

June 8, 2026

**To:** Economic and Community Development Committee / City Clerk

**Re:** Item 2026.EC29.12 — Community Engagement Process to Assess Local Community Support for Echoes and Nighttime Closure of Barbara Hall Park

**Clerk's note:** Please attach this submission to Item 2026.EC29.12 and cross-post it to any new business item on The AIDS Memorial or *Echoes* that is introduced at the June 9 meeting of the Economic and Community Development Committee

Dear Councillor Bravo and Members of the Economic and Community Development Committee,

On behalf of **Realize**, I am writing to submit this public letter for distribution to the Economic and Community Development Committee as part of Item 2026.EC29.12.

**Realize** endorsed The AIDS Memorial Project's *Echoes* proposal because remembering and honouring friends and family lost to AIDS is an essential part of the grieving process, and the healing process. Our organization was born out of an alliance of community members living with HIV, health professionals and policy makers at the height of the pandemic to find better health and life outcomes for people living with HIV. Today, a significant focus of our work is on HIV and aging – there are still so many unknowns. One thing we do know is that the stigma and othering that people living with HIV experience continues and the resulting trauma effects the HIV community negatively.

We believe tying discussions of the future of the AIDS memorial to security and fencing issues further traumatizes and stigmatizes our community. We urge the Committee to separate the future of The AIDS Memorial (Toronto) from the debate about fencing or nighttime closure of Barbara Hall Park.

**The AIDS Memorial should be considered on its own terms:** as a site of mourning, naming, public memory, dignity, and recognition for people who died of AIDS and for people living with HIV today. It should not be embedded in an agenda item framed around crime, safety, disorder, and enforcement.

This distinction matters. Committee may amend or strike recommendations, but it cannot rewrite the summary text of the existing item. Even if the fence recommendation is removed, The AIDS Memorial would still remain attached in the public record to an item whose framing is fundamentally about public safety and park disorder. That is not an appropriate civic frame for a memorial to people who died of AIDS and those living with HIV.

*Echoes* is a community-led proposal for the restoration and expansion of The AIDS Memorial. It has been endorsed by more than 45 AIDS service and HIV/AIDS organizations from across

Ontario and Canada, four leading local trans organizations, and the Church Wellesley Neighbourhood Association. This is a broad and serious community consensus.

**We ask the Committee to:**

1. Support a new and separate business item on The AIDS Memorial and *Echoes*, introduced by a councillor other than Councillor Moise.
2. Recognize The AIDS Memorial (Toronto) as a memorial of national significance.
3. Endorse *Echoes* as the principal framework for the restoration, expansion, interpretation, and long-term recognition of The AIDS Memorial.
4. Direct the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, to continue working with the HIV-positive community to integrate *Echoes* into the final design for The AIDS Memorial at Barbara Hall Park.
5. Delete Recommendation 1 from EC29.12 so the existing item no longer uses *Echoes* or The AIDS Memorial as part of the debate over fencing and nighttime closure.
6. Reject the proposed fencing or nighttime closure of Barbara Hall Park, and reject any approach that displaces unhoused people and people experiencing mental health crises instead of addressing the conditions they face.

The AIDS Memorial belongs to a much larger community than one ward. It holds the names, grief, memory, and history of people from across Toronto, Ontario, and Canada. **There are people living with HIV, and people who have died of AIDS, in every ward of this city.**

The Committee should do the right thing: separate the memorial from the fence debate, support a new motion on *Echoes*, and allow The AIDS Memorial to be treated with the respect it deserves.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Roger Musselman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Roger Musselman  
Co-Executive Director  
**Realize**