

City Council**Notice of Motion**

MM28.17	ACTION			Ward: 13
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Authorization to Release Section 37 Funds for North Star Way Lane Heritage Plaque - by Councillor Chris Moise, seconded by Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Chris Moise, seconded by Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik, recommends that:

1. City Council increase the 2025 Operating Budget for Heritage Toronto on a one-time basis by \$10,000 gross, \$0 net, fully funded by Section 37 community benefits obtained in the development at 46 to 48 Power Street, and 113 to 125 Parliament Street (Source Account: XR3026-3701033), secured for local streetscape improvements in the area designated Corktown Area of Special Identity, for the production and installation of a heritage plaque recognizing North Star at North Star Lane (Cost Centre: HG0001).

Summary

I am writing to request support to release section 37 funds to create a heritage plaque recognizing North Star Way, to be placed in the [newly named laneway in Corktown](#) of the same name.

Heritage Toronto approached my office seeking funding for several new heritage plaques in Ward 13. The City renames laneways frequently, but rarely provide context for residents as to who the person is and why they are being honored. A heritage plaque is a relatively inexpensive placemaking tool to promote our city's history and educate the general public about notable historical figures.

This plaque will honor the North Star's significance to the Underground Railroad.

A guiding light for freedom and resilience, the North Star (Polaris) has long served as a vital navigational guide, helping travelers find their way. Revered as the "Going Home Star," it played a crucial role during the Civil War and remains a powerful symbol in numerous stories and publications about the Underground Railroad.

Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), a prominent abolitionist, founded The North Star Newspaper named after the star that guided those escaping slavery to Canada. Additionally, metal signs that say "Follow the North Star" were placed along roads and streets to lead people to Underground Railroad sites.

Additionally, the North Star carries cultural importance for Indigenous communities across Canada. To the First Nations Cree people, the North Star signifies “The one that never moves,” embodying the resilience of Indigenous community spirit.

The unveiling of Toronto’s North Star Way took place on February 1, 2024, with the unveiling of Henry “Box” Brown Lane, in celebration and recognition of the first day of Black History Month.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM28.17