

Subject: Moccasin Flats Memorial**APPROVALS:****Jamie Doyle**_____
Director_____
Chief Administrative Officer**Recommended Motion:**

1. THAT the update to Council on the Moccasin Flats Memorial initiative be accepted as information.
2. THAT Administration finalize Indigenous community engagement and validate feedback to further refine Memorial design concepts.

Summary:

Indigenous engagement enables meaningful opportunities for feedback on initiatives that impact Indigenous people and communities. The events that took place at Moccasin Flats is a painful part of our Region's history and requires awareness, atonement, and action to be able to move towards a state of reconciliation.

The McMurray Métis commissioned a report in 2018 on the cultural history and significance of Moccasin Flats, a Métis settlement that was demolished by the then Town of Fort McMurray between the late 1970s and the early 1980s. These historical events continue to have an impact on present-day Indigenous communities. In this context, Moccasin Flats can be viewed as central to advancing reconciliation in Wood Buffalo. The memorial is intended to commemorate and honour all those affected, helping to bring about healing and reconciliation in the region.

Background:

On July 10, 2018, RMWB Council voted unanimously as follows:

THAT the Municipality support and collaborate with the Indigenous community of Wood Buffalo to reconcile Moccasin Flats in a manner that is meaningful to all that have been impacted by the events which took place.

On December 3, 2020, Council passed the following Motion:

THAT funding in the amount of \$200,000.00 be included in the 2021 Capital Budget for the pre-design, design and construction of a memorial to remember the impact of Moccasin Flats, with a target date of 2021, with options being brought forward to Council during Q1 after engagement; and

THAT Administration bring forward an amendment to the Community Identification Committee Policy to include recognizing the history of our Region.

Moccasin Flats is an area of land at the confluence of the Athabasca and Clearwater Rivers. The Indigenous residents who lived there, primarily McMurray Métis members, were forcefully removed from their homes in the late 1970s and early 1980s to make way for Fort McMurray's urban development.

During a Special Council meeting in July 2018, a motion was unanimously passed to collaborate with Indigenous communities and meaningfully reconcile the historical events at Moccasin Flats. A September 2018 Report titled *The Moccasin Flats Evictions: Métis Home, Forced Relocation, and Resilience in Fort McMurray, Alberta* (Attachment 1), suggests several actions to advance reconciliation and promote healing surrounding the events at Moccasin Flats, including calling for "Remembering History with a Monument and Cultural Center" in Section 6.2. The report also noted that the lack of any trace of the history of the evictions perpetuates the erasure of Indigenous presence at Moccasin Flats.

At the July 2018 Council meeting, Council made a motion calling on the Government of Alberta to conduct a public inquiry into Moccasin Flats, and in a March 2019 *Strategic Plan* Progress Update, Council unanimously passed a resolution that the Municipality call upon the Government of Canada for a Federal Inquiry into the matter of Moccasin Flats. Calls for both provincial and federal-level inquiries went unheeded.

On February 22, 2021, Mayor Scott sent a letter to First Nation Chiefs, Métis Presidents, and the Reconciliation Advisory Circle to invite engagement on the Moccasin Flats initiative. Timed to coincide with the launch of the McMurray Métis survey regarding the same initiative, the letter outlined ways to become involved and stressed the importance of receiving feedback from those that have been impacted. Presentations to those expressing interest in participating have been structured to solicit feedback on memorial design options. This approach is intended to align data collected from both the McMurray Métis members' survey with Indigenous and Rural Relations's (IRR) Indigenous engagement findings on a Moccasin Flats memorial. To date, IRR has received responses from each organization and has scheduled one-on-one engagements with those indicating interest in participating.

To support the second part of Council's December 3, 2020 Motion, IRR presented an update on the initiative to the Community Identification Committee (CIC) on March 25, 2021. Following Indigenous engagement, IRR may need to engage the CIC on the selection of a name for the structure - in Cree, Dene, or Michif - and bring it forward to Council for approval.

Indigenous and Rural Relations is in receipt of the March 29, 2021, letter addressed to the Mayor from the McMurray Métis (Attachment 2) that summarized their organizations' engagement efforts to date. Understanding that the McMurray Métis members have been greatly impacted by the events at Moccasin Flats, IRR has been working closely with their team to ensure meaningful collaboration for the initiative. IRR will continue to collaborate and engage with the McMurray Métis and the broader Indigenous communities and Nations in the region to ensure all those that have been impacted have an opportunity for input.

Budget/Financial Implications:

A total of \$200,000 has been allocated from the 2021 Capital Budget for the pre-design, design, and construction of a Moccasin Flats memorial.

Rationale for Recommendation:

This project aligns with several of the initiatives outlined in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo's *2018 - 2021 Strategic Plan*. Specifically, Strategy & Initiative #1f, Foster equality, diversity and inclusion in the region; #4a, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action; #4f, Inclusion and Partnerships; and #4g, Advocate for Rural and Indigenous communities.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada defines reconciliation as “establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians”. The Municipality acknowledges the events that occurred at Moccasin Flats and is committed to addressing these events in a meaningful way for all those adversely impacted. The Municipality commits to ensuring that these past events at Moccasin Flats are recognized, remembered, and commemorated with a memorial, moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation. The initiative is intended to take meaningful and responsive action to strengthen the Municipality's ongoing reconciliation actions and efforts with Indigenous communities in the Region.

Strategic Priorities:

Responsible Government
Rural and Indigenous Communities and Partnerships

Attachments:

- 1. The Moccasin Flats Evictions; Métis Home, Forced Relocation, and Resilience in Fort McMurray, Alberta**
- 2. McMurray Métis Letter and Attachments - March 29 2021**