

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

TO: *MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS*

SUBJECT: BURNABY POLICY ON COMMUNITY INITIATED MEMORIALS

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the proposed City of Burnaby Policy on Community Initiated Memorials as outlined in the report titled “Burnaby Policy on Community Initiated Memorials” dated February 28, 2024, be approved.

REPORT

The Public Safety Committee, at its meeting held on February 28, 2024, received and adopted the attached report seeking Council approval for the proposed policy that establishes a framework to ensure a trauma-informed, coordinated and consistent City response to community memorials.

On behalf of the Public Safety Committee,

Councillor J. Wang
Chair

Councillor M. Santiago
Vice Chair

TO: PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE (PSC)
FROM: GENERAL MANAGER COMMUNITY SAFETY
SUBJECT: **BURNABY POLICY ON COMMUNITY INITIATED MEMORIALS**
PURPOSE: To seek approval for the proposed policy that establishes a framework to ensure a trauma-informed, coordinated and consistent City response to community memorials.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the proposed City of Burnaby Policy on Community Initiated Memorials as outlined in the report titled “Burnaby Policy on Community Initiated Memorials” dated February 28, 2024, be approved.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

The City of Burnaby Community Initiated Memorial Policy aligns with City and regional bylaws and policies, including the Street and Traffic Bylaw, Burnaby’s Social Sustainability Strategy, Burnaby Strategic Plan, and the Burnaby Community Safety Plan.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Community initiated memorials are established throughout communities after a disturbing or otherwise traumatizing incident, most frequently an unexpected death. These public displays are commonly created by surviving families or loved ones as a shared expression of their loss. Sometimes the nature or reminder of the incident can also cause upset and create concern within the broader community. Further, the content or placement of memorials can create safety, operational or maintenance concerns for public space and infrastructure.

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

This proposed Community Initiated Memorials Policy provides an enterprise-based coordinated City response to community initiated memorials that is equitable and consistent, upholding community safety for the greatest public good. The policy integrates trauma-informed processes sensitive to the needs of diverse stakeholder groups. This includes dealings with surviving families, the broader community, as well as our staff who undertake this difficult work to manage the memorials as required.

The proposed policy utilizes existing staff resources and workflow to provide a strong level of responsive customer service to how we effectively manage memorials in Burnaby.

3.1 Coordinated and Systematic Response to Concerns about Memorials

Staff in the Crime Reduction and Intervention Division will coordinate with other City departments to ensure a consistent response to memorial complaints when received.

Community concerns and complaints about these memorials will be recorded in compliance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and responded to in a systematic manner. The response to community initiated memorials will include communication to the involved parties about this policy; timelines for review processes and potential removal of the memorial as appropriate.

3.2 Framework and Approval for Memorial Removal

Memorials will be assessed for removal according to the following evaluation framework:

1.	Unsafe - Roadside memorials containing elements that could be unsafe. Examples could be those that cause a visual distraction to drivers, thus presenting a safety concern. This may include very large displays or those that include solar lighting or other electronic elements.
2.	Abandoned or Derelict - Memorials that may be considered run-down or unkept. This could include those with large quantities of decomposing flowers or sodden stuffed toys, for example.
3.	Obstructs Use of Public Space - Any memorial that prevents the intended use of public space or infrastructure. Examples might include memorials that obstruct the use of a bike path, trail, parking sign, sidewalk or playground.

4.	Incompatible With Adjacent Uses Memorials that are incompatible with adjacent uses of space (including those adjacent to a school, playground or other area frequented by children).
5.	Violates Personal Information or Privacy Memorials that contain elements that violate the personal information or privacy of individuals or others other than the subject person(s) of the memorial. This could include images of minors or other people who have not consented to their use or other named individuals who have not consented or complain about their personal information being included in the memorial.
6.	Infringing on Use of Private Property Those memorials in close proximity to a private residence while unassociated to the occupants.

Removal will not be undertaken for all instances of memorials in Burnaby. Additionally, there may be unforeseen elements of future memorials which would also warrant a review and potential removal.

Occasionally, City staff become aware of a memorial prior to receiving any complaints from the community. The above same evaluation framework will be used to determine if proactive removal of the memorial needs to be undertaken prior to receiving such concerns.

The decision to initiate removal of a memorial will remain with the General Manager Community Safety, in accordance with the above framework and through consultation with staff. The volume of community concerns received by the City about a memorial may also be taken into consideration as part of this evaluation.

3.3 Communication with Families

Whenever possible, staff with training and experience with trauma-informed practice will act as primary contact with the family or other identified parties associated with the establishment of the memorial.

3.4 Supporting our People

City staff involved in any physical removal of memorials will be briefed on the assignment through crew talks in advance. A supervisor will offer follow-up after the

removal as necessary and according to established departmental procedures, including to provide any necessary resources such as access to the Employee and Family Assistant Program

3.5 Memorial Management

All efforts will be made to notify family members or other identified parties associated with the establishment of the memorial of the decision to remove a memorial. They will be permitted to remove memorial artifacts themselves or elect to have City staff do so.

If City staff have been unable to contact family or other parties associated with the memorial through reasonable efforts, staff shall remove the memorial items and store them in a secure location for thirty days.

Removals without contact may have a notice posted on the memorial location including how to reach staff to retrieve memorial materials for this thirty day period. Staff will otherwise safely dispose of collected items that have been held for thirty days.

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Costs associated to the administration of this policy will be absorbed within existing departmental base budgets as part of the 2024-2028 Financial Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Critchley, General Manager Community Safety

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Draft Community Initiated Memorial Policy

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Dawn Virginillo, Manager Crime Reduction and Intervention. Parks, Recreation and Culture, Engineering, Legal, People and Culture, Police Services, Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Victim Services, and Legislative Services were consulted in the development of the policy.

Community Initiated Memorials Policy

SOURCE:	Crime Reduction and Intervention Division		
POLICY NUMBER:	Draft: A-CS-2024-002		
APPROVED BY:	Council		
EFFECTIVE DATE:	Draft, pending	REVISION DATE:	Original

Purpose

This policy outlines the framework and guiding objectives governing the City's response to community initiated memorials. The policy includes key City resources to be engaged in this response, as well as guidelines for communication, review and management of community initiated memorials on City property.

Scope

This policy applies to all City owned, leased or operated property, infrastructure and facilities.

Background

Community-driven memorials occur in the aftermath of a disturbing or traumatic incident, most frequently in the event of an unexpected death. These public displays reflect the loss felt by those who set up the memorial. The nature or reminder of the incident can also cause upset and create concern within the broader community. Occasionally the content or placement of memorials can create safety, operational or maintenance concerns for public space and infrastructure.

This policy provides an enterprise-based City response to community initiated memorials that is equitable and consistent, upholding community safety for the greatest public good. The integration of trauma-informed processes ensures the City remains sensitive and responsive to the needs of diverse stakeholder groups.

Policy

The City will undertake review and respond to all complaints or concerns regarding community initiated memorials, including from members of the public. Once the City is aware of a complaint or concern, the following framework will be used to assess whether a memorial should be considered for removal. However, there may be additional relevant considerations depending on the memorial. For example, the City will review considerations including, but not limited to:

1. Potential safety concerns. For example, those memorials that present a visual distraction or obstruction to drivers; such as large

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eye-catching displays, or those that include solar lighting or other electronic elements.

2. Abandoned or derelict. Examples could include those with decomposing flowers, sodden stuffed toys or other materials vulnerable to outside elements.
3. Obstruction of public space or infrastructure. Examples might include memorials that obstruct the use of a bike path, trail, parking sign or other infrastructure such as a sidewalk or playground.
4. Memorials that are incompatible with adjacent uses of space (such as schools, playgrounds, playfields or other areas frequented by children).
5. Violating personal information and privacy of individuals or others other than the subject person(s) of the memorial. This can include images of minors or other people who have not consented to their use; or other named individuals who have not consented or complain about their personal information being included in the memorial.
6. Those memorials in close proximity to a private residence, while unassociated to the occupants.

Occasionally City staff will become aware of a memorial prior to receiving any complaints or concerns from the community. The above same criteria will be used to determine if proactive removal of the memorial needs to be undertaken prior to receiving such concerns or complaints.

The decision to initiate removal of a memorial will remain with the General Manager of Community Safety, in accordance with the above framework and through consultation with staff.

General Principles and Objectives

1.0 Coordinated and Systematic Response

The Crime Reduction and Intervention Division is responsible for coordinating with other City departments to ensure a consistent response set out in this policy.

2.0 Managing Memorial Items

Family members or other identified parties associated with the establishment of the memorial will be notified of a decision to remove a memorial whenever possible. They will be permitted to remove memorial artifacts themselves or elect to have City staff do so.

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If City staff have been unable to contact family or other parties associated with the memorial through reasonable efforts, staff shall remove the memorial items and store them in a secure location for thirty days.

Removals without contact may have a notice posted on the memorial location including how to reach staff to retrieve memorial materials for this thirty-day period. Staff will otherwise safely dispose of collected items that have been held for thirty days.

3.0 Sensitive, Trauma Informed Response

The City seeks to implement a trauma-informed response to the management of community initiated memorials.

3.1 – Dealings with Family: Staff with training and experience with trauma informed practice will act as primary contact with the family or other identified parties associated with the establishment of the memorial whenever possible. This communication may include but will not be limited to information about this policy; other grief supports and referrals available to them, as well as potential alternative means to memorialize their loved one through established City programs when available.

3.2 – Dealings with Community: Community concerns and complaints about these memorials will be recorded in compliance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and responded to in a systematic manner. This response may include but will not be limited to information about this policy; timelines for review processes and potential removal of the memorial if appropriate. Personal information collected for this purpose will only be retained for its useful period and retained for two years, then destroyed.

3.3 – Supporting our People: City staff involved in any physical removal of memorials will be briefed on the assignment through crew talks in advance. A supervisor will offer follow-up after the removal as necessary and according to established departmental procedures, including to provide any necessary resources such as access to the Employee and Family Assistance Program.

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Responsibilities General Manager Community Safety/City Leadership Team

- Decisions under this policy, and on-going review and recommended updates to this Community Initiated Memorials Policy document.

Departmental General Managers/Directors and Managers

- Upholding the principles of this Community Initiated Memorials Policy; this includes ensuring department specific procedures for recording and responding to community concerns about memorials, to ensure a consistent and equitable City response.

Engineering Department

- Complying with all aspects of this Community Initiated Memorials Policy.
- Ensuring adequate storage, retention, and possible disposal of memorial artifacts according to pre-established departmental procedures.

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services

- Complying with all aspects of this Community Initiated Memorials Policy.
- Ensuring adequate storage, retention, and possible disposal of memorial artifacts according to pre-established departmental procedures.

Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Division

- Ensuring that any decisions made with regards to memorials related to the history of colonization and/or reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples will be made in consultation and collaboration with Indigenous Peoples following appropriate cultural protocols.

Crime Reduction and Intervention Division

- Complying with all aspects of this Community Initiated Memorials Policy.
- Ensuring that the Community Initiated Memorials Policy remains current and recommending modifications as needed.
- Maintaining ongoing communication with other departments to ensure community concerns are responded to in a consistent and equitable manner. This may include referrals and requests for

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follow-up, as well as direct communication with concerned residents, or families and other parties responsible for the establishment of the memorial as required.

Burnaby RCMP Victim Services

- Complying with all aspects of this Community Initiated Memorials Policy.
- Undertaking primary communication and follow up support service with the family or other identified parties associated with the establishment of the memorial whenever possible, after receiving consent for services.

City Staff

- Awareness of the general principles and guiding objectives of this policy.
- Maintaining strong levels of customer service and confidentiality when dealing with complaints about community initiated memorials.

Assistance, Guidance, or Policy Clarification

If you require assistance, guidance, or clarification regarding this policy, please contact the Crime Reduction and Intervention Manager.

Leon Gous
Chief Administrative Officer

	Date	Updated by	Description
1.0	January 22, 2024	Dawn Virginillo	Original Community Initiated Memorials Policy

Community Initiated Memorials Policy

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