



## COUNCIL REPORT

Report Date: March 17, 2026  
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Meeting Date: May 5, 2026  
[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Vancouver City Council  
FROM: General Manager of Arts, Culture, and Community Services  
SUBJECT: City of Vancouver Commemoration Framework

### Recommendations

- A. THAT Council approve the City of Vancouver Commemoration Framework ("Framework") attached as Appendix A to this report and direct staff to develop internal guidelines and public-facing resources to implement the Framework by Q4 2026.
- B. THAT Council delegate the following authorities to City staff:
  - i. the General Manager of the lead Department (typically the Department that owns the applicable asset) may decline Applications where the Assessment Criteria (as defined in Appendix A) are not adequately met, and
  - ii. the General Manager of the lead Department (typically the Department that owns the applicable asset) may approve Applications (as defined in Appendix A) for fully funded, temporary plaques that will be displayed for up to 10 years and that demonstrate a strong alignment to the Assessment Criteria.

### Purpose and Executive Summary

This report seeks Council approval of the Commemoration Framework, which outlines a standardized approach to receiving and approving commemoration applications for City of Vancouver owned and operated spaces and assets including naming, monuments, public art, and official observances. The Framework seeks to prioritize approval of Commemorations that reflect meaningful, unique and significant local circumstances. Applications are evaluated against five Assessment Criteria (holds broad community interest and support; is locally relevant; advances UNDRIP and equity; a two-year waiting period; and is feasible and

sustainable), with staff authorized to decline or approve limited applications and Council retaining decision-making authority over all other commemorations.

Should Council approve the Framework, staff will develop and implement internal and public-facing guidelines and resources to support the Framework's implementation and commence the assessment and decision-making process for the existing on-hold Applications.

### **City Manager's Comments**

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

### **Council Authority/Previous Decisions**

- Vibrant Vancouver: City Council's Strategic Priorities 2023-2026 ([RTS 15933](#), 2023)
- [Culture|Shift: Blanketing the City in Arts and Culture](#) (2019)
- [City of Vancouver's UNDRIP Strategy](#) (2022) and [UNDRIP Action Plan](#) (2024)
- [Civic Protocol Policy](#) (2024)
- [Sponsorship and Sponsorship Naming Rights Policy](#) (2024)
- [City of Vancouver Framework for Reconciliation](#) (2014)

### **Context and Background**

Commemoration is an intentional act of acknowledging the memory of communities, people, places, events and ideas and is an important expression of the city's diversity and values. The City enables commemoration in many ways, including through proclamations, monuments, public art, plaques, names, and places of remembrance. To date, commemoration requests have been made and reviewed on an ad-hoc basis. In the absence of a framework, the process has been inconsistent and confusing to the public and not guided by clear City objectives, including the need to consider the scarcity of available City assets and spaces.

The City's 10-year culture plan *Culture|Shift: Blanketing the City in Arts & Culture* and the Park Board's *VanPlay Playbook: Vancouver's Parks and Recreation Services Master Plan* both include direction for City and Park Board staff to develop a joint monuments and memorials framework.

From 2021 through 2023, City and Park Board staff engaged community and consulted the Local Nations on commemoration. Based on this feedback, staff developed a draft vision, guiding principles, and emerging priority areas for the Framework. Development of a Framework was paused in 2024 to ensure it would align with the Sponsorship and Sponsorship Naming Rights Policy, as both relate to City assets.

In 2025, following approval of the Sponsorship and Sponsorship Naming Rights Policy, staff restarted work on the Commemoration Framework. While coordination with Park Board staff continued, the scope focused on assets within the sole control of the City. The Framework proposed in this report supports Council's strategic priorities for a vibrant and diverse city, and organizational commitments to reconciliation, equity, inclusion, and cultural redress.

## Previous Approaches to Naming

### *Civic Asset Naming Committee:*

The [Civic Asset Naming Committee](#), which was dissolved in 2022, was a Type A civic advisory committee composed of nine members, including representatives from the Vancouver Historical Society, Vancouver Public Space Network, the City's Racial and Ethnocultural Committee and the City's Urban Indigenous Peoples Advisory Committee, as well as representation from the public. The City Archivist served as the staff liaison. The Committee had the authority to make recommendations to Council based on the Civic Asset Name Reserve List. The Civic Asset Name Reserve List included commemorative, celebratory and nature-inspired names. With limited opportunities for naming and appropriate applications, the Committee was replaced with the Interim Street Naming Committee in 2023.

### *Interim Street Naming Committee*

The [Interim Street Naming Committee](#) was established in 2023 as an interim committee in advance of a Council approved Commemoration Framework. This interim committee was structured as a Type B ad-hoc advisory committee that convened only when a development project required a new street name. Since 2012, only 19 new street names have been brought to Council for decision.

## **Discussion**

### Overview of Proposed Commemoration Framework

If approved by Council, the Framework will guide the intake, assessment and approval processes for commemoration applications to the City of Vancouver. The complete Framework is found in Appendix A).

### *Scope:*

The Framework would apply to City assets, specifically:

- New and honorary commemorations for City streets, laneways, buildings, plazas, and other assets;
- Development, acquisition or deaccession of commemorative civic monuments, public art and plaques; and
- Commemorative protocols including official celebrations and observances.

Out of scope of the proposed Framework are Indigenous naming, temporary and community activations, and assets not wholly owned and controlled by the City:

- Indigenous naming follows distinct protocols and processes and are managed through the City's relevant Indigenous naming guidelines, protocols, and policies;
- Temporary and community activations are often spontaneous in nature and are managed through city street activation processes; and
- Assets and spaces not wholly owned and controlled by the City are out of scope because conditions maybe subject to a broad range of existing lease agreements or

require coordination with other governing bodies. Staff will coordinate joint requests where appropriate i.e. with the Park Board.

#### *Assessment Criteria:*

Applications would be assessed using five criteria. The only criteria that is required is that the commemoration be locally relevant. After this, not all criteria need to be met for an Application to proceed however together they are intended to guide decision-making. The assessment will look at the extent to which the Commemoration:

- **Is locally relevant**, grounded in and connected to Vancouver (Required);
- **Holds broad community interest and support**, prioritizing significant events, and groups, with individuals being commemorated only in exceptional circumstances;
- **Recognizes Vancouver's diverse communities and history and advances UNDRIP priorities**, grounded in historical research, documented stories, community insights, Indigenous Traditional Knowledge, and/or advance equitable representation from communities that have been historically underrepresented;
- **Has a minimum of a two-year waiting period** from the time of the occurrence of an event and the proposed commemoration; and
- **Is feasible and sustainable**, supported by an applicant-developed whole-life funding strategy, and considerate of the City's operational needs and limited public assets and spaces.

While the Framework places emphasis on local history and incidents as a priority, this does not diminish the significance and impact of devastating events that have happened and happen in countries across the world.

#### *Application and Review Process*

The Application and review process varies depending on the scale, nature, complexity and location of the proposed commemoration. The steps below are intended to standardize and simplify the process whilst retaining flexibility to accommodate the nuance involved in assessing commemoration requests.

1. *Application Intake:* An individual or community group may submit an Application to commemorate a person, place, or event using an intake form on the public-facing website. Council may initiate/direct staff related to a specific Council-initiated commemoration.
2. *Staff Review and Application Refinement:* Staff assess the Application using Assessment Criteria and determine whether to proceed, what resources are needed and if the asset is being considered under the Sponsorship and Sponsorship Naming Rights Policy and/or the Indigenous Naming Guidelines, protocols, and policies. Where appropriate, staff work with the Applicant to refine an Application.
3. *Staff or Council Decision:* Staff have delegated authority to decline the Application if relevant Assessment Criteria are not met, or approve simple, time-limited and fully funded Applications (e.g. plaques). Council decision is required for all other Applications (e.g. incumbering City asset, monument, public art or naming). For the majority of Applications, staff propose to seek Council direction as part of a 6-monthly consolidated

commemoration report process and/or an ad-hoc Council report where time-sensitive. For commemorative street names the naming would be managed through the zoning, rezoning, development or subdivision process advanced by Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability. As part of these planning processes, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability will use the Commemoration Framework to guide street names of a commemorative nature.

From time-to-time Council may initiate commemorations. These would be advanced on a case-by-case basis according to the direction provided by Council.

### Naming Committees

There is no Civic Asset Naming Committee or Street Naming Committee in the proposed Commemoration Framework. New street names are primarily required through the zoning, rezoning, development or subdivision process advanced by Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability. As part of these planning processes, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability will use the Commemoration Framework to guide street names of a commemorative nature. The Interim Street Naming Committee will no longer be convened.

### Coordination with the Sponsorship and Sponsorship Naming Rights Policy

In November 2024, Council adopted the Sponsorship and Sponsorship Naming Rights Policy (RTS 17612), which generates non-tax revenue and value-in-kind benefits for City facilities and infrastructure. This policy applies to City assets within the scope of the Framework.

During application review, staff will identify any overlap between a proposed commemoration and a potential sponsorship, and include an assessment of the implications and recommendations as part of the report to Council. Such overlap is expected to be infrequent.

### Next Steps

Should Council approve the Commemoration Framework, staff will:

- Develop public-facing resources, including a landing page on the City's website;
- Refine and develop internal processes and guidelines to support Framework implementation by the end of Q4 2026; and
- Assess the on-hold commemoration Applications and follow-up with Applicants.

While this Framework focuses on City owned and operated assets, staff continue to collaborate with staff from Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation to align on processes and joint applications.

### **Financial Implications**

If approved, implementation of the Framework will be managed through existing resources. Any additional funding and staffing resources associated with specific Commemorations would be subject to Council direction.

**Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications associated with this report’s recommendations.

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## APPENDIX A Commemoration Framework

# City of Vancouver Commemoration Framework

## Framework Purpose

This Commemoration Framework (“**Framework**”) guides the commemoration of communities, people, places, events and ideas, in City of Vancouver (“**City**”) owned and operated spaces and assets. Commemoration is an intentional act of acknowledging the memory of communities, people, places, events and ideas. This can be represented in a range of forms, including monuments, memorials, plaques, artworks, and naming. The Framework provides a path for decision-making related to commemoration and ensures commemorative practices are inclusive, respectful, and aligned with the City’s policies.

## The Importance of Commemoration

Commemoration serves as a public acknowledgment of shared history and collective memory. It can foster community identity and pride, promote reconciliation and redress by recognizing historical injustices, educate residents about diverse contributions and experiences, encourage civic engagement and dialogue, and support cultural preservation, conservation, and storytelling.

The City plays an important role in promoting a broad understanding of the area’s history and legacies. The City is able to educate, encourage reflection, and remind passersby not to forget. Commemorations have the ability to reflect community values by visibly showing how we choose to honour the past, mark the present, and shape the future.

## A Meaningful Honour in City Public Spaces

The Framework and Assessment Criteria acknowledge that Commemorations should be prioritised for meaningful unique and significant local circumstances. City assets and spaces are limited, shared by the entire community, and are often highly visible. Frequent use of City assets and spaces for Commemoration has the potential to dilute the importance and meaning. The City has existing Commemorations reflecting particular histories and perspectives. The Assessment Criteria seek to broaden and diversify representation across Vancouver, encourage Commemorations to remain meaningful and aligned with the City’s priorities and community values, and weigh feasibility and operational considerations in light of limited space and assets.

## Definitions

**Applicant** means an initiator of an Application, which may be an individual or community group.

**Application** means a request for Commemoration that an Applicant submits to the City.

**Assessment Criteria** are the criteria used by the City to assess Applications, guide its decision-making and prioritization process, and inform staff recommendations to Council.

**Civic Agencies** are volunteer bodies that convey community perspectives to Council and staff while advising on City priorities, projects, and initiatives, or serve statutory functions outlined in relevant by-laws or terms of reference.

**Commemoration** means the intentional act of acknowledging the memory of communities, people, places, events, and ideas.

**Lead Department** means the Department which is responsible for space or asset being considered as part of the Commemoration Application process. This would usually be the asset owner department.

**Monument** means a statue, building, or other structure installed to commemorate a person, place, or event.

**Public Art Committee** is a Council approved Civic Agency that provides advice and guidance to City Council, staff, civic agencies, developers and citizens on public art matters, including the Public Art Program.

## Scope

Commemoration can take many forms. This Framework applies to commemorative activities undertaken by the City and/or on City owned and operated spaces and assets. The categories of commemorations covered by this Framework are:

- **Commemorative naming and honorary naming** (streets, laneways, buildings, plazas, and other assets);
- Developing, acquiring, or deaccessioning of commemorative **civic monuments, public art and plaques**; and
- **Commemorative protocols** (official celebrations and observances).

This Framework does not apply to commemorations involving:

- **Local Indigenous naming** which are managed through relevant Indigenous naming guidelines, protocols, and policies.
- **Street Renaming** which are managed through the area planning process.
- **Temporary and community activations**, including informal temporary memorials, half-masting, illuminations, proclamations and murals, which are managed through other city street activation processes, the Civic Protocol Policy and the City's mural program.
- **Lands and assets that are not wholly owned and controlled by the City**: such as Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, Vancouver Public Library Board, Hastings Park - Pacific National Exhibition, other public sector organizations, non-profit organizations; private property owners, and lessees of City properties.

While Indigenous naming is out of scope, public art and commemorative protocols that commemorate local Indigenous peoples, communities, places and events remain in scope.

## Assessment Criteria

A set of criteria has been identified to support assessment of Commemoration applications and decision-making. They seek to ensure Commemorations are prioritized for unique and significant circumstances of broad community and local interest, reflecting the scarcity of available city assets and spaces. They also recognize City priorities related to equity and inclusion in place-making and promote a broader understanding of history and its legacy on communities. The five Assessment Criteria are listed below. The only criteria that is required is that the commemoration be locally relevant. After this, not all criteria need to be met for an Application to proceed however together they are intended to guide decision-making.

The assessment will look at the extent to which the Commemoration:

- **Is locally relevant**, grounded in and connected to Vancouver (Required);
- **Holds broad community interest and support**, prioritizing significant events, and groups, with individuals being commemorated only in exceptional circumstances<sup>1</sup>;
- **Recognizes Vancouver's diverse communities and history and advances UNDRIP priorities**, grounded in historical research, documented stories, community insights, Indigenous Traditional Knowledge, and/or advance equitable representation from communities that have been historically underrepresented;
- **Has a minimum of a two-year waiting period** from the time of a person's passing or the occurrence of an event and the proposed commemoration; and
- **Is feasible and sustainable**, supported by an applicant-developed whole-life funding strategy, and considerate of the City's operational needs and limited public assets and spaces.

## Process and Accountabilities

### Process Overview

Each Application will follow a similar high-level process that includes:

1. Application Intake
2. Staff Review and Application Refinement
3. Staff or Council Decision

These steps may be further refined by Council or staff based on the specifics of the Application and departmental processes.

#### 1. Application Intake:

The Commemoration process begins with an Application submitted by an individual or community group. The Applicant will submit key elements of the Application for further review, including a general description and rationale for the Application, alignment with the Assessment Criteria, consideration of who may be impacted and/or interested from the community, and any project

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<sup>1</sup> The *exceptional circumstances* when commemorations of individuals may be considered could include: figures whose impact is enduring, broadly recognized, and foundational and transformational in the local community, where there has been exceptional service or sacrifice and direct association with a particular site of commemoration.

details related to the Commemoration such as funding sources and City resource requests. A single coordinating department will be responsible for receiving all Applications and assigning the Application to the appropriate Lead Department which would usually be the asset owner department.

## 2. Staff Review and Application Refinement:

The Lead Department will manage the review process, applicant engagement, allocation of City resources, and consultation with the local Nations. Broader public engagement may be undertaken in unique circumstances (e.g. relating to scale or complexity) and with Council direction.

Staff will review the Application and assess whether the Application meets the application requirements and the relevant Assessment Criteria. Staff will liaise with and support the Applicant on the development and refinement of the Application as appropriate and feasible.

The Application should include:

- a. Summary of the Commemoration;
  - i. What or who is being commemorated;
  - ii. Why this Commemoration is important for the broader community;
  - iii. Where and why the specific location;
  - iv. Duration of the Commemoration; and
  - v. Similar and/or related commemorations currently underway or already installed, if applicable;
- b. Alignment with the Assessment Criteria;
- c. Potential and/or known local Nation interest and culturally significant considerations, including next steps if applicable;
- d. Summary of community engagement and support, historical accuracy review, findings and key considerations, including areas of community contention;
- e. Whether there is any interface with the [Sponsorship and Sponsorship Naming Rights Policy](#), the Civic [Protocol Policy](#), or other City policies;
- f. Funding strategy for the whole life of the Commemoration, including fabrication, installation, ongoing maintenance and deaccession;
- g. Potential financial implications or risks for the City;
- h. Fabrication and installation plan;
- i. Ongoing maintenance plan and deaccession plan, if relevant; and
- j. Communications plan for how knowledge and stories behind the Commemoration will be shared.

## 3. Staff and Council Decision:

To support flexibility in the assessment process and avoid undue burden on applicants, staff and Council, the Framework delegates Council authority to staff for key assessment decisions. These include:

- a. Council delegates authority to the General Manager of the Lead Department to decline applications where the Assessment Criteria are not adequately met. Staff would request the Applicant to consider refining and resubmitting the Application to meet the Assessment Criteria, and/or consider non-City assets and spaces.
- b. Council delegates authority to the General Manager of the Lead Department to approve applications for fully-funded, temporary plaques that will be displayed for up to 10 years and that demonstrate a strong alignment to the Assessment Criteria and show little to no disparity in community opinion.

All other Applications that adequately address the Assessment Criteria will be brought forward for Council consideration.

The coordinating department will seek Council direction on batches of Applications from across all City departments every six-months, and report back annually on the status of all Applications. Where time-critical, staff may seek Council direction through a one-off report process. New street names will be recommended to Council through the zoning, rezoning, development or subdivision process advanced by Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability.

Council reports will include a summary of all Applications, a staff assessment summary, and recommendations for Council's consideration.

## Review and Removal of Existing Commemorations

Staff will review Applications for the removal and deaccession of existing commemorations and will bring such Applications to Council for consideration with a staff assessment summary and recommendations. Deaccession of commemorative public art assets will be considered by the Public Art Committee as part of the Application process and be subject to Council approval.

## Framework Review Cycle

As Council-adopted strategies, policies, and other frameworks are updated and created, the Framework can be adjusted to align as directed by Council.

The Framework, along with any proposed amendments, should be reviewed, approved, and reaffirmed by Council on a four-year cycle.