

**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.	<b>Unsafe</b>  - 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.	<b>Abandoned or Derelict</b>  - 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.	<b>Obstructs Use of Public Space</b>  - 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.

<b>4.</b>	<b>Incompatible With Adjacent Uses</b>  Memorials that are incompatible with adjacent uses of space (including those adjacent to a school, playground or other area frequented by children).
<b>5.</b>	<b>Violates Personal Information or Privacy</b>  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.
<b>6.</b>	<b>Infringing on Use of Private Property</b>  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.