

**STRATEGIC PLANNING REPORT  
for  
OAK BAY CENTOTAPH**

*"It is a truly a magical place for honouring service and sacrifice."  
OBCTG member*



**Submitted to:** Oak Bay Council  
**Submitted by:** Oak Bay Cenotaph Task Group  
**Date Submitted:** April 16 2016

*Table of Contents*

Executive Summary..... 3  
Rationale.....3  
Task ..... 4  
Site Analysis.....4-5  
Strategic Plan .....5-7  
Appendices ..... 9  
Committee Members..... 10

## **1. Executive Summary**

The Oak Bay Cenotaph Task Group (OBCTG) was assigned by Mayor Nils Jensen in November 2015. The Mayor asked that a group of key stakeholders report back on strategies to update and broaden the use of the “Cenotaph site” at Uplands Park. The OBCTG met for five meetings to produce the following report. Members of the group included a heritage expert, archivist, citizen judge, environmental expert, Canadian Armed Forces member, and a council representative.

To inform the report the committee i) did a site visit at Uplands Park, ii) toured the Oak Bay archives, iii) individually scripted and shared visionary statements, and iv) conducted an assessment of the existing site and its use. The following report provides a framework to reimagine the site where the Cenotaph is located and its future use, and includes a rationale, description of the task, site analysis, a strategic plan, and appendices.

Council is asked to approve a resolution to accept in principle the following report, and to give the OBCTG the mandate to consult and engage key staff and stakeholders with respect to the implementation of the report.

## **2. Rationale**

The Oak Bay Cenotaph, within Uplands Park, is designated as a municipal heritage site and as such is recognized as a special place within the community. This report suggests "reimagining" the immediate larger park site within where the Cenotaph exists; the initiative will provide an opportunity to strengthen public recognition of the site as a special place and enhance its use as a place of remembrance and reflection beyond its traditional association with the annual November 11 Remembrance Day ceremony.

### **3. Task**

Be it resolved that the OBCTG:

- i. Be established as a working committee;
- ii. Reimagine the Cenotaph site and its use for the future, and
- iii. Prepare a report to Council

### **4. Site Analysis**

The following is a snapshot of the current situation re the Cenotaph site and its use in Oak Bay.

#### **a) Strengths**

- i. Durability of existing monument;
- ii. Prominent siting in Uplands Park;
- iii. Relationship of Cenotaph to surrounding natural environment;
- iv. Increasing attendance at the Cenotaph site at annual Remembrance Day services;
- v. Good public recognition of site and profile;
- vi. Heritage designation of the Cenotaph.

#### **b) Weaknesses**

- i. Focus of the Cenotaph on WW II sacrifices solely;
- ii. Plaques on boulders to recognize other conflicts and sacrifices have no integrated plan with the site;
- iii. Poor accessibility of the Cenotaph for physically challenged/frail and seniors;
- iv. Existing religious nature of Remembrance Day service is not inclusive;
- v. Existing conservation of the Cenotaph.

**c) Opportunities**

- i. Site is already perceived as a “special place” within Oak Bay;
- ii. Overall site is a cultural landscape with natural setting embracing the Cenotaph;
- iii. Some potential to recognize aboriginal traditional use of the site;
- iv. Future management and public use of the site need not be limited to its use as a Cenotaph once per year.

**d) Threats**

- i. Ongoing cost of maintenance and conservation;
- ii. Conflicts among various interests regarding existing/future recognition and use of the Cenotaph site;
- iii. Proposals for significant alterations to the designated heritage site;
- iv. Demands by seniors for better/safer access to Cenotaph;
- v. Efforts by some to reserve the space for war veterans solely.

**5. Strategic Plan**

**a) Aspiration**

The way we remember and narrate our past shapes how we behave in the present and orient toward the future.

**b) Statement of Principles**

The Oak Bay Cenotaph was constructed in 1948 and dedicated to those who gave their lives during the Second World War; the Cenotaph and its natural rock podium has existing status as a designated Municipal Heritage Site.

The Cenotaph, together with its natural environment in Uplands Park in the traditional territories of the Lekwungen peoples, is a rare and unusual cultural landscape.

Given the foregoing, the entire site is a special place in Oak Bay where we recognize, remember and reflect on those who sacrificed in military conflicts, peace operations and domestic safety and security.

**c) Goals**

- i) Create a special place in Oak Bay to reflect while:
  - Strengthening understanding of the site as a place of recognition and remembrance; and
  - Respecting the relationship between the Cenotaph and the natural features of the landscape.
- ii) Extend the recognition of the site to include Public Safety Personnel;
- iii) Make the site more inclusive of other remembrances; and,
- iii) Reinvigorate the Remembrance Day ceremony and other uses of the site to be more accommodating of Canadian diversity.

**d) Strategies**

- i. Identify a list of military actions and Emergency Response Personnel contributions we will add to the site (where we've been and where we are going);
- ii. Enhance visibility of the site;
- iii. Promote and expand public recognition of the Cenotaph site;
- iv. Determine necessary site conservation;
- v. Establish community engagement plan that is consistent with the goals;
- vi. Create a short list of names for the site through a preliminary process of brainstorming and present the list to community for selection;
- vii. Evaluate options for making site more accessible without causing inappropriate alterations to the Cenotaph, minimizing environmental impact, and respecting the heritage designation bylaw to include:
  - o Access to ceremonial proceedings for individuals with mobility constraints;
  - o Roadside parking;
  - o Road crossings; and

- Additional seating (benches) for physically challenged and seniors.
- viii. Focus future development on natural features and strengthening the cultural landscape (fixed vs evolving);
- ix. Revitalize the content of the Remembrance Day Ceremony to be more reflective of contemporary Canadian diversity and values;
- x. Redesign the physical siting and focal point for the site of the Remembrance Day Ceremony;
- xi. Respect First Nations' traditional use of site.

**e) Actions**

- i. Engage relevant stakeholders to name the park area site;
- ii. Extend formal heritage site designation to include appropriate natural features to enhance the cultural landscape of the site;
- iii. Rededicate the site with an appropriate ceremony as a special place in Oak Bay;
- iv. Meet and consult with the Remembrance Day Ceremony organizers to discuss revitalization of the Remembrance Day ceremony;
- v. Meet with Oak Bay key stakeholder staff in Fire, Police, Parks, Arts and Culture, as well as the Heritage Commission to discuss engagement in the project;



- vi. Work with OB Parks to remove non-native and invasive species such as the English Ivy and Cotoneaster;
- vii. Investigate low profile lighting options and costs;
- viii. Understand First Nations' (Songhees and Esquimalt) traditional use of site;
- ix. Promote the concept of citizen education committee (*Friends of the Cenotaph*);
- x. Establish a plan to improve site interpretation and recognition, including addressing the existing 2004 boulder plaques and Dorothy Saul and Isobel Craig markers;
- xi. Consult with landscape architect regarding the plan; and
- xii. Nominate the site to the Canadian Register of Historic Places.

## **6. Appendices**

- A. Map of Site by Engineering Department, 1948
- B. Designation By-law
- C. Statement of Significance for Cenotaph
- D. Cenotaph Monument Restoration Program Documents (2005)
- E. Conservation Report (2012)
- F. Conservation Standards for Historic Places in Canada  
<http://www.historicplaces.ca/media/18072/81468-parks-s+g-eng->

web2.pdfhttp://www.historicplaces.ca/en/pages/standards-normes.aspx

- G. Guidelines for Conservation of Cultural Landscapes (as appropriate) and Cenotaphs
- H. Canadian Forces Chaplains Manual: Guidelines for Public Liturgy  
(<https://info.publicintelligence.net/CanadaChaplainManual.pdf>)

## **7. Committee Members**

**Chair:** Tara Ney (Municipal Councilor)

**Committee Members:** Jayden Cormier (The Canadian Scottish Regiment, CAF); René de Vos (Environmental/Landscape Advocate); Patrick Frey (former Director Heritage Branch); Gerald Pash (Citizenship Judge and retired Canadian Forces Public Affairs Officer); Jean Sparks (Archivist and Heritage Specialist); Angus Stanfield (Legion Member)

**Date Submitted:** April 16, 2016