



## MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

### Recognition, Restoration, and Expansion of The AIDS Memorial (Toronto)

Moved by: Mayor Olivia Chow

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Seconded by: Councillor Jamaal Myers

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#### SUMMARY:

The AIDS Memorial (Toronto), located in Barbara Hall Park in the Church-Wellesley Village, is one of Toronto's most significant sites of public remembrance.

First emerging in 1988 as a community act of naming, mourning, and public witness, and made permanent in 1993, The AIDS Memorial centres the names of people who died of AIDS. It continues to receive names and remains a living memorial to a continuing epidemic, a national loss, and the dignity of people living with HIV.

The memorial is located in Ward 13, but its meaning is not limited to one ward. It is a civic memorial of national significance. There are people living with HIV, and people who have died of AIDS, in every ward of this city. The memorial holds grief, history, activism, and memory from across Toronto, Ontario, and Canada.

More than 21,000 Canadians have died of AIDS-related illness, and more than 65,000 people in Canada are currently living with HIV. The impact of HIV/AIDS has been borne especially by communities already facing stigma, exclusion, and institutional neglect, including gay and bisexual men, trans people, African, Caribbean and Black communities, Indigenous communities, sex workers, people who use drugs, incarcerated people, newcomers, and migrants.

For many people who died of AIDS, public naming was an essential act of dignity. In periods when many were denied recognition by families, institutions, and governments, chosen family and community carried the work of remembrance. The AIDS Memorial made that grief visible.

As the City of Toronto advances the Barbara Hall Park Improvements project, The AIDS Memorial must be treated as a defining civic and historical feature of the site. Community members living with HIV, people who lost loved ones to AIDS, and HIV/AIDS organizations have identified the need to restore the existing memorial, strengthen its dignity and legibility, expand its capacity, and ensure that its history is understood by future generations.

The AIDS Memorial Project's *Echoes* proposal responds to that need. *Echoes* is a community-led restorative framework for The AIDS Memorial that combines restoration, spatial definition, interpretation, public art, gathering space, and a renewed memorial landscape.

*Echoes* has received unusually broad community support, including endorsement from over 45 provincial and national HIV/AIDS organizations, four local trans-led organizations, and the Church Wellesley Neighbourhood Association.

City Council should recognize The AIDS Memorial (Toronto) as a civic memorial of national significance and endorse *Echoes* as the principal framework for its restoration and expansion.

**Reason for Urgency:** Substantive work to develop the final concept plan for the Barbara Hall Park Improvements project will be complete before the next meeting of City Council.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. City Council acknowledge the profound and continuing scale of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Canada, honour the memory of the more than 21,000 Canadians who have died of AIDS-related illness, and stand in solidarity with the more than 65,000 people currently living with HIV in Canada.
2. City Council recognize The AIDS Memorial (Toronto), for the purpose of City decision-making and stewardship, as a memorial of national significance, including as one of the world's few large, permanent AIDS memorials, an open-ended memorial for names of those lost to AIDS, and a living site of loss, survival, activism, and public memory.
3. City Council acknowledge the broad community consensus behind The AIDS Memorial Project's *Echoes* proposal, including endorsement from over 45 provincial and national HIV/AIDS organizations, four local trans-led organizations, and the Church Wellesley Neighbourhood Association, and endorse *Echoes* as the principal framework for the restoration, expansion, interpretation, and long-term civic recognition of The AIDS Memorial (Toronto).
4. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, in consultation with The AIDS Memorial Project, people living with HIV, people who lost loved ones to AIDS, HIV/AIDS service organizations, and relevant City divisions, to continue moving forward with the integration of the *Echoes* proposal into the final design for The AIDS Memorial (Toronto), including its core components.
5. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, to ensure that the interpretive, storytelling, and name-recovery components, including opportunities for digital storytelling, associated with the *Echoes* proposal for The AIDS Memorial (Toronto) are developed through community-led processes, with the City supporting the participation of people living with HIV, especially those from communities most affected by HIV/AIDS.

June 24 & 25, 2026