

TORONTO STAFF REPORT

April 20, 2006

To: Economic Development and Parks Committee

From: Brenda Librecz, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Subject: Air India Memorial
Ward 6 - Etobicoke-Lakeshore

Purpose:

To seek City Council approval to accept the donation of a memorial from the Government of Canada in memory of the victims of Air India Flight 182.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no direct financial implications to the City related to the acceptance of this memorial. The project will be fully funded by the Government of Canada through the Federal Air India Review Secretariat (Attachment 1) as per an agreement to be negotiated with the City of Toronto (Recommendation 2).

No work will commence until an agreement has been reached and the source of funding confirmed. In addition, ten percent of the total project budget is to be deposited into a reserve fund to be established to cover ongoing maintenance. The City will contribute parkland and staff support during the development and implementation of the project.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial impact statement.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) City Council accept the donation of a memorial to the victims of Air India Flight 182 from the Government of Canada to be located at Humber Bay Park East (Attachments 2 and 4);

- (2) authority be given to the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to enter into an agreement with the Government of Canada for the purpose of stipulating the City's conditions and requirements related to the source of funding, design, development, construction, completion and ongoing maintenance of the proposed memorial;
- (3) following the successful negotiation of an agreement with the Government of Canada, the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and the Chief Financial Officer submit a report to City Council with respect to establishing a reserve fund called the "Air India Memorial Maintenance Fund" to receive funds for the ongoing maintenance of the memorial; and
- (4) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

On June 23, 1985, Air India Flight 182 crashed, due to an act of terrorism, into the Atlantic Ocean, just off the coast of Cork, Ireland. 329 innocent lives were lost in this aviation tragedy - the world's worst prior to September 11, 2001.

While in Ireland in June 2005, then Prime Minister Paul Martin announced that June 23rd would be designated as a new National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism. In addition, Prime Minister Martin announced that the Federal Government of Canada would fund the cost of a memorial to be built in memory of the innocent lives lost. The families of the victims of Air India Flight 182 have been examining potential sites for a permanent memorial since the Prime Minister's announcement and as a result, a memorial has been proposed for an area located at Humber Bay East Park (Attachments 2 and 4).

A memorial tree and plaque was commissioned by the Ontario Government under the leadership of Premier David Peterson as a provincial symbol of remembrance. This modest memorial remains at Queen's Park today.

Comments:

As per the Prime Minister's pledge, the project will be funded by the Federal Treasury Board through the Federal Air India Review Secretariat. Additional funding, equal to ten percent of the total cost of the memorial, will be provided to the City for the ongoing maintenance of the memorial and a reserve fund will be established for this purpose. The City will contribute

parkland for the development and construction of the memorial along with providing staff assistance throughout the project.

Given that the majority of victims were from the Greater Toronto Area, family members are eager to see a more appropriate and permanent memorial established that would offer a place for congregation and reflection in peace and tranquility (Attachment 2). The families wish to have the memorial located on the shore of Lake Ontario, given that they feel a close affinity to a large body of water because it is the final resting place for many of their loved ones.

Thousands of Torontonians were affected by this tragedy, yet to date no appropriate memorial has been built in Canada to symbolize the magnitude of this loss. During discussions with City of Toronto and Government of Ontario Officials, a few waterfront sites were identified as being potential locations for the memorial. Humber Bay Park East received unanimous support from victims' families as the preferred location. The area has open views of Lake Ontario, which will encourage reflection, and the site is easily accessible by both car and public transit. The site also has washrooms and public telephones.

The design will be a landscaped area very similar to the one that was created in Ireland which has the names of all the victims engraved on a wall behind a sundial as shown in Attachments 2 and 4. The memorial will be designed to accommodate large gatherings during annual memorial ceremonies. This memorial will also serve as a touchstone of remembrance for victims of terrorism around the world as part of the new National Day of Mourning for Victims of Terrorism.

The proposal also creates an opportunity for the western expansion, beyond the Humber River, of the existing Parks, Forestry and Recreation Western Ravines and Beaches Discovery Walk to include this memorial as a landmark terminus to the interpretive walking experience. In doing this, the public profile of this memorial will be raised and integrated into visitors' experience of the City's western waterfront.

This project has been reviewed and recommended by the City's Official Gifts and Monuments Committee and has the support of both the Ward Councillor and the local community.

Conclusions:

This report recommends that City Council accept the donation of a fully-funded monument from the Government of Canada in memory of the victims of Air India Flight 182 to be located at Humber Bay Park East provided there is a successful negotiation of a construction agreement between the City of Toronto and the Government of Canada. A subsequent report to City

Council will address the issue of establishing a reserve fund to receive funds for the ongoing maintenance of this important and long overdue memorial.

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Brenda Librecz, General Manager
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

List of Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Letter of support and confirmation from Federal Air India Review Secretariat
- Attachment 2: Map of Proposed Air India Memorial Location
- Attachment 3: Letter from Air India Victims' Families Association
- Attachment 4: Photo Images of Air India Memorial in Ireland

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Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

Air India Review
and Inquiry Secretariat

Secrétariat de l'examen et de l'enquête
relatifs à l'affaire Air India

Monday, April 24, 2006

Ms. Barbara Sullivan
Chief of Protocol
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St. West
Toronto, ON
M5H 2N2

Dear Ms. Sullivan,

As you are aware, the Federal Government has committed to provide funds in order to construct a memorial dedicated to the victims of Air India flight 182. The project, estimated to cost \$350,000 will be supported by funding of up to \$350,000 from the Federal Government, and no less than \$225,000, should the Province of Ontario choose to commit funds towards the final project cost.

The Federal Government will provide an additional \$35,000 to be used for maintenance of the memorial over a period not to exceed 5 years.

It is our understanding that the City of Toronto will undertake to manage all aspects of construction and design of this project. The Federal Government will provide funding for the project according to a schedule to be outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding, which will be signed by all parties.

It should be noted that Federal funds are to be used only for design, construction, and maintenance of the memorial site, as well as the memorial itself.

We anticipate a groundbreaking ceremony to be held on June 23, 2006, and project completion to occur no later than June 23, 2007.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

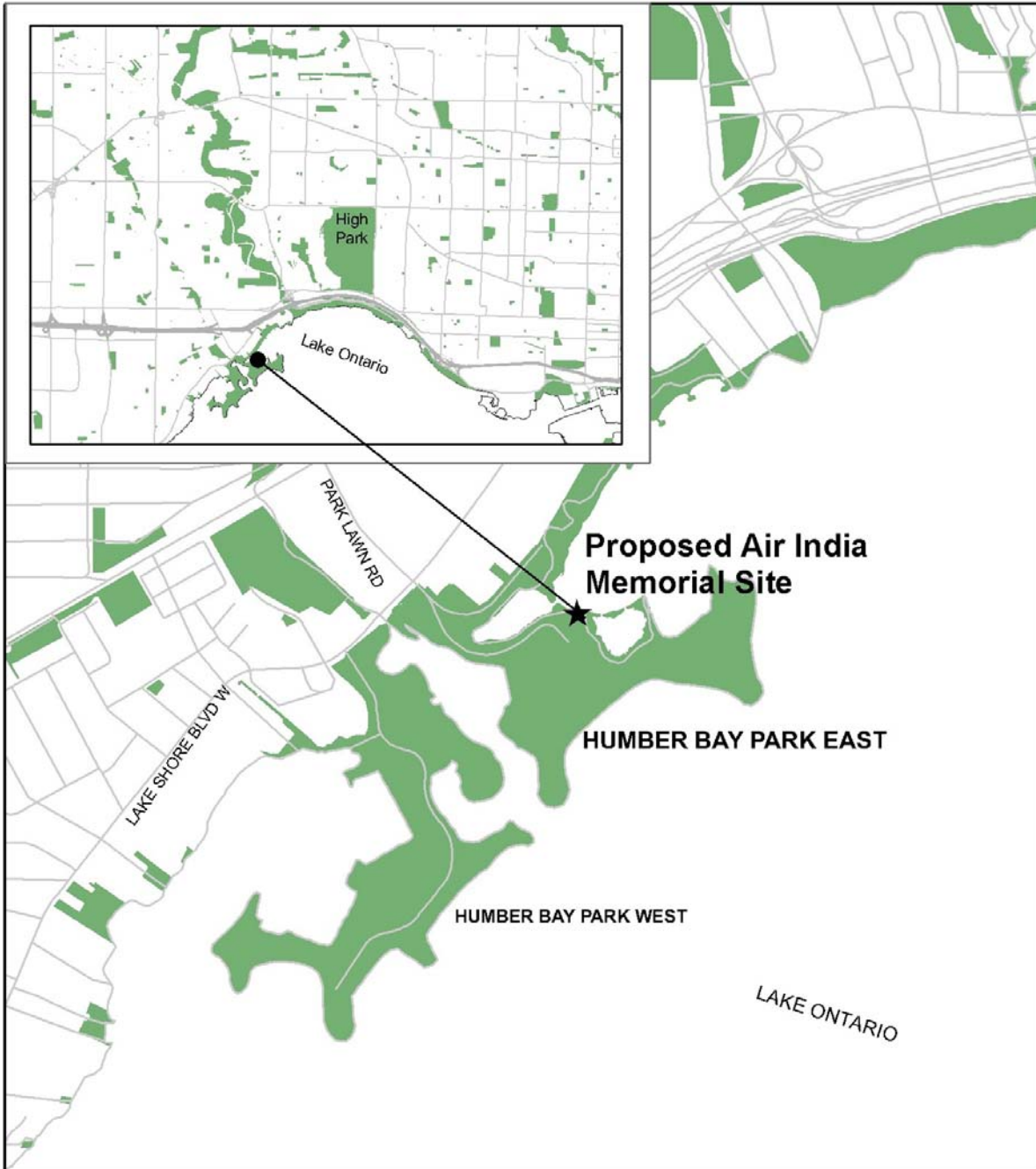
Talceb Noormohamed
Executive Director,
Air India Review & Inquiry Secretariat

Canada

Attachment 2 – Map of Proposed Air India Memorial Location



Proposed Air India Memorial Location



Proposed Air India Memorial Site
Humber Bay Park East
Ward 6 - Councillor Mark Grimes
April 6, 2006

Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Strategic Services
Research 

Attachment 3 – Letter / Proposal from Air India Victims’ Families Association

February 2, 2006

Ms. Barbara Sullivan
Chief of Protocol, City Clerk’s Office
10th Floor, West Tower
Toronto City Hall

100 Queen Street West

Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Re: Proposed Air India Memorial.

Dear Ms Sullivan:

We are members of the Air India Victims’ Families Association. Enclosed, please find our proposal to the City’s Official Gifts Committee for a permanent memorial in honour of the victims of Canada’s worst act of terrorism – the Air India Flight 182 tragedy of June 23, 1985, which crashed into the Atlantic Ocean, just off the coast of Cork, Ireland.

Following meetings with City of Toronto and provincial government officials, we collaborated with members of our association to determine that a landscaped area with memorial sundial and plaque, preferably on Toronto’s waterfront Humber Bay East Park, is the most respectful and fitting place to commemorate the tragedy. The area may also serve as a touchstone for regional commemorations of the new National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism each June 23, announced by the Rt.Hon. Prime Minister Paul Martin in 2005.

As this project is being funded by the federal Treasury Board through the Federal Air India Review Secretariat, the City’s contribution would take the form of a small parcel of parkland. Ongoing maintenance will be provided for by the federal government, though not in perpetuity, and would eventually become the responsibility of the City as part of its regular parks maintenance. The community will also be heavily involved in maintaining the site. The Province of Ontario will continue to remain heavily involved in this process.

To this proposal, we have attached:

- a letter of support from the Federal Air India Review Secretariat
- a letter from the RCMP indicating that the majority of victims were from this region
- a picture of the existing memorial in Cork, Ireland that serves as our guide for the Toronto memorial

Proposed Air India Memorial on Toronto’s Waterfront

- a map of the proposed Humber Bay East Park site.

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Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to hearing from you and ask that you address your correspondence to _____, whose contact information is listed below:

| Best regards,

Original Signed by:

Proposed Air India Memorial on Toronto's Waterfront

A Proposal to the City of Toronto Official Gifts Committee

June 23, 1985 was a black letter day in the history of Canada. 329 innocent lives were lost due to an act of terrorism in the world's worst aviation tragedy prior to September 11, 2001. Even after 20 years, the families of the victims are looking for justice and closure. All the hopes are now pinned on an Inquiry, which is to investigate the systemic failures, which we recognize, will never bring to justice the perpetrators of this heinous crime. The only redeeming factor in the aftermath of the verdict was a declaration by the federal government that June 23 will be a national day of remembrance for victims of terrorism. Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Paul Martin's presence with all leaders of the Opposition in Ireland on June 23, 2005 was a fitting gesture by the government, for the first time acknowledging this event as a "Canadian Tragedy". During his speech at the memorial service, Prime Minister Paul Martin announced that his government would fund the cost of memorials to be built in memory of the innocent lives lost in the Air India tragedy.

The families of the victims have been discussing a probable site for the memorial since the Prime Minister's declaration. We have always appreciated the tree and plaque at Queen's Park commissioned by former Ontario Premier David Peterson as a provincial symbol of remembrance of our loved ones. Given that the vast majority of victims were from the Toronto region, a more respectful and appropriate memorial is proposed for Toronto, one that offers a place for the families to congregate and reflect in peace and tranquility. Thousands of Torontonians were affected by this tragedy and yet, to date, no appropriate memorial has been built in Canada to symbolize the magnitude of this loss.

Every year, on the anniversary of the tragedy, many family members have been travelling to Ireland to pay homage to their loved ones. However, because of the elapsed time many have aged considerably and are unable to take the yearly trip. Having the memorial in Toronto will give them a place to visit without having to travel far.

Proposed Air India Memorial on Toronto's Waterfront

During the discussions with City of Toronto and Government of Ontario Officials, we were advised of a few sites that may be of interest to us. One such site is the Humber Bay East Park, a map of which is attached to the proposal. The family members are unanimous in support of this site for the memorial. The area has open views of Lake Ontario, which will encourage reflection, and is easily accessible because of its proximity to parking areas and transit. The site also boasts modern facilities, such as washrooms and public telephones.

The proposed Toronto Memorial would be a landscaped memorial similar to the one in Ireland, with the names of the victims engraved on a wall behind a sundial. Photos of the Ireland sundial are attached to this proposal. The families wish to have the memorial on the shore of Lake Ontario since it will be close to the water. Many families feel a close affinity to a large body of water because it is the final resting place for many of their loved ones.

The proposed memorial, along with the sundial and the names of the victims, would ideally feature a landscaped area large enough for hosting a group of family members gathering during the annual memorial ceremonies on June 23, as well as a few benches. It may also serve as a touchstone of remembrance for victims of terrorism around the world as part of the new National Day of Mourning for Victims of Terrorism.

A second linked site is proposed further south onto the promontory, into the lake. The walkway leading to the promontory will be called the Memorial Path. It is suggested that a small landscaped rock garden be built with rocks from Ireland, India, British Columbia and Ontario.

This proposal also creates the opportunity for the western expansion, beyond the Humber River, of the existing City of Toronto Western Ravines and Beaches Discovery Walk to include this memorial as a landmark terminus to the interpretive walking

experience. In doing this, the public profile of this memorial will be heightened and integrated into residents' and tourists' experience of the City's western waterfront.

While enhancing the natural beauty of Toronto's waterfront, the proposed memorial will stand as a permanent reminder to the world that terrorism will not be tolerated in any form. It will also be a constant reminder of how terrorism, while seeking to destroy, ultimately serves to strengthen and unite communities. We also feel that the addition of our proposed memorial will more effectively symbolize the loss to our community, to our city and to Canada.

As this project is being funded by the federal Treasury Board through the Federal Air India Review Secretariat, the City's contribution would take the form of a small parcel of parkland. Ongoing maintenance will be provided for by the federal government, though not in perpetuity, and would eventually become the responsibility of the City as part of its regular parks maintenance. The community will also be heavily involved in maintaining the site. The Province of Ontario will continue to remain heavily involved in this process.

The Air India bombing was the largest act of terrorism in Canada's history. The majority of its victims were from the Toronto area. We hope you will consider our proposal, as it will finally allow the city of Toronto to join the world in appropriately symbolizing and reflecting the magnitude of this loss.

We are enclosing a copy of a letter from the Federal Air India Review Secretariat detailing their financial support of the Toronto memorial. We are also enclosing a copy of the geographical distribution of the victims as provided by the RCMP for your perusal.

Proposed Air India Memorial on Toronto's Waterfront

In closing, we leave you with the words of one of the young victims Deven Nadkarni (1967–1985):

*Would that I had the power
To change this world of mine,
But I have not, and I doubt
There is power of this kind.*

*But perhaps if every man were
To make a subtle change,
A kind word or deed,
Some mercy or forgiveness shown,*

*Each contributing as his own
What his abilities permit
Toward improving the life
Of his fellow man,
Then, maybe, the sum of these acts
Will add up to a greater whole*

*And we shall together rise
Above our present state . . .*

Air India Victims' Families Association

Proposed Air India Memorial on Toronto's Waterfront

Attachment No. 4 – Photo Images of Air India Memorial in Ireland

