



March 29, 2021

Mayor Don Scott
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
9909 Franklin Avenue
Fort McMurray, Alberta
T9H 2K4

Dear Mayor Scott,

Thank you for your invitation to engage with the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) regarding a Moccasin Flats memorial. As you are aware, the Moccasin Flats evictions deeply impacted several McMurray Métis individuals and families. The legacy of the Moccasin Flats evictions continues to affect these individuals and families. We believe that the establishment of a memorial that is conceived from a robust engagement with impacted individuals, families and the McMurray Métis community is a positive step toward healing some of the trauma the community has experienced. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Council and administration for supporting a Moccasin Flats memorial.

Moccasin Flats was an important Métis home, with recorded Métis occupancy since around 1870. It was part of an Indigenous homeland and a central location for the exercise of Indigenous rights to hunt, trap, fish, and gather for subsistence. From the late 1970s to the early 1980s, The New Town of Fort McMurray collaborated with Northward Developments Ltd. (Syncrude) to evict Métis families and demolish the Métis settlement at Moccasin Flats to build the River Park Glen housing towers and a proposed marina, which was never built.

In early 2018, McMurray Métis Elders and leadership identified the Moccasin Flats evictions as a research priority and a central issue for Truth and Reconciliation for their community. In April 2018, the McMurray Métis tasked Dr. Tara Joly and Hereward Longley (Ph.D. student) with undertaking a study examining the cultural history and significance of Moccasin Flats and the impact of the Moccasin Flats evictions on the McMurray Métis community. The study, “The Moccasin Flats Evictions: Métis Home, Forced Relocation, and Resilience in Fort McMurray, Alberta” is provided as Attachment 1 to this letter (hereafter “the 2018 study”).

Métis Nation of Alberta Association Fort McMurray Local Council 1935

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The study identified two general themes of impacts on the Métis community in Fort McMurray: (1) cultural impacts to a Métis way of life, including social fragmentation, disruption of relationships to the land, and related intergenerational trauma; and (2) socio-economic impacts such as housing insecurity, economic impacts, and exposure to racism.

When asked what would constitute reconciliation regarding the evictions, impacted families and individuals interviewed for the 2018 study suggested a monument or memorial be erected at the site of Moccasin Flats. Other participants suggested a Cultural Centre be built to educate the public regarding the Indigenous histories at Moccasin Flats. Additional recommendations were made – all of which are described in the 2018 study.

Since the completion of the report, McMurray Métis leadership have strongly and consistently advocated that the RMWB take responsibility for the evictions and advance reconciliation through the avenues identified in the 2018 study.

In June 2020, the RMWB agreed to transfer land on MacDonald Island to the McMurray Métis for the purposes of building a Cultural Centre. On December 3, 2020, the RMWB Mayor and Council unanimously carried a motion that funding in the amount of \$200,000 be included in the 2021 Capital Budget for the pre-design, design and construction of a memorial to remember the impact of Moccasin Flats. The RMWB identified a target date of 2021 with the expectation that Moccasin Flats memorial options are brought forward to Council during Q1, after engagement.

In January 2021, the McMurray Métis leadership team, staff, consultants, and Moccasin Flats researchers (hereafter “the McMurray Métis team”) commenced a robust engagement process with the McMurray Métis community regarding the design of a Moccasin Flats memorial. The McMurray Métis team directed a two-part engagement process consisting of (1) a survey administered to each McMurray Métis member follow-up by (2) direct engagement with McMurray Métis members that expressed interest in additional engagement.



The McMurray Métis team administered the survey to McMurray Métis members between February 22 - March 12, 2021. Survey questions were a combination of open-ended questions and multiple-choice questions with a pre-determined range of possible answers. The survey covered topics including:

- Memorial goal
- Memorial design aspects
- Interaction with the memorial
- Access to the memorial
- The memorial's audience
- The location of the memorial
- Elements of the memorial (e.g., physical structure / landscape alteration verses a nature-based memorial and mobility of the memorial)
- Acknowledgements at the memorial
- Unacceptable aspects of a memorial
- Visioning of an ideal memorial

The survey generated strong interest from McMurray Métis members. Members that participated in the survey provided well-articulated thoughts, perspectives, and views regarding a Moccasin Flats memorial. The McMurray Métis team used the survey data to brainstorm a range of memorial options that achieved the vision delivered by McMurray Métis members that participated in the survey.

During the week of March 15, 2021, the McMurray Métis team evaluated the range of memorial options against various contextual factors (e.g., expected features of the RMWB's waterfront development project and how that project could complement and enhance a Moccasin Flats memorial) and practical constraints and opportunities (e.g., footprint considerations and visibility considerations, cost, accessibility, tie-in to the McMurray Métis Cultural Centre). This exercise eliminated some of the options that were initially brainstormed, leaving two options that the McMurray Métis team believed achieved the vision of the McMurray Métis community, would complement and augment current waterfront development plans, and, considered practical constraints and opportunities of the project.



During the week of March 22, 2021, the McMurray Métis team administered a follow up survey to McMurray Métis members that expressed an interest in additional engagement. The survey presented the two options generated by the McMurray Métis team and asked each survey participant to provide their thoughts and perspectives on each of the options. The survey also asked participants to rank the options, choosing a preferred option. Lastly, the survey asked participants to provide their feedback regarding aspects of the memorial location (e.g., visibility, access, and flood risk factors).

During the week of March 22, 2021 McMurray Métis representatives contacted Mr. Steve Shott (son of Pat Shott) to ensure that Mr. Shott and his family were aware that the RMWB were engaging Indigenous communities with respect to a Moccasin Flats memorial and to ensure that the memorial concepts envisioned by the McMurray Métis community would not inadvertently create offense or additional trauma for Mr. Shott and his family. Mr. Shott explained that he was not aware that a Moccasin Flats memorial was being advanced. Mr. Shott, who is a member of the Fort McKay First Nation, expressed an interest in participating in the memorial design. Mr. Shott noted that there may be other impacted families that may not be aware of an opportunity to engage with respect to the memorial.

The Moccasin Flats engagement process resulted in two memorial options that achieve the vision of the McMurray Métis community. Attachment 2 and 3 to this letter provide a detailed profile of each of the memorial options.

Memorial Option #1 - Silhouettes From The Past - Silhouettes From The Past is a collection of full-size silhouette figures based on the people who lived at Moccasin Flats or represents activities that reflect elements and aspects of a Métis way-of-life. The silhouettes may be placed in a circular open-air pavilion that features a central seating area to invite and promote gathering and reflecting OR the silhouettes may be configured to facilitate storytelling and / or to integrate into the area in the most impactful way.

The silhouettes are accompanied by ground structures that help to identify local landmarks and areas of interest and / or to augment the storytelling aspect of this memorial.

89% of McMurray Métis members surveyed regarding the two options expressed a preference for this memorial option.



Memorial Option #2 - The Trappers Pavilion - The Trappers Pavilion is a pavilion in the shape, form, and style of a Métis trapper's cabin. The trapper's pavilion features physical elements and aspects that reflect a Métis way-of-life. The pavilion features local landscaping that includes traditional plants and that creates an inviting atmosphere. Educational plaques are placed throughout the pavilion and the pavilion area to memorialize the Moccasin Flats evictions.

10% of McMurray Métis members surveyed regarding the two options expressed a preference for this memorial option.

Several McMurray Métis community members expressed support for a memorial that combined elements of "Silhouettes From The Past" and "The Trappers Pavilion". The McMurray Métis support a combined option if this is a feasible and preferred option for the RMWB as well.

An overwhelming majority of McMurray Métis members that participated in the survey expressed a strong preference that the Moccasin Flats memorial is located at the site of the evictions. McMurray Métis members were also surveyed regarding aspects of the memorial location. Nearly all those surveyed expressed that they would like the memorial to be in a location that is highly visible and easily accessed by foot or vehicle.

In addition to the feedback provided regarding memorial design elements and location, several McMurray Métis community members expressed some additional thoughts and views that we feel are important to bring to your attention:

- Vandalism: several community members expressed strong views that steps should be taken to deter and prevent vandalism to the extent possible. There were several suggestions including the installation of cameras and lighting.
- Security and / or misuse of memorial area: several community members expressed concerns regarding security of the memorial area and / or misuse of the memorial area (e.g., people camping / loitering). The McMurray Métis request that the RMWB take these concerns into consideration when advancing the memorial design and its location.



- Acknowledgements – RMWB: survey respondents asked that the memorial acknowledge the people evicted from Moccasin Flats, the Elders who participated in the study, the region’s Indigenous People, the Moccasin Flats researchers, McMurray Métis leadership and administration, and the historic and contemporary Métis community. However, some community members had strong views that the RMWB not be acknowledged, considering the municipality’s role in the Moccasin Flats evictions. The McMurray Métis respectfully request that the RMWB refrain from any acknowledgement of the RMWB leadership, administration, or staff – past or present.

As described above, the Moccasin Flats evictions impacted McMurray Métis members and families disproportionately. The impact and the legacy of the evictions is a trauma that continues to be experienced by McMurray Métis members and families.

The McMurray Métis would appreciate the opportunity to participate in the detailed design and construction of a Moccasin Flats memorial so that the memorial best reflects the vision of impacted families and individuals. In consideration of the sensitivity of this subject matter and the trauma that continues to be experienced by McMurray Métis members, it is important to the McMurray Métis that the memorial design does not inadvertently create additional trauma to impacted families and individuals.

The McMurray Métis would like to reiterate its appreciation of the opportunity to contribute to the design of a Moccasin Flats memorial. We look forward to continued participation in this project. Please do not hesitate to contact me if the RMWB have any questions regarding the feedback provided in this letter.

Warm regards,

Section 17 (1) FOIP

Gail Gallupe
President, McMurray Métis

Memorial Title: Silhouettes From The Past



EXAMPLE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY

Memorial Description

A collection of full-size silhouette figures based on the people who lived at Moccasin Flats or represents activities that reflect elements and aspects of a Métis way-of-life. The silhouettes may be placed in a circular open-air pavilion that features a central seating area to invite and promote gathering and reflecting OR the silhouettes may be configured to facilitate storytelling and / or to integrate into the area in the most impactful way.

The silhouettes are accompanied by ground structures that help to identify local landmarks and areas of interest and / or to augment the storytelling aspect of this memorial.

Design Considerations

Design of the silhouette figures will be carefully considered. They will be laser cut from 3/8" plate steel that will be vandal resistant powder coated. The finish could be done in various colours as well as a chrome-like finish so that upon approaching the figures you will see your own reflection. The figures will need to be bolted to foundation supports such as screw piles.

Depending upon access to power the addition of well placed lighting could enhance the memorial during the long winter nights and be a deterrent to vandalism.

Memorial Features

Key features of this memorial include:

- To commemorate the homes of the people who lived at Moccasin Flats
- To reclaim Métis space
- To create a place of education and sharing
- To establish a permanent monument (physical structure)
- The use of educational plaques to provide information to visitors
- Creates a place to:
 - Learn
 - Reflect
 - Gather
 - Rest
- Open to the public
- Targets a wide audience (Indigenous and non-Indigenous local residents, visitors to the region)
- Pavilion is constructed at the Moccasin Flats site
- Although there are nature-based elements in the landscaping, the predominant feature of this memorial is that it is a permanent physical structure
- The following organizations and people will be acknowledged at the memorial:
 - The region's Indigenous people
 - Elders who shared stories for the Moccasin Flats study
 - Impacted families and individuals
 - The historic Métis community
 - The contemporary Métis community
 - McMurray Métis leadership
 - Moccasin Flats researchers

Memorial Title: The Trapper's Pavilion



EXAMPLE FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY

Memorial Description: a pavilion (an open air or semi-enclosed covered structure) in the shape, form, and style of a Métis trapper's cabin. The trapper's pavilion features physical elements and aspects that reflect a Métis way-of-life. The pavilion features local landscaping that includes traditional plants and that creates an inviting atmosphere. Educational plaques are placed throughout the pavilion and the pavilion area to memorialize the Moccasin Flats evictions.

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