

From: ["Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca)

To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)

Date: 9/29/2021 4:21:49 PM

Subject: [Memo - Memorial for Residential School Children at 800 Robson Plaza](#)

Attachments: [Memo - Memorial for Residential School Children at 800 Robson Plaza.pdf](#)

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Lon LaClaire. A short summary of the memo is as follows:

- In May of this year, a memorial was established in the 800 Robson plaza on the Vancouver Art Gallery steps in commemoration of the children of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School.
- The memorial is tended by volunteers who maintain the site as a living vigil, and the Vancouver Art Gallery has taken a lead role in engaging with the group in regards to the details and needs associated with the memorial.
- Engineering Services has taken on a supporting role in close collaboration with the gallery to ensure that City operations do not impact the memorial.
- The volunteer group recently expressed a desire to maintain the memorial throughout the winter
- To maintain a respectful environment, other planned uses and City operations in the plaza have been postponed, cancelled or re-located.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lon LaClaire at 604-873-7336 or lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
City Manager
City of Vancouver
paul.mochrie@vancouver.ca



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), S^kwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

September 29, 2021

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Maria Pontikis, Director, Civic Engagement and Communications
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office

FROM: Lon LaClaire
General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Memorial for Residential School Children at 800 Robson Plaza

RTS#: N/A

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the memorial for the residential school children that is currently on the Vancouver Art Gallery's south steps in the 800 Robson plaza.

Discussion

As a City of Reconciliation, the City of Vancouver is committed to upholding the Calls to Action identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including informing our residents and staff about the truth of what happened in residential schools.

On May 27 of this year, the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation announced the tragic news of the unmarked grave of 215 children at the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. On May 28, a memorial was established by Haida artist Tamara Bell on the Vancouver Art Gallery's south steps in the 800 Robson plaza. The memorial is tended to daily by volunteers who maintain the memorial as a living vigil. A teepee has also been setup along with movable furniture from šxʷłəneq Xwtl'e7énk Square to provide volunteers a place to rest and gather.

Roles

Given the location of the memorial, the Vancouver Art Gallery has taken the lead in engaging with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, the memorial artist and the attending volunteers from various indigenous communities in regards to the details and needs associated with the memorial. In particular, in May of this year, the Vancouver Art Gallery launched its Elder in Residence program, with their inaugural Elder being Willard (Buddy) Joseph – Skwetsimeltxw. As stated by the gallery: “The Elder in Residence aims to provide spiritual support, encouragement and guidance to staff while promoting understanding and respect for Indigenous perspectives, culture and values.”

Since the initiation of the memorial, the Elder has been providing guidance to the gallery and facilitating conversations between the gallery and the memorial volunteers. In turn, the gallery has been sharing information and requests regarding the memorial with the City.

While the gallery has taken the lead in engaging and working with the memorial volunteers, Engineering Services has taken on a supporting role in close collaboration with the gallery as the primary point of contact for the City due to the ongoing uses within the overall space and to ensure that City operations do not impact the memorial. Internal coordination includes the City Manager’s Office, Arts, Culture and Community Services, Engineering Services and Engineering’s Indigenous Relations.

Timeline

Earlier this summer, the gallery’s Elder in Residence shared the memorial volunteers’ interest in keeping the memorial in place until September 30, 2021. More recently, the group has expressed a desire to maintain the memorial through the winter, with no specific end date. To enable this, the group will bring in a larger teepee to support the volunteers throughout the winter.

Two events associated with the memorial are planned for the last week of September:

- On September 29, representatives from approximately 20 First Nations will attend an event at 800 Robson commemorating the 6,100 plus children’s graves that have been found at various sites in Canada and the United States.
- On September 30, the memorial volunteers are planning an event on ʂxʷł̓əneq Xwtl'e7énk Square

Impacts

To maintain an appropriately respectful environment for the memorial, other planned uses and activities in the plaza have been postponed, cancelled or re-located. For the duration of the memorial, changes to regular City operations in the 800 Robson plaza include:

- All active programming is on hold (i.e. special events)
- Reduced access for filming
- Reduction to amount of moveable furniture within the plaza
- Limited on-site communications regarding Council-approved alcohol pilot at 800 Robson
- Reduced number of permitted vendors (food trailers and non-food vending) within the plaza

- Completion of landscaping and final construction elements has been delayed until early fall (now scheduled with approval from memorial's volunteers)
- Third-party utility work has been delayed through spring/summer (now has memorial group's tentative approval to advance this fall)

Next steps

City staff will continue to work closely with the gallery and their Elder in Residence program to understand and support the needs associated with the memorial. Staff will also continue to manage and support other programs and uses that are temporarily limited or displaced from the plaza.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lon LaClaire', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Lon LaClaire, M.Eng., P.Eng.
General Manager, Engineering Services

604.873.7336 | lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca