need to diversify the types of places where these engagement activities take place, such as: community centres and libraries, digital tools and public art, and notices in newspapers and on social media.

Connecting with community groups and leaders was suggested as key ways to make commemoration more accessible, and by bringing engagement activities to communities in ways that are accessible for them, rather than making them adjust to municipal spaces, time frames etc...

This was connected with the need for a transparent process that is clearly communicated to community members. Youth engagement was also once again highlighted as an important way to engage residents, and as a demographic that is often overlooked in this process. Schools and youth groups were suggested as another important space to engage in commemoration. Community members also praised the use of public consultation and engagement sessions.



# Recommendations from Anishinabe Algonquin Nation Elder Annie Smith St. Georges' Remarks



CHC would like to share some of the recommendations and thoughts that Anishinabe Algonquin Nation Elder Annie Smith St. Georges expressed during her closing remarks following the Bilingual Public Engagement Session. We feel that it is important to recognize, highlight and amplify these recommendations within this report and ask that they also be taken into consideration by the City of Ottawa in the development of the new commemoration policy.

Throughout Elder Annie's closing remarks, she shared her thoughts on commemoration in Ottawa in response to what was shared by Session facilitators. Elder Annie's main recommendation was to add more Algonquin Anishinabe 'flavour' into Ottawa; citing that there are only a few statues, monuments, plaques or streets named for Algonquin Anishinabe peoples. In particular, Elder Annie Smith St. Georges highlights the many Indigenous women leaders who fought hard and worked for change for Indigenous peoples here in Ottawa such as Mary Two Axe who fought to regain Indigenous women's rights under the Indian Act that was stripped when they married a non-Indigenous person.



# Recommendations from Anishinabe Algonquin Nation Elder Annie Smith St. Georges' Remarks

Elder Annie also mentions that we must not forget about art and infrastructure as tools of commemoration. Elder Annie and her husband Robert discussed the lack of an Indigenous quarter or neighbourhood in Ottawa, similar to Chinatown or Little Italy.

Ultimately, Elder Annie Smith St. Georges advocated for community members to “work together in union, in harmony, and in a peaceful way”, highlighting the lack of Indigenous representation in Ottawa’s commemorative landscape and left us with a hopeful message:

***“Looking towards the future, building a new future, building a future that we are now free to speak.”***



# Successes & Lessons Learned

The following section presents key successes and lessons learned regarding the logistics, planning and implementation of the project from CHC's perspective and experiences.

## Successes

**Recruitment & Coordination of Facilitators** - CHC intentionally identified and recruited facilitators with varied backgrounds and experiences from within the heritage sector and outside. All facilitators were excellent speakers who were able to professionally facilitate their group discussions and report their group's experience and topics of discussion back to the larger group.

**Diverse participant group** - There was representation of the community from various age groups and across various equity deserving communities. We had representation from the Indigenous, ACB and Francophone communities, as well as participants from a wide range of demographics.

**Public Awareness** - The Bilingual Public Engagement Session gained public awareness through an article written by James Gray in the *Capital Current* on Tuesday, March 28th, 2023. Entitled "*Amid 'contentious commemorations,' city moves closer to new naming policy*", the article features interviews from numerous participants in the session as well as provides information on the presentation given by Yadollah Parmoun on the Proposed Approaches of the Commemoration Policy Development Project. James Gray was very cooperative in clarifying aspects of the article after CHC staff reviewed it and provided edits. See the article in full in Appendix E.

## Successes

**Event Flexibility and Accommodation-** The use of a hybrid approach proved effective for participants who were unable to be present in person during working hours to participate virtually, while also providing a safe space for networking and community-building conversations for those who participated in person.

**City Staff Support** - The cooperation and support of City staff (both from the CDI team and colleagues from other departments) was crucial in supporting note-taking during the breakout sessions.

**Community interest and participation** - We have since continued to engage with community members who were not able to attend the Session in conversations around the commemoration policy, reflecting continued community interest in the City's commemoration approach.



## **Lessons Learned - Event planning**

**Evolving Circumstances** - Following the approval of the Purchase of Service between Capital Heritage Connexion and the City of Ottawa, there were a number of evolving circumstances that resulted in changes to the original proposal.

One change was the need to find 6-8 facilitators (at least two fully bilingual) when the initial recommendation to have members of the Advisory Committee act as facilitators was ruled out. This was a challenge given the short notice (3 weeks prior), with a limited budget and during Francophonie Month as many French-speaking stakeholders were otherwise engaged in Francophonie celebrations and events.

Another challenge was the event location. Various locations were suggested at varying times during the planning phase with a final change of room location within City Hall a week before the session. These dynamics interrupted the planning flow required to promote invitations and partner communication to participants, as well as physical setup for breakout group distribution and in-person translation services.

A final change from the original proposal was the inability to use recording devices for note-taking purposes and therefore requiring CDI team members to take on the roles of note-takers during the breakout sessions. In the end, we had to resort to recording the French language breakout group on Zoom because of an absence of a French note taker on the morning of due to illness.



## Lessons Learned - Event planning

**Attendance** - A key challenge while planning this Session was balancing the requirements of holding a hybrid, bilingual, and accessible session with the actual evolving needs of the participants who registered and those who attended. Furthermore, the short notice confirmation of the venue was a crucial deterrent for working community members unable to access the required time off work to be present. Up until the morning of the Session, CHC staff were making adjustments to resource allocation depending on the access needs of the attendees.



## **Lessons Learned - Community Engagement**

**Community Consultation** - While engaging with the Ottawa heritage community throughout this process we received multiple points of feedback indicating inconsistent communication as a critical pain point. One instance in particular that was brought to our attention (separate from the engagement session itself but in relation to its promotion) epitomizes what we heard was needed from the community during the Session.

CHC was made aware of a group of heritage volunteer advocates who had been asked back in 2012 to provide feedback to the City Clerk and Solicitor Department on the then current Commemorative Naming Policy prior to the more formal policy review. This group of volunteers, making up the Arts, Heritage and Culture Advisory Committee working group, created an 8-page report that they submitted to the City Clerk and Solicitor Department only to have their recommendations ignored. Please see Appendix D for the full report, and please recall that this report dates back to 2012. This communication is important to bring to the Advisory Board members as not many were able to attend the session.

This situation was a missed opportunity to instigate many of the recommendations that are still being asked for by Ottawa's heritage community including, but not limited to, letting the community lead the process, and being open and transparent. We hope that by bringing this situation to light that we can all learn from it and move forward towards a more transparent, consistent and inclusive commemoration policy and engagement process. In the spirit of the goals of the Session, CHC recommends that the City and CDI Project Team consider this report in the development of the new policy.



## **Lessons Learned - Community Engagement**

**Timing** - We received feedback from a number of attendees and prospective attendees that the choice to hold this Session on Monday, March 20th from 9AM to 1PM was not conducive to high attendance. The date itself, followed the local schools' March Break, and was also at the same time as numerous Francophonie events celebrating Francophonie Day/Month. The timing of the Session, being held during a work day, is also not conducive to people being able to attend as it is a large portion of a work day.

This timing issue similarly affected logistical components of the event, including the set up of simultaneous translation services on the morning of the event. Unfortunately, due to technical difficulties with the in-person translation equipment we were not able to offer simultaneous translation to in-person attendees via the contracted devices. Had the event been later in the day or the room secured earlier the installer would have had more time to set up and test equipment.

No one in attendance required the simultaneous translation, but if there had been a need we would have connected the attendee(s) to the Zoom meeting with a mobile device or laptop and headphones where they could access the simultaneous translation.

**Virtual Experience** - We received feedback during the Session from attendees joining via Zoom regarding the wait times as we transitioned from the Session to breaks and back again. We recognize that the experience for virtual attendees was not as dynamic as it could have been and we aspire to engage our virtual attendees better in the future.

# Financial Summary

The purchase of service agreement approved a \$12,675 budget based on program activities to cover costs associated with CHC co-hosting the Bilingual commemoration public engagement session.

## Budget

|   | Program Activities                           | Budget          |
|---|--|-----------------|
| 1 | Opening and Closing (by an Indigenous Elder) | \$800           |
| 2 | Facilitators                                 | \$2400          |
| 3 | CHC Administration                           | \$1000          |
| 4 | Translation and interpretation services      | \$3500          |
| 5 | Hybrid Event coordination and logistics      | \$2500          |
| 6 | Photography services                         | \$900           |
| 7 | Transportation                               | \$120           |
| 8 | Refreshments                                 | \$900           |
| 9 | Marketing and promotion                      | \$555           |
|   | <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>\$12,675</b> |

# Conclusion

In conclusion, the presentation of this Bilingual Public Engagement Session was successful in meeting its 3 main objectives as previously stated with limited impediments.

The BPES brought together diverse members of Ottawa's heritage community to discuss matters of commemoration and provide feedback to the City of Ottawa's Cultural Development and Initiatives team on the Commemoration Policy Development Project. The Session was presented in-person and virtually, and was made available in English and French.

Community feedback was comprehensive, and fairly consistent. Based on the feedback, there are three key recommendations/issues that are clearly important to the community: commemoration should be community led and community driven, with support from the City of Ottawa; there should be diverse and inclusive representation from the community, including Indigenous, Francophone, and youth representation; and there should be transparent and accessible communication throughout the commemoration process.



# Appendix

A. Session Information Package

B. Speaker Biographies

C. Feedback Notes from Breakout Discussion Groups

D. Arts, Heritage and Culture Advisory Committee  
Report (2012)

E. Capital Current article (2023)



**Bilingual Public Engagement Session:**  
**City of Ottawa Municipal Commemoration Policy Development Project**  
**Date: Monday, March 20th 2023**  
**Time: 9 AM to 1 PM EDT**

**Presented by:**



**AGENDA**

| <b>Time</b>                | <b>Activity</b>  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>9:00 am - 9:15 am</b>   | <b>Registration</b>  |
| <b>9:15 am - 9:20 am</b>   | <b>Land acknowledgement &amp; Housekeeping items</b>   |
| <b>9:20 am - 9:30 am</b>   | <b>Welcome to Anishinabe Algonquin Nation<br/>Unceded Territory and opening words/prayer<br/>by Anishinabe Algonquin Nation Elder Annie<br/>Smith St. Georges</b>  |
| <b>9:30 am - 9:40 am</b>   | <b>Greetings from Mayor Mark Sutcliffe</b>   |
| <b>9:40 am - 10:00 am</b>  | <b>Opening remarks from CHC Executive Director<br/>Ruby Edet and City of Ottawa Municipal<br/>Commemoration Policy Development Project<br/>Sponsor Dan Chenier</b> |
| <b>10:00 am - 10:30 am</b> | <b>Presentation of the Commemoration Policy<br/>Proposed Approaches by Project Lead Yadollah<br/>Parmoun</b>   |

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>10:30 am - 10:40 am</b> | <b>Break &amp; Refreshments</b>  |
| <b>10:45 am - 12:00 pm</b> | <b>Facilitated breakout discussion groups</b>  |
| <b>12:00 pm - 12:10 pm</b> | <b>Break &amp; Refreshments</b>  |
| <b>12:10 pm - 12:40 pm</b> | <b>Breakout room reports by the facilitators/note-takers to the general meeting</b>      |
| <b>12:40 pm - 12:45 pm</b> | <b>Final Remarks &amp; Next Steps</b>  |
| <b>12:45 pm - 12:50 pm</b> | <b>Closing words/prayer by Anishinabe Algonquin Nation Elder Annie Smith St. Georges</b> |
| <b>12:50 pm</b>            | <b>Group photo (in person)</b>   |



## **City of Ottawa Municipal Commemoration Policy Development Project**

### **Bilingual Public Engagement Session on**

# **Proposed Approaches for City of Ottawa Municipal Commemoration Policy**

**Monday, 20 March 2023**

## **PowerPoint Presentation Text – Yadollah Parmoun (project lead)**

### **Slide #1: Introduction**

Today's public engagement session will present the approaches, concepts and principles proposed by the commemoration policy development project team for an overarching City of Ottawa municipal commemoration policy. These proposed approaches follow research on fundamentals of commemoration, comparative studies of past practices, gaps, and potential, and extensive community consultation and engagement. Today's final public consultation will test our collaborative work to date and check in on public expectations as we move towards the crafting of a final draft policy document. We are very much looking forward to your input and feedback today.

### **Slide #2: Presentation Contents**

This presentation will provide you with proposed definitions, goals, guiding principles, approaches to contentious and alternative commemoration, roles for a Commemoration Committee, and a public engagement path.

### **Slide #3: On “policy” vs “procedure”**

The City of Ottawa Municipal Commemoration Policy will provide a framework for all municipal commemoration programs and initiatives. As an overarching corporate policy, it will provide goals, guiding principles and mechanisms that support collaboration across the corporation. Definitions of key terms, policy requirements, roles and responsibilities and reporting mechanisms will be included as is typical for policy frames.

Distinct from policy, procedures (or guidelines) set out scope, purpose, program roles and responsibilities and budget. The development of specific commemoration program procedures would follow the development and approval of the overarching municipal commemoration policy.

#### **Slide #4: On the concept of commemoration**

The commemoration policy project team has been aligning with the discipline of Memory Studies which has been guiding the policy development path. Memory studies define commemoration within the context of ‘collective memory.’

‘Collective memory’ can be defined as the memory of an achievement, a tragedy, a difficult past, or a cultural practice, that a nation, a city, a community or a group, values as part of its shared identity.

Commemoration is a method to regularly remember and share such collective memories together in various symbolic ways. Some commemorative forms are monuments, commemorative names, commemorative works of art, plaques, ritual gatherings such as Indigenous ceremonies, visits to special places, and awards or flag-raising ceremonies. These forms can commemorate tangible and/or living (intangible) cultures and heritages.

#### **Slide #5: On the proposed Purpose of the Policy**

The project team is proposing eight goals which, together, set out the purpose of the policy:

1. Guide City of Ottawa commemoration and naming activity with a comprehensive and contemporary approach
2. Enhance the commemoration of local Ottawa histories, stories, and legacies
3. Increase the number of commemorations related to under-represented communities and cultures in urban, suburban, and rural areas
4. Ensure City of Ottawa commemoration practices respectfully include, promote, and encourage the participation of the Anishinabe Algonquin Host Nation, on whose unceded territory Ottawa is built; Urban First Nations, Inuit, and Métis residents and equity-deserving communities
5. Encourage public engagement, and support public interaction with new and existing commemorations
6. Establish a City of Ottawa Commemoration Committee that guides policy implementation and benefits municipal commemorative activity
7. Nurture collaboration among City of Ottawa service areas and employees involved in commemorative activity
8. Build awareness around the UN Sustainable Development Goals, as a resource for municipal governments to guide the development of good public governance

in these challenging times. Commemoration carries potential to enhance sustainable practice in the City of Ottawa.

## **Slide #6: On the proposed Guiding Principles of the Policy**

Five principles are proposed to guide policy development and implementation:

1. Responsible Stewardship – The City of Ottawa will adopt good practices and professional standards to commemorate local Ottawa histories, stories, and legacies for current and future generations.
2. Equity and Inclusion – The City of Ottawa will promote truth and reconciliation, equity, diversity, and inclusion, in municipal commemoration.
3. Openness and Transparency – The City of Ottawa will implement the municipal commemoration policy in an open and transparent manner.
4. Cultural Norms and Engagement – The City of Ottawa will ensure that community cultural norms are respected, and that appropriate engagement on municipal commemoration themes is undertaken.
5. Human Rights, Mutual Respect, and Sustainable Development – In its commemorative and naming practices, the City of Ottawa will adhere to provincial, federal, and international human rights legislation; principles of mutual respect among communities, groups, and individuals; and sustainable development.

## **Slide #7: On the proposed approach to contentious commemoration**

During the policy development path, a Working Group on Contentious Commemoration was established as a subcommittee of the City of Ottawa's Advisory Group for Municipal Commemoration Policy Development. The working group has developed a set of principles and recommendations to deal with cases of contentious commemoration, and the project team is proposing that these principles be adopted into the policy.

Based on this work, removal would not be the only option in reaction to contentious or disputed memorials and other commemorative forms.

## **Slide #8: On the concept of alternative commemoration**

Both the Advisory Group and the Working Group on Contentious Commemoration are recommending inclusion of "alternative commemoration" among the commemorative practices supported by the City of Ottawa.

"Alternative commemoration" encompasses all creative initiatives that attract people to engage and interact with monuments, names, or sites of historical or cultural significance, with the purpose of encouraging dialogue and raising public awareness.

Alternative commemoration can be especially effective in dealing with cases of contentious commemoration. It can also help to diversify commemoration methods, boost active public engagement, support artists and creatives, and promote truth, reconciliation, equity, inclusion, and sustainable development.

## **Slide #9: On the proposed City of Ottawa Commemoration Committee**

The Council-approved Renewed Action Plan for Arts, Heritage, and Culture (2013-2018) recommended that a new municipal commemoration and naming policy be overseen by an arms-length body composed of citizens and heritage authorities. The City of Ottawa will consider the establishment of such an arms-length, informed/expert City of Ottawa Commemoration Committee to guide the implementation of the Commemoration Policy through a set of procedures.

These procedures could include guidelines that:

- encourage diverse approaches to commemoration
- support solutions for contentious commemoration, and
- encourage creative and alternative commemorative forms.

These connect to the guiding principles and have already been presented in previous slides.

Following consideration and if approved by Ottawa City Council, Terms of Reference and procedures for a Committee would be developed. An arms-length Committee could include representation that reflects the diversity of Ottawa cultures and communities. Committee recommendations could be submitted to the Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services Department and could provide support to existing commemorative activity as deemed beneficial.

## **Slide #10: On past and proposed future public engagement**

During the commemoration policy development process, the project team has actively reported to and encouraged community engagement.

The project's Advisory Group is composed of members with deep knowledge of memory studies, diverse lived experiences, and access to Ottawa histories, stories, and legacies from a wide range of local communities.

An arms-length survey of City of Ottawa past and existing commemorative practice is underway by two expert firms - EVOQ Strategies and Archipel Research and Consulting. Field work has included interviews with people from equity-deserving communities of Ottawa.

A Host Nation engagement session received input from Anishinabe Algonquin Nation Chiefs, representatives and Elders, and an Indigenous Youth Engagement session

organized by the Assembly of Seven Generations brought together 30 Host Nation, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis youth to engage in and provide input to the policy development project.

This final public engagement session, organized by Capital Heritage Connexion, values your feedback on proposed approaches to municipal commemoration that have developed through project work. Your input is very valued, and we look forward to your feedback in the facilitated breakout groups coming up.

Once approved by City Council, implementation of the policy will aim to follow a similar community engagement path that may include establishment of an arms-length Committee to guide the work.

### **Slide #11: On the unique local features of Ottawa**

This final slide identifies the features that the project team believes make Ottawa unique. This uniqueness provides exciting potential for meaningful municipal commemoration.

Ottawa is unique in that:

- It rests on the unceded territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin Host Nation
- It is home to a diverse urban Indigenous community of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people
- It is home to diverse immigrant and equity-deserving communities
- It includes a landscape that connects neighbouring urban, suburban and rural lifestyles
- It serves as both Canada's National Capital and a multilingual, medium-sized North American city with French and English as official languages

The linguistic diversity of Ottawa has also resulted in the recommendation to develop a set of municipal toponymy guidelines, a distinct future project, that can guide the identification and use of authentic Ottawa place names with consistency.

### **Slide #12 Questions for Break-Out Groups**

Your break-out group questions will help us to test our proposed approaches on municipal commemoration:

1. What does commemoration mean to you?
2. To what extent do you think the proposed approaches to municipal commemoration presented today are on the right track? How would you improve them? What would you add, change, or remove?
3. How can the City of Ottawa effectively support commemoration efforts in its communities?
4. The establishment of a Commemoration Committee is being considered to guide City of Ottawa commemoration programs and initiatives. Should the City



determine that such a Committee is beneficial, how would you suggest that individuals be selected to serve as Committee Members?

5. What is the best way to encourage Ottawa residents to engage in commemoration - to express their ideas, interact with municipal monuments, memorials, and names, and suggest themes for new commemorations?

We are looking forward to your input and feedback.



# City of Ottawa **Municipal Commemoration Policy Approaches**

Bilingual Public Engagement Session

March 20, 2023

# A Municipal Commemoration Policy for Ottawa

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Policy and procedure

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What do we mean by commemoration?

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Purpose of a municipal commemoration policy

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Guiding principles

---

Contentious and alternative commemoration

---

Municipal commemoration committee

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Public engagement

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Finding the right fit for Ottawa

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# Policy or procedure?

## Policy

- A framework for all programs and initiatives in a specific area
- Establishes:
  - Goal(s)
  - Guiding principles
  - Collaboration mechanisms
- Includes:
  - Definitions of key terms
  - Requirements
  - Legislative and reporting requirements
  - General roles & responsibilities

## Procedure

- Relate to a specific program or initiative
- Sets out:
  - Scope
  - Purpose
  - Action required
  - Specific roles & responsibilities
  - General budget information

# Definitions

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**Commemoration:** remembering and sharing collective memories together in a symbolic way for example, through rituals, visiting a special place, ceremonies, special objects

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**Collective memory:** past events, achievements, tragedies, or cultural practices shared by nations, communities or groups that are valued as part of a shared identity.



# Purpose of the commemoration policy

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- Implement comprehensive, updated approaches to commemoration and naming
- Nurture collaboration between different City service areas working on commemoration
- Establish a City of Ottawa Commemoration Committee to guide policy implementation
- Enhance local commemoration – Ottawa histories, stories, legacies
- Grow the number of commemorations relating to underrepresented communities across urban, suburban and rural areas
- Ensure City commemoration practice respectfully honours, includes and promotes the participation of the Anishinabe Algonquin Host Nation as well as Urban FNIM
- Encourage public engagement and interaction with existing and new commemoration
- Build awareness around the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

# Guiding principles

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Responsible stewardship</b>             | The City of Ottawa will adopt good practices and professional standards to commemorate local Ottawa histories, stories and legacies for current and future generations  |
| <b>Inclusion</b>                           | The City of Ottawa will promote and enhance truth, reconciliation, diversity, inclusion, and sustainable development in municipal commemoration including through lesser known and alternative commemoration practices.                         |
| <b>Openness &amp; transparency</b>         | The City of Ottawa will implement the municipal commemoration policy with openness and transparency.  |
| <b>Cultural norms &amp; engagement</b>     | The City of Ottawa will ensure that community cultural norms are respected, and that appropriate engagement on municipal commemoration themes is undertaken.  |
| <b>Human rights, mutual respect and SD</b> | The City of Ottawa will adhere to provincial, federal and international human rights legislation, principles of mutual respect among communities, groups, or individuals, and sustainable development in its commemorative and naming practices |

# Contentious commemoration

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**Contentious commemoration:** commemorative events, activities, and symbols with disputed, sometimes conflicting, meanings or symbolism to different communities and/or groups.

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The advisory group created a subcommittee to look specifically at issues of contentious commemoration. The subcommittee met three times and presented a series of recommendations to the advisory group and the project team to be incorporated into the policy.



# Alternative commemoration

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## What is it?

- creative initiatives by the public, especially artists and creatives, to attract people to spaces, places and symbols of cultural or historical significance, encouraging dialogue about them in all their complexity and raising public awareness

## What does it do?

- diversifies commemoration methods, boosts active engagement of the public, artists, and creatives with memorials, monuments, and names,

## What does it promote?

- truth, reconciliation, diversity, inclusion, and sustainable development.

# City of Ottawa Commemoration Committee

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The Council-approved Renewed Action Plan for Arts, Heritage and Culture (2013-2018) recommended a new Municipal Commemoration & Naming Policy be overseen by an arms-length body inclusive of both residents and heritage authorities.

The City will consider establishing an arms-length committee to guide Policy implementation.

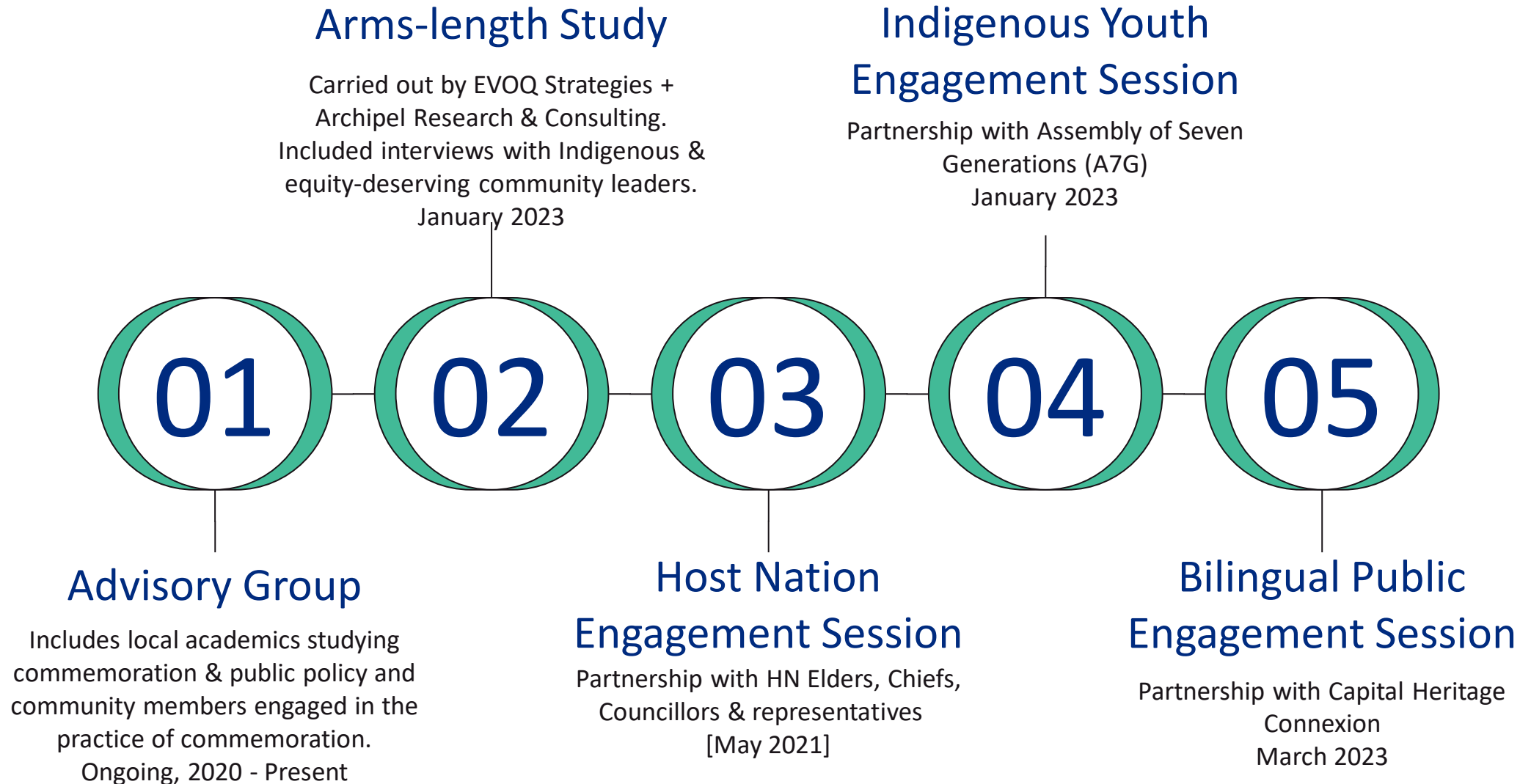
## **Possible procedures could include guidelines that**

- Encourage diverse approaches to commemoration
- Support solutions for contentious commemoration
- Encourage creative and alternative commemorative forms



# Public engagement

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# A policy for Ottawa

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## Host Nation

The City of Ottawa sits on the unceded land of the Anishinabe Algonquin nation who have stewarded this land since time immemorial

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## Gathering Place

Ottawa is home to a diverse urban Indigenous communities with members many different First Nations and Métis Nations alongside the largest concentration of Inuit outside of the north

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## Diversity

People from across Canada and around the world have made their home in Ottawa. Our diversity is our strength, but we must also work for equity for all who call Ottawa home.

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## Urban, suburban and rural

The City of Ottawa is one of the largest municipalities in the province, representing a large urban population, a large rural landmass and a number of distinct suburbs with their own new & historic identities.

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## A National Capital

Ottawa is Canada's national capital. Residents communicate in both official languages as well as a number of non-official languages. Ottawa is a growing mid-sized North American city.

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# Our questions for you

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1. What does commemoration mean to you?
2. To what extent do you think the proposed approaches to municipal commemoration presented today are on the right track? How would you improve them? What would you add, change, or remove?
3. How can the City of Ottawa effectively support commemoration efforts in its communities?
4. The establishment of a Commemoration Committee is being considered to guide City of Ottawa commemoration programs and initiatives. Should the City determine that such a Committee is beneficial, how would you suggest that individuals be selected to serve as Committee Members?
5. What is the best way to encourage Ottawa residents to engage in commemoration - to

# MIIGWETCH | MERCI | THANK YOU

For more information about the Municipal Commemoration Policy project please contact:

**Yadollah Parmoun**

Cultural Developer (Heritage)

Cultural Development & Initiatives

City of Ottawa

[Yadollah.Parmoun@Ottawa.ca](mailto:Yadollah.Parmoun@Ottawa.ca)

## Questions for Break-Out Groups

Dear participants,

Your responses to these questions will help us to test our proposed approaches on municipal commemoration:

1. What does commemoration mean to you?
2. To what extent do you think the proposed approaches to municipal commemoration presented today are on the right track? How would you improve them? What would you add, change, or remove?
3. How can the City of Ottawa effectively support commemoration efforts in its communities?
4. The establishment of a Commemoration Committee is being considered to guide City of Ottawa commemoration programs and initiatives. Should the City determine that such a Committee is beneficial, how would you suggest that individuals be selected to serve as Committee Members?
5. What is the best way to encourage Ottawa residents to engage in commemoration - to express their ideas, interact with municipal monuments, memorials, and names, and suggest themes for new commemorations?

## Speaker Biographies

### Anishinabe Algonquin Nation Elder Annie Smith St. Georges

Elder Annie Smith St. Georges was born and raised in Kitigan Kibi Anishnabeg First Nation. Elder Annie's teachings are based on respecting Mother Earth and all its creatures, spirituality and promoting harmony among each other.

Elder Annie holds a teaching certificate from the University of Quebec and had worked for several years as a federal civil servant. She was the founder of Kumik, the Elders Lodge (Crown - Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada) established in the early 1990s following the Oka crisis where Elders came from across Canada to share their teachings and knowledge

Elder Annie was featured in many documentaries regarding aboriginal culture and social issues. One of the documentaries she and her husband Robert (a Métis) were featured in "KWEKÀNAMAD" (The Wind is changing) was nominated in three aboriginal film festivals.



### Mark Sutcliffe, Mayor of the City of Ottawa

Prior to entering municipal politics, Mark was an award-winning journalist, entrepreneur, volunteer, and community activist. For over 30 years, Mark covered politics and current events as a broadcaster for CFRA, CityNews, Rogers TV, and CPAC, and as executive editor and columnist for the Ottawa Citizen.





## Dr. Ruby Edet, Executive Director of Capital Heritage Connexion

Dr. Ruby Edet is an adept leader with over ten years of experience in Leadership internationally and in Canada. She is passionate about heritage and fostering diversity. She has worked with Somerset West Community Health Center as the first Systems Change Manager working with Leadership to ensure equity, diversity, and inclusion is reflected in its systems processes and practice. She also worked with the Leadership of Restore Medical Clinics, Restore-International Foundation, and the University of Ottawa Co-Creath lab, among others, in leadership and management roles fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion in leadership spaces.



## Dan Chenier, City of Ottawa Municipal Commemoration Policy Development Project Sponsor

Dan has been involved in the delivery of community recreation for over 45 years. Since his first job as a lifeguard at a City pool in 1972, he has held increasing levels of managerial responsibilities in municipal recreation with extensive experience in the direct delivery of recreation services as well as working with community partners to build partnerships that benefit residents. Dan was actively involved in the reshaping of recreation services at amalgamation, and more recently in the subsequent refinements to the model. Dan now serves as the General Manager of the Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services Department.



## Yadollah Parmoun, Commemoration Policy Project Lead

Yadollah Parmoun is a Cultural Developer for Heritage in the Cultural Development and Initiatives Unit. Yadollah carries more than 20 years of experience in cultural research, policymaking, training and management at national Iranian, Asian, international and Canadian centres of expertise. He is certified as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) expert, has worked at the Canadian Commission for UNESCO and at Library and Archives Canada, and is a current member and research fellow with the Folklore Studies Association of Canada. Yadollah holds doctorates in theoretical linguistics from Tarbiat Modarres University in Tehran.



## **Break Out Group Notes**

### Commemoration Policy Development

March 20, 2023 – Public Engagement Session

#### **Question #1**

1. What does commemoration mean to you?
  - Commemorating our past and acknowledging how we're moving forward, not just to where but how
  - Ensure we are honouring appropriately and effectively
  - Take into consideration what happened in the past, what people lived in the past before us and respect that
  - When thinking about bad experiences in the past, commemoration can help us to plan how to live so that we never have to live what was experienced badly in the past
  - Moving forward together
  - No way to reconcile past if we're not doing this together

#### **Question #2**

2. To what extent do you think the proposed approaches to municipal commemoration presented today are on the right track? How would you improve them? What would you add, change, or remove?
  - Give emphasis to the future – we mostly focus on what happened and talk about history – this is very good, but we need to focus more on what we are going to do based on what we lived
  - More accessible communication on commemoration is needed, this is lacking
  - As we share history and the past, there is a need to focus on how the past impacts the community living we share today
  - Focus on ways to assess how we are moving towards better integration of our communities as we commemorate
  - Proposed approaches are good and are in-depth, commemoration policy for the City is important
  - City should consider reviewing the policy (once approved) within the first year or first two years – need more regular and consistent reviews – City tends to review policy every 7 to 10 years
  - With so many community groups and partnerships and so many voices that need to be heard, very important to stay on track and consistently review remembering “nothing about us without us”
  - Commemoration is always evolving and our approach to commemoration must evolve over time as well

#### **Question #3**

3. How can the City of Ottawa effectively support commemoration efforts in its communities?
  - City must support community projects and must identify times for City and community to assess progress on commemoration together
  - Choose topics each year that emanate from community for community-City discussion
  - Together identify trends and themes
  - After a year or maybe three years, meet again and assess, consult - did people hear what we were talking about around commemoration? Were people engaged by the topics? Did communities move forward together?
  - Need a step-by-step process for community participation and leadership
  - Communities should not be just involved in commemoration - community should be in a leadership position and should have the ability to involve the City
  - City should serve as facilitator of decisions, not decision-maker
  - Commemoration ideas might come from a neighbourhood, but this seed should reach out to involve everyone in some way

#### **Question #4**

4. The establishment of a Commemoration Committee is being considered to guide City of Ottawa commemoration programs and initiatives. Should the City determine that such a Committee is beneficial, how would you suggest that individuals be selected to serve as Committee Members?
  - Application process is important – candidates should submit resume or cv and should identify the background that brings them to the table, and the awareness they have
  - Committee could include councillors (elected officials), City officials, representatives of cultural institutions (museums, galleries, community centres), community members
  - Members should not be members for more than two years (voices become stagnant and too engrained in what they're doing)
  - Members could serve for two-years and then there should be a hiatus before applying again
  - People can be solicited by outreach to community groups, but City needs to exercise caution around reaching out itself
  - Better to approach Pikwakanagan and Black History Ottawa to ask for representatives
  - Need to ensure a wide diversity
  - If the City does not receive submissions, more work needs to be done reaching out further and better
  - Perhaps there could be an annual meeting that brings everyone together (Committee and public) to outline and discuss commemoration initiatives that are on track for the year

- Youth members very important since they are the future, and we need to design commemoration policies that can implement what our youth want to see
- Need to consider age diversity – young and older – where legacies can be shared, new points of view expressed – this mix could be very effective

### **Question #5**

5. What is the best way to encourage Ottawa residents to engage in commemoration - to express their ideas, interact with municipal monuments, memorials, and names, and suggest themes for new commemorations?
  - The way we present and spread information about community is important not only to share history (lessons) but to spark thinking about better ways forward
  - Need new ways to communicate - organize a mashup
  - Identify points in public markets where residents can access information about communities and streets, information could be accessed via sellers/vendors
  - People, in their homes, could hold information about their neighbourhood – accessible at community gatherings
  - Need not only a formal space like this public engagement session, but also a permanent, people-friendly way to spread history
  - Can be a slippery slope – important to engage the public and bring questions to the forefront, but the process and people can get overstimulated by information and ideas – need to be ready to handle challenges
  - Change the methods of engaging - some communities already know they can participate but others need new ways to engage, not formal and classic but new ways to increase interest and engagement
  - Younger population needs different language and alternate channels for communication
  - Good to have a formal way to debate and discuss, but need new ways to engage, since sometimes formality can dissuade people from engagement

### **Other**

- Important that we walk slowly through this
- Look for new ways of integrating people into this process – take the time required to do it right – the faster we move the more we're not listening
- Make sure we're not sliding off the track as we move along

### **1. What does commemoration mean to you?**

- In the past, commemoration was more about patriotism, a sense of national identity, honouring founders, but now, it is more informed by an understanding of history and the more diverse perspectives on events and people.
- Commemoration is iconography, often of a bygone era
- Visuals that are meant to send a message, but not always the correct one
- Commemoration helps us to understand the history we've inherited balanced with history as we know and see it now.
- Ever evolving
- Traditionally, commemoration seemed to focus on the "who" but perhaps these days it should shift more towards the "why" and "when" and "where"

### **2. To what extent do you think the proposed approaches to municipal commemoration presented today are on the right track? How would you improve them? What would you add, change, or remove?**

- Focus on all sides of the story
- Tell stories of all communities
- An approach and a balance between Ottawa as both a Federal and a Municipal community
- Ensuring that the policy and committee is focused on Ottawa as a community
- Ensure that Capital doesn't overshadow

### **3. How can the City of Ottawa effectively support commemoration efforts in its communities?**

- Assist in the creation of an inventory of current, ongoing, and future commemorative projects in order to identify gaps, inequities, marginalized groups, or certain neighbourhoods lacking in such programs.
- City can support ideas coming from the communities themselves; needs to be a community-led initiative with city support, not the other way around.
- Public consultation and awareness campaigns on how to apply for funding, grants etc.
- Support community involvement via budget; covering costs of consultations, focus groups, physical elements of a commemorative piece etc.
- City could lend support to heritage organizations, museums, and community groups who act as intermediaries between their community and the committee and/or working group.
- Heritage organizations with city support could also facilitate nominations and proposals.



**4. The establishment of a Commemoration Committee is being considered to guide City of Ottawa commemoration programs and initiatives. Should the City determine that such a Committee is beneficial, how would you suggest that individuals be selected to serve as Committee Members?**

- How big will this committee be?
- How many members?
- Consultation process
- Historians vs. community members? Mix?
- Ensure community voices
- Look at other models that already exist ie. NCC
- How would criteria be developed to choose members
- Potential for community groups or organizations to have sitting members?

**5. What is the best way to encourage Ottawa residents to engage in commemoration - to express their ideas, interact with municipal monuments, memorials, and names, and suggest themes for new commemorations?**

- Public consultation
- Involve nominators and nominees in the whole process
- Ensure openness and transparency throughout the process
- People want to be involved, but they want to know how and why, and how long.
- Require detailed timelines and real action.
- Bringing nominations and presentations into schools; engage with school-aged children and youth groups.
- Focus on historical vs. contemporary nominations

## BREAKOUT ROOM 3

### COMMEMORATION POLICY PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SESSION

20 March 2023

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What does commemoration mean to you?

- A lot of the commemorations that we have a neighborhood level are memorials, often for the war, at a regional level and would like to see more of these whole community commemorations
- Think its easier to commemorate groups or events than individuals for the reasons of contentious commemoration
- In westboro all of the commemorations focus on the early 1900s because that's when Westboro was developed, would like to see more commemoration around the river, the link between early and modern Ottawa, would like to hear more from Indigenous residents
- Is there any way that the parks, streets, etc. could be drawn into the story of our Indigenous heritage
- If we're commemorating disaster, commemorating the event rather than the specific individuals involved
- Not everyone even knew that the Algonquins were the host nation so I think that there's a push for recognition that we're on unceded territory
- The host nation needs to be part of all of the commemoration activities
- New people coming in to Ottawa need to know about and respect this history
- For local organization our aim is to bring to Canadians a vision of what's happened in the past and how the visions and the actions of former politicians and judges and people in our history the good things and the bad things or decisions that in hindsight are deemed to be poor decisions and the impact that they've had on Canadians today
- It's not just about prime ministers, also looking at the people who've lived in the community and helped build Ottawa
- We want to save our built heritage because it's not just our neighbourhood's built heritage but ottawa's built heritage and canada's built heritage
- Want to bring this heritage not just to local people but to Canadians
- We need to ensure that the population is well represented during commemoration activities
- Is it possible to do like an annual video of regular citizens who passed away buy who gave significant contributions to the community that could maybe go through in the City Hall room so that people when they go to City Hall can see the pictures and a synopsis of the person because usually for commemoration it's for the greater person of society that are picked, but we could also have that level of the loss of people who have made a difference at a different level
- Both levels, people who have contributed to the community, could be the Canadian community or the community of Ottawa or regular citizens if a family member believes that person contributed some way during their life, they could submit a name, picture and little bio of that person to give more of a sense of belonging to the city

To what extent do you think the proposed approaches to municipal commemoration presented today are on the right track? How would you improve them? What would you add, change or remove?

- On the right track but when you develop policy it should also be reviewed every year because things change every year and you need to make sure that it continues on the right track
- Walking museums have low barriers to access – outside, just bring yourself
- Have you consulted the federation of community associations as they have all of the community associations and you might want to have a meeting with them to find out what they're doing on commemoration
- Good commemoration can only come from the grassroots or the community level
- Commemoration can be many things but people often think it's an event, statue or memorial
- I think we're on the right track and when comparing Ottawa to other cities I'm sure we're on the right track but think it's good to have this kind of consultation

Anything that the City of Ottawa could bring to the table to effectively support the community?

- Continue to talk to different groups around what commemoration means
- In my neighbourhood there's renaming
  - o If there's a park and it's named after the street that it's on it's possible to do commemoration through renaming the park or having activities and events in the park
  - o Even if nothing happened specifically in that park, you could reach out to different communities who maybe don't have space and offer that space for commemorations for that community (ex. if there's an event that's significant to commemorate for the Black community, have them have that commemoration in Lion's park, doesn't need to be specific to what has happened in that specific park or neighbourhood)
  - o Maybe something could be done with the community centres, inside or outside, potentially a renaming or additional name that could be named after someone or an event that's important
  - o Would really like to see more about commemorating our indigenous heritage and it would be up to our Indigenous neighbours to tell us what's important
- In terms of disaster, our community had a terrible disaster – the bus disaster – and it would be good to have a commemoration there but it also has to come from the families and those who were injured in the bus accident
  - o Would like to know if someone in the city is looking at a gentle commemoration for what happened
  - o Let's not forget about naming our stations in a commemorative way

How would you recommend that individuals be selected to serve as members of a potential commemoration committee?

- As a volunteer I think that it's really important to have people who have an interest be appointed or they're not going to contribute to the conversation
- There should be a limited service time because new volunteers bring new ideas
- I think that it's important to have some continuity but also a lot of renewal
- Think the committee is necessary for guiding the City of Ottawa

- Should be diverse, like the advisory group
- In order to pick, yes there needs to be a candidacy system and just a call out, an open call
- Maybe ads on public transit in the buses or the train
- On the radio
- Call should be annual, yearly opportunity to join
- Social media
- Reaching out to equity groups
- You can use all your public facing tools
- The city often has an annual call for public facing groups and committees
- If you want to really get people who are involved, you need to get people who are really committed to the idea of commemoration, not with a personal agenda (ex. looking for a commemoration of a specific relative)

What is the best way to encourage Ottawa residents to engage in commemoration – to express their ideas, interact with municipal monuments, memorials and names and suggest themes for new commemoration?

- Maybe we can have a collective little booklet that people can contribute to with either an article or a poem or open literature slot where they can express themselves according to a personage or a historical event
- This will engage more citizens in a commemoration activity
- I think that the important thing is people will engage with commemorations that they feel an emotional attachment to – which is usually because people have family involved or they are involved in a community that's being commemorated
- Commemoration of the world wars used to be more tepid than it is now
- Reaching out into different groups – you need a proponent – and they will be the ones that reach out into the communities affected
- Ask community leaders what's important to their communities
- We can't forget about youth
- A7G had a youth engagement session and their perspective is quite different, need to remember to get the perspective of the youth and often social media is the best way to do that
- In Sandy Hill we've had recent park renamings that have reflected local heritage, commemorating women and Inuit individuals
- We have groups that are connected to those names come and celebrate their events in those parks since they've been renamed which is another way of encouraging people to get involved in commemoration (ex. Annie's park)
- Some people didn't even learn what commemoration was – the document didn't open
- Would have liked a 30 second explanation of commemoration?
- Commemoration is basically when a community chooses to remember or celebrate something that's happened in the past – person, place, event, initiative, tragedy. Could be a good thing or a bad thing, celebration or a tragedy.
- The purpose of today's meeting is to look at how we've been commemorating and collecting ideas on how to update the policies
- Will the city ever have grants or money available to groups to prepare their own commemoration?

- If you don't say anything or ask nothing will ever be done
- Please feel free to provide additional feedback
- There will be a report from the notetakers at 12:10
-

#### Question 1

- Commemoration allows us not to forget illustrious characters of historical events
- Creates a historical link with what preceded us, and allows us to project ourselves into the future (preventing us from sinking into oblivion)

#### Question 2

- Better dissemination of the memorialization process, people are not aware that they can suggest or help with the names of buildings, places being commemorated etc...
- Never to forget or lose sight of the Francophone element.
- Focus and keep particular attention to Vanier and Orleans for commemoration projects and to not forget the language.
- Also to remember that the First Nations were there first as well, part of the history of the place.

#### Question 3

- Ideas that can come from community groups and individuals, they may be intimidated. People who want to commemorate but don't know where to start.
- A role of support for the City, with resources, for people who can support these groups or individuals.
- Being aware that even though amalgamation happened 20+ years ago there is still deep attachment by people to their hometown / neighbourhood. Remember that the City is made up of several communities and to be sensitive to this.
- Many small identities that remain to be commemorated. They are all unique and the City must have flexibility and adaptability when it comes to each community.

#### Question 4

- Citizens of the City of Ottawa
- The composition of the committee will depend on its mandate and purpose.
- Modeled on pre-existing committees where there is a mix of people from the fabric: councillors, elected officials and people from the community who submit an application.
- Good representation of Francophone, Indigenous and all communities that make up the City of Ottawa.
- People are invite to apply, and a sponsorship process. So someone would apply but be required to show that they are supported by a community group (or multiple) for example. This would help with representation as well.

#### Question 5



- Similar to how notices are put out publicly when designating something under the Heritage Act. Publish notices of intent to transmit information in newspapers but also through social media and other digital means.
- If people see that the process is open and accessible to everyone that will encourage them to interact more with commemoration generally.
- A big opportunity with new developments to engage people moving there to suggest names and ideas for commemoration. This will encourage social cohesion as well, connecting with neighbours and other stakeholders in that new community
  - People will understand that not everything is decided in advance. Open and transparent.
- Make it open, inclusive and simple. If it's too complicated people will drop out quickly.
- Traditional media, new media, encourage people to go to a service centre/community centre that's City run and fill out a form to suggest a commemoration.
- Digital media avenue is very important because you can reach so many people at once.

# NOTES BREAKOUT GROUP

## 1. What does commemoration mean to you?

- Memory and honoring “remembering the root, the person”
- Relates to the past but framed in the present, commemoration should be something flowing and changing “should work of art stay or change or move as time evolves and frame of references changes?”
- History is framed by the eyes of the leaders of the time. People and memories get lost if they’re not part of the main system, there is bias
- Commemoration is on going commitment, it only exists if we all agree to do it
- If we fail to commemorate there is missing time and history
- Failure to commemorate is like notes missing in sheet music, fails to adequately represent the melody

## 2. To what extent do you think the proposed approaches to municipal commemoration presented today are on the right track? How would you improve them?

- Policy feels very abstract
- It feels very collaborative, feels like it attempts to have a balance in participants
- The Policy needs to examine ways to draw out awareness, not enough participation to accurately drive inclusiveness (specifically on proposal)
- The content is good and on the right path, but needs increased awareness around policy
- Issues are related to communication of the policy rather than content of the policy
- Policy can be good but if not enough people engage it’s hard to determine relevancy
- Issues with residents who don’t engage with the city digitally, possible solution would be to offer physical options for residents to engage with commemoration “a box next to a statue”

## 3. How can the City of Ottawa effectively support commemoration efforts in its communities

- Commemoration needs to be an ongoing commitment
- Support would be different based on distinct communities involved or represented in the commemoration
- Gaps exists when distinct communities have lack of understanding or reflection in commemoration “if a group doesn’t have adequate information on their roots, they have no context for commemoration”
- Commemoration reflects negative events for ACB/indigenous groups
- The group feels Appreciation for different types of commemoration
- Policy should classify different types of events for commemoration “negative story, positive story, identity crisis”
- The identity of Ottawa is difficult as it represents all of Canada
- Policy should Preserve identities but allow for evolution as diversity evolve

**The establishment of a Commemoration committee is being considered to guide City of Ottawa commemoration programs and initiatives. Should the city determine that such a Committee is beneficial, how would you suggest that individuals be selected**

- Representation matters

- Accommodate the representatives of distinct communities and hold space for multiple space
- Always ask the question “who is being left behind”

**What is the best way to encourage Ottawa residents to engage in commemoration – to express their ideas, interact with municipal monuments, memorials, and names and suggest themes for new commemoration**

- Google alerts or maps that link to discussion groups online for visitors to engage with
- Use virtual and digital art and space to allow people to engage “augmented reality tours that can allow for contentious commemoration and stories and contribute their voices”
- Waze is a good digital tool

Notes for commemoration policy

Equity deserving groups

What do they mean by Equity deserving groups ?

Ask EDI

Question 1,

What does commemoration mean to you?

Like putting a bookmark on collective history

A way of identifying a point in time and something which is significant in that point in history

And retraining it for future generations to learn from

Both positive and neagative

Not to glorify any of them in any particular way

An experience for everyone in the community of Ottawa

You can build information around that bookmark

A context for it

But to me, thats what it is

A place or an event

gave a great description of the ideal of commemoration

What is the reality of commemoration

The ideal should tell the whole truth of the history of history

But it has often been used to erase various histories

I agree it should be based on the truth

The truth it relevant to the person providing the truth

It is not necessarily the common truth

Where all parties have the opportunity to contribute to the whole truth or the facts  
Of the situation

You observe something, but what you see is influenced by what you expect to see

Different groups are in a different situation with a different backgrounds

History shows us that different people come with different perspectives and that creates

There version of the truth

Whoever has the power can create the history

We should do what should maintain our power

An example I have recently

In Halifax I was walking around

I saw across the filed a plaque that had not been here before  
The plaque was to enos collins, who started to the CIBC bank  
Made a lot of Money selling to slave colonies  
These plaques should be required to the same standard as court witnesses  
Do not take these down

And provide the context for how they are presented the plaques  
It would be much more effective to provide a true history of who or where they are  
You need to know all side of the situation

hi are you with us ?

I am no clear what is going on and commemoration is lost on me  
We will try and put a word document into the chat soon  
What are we trying to get feedback on how  
Can you explain what commemoration means to you ?

I signed up ahead of time  
I would like a refresher of commemoration  
Up until March 31st you have the opportunity to reply to  
The draft that has been sent

## Question 2

To what extent do you think the proposed approaches to municipal commemoration presented today are on the right track? How would you improve them? What would you add, change, or remove?

The idea of alternative commemoration sounds very similar to the Ottawa  
Polices réponse to mental health  
There is no power structure change in this moment  
Leave the statues up  
Don't tell the truth  
Shut the hell up a way to dodge the question

The real issue is that an alternative means it can reinforce what is already there  
It really needs to be is a counter position not just a reiteration in the same form  
You need two sides to get to the truth  
You need multiplied perspective  
More than one way to commemorate something  
The thing you are remembering  
Not just the single dominate perspective

Facilitator - do you think the approaches are effective  
there needs to be multiplied perspectives and they are no effective

There needs to be a push back on the EDI struggle  
Against the forces that are actively attacking editors initiatives  
Jordan Peterson

there is an accessibility issues because they don't know what commemoration is.

Facilitator - what is the best way forward  
The best way to commemorate

We are thinking of commemoration in terms of collective memory  
We inherit from people own the past  
Or installing a statue or installing a plaque  
There are many more ways to commemorate a shares history  
This could be a memory of a tragedy

Question 3

How can the City of Ottawa effectively support commemoration efforts in  
its communities?

How people spend their money says so much  
Capital heritage connection 200k budget  
The Ottawa place dry cleaning budget is 500k  
The city should put more money into commemoration  
It is hero making  
It is why we have the problem with pushing against equity groups

Facilitator -we need Money to push things forward

They need to provide an easier mechanism for people to propose  
Points of items for commemoration  
Committee to give advice  
You only get the dominant pushing forward that the city if prepared to accept  
You need more opportunities for items to be collected at the table  
If you don't have an easy way for people to propose items then you are narrowing  
The focus before reviewing items commemorate

The process must be easier to understand and more accessible  
You need the process for feeding information in more inclusive

I agree

The establishment of a Commemoration Committee is being considered to guide City of Ottawa commemoration programs and initiatives. Should the City determine that such a Committee is beneficial, how would you suggest that individuals be selected to serve as Committee Members?

This is very difficult question  
The dominant individuals in society are the ones who are trying to be a part of that  
A random selection of voters might be more effective  
Is probably more open  
We need some way of having people contribute  
A kind of hurt duty process  
A random process  
An equal chance to be asked for there input

I would agree  
But also an element that considers different equity seeking groups  
A filter for sifting out the dominant narrative  
When constructing random sample.

I can see where you are coming from  
I have sympathy for that  
You end up creating a different kind of problem  
It balances things out in one sense  
But then you are identifying groups  
I still feel uncomfortable with that

There are clearly already identifying groups  
They should have a place on that committee

Attack on political correctness is linked to attacks on political groups  
Your canceling people by taking down statues  
Any attempt to make it more equitable is more PC



They want to maintain the status quo  
If all I wanted to do was to play gold all day then I would wan this too

My own opinion  
If each group has a a representative  
About how the people in that community feel would help  
Creating representatives

Facilitator - like different groups have representatives ?

Yes, maybe different minorities have a representative head

Facilitator - is it possible to have every group equally represented

It is a work in progress

How do we break this down ? Is one person a group ?  
It becomes very difficult when you start talking about groups  
Its very challenging

Different associations representing different groups

I hear where you are coming from

Groups are diverse  
They are not a monolith  
Advisory groups are so important

What is the definition of a contentious commemoration ?  
Different forms of misinformation

The strategy is to promote disinformation  
And the strategy is to promote

And the way the story is used to create form of disinformation

What is the best way to encourage Ottawa residents to engage in commemoration - to express their ideas, interact with municipal monuments, memorials, and names, and suggest themes for new commemorations?

There needs to be some kind of mechanism for people for people to propose items to Commemorate

I think that should be an open forum

Probably online

At least once a year the city should have a day when there is an opportunity to solicit More input on the meaning of commemoration

Just formatting an idea

Still thinking about it

If folks were trying to make it more equitable ( I didn't here about more black people)  
Actively seeking people in these communities to represent the area

To add to that

If the city of Ottawa has a plan to get a day in the month whereat they cal for

Rep of the black community

The whole essence would be to get there opinions

Just to get there thoughts

In person surveying

In my own opinion this makes sense

Facilitator

Do you think surveys would help ?

Or if its in person

I think it works both ways

Another thing id suggests

Is being careful with simplistic democratic ideas

The Ottawa police

The majority of people want more police

Its not the majority pf people that the Ottawa police are targeting

We need to choose people who have been disproportionately affected by the

Force of historical commemoration policy

Concerned about positive discrimination

You have to be careful with selecting those who have been seated by this force

END

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Little to no mention of class analysis

# Public Engagement on Ottawa Commemoration Proposed Approaches

Thank you for attending the recent Bilingual Public Engagement Session on the City of Ottawa's Commemoration Policy Development Project. Please provide any further feedback, questions, and suggestions below to the questions discussed in the session. You will also have the last field to provide open comments. All responses are anonymous.

## 1. What does commemoration mean to you?

The public display of a historical representation that nurtures a shared historical understanding of past, present, and future.

## 2. To what extent do you think the proposed approaches to municipal commemoration presented in the session are on the right track? How would you improve them? What would you add, change, or remove?

I still want to see more community-based commemoration, where residents are given the resources (financial, technical, etc.) to produce their own historical representations.

## 3. How can the City of Ottawa effectively support commemoration efforts in its communities?

Through providing resources, including providing workshops that show examples of community-based commemorations from around the world.

## 4. The establishment of a Commemoration Committee is being considered to guide City of Ottawa commemoration programs and initiatives. Should the City determine that such a Committee is beneficial, how would you suggest that individuals be selected to serve as Committee Members?

Experience and expertise in both the making and the study of commemoration, drawn from neighbourhoods across the city and representing the ethnocultural diversity of Ottawa.

5. What is the best way to encourage Ottawa residents to engage in commemoration - to express their ideas, interact with municipal monuments, memorials, and names, and suggest themes for new commemorations?

By going to residents - at libraries, community centres, school fairs, etc. and opening booths that showcase current commemoration and engage people about their neighbourhoods and communities. This should also be done digitally, looking at existing neighbourhood Facebook groups, Ottawa Reddit, etc.

6. Please let us know any other questions or comments you have about the City of Ottawa Commemoration Policy Development Project.

Would like to see more collaboration with heritage and public history expertise at Algonquin, Carleton, and the University of Ottawa. This seems underdeveloped in contrast to how much the NCC and federal museums already collaborate with them.

This form was created inside of Capital Heritage Connexion Patrimoine de la Capitale.

Google Forms

# Public Engagement on Ottawa's Commemoration Proposed Approaches

Thank you for participating in the recent bilingual public engagement session on the City of Ottawa's Commemoration Policy Development Project. We invite you to provide your comments, questions and suggestions below on the issues discussed at the session. There is also a final field for open-ended comments. All responses are anonymous.

## 1. What does commemoration mean to you?

To create a collective memory, geographically located and periodically revisited, of past events representative of the present population.

## 2. To what extent do you think the proposed approaches to municipal commemoration presented in the session are on the right track? How would you improve them? What would you add, change, or remove?

I particularly like the notion of contentious memorialization, and the fact that it is not simply dismissed, but included as an embodiment of human complexity and diversity. This could provide a space for constructive exchange for different views of history in the population. These views could then be integrated as part of future commemorations.

## 3. How can the City of Ottawa effectively support commemoration efforts in its communities?

Supporting commemoration efforts = being aware of a community's desire to commemorate someone or something + supporting and guiding the development of the commemoration itself. The first point relates to the challenge of reaching all communities and age groups > diversifying the means of communicating this desire (electronically or not, written or oral, etc.). The second point requires considering various forms of commemoration, and their duration in time if it is a question of works of art.

4. The establishment of a Commemoration Committee is being considered to guide the City of Ottawa's commemoration programs and initiatives. If the City determines that such a Committee is beneficial, how would you suggest that individuals be selected to serve as Committee Members?

I would imagine that there would be a "core" group of people, with additional members depending on the commemoration in question.

5. What is the best way to encourage Ottawa residents to engage in commemoration - to express their ideas, interact with the monuments, memorials, and names, and suggest themes for new commemorations?

Diversify the channels of communication: email, QR codes on artworks, public tablets where people can register their ideas; Diversify the geographic "entry points" for these ideas: buildings, artworks, schools, street signs, museums, libraries, etc.

6. If you have any questions or comments about the City of Ottawa's Commemoration Policy Development Project, please let us know.

Congratulations on the working session! Very interesting to participate in the discussions and to see commemoration through the Canadian lens of its diversity.

This form was created inside of Capital Heritage Connexion Patrimoine de la Capitale.

**Forms**

**Report to/Rapport au:**

**City Clerk and Solicitor Department  
Bureau de service du greffier municipal et chef du contentieux**

**22 May 2012 / le 22 mai 2012**

**Submitted by/Soumis par: Chair/président  
Arts, Heritage and Culture Advisory Committee/  
Comité consultatif sur les arts, le patrimoine et la culture**

*Contact Person/Personne ressource: Melinda Aston, Advisory Committee Coordinator /  
coordinatrice des comités consultatifs  
(613) 580-2424 x21838, Melinda.Aston@ottawa.ca*

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City Wide/à l'échelle de la Ville

RefN°: ACS2010-CCV-AHC-0001

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**SUBJECT: REQUEST FROM THE CITY CLERK AND SOLICITOR DEPARTMENT  
FOR FEEDBACK ON THE CURRENT COMMEMORATIVE NAMING  
POLICY**

**OBJET: *To be translated from above.***

**REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That the City Clerk and Solicitor Department address the following recommendations, as part of the Commemorative Naming Policy review:**

- 1. Revise nomination criteria to reflect:**
  - a. Broader commemoration to include persons, groups, places and events**
  - b. Recognition of significant contributions through outstanding achievement, volunteerism or public service**
  - c. Historical, cultural or social significance to the community**
  - d. Strong community identity and clear, direct ties to a facility, park or street being named**
  - e. A preference for names of local significance over those of provincial, national or international scope**
  - f. Posthumous honours, with exceptions only for truly outstanding contributions to the community**
- 2. Discourage the practice of renaming**
- 3. Revise the Commemorative Naming Committee (CNC) membership to reflect diverse citizen representation from across Ottawa, including:**
  - a. Five members of the public appointed by a process akin to that used to select members for the Transit Commission or Advisory Committees. Representation should reflect relevant expertise (knowledge of history, community building,**



- sports and recreation community, etc.) and our diverse community elements (rural/suburban/urban, linguistic, ethnic, etc.)
  - b. One member appointed by the board of directors of the Council of Heritage Organizations in Ottawa
  - c. One member appointed by the City's Arts, Heritage and Culture Advisory Committee
  - d. The Chair (or a designated member) of the Standing Committee that the CNC reports to, as a non-voting, ex-officio member
4. Provide for Mayoral and Councillor input throughout the naming process and streamline the process by having the CNC report through only one Standing Committee
  5. Ensure that all related application and consultation processes are open, transparent, consistent, and designed to encourage citizen input
  6. Provide the CNC with appropriate City Staff support for advice, research and administrative support (e.g. the Chief Building Official, the City Archivist, etc.)
  7. Ensure that naming recommendations are supported by sound historical research
  8. As part of the City's "Open Data" initiative, create and maintain a database of existing commemorations across all types (e.g. parks, facilities, streets, statues, plaques, etc.)
  9. Work with staff at the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department to analyse, seek input, and make recommendations on the pros and cons of an expanded CNC mandate to include all naming (e.g. streets) and/or other types of commemoration (e.g. statues, fountains, etc.) and to review all City commemoration and naming to see if linking related policies and procedures would be advantageous
  10. Engage and widely consult the citizens of Ottawa on the resulting draft of a revised Commemorative Naming Policy

## **RECOMMENDATIONS DU RAPPORT**

*To be translated from above.*

## **BACKGROUND**

City Council approved the Renewed Action Plan for Arts, Heritage and Culture on February 8, 2012. At that time, a motion was also approved which stated that "the recommended action related to the development of a municipal commemoration and naming policy in the Renewed Action Plan on Arts, Heritage and Culture in the City of Ottawa (2013-2018) be referred to the Mid-Term Governance Review."

At the AHCAC meeting of February 21, 2012, the Committee was asked by Debbie Hill to provide feedback to the City Clerk and Solicitor Department on the current Commemorative Naming Policy prior to the more formal policy review exercise now scheduled to take place as part of the Mid-Term Governance Review.

AHCAC subsequently struck a working group comprised of two AHCAC members and seven members of the broader heritage community to study the effectiveness of the current policy and to consider new approaches. This report reflects the work undertaken by the working group

whose members include: Jean Bruce, Bruce Elliott, David B. Flemming, Meg Hamilton, John Heney, Louis Patry, Jean Yves Pelletier, John Reid and Christina Tessier. The review process was also informed by an analysis of the current policies in 15 other Canadian municipalities and two provinces.

## DISCUSSION

In vibrant and growing communities, commemoration and naming form a continuous exercise. It ebbs and flows on municipal or citizen initiative, private or commercial input, individual or collective desire, and memories both broad and specific. As a recurring practice, it is in need of consistent, long-term management if it is to result in best practices with the widest benefits. The working group kept this in mind while forming recommendations that will serve City Council and the wider community by:

- Providing for ongoing feedback and advice to ensure for a long-term vision
- Facilitating community-driven and supported policies and processes and informed recommendations
- Applying best-practices in vetting and recommending nominations to ensure transparent, consistent processes
- Streamlining coordination, deliberation and review
- Helping ensure adherence, thus building confidence in the process

**1. Recommendation:** Revise nomination criteria to reflect:

- a. Broader commemoration to include persons, groups, places and events
- b. Recognition of significant contributions through outstanding achievement, volunteerism or public service
- c. Historical, cultural or social significance to the community
- d. Strong community identity and clear and direct ties to the facility, park or street to be named
- e. A preference for names of local significance over those of provincial, national or international scope
- f. Posthumous honours, with exceptions only for truly outstanding contributions to the community.

**Rationale:** The current policy restricts nominations to individuals. This should be broadened to include other significant aspects of our history and districts worthy of commemoration, such as groups of persons, places, and events.

The criteria of most municipalities studied in preparing this report favour local names over those of provincial, national or international scope. While Ottawa carries a triple identity as a major city, a provincial hub and a national capital, it should give priority to our local story in its own naming policies and practices. The City of Ottawa should also support commemorative naming undertaken by the National Capital Commission to honour those who have made contributions on the national or international stage.

Current policies of several Canadian cities lean toward commemoration of only deceased individuals. The Québec and Ontario provincial policies, and those of Gatineau, Halifax,

Montréal, New Westminster, Victoria, and Québec City, bar names of the living. Toronto allows for commemoration of the living, but only as exceptions directed by City Council in deliberation. If Ottawa decides to do likewise, the City is encouraged to provide clear criteria for what warrants an exception and to be narrow in both its policy and its application of such exceptions.

It should also be noted that the City has other means to acknowledge the contributions of living individuals, including the *Mayor's City Builder Award* and the *Civic Appreciation Awards*. In addition, an unsuccessful candidacy of a living person may become problematic for the City and, through no fault of their own, for a candidate involved. This is, in part, because a nomination is not yet, nor guaranteed to be, an approved naming.

**2. Recommendation:** Discourage the practice of renaming.

**Rationale:** In general, established names and commemorations should not be altered, out of deference to local historical identities and to avoid giving offence to families of persons already commemorated. Renaming entails costs to residents and businesses, and impacts upon emergency services, public safety, traveller confusion, and planning and record-keeping.

Renaming is discouraged in item 18 of the City's *Highway Naming Guidelines*. It directs that name changes shall not be considered "unless there is a safety issue as determined by the Director," highway referring to any public road or street.

- 3. Recommendation:** Revise the Commemorative Naming Committee (CNC) membership to reflect diverse citizen representation from across Ottawa, including:
- a. Five members of the public appointed by a process akin to that used to select members for the Transit Commission or Advisory Committees. Representation should reflect relevant expertise (knowledge of history, community building, sports and recreation community, etc.) and our diverse community elements (rural/suburban/urban, linguistic, ethnic, etc.)
  - b. One member appointed by the board of directors of the Council of Heritage Organizations in Ottawa
  - c. One member appointed by the City's Arts, Heritage and Culture Advisory Committee
  - d. The Chair (or a designated member) of the Standing Committee that the Commemorative Naming Committee reports to, as a non-voting, ex-officio member

**Rationale:** Many Canadian jurisdictions studied for this report have an arms-length commemorative naming committee that ensures that transparency, community interest, and expertise are brought to bear on nominations. Currently, the CNC is an ad hoc committee consisting of the Mayor or a designate, the Councillor(s) of the ward(s) in question, and members of City Staff.

In the recommended scenario, the five members of the public allow the Committee to reflect Ottawa's ethnic, social, district and cultural diversity, to widen input and deepen the rationale for wise decisions and directions. The representatives appointed by the Council of

Heritage Organizations in Ottawa and by AHCAC help ensure that Ottawa's history and its arts, heritage and cultural organizations are taken into account.

The non-voting member from the Standing Committee helps ensure a strong tie with that Standing Committee and with Council.

The Chair of the Committee would be chosen from among the voting members of the CNC; terms of office of committee members would reflect current City practices. Meetings would occur on a regular schedule, whether quarterly or more frequently.

4. **Recommendation:** Provide for Mayoral and Councillor input throughout the naming process and streamline the process by having the CNC report through only one Standing Committee.

**Rationale:** In addition to the resulting Committee being a creation of Council and serving at the pleasure of Council, the Mayor and Councillors would be able to participate:

- At all times, as applicants and/or as participants in the public review process in their own right
- As parties of interest related to activity in their ward
- When applicable, as members of the Standing Committee of Council who vote on CNC recommendations
- As members of Council in approving Standing Committee recommendations that emerge from the process.

In addition, Councillors will be informed in a timely fashion of any commemorative naming processes occurring or expected to occur in their ward.

It is recommended that the CNC report to only one Standing Committee. This would allay previous confusion resulting from submissions flowing through several channels and Standing Committees, and aid clarity, transparency and tracking, while more easily informing and educating those Councillors who make recommendations to Council.

5. **Recommendation:** Ensure that all related application and consultation processes are open, transparent, consistent, and designed to encourage citizen input.

**Rationale:** The processing of applications and consultations have been, at times, unclear and inconsistent. For the public to be truly engaged, it is crucial that processes are well defined and adhered to. A Commemorative Naming Committee, as outlined in this report, would assist with the fine-tuning of application forms and processes.

In support of this, the City may consider identifying "parties of interest," such as Heritage Ottawa, the National Capital Commission, and local community organizations who may have a strong continuing interest or whom the CNC may wish to consult. They would not be CNC members, but they would be kept informed of proposals and consultations and could attend at their own discretion, with notice, to make their views known, to speed communications, input, and decision-making.

Ultimately, it is crucial that the public and Council believe that the City's process has provided the best results, in respectful and transparent ways that are well-researched, objective and clearly supported by the community.

6. **Recommendation:** Provide the CNC with appropriate City Staff support for advice, research and administrative support (e.g. the Chief Building Official, the City Archivist, etc.).

**Rationale:** City Staff support is required to assist the CNC with its meetings and to provide direction on policies and process, aid in the research of nominated names and ensure the use and maintenance of the recommended database.

7. **Recommendation:** Ensure that naming recommendations are supported by sound historical research.

**Rationale:** Thorough historical research must be conducted before the CNC formalizes a recommendation. While this will not guarantee that all nominations are unanimously approved or without controversy, it will provide Councillors with an informed basis for decision-making and help ensure the integrity of the overall City policy and process.

8. **Recommendation:** As part of the City's "Open Data" initiative, create and maintain a database of existing commemorations across all types (e.g. parks, facilities, streets, statues, plaques, etc.).

**Rationale:** By providing public access to the background information for current commemorations, the City will foster community engagement through greater understanding of related rationales and ease tracking, applications, research and review. The database should incorporate all existing municipal commemorations (statues, plaques, etc.) detailing rationale, associated history, location, etc.

9. **Recommendation:** Work with staff at the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department to analyse, seek input, and make recommendations on the pros and cons of an expanded CNC mandate to include all naming (e.g. streets) and/or other types of commemoration (e.g. statues, fountains, etc.) and to review all City commemoration and naming to see if linking related policies and procedures would be advantageous.

**Rationale:** At a time when the Commemorative Naming Policy is under review, it would be opportune to consider the CNC mandate and whether the Committee could assist the process further as a single destination for input, engagement, coordination and decision-making.

There are three potential options to consider:

- a) The CNC mandate remains largely unchanged and involves the commemoration of facilities, parks, and streets (where a street name is commemorative)

b) The mandate is broadened to include commemorations of all types such as statues, plaques, plazas, fountains, etc.

c) The mandate is widened further to include the naming of all streets, subdivisions and facilities, commemorative or not. This could improve efficiencies by means of a single database while perhaps fostering the use of commemorative names across the city.

Drafting a policy will entail many considerations not covered here, including necessary deliberation on items such as when the City should call for proposals rather than consider only “spontaneous” applications, and when, on occasion, it may be wise to present the public with a recommended slate of approved candidates for comment, or Council with a slate of approved candidates for its final decision.

There is an opportunity to clarify and potentially amalgamate some or all existing, related City policies on commemorations, sponsorship naming, naming involving veterans, etc. The benefits of doing so, including efficiencies, should be examined.

**10. Recommendation:** Engage and widely consult the citizens of Ottawa on the resulting draft of a revised Commemorative Naming Policy.

**Rationale:** As we seek to create a more community-driven and supported policy, it is important to stand by this principle from the outset even as policy and processes take shape.

While the working group under AHCAC has consulted with some heritage organizations, this cannot be considered true public consultation as the City would define it.

## CONCLUSIONS

Through its review of the Commemorative Naming Policy, the City of Ottawa has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership, efficiencies, inclusion and forward-thinking best-practices. AHCAC and its working group welcome further discussion with the City of Ottawa as the policy is reviewed as part of the Mid-Term Governance Review.

The City may want to consider a moratorium on new commemorative naming during the review of the policy.

## CONSULTATION

### City Operations

The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department has been consulted by the working group.

## Legal Services

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

## RURAL IMPLICATIONS

## LEGAL/RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

## DISPOSITION

Following discussions with City staff in the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department, it has been suggested that the AHCAC working group on the Commemorative Naming Policy continue to study issues and connect to the development of a broader Commemorations Policy that is being undertaken by Cultural Services. The membership of the working group may be broadened for this initiative.

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Cabot Street in Ottawa's Alta Vista neighbourhood is named for John Cabot or Giovanni Caboto, the 15th-century Anglo-Italian explorer who was, in 1497, the first European after the Vikings to set foot in what is now Canada. Cabot also enslaved and sold a woman named Marina in the 1480s, and his commemoration in the street name is one of many such tributes that have been questioned in recent years. [Photo © James Gray]

*Heritage*

## Amid 'contentious commemorations,' city moves closer to new naming policy

By James Gray, 7 days ago     0

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Ottawa's city council will soon receive a formal proposal for a revamped municipal commemoration policy for paying tribute to worthy citizens and historical figures in street names and other landmarks.

The proposed change comes at a time of heightened awareness of historical injustices and after months of research by a municipal advisory group in collaboration with the Capital Heritage Connexion organization.

The CHC, a non-profit umbrella organization that advocates for its member organizations and individuals on matters of heritage in Ottawa, held a public meeting about the issue on March 20. CHC had been asked to organize the engagement session by the cultural development and initiatives unit of the City of Ottawa.

Though scheduled in the middle of a work day, about 20 people attended in person and another 30 participated via Zoom. During the meeting, people were asked what they would want to see from a renewed commemoration policy.

"We need to continue the link with history in the present day," said Elizabeth Hale, who took part in the session and works with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. "If you stop telling those stories because they make people uncomfortable, you miss out on the background, the opportunity to tell that story."

”*‘To say that you can’t change history is like saying that you can’t change science — that what you understood of science in the 1700s is the limit of what your understanding’s going to be.’*

— Benjamin Weiss, Historical Society of Ottawa

In recent years, several landmarks in Ottawa have had their names changed in an effort to move away from Canada's colonial past. In 2021, the Prince of Wales Bridge across the Ottawa River (named after the future King Edward VII in 1881) became the Chief William Commanda Bridge (after an elder of the Kitigan Zibi First Nation). And just this year, the National Capital Commission decided to change the Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway to a new name — which has not been chosen yet — in the midst of controversy over the 19th-century prime minister's role in the residential school system.

These “contentious commemorations,” as city cultural planners have labelled them, were a main topic of City of Ottawa project lead Yadollah Parmoun during his presentation.

“Removal would not be the only option for contentious commemoration,” Parmoun emphasized. He suggested it would be possible to add additional notations on a nearby plaque about such figures' negative aspects.



Benjamin Weiss, a member of the Historical Society of Ottawa, attended the March 20 forum on the city's commemoration policy. He said our perceptions of history are always changing. [Photo © James Gray]

Parmoun said that many “contentious commemorations” have been identified in the city, but refused to share the list of landmarks with Capital Current at this time.

Parmoun did say that he wants the city to work more closely with Indigenous and other advocacy groups in the future. These groups have often been at the forefront of renaming reforms in the past, such as with the Macdonald Parkway — a campaign led by Ottawa's current English-language poet laureate, Algonquin activist and storyteller Albert Dumont.

However, Parmoun said he wants to permanently involve Ottawa-area First Nations, Métis and Inuit organizations, as well as other ethnocultural groups, to “grow the number of commemorations related to underrepresented communities.”

One thing the new commemoration policy could create is a centralized, “arms-length” commemoration committee in charge of all official commemorations, including things such as public art displays and more

traditional landmark naming. Currently, there are various departments of the municipal government and National Capital Commission that manage commemorations.

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For example, commemorations of trees, benches and streets are all handled by different municipal departments. The CHC-organized engagement session was, in part, an opportunity for city officials to hear from heritage advocates how such a committee could be structured and how its members might be selected.

The CHC told Capital Current that its goal is “to increase access and inclusion to more diverse communities in Ottawa when it comes to commemorative engagement generally.

“Ottawa is made up of so many diverse groups which have all had an important impact on our city, and they should all have equal access to these discussions on commemoration,” the CHC stated. “Our role is to bridge and amplify voices of diverse groups in the community on this policy draft through our report and advocacy with CDI before they finalize the policy and submit it to Council.”

City council is the final authority on whether any proposed changes to the city’s commemorative policy will be implemented. Mayor Mark Sutcliffe attended the March 20 event and said: “These commemorative activities help us renew collective memory . . . Commemoration should reflect our diversity, our values and our *joie de vivre*.”

Benjamin Weiss, a member of the Historical Society of Ottawa, participated in the forum and reflected on how perceptions of history and historical figures can change over time.

“We don’t all understand that history has movement to it,” he said, “that history has the word ‘story’ in it itself — that the story is always changing. Not that what’s happened in the past has changed, but we’re always learning of new perspectives, we’re always understanding history better.”

He added: “To say that you can’t change history is like saying that you can’t change science — that what you understood of science in the 1700s is the limit of what your understanding’s going to be. History is the same way.”

Certainly, the changing of names is not without opposition. Some critics believe it erases history or dishonours people’s positive contributions. However, the members of the CHC seemed confident that their proposed changes will be accepted, and the general trend seems to be towards reconsidering colonial commemorations.

Weiss said revising the city’s commemorative policies is inevitably contentious.

“There’s always going to be resistance,” he said, “to any kind of change.”

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