

Culture and Commemoration within the City of Lethbridge

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OVERVIEW

The 2024 **Civic Culture Plan (CCP)** outlines the role of the City in promoting trust-building, interculturalism, inclusion, and placekeeping/making within Lethbridge. This plan recommends the implementation of a cultural heritage policy.

During the 2025 **Policy Innovation Lab (PIL)**, the student interns researched policy approaches which could enhance the cultural vibrancy of the City of Lethbridge through commemorative initiatives.

WHAT IS THE POLICY INNOVATION LAB?

The PIL is a collaboration with the **City of Lethbridge (CoL)** and the **Prentice Institute (PI)** to develop students' ability to conduct research and analyze policy interventions through an innovative experiential learning environment.

The 2025 PIL focused on the themes of **culture and commemoration**, including implementation of the **CCP** and other municipal cultural strategies (such as the **Heritage Management Plan, HMP**). The final output of the PIL was a technical report outlining their research, findings and recommendations.

The 2025 PIL was also generously supported by the Archaeological Society of Alberta.

REFERENCES

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UNESCO 2003, *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible cultural heritage*. <https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/15164-EN.pdf>
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REPORT FINDINGS

Cultural heritage is a complex and multifaceted topic that requires nuanced understanding to apply to the CoL context. Our report outlines the following:

Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage

- Tangible and intangible forms of cultural heritage are intrinsically linked, dynamic and ever-evolving (UNESCO 2003).

Commemoration

- Commemoration is the expression of cultural heritage through a variety of mediums (such as statues, monuments public art, and festivals), representing both tangible and intangible historic practices (Lei, Wei, and Xu 2025).
- Commemorative practices have historically been understood through dominant Western perspectives, however, have recently begun to display multiple, intercultural perspectives (Ebbrecht-Hartman 2021).

CoL role within Cultural Heritage

- City plans such as the CCP, Public Art Master Plan, HMP, and plans focused on operationalizing reconciliation define Lethbridge's commemorative landscape and justify the City's role in enhancing cultural vibrancy.
- The CoL can use commemoration as strategic practice to implement the vision of these cultural plans and represent Lethbridge's evolving community dynamics.

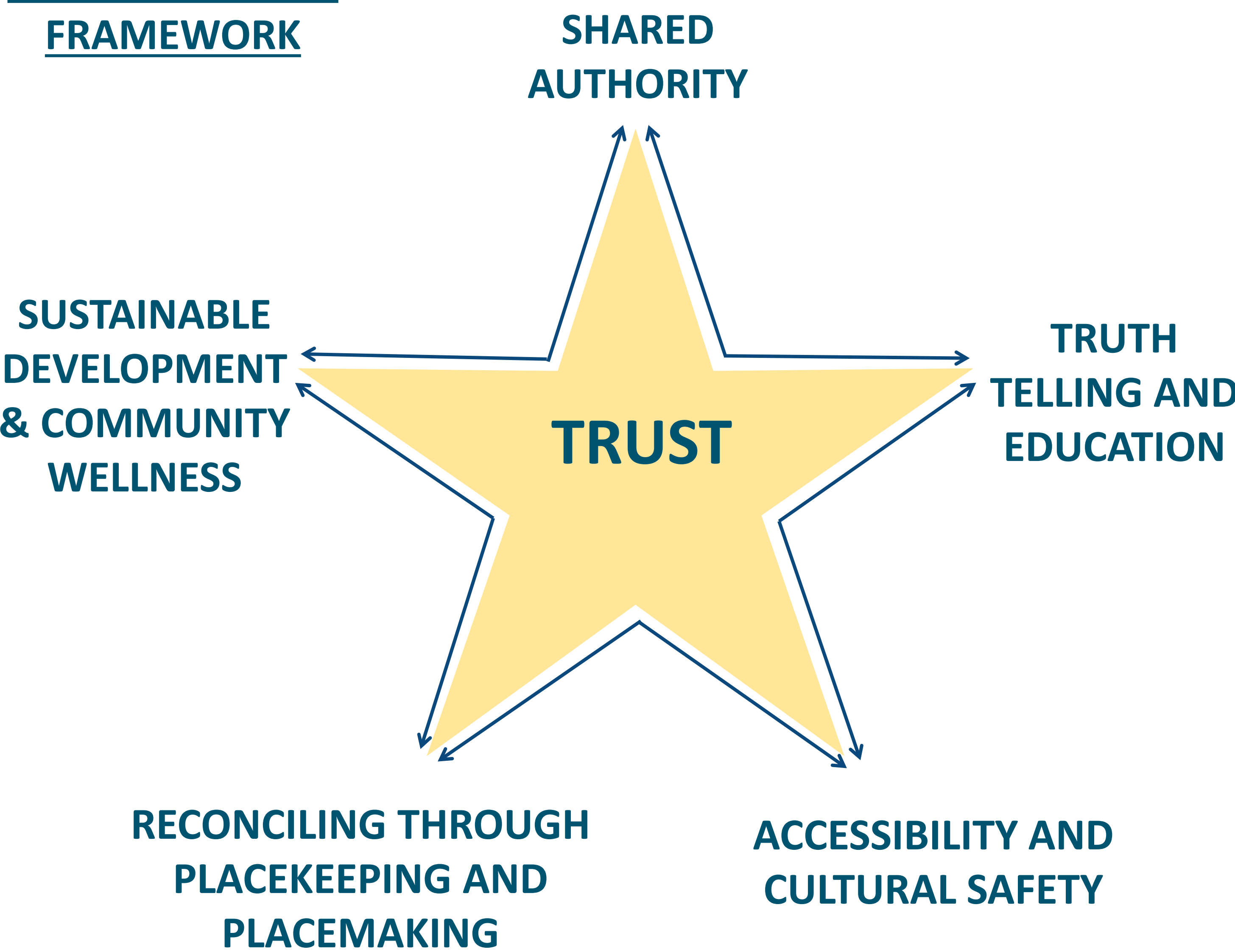
Potential Commemoration Framework

A framework that informs future commemorations would allow for commemorative initiatives to be considered within specific cultural contexts but still align implementation on a common path.

- Trust must be centered within good commemorative practice but can also be cultivated through meaningful cultural heritage practice and meaningful community engagement

COMMEMORATION FRAMEWORK

THE TRUST-STARS FRAMEWORK



RECCOMENDATIONS

The City of Lethbridge should explore:

1. Creation of a Commemoration Framework

- Doing so would guide implementation of cultural heritage policy on a common path with applicable guiding principles

2. Incorporate sustainable development within cultural heritage

- Doing so would combine commemoration with development to enhance public wellness and fulfill functional community needs (UCLG 2018).

3. Prioritize trust-building and engagement

- Doing so would center the community within new initiatives and allows residents to assert agency over the future of their communities and to get involved in their city

4. Focus on accessibility

- Doing so would disperse cultural heritage initiatives throughout the city so that all neighborhoods have access.