

Culture and Commemoration Within the City of Lethbridge

Jordan Hanas, Aliya Jansen, Taryn Lachman

Prentice Institute for Global Population and Economy, University of Lethbridge.

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Author Note

Correspondence concerning this report should be addressed to: perry.stein@lethbridge.ca or jillian.bracken@lethbridge.ca

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Oki. We acknowledge that the work done on this report took place on the traditional lands of the Blackfoot Confederacy, including the Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani Nations, and within the territory of Treaty 7. Sikoohkotoki, now known as Lethbridge, is also home to members of the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.

We recognize and respect the enduring relationship the Niitsitapi have with this land. A relationship rooted in knowledge, stewardship, protection, and cultural continuity since time immemorial. These lands hold stories, languages, and traditions that shape the past, present, and future of this place. We are committed to honoring Indigenous perspectives and the continued presence and contributions of Indigenous communities in this work. This land, the history of Sikoohkotoki, and the Niitsitapi have played an invaluable role in the context and perspective of this report, and the role that each played in informing the final output should be acknowledged with respect.

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Glossary

CoL	City of Lethbridge
CCP	Civic Culture Plan
CC	Culture and Commemoration
HMP	Heritage Management Plan
ICH	Intangible Cultural Heritage
MDP	Municipal Development Plan
NCU	Nicolas Copernicus University
PIL	Policy Innovation Lab
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TCH	Tangible Cultural Heritage
TKUA	Traditional Knowledge and Land Use Assessment
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Committee
UCLG	United Cities and Local Government
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

Intention and Role

The 2025 Policy Innovation Lab (PIL) was structured around the themes of culture and commemoration. Throughout the lab, we participated and engaged in discussions with expert leaders in the sectors of urban planning, public policy, municipal government, museology, and public art. The PIL included a field day to Áísínai'pi/Writing-On-Stone Provincial Park with a local Blackfoot guide, and attendance of other local cultural events and showcases.

Our position as University of Lethbridge undergraduate summer interns situates us in relation to the City of Lethbridge (CoL). Between the three authors, we have a breadth of different educational, cultural, and personal experiences that can impact our position on the report. Our team consists of one B. FA holder pursuing an education after-degree, and two students pursuing a B.A. in Political Science, one student with a minor in Human Geography and the other student with a minor in History. We bring a diverse range of cultural perspectives, and our lived experiences as Lethbridge residents. As understandings and definitions of culture and commemoration are often informed by personal lived experiences, we found it important to recognize our own positions as authors on the project.

Our role as summer interns in the PIL is to write a research report for the City of Lethbridge in the realm of cultural and commemorative policy, including providing recommendations for City staff and researching avenues for how the City may choose to integrate culture and commemoration into future cultural heritage policies in accordance to the Civic Culture Plan (CCP) and Heritage Management Plan (HMP). Our evaluation of current Lethbridge cultural initiatives was developed from knowledge gained from the PIL seminar series, previous work from a Winter 2025 Anthropology class which was themed around culture and commemoration and a previous heritage index analysis from the Prentice Institute.

By recognizing our role and intention within this report, we hope to expose potential bias and contextualize our positionality to communicate to the reader any potential unacknowledged perspectives, preferences, or positions. We acknowledge our proximity to the City of Lethbridge and wish to state our intention to act independently as we make our recommendations, evaluations, and potential critiques that may not reflect the voice of the City but do reflect the research we have conducted on the themes of culture and commemoration.

Executive Summary

This project seeks to justify the capacity for cultural heritage policy within local government to foster connection and wellbeing throughout communities and to assist the City of Lethbridge in aligning future commemorative initiatives towards their goal of a culturally vibrant city. To contribute to the City's understanding of culture, this report will examine the dialectic nature between culture and commemoration and define tangible and intangible heritage within Alberta's and Lethbridge's context. As such, gray and academic literature were consulted to establish a firm understanding of the nuance of cultural and commemorative policies. An analytic assessment of seven case studies was conducted to examine an array of commemorative within different cultural contexts and understand diverse approaches to the strengthening of cultural vibrancy. Our findings reveal the importance of building trusting relationships through the promotion of cultural safety, truth-telling and education, shared authority, and sustainable development within City of Lethbridge initiatives. These key tenets were incorporated into a commemoration framework put forward as a recommendation to inform inclusive commemorative planning within the City of Lethbridge.

By providing background information and knowledge on the topics of culture and commemoration, this report aims to connect our theoretical knowledge to the City of Lethbridge's current policies. Recommendations will be made to ensure that future municipal policies relating to culture and commemoration are inclusive and well informed.

This report is divided into the following eight chapters:

- **Chapter 1: Defining Culture and Commemoration** introduces the concepts of culture and commemoration through an overview of academic and gray literature as well as information acquired through the PIL seminar series. This knowledge has guided our understandings of cultural heritage, multiculturalism, colonial influences, and the dialectic relationship between culture and commemoration.
- **Chapter 2: Culture and Commemoration in Context** builds off of the information presented in Chapter 1 by demonstrating the applicability of cultural heritage planning to represent and include Alberta's changing demographics, and the opportunities of integrating cultural heritage efforts within wider City infrastructural and sustainable developments.
- **Chapter 3: Trust-STARS Framework** introduces the Trust-STARS framework for culture and commemoration. This framework was developed by the PIL team as a method to analyze a variety of case studies within different cultural contexts through guiding principles. Trust-STARS is intended to reflect all foundational themes highlighted in Chapter 1 into an operational guideline for culturally sensitive and relevant commemorative initiatives.

- **Chapter 4: Culture and Commemoration Within the City of Lethbridge** provides and overview and evaluation of current City of Lethbridge policies relating to civic culture, planning, heritage, public art, Indigenous ways of knowing and reconciliation.
- **Chapter 5: Evaluation of Current Commemorative Initiatives** evaluates current commemorative practices within the City of Lethbridge to consider how commemoration is perceived within communities today.
- **Chapter 6: Case Studies** presents seven case studies that highlight different aspects of culture and commemoration in an urban context. Each case study provides insight into how the City of Lethbridge could move towards adopting a commemoration framework.
- **Chapter 7: Discussion** discusses themes from literature, City of Lethbridge policies, and our cases studies within the Trust-STARS framework to consider how a commemoration framework could be implemented.
- **Chapter 8: Recommendations** introduces a series of recommendations for the City of Lethbridge regarding the treatment of culture and commemoration within current and future city initiatives. This includes recommendations relating to policy priorities and community engagement strategies. The Trust-STARS framework, introduced in Chapter Three, is highlighted as a tool to help guide a culturally focused outlook on both past and present City initiatives.

Introduction

Cultural heritage, although often recognized through tangible manifestations, can be expressed in many forms, including traditions, events, and festivals. In recent years, there has been a shift in understanding and recognition of what cultural heritage can look like beyond this westernized ideal. In part, this includes recognition for the capacity that cultural heritage and representation to foster connections and increase the well-being of communities (Duxbury and Campbell 2011). In diverse urban centres, expressions of cultural heritage will interact and collide with one another. Because of such potential for entanglement, it is increasingly important to recognize tangible and intangible forms of heritage while considering how they impact intercultural landscapes. (Ortiz and Madariaga 2022; Perry, Ager, and Sitas 2020). In efforts to protect diverse cultural expressions, local actors (such as museums, cultural groups, or galleries) and international actors (such as UNESCO) should each recognize the importance of keeping space for all forms of cultural heritage.

Governmental entities have an increasingly complex role to navigate in relation to cultural heritage. Throughout history, the authority and power of governmental entities have been intentionally weaponized to silence cultural expressions of marginalized groups (Mitchell 2003). As a result, different cultural groups have been pushed to the margins of mainstream culture and society, while western ideals and values have been used to dominate collective memory (Mitchell 2003). In the specific context of Canada, all levels of government have been deeply involved in the historical and ongoing marginalization and assimilation of Indigenous peoples and culture. Canadian governments have also been responsible for and complacent in many instances of the historical discrimination of various other cultural groups (Bell and Erickson 2022; Stanley 2019).

Due to this historical context, the expectations for how governmental systems should navigate with diversity in culture and commemoration today is greatly impacted. This impacts the very role that governments should even have in facilitating and disseminating cultural and commemorative practices. In acknowledging past harms inflicted by governments onto cultural groups, it is necessary to question the role they should play within cultural heritage and if governmental entities should be trusted, given attempts to hegemonize cultural narratives with the authority of governmental voices.

However, it is due to the impact of this complex and traumatic history that governments today learn and make change to reconcile past harm. Reconciliation in this context can include taking an active role in promoting, protecting, and keeping place for diverse cultural heritage within commemorative landscapes. As governments hold power in Canadian societies, there is a responsibility of these entities to collaborate with equity-deserving groups who have previously had their culture targeted, so that connections and engagement with their cultures can be promoted (Stanley 2019; Pentland 2021). To collaborate effectively, community engagement and trusting relationships between actors is required; when these relationships form, authority can be

shared between governmental bodies and cultural groups (Pentland 2021). In an ideal collaboration, cultural groups can decide for themselves when the government can support their efforts or step back to allow the group to independently pursue their goals (Pentland 2021).

As municipal governments can be particularly close to local cultures, they play an important role in reconciliation and redress within cultural and commemorative spaces. Their potential proximity to cultural groups allows opportunity to meaningfully engage in building trusting relationships with various groups and communities. In doing so, they can learn how to best support the goals or needs of equity-deserving cultural groups.

Close collaboration between cultural groups and their municipal governments communicates that their representatives care to make actionable steps towards reconciling relationships that have been damaged by colonial histories. It is important to recognize the time it takes to build a foundation of trust, as past harms inflicted onto groups from governmental entities can take a long time to heal and recover from. Municipal governments should be aware of this time commitment, making sure to be sensitive and aware of the time and effort that trust-building can take.

With the recognition that local governments play an important role in the ongoing development, maintenance, and protection of relationships with marginalized cultural groups, this report seeks to explore what role the municipal government of Lethbridge should have in the cultural and commemorative landscape of the city. The City of Lethbridge seeks to enhance the cultural vibrancy of their city and has created plans such as the Civic Culture Plan (2024) and the updated Heritage Management Plan (2023) to assist in doing so. This report will examine these City of Lethbridge plans and current cultural heritage practices to assess how the City can realize their visions throughout their cultural landscape. While closely examining City plans and projects, this report will dissect the following questions to better understand how the City of Lethbridge can best move forward towards their goals.

- 1) Why and how should the City equip policy to build trusting relationships, keep/make place, and support cultural initiatives from diverse groups?
- 2) How can the City share authority with equity-deserving groups to safeguard cultural heritage, celebrate interculturalism, and promote reconciliation?
- 3) Why should culture and commemoration be utilized in wider City efforts to aid in development? How can cultural heritage foster connection within communities?

By seeking to address these questions, this report aims to justify the stance that the City of Lethbridge should play an active role in facilitating the development, promotion, and protection of diverse expressions of cultural heritage throughout the municipality. These efforts can include trust and relationship building with equity-deserving groups through community engagement efforts, embarking on educational journeys to expand understandings of commemoration to embed that knowledge into City development efforts and community education, encouraging

intercultural collaboration, and supporting expressions of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage throughout the city.

This report will provide explanations and examinations of both cultural heritage and commemoration, as well as an evaluation of the City's current cultural policies and commemorations. We will also include an analysis of seven case studies chosen to explore commemoration in the context of other regions and municipalities. In doing so, we seek to gain a clearer vision for ventures the City of Lethbridge may wish to pursue to best align themselves on a culturally vibrant path. Through these examinations and analyses, we aim to inform a commemoration plan to further guide the implementation of the CCP and HMP. Implementation of inclusive commemorative planning would help to enhance the cultural vibrancy of Lethbridge by highlighting the diverse cultural heritage that exists throughout the city and support the city's growing diversity and development.

Chapter 1: Defining Culture and Commemoration

Culture and commemoration (CC) are complex and multifaceted topics, without one clear definition. Globally, there is no one set definition that can be used to explain the concepts in their entirety. Rather, definitions of culture vary from group to group. Definitions are dynamic and evolve over time as they are passed down through generations. Our review will focus on culture and heritage within an urban context. Doing so will allow us to focus on how culture and commemoration pertain to the City of Lethbridge. The following chapter will provide a review of literature and knowledge from the PIL seminar series (see Appendix A – PIL Seminar Series) to define and explore the intersecting themes of culture and commemoration. This exploration will offer a deeper understanding of culture and heritage, which will inform our proposed commemoration framework.

Tangible vs. Intangible Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage is difficult to define. Blake (2000) argues that a clear and universally applicable definition should not be sought out, as the issue is too complex and varies among cultural groups. To account for nuance and global cultural differences, the general understanding of cultural heritage is that which encompasses historical, spiritual, and practical elements of a person's identity; an extension of shared values, beliefs, behaviours, and traditions that allow a group of people to connect with a shared identity. From this understanding, the definition can be refined to two main types of cultural heritage: tangible and intangible heritage. Both forms of heritage have been developed, understood, and practiced by multilateral organizations throughout time and regions.

Tangible cultural heritage (TCH) and intangible cultural heritage (ICH) were terms developed by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) in 2003. TCH refers to physical objects that hold cultural significance (UNESCO 2003). This encompasses things like art, food, regalia or buildings; aspects of culture that can be physically touched. Western colonial societies often prize tangible cultural heritage, as it can be a means of physically preserving the past. Physical preservation can be seen in museums, where cultural items are put on display for the public, as well as monuments, where people or moments are preserved in public memory via statues or plaques.

ICH embodies the non-physical elements that make up cultural heritage. Intangible heritage refers to “the practices, representation, expressions, knowledge and know-how transmitted from generation to generation within communities, created and transformed continuously by them, depending on the environment and their interaction with nature and history” (UNESCO 2003, pg. 4). Although UNESCO has paved the way for cultural heritage recognition, their international framework is not without issues. Tensions remain on the global stage regarding UNESCO's acknowledgement that cultural heritage can promote group identity at the local level

(Ortiz and Madariaga 2021). This tension sparks questions of authority, such as who determines the value of cultural practices or items.

While UNESCO recognizes the responsibility to safeguard and protect both tangible and intangible cultural practices, it remains unclear who is responsible for the practical application of culture and commemoration. Local governments are particularly relevant abilities in relation to an urban context, and cities are often assumed to have a larger capacity for cultural initiatives than smaller rural areas (UCLG 2018). Urban centres are also recognized as sites of interculturalism. These sites are examples of where different communities' tangible and intangible forms of heritage entangle and connect, requiring further recognition of all forms of cultural heritage (Perry, Ager, and Sitas 2020).

Intangible cultural heritage is often overlooked in Western and colonial commemorative practices. This could be due to Western culture's tendency to preserve. Both tangible and intangible forms of cultural heritage should be regarded as integrated properties of heritage, rather than as separate entities (Perry, Ager, and Sitas 2020). When the two forms are viewed as independent entities, they are placed in competition rather than allowing for independent historical significance. This, in part, remains in Canadian society as a remnant from colonialism and settlement.

Because of this, throughout Canada and the Global North, tangible cultural heritage is often better understood than intangible heritage expressions. Despite this imbalance, urban centres with culturally diverse commemorative landscapes require TCH and ICH to be integrated as equal. Together, the two streams of heritage can serve to transform values. When both forms of heritage are celebrated and platformed, western European values of commemoration can begin to shift; this shift can occur through interactions between people, place, and memory as the heritage expressions are engaged with by community members (Lei, Wei, and Xu 2025).

Commemoration

Because of the inherent value of both TCH and ICH, incorporating both within a city's cultural landscape can help enhance the cultural vibrancy of the community. This can lead to embracing diversity throughout the city, through the integration of commemorative initiatives. Culture and commemoration are deeply connected; and commemoration is an integral part of cultural heritage. Commemoration is often regarded as the practice of paying respect to, remembering, or preserving elements of cultural heritage (UNESCO 2003). Commemoration is a culturally specific and continuously renewed process; these practices are often dynamic, as traditions and values change over time.

However, commemoration has historically not recognized this dynamic nature, nor has it recognized a diverse set of voices. Pentland (2021) examines how historical Canadian commemoration practices have failed to acknowledge the role of colonial conquest narratives

have had in marginalizing Indigenous people, practices and perspectives. Further, there is a greater risk of commemoration being used to push a single, sanitized narrative when there are no systems present to ensure that cultural groups are given the agency to inform their own cultural commemoration practices (Rodgers, Petersen and Sanderson 2016).

Embracing diversity in commemorative practices is crucial to fostering a rich and nuanced understanding of global cultures and histories. The narratives presented through commemoration are subject to varying public interpretation. Diversity, interpretations and analysis contributes to the construction of social realities, which shape everyday life and public memory (Rodgers, Peterson and Sanderson 2016; Azaryahu 1996). Ebbrecht-Hartman (2021) remarks on the importance of community-directed commemoration to promote culturally sensitive action. By acknowledging diverse perspectives and different approaches to cultural heritage, commemoration can act as a tool to enhance intercultural relations. This capacity for intercultural dialogue to emerge is heightened in urban spaces, as they are often hubs with diverse populations. Since the value of heritage is deeply rooted in memory, the act of practicing and remembering culture is vital. Having a diverse cultural and commemorative landscape throughout a city can assist in ensuring that members of all communities feel safe, valued, and wanted in the city that they call home.

Connection between Culture and Commemoration

The relationship between culture and commemoration is both mutually reinforcing and synergistic (Pentland 2021; Ebbrecht-Hartman; Lei, Wei, and Xu 2025). The two elements work together, strengthen one another, and enhance the impact of the other. When a community has strong cultural traditions and heritage, the capacity to participate in commemorative practices is enhanced. Conversely, strong commemorative practices contribute to the strengthening of a community's culture. This occurs by fostering and preserving "living memory" through practice, education and cultural entanglement (van der Hoeven 2019; Ebbrecht-Hartman 2021).

Internationally, approaches to culture and commemoration vary widely; some communities prioritize the preservation of tangible and material culture, while others focus primarily on safeguarding intangible practices or traditions (McCandlish and McPherson 2021). Historically, Canadian practices of commemoration often favor TCH despite Indigenous cultures and other immigrant cultures placing a higher value on ICH. Urban centers often present unique blends of both tangible and intangible practices, through various community approaches (Perry, Ager, and Sitas 2020). Regardless of differing priorities, both ICH and TCH are deeply entwined and necessary components of a culturally vibrant city.

As the City of Lethbridge has communicated vision of Lethbridge as a culturally vibrant city, we found it necessary to examine the entwined nature of culture and commemoration. This examination was informed by both the content of the PIL seminar series and the literature

regarding CC. Throughout the seminar series and the preliminary literature search, recurring themes became apparent. To best explore the connection between culture and commemoration, the PIL team determined five themes to focus on:

- **Trust:** A constructive relationship between policymakers, City administrators, and citizens. When trust is successfully established, relationships emerge that are grounded in open communication and sensitive to a diverse array of cultural practices. This theme is central, as communities shaped by cultural identity and commemoration may be hesitant to engage or share experiences without a foundation of trust.
- **History & Memory:** History plays an important role in shaping power. Memory and perspective are important factors in defining the meaning of cultural and commemorative practices but are heavily confined by power and history. This relationship invites the question of who determines significance in cultural and commemorative spaces.
- **Embracing Diverse Communities:** It is important to recognize the role that intercultural collaboration plays in fostering the expansion and evolution of cultural practices. Displays of cultural entanglement can benefit wider communities and create space for intercultural dialogues and growth. These relationships can enhance cultural vibrancy, but care must first be taken to embrace diverse communities to ensure they feel valued, safe, and welcomed.
- **Placekeeping and Placemaking:** Highlighting Indigenous voices and perspectives can help to reclaim spaces that have previously been shaped, changed, or erased by colonialism. Working to ensure that local Indigenous communities not only have access to the land and place but also feel welcomed and wanted in the space is one way to support cultural heritage and expression.
- **Shared Authority:** This theme refers to a decentralization of conventional control systems. In 2025, power hierarchies remain rooted in colonialism. Marginalized cultural groups are often excluded from positions of authority. In conversations of commemoration, including diverse voices and perspectives is needed to ensure that cultural and commemorative initiatives are inclusive and expansive- not simply upholding conventional narratives and power dynamics.

The following pages will examine each of the five guiding themes listed above, which have been drawn from both academic and gray literature alongside information obtained during the PIL seminar series (see Appendix A – PIL Seminar Series). This includes community-based studies from a variety of disciplines (including anthropology, museology, visual arts, human geography, and political science) as well as gray literature focused on reconciliation and community engagement strategies. In doing so, we hope to highlight the importance of praxis within cultural policy as the alignment of theory and practice. We also seek to demonstrate the applicability of these guiding themes in real-world contexts. This application can help promote equity and

diversity within cultural and commemorative spaces and enhance the overall cultural vibrancy and safety of a city.

Placekeeping/Placemaking

The topic of shared memory and the historical significance of CC is intricately intertwined with concepts of placekeeping and placemaking. In a Canadian context specifically, these concepts are integral to understanding why Indigenous cultures deserve to be celebrated and uplifted. The shared memory of Canada has been shaped by narratives that celebrate conquest and colonization. These narratives support the idea that Indigenous cultures deserved to be erased during the establishment of Canada as a country. Throughout urban spaces in Canada, commemorations that glorify colonization and discrimination against Indigenous people are present. This narrative also frames colonial presence on the land as earned or deserved, while actively erasing the presence of Indigenous people since time immemorial. Thus, the importance of placekeeping and placemaking becomes evident.

Placekeeping can be defined as an active process of maintaining the physical, cultural, and commemorative place of Indigenous practices and ways of knowing. Placemaking, on the other hand, is used more frequently within literature and is defined through making space into place and fostering community interactions within public landscapes (Mattijssen et al. 2017). While both terms are important, they carry different connotations, with place-keeping defining the act of maintaining Indigenous cultural landscapes, and placemaking referring to the act of creating place for all people. These are dual and active processes that work to enhance community spaces through inclusion, and both serve an important purpose. Therefore, in this report, we utilise both words in conjunction with one another (placekeeping/placemaking) to signify the need to keep place for Indigenous sovereignty while understanding the need to make an active effort to reclaim and make space for all cultural groups.

When analysing the connection between culture and commemoration, understanding and recognising both placekeeping and placemaking is important. Within Canada's cultural landscape, memory and place are each informed and contextualized by our country's colonial past. Therefore, it is crucial within intercultural centres that commemoration of Indigenous histories remains a central tenet alongside reconciliation efforts. These core tenets should be pursued intentionally and meaningfully, rather than being viewed as singular aspects of a region's commemorative landscape.

Pentland (2021) draws attention to the importance of centering Indigenous ways of knowing in Canada's commemorative landscape by emphasizing the historical tendency to exclude Indigenous stories from Canadian memorials so that settler narratives can be promoted instead. As museology and heritage practices shift to include more perspectives, Indigenous scholars and curators have been working to re-frame existing narratives to include Indigenous stories, demonstrating the integration of both placemaking and placekeeping (Parker 2023). Further, to successfully recognise placekeeping/placemaking, a shift for actors within the cultural landscape

is required; they must adapt to a role of facilitation rather than expertise to allow rightful voices to inform commemorative practices (Onciul 2018).

The act of placekeeping/placemaking is not only to be undertaken by institutions. As urban Indigenous populations in Canada increase (See Chapter 2: Culture and Commemoration in Context), and interact with other communities within diverse cities, the acts of placekeeping/placemaking must be taken up by communities within their own practices to acknowledge reconciliation (Stranger Ross and Marks 2022). However, it is important to conceptualize non-Indigenous communities in their varied cultural contexts rather than categorizing all of them within reconciliation as settlers (Nejad et al., 2021). Urban centres present an opportunity to understand reconciliation through varied perspectives, not just solely settler or Indigenous ways, which will enhance the impact of placemaking/placekeeping processes (Nejad et al., 2021).

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is an international declaration and framework for reconciliatory practices (Bell and Erickson 2022). In terms of commemoration centering of Indigenous voices, UNDRIP outlines articles (See Appendix B – UNDRIP Articles) which call for cultural acceptance and recognition of Indigenous cultural heritage (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007). This includes Article 11, the right for Indigenous people to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions, and Article 12, to teach their practices and traditions, customs and ceremonies, and have privacy in their religious and cultural sites. Article 13 outlines the right to transmit these practices to future generations and retain their own name for their communities, and Article 31 describes the right to develop their own cultural heritage and maintain it with agency and privacy.

The UNDRIP framework informs Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Committee's (TRC) Call's to Action (Bell and Erickson 2022). The TRC Calls to Action (2025) highlight 94 acts to aid in the healing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. In the context of commemorative acts for reconciliation, notable calls include 79, which calls for a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration to integrate a variety of Indigenous representation and contributions, and call 81, to develop strategies to commemorate residential school sites. Call 83 notably calls for a funding priority of Indigenous artists. Call 47 calls for each level of government to further examine concepts that "justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands" (Truth and Reconciliation Committee 2015).

History and Memory

At their core, CC is rooted in history and collective memory. Ebbrecht-Hartman (2021) examines how commemorative practices aim to both preserve the presence of the past while still allowing space for living memory. In a similar vein, Pentland (2021) highlights the dual nature of commemoration as it is anchored in both the past and present. Acknowledging this duality can

promote meaningful dialogue and add a layer of nuance to policy decisions. The relationship between past and present is an important element in understanding how academic literature has conceptualized the link between culture and commemoration. Neither past nor present, culture nor commemoration, exists outside of the temporal context. Additionally, cultural heritage and connection to place have a dialectic relationship informed by memory, emotional bonding, and physical commemorations that serve as reminders of place (Lei, Wei, and Xu 2025).

For commemoration to meaningfully reflect and celebrate culture, it must be grounded in historical context while also responding to contemporary values. This connection between history and commemoration creates tension. In recent years, there has been a movement towards inclusivity and reparations. This shift of public narrative has caused many people to have to grapple with the harmful histories that some commemorative landmarks represent and celebrate. Removal and reinterpretation of problematic figures or symbols has been a recent trend emerging from these tensions. The way events are commemorated directly influences both public memory and the emotional resonance of said events. This phenomenon is exacerbated in urban centres, which often house bigger community events and a wider array of diverse communities (Mitchell 2003). Thus, for commemoration to be genuinely inclusive and meaningful, it must acknowledge and incorporate diverse histories and experiences.

Ongoing negotiations between past and present are essential for the continued relevance of cultural heritage and commemorative expressions. Such practices must be informed by historical memory and lived experience. When practices are missing these three features, the resonance and justness of the practice risks becoming devoid of meaning. As Mitchell (2003) argues, commemorative practices have the power to shape both collective memory and the broader social narrative. In doing so, power is gained while the vision of the future becomes increasingly informed by the past that has been constructed in the context of the commemorative practice (Mitchell, 2003).

A nuanced understanding of history and memory is vital for fostering inclusive and respectful cultural practices. This is prominent when exploring concepts of placemaking/placekeeping, but also in the context of embracing broader social diversity. Acknowledging history and continuing practices of truth-telling can help build trust. When trust is established, the capacity for meaningful community engagement expands, therefore expanding the scope of commemorative expressions supported by a municipality that has been informed by their local cultural groups.

Shared Authority

As the previous section unpacked the importance of centering equity-deserving cultural groups by placekeeping and placemaking, the topic of shared authority is a natural segue in the discussion. With the context of history/memory and placekeeping/placemaking already being established, shared authority is central to culture and commemoration as it is entwined with many other topics relevant to CC. Mitchell (2003) remarks in their work how memory is

connected to power and how the process of remembering and forgetting is both produced and maintained through power. This is echoed by Pentland (2021), who argues that the current Canadian system needs to be decolonised and undergo a paradigm shift. By reevaluating the processes and promoting community-based authority, power can more easily be shared between groups, allowing those who are traditionally marginalised to regain their voice and promote their cultural heritage.

Heritage and commemoration must be viewed differently within the context of a globalised intercultural city. Perry, Ager, and Sitas (2020) highlight how, within urban contexts, cultural heritage possesses the capacity to transform existing power relations when considered an evolving living resource rather than an economic tool. While difficult, shared authority is highly necessary for culture and commemoration to flourish within any community. Municipal government plays an important role due to its proximity to local groups, which allows for more collaboration (Gunstone 2013). Without such cooperation, diversity cannot be celebrated as oppressive institutions remain the sole authority of promoting culture and commemoration.

Unfortunately, despite the benefits of shared authority, it is often a contentious topic as those who possess power are rarely willing to give it up. Governmental institutions have long since been criticized for. In Canada, this is most prominently seen in reconciliation efforts that require the recognition of Indigenous sovereignty. For example, many organizations rely on the goodwill of Indigenous community representatives to volunteer their time towards committees (Oncuil 2019). While this allows some representation of diverse perspectives, these committees are often unpaid positions. When governments allow Indigenous representatives to give their time to the betterment of the community but do not compensate their work fairly, authority is not truly being shared. In such instances, governments are still benefiting from the work of Indigenous people while the Indigenous representatives receive no compensation and may or may not see the change they advocate for occur. One means of mitigating this imbalance is to actively employ Indigenous people in decision-making spaces, rather than just consulting with them (Oncuil 2019; PIL Seminar)

Embracing Diverse Communities

Within increasingly globalized urban centres, cultural diversity is ever-present. As was explored in the previous three sections, diversity is ever present within the realm of culture and commemoration. Without recognizing and integrating diverse perspectives into the environments of intercultural urban centres, cultural heritage and commemoration efforts risk becoming one-dimensional. When this flattening of CC occurs, traditions and culture become less accessible and can slowly become obsolete in public spaces. Because remembering is a group activity, it impacts more than just an individual; remembering also has the capacity to shift the cultural and social perspective of the thing being remembered (Mitchell 2003).

As culture and commemoration are intricately related to collectivity, there is often tension regarding who and what is commemorated. Stranger-Ross and Marks (2022) define the concept of “memory wars” in which cultural groups fight for commemorative recognition through physical space, governmental funding, and public understanding within complex urban landscapes. Intercultural tensions can arise when authoritative groups take control of commemoration and control the dominating narratives, forcing groups to compete for the focus on their narrative (Crooke 2016; Chambers and Blood 2009). In the urban Canadian context, we see remnants of such control in commemorations that celebrate colonial figures and perpetuate narratives of conquest over the land and Indigenous peoples of the land.

Tensions can also arise through controversy, such as the evaluation and removal of current monuments, which confront how memorialization can be used to uphold dominating cultural perspectives (Stanley 2019). These controversies are heightened when little explanation is given by the deciding actors of the removal, which can put hate and anger onto marginalized cultural groups, rather than the deciding bodies of such acts (Shayegh et al. 2025). Interculturalism creates a complex nuance surrounding memorialization in public spaces, such as cities. It becomes difficult to honour and monumentalize every community’s ICH and TCH, as cultural histories and identities can clash with others.

While in certain instances, memory wars can inhibit understanding between cultural groups, the literature we consulted notes that there are also instances of intercultural processes enhancing cultural understanding. Giglito, Ciolfi, and Bosswick (2022) suggest that ICH can be utilized to diffuse intercultural tensions and that intangible elements of culture can educate and promote connection. Perry, Ager, and Sitas (2020) introduce the idea of “entanglement”, which examines festivals in urban centres where tangible and intangible cultural heritage properties become intertwined. Processes in which heritage and people can connect and interact blur cultural divisions, enhancing cultural exchanges (van der Hoeven 2019).

Place-attachment (the connection between people and place) encompasses a wider scope of intangible belonging. This sense of belonging can be fostered through time spent within one’s environment through activities such as recreation, interacting with green spaces, and sustained community interaction (Falcone et al. 2024). Cultural events are “the manifestation of place identity,” which contributes to place attachment and fosters sustained feelings of belonging (Kamani Fard and Paydar 2024, pg. 8). Municipalities that offer a breadth of spaces and activities for residents to engage with can help promote place attachment and enhance community wellness as a result.

The literature consulted demonstrates that when cultural diversity is handled correctly, it can be beneficial for the city environment. The promotion of diversity and inclusivity within a city’s memory landscape can work to disrupt dominant narratives within a society. In doing so, marginalized communities and voices can be amplified and included within the mainstream commemoration space, rather than relying on ad-hoc initiatives (Mitchell 2003). This process not

only reshapes history and memory through inclusive placemaking and placekeeping but also fosters shared authority in narrating the past. When municipal leaders allow collective memory to be co-produced by a wide range of voices that are embedded within the fabric of the urban city, the narrative told will be more holistic and representative of a wider range of perspectives and histories.

Trust

Trust is the final guiding theme that was identified by the PIL team and is foundational to effectively integrating all our guiding themes. Without trust, initiatives that urban institutions pursue in aim of promoting cultural heritage and commemoration practices may be rejected by community members. Marginalized groups may be hesitant or unwilling to engage with such initiatives if a foundation of trust has not been established and will lack confidence in the intentions of institutions. Transparency and accountability are key components of trust building and can play an important role in partnerships between institutions and cultural groups.

Ebbrecht Hartman (2021) emphasises that meaningful and culturally sensitive commemoration must be developed in collaboration with the communities being represented. Community involvement not only ensures authenticity but also fosters a sense of ownership. When groups feel that they have played an integral role in projects, that sense of involvement and ownership reinforces commemoration as an inclusive practice. Trust-building projects can be complex to navigate within intercultural cities. When a diverse array of groups exist within the cultural landscape of a city, collaboration and connection-building must be prioritized to ensure that relationships are maintained and each group feels valued.

Trust between communities and institutions can be built through community engagement, which is widely acknowledged as a core principle of cultural heritage initiatives (Chitty 2016; Parker 2023; Pentland 2021). Engagement must be thoughtful and well-constructed to ensure that community members feel empowered by the process. When this engagement is not well executed or is unstructured, community members may be left feeling frustrated and demoralized. Feelings of frustration can also emerge when community members do not see direct follow-through or action from their municipal leaders after engagement.

Heritage preservation and museology practices have shifted to assess the direct needs of a city through community consultation (Chitty 2016; Parker 2023). Community engagement and trust can contribute to success in city projects, but they are lengthy processes. Building trust requires time, and the timelines to build meaningful and strong relationships often do not align with the timelines of policies or institutional processes. Cities are often working on multiple projects and initiatives at once, further limiting the amount of time and resources they can funnel into trust-building capacity (Onciul 2018).

However, trust can be built by prioritizing community involvement to make substantial change. Providing structured engagement sessions that include follow-ups and detailed accounts of actionable changes made can help to build and maintain working relationships with communities. The following sections will outline two major frameworks, the 9-Dimensional Framework and the ADKAR Change Management Model, which were identified in the PIL seminar series. These frameworks can be used to guide the process of establishing trust between urban institutions (such as the City of Lethbridge) and the communities they serve. In the following sections, each framework will be assessed and examined for how it can be applied to make meaningful change.

9-Dimensional Framework (9DF)

This model, designed by Natarajan and Hassan (2024), details the complex nature of community engagement in city planning. By emphasizing the importance of structure for community stakeholders, Natarajan and Hassan offer a framework for how to provide community engagement that allows contributors to feel confident in their inputs and in the results of the project. This framework highlights empowerment, influence, and inclusion as key dimensions. These key dimensions are then considered in relation to process, learning, and context to create a table with nine dimensions. When following the 9DF, these nine dimensions are individually considered in relation to the specific community being engaged. This model suggests that community involvement must be for the benefit, not the burden, of local stakeholders, as emphasized through the promotion of empowerment and inclusion.

	Processes that provide...	Learning with communities...	Contextual factors such as...
Empowerment	Opportunities for connecting to development processes (including learning processes)	Having demonstrable legitimacy of voice within processes	Actor's capabilities (e.g.) for connection that link to relational and practical circumstances
Influence	Possibility of impact on collective decisions about development activities	Shaping understandings of (desired/likely) outcomes, and learning processes	Nature of the issues at stake (e.g.) entrenchment/novelty will determine levels of mutual understanding intensity of work needed for impact
Inclusion	Practicable means for involvement for all social groups, and (e.g. regional/interest-based) communities.	Opening up to diverse forms of knowledge and 'outlier' viewpoints.	Established relationships always matter (E.g.) affecting trust needed for involvement/co-production and are likely to require expansion/change.

Table 1. Core Concepts of Community Engagement (Natarajan and Hassan 2024).

Table 1 presents the 9DF framework and illustrates how the three key dimensions (empowerment, influence, and inclusion) can be examined through the intersecting dimensions of process, learning, and context. When applying the 9DF to a municipality, policymakers and administration should seek to find their own intersections (white boxes) that best fit the needs of the community and project. For the general example given within Table 1, empowerment focuses

on providing opportunities for communities to connect with the development process. Empowerment can help ensure that stakeholder voices hold legitimacy in the work and in recognizing that individuals' capabilities and circumstances play a role in their overall participation. Influence, in the Table 1 example, emphasises the creation of meaningful opportunities for community members to shape decisions themselves. It also contributes to collective learning about potential outcomes and relates to the process of adapting efforts based on the specific issue at hand. Inclusion centres on enabling participation across all groups by welcoming diverse perspectives and knowledge. Inclusion also seeks to address how existing relationships, and trust can influence stakeholder engagement. Altogether, the nine dimensions highlight that community involvement must be sensitive to individual contexts to be genuine. It also emphasises the importance of structural support during the process, and the effect that aiming to benefit stakeholders rather than burden them can have on the results.

ADKAR Change Management Model

Community engagement must not only be considered when creating future monuments or commemorative acts, but also when evaluating current commemorations. Change management is a process to guide stakeholders from “a current state to a desired state” (Galli 2018). Most literature that discusses the intersection of cultural heritage and changes management highlights a need to focus on enhancement and development (Brown 2023; Guttormsen and Skrede 2022; Sukwai et al., 2022). This does not consider how change management can be used to engage the greater community in the evaluation of current commemoration practices or structures. If municipalities aim to support reconciliation and reflect on harmful practices, they must establish processes that help guide the public through the transition.

Change management models are a great way to help build trust and manage changing cultural landscapes within a community. While there are many different models for change management, ADKAR presents a unique people-first mindset. ADKAR focuses on managing change adaptations for the people affected by a change, rather than for the change itself (Galli 2018). By accounting for how individuals experience change, the ADKAR model identifies what changes will occur. From there, the model assists in managing people through change by grounding the process in five primary goals.



Figure 1: ADKAR Change Management Model Visual Model

These goals are presented in *Figure 1*, and make up the ADKAR acronym: Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement. For the model to be successfully implemented, each of the five goals must be addressed. In short, the terms refer to awareness of the need to change,

desire to support and participate in the change, knowledge of how to change, ability to implement the change, and reinforcement to sustain the change (Hiatt 2006). By recognising all five aims of ADKAR within both policy development and the subsequent measuring of effectiveness, organisational change is more likely to meet the needs of the people in the process.

While this model is specifically designed to work within organizations, that does not disqualify it from being applied to a larger scale. Cities, and the City of Lethbridge specifically, function very similarly to corporations and large businesses. Viewing City administration and staff as “employers” and residents as “employees” can help to visualize the link for how ADKAR can be applied in these settings. City staff and admin can take responsibility for guiding change by assessing the need for change. Community engagement can then be utilized to gauge the desire to support or participate in change. From there, knowledge on how to change can be shared between parties, the ability to implement change can be assessed, and reinforcements to sustain change can be implemented.

Overall, the establishment of change management strategies like ADKAR and 9DF are helpful for establishing trust between community members and City staff. Both frameworks offer valuable perspectives on how to navigate future promotion and pursual of commemorative initiatives throughout the City of Lethbridge. One hinderance faced in urban settings is resistance from residents who struggle to comprehend or cope with large scale changes to their environment or worldview. Canada’s historical landscape requires a shift to meaningfully incorporate diverse traditions and heritage practices into the community. Managing change effectively and proactively can ensure that citizens feel heard and valued. This can promote feelings of trust between residents and their municipal leaders, as well as between members of different cultural groups. Ensuring that community members are properly informed of large changes can result in stronger intercultural relationships and lasting trust in policy makers.

The City of Lethbridge currently practices community engagement, especially within cultural planning. Engagement by the City is typically through forms such community discussions, idea labs, and public surveys. Although this array of engagement strategies can include elements of 9DF, the City of Lethbridge (CoL) can inspire more consciousness and intentionality about community engagement by purposefully employing 9DF principles or by developing engagement strategies that consider the dimensions of process, learning, and context.

Change management processes are an important part of community engagement and cultural planning that have not been fully utilized by the CoL. The importance of cultural vibrancy has been outlined within City plans (See Chapter 4: Culture and Commemoration Within the City of Lethbridge), but more work could be done to outline these goals to the public. In Lethbridge, there are still perceptions and beliefs that Lethbridge does not value diversity or inclusion. The City has stated their vision, and we have provided information regarding the role that local governments play in protecting and enhancing cultural heritage sites in the city.

This role includes a clearer and more direct communication of intent and an active role in educating residents about their involvement with cultural expressions throughout the city. This communication and education may also include expressing why such involvement is necessary. Using change management strategies in these areas gives citizens an opportunity to understand and embrace the role of the CoL in CC. This education piece can be included through plaques explaining the reasons for commemoration, the codification of events and commemorative actions, and active communication and transparency of the government's role within our evolving and increasingly diverse city.

Throughout our research, we have noticed potential gaps in the literature pertaining to culture and commemoration. We would like to address these gaps and acknowledge any impact that they may have on our understanding of the topics at hand. The first gap noticed is the aspect of gender. The PIL authorship team would like to recognize that potential gaps in the literature pertaining to culture and commemoration that we have noticed through our research. These gaps being firstly, the aspect of gender. Morgan (2021) notes that there is a lack of literature examining how masculinity has come to shape public memory. Skolowska and Paryz (2023) also make mention of this gap in their work. Themes related to hegemonic masculinity are largely overlooked throughout our consulted literature, although they are highly present within feminist critiques of both social policy formulation and heritage management. While this study does not seek to fill this gap in the literature, it does work to consider the potential effects this gap may have on policy recommendations put forward at the end of the report.

A second gap in the literature is the multiple meanings of the term commemoration. As we have defined it through this chapter, commemoration signifies actions of remembrance. However, Rodgers, Petersen, and Sanderson (2016) suggest that commemoration can largely be interpreted in different ways, often to the benefit of dominant narratives. While in this document we have provided a foundation and definition for the term, throughout broader literature, there is a potential gap regarding how language shapes meanings, intentions, and actions associated with commemoration.

Chapter 2: Culture and Commemoration in Context

As we have detailed the role that commemorative practices play in enhancing the culture within a municipality, it is important to consider what this means for cities beyond just intrinsic value. As urban centres in Alberta reckon with changing demographics, such as influxes of urban Indigenous and immigrant populations, and increasingly mobile youth, CC policy remains an important avenue to foster both community understanding and Canada's "cultural mosaic" (Sokołowska-Paryż 2023). Commemoration can be used to embed newcomers into the cultural landscape and can be employed as a tool to retain human capital and youth populations within urban centres throughout Alberta.

While culture and commemoration can enhance place-attachment to match the realities of Alberta's demographics, cultural heritage can also strengthen municipalities' urban, economic, and infrastructural development if correctly integrated within wider City efforts. This integration provides opportunities for other actors (such as museums, cultural groups, or non-profit organizations) to contribute to municipal efforts. For these reasons, treating culture and commemoration as an asset which can enhance the well-being of a municipality is a crucial step in fostering vibrant and welcoming spaces. As Lethbridge is one of the larger urban centres of Alberta, these conversations are increasingly relevant.

Alberta's Changing Demographics and Place-Attachment

There is often disconnect between the perception and reality of Alberta's demographics. This dissonance is then reflected in the understanding of Albertan traditions and culture. Alberta's culture is often characterized through whiteness. The widely accepted history of the province evokes western and settler imagery, solidified through cultural signifiers such as the historic whisky trading posts or the Calgary Stampede (Schäfer 2020). However, in recent years, there has been shifting and increasingly diverse demographics. More Indigenous people and people of diverse immigrant backgrounds are residing in Alberta's urban centers, including Lethbridge. This diversity, however, is unfortunately not often recognized or reflected in the cultural landscapes of urban Alberta (Schäfer 2020).

In particular, the Indigenous population in Canada has been growing at a higher-than-average rate, around 10%, between 2016-2021 (Government of Alberta 2023). There is also an increase of First Nations people living off reserves, raising from 63.4% in 2016 to 70.9% in 2021, with the largest Indigenous populations living in the urban centers of Edmonton and Calgary (Government of Alberta 2023). Despite this population growth within urban centres, there is little recognition or commemoration of Indigenous populations within these commemorative landscapes. In part, this is due to the perception that Indigenous people only live on rural reserves (Trovato 2014). While this perception is both incorrect and outdated, little has been done to rectify this narrative through purposeful commemorative initiatives.

Alongside increasing urban Indigenous populations, there has been an influx of both international and interprovincial immigration in Alberta within the past 5 years (Government of Alberta 2025). The changing demographics of new immigrants, migrants, and non-permanent residents (NPRs) can create tension and complexity within our cultural landscape, particularly as it clashes with what is understood as “traditional” Alberta (Schäfer 2020; Shayegh et al. 2025).

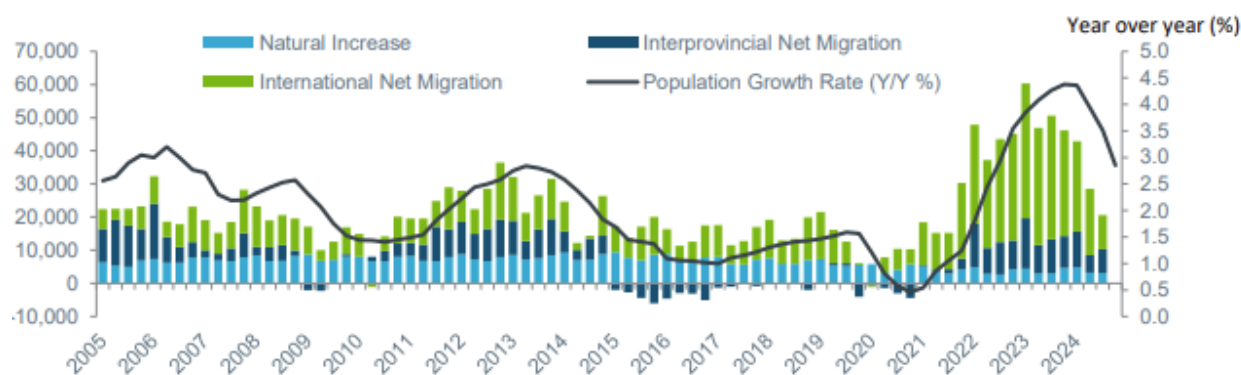


Figure 2. Alberta's Net Migration by Type (Government of Alberta 2025)

As Indigenous and immigrant populations move into urban centers, we also see increased movement of youth in Alberta. This is particularly true in the case of urban youth wishing to leave the province. When examining Albertan youth migration patterns, historically, youth would steadily come to Alberta (Canada West Foundation 2022). However, over the last 10 years, net migration has gone down for you individuals (Canada West Foundation 2022).

The Youth Mobility Report (2022) found that young adults (age 19-24) perceive Alberta to be lacking vibrancy and diversity, and that many young adults in Southern Alberta do not feel connected to their city or community (Canada West Foundation 2022). This is felt particularly within youth populations in urban Alberta, who express a desire to move to larger cities outside of Alberta. (Canada West Foundation, 2022). Alongside recommendations for more career opportunities geared towards youth, the Canada West Foundation recommends revitalizing community spaces, ensuring accessible transit options, and making safe and culturally inclusive spaces. Pursuing these areas could help in retaining Alberta's youth population by promoting opportunities for youth to feel connected to their communities and by enhancing cultural vibrancy and diversity.

Movement of Indigenous populations alongside immigrant and migrant movement throughout Alberta's urban centres has an influence on the cultural and social dynamics. The struggle for youth populations to feel a sense of belonging in their municipalities also contributes to these changing dynamics. Municipalities can play an active role in social integration, which can help residents to foster a sense of place-attachment. CC policy is a valuable avenue for retaining populations in communities and cementing understandings of inclusive and diverse local heritage expressions.

By focusing on these tenets, municipalities can recognize and represent Indigenous communities, migrants, and youth populations, all while also reaping the unique and diverse benefits that these communities bring (Sowa-Behtane 2023). Albertan municipalities have opportunities to connect with these specific populations through local cultural and commemorative initiatives. Doing so would require the pursuit of inclusive and accessible practices designed to allow intercultural heritage exchanges (Sowa-Behtane 2023). Such cultural and commemorative projects can help ensure feelings of cultural and physical safety for diverse populations, which can in turn play roles in both resident retention and overall wellbeing.

For new refugees and immigrants, physical and social features in communities that embrace multiculturalism and inspire connections between memory and place improve quality of life (Kamani Fard and Paydar 2024). Not only can features that foster these connections improve overall well-being, they can also promote understanding between community members, enhance social developments, and support economic development (Giglietto, Ciolfi, and Bosswick 2022). Canadian municipalities have a responsibility to assist in the process of social integration for incoming migrants (Sowa-Behtane 2023). Both physical commemorative landmarks and intangible events can help embed newcomers within the social framework of a community and ensure that they feel welcomed (Sowa-Behtane 2023).

Highly skilled young people can be encouraged to live long-term in a city if its built commemorative landscape and physical cultural heritage expressions increase its regional attractiveness (Backman and Nilsson 2018). These processes can help with population retention because cultural events and built place can foster a connection that ties citizens to their communities (Duxbury and Campbell 2011). Although the available research notes how important it is to develop the cultural economy as a method of retaining youth populations, there is little research on the intersections between place-attachment, cultural events, and the population of young adults (Duxbury and Campbell 2011). Examining these intersections could frame a more holistic scope for long-term population retention.

Sustainable, Infrastructural, and Economic Development

As it has been understood that Alberta's demographics are shifting while the province seeks to both welcome newcomers and retain its current population, it is logical to then expect that new development is needed to match these realities. Incorporating the cultural sector within broader City development provides opportunities for cities to both sustainably develop and strive to reach their goals of having more culturally developed hubs. Reaching these goals requires interdepartmental coordination to consider how culture is best integrated into development. It also includes understanding on how to best communicate the value that such a fusion holds. Blending culture into wider City efforts creates room for cross-sectoral collaboration for commemorative initiatives, which allows expertise to shine through and opportunities for shared authority to arise (Innocenti 2016).

When examining how culture can benefit the development of municipalities, the United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) studies the role that local governments play in utilizing cultural initiatives to incorporate the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals into their cities (2018). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an idealized framework to follow for urban development. The SDGs consider multiple facets of development and incorporate infrastructural, economic, institutional, environmental, and equitable considerations into development plans.

Although cultural development is not recognized as one of the 17 SDGs, it is recognized as being essential to the fulfillment of each goal (UNESCO 2017). Considering the multi-faceted nature of development and the role of culture in each form of development, makes the UN's SDGs a valuable framework to help guide city planning. Aligning planning and development with the SDGs allows the well-being of an impacted community to remain a central consideration for wider development plans. Community wellness plays a role in population retention and strengthens trust between communities and their municipal leaders.

Reports and frameworks, such as the UCLG examination of culture within municipal sustainable development, can help utilize the SDGs and contextually operationalize them for an urban scale. Becoming familiar with such guides can illuminate the intersections between culture and each SDG, which can then simplify how local governments proceed with working towards each goal. Further, recognizing the impact that cultural initiatives can have on both local and global sustainable development plays an important role in understanding the value of culture and commemoration. Understanding the relationship between culture, commemoration, and city development can help incorporate culturally vibrant projects into local-level sustainable development initiatives.

Culture and Commemoration Within the City of Lethbridge

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)	How is Culture Relevant?	What can cities do?
End poverty in all its forms everywhere.	Cultural service and expression must be accessible for everyone and can contribute to inclusive sustainable economic development.	Create minimum service standards for basic cultural services. Integrate cultural aspects and preservation of cultural resources into local economic and resilience strategies.
End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.	Traditional Knowledge related to existing natural resources should be recognized and maintained.	Integrate cultural factors into local environmental sustainability. Establish programmes to preserve and spread Traditional Knowledge.
Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.	Health policies need to be culturally relevant. Participation in cultural experiences can contribute to improved wellbeing.	Reference cultural factors in local well-being policies. Examine relationships between personal welfare, health, and active cultural practice. Establish health and social service programmes that specifically recognize cultural factors.
Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities.	Educational programming needs to have both cultural aspects and stakeholders within sustainable development.	Adapt a local strategy linking educational and cultural policy. Ensure primary and secondary education includes the acquisition of cultural skills and knowledge.
Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.	Gender equality and the important role of women and girls must be recognized within diverse streams of cultural life.	Work to eliminate gender discrimination and gender-based violence within cultural policy and activities. Ensure cultural programming supports gender equality.
Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.	Traditional Knowledge can guide sustainable water use systems. Traditional Knowledge can inform proper care and maintenance of water related ecosystems.	Recognize connections between cultural and economic sustainability. Explore cultural contexts to raise awareness of water scarcity. Use cultural lenses to combat water pollution and misuse.
Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.	Cultural factors underpin energy production and consumption patterns.	Explore the potential for creative processes to foster new approaches to energy production. Ask cultural organizations to evaluate environmental impact, listen to and implement their advice.
Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work.	Cultural sector can be an area for inclusive, sustainable, and fair employment (such as through integration within tourism strategies).	Explore potentials of cultural sectors to contribute to fair employment. Include cultural knowledge within employability programmes.

Culture and Commemoration Within the City of Lethbridge

Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.	Cultural infrastructures that provide affordable and equitable access are part of the foundation of sustainable industrialization.	Guarantee that there is a range of accessible cultural facilities and funding mechanisms for cultural projects. Analyze and promote understanding of relationships between cultural processes and social innovations.
Reduce inequality within and among countries.	Cultural participation contributes to the empowerment and inclusion of all.	Integrate cultural policy relating to cultural expression and intercultural dialogue. Ensure accessibility within cultural facilities.
Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.	Tangible and intangible cultural heritage both play important roles in sustainable local development.	Adopt policies that protect cultural heritage. Understand the role of sustainable local development.
Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.	Local, small-batch traditional products can be sustainably sourced and ethically produced.	Include history and culture in guidelines and initiatives. Facilitate and promote citizen initiatives for the sustainable use of public space. Promote local businesses and encourage sustainable businesses.
Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.	Link between cultural activities, Traditional Knowledge, and environmental-sustainable practices.	Recognize the intersections between cultural policy, culture, and environment within local government.
Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources.	Cultural traditions may relate to the sustainable preservation of marine ecosystems and waterways.	Consider both natural and cultural landscapes in aspects of development. Recognize and preserve cultural practices relating to marine resources. Integrate waterway preservation into development initiatives.
Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems.	There is a breadth of Traditional Knowledge relating to terrestrial ecosystems	Recognize the cultural impact of natural spaces. Integrate Traditional Knowledge of terrestrial ecosystem preservation and maintenance into development plans. Employ Traditional Knowledge Keepers in assessing land and guiding development plans.
Promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.	Recognition of stolen cultural assets and responsibility to return to relevant communities. Community engagement helps foster access to cultural information.	Place cultural rights at the centre of local policies. Consider the potential for culture in prevention and resolution strategies. Guarantee cultural institutions are transparent, accountable, and evaluate the public services they provide.
Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.	All levels of strategies need to include a cultural dimension. Cultural stakeholders need to be strengthened through capacity-building.	Support capacity-building programmes with the protection and promotion of cultural diversity. Contribute to an understanding of culture. Participate in the local implementation of the SDG's

Table 2. Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals: A Guide for Local Action (UCLG 2018)

Culture and commemoration play an important role in City development as they can garner global recognition for local cultural initiatives that work towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through this global recognition of the ability of local cultural initiatives to work towards broader sustainable developmental goals, we can see the importance that culture and commemoration play within City development. Fostering cultural vibrancy and a rich commemorative landscape is essential for both the wellbeing of residents and the expansion and development of a municipality. In order to incorporate these initiatives into wider City practice, cultural impact assessments can be conducted. This form of assessment works to incorporate heritage and community-strengthening within all projects, and to consider the role and impact they play in sustainable development (Partal and Dunphy 2016).

Culture can also be utilized as a method of promoting infrastructural, economic, and urban development (Commurian 2011; Goldberg-Miller 2018; Modwel 2016). This requires active participation from various sectors to ensure culture is prioritized through developmental processes and thoroughly incorporated throughout all stages of planning (Goldberg-Miller 2018). Infrastructural development should allow cultural heritage to be considered within building and zonal regulations (Duxbury, Hosagrahar, and Pascual 2016). Including culture and heritage in these considerations allows community dialogue to lead development, resulting in projects that both suits the needs of a community and represent the area's unique history (Duxbury, Hosagrahar, and Pascual 2016).

Within economic development, rich cultural vibrancy can be utilized for employment and revenue, through increased cultural programming and entrepreneurship capacity (Duxbury, Hosagrahar, and Pascual 2016). Literature surrounding economic benefits of cultural and commemoration in the past has recognized its capital through tourism ventures (Petronela 2016). However, viewing cultural heritage solely through the lens of tourism can erode and commodify true commemorative practice (Giglietto, Ciolfi, and Bosswick 2022), and it is important for municipalities to balance economic opportunities with meaningful representation. Therefore, cultural policy should be catered towards the people, not the elites of cultural sectors. If cultural impacts are considered and assessed through all City departments for the needs of a municipality, then the benefits of these consideration will come through its development and positively impact the people (Duxbury, Hosagrahar, and Pascual 2016).

Through a trend of institutional bodies exploring cultural heritage (including local, national, international and non-profit organizations), municipalities should consider collaborating with different actors when pursuing CC development or plans (Giglietto, Ciolfi, and Bosswick 2021). Recognizing culture's role in other forms of development can provide opportunities for cross-sectoral networking, including collaborations between libraries, museums and other cultural spaces (Innocenti 2016). Acknowledging that culture should be incorporated through development can allow other institutions to share expertise and help assess the best route to pursue, informed by different knowledgeable perspectives (Innocenti 2016).

These collaborations can create complexity if interests struggle to align. When collaborating and networking with larger bodies than are present at the local scale, interpretations and perspectives may differ. For example, if working with a larger organization such as UNESCO, international, local, and cultural community needs may conflict. Although collaboration with other actors can create an additional layer of nuance and navigation, such partnerships require an internal shared understanding to prioritize culture within a local context. When such an understanding is established, networks can help lay a foundation of common understandings that can be used to build a sustainable cultural landscape.

Chapter 3: Trust-STARS Framework

After comprehending the relationship between culture and commemoration and how they work in practice, the PIL team developed a framework. The framework is designed to guide the City of Lethbridge and other institutions on how to engage and proceed with cultural and commemorative initiatives. An example of a culture and commemoration policy informed by the Trust-STARS framework is provided in Appendix C – Draft Culture & Commemoration Policy.

This framework was designed to demonstrate the key tenets to consider when pursuing commemorative initiatives. Trust has been defined as the central component of the framework, as it is both integral to each of the surrounding themes and can be cultivated through the utilization of the framework itself. Each component serves an important role in creating a culturally vibrant, diverse and safe communities. Due to the importance trust and relationship-building play in meaningful commemorative practices, our key tenets both inform and reflect how to build and maintain trust with communities. When consulting the framework to implement cultural or commemorative initiatives, it is important to start in the center, with trust, as it is intended to be at the forefront of all projects.



Figure 3. Trust-STARS Framework Diagram

TRUST

Shared Authority

Truth Telling & Education

Accessibility & Cultural Safety

Reconciling through Placekeeping & Placemaking

Sustainable Development & Community Wellness

Figure 4: Trust-STARS Acronym

Trust

- Trust is the center of the star, as it is the primary theme of the framework. Trust includes building relationships with communities and citizens, creating a sense of safety and appreciation, and thoroughly communicating intention throughout the process. Trust takes time to build but is foundational for meaningful engagement. It is not a short-term commitment, as it requires time and effort to be maintained over time. It is important to center throughout all stages of a partnership, including development, collaboration, and creation.
- In the context of commemoration, trust is vital as historical context deeply impacts how relationships are formed between citizens and governmental bodies. Trust is necessary to represent communities with integrity, and for communities to understand intention. Navigating these concepts with trust and respect is integral to ensuring that community members feel appreciated, valued, and welcomed within City projects.
- When relationships are built on trust and mutual respect, there are fewer barriers to face when working with community members. Trust can increase the productivity of community-focused committees and impacts how they feel about the final outcomes of projects they worked on. It allows community members to feel motivated and assures that their City cares about their concerns and listens to their input. Within this framework, trust is central to each of the priorities and should be considered as an integrated aspect to each surrounding theme, rather than as a separate entity.

Shared Authority

- Shared authority refers to the intentional act of dismantling conventional power dynamics by sharing political authority more holistically between collaborating parties. With a more equitable dynamic, space can be created for marginalised voices to be uplifted and for diverse perspectives to be shared. In doing so, collaborators should feel more welcomed and valued in the project space. This equalization challenges western conventional norms of authoritative figures acting as final decision-makers who hold power over other collaborators.
- Intentionally and meaningfully sharing authority can work not only establish trust in relationships between governments and cultural groups but reinforce and strengthen trust that has already been built between parties as well.
- In the context of commemoration, shared authority can address commemorative landscapes that uphold or reinforce conventional power dynamics. These authorial dynamics can be upheld through the narratives told by a commemoration, whose histories are recognized and celebrated, or the people acknowledged. When authority is shared and given up by the conventional holder of power (dependent on cultural context but often includes governmental voices or those with dominating white, straight, or patriarchal perspectives) communities can begin to feel safe to trust municipal governments that they may previously been skeptical of. Sharing authority in this space can bring diverse stories, histories, and perspectives to commemorative landscapes. In doing so, the narratives shaped and upheld by commemorations can begin to shift to be more inclusive and more holistic.
- This tenet can be operationalized by offering paid positions, consultations, or community outreach opportunities for collaborating party members. This requires community members to be partners at the decision table who hold significance and sway. Another mode of operation could be inviting communities to collaborate, rather than them having to seek support positions for projects. It is important that shared authority is authentic and meaningful, as taking a dishonest or disingenuous approach can harm trust between collaborating parties rather than strengthen it. If the operation of this tenet is not approached or conducted with integrity, communities may end up feeling used. Ensuring that authority is shared in a way that is both beneficial and meaningful to collaborators is crucial to building and maintaining trust in these partnerships.

Truth Telling & Education

- Truth telling in the context of the Trust-STARS framework is the act of voicing aspects of history that may challenge the dominant narrative. This can include telling the uncomfortable truths of history, as well making/keeping place for marginalized groups who may not have historically been given the space to tell their own truths. Truth telling

and education go together as a joint process to share truths with the intention of educating wider audiences to strengthen cultural belonging and safety. As marginalized groups and voices have historically been silenced in many instances, it is important to help share their stories so that their histories can educate and inform our present and future. This tenet can help in both establishing and strengthening trust between communities and governments, as it communicates an effort to acknowledge past harm and take a stance of accountability in correcting dishonest narratives.

- In a commemoration context, this tenet will help to address the overrepresentation of attention given to figures associated with colonization, erasure of Indigenous culture, and the marginalization of diverse cultural groups. Challenging dominant narratives will help lead to an expansion of knowledge that creates and offers room for diverse stories and histories to be shared. These stories work together to tell a more holistic and complete story of land, time, and people throughout a commemorative landscape. In doing so, municipalities can play an important role in educating the public on uncomfortable truths, acting as a barrier to backlash as a means of protecting marginalized communities from any hate that may arise from attempts to shift dominant narratives.
- In practice, this can look like storytelling, hosting events to share knowledge, informative posters, and any other act of educating through a sharing of truth that has been historically omitted from the mainstream narrative. It is important that truth telling and education work to challenge dominant narratives of conquest, discovery, subordination, or any other narrative that upholds barriers to equality, rather than reinforce them. However, governments must take the time to promote relationships and engagement to understand their role in specific cultural contexts. The burden should not only be shouldered by marginalised groups to fight systemic oppression. The Trust-STARS framework suggests that these groups should be given adequate support from governmental institutions, like the City, to increase capacity and promotion for meaningful truth-telling. This requires a careful balance for governments to step back from being the voice of authority and instead focus on supporting marginalised communities to build trust in the process. Not only does this approach work to un-do power imbalances and harmful narratives but can also work to establish lasting relationships between various cultural groups.

Accessibility and Cultural Safety

- Accessibility refers to the ease of access for audiences attempting to interact with cultural events and commemorative initiatives. This includes the removal of physical, intellectual and emotional barriers wherever possible. Cultural safety is associated with accessibility, as it defines possible inequity within cultural context which can infringe upon a person's sense of security, safety or well-being based on their cultural identity. Trust can play an important role in improving this sense of cultural safety, improving these inequities and

allowing everyone to feel included, which will work to manage other facets of accessibility. When trust is established between a municipality and cultural groups, there is expectation of the municipality to protect said groups from harm when they are accessing public commemorative spaces. Together, accessibility and cultural safety acknowledge both the ease of access to a space or commemoration as well as the sense of emotional or physical safety associated with participation.

- Cultural safety must be considered not only within a final product of commemoration, but also within initial planning, internal processes of government, and when consulting community stakeholders. Accessibility is a crucial priority within culture and commemoration as it ensures everyone has equitable ability to access important community connectors. When cultural groups have trust in their municipal governments, the safety they feel in accessing cultural groups can be strengthened, increasing the emotional accessibility of the space.
- Cultural safety must also be addressed in terms of content. When implementing or reviewing cultural events and commemorations, those implementing the initiative must question how contents may perpetuate harmful narratives. Any narratives identified to be potentially harmful must be addressed by the enacting party to ensure the greatest level of accessibility and cultural safety possible for the entire population.
- In operation, this tenet can be applied by considering all forms of accessibility within commemorative initiatives. This could include considering physical accessibility through location, ease of access, disability access, and the removal of financial barriers.
- Other accessibility features such as language should also be considered. This includes not only accessibility in multiple languages but also the use of clean and simple language to ease understanding for a wider audience. When accessibility and cultural safety have clearly been considered by municipalities, it is communicated to audiences that they are cared for and thought of. This communication of intention can help to strengthen and establish trusting relationships between cultural groups and their municipal governments.

Reconciling Through Placekeeping & Placemaking

- Placekeeping refers to the act of caring for and maintaining space and place within society and safeguarding minorities from further erasure wherever possible. Placemaking builds on this by recognising the act of making space for marginalised communities where they have been historically excluded or their space has been forcibly taken. Both placekeeping and placemaking can assist processes of reconciliation and wider efforts of diversity, equity, and inclusion, if done collaboratively with Indigenous and marginalised communities.
- Keeping and making place for Indigenous people to exist and practice their cultural heritage within public city spaces can work to reconcile historical harms by encouraging

and promoting their right to share their culture, traditions, and customs within public spaces while resisting historical erasure. This framework recognises the importance of fostering a sense of cultural safety through placekeeping and placemaking to avoid further marginalization of Indigenous voices while working to create a trusting environment, safe for all aspects of Indigenous culture to be appreciated and commemorated openly. These processes can be used for all equity-deserving groups to make place for these groups to be connected and feel included within.

- This process of collaboration between municipalities and equity-deserving communities needs trust to flourish, and in turn partnerships can strengthen trusting relationships throughout the collaboration process. Active and sincere decisions to keep and make place can enhance feelings of cultural safety.
- Placekeeping and placemaking are important to consider in the context of commemoration, as they relate to the upkeep and maintenance of space for cultural use. These tenets connect deeply to the land and space that are utilized to perform culturally significant events, practices, or showcases. Consideration of land should be taken when looking to designate or keep space for a commemorative initiative, and these considerations should include the expansive history of land and people. Recognizing a diverse array of heritage associated with place can help build and strengthen the trust between all communities and municipal governments.
- This tenet can be operationalized through consultation and partnerships with Indigenous communities and representatives. Working alongside Indigenous collaborators as support to assist in realizing their visions helps to break down structures of authority, and aid in reconciliation. This can be done through community engagement sessions, asking representatives where assistance or support could best be utilized, integrating Indigenous perspectives into development plans, and through education initiatives designed to teach the wider public the importance of places that have been intentionally kept or made for cultural use.

Sustainable Development & Community Wellness

- Sustainable development within a cultural context can be equipped to enhance public spaces and improve community wellbeing. Community wellness refers to the happiness, healthiness, and general well-being of a community. Together, these facets of life can be supported and enhanced through development projects that seek to sustain the community and the natural world. By enhancing green spaces, public amenities, improving infrastructure for community vitality, and access to the natural environment, the well-being of a community will improve. When communities feel supported and cared for, the feeling of trust between community members and their municipalities can be strengthened which in turn enhances the retention of community members within the municipality.

- Within the context of commemoration, this priority can be implemented by developing spaces or infrastructure that pay mind to sustainability and well-being. This will provide necessary resources that people can access, encouraging a people-first mindset. This can focus development within the city on the needs of the public, prioritizing what will improve community vitality.
- In operation, this tenet can appear through integrating sustainable infrastructure and amenities into city planning. These structures and resources can be used to commemorate communities, people, or events and will in turn sustain the communities and environments they exist within. When drafting development plans, consideration should be made to assess how to improve the vitality of the space: where green spaces or gardens could go, what types of trees are planted, whether there is shade coverage or public drinking water available, and whether there are usable walkways with accessible lounge areas along them. Providing resources specifically intended to sustain the communities that access them not only promotes trust to form but also enhances the quality of life for communities who are accessing the resources and spaces.

Chapter 4: Culture and Commemoration Within the City of Lethbridge

As it currently stands, the City of Lethbridge does not have one set policy which details how the City operationalizes CC initiatives. However, there are several plans and policies that currently inform how the City navigates these topics and adjacent themes. The Civic Culture Plan (2024) and updated Heritage Management Plan (2023) are major influences on the cultural landscape of the City of Lethbridge today. The Civic Culture Plan (CCP) stands as the guiding plan for culture in Lethbridge and seeks to situate Lethbridge as an “intercultural hub.” The CCP communicates the City’s efforts to foster inclusiveness, celebrate diversity, and ensure that all residents feel welcomed and valued. The City’s newly updated Heritage Management Plan (2023) outlines the ways in which the City will identify, protect, and celebrate cultural heritage, as well as how the City can better represent and promote dialogue between the City and the Blackfoot and Metis communities in the region (HMP).

While no commemorative policy is currently informing development in Lethbridge, the City is interested in pursuing a cultural heritage policy in hopes of better operationalizing the visions of the CCP and HMP. This policy would outline processes, procedures and tools to navigate requests from communities to commemorate people, organizations, events, or other tangible and intangible elements that tell the stories of their communities. Examining each current plan that outlines current cultural planning in Lethbridge will allow us to better understand what gaps need to be filled with a cultural heritage policy.

Policy Overview

Our policy overview will examine each of the following City of Lethbridge plans: The Municipal Development Plan (2021), Civic Culture Plan (2024), Heritage Management Plan (2023), the Public Art Policy (2007), and Public Art Master Plan (2012). Each section will examine the role of the plan within the City and how it works within municipal practice, then evaluate the policy in terms of how it has been implemented and integrated within other cultural policies. By identifying possible gaps within these City policies, we will contextualize the City of Lethbridge’s understanding of cultural heritage and understand where a possible cultural heritage and commemoration policy would best fit.

Municipal Development Plan (2021)

The role of the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is to provide an overall structure and plan for the city in the timeframe of reaching a population of 150,000 residents. Although the scope of this plan encompasses City-wide planning it plays a key role in understanding City understanding of cultural heritage and commemorative practices. This plan sets the tone for all

future City cultural initiatives, making it a cornerstone plan for the CC development of Lethbridge. It envisions the future of Lethbridge as “culturally vibrant,” that provides a strong sense of place, community identity, and belonging.

This plan recognizes the importance of place-making for the community, as well as moving forward with reconciliatory practices. A key component of the plan is the desire expressed to integrate Traditional Knowledge into the city’s cultural landscape and to connect the city more deeply with Blackfoot culture. Regarding commemoration and monuments, the MDP discusses heritage and the importance of preserving historic places in Lethbridge, referring to the Heritage Management Plan.

In practice, the MDP sets out policy objectives for art, culture, and heritage celebrations. These are general guideposts and aspirations that will lead to cultural vibrancy, rather than concrete goals and plans. Specific to cultural heritage, the MDP stresses the importance of integrating “public art, cultural programming, and heritage interpretation as place-making tools in public spaces and the city’s urban fabric” (pg. 105). In summation, the MDP outlines City-wide development, all while connecting to the general themes of inclusivity, cultural saturation, and cultural celebration.

The Municipal Development Plan includes a section defining leading indicators which would reflect a culturally vibrant city. These indicators are predictors for future performance to assist the City in measuring what a culturally vibrant Lethbridge would look like. These goals can be used both to guide current projects on a similar path, and to create new CC initiatives that would seek to strengthen these goals. The leading indicators included within the MDP are applicable across different City plans and can be used to align initiatives and projects with a common vision:

Leading Indicators	Source	Interval
1. Number and Proportion of Ethnicities Among Lethbridge Residents	Statistics Canada	Federal Census Years
2. Number of City-Supported Cultural Events Held	City of Lethbridge Recreation and Culture	Annual
3. Total Participation Numbers for All City-Supported Cultural Events	City of Lethbridge Recreation and Culture	Annual
4. Reconciliation Week and Indigenous People’s Week Events Participation Numbers	City of Lethbridge Indigenous Relations Office	Annual
5. New Public Art Installations (Number and Value)	City of Lethbridge Recreation and Culture	Annual

Table 3. List of Leading Indicators in a Culturally Vibrant Leth bridge from the MDP. Source: (City of Lethbridge, 2021)

Evaluation of Policy

Even with the wide scope of the Municipal Development Plan, it provides a clear outline of the general goals the City seeks to focus on within cultural heritage. In recognizing the importance that culture plays in a City-wide developmental plan, the MDP shows the possibility for other initiatives to embrace culture within their planning. This plan inspires consciousness of the City's role in increasing cultural vibrancy to make Lethbridge a more inclusive and welcoming city.

However, through our focused lens on cultural heritage, there is room for increased opportunities to integrate commemoration as a tool to increase cultural vibrancy. The outcome section of the MDP lists the number of historic resource designation approvals and grants are measured as lagging indicators, metrics to measure past performance, as well as current satisfaction with libraries, recreational, and arts and culture facilities. Satisfaction with commemorative initiatives, including historic places, statues, and general feelings of representation within public spaces, is not recognized as leading or lagging indicators to measure cultural vibrancy. Given the importance of the MDP places in preserving historical places through the Heritage Management Plan, satisfaction with commemoration should be considered within the list of cultural vibrancy indicators. This would allow commemorative initiatives to be recognized as a key factor to enhance and maintain as measurements of cultural vibrancy.

Although the MDP may not recognize the specific role of commemoration as a measure for cultural vibrancy, it does recognize the crucial role the City plays in enhancing culture and community. This recognition within the plan allows the opportunity for a smaller-scale framework working under the MDP, HMP, and CCP that could further examine the complexity of commemoration to enhance the cultural goals laid out in the Municipal Development Plan.

Civic Culture Plan (2024)

The role of the Civic Culture Plan (CCP) is to operationalize the overarching aspirations of the MDP through actionable goals to meet the indicators a culturally vibrant city would have. It acknowledges the lack of cultural planning within other City efforts, and the importance of a Civic Culture Plan to create common definitions, values, and goals that will align the City on one culture-building path.

The CCP understands culture as “practicing culturally specific activities, connecting and building relationships with others, and defining [...] personal sense of self and place” (City of Lethbridge 2024). Taking a focus on both cultural and intercultural development, this plan looks at enhancing Lethbridge's evolving community dynamics to promote a City-wide civic identity built on inclusion and respect.

Culture and Commemoration Within the City of Lethbridge

The development of the Civic Culture plan included community engagement processes with Blackfoot leaders, cultural sector stakeholders, and community members (2022). During these outreach sessions, the community recognized three expectations for the plan. (1) to address the gaps in equity and experiences of racism that some residents have felt; (2) to build a more collective identity of Lethbridge; (3) achieve sustained support and recognition of culture as an integral element of City planning and city development.

Given the recency of this plan, it is difficult to assess implementation. Three phases are clearly outlined within the plan to establish the goal of enhancing Lethbridge as a vibrant intercultural hub.

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3
<i>Outcome: Establishment of an Inclusive Cultural Planning Framework</i>	<i>Outcome: Cultural Aspirations are Translated into Concrete Actions</i>	<i>The City is a Vibrant Intercultural Hub</i>
STRATEGIES	STRATEGIES	STRATEGIES
1.1 Establish a City Interdepartmental Working Group (IWG) 1.2 Establish an Ad-Hoc Intercultural Community Forum (ICF)	2.1 Broaden the Scope of the Interdepartmental Working Group (IWG) 2.2 Expand Community Engagement	3.1 Refine the Governance Model
1.3 Refine and Realign Existing Cultural and Intercultural Work Across the City	2.4 Elevate Public Spaces through Creative Activation	3.2 Maximize Cultural Planning and Development Service
1.4 Enhance the Public Realm through Placemaking and Placekeeping	2.5 Improve Accessibility to Culture	3.3 Prioritize Culture in New City and Private Development Initiatives 3.4. Develop a City-wide Placemaking Strategy
1.5 Prioritize Space for Culture in City Facilities and Parks	2.6 Implement Equitable Cultural Investment Framework	3.5. Enhance Cultural Economy Through Cross-Sector Collaboration
1.6 Review City Investments and Develop a Strategic Cultural Investment Framework 1.7 Boost Intercultural Initiatives with Micro-Grants	2.7 Integrate Indigenous and Diverse Cultural Decision-making Framework	3.6. Review and Refine the Investment Framework
1.8 Acknowledge and Integrate Diverse Traditional Knowledge	2.8 Enhance the Monitoring and Reporting Framework	3.7 Foster Inclusive Cultural Representation and Participation
1.9 Establish a Measurement and Reporting System		3.8. Institutionalize Excellence in Monitoring and Reporting

Table 4. Civic Culture Plan Framework. (City of Lethbridge 2024)

Culture and Commemoration Within the City of Lethbridge

Phase 1 focuses on establishing an overarching cultural planning framework. This phase is focused on internal work within the Recreation and Culture department to create a streamlined approach to cultural planning. Through the creation of community groups, the realignment of past cultural initiatives, and focus on the enhancement of public spaces, this phase intends to “foster a responsive and dynamic cultural ecosystem” (pg. 31).

In Phase 2, the plan focuses on using the re-aligned cultural framework to operationalize efforts. This includes improving accessibility to culture, expanding community engagement, and integrating culture within wider City efforts. They note the importance of cultural impact assessments to examine how projects are influenced by cultural contexts and to make sure plans and changes can help enhance multiple cultural perspectives (pg. 55). The second phase seeks to establish a cultural system adapted to community needs, which would be essential to Lethbridge’s growth.

Phase 3 of the CCP focuses on readjustment and refinement of the City’s cultural initiatives. This phase seeks to lay a clear internal framework to operationalize efforts to improve cultural access for the broader community. Doing so will allow cultural planning to be maximized and enhanced by other departments. This final stage of the CCP focuses on the adaptability and resilience of the plan through community changes.

Evaluation of Policy

The CCP provides a detailed description of how Lethbridge should implement and incorporate culture within the city that focuses on their initial engagement outlines. Although this plan is broad and aspirational, it envisions a future of the city that implements actionable goals to sustain support of culture throughout City efforts. The aspirational vision of the city presented in this plan also recognizes past wrongdoings to move forwards to embrace and celebrate diverse communities. The outline of the CCP itself focuses on, and is set to meet, community expectations.

The implementation of this plan, however, is reliant on the City Council, other departments, budgets, and time. Given the Civic Culture Plan’s goal to integrate and establish a cohesive planning framework, it is difficult to evaluate how it works in tandem with other policies. The nature of the CCP is heavily reliant on the implementation efforts of Phase 1. The plan, however, sets important goals to ensure that cultural initiatives in Lethbridge are collaborative and work towards the same goals.

Commemoration and cultural heritage arise as gaps within the interconnected framework of the Civic Culture Plan. This is noted through the goal of creating a cultural heritage plan within Phase 1.4 (Enhancing the Public Realm through Placemaking and Placekeeping). There is little discussion in this plan on how commemoration can intersect with cultural initiatives. This gap relates to the intersection of CC both as a point of inhibition or reminders of harmful history, and

as a tool to encourage or promote new understandings of community and intersectionality. While this gap is clearly recognized through the CCP and the City is interested in the implementation of a cultural heritage policy, the inclusion of commemoration in this civic plan could help inspire awareness about the benefits of incorporating Lethbridge's cultural heritage into cultural efforts throughout the city.

The CCP provides valuable information on what the City's goals are for culture and commemoration and how a commemoration framework could fit within this foundation. Within the context of the MDP and the CCP, there is a need for a plan that recognizes the importance of commemoration within wider cultural efforts. The Civic Culture Plan outlines both idealized goals for culture within Lethbridge and specified actions within phases, but commemoration stands as an important consideration for future endeavors.

Heritage Management Plan (2023)

The City of Lethbridge's Heritage Management Plan (HMP) emphasizes the importance of cultural identity in Lethbridge and Alberta. The plan recognizes the deep and diverse cultural heritage of the region and seeks to protect it for the future. This document details the archeological, paleontological, and Traditional Blackfoot Knowledge of the Lethbridge area, emphasizing the expansive history of the region and the rich history embedded within the land. The HMP outlines the ways in which the City will identify, protect, and celebrate cultural heritage while also laying out a framework for better representation and dialogue between the City, and Blackfoot and Metis communities.

The HMP outlines actions that the City of Lethbridge intends to take or inquire on. These actions include education and public awareness of diverse cultural heritage sites in the region, partnering with Blackfoot nations to develop guiding principles for the protection, promotion, and education on Blackfoot heritage and wider heritage sites, possible development of a heritage management plan specific to Blackfoot heritage, and, inquiring into having the Old Man River Valley designated as a National Historic Site. In practice, the HMP is intended to work alongside other City plans, policies, and City Council plans. The plan is designed to protect the Historic Places of Lethbridge/Sikóóhkotok and to promote an awareness of the community's rich heritage. Another key goal of this plan is to ensure that the stewardship of Lethbridge's heritage, past, present and future, is at the heart of the development of the city (Heritage Management Plan 2023, pg. 12).

Evaluation of Policy

The updated HMP is a well-articulated and thoughtfully considered document. It frames heritage as not only a culturally significant source of identity, but also as a potential economic driver for

the City of Lethbridge. Its core objectives are to develop a mechanism to protect heritage within Sikóóhkotok/Lethbridge and to develop said mechanism to conform to provincial standards. This policy is intended to be understood as a “living document” to be updated as follow-up work as the plan is integrated into wider city planning. The short-term goals of the plan are aimed towards public education and awareness, and center on partnering and collaborating with local institutions and communities to promote educational spaces for citizens to engage with to learn about heritage sites in the city.

Part of this educational process includes partnering with Indigenous collaborators. The goal of these partnerships would be to ensure that cultural heritage sites are being recognized, celebrated, and protected through intentional dialogue with Blackfoot and Metis community members. With such collaborations, goals for guiding the future approach to Blackfoot heritage sites in city planning have emerged. The Metis Nation of Alberta, Region 3 were also consulted, and the need for further collaboration and the development of a Metis TKUA plan were made clear. Prioritizing meaningful collaborations with Indigenous communities shows alignment with the City’s core value of Reconciliation.

The long-term goals center on integrating collaborative dialogue between the City and Indigenous communities. Through these conversations, the City will integrate different perspectives into future planning and development endeavors. Further, collaborations will assist in the possible pursuit of heritage site designations for different areas throughout the river valley and surrounding landscapes. In identifying, protecting, and celebrating heritage sites within the city, the City of Lethbridge is positioning itself as a proponent of intercultural dialogue. In doing so, they are setting a precedent for caring and collaborative relationships with cultural groups while pursuing knowledge about culturally significant heritage sites and resources.

In evaluation, the ideas and goals expressed in this plan align with the intended vision stated. The word choice of “protection” over “preservation” in the policy’s vision statement is valuable and suggests the City’s interest in assisting in the care and maintenance of culturally relevant heritage sites in the Lethbridge/Sikóóhkotok region. Protecting traditional land with cultural heritage value serves as an act of placekeeping by the City and shows an active attempt in reconciling past harms through meaningful stewardship alongside Indigenous communities of the area, further aligning with the core values of the city (Parks Master Plan 2024).

In stating the City’s interest in heritage that not only provides identity and awareness but can strengthen economic aspects, we can understand the possibilities of leaning into cultural heritage as a means of economic advancement alongside the growth and expansion of a culturally informed society. The pursuit of economic growth through cultural heritage strengthens the HMP’s alignment with the City’s core values.

The intent outlined in the HMP aligns with the visions of the Civic Culture Plan and Public Art Master Plan, with each document sharing themes of public space, culture, vibrancy, diversity, placekeeping, and a desire to integrate themes and ideas across multiple city projects. The HMP

also discusses an array of diverse cultural groups and provides context for their heritage within the Lethbridge area. This examination of cultural heritage in Lethbridge shows the breadth and diversity that is already here, and has been for decades, and in some cases, millennia. The plan includes mention of:

- The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints settlers who moved from Utah and helped to lay the foundations for irrigation in the Lethbridge area
- The different mining families who settled in the area and started to form the structure for how the city was planned out
- The history of Chinese Canadian Pacific Railway workers who settled in Lethbridge
- Blackfoot communities and their specific cultural relationship to this land since time immemorial, as well as the current implications of that history
- The Metis nation of Alberta, Lethbridge, and Area
- Euro-settlers to the region

In addressing the multicultural history of the region, we can see that the identification, celebration, and protection of cultural heritage in Lethbridge is not specific to one community or cultural group, but rather to a diverse array of peoples and histories. In celebrating and protecting the heritage that has already historically been present, Lethbridge can showcase present cultural vibrancy. Expanding the celebration and protection to newer heritage sources as well could help to saturate the already present cultural vibrancy even more and assist in ensuring an inclusive community where all feel welcomed and valued.

In the context of commemoration, the HMP lays out a clear overview of the diversity and depth of culturally significant spaces, landmarks, and locations throughout the city. Commemoration has the potential to be integrated into future planning and development to ensure that the rich history of Lethbridge is continually acknowledged and remembered. As themes of public space, cultural vibrancy, and diversity, placekeeping, and integration are already present among multiple City plans and policies, the possibility for integrating commemorative practices into development, planning, and infrastructure become evident.

City of Lethbridge Public Art Policy (2007)

The role of the Public Art Policy is to establish a framework to guide the acquisition of public art within the City of Lethbridge. The intended purposes of the policy include building a visually rich environment, helping to attract creative businesses and workers, providing free and accessible art opportunities, and encouraging the growth of a culturally informed public. The City's intended outcome for the policy is to see a distinct and vibrant artistic legacy for the citizens of Lethbridge (City of Lethbridge, Public Art Policy, 2007). In practice, the core responsibilities of the plan are carried out by the City Council, Community Services Department, and the Public Art Committee. This policy is in the process of being reviewed, within the Public

Art Master Plan update that will focus on representing all stories and identities within public art in Lethbridge (City of Lethbridge 2025).

Stakeholder	Responsibilities
City Council	• Management and allocation of funds for the public art collection. • Establishing the Public Art Committee. • Final approving body for acquisitions and deaccessioning.
Recreation and Culture Department	• Liaising with the Public Art Committee. • Establishing a maintenance program for the art collection. • Coordinating the installation of new works.
Public Art Committee	• Advising on public art and guidelines. • Aiding in the development of the public art master plan. • Playing a role in the acquisitions, communications, maintenance, and deaccession of public artworks in the collection.

Table 5. Public Art Policy Responsibilities

Evaluation of Policy

In evaluation, the City has realized multiple goals since the development of this policy in 2007. The success of the visually rich environment succeeding this policy can be seen through the public accessible categorization of public art throughout the city (Lethbridge Public Art n.d.). Indications of success in other goals of the policy include the frequency of local artisan markets within the city, the developments of new creative businesses, calls for artist opportunities frequently put forth by the City, and the frequency of vibrant and diverse artworks being added to the city's landscape since the creation of the policy. The frequency of artisan markets contributes to economic growth, whereas the installation of public artworks contributes to cultural vibrancy and quality urban design, aligning this policy with the core values of the City (2024 Parks Master Plan).

The development of the City of Lethbridge's Public Art Master Plan (2012) was a direct goal of the Public Art Policy. The development and implementation of the Public Art Master Plan has further clarified the vision of public art in the city. Implementation has also assisted in providing a more defined structure and framework for site and artist selection, collection management, funding and implementation improving communication and coordination (City of Lethbridge, Public Art Master Plan, 2012). Due to the cultural nature of public art, the Public Art Policy has also helped support the vision of the City's 2024 Civic Culture Plan, to see Lethbridge as an intercultural city that reflects its diversity (City of Lethbridge, Civic Culture Plan, 2024).

In relation to our research topic, one gap within these policies is commemoration. While both public art and civic cultural events may incorporate commemorative elements, the Public Art Policy does not distinctly lay out a framework for commemoration within the City of Lethbridge.

City of Lethbridge Public Art Master Plan (2012)

The role of the Public Art Master Plan is to establish a long-term vision for public art within the city. It is intended to assist in determining funding allocations, developing a collaborative administrative framework, fostering community partnerships, and selection processes for public art. The plan seeks to formalize a public arts program with the intention of mitigating and foreseeing potential obstacles, as well as integrate the City's current initiatives under a comprehensive framework to provide direction for the future advancement of public art within the City (Public Art Master Plan 2012).

In practice, the plan is very collaborative. Implementation of the policy and responsibilities which it lays out are shared between many groups and stakeholders. City Council, the Recreation and Culture Department, the Fine Arts Collection Committee, the City of Lethbridge Art Committee, and the Project Commissioning Committee each have a role to play in bringing the goals of the plan to life.

Evaluation of Plan

Since the approval and subsequent implementation of the policy in 2012, the breadth, vibrancy, and diversity of public art within Lethbridge has flourished. Although this plan does not specifically lay out a foundation for how the City intends to address or incorporate commemorations within the public art landscape of Lethbridge, it does suggest that commemorations should comply with the same standards and expectations of public art outlined in the Public Art Master Plan. Acknowledging the City's desire to see commemoration approached in the same manner as public art helps us to understand how the City understands the role and position of commemoration within our cultural landscape.

This plan is currently in the process of being updated, with recommendation from the Municipal Development Plan and the Civic Culture Plan (City of Lethbridge 2025). This plan will take placekeeping/making into further consideration, and work to enhance Lethbridge's artistic landscape through inclusive public art initiatives. The updated plan considers the importance of historical and cultural features of Lethbridge, which will add to public understanding of commemoration throughout the city.

Reconciliatory Policy within the City

The City of Lethbridge has developed several action plans aimed at promoting truth, reconciliation, and inclusion. However, a definitive policy that mandates the incorporation of these principles into City Planning, Council initiatives, or other sectors remains absent.

Currently, the MDP and CCP do recognize a need for reconciliation, placemaking and inclusion. However, significant gaps in policy remain regarding how these principles will be implemented in practice.

Significant plans and policies in the realm of truth and reconciliation include: The Indigenous Placemaking Strategy and Public Realm Audit, Traditional Land Use Assessment (TKUA), and Reconciliation Implementation Plan. Collectively, these documents provide a framework for the City to address policy gaps while fostering the promotion of Indigenous cultural heritage and commemorative practices. The following pages will outline the details of each action plan and highlight the need for City policy to define specific initiatives that address the issues and opportunities related to truth, reconciliation, and inclusion. Further, the plans highlight possible solutions and work to ensure that Indigenous people and voices are actively involved in conversations and developments.

Indigenous Placemaking Strategy & Public Realm Audit (2022)

Initially, the role of the Indigenous Placemaking Strategy and Public Realm Audit was to help advance planning efforts and identify opportunities to showcase Indigenous cultures, languages and histories in public spaces around the city. After the discovery of unmarked children's graves in Kamloops, Council amended the scope of the project to include an "audit" of public spaces and names. This audit sought to reform the consideration of these places and titles to include a lens of truth, reconciliation and inclusion. From this initial plan, the audit was intended to look at the City of Lethbridge for opportunities to rename, reframe, placemake, and placekeep.

The report presented 31 recommendations, which were assessed based on the level of impact and effort required. Some high priority recommendations include the creation of an Indigenous advisory committee, replacing the Lethbridge flag, and renaming areas with colonial names (Whoop-up Drive, Indian Battle Park, Galt Museum, Galt Gardens etc.). Other significant recommendations included prioritizing Blackfoot language and Bilingual signage, an Indigenous art installation at the airport, recognition of Indigenous veterans, and an Indigenous Awareness course. The goal of the course would be to educate members of the public on the rationale of renaming, reframing and placemaking initiatives. Overall, this plan highlights the needs for placemaking and meaningful engagement to be ongoing processes of sustained partnership with the City of Lethbridge, rather than one-time instances.

Evaluation of the Plan

In practice, this plan has yet to be meaningfully implemented. Some significant recommendations have been implemented, such as the installation of Indigenous art. However, some of the more large-scale recommendations have yet to be addressed. Most importantly, the establishment of an Indigenous Advisory Committee was considered a requirement for the succeeding recommendations to be implemented in a meaningful way. Without the establishment

of the Advisory Committee with Indigenous elders and community members, pursuit of any other recommendation risks a lack of proper direction and guidance.

Further, this plan does little to promote ongoing reconciliation within city planning and administrative duties. While the City has recognized a need for change and made a few limited actions, there are no policies in place to direct City Council or administrators to implement the principles and recommendations outlined in this plan. There are also no safeguards that ensure new developments, art installations, or projects undertaken by the City honor the recommendations given in this document.

The Indigenous Placemaking Strategy & Public Realm Audit does, however, serve an important role in the commemorative landscape of Indigenous heritage. It lays out clear examples of how the City of Lethbridge should pursue reconciling with Indigenous communities' by promoting their cultural heritage. The plan also provides direction for how Indigenous traditions and histories can be commemorated throughout the city.

This document reflects key themes seen in the Trust-STARS framework. Significant themes include shared authority, placekeeping/placemaking, and change management. Shared authority is recognized through the establishment of an Indigenous advisory committee. Without employing Indigenous leaders to inform non-Indigenous City staff on how to best commemorate and promote Indigenous culture, the City remains the central voice of authority. When partnerships are formed through shared authority the City can prioritize informing their practices with Indigenous knowledge and lived experiences that are shared with them. Doing so can allow a commemorative landscape that has been shaped by Indigenous perspectives to emerge, working to both keep and make places to remember Indigenous histories. Change management can play a crucial role in the implementation of other reconciliation actions taken by the City. This principal can include the pursuit of an Indigenous awareness course, which would help City staff understand the importance of incorporating recommended reconciliatory actions into both practice and policy. If the City wishes to increase cultural vibrancy in Lethbridge through reconciliation, as stated in the MDP and CCP, they must take the time to implement meaningful policy. Policy crafted with this specific intent would help ensure that Indigenous culture is respected and commemorated throughout the city.

Traditional Knowledge and Land Use Assessment (TKUA), (2017)

The Traditional Knowledge and Land Use Assessment (TKUA) plays a crucial role in providing historical context regarding the protection and responsible management of sites and resources that are significant to the Blackfoot and First Nation people of the region. It includes considerations of how to manage assets to promote Indigenous cultural heritage practices. The TKUA also includes information on how to enhance non-Indigenous public awareness of

Indigenous history and place The Blackfoot Confederacy team made several recommendations to the City of Lethbridge within this document based on their findings.

Recommendations included ideas such as establishing a committee of Blackfoot experts to advise on traditional resources and cultural matters within the city, creating interpretive signage, and recording areas of significance to the Blackfoot people. A key goal highlighted in this document was to establish an approach where the Niitsitapii (Blackfoot Nations) serve as primary consultants rather than merely informants for a report by non-Blackfoot experts. It is emphasized that shared authority in this capacity is foundational to reconciliation between the City of Lethbridge and Blackfoot communities.

Evaluation of Plan

The TKUA is a well-established document grounded in information gathered through public engagement initiatives. Despite putting forward several recommendations to the City of Lethbridge, very few initiatives have been implemented. There have been changes made, such as the Blackfoot confederacy flag flying at City Hall, and facilitation of Indigenous art throughout the city. However, most of the recommendations remain unaddressed or only partially incorporated into wider City efforts. As was noted in the Indigenous Placemaking Strategy, initiatives run the risk of being left stagnant if intentional and effective policies designed to emphasize and support Indigenous voices are not enacted.

This document is a prime example of the potential for the City of Lethbridge to promote Indigenous culture and commemoration. The document also clearly details the capacity for such endeavors to be directly guided by the involvement and knowledge of Blackfoot experts. The TKUA outlines specific actions that the City can take to further integrate and protect Blackfoot culture within municipal planning. The steps towards reconciliation through cultural recognition that have developed as a result of the TKUA could be significantly strengthened by the implementation of policies that prioritize the promotion and preservation of Indigenous culture. Implementing such policies would aid in uplifting marginalized voices independent of current colonial authority.

Reconciliation Implementation Plan (2017)

The Reconciliation Implementation Plan was put forward by the City of Lethbridge in 2017 in response to the TRC's Calls to Action. This plan demonstrates a vision of ongoing collaboration between the City of Lethbridge and Indigenous community serving organizations. They express in this document that the City of Lethbridge "values inclusion, equity and diversity in [the] community and is committed to becoming a community of reconciliation with our Indigenous populations" (pg. 8). Throughout, they establish that the main role of this plan is to promote reconciliation within the City of Lethbridge by highlighting TRC calls to action that can be addressed through direct municipal action or with broader community support. Overall, it seeks

to build stronger relationships, foster community healing and educate people on the Canadian residential schools and the resulting intergenerational impact on Indigenous communities.

Evaluation of Plan

In practice, the Reconciliation Implementation Plan has very little effect on City policy and practices. Despite each of the Calls to Action included in the plan having connections to actionable steps for the City, including initiatives the City could support, as well as information regarding who within the City could take the lead in pursuing change, these actions have not been pursued.

This plan plays an essential role in preserving and recognizing Canadian history. While the residential school system is often viewed solely as Indigenous history, it is important that all Canadians recognize it as shared history. An acknowledgment of shared history can result in shared responsibility to amend the harm caused. As Canadians, we must commit to remembering the harms and trauma caused by these institutions and actively work to heal and reconcile. Part of the process of reconciliation includes addressing the lasting trauma inflicted on Indigenous communities and working together to create a present and future which can work to embrace this shared history.

Evaluation of Indigenous Cultural Heritage Plans at the City of Lethbridge:

There is no doubt that the City of Lethbridge has made meaningful progress in placemaking, placekeeping, and reconciliation efforts. Each of the three previous plans identify the importance of recognizing and commemorating Indigenous cultural heritage. While each plan has had varying degrees of implementation, the progress made thus far also highlights the need for formal policy. Enacting formal policy to address specific issues regarding reconciliation and inclusion can help to clarify and codify the role of the City as they continue to incorporate these principles into planning and development.

Although reconciliation is outlined as a value within the MDP and CCP, this type of plan is often adopted in principle. This lack of formal adoption means that the City does not have a binding obligation to fulfil the visions of the plan. Therefore, formal policy would be most effective in maintaining, protecting and ensuring that historically marginalized Indigenous voices are heard and respected. Doing so would work to effectively codify the expectation of shared authority in future endeavors relating to partnerships with Indigenous representatives or communities.

The most prominent theme across all three plans was the need for shared authority. The implementation of policy which recognizes Indigenous sovereignty and leadership as equal to the City of Lethbridge would create capacity for Elders and leaders from Blackfoot Nations to advocate for the future of their cultural heritage practices as they best see fit. Without protecting these rights within policy, Indigenous voices have the potential to be erased and overlooked by

councilors and administration who may not consider the promotion and protection of Indigenous cultural heritage as a priority.

Key Takeaways

In the realms of both culture and commemoration, it becomes apparent that the City recognizes the roles they play in enhancing cultural heritage throughout the city and incorporating reconciliatory practices within plans and development. The City has made clear effort within these realms, and the work that has been accomplished as well as the work that is in progress both work to enhance the cultural vibrancy of the municipality. It is crucial, however, to consider how these efforts can be implemented and integrated most effectively. Plans like the recent Civic Culture Plan and Heritage Management Plan can be key players in enhancing cultural vibrancy and heritage efforts through policy implementation.

An integral aspect of cultural heritage is commemoration, which should be included within implementation plans. Keeping the elements of culture, heritage, and commemoration in mind during planning is vital, as they can each be used to enhance feelings of cultural safety and belonging. However, commemorative initiatives have not been utilized to their fullest capacity within the City of Lethbridge. Despite recognition of commemoration in recent cultural plans, it is still a gap within City policy. An accessible commemoration framework that recognizes the complexity and importance of commemoration would allow the efforts of the Civic Culture Plan and Heritage Management Plan to be implemented to their full potential. Such implementation would play an important role in amplifying the cultural saturation and vibrancy of the city, creating a rich cultural landscape for residents to enjoy.

Chapter 5: Evaluation of Current Commemorative Initiatives

To best evaluate how the City of Lethbridge could proceed with future cultural and commemorative plans, we deemed it necessary to first examine the City's current cultural landscape. This landscape includes physical landmarks, development initiatives, cultural events, and ongoing projects. To navigate such a broad range of components, any potential commemoration plan should consider both the creation of future cultural and heritage initiatives, as well as the evaluation of past and present landmarks and events.

As discussed in Chapter 2, it is crucial that citizens of a municipality feel satisfied with a diverse range of commemorations within their community. Such satisfaction can improve feelings of well-being amongst residents, attract newcomers to the area, and improve resident retention (Kamani Fard and Paydar 2024). Further, feelings of satisfaction within cultural and commemorative landscapes can strengthen citizen's feelings of trust, as it communicates governmental effort to create culturally safe, educational, and functional spaces to improve community wellbeing. Cultural and commemorative initiatives that improve wellbeing can take several forms. While many commemorations are intended to be permanent (trees, benches, statues, buildings), many commemorative practices are temporary or ephemeral. This makes it difficult to succinctly summarize all cultural and commemorative initiatives throughout the city. Despite the importance of ephemeral, intangible, or unofficial cultural expressions, they are not easy to describe or measure to the role and expectations of the City. We recognize this dissonance as a notable gap within our evaluation and seek instead to examine key cases that we have selected to exemplify cultural initiatives supported by the City. Through this examination, we intend to gain a deeper understanding of how culture and commemoration are perceived in Lethbridge.

Inventory of Heritage Landmarks

In 2023, Laberge and Wilson completed a City Scholars Project that focused on thematically analyzing the City of Lethbridge's current heritage inventory. This analysis was completed through a critical lens of equity, diversity, and inclusion (Laberge and Wilson 2023). Through this project, they conducted a full analysis of Lethbridge's heritage sites. They then compared the results through both demographic information (race, residency status, and non-English speakers) and common theming (community, political, economic, and cultural and spiritual development). Through this evaluation, the team discovered that a significant portion of the current heritage matrix of official designated sites in Lethbridge represented the history of settlement and economic development of the early 1900's.

When assessing the heritage sites recognized throughout Lethbridge, an emphasis on dominant narratives becomes evident. These dominant narratives work to uphold and favor white, patriarchal, and western values by offering a lack of representation for women, Indigenous people, ethnocultural communities, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people (Laberge and Wilson 2023). Such

a lack of representation works to further marginalize underrepresented groups by keeping them removed from mainstream narratives. This disconnect between Lethbridge's commemorative landscape and changing demographics reveals that there are large demographics of people who are underrepresented or absent from physical commemoration landmarks.

In this case, the removal of landmarks that uphold these dominant narratives is not necessarily the only path towards a more equitable commemorative landscape. Prioritizing the inclusion of diverse voices in future cultural and commemorative initiatives could help in better aligning the City of Lethbridge with the City's intended goal of a culturally vibrant municipality. This alignment would help to create a sense of cultural safety for marginalized groups, as well as promote interculturalism and belonging to enhance community wellness.

Revitalization and Cultural Events

Representation can extend much further than the realms of just conventional and official physical commemorative expressions. Other impactful initiatives include the City's ongoing downtown revitalization project, cultural events, and City sanctioned events and festivals. Events can contribute to increased cultural vibrancy and enhance feelings of belonging amongst diverse populations of residents. Practices such as these have been recognized by the City of Lethbridge through both the MDP and the CCP and are seen as essential in enhancing the exposure of cultural heritage in the city.

Many of these initiatives have been focused on enhancing the city's downtown core. By promoting community safety and supporting local businesses, the ongoing revitalization projects seek to encourage resident use of the downtown region to turn it into a hub for activity. The Heart of the City's Master Plan was created in 2008 and outlines a develop strategy to suit the growing needs of the community. This plan includes prioritizing pedestrian-oriented spaces, green landscapes, and creating an inclusive and culturally vibrant community. Enhancements like this can improve community well-being by improving public access to useable green spaces and encouraging walkability within the city. Part of the Heart of the City Master Plan included the Re-Imagine Downtown Activation Grant, which looks to financially support areas of the city that engage community members, utilize public space, showcase safety in the downtown core, and connect the downtown to the wider community. These initiatives provide a rich opportunity for integrated commemorations that share cultural expressions or add to the usability of the area.

Another plan designed to improve the downtown area is the Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan. This plan was intended to guide development from 2013 until 2023 and made recommendations for specific future projects designed to aid in the creation of a vibrant downtown space, focusing on enhancing the streetscape, securing public funding, and defining purpose for areas downtown. Each of these projects focus on the capacity for places to connect people. By bringing people together into the downtown space, intercultural exchanges and dialogues have a heightened chance of occurrence. Further, by hosting cultural and community

events in the downtown space (such as the pride parade, concerts, markets and cultural events), the revitalization efforts work to embed the public downtown core into the cultural landscape of the city.

The CoL is host to several cultural events that can inspire a sense of belonging and work to fulfil the outlines of the MDP and CCP. Although these events may not seem commemorative in nature, many long-standing events do incorporate commemorative elements in one capacity or another. Whoop Up Days, for example, is an annual summer event that dates to 1897 and has connections to Fort Whoop Up and the whisky trade (Therien 2022). These historic connections were responsible for the suffering of the Blackfoot people (Favrholdt 2020). Although the recreation of Fort Whoop up works to recognize this history through a re-framing to represent Indigenous perspectives (Fort-Whoop Up n.d), this narrative is left out of the carnival style festival of Whoop Up Days.

We must consider the present-day implications of history that is commemorated as it still impacts members of the community and their cultural safety. Inclusion, belonging, and overall well-being can all be impacted by the stories that community members see being celebrated throughout the city. While there may be other community or intercultural events that represent different demographics of Lethbridge, many of these events are not perceived as “City” events in the way that Whoop Up Days is (Clopot and McCullagh 2019). Although not all cultural events need to represent every demographic, it is worth recognizing that events which celebrate western culture and histories are often positioned as the “norm”; these events are also often more closely associated with the City itself, while ethnic monocultural events are often othered.

In summation, the City of Lethbridge has a rich cultural landscape. Physical landmarks, revitalization efforts and cultural events all enhance the vibrancy of this landscape. However, there are opportunities to widen the scope of these vibrancy efforts and embed both cultural heritage and commemoration into these initiatives. Doing so is one path towards a more holistic representation of the culture of the City of Lethbridge, which is diverse, growing, and worth being shared.

Chapter 6: Case Studies

Throughout the following chapter, we will break down seven individual case studies to illustrate the utility of the Trust-STARS framework, through both exemplifying how good cultural heritage initiatives exemplify our tenets, and how our tenets can be used to evaluate a diverse array of cases with different cultural contexts. This approach is intended to provide an analysis of how other municipalities have attempted to incorporate culture and commemoration into their cityscape while observing factors that the City can use to shape recommendations or learn from. By using the Trust-Stars framework, we strive to provide nuanced recommendations to allow the City of Lethbridge to integrate these tenets of culture and commemoration realistically and effectively into their greater policy objectives.

Each case study was selected based on five core criteria to ensure relevancy and applicability of findings: 1) relevance to the Lethbridge context; 2) engagement with culture and commemoration; 3) policy application with meaningful action or inaction; 4) public participation; and 5) overall success. Inclusion in the study required the case to fit a minimum of three criteria.

Our first criterion, relevance to Lethbridge's context, was essential to ensure that each study could inform potential policy in a meaningful and applicable way within the City of Lethbridge. Relevancy was determined both through demographics, such as population, economy, size, or similar political climate. Consideration was also given towards comparable challenges that impact the practices of culture and commemoration. Challenges of this sort could include navigating colonial histories and practices, racial tensions, or dominant traditional ideology.

Second, it was imperative that the case studies included had some connection to culture or commemoration. We sought to include a diverse range of cultural and commemorative projects to allow us to examine tangible, intangible, and entangled forms of cultural heritage. Through this approach, we could understand how different forms of heritage manifest in different contexts. Such diversity allowed us to gain a broader understanding of how initiatives can best be supported, funded, and recognized by both the City and the broader community.

Our third criterion, policy application, was intentionally crafted to be broad. This choice was to help mitigate the chance of bias being introduced into our final policy suggestions by allowing us to examine a wider scope of projects and initiatives than if we had based our case studies on a predetermined policy approach. Rather than focusing solely on formalized policy, we chose to focus on whether there was meaningful political action. A meaningful political action implying one of the following: a change has occurred, a valuable system remained, or policy was not enacted for a clearly defined purpose.

The fourth criteria chosen for this study was community engagement to best understand the roles of dialogue, change management, transparency and public participation in policy regarding culture and commemoration. At the conclusion of the PIL seminar series and our review of

literature, we determined it was highly necessary to incorporate community engagement into the fabric of culture and commemoration policy to accommodate the wants and needs of all citizens as well as to uplift marginalised voices. By examining how other municipalities incorporate community engagement into policy actions, we were able to observe how different strategies allowed for varies levels of successful implementation.

Finally, our fifth criterion was the outcome of the initiatives/policies. To provide nuanced and applicable recommendations to the City of Lethbridge, we felt it necessary to include examples of plans and policies with clear outcomes. We did not only consider success in our case studies, but also how municipalities structure their internal processes and analyze them for areas of improvement. The facilitation of initiatives relating to cultural heritage is a difficult task, and we deemed it important to understand how individual municipalities evaluate current practices, and the relationship between practices and their success. By understanding different approaches and definitions of successful implementation, this case study analysis provides a broad range of informed and applicable recommendations to the City of Lethbridge.

New Zealand: The Māori Language Act

The following case study explores how the implementation, use, and subsequent revision of the Māori Language Act played a pivotal role in supporting the Māori people of Aotearoa (Indigenous people of New Zealand) in promoting their cultural heritage. Through recognizing te Reo Māori as an official language, the Act allowed for a crucial shift in government protection towards Indigenous culture and ways of knowing. The Māori Language Act has served not only as a legislative tool for revitalizing te Reo Māori, but also a broader symbol of reconciliation. The Act has allowed for empowerment reassertion of Māori culture in education, governance, and everyday life. This case study seeks to illustrate how language policy, like that presented in the Māori Language Act, can be a powerful mechanism for cultural practice, and inclusion. We have included this case study to examine how the tenets of shared authority, placekeeping/making, truth-telling and education can be operationalized to foster cultural safety.

Historical Context

Before the colonization of Aotearoa, te Reo Māori was the primary language spoken across the land and was often viewed as a valuable tool by Pākehā (non-Māori) for facilitating trade communication (New Zealand Parliament 2022). However, following the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, and the intensification of colonial settlement, assimilation of Māori became a clear goal of Pākehā. This led to increased domination of English language and culture, while Māori culture became confined to smaller Indigenous communities (Ballara 2024).

During active colonization, schools were established rapidly with the goal of converting Māori to a European settler lifestyle and Christian faith (Parsonage 1956). In 1867, the Native Schools Act was introduced to formalize government efforts in regulating and coordinating the assimilation

of Māori through the education system (New Zealand Parliament 2022; Parsonage 1956). This act enforced English as the only acceptable language of instruction, often leading young Māori to be discouraged or punished for speaking their native language (New Zealand Parliament 2022; Ballara 2024). Further assimilation of the Māori people and their language was done through “pepper potting,” where Māori families were placed in Pākehā neighborhoods to continue the discouragement of using te Reo Māori at home, as well as its associated cultural practices (New Zealand Parliament 2022).

By the mid-20th century, concerns began to rise of the language dying out. This led to major initiatives launched by Māori communities to revive their culture and language (Ballara 2024). The implementation of the Māori Language Act in 1987, which declared te Reo Māori as the official language of New Zealand and granted access to its use in legal settings, was a major step from the government towards protecting the culture and language of the Māori people (New Zealand Government 1987). Although the act was not a perfect fix, it did provide some significant improvements. In the mid-1970s, it was estimated that less than 5% of Māori children under 15 were fluent in te Reo Māori, but a quarter century later, according to the 2001 census, around 25% of children could have a conversation in the language. This improvement demonstrated the success of the first version of the Māori Language Act (Benton 2015).

In 2016, the Māori Language Act was repealed and replaced with a new iteration. The new version of the act included a new independent body led by Māori, and a governance shift to allow Māori communities greater authority over the revitalization and implementation of the language. There were also significant considerations made for how to promote intergenerational transmission and integration of visual language indicators, such as bilingual signage (New Zealand Government 2016). By replacing the original Māori Language Act, the New Zealand government was able to adapt to the changing needs of the community and form a reconciliatory approach in conjunction with Māori tribes. This partnership led to the promotion of Māori culture and commemoration. Furthermore, allowing te Reo to thrive demonstrated the potential for the living language to grow and change with the Indigenous people of Aotearoa. Because of this growth and change, the language was able to be integrated into the wider community. Since strengthening and reviving their native language, Māori culture, both tangible and intangible, has been flourishing.

Relevance to Lethbridge:

The integration and revival of the Māori language, te Reo, is deeply relevant to Lethbridge’s journey towards reconciliation with the Blackfoot communities in the region. Historically, Blackfoot communities have faced many similar challenges to the Māori. Both Indigenous groups were forcefully assimilated for generations into English, European, and Christian societal standards through government-led schooling systems. Due to this history, they have both faced varying degrees of generational trauma, loss of culture and language, and a historical absence of

government-initiated commemorations honoring their cultural heritage. More recently, both Indigenous groups have been facing the challenge of balancing the revitalization of Indigenous language and culture with the dominance of both English language and the addition of diverse newcomer languages as well.

In addition to the direct colonial similarities of the Blackfoot and Māori communities, Lethbridge and New Zealand possess many demographic similarities as well. The median age in both regions is around 38 years old, and they both function on similar economic systems (Government of Canada 2022; Stats New Zealand 2022). Lastly, both areas possess large populations of immigrants who are also seeking to promote their individual practices of culture and commemoration (Government of Alberta 2014).

Although we have established many similarities between the two defined regions, it would be negligent to assume that the same legislation implemented in New Zealand would be functional if implemented in the context of Lethbridge. There are many differences between the two that would prevent equal success, including variations in municipal versus federal authority and jurisdiction. Therefore, this case study looks to emphasize how the approach and practices adopted by the New Zealand Government provide helpful pathways to reconciliation and the promotion of culture and commemoration that may be successful if implemented in a comparable manner within the City of Lethbridge.

The two most essential aspects of the Māori Language Act are the revisionary approach and shared authority. These two aspects can be applied within cultural and commemorative practice within the City of Lethbridge and are often accredited with the success of the 2016 version of the Māori Language Act. While both concepts have been addressed within City documents or agreements in Lethbridge – such as the Buffalo Treaty – they have yet to be fully implemented (International Buffalo Relations Institute, n.d.).

Policy Overview:

Māori Language Act 1987 (New Zealand Government 1987):

- Granted te Reo Māori status as an official language.
- Allowed for and protected the use of te Reo Māori in legal proceedings.
- Established the Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori commission to aid in recognition, promotion, and protection of the language. This commission functions independently of the Crown to help promote the “living language.”

Māori Language Act 2016 (New Zealand Government 2016):

- Designed to replace the original 1987 Māori Language Act.
- Te Mātāwai was established as an independent body to act on behalf of iwi and Māori to help facilitate the revitalisation of the language.

- Amends the Broadcasting Act of 1989 and Māori Television Service Act of 2003 to help strengthen recognition and revitalization of the Māori language by integrating it into broadcasting, making the language more accessible to a larger audience.

Implementation:

The implementation of the 1987 Language Act allowed iwi (Māori tribes) through government funding and policy to use their language freely within both governmental affairs and daily life. Notably, this policy put the Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori commission in place. Doing so allowed Māori language to be promoted and integrated into all aspects of New Zealand life. Overall, the implementation of the 1987 iteration of the Act was highly successful in allowing for greater recognition and early learning initiatives.

In 2016, the Act was revised and re-adopted. The choice to review and update the Māori Language Act reflects that Government of New Zealand's recognized that further action was necessary to continue saving the language and culture associated with te Reo. This led to revitalization efforts being divided collaboratively between New Zealand government and Indigenous tribes through Te Mātāwai, allowing for an increase in bottom-up public engagement and a splitting of authority and power (Ruckstuhl 2018).

While the 2016 revision led to many positive outcomes, several challenges persist. The most significant among these are difficulties in the: (1) shared partnership model (shared authority), (2) promotion the intergenerational transmission of the language, and (3) municipal engagement for aid in facilitating change management. While these challenges continue to pose significant obstacles to the revitalisation and commemoration of Māori culture, both the New Zealand government and iwi are actively working to address them. Although no comprehensive review has been released since 2016, the government has conducted evaluations in 2018 and 2022 to assess the progress of the 2016 plan's implementation so they can adapt further improvements (Stats New Zealand 2022).

Key takeaways:

The Māori Language Act serves as a valuable case study when looking to reconcile through cultural and commemorative policy. New Zealand and Canada share many similarities in their stories of colonization; seen in the Lethbridge region because of its location within Treaty 7 territory, proximity to residential school sites, and its reconciliatory relationship with the Niitsitapi people. Both the successes and hinderances of the Māori Language Act, as well as adjacent legislation, show that municipal involvement can play a powerful role when working towards promoting Indigenous culture and commemoration.

As it stands, this case study reflects all key tenets of our Trust-STARS framework: community-based authority, living memory, and an evolutionary mindset regarding cultural heritage and commemorative practices are at the heart of the relationship between the Māori people and Government of New Zealand. These principles are at the forefront of the ongoing revitalization efforts. Although many challenges are still faced by both the government and the Māori people as they navigate their ongoing relationship, success can be seen through the demonstration of shared partnership to collaborate with cultural groups. Such a collaborative effort allows for history to be shared from a marginalized perspective, allowing commemorations that develop and share culture to emerge (Pentland 2021).

Further, this case study demonstrates what can come from municipal level governments engaging with their communities rather than relying on provincial or federal intervention. Although major legislation for the Māori Language Act was passed at the federal level, municipal implementation and engagement was ultimately the largest factor of success. The third main challenge identified in this case study (municipal engagement to assist the facilitation of change management) highlights the obstacle Māori language revitalisation efforts face. This obstacle is effective, even support within and from communities. The rationale within the Language Act legislation largely implied that Māori need to be represented and involved at a local level because all branches of government have a duty to participate in the self-determination interest of Indigenous communities (Bargh 2016). Lack of clarity within the legislation has led to many groups who do not understand or do not agree with Treaty obligations being a barrier to successful local language efforts (Bargh 2016). This lack of clarity and agreement displays a need for change management strategies when promoting culture and commemoration at the local level.

Overall, this case study demonstrates the vitality of public engagement and participation when looking to enhance culture and commemoration policy. While the 1987 version of the act is widely regarded as successful, the updated 2016 version reflects a clear commitment by the government to address ongoing challenges directly. Despite no perfect solution, this case provides an example of meaningful change occurring because of policy. This case also exemplifies that revisiting and revising plans to best adapt to the changing needs of a community is crucial, despite the time and effort that it may require.

City of Victoria: City-Wide Commemoration Initiatives

The City of Victoria provides an exemplary case study of how commemorative initiatives can intersect with both reconciliatory practices and economic development when cultural opportunities and community input are valued. This will be explored through an examination of the City of Victoria's removal of settler symbology and their initiative to re-develop Government Street. In this exploration of their cultural policies, direction, and goals, we see how Lethbridge

could incorporate commemoration into broader city efforts and recognize the value these practices can bring through a reconciliatory and economic lens.

Relevance to Lethbridge

Lethbridge and Victoria have comparable population sizes. As of the 2021 census, Victoria had a population of 91,867, while Lethbridge had a population of 98,406. They also share similar age demographics with large elderly populations (Statistics Canada 2021), and both service a larger network of surrounding communities. Given these similar populations, we can see how smaller cities grapple with complex cultural topics, such as sensitivity in respect to colonial symbology and the importance of meaningful reconciliatory action according to the TRC Calls to Action. We can also look towards Victoria's cultural planning to see how a smaller city implemented cultural visions.

Plan Overview

The City of Victoria's Official Community Plan (OCP), comparable to Lethbridge's MDP, recognizes overarching goals of elevating their downtown, increasing community-well-being, embracing place-making, and prioritizing collaboration with Indigenous partners (2012). They define culture through "practices and values, heritage and place, the arts, diversity and social history" (pg. 11).

Victoria's Arts and Culture Master Plan sets aspirations from the OCP into more detailed and actionable goals (City of Victoria, 2018). The plan defines cultural planning as examining and understanding a community's cultural identity and addressing development needs. The plan outlines important connections between the culture, people, and geography of Victoria. To protect, maintain, and celebrate the character of the city, the OCP defines strategic priorities for actionable policies: (1) to connect people and space, (2) to build cultural leadership, (3) to tell Victoria's story, and (4) to become future ready (City of Victoria 2018).

In regard to commemoration, the City of Victoria does not have a set policy regarding memorial or commemorative actions. This gap is recognised within the 2018 Arts and Culture Master plan and is stated as a future goal. Their plan does not provide an explanation on why they deem this necessary, or how commemoration can be seen as a gap in their current cultural framework. As of 2025, they still have not developed their policy or set a plan to do so.

Although this plan does recognize the importance of reconciliation and uplifting Indigenous voices within planning, it does not consider how consequential acts of reconciliation can affect commemoration. The plan recognizes the ability of the arts and culture to keep and make inclusive places. However, it does not consider what might need to be evaluated or changed in the municipality's current cultural landscape to prioritize the safety and well-being of Indigenous community members.

Implementation

Reforming of Settler Symbology

In 2018, Victoria's City council decided to remove the John A. Macdonald statue that was situated outside their City Hall (Stanley 2019). This decision was made after consulting the Witness Reconciliation Committee, which included representatives from the Esquimalt and Songhees nations who noted that the prominence of the statute outside of City Hall, a place for reconciliation, made the representatives feel unsafe. The context of this monument is deeply rooted in Canada's colonial past, which still has real-world implications on the cultural safety of Indigenous people. This situation highlights how commemoration and monuments have an immense impact on reconciliation (Stanley 2019).

Prior to the removal of the statue, cultural and commemorative experts were not consulted on strategies to manage the removal of this statue, and the monument was quickly removed without explanation to the public. This decision was met with national outrage, with many frustrated about the removal of a prominent founding figure. Many saw the act as an erasure of history, or evidence of "political correctness" (Shayegh et al. 2025). No change management strategies were equipped, nor was time spent informing the public about this decision. Although the removal of the statue was an important reconciliatory act to increase the cultural safety for the Esquimalt and Songhees nations, many community members felt slighted and betrayed by the lack of discussion before the removal.

In response to the outrage over the removal of the statue, an educational plaque was placed outside of City Hall which explained the reasoning for the removal and provided sources for more information. Although this was a good strategy for education concerning historical monuments, there was a lack of discourse in informing the public before removal. Proactive education initiatives can lessen criticism and allow room for change management practices. This approach could have allowed for discussion between decision makers and the public, resulting in less feelings of erasure, and greater trust between all parties.

Since the City of Victoria lacks a set commemoration policy, their city council was unable to provide justification for the removal of the statute from a memorial and policy perspective, only from a reconciliatory stance. Many who expressed anger towards the statue were not against reconciliation directly and did not understand how this statute perpetuates the glorification of Canada's colonial past (Shayegh et al. 2025). Having a policy or guideline that recognizes this intersection, and the impact harmful commemoration can have on communities, can aid in the processes of change management and education for the broader community. However, the lack of detailed policy can bring benefits, as Victoria's City Council was able to act directly to the needs of the Reconciliation Committee without having to navigate a policy that may not account for the complexity surrounding historical statues. Through their dedication to reconciliation even through controversy, we can see that Victoria considers cultural safety an important tenet of inclusivity and the wellness of the community.

Re-Development of Government Street

Another example of how the City of Victoria is seeking to implement culture and commemoration in the city can be observed through the redevelopment of Government Street. As the OCP set the goal of creating a bustling downtown area, City Council proposed the re-development of the major historical street to become a “people-first” street that would promote infrastructure renewal and economic development to revitalize the downtown sector (City of Victoria 2022). This project was funded through the Canada Community Revitalization Fund (CCRF) through the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada which funds community projects that rejuvenate public spaces and create opportunities for Canadians (Pacific Economic Development Canada 2022).

Through their initial public engagement phase with the community, they began with three streams of engagement: Indigenous representatives, public and stakeholder engagement, and City advisory committees. These public engagement strategies led the way to the inclusion of cultural and commemorative practices within the re-development, even if it was not an initial goal when proposed by the City Council.

Further, consultations with the Songhees and Esquimalt nations, both in person and online, allowed for Indigenous placekeeping/placemaking to take place in the development process. This resulted in the recognition of past wrong doings while maintaining heritage buildings and demonstrating how Indigenous perspectives can be a vital component of redevelopment without erasing other components of Canadian history. (City of Victoria, 2022, pg. 13).

The success of the redevelopment of Government Street can be attributed to community engagement. In the initial stages of the project, survey data revealed a significant gap in perceived levels of safety of Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups. Therefore, in seeking to prioritize cultural safety of community members, the City Advisory committee cemented the importance of including multiple cultural perspectives within the space while also maintaining the historical character of the street.

Incorporating both the historical colonial character of the street alongside Indigenous and Chinese perspectives should be considered best practice for commemoration, as it connects multiple perspectives that all hold important meaning to the land. This development shows how interculturalism can be embedded within the character of the city. It also emphasizes that community engagement is crucial to consider when seeking to ensure that all communities who have a meaningful connection and history to a place are highlighted.

In the 2022 Concept Vision Report of the Government Street refresh, we can see that culture and reconciliation shine through as important tenets of the street development, even if commemoration was not a key influence on the direction of the re-development. This demonstrates the importance of community engagement with diverse groups during initial phases of development, as culture and commemoration should be embedded with infrastructural and economic development of a municipality, rather than an afterthought (Evans 2009). Through the

prioritization of safety and a people-first mindset, we can see that Victoria's re-development recognizes the role that commemoration can play, even if they do not have a set policy that dictates the functions and uses of commemoration within the city.

Key Takeaways

Victoria's case study exemplifies the key tenets of cultural safety, the importance of truth-telling and education for the community, the abilities of public engagement, how culture and commemoration consciousness can promote engagement within municipal development and enhance wellbeing. Culture and commemoration must be prioritized not just to improve the vibrancy of the municipality, but to make sure everyone feels welcome and safe, and to enhance economic, sustainable and infrastructural development. Victoria shows that if community engagement is prioritized and cultural and commemorative initiatives are valued, there may not be a need for one set commemoration policy. However, the addition of a framework or plan may allow for the municipality to continue this prioritization and allow for the municipality to consider how commemoration affects many City efforts, especially when evaluation of current symbology is being considered.

City of Calgary: Tomorrow's Chinatown

City of Calgary's *Tomorrow's Chinatown* exemplifies how inclusive engagement strategies should be a priority within cultural planning, as it allows unique community-specific assets to shine through. This focus on inclusiveness through multilingual engagement and signage strategies helped Calgarian communities to engage meaningfully and to build trusting relationships through cultural heritage. *Tomorrow's Chinatown* project was created for use by citizens, community groups, businesses, artists, and creators to allow for the sustainment of culture within the community. The developmental plans were created based on collaboration with the Chinatown community in response to their outspoken call for a revitalization of their space. Calgary's Chinatown has a long and complex history, with recent decades showing an increase in the erosion of its borders through gentrification and expropriation (Patterson, Kokaritis, Magnussen, and Yip, n.d.). This case study shows us how cultural heritage policy can aid the revitalization of cultural space.

Relevance to Lethbridge

As two of the major urban centers within Alberta, Calgary and Lethbridge share similar cultural contexts, including similar political climates. The demographics of each city are similar, with an average age of 38 years old, as well as a mix of Indigenous communities, a diverse array of Canadian born residents, and immigrant populations (Statistics Canada 2021).

Calgary, and the greater Alberta, have historically been a site of discrimination and racial tensions between white Canadians and Chinese immigrants. This animosity often materialised through destruction of Chinese owned businesses and cultural racism, fueled by the "Chinese

head Tax” (Chinatown Cultural Plan). Further, when the tax was repealed and replaced with the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1923, anti-Chinese sentiments only grew more popular (Chinatown Cultural Plan). This historical context is still present in the 21st century Chinese racism and has impacted how Chinese communities live in Albertan space today.

Policy Overview

Chinatown Cultural Plan

The *Chinatown Cultural Plan* (2022) is a City of Calgary initiative to create a vibrant Chinatown to live, work and do business for multiple generations. This plan was initiated by the City of Calgary and was developed alongside the Chinatown community through an extensive community engagement process that reached around 8,500 people by writing and sharing the plans in Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, and English (City of Calgary n.d.). The plan lays out a roadmap for capitalizing on Chinatown’s cultural strengths with the intent to sustain and improve the quality of life for its inhabitants, while also encouraging visitors and newcomers. This is framed not only an economic goal, but a way to strengthen the culture within Chinatown. This plan is community led and has been developed in response to members of Calgary's Chinatown community advocating for an evolution of the space that is anchored in culture and developed through a cultural lens. The Chinatown Cultural Plan offers strategic directions for advancing Chinatown’s cultural future, and provides a structure for setting priorities, forming partnerships, assigning roles, and securing resources. The policy is structured thematically, by the following themes:

- A) People, Voices & Experiences
- B) Culture, Creative & Learning
- C) Food, Merchants & Tourism
- D) Housing, Health & Social Purpose
- E) Places, Spaces & Natural Environment

Each theme has a strategic plan which outlines specific actions that are intended to support and amplify the community’s access to the theme, as well as promote and welcome access for non-Chinese members to advance economic growth and use of Chinatown. The Chinatown Cultural Plan also informs and complements Calgary’s newly developed 2024 Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) by introducing a cultural lens to the planning and development of public space improvements.

Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan

Calgary's Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) for Chinatown, as part of *Tomorrow's Chinatown*, seeks to retain the cultural identity of Chinatown and ensure the space remains a place for people to live, work, and run their businesses (City of Calgary 2024). The 2024 ARP addresses the unique cultural history and character of Chinatown, and seeks to provide consistency to community members, developers, and decision makers as *Tomorrow's Chinatown* project continues.

This policy has been heavily informed by community engagement sessions conducted with the intent to inform the Chinatown Cultural Plan, so the vision of the ARP is aligned with the wishes and vision of the Chinatown community. The ARP aligns to the same 5 overarching themes as the Chinatown Cultural Plan and recognizes the inherent value in the longstanding culture and character of Chinatown, which the plan seeks to navigate with care for the longevity of such. Both the Chinatown Cultural Plan and the Chinatown Area Redevelopment Plan employed community engagement in a way that maintains trust between the Chinatown community and the City of Calgary.

Implementation

Implementation of the *Tomorrow's Chinatown* project is ongoing, with an extended vision for the next 30 years. The implementation plan will be executed in conjunction with Calgary's Municipal Development Plan, Calgary Transportation Plan, and The City Centre Guidebook within the MDP Volume 2.

A monitoring schedule for the implementation of the plans has been set, with consideration taken to ensure that adherence to other policies remains. The project plans will be monitored and revisited at a minimum of every 10 years during implementation. As the project is still in its earliest stages, with final development plans still being finalized. Community engagement has been centered in the realization plans, and this case study provides valuable insight into the process of conducting thorough community centered engagement and realization, such as ensuring the language of plans is accessible to the targeted demographic and collaborating with local communities to ensure their needs are being met and their visions are helping guide projects. Proper and complete implementation will help to secure the trust being built between the community and the City.

Key takeaways

Tomorrow's Chinatown has succeeded in meaningfully engaging with community members to allow their own cultural perspectives to guide and shape the policy intended to revitalize Calgary's Chinatown. The plans suggest that culture and commemoration are integrated into the expansion of infrastructure to keep space for culturally relevant and enriching activities, allowing room for education and participation from the Chinatown community as well as community

members across the city from culturally diverse backgrounds. By promoting the expansion and investment of time, money, and energy into the cultural space of Chinatown, the City of Calgary is promoting intercultural dialogues and relations to occur within the city. The plan in its entirety is designed to promote the sustainable development of the area, keeping community wellness of the Chinese Canadian population in mind. The City of Calgary's *Tomorrow's Chinatown* project can be seen as best practice in integrating culture and commemoration into the expansion and revitalization of city spaces to both promote intercultural connection and defer narrative shaping authority to diverse cultural groups.

The use of Traditional and Simplified Chinese in the engagement plans is an example of a small yet meaningful reconciliatory act. This, as well as the inclusion of historical sensitivity for the Chinese Canadian community within the City's present-day plans, works to acknowledge past wrongs and work to repair the damage done to relationships as a result. These initiatives also act to disrupt conventional power imbalances while also working to mend the relationship between the City of Calgary and the Chinatown community. Chinese discrimination in Calgary and the historical treatment of Blackfoot and Indigenous people in the Lethbridge region share similarities, and Calgary's efforts to reconcile through space and language can offer valuable insight.

Meaningful community engagement helps to shape the realization and implementation of policy both by the development of trust as well as all other aspects of the Trust-STARS framework. Community engagement alone often does not meet all the needs of a community to successfully implement change. Therefore, change management strategies can also serve to educate and transition the wider community so that the project is met with excitement and interest, rather than discouragement and anger (Natarajan and Hassan, 2024).

This case study highlights the importance of promoting diverse cultures, and the effect that cultural integration and culturally meaningful commemorative practices can have on the overall cultural identity of a city. It also serves to highlight meaningful City policy, developed intentionally alongside the target community to build and maintain trust while promoting cultural initiatives the city. Since collective memory is shaped by the repetition of remembering events, helping to shift the perception of a marginalized cultural group can begin the process of reshaping collective attitudes towards that group as a means of reconciling past harms and making room for a new collective memory of acceptance and celebration (Mitchell, 2003). The intentional acts of both protecting and promoting Chinatown through the development of City policy helps to ensure the community can place-keep within their physical community as well as commemorate the history of that space.

Revitalizing Chinatown not only encourages cultural and economic growth within its borders but allows the community to strengthen its assets. The strengthening of culture and business within Chinatown both connects members of the Chinatown to the space and allows for intercultural

exchanges to occur when members from outside the Chinatown or Chinese community partake in cultural events within the space. Because of Calgary's complex history in navigating racialized prejudice towards the Chinese community, it is important that the Chinese community feels secure within Chinatown and that other Calgarians see the value that Chinese culture and heritage add to the city. The use of multiple languages in the sharing of these plans is a step towards fostering that sense of security, put forth by the City of Calgary to begin dismantling the power imbalances that come from community engagement with marginalized communities that is conducted in only the oppressor's language.

Calgary's Tomorrow's Chinatown project can be seen as best practice in navigating the creation of policy regarding culture and commemoration to allow room for the cultural community being impacted to self-represent and self-determine for themselves culturally relevant commemorative practices with support from the City, without crossing the line into seeing the City act as an authoritative figure in decision making.

City of Winnipeg: Welcoming Winnipeg Committee

The City of Winnipeg's "Welcoming Winnipeg: Reconciling our History" committee provides an example of the importance of satisfaction, structure, and active listening within community engagement. This case study will not only explore how City's must create representative committees to highlight Indigenous voices but must also be willing to put in the work to move past a tokenistic standpoint to enact meaningful change. This change begins with how the City treats community stakeholders who wish to enhance the culture of their community. Winnipeg's commemoration reconciliation committee displays how rushing the processes of reconciliation in efforts to be accommodating and make change quickly can create difficulty for volunteer-focused engagement and quickly burden or silence the voices that are meant to be uplifted.

Relevance to Lethbridge:

Although each province approaches reconciliatory efforts with different contexts and history, we can learn from other municipal efforts of implementing the TRC Calls to Action and alter our current approach to best benefit both the Indigenous and settler communities. . This case is relevant to Lethbridge as it exhibits the importance of meaningful and respectful community engagement with Indigenous partners within culture and commemoration that is considered with nuance and depth. As the City of Lethbridge begins to implement the Civic Culture Plan, and moves to consider commemoration as well as re-naming efforts, it is crucial to remember how thoughtless efforts can burden community members.

Policy Overview:

Winnipeg's municipal development plan, *OurWinnipegPlan*, was approved in 2022 and is intended to guide the city's future until 2045. In the context of culture and commemoration, the plan lays out the values of equitable service, access, participatory democracy, and responsive change management. The City also sets the goal of prioritizing reconciliation and Indigenous perspectives through all their programs and policies by specifying heritage management as an area of focus to implement reconciliation while prioritizing community engagement within these processes.

As of 2025, Winnipeg does not have an overarching Civic Culture Plan that breaks down aspirations from *OurWinnipeg2045*, although it falls under Manitoba's provincial Civic Culture Plan that outlines the overarching goals for the province, including a specific focus on reconciliation (Province of Manitoba 2019). This case study demonstrates how an overarching culture plan can help incorporate reconciliation and diversity within other efforts, such as city revitalization and planning, which is noted as a gap within the compartmentalization of Winnipeg's City initiatives (Nejad, Viswanathan and Walker 2021).

Although the *WelcomingWinnipeg2045* policy predates their new developmental plan, it continues to guide the commemorative work in Winnipeg as an umbrella policy for the journey towards reconciliation. Having been created following public engagement sessions, made to consider how to implement Indigenous priorities within municipalities (City of Winnipeg 2019), this policy focuses on how to implement renaming strategies and ensure a more welcoming Winnipeg. It also seeks to outline a blueprint for naming and renaming efforts. Most notably, a community committee tasked with overseeing renaming efforts.

The *Welcoming Winnipeg Committee* was created in January of 2020 to provide the community with a voice. To ensure meaningful engagement with Indigenous and marginalized communities, it was required that there be equal parts Indigenous and non-Indigenous members on the council, balanced with varying representative for gender, race, elders, academics, historians and members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community (Indigenous Relations Division 2020). The primary design goal of the committee was to present their recommendations to the Executive Policy Committee and the City Council after reviewing requests, hosting delegations, and advising Indigenous relations. These positions were not paid, and no budget was given for the creation or maintenance of the committee, including zero paid support positions to aid laypeople in their interpretations and suggestions (Loverin 2025).

Requests for re-naming efforts could be sent to the committee in a variety of ways: through surveys, in-person appearances, or phone calls. Further, feedback was also an essential element incorporated into the *Winnipeg Welcoming Committee* to adapt and understand the needs of the community. Thus, the plan established a system for community feedback through online comment channels, and digital submission portals (Chang 2024).

Implementation:

The implementation of the committee program and adjacent policies has been rocky. In early 2025, the Mayor's Office conducted a report on the work of the committee to analyze and strengthen the work being done. From this, they concluded that the workload of the committee was too ambitious without an allocated budget, and the lack of structure and streamlined approval process made the work difficult for the community members (Pursaga 2025). Unsurprisingly, these issues were felt within the committee and became a hinderance to the completion of their work.

The renaming committee was saddled with incomplete applications that were given to them to finish with zero-support staff from the Indigenous relations department (Pursaga 2025) The responsibilities went beyond what was outlined in the *Welcoming Winnipeg* policy, and beyond the expectations for a volunteer community organization. The report from the Mayor's office stated confusion over the make-up of this committee, as it did not clearly communicate how it aimed to incorporate Indigenous perspectives through re-naming that through the lack of clear interpretation, it "has placed Indigenous perspectives in competition with non-Indigenous naming opportunities (Loverin 2025) Moreover, the plan for this committee did not state that re-naming recommendations must implement Indigenous names, which caused confusion over the point of the project and flooded the committee with non-relevant requests. (Samson 2022)

Committee members also reported instances of racism and misogyny when presenting with City Council (Chang 2024). The Co-chair of the committee noted that "about 98 per cent of the feedback *Welcoming Winnipeg* [received] through its online portals [was] negative" (Chang 2024). Alongside critical hate comments from successful implementations of re-naming, community members felt demoralized and taken advantage of from the amount of work and the lack of support from City officials and the public.

After the report from the mayor's office, the decision was made to pause the *Welcoming Winnipeg* committee for 120 days until changes could be made to the policy that would lay out clearer goals, expectations and produce better outcomes that accurately represent Indigenous perspectives (Welcoming Winnipeg Policy Review 2025). As of August 2025, there still have not been updates to this council, nor have we seen progress on the changes that were set up to be implemented. It remains unclear whether a budget will be allocated to this project in the future including paid positions for community members sitting on the council.

Analysis:

When engaging with the community to represent Indigenous perspectives, it is crucial that specific processes are defined, and expectations are made clear. In an effort to be inclusive, the City of Winnipeg did not want to categorize or limit the requests made by citizens, instead placing the burden on the volunteer committee. Although the ability for the community to make easy applications for renaming strategy seems important and viable for community engagement

in commemorative initiatives, it is unequitable for a volunteer committee to be burdened with hundreds of applications, some of which are incomplete and irrelevant, without a clear goal or mission. Further having Indigenous representation on the committee is seen as overall successful and an example of good practice, however without paid positions or an allocated budget, there is little incentive for the City of Winnipeg to continue uplifting marginalised voices. This unfortunately leaves the committee vulnerable to hate comments from both the public and city councillors without compensation or help, going against the initial philosophy of a “Welcoming Winnipeg”.

From the mayor’s report and the decision to pause the committee, this case study demonstrated a recognition for improvement. Although change has been delayed and members of the committee faced mass amounts of adversity, this case must also be recognized for its attempt at reconciliation and their willingness to re-evaluate strategies. Overall, this study demonstrated that community committees, or any committee tasked with uplifting marginalized voices through culture and commemoration, must be given proper support (both financial, social, and temporal) to express concern and work to implement change.

Key takeaways:

Relating back to Natarajan’s and Hassan’s (2024) 9-Dimensional Framework for community engagement, we can see the importance of satisfaction and structure when engaging stakeholders. The members of Winnipeg’s volunteer committee were not given proper structure or support, which led to an overall lack of satisfaction with the project. City councils’ dismissal and discrimination at times heightened these feelings and led those eager to be involved with commemorative efforts to become frustrated. It is crucial to consider the context in which the reconciliation committee resides in, and how leaving members vulnerable to discrimination goes against their stated mission.

When observing this case study in relation to the Trust-STARS framework, we can discern how there were strong efforts made toward the concepts of shared authority and reconciling through place. The plan only began to fail when other tenets of the framework were ignored.

Accessibility and cultural safety were highly undervalued in the implementation of this project. Having no allocated budget and no manner of filtering out hate, left those on the committee vulnerable and unable to complete their tasks without a substantial amount of pushback. The same applies to truth telling and education, without systems for cultural safety in place, Indigenous elders and other members of marginalized groups could not effectively provide insight to the project. The culmination of these oversights led to the collapse of a sustainable development framework and sacrificed community wellness by attempting to reconcile without proper resources and time.

Although this case study does demonstrate many of the negative facets of neglecting the Trust-STARS framework, it does present a great example of adapting cultural and commemorative

policy. We can see from this case study that before the community is involved through the implementation of a committee, the process and purpose must be fully thought out and have adequate support in place, including the establishment of trust. Reconciliatory efforts are often regarded as ambitious, although, putting systems in place to ground efforts in actionable and manageable steps allows community members to feel empowered, and that the City is actively creating an environment conducive to success.

City of Vancouver

Case Overview:

This case will examine the City of Vancouver's emerging Commemoration Framework, created in collaboration with the Parks Board. While the framework is still in development, it is scheduled to be presented to the Parks Board and City Council in 2025 to help guide future initiatives (City of Vancouver 2025). This framework is intended to address the erasure of Indigenous history and the exclusion of equity-denied communities' histories in the commemorative landscape. It seeks to support cultural heritage practices that foster equity, belonging, and connection across all communities, addressing monuments, memorials, plaques; as well as naming and renaming initiatives. This case study will provide valuable insight into actions taken towards the development and implementation of a commemorative framework and can help guide the potential creation of a framework for the City of Lethbridge.

Relevance to Lethbridge:

While Lethbridge and Vancouver are relatively juxtaposed in their population sizes, political tendencies and demographics, they do both share a history of colonialism and erasure of Indigenous culture. Both cities have been actively acknowledging the need for reconciliatory processes and have been slowly adapting policies to be more inclusive and sensitive to Indigenous ways of knowing. While Lethbridge may lag slightly in this area, this case study found that the relative desire for both communities to reconcile with the past and create more culturally vibrant futures proved to be a viable link between the two cities and their plans. We have identified the City of Vancouver's emerging commemoration framework as best practice in addressing oppressive narratives shaped by a city's commemorative landscape; and that implementing a framework to reduce inequalities in order to uplift marginalized voices within that landscape has been successful.

Policy Overview:

The proposed framework intends to address the colonial commemorative landscape and the erasure, exclusion, and inaccuracies within it (Joint CoV/PB Commemoration Framework Report, 2022). It seeks to accomplish this by building transparency and fairness and enabling partnerships with Host Nations throughout Vancouver; in essence, building trust. In doing so, the

framework communicates the City's desire to embed redress, decolonization, reconciliation, equity, and accessibility within the commemorative landscape. This will clarify and align the Parks' and City's roles in supporting, curating, delegating, deferring, and non-interference within a cultural commemorative context.

More specifically, the Vancouver commemoration framework outlines principles of self-determination, reciprocity, integrity, equity, accessibility, learning/unlearning and artistic/cultural practices. These principles are then reflected in the four main priorities of the framework:

1. Make space for host nations to assert self-determined memory practices
2. Reckon with colonial history and narratives celebrating conquest
3. Center equity-denied communities' stories and memory practices
4. Foster belonging, multiplicity, and connection across communities

The four main priorities of the City of Vancouver commemoration framework outline a practice and method to implement cultural and commemorative initiatives by diversifying their target demographic while attempting to uplift equity denied and marginalized communities.

Moreover, we have identified the City of Vancouver's plans for a commemorative framework as best practice for incorporating Indigenous commemoration practices, self-determination, reconciliation, and learning/unlearning into a framework as it seeks to foster a relationship with the community based on trust and shared authority. Many aspects of this emerging framework demonstrate the themes highlighted during the PIL seminar series as well as reflect our proposed Trust-STARS framework. While implementation is still ongoing and the framework continues to be developed, the City of Lethbridge can look to Vancouver to guide our own plans and policies related to culture and commemoration.

Key takeaways:

While there are many paths that can lead towards a more diverse and inclusive landscape of commemoration and heritage practices within a city, one option as exemplified in this case study, is a framework. Frameworks can be developed through community engagement sessions, to ensure that community members feel they have a voice in the process. Employing these types of engagement sessions can also provide insight on perspectives that are unique to the community and ensure that the final product is going to be meaningful to the region it serves.

Another key takeaway we identified was how frameworks and policies can be initiated with the intention of disrupting the dominant narrative to purposefully make and keep place for voices that have historically been excluded. The City of Vancouver's proposed commemoration framework can offer valuable knowledge on how to move towards enacting policies that purposefully and meaningfully include equity-deserving groups within the commemoration landscape of a city, so that the social narrative being shaped is inclusive and diverse.

This case study reflects and uplifts the proposed trust-STARS model introduced in this report. While they are different in many ways, both frameworks seek to engage the community, allowing for some level of building trust and shared authority. Further than that, they seek to reconcile and develop the city in a sustainable manner allowing for ongoing elements of truth-telling and ensure accessibility for all people. In addition to our proposed framework, this case study demonstrates how policy can be used to potentially uplift and implement culture and commemoration within the fabric of City initiatives.

City of Kelowna

Relevance to Lethbridge:

We chose to include Kelowna, British Columbia because of the relative similarities in population size (251,756 for Kelowna in 2024 compared to 111,400 in Lethbridge that same year) as well as geographical similarities (Statistics Canada 2024). Both cities are relatively isolated from other major centers and serve as economic hubs for surrounding municipalities (Kelowna is 400km away from Vancouver, while Lethbridge is 211km from Calgary). Both Kelowna and Lethbridge also have comparable climates, being semi-arid zones (Tourism Kelowna 2025; University of Lethbridge 2012). One notable difference between the two locations is political leanings; Kelowna having voted for a Liberal government in the last federal election whereas Lethbridge voted Conservative. Despite these differences, the cities present a relevant comparison, and Kelowna can be examined to better understand where Lethbridge can utilize collaboration through culture and commemoration.

Case Overview:

Kelowna, B.C presents a unique case study for their innovative community engagement approach to revitalizing their city. Through these initiatives, they were ultimately able to expand their already robust wine industry and connect this production to their science sector, strengthening economic growth through industrial collaboration (Bradford, 2003). According to Bradford (2003), community-based innovation calls for upper-level governments to remain active and engaged in problem solving with interventions strategically formed to local places. This allows municipal government to gather stakeholders for meaningful partnerships, to partake in land use and development planning for inclusive urban spaces, and work with local authorities to secure upper-level policy support (Bradford, 2003).

Kelowna has an impressive winery industry, producing products with a wide reach as well as attracting tourism for the industry. Multiple actors, including partnerships between economic commissions, academic institutions, and scientific councils, collaborated to enhance Kelowna's wine industry. Out of these partnerships came improvements to the grape and wine industry, resulting in economic growth and notoriety within the industry (Bradford, 2003). These collaborations happened independent of governmental policy, however, there is still room for

municipal involvement to evolve and grow to support community-based innovations in meaningful ways. Community-based innovation is a social learning process for multiple actors. Civic society learns through mobilization and collaboration, administration learns how to best support and maintain relationships while also learning how to share decision making power; and policymakers learn to respond and adapt to diverse inputs and wisdom gained by engaging citizens and organizations (Bradford, 2003). Kelowna shows that there are many ways for community partnerships to form and advance economic and cultural sectors of a city.

Key Takeaways:

Partnerships between multiple sectors such as educational, economic, and cultural groups can assist in creating development plans that consider multiple perspectives. Further, partnerships between civic organizations and local governments can impact the people of a municipality, and consulting non-government organizations can be very impactful when planning (Canales Gonzales, 2025). Building these relationships requires strong working relationships, and having cross-sector partnerships can amplify the effect of the output while minimizing the potential harm done to communities in the development processes.

Within the Lethbridge context, this information can be used to begin to analyze and question where in city community-based innovations would be better supported or encouraged. It would also be relevant to consider if there is anywhere in our current development that could be improved through partnering with science or academic institutions. When examining where the City of Lethbridge currently stands, a connection could be drawn between the City, local Indigenous communities, and the science sector, through initiatives such as equipping environmental knowledge in conjunction with traditional knowledge to enhance sustainability within Indigenous communities (Cajete 2020). With development occurring in the City of Lethbridge also occurring on Blackfoot territory, it is important to recognize the impact to the land that can be caused and the environmental output and impact of projects. Employing effective partnerships when developing spaces and plans that impact the land can help to ensure that their diverse perspectives within the project are heard, and respected, mitigating potential harm to both citizens and the landscape.

In terms of culture and commemoration, the Kelowna case study exemplifies how municipalities might consider expanding their understanding of culture and commemoration to find partnerships and communities in new places. The cultural and commemorative landscapes of Lethbridge might benefit from a similar approach to community-based innovation, incorporating perspectives rooted in science or public health to bridge public perception and open a dialogue facilitating a more holistic view of culture and commemoration. In encouraging multi-sector collaborations, the potential for deep and nuanced projects to emerge expands. As the City of Lethbridge has stated their desire to create intercultural connections and a welcoming environment, we have identified the Kelowna case study as good practice in collaborative efforts to pursue projects that are beneficial to multiple sectors.

City of Toruń and Nicolaus Copernicus University

The following case study was selected as it provided a meaningful example of how sustainable development can be integrated within cultural and commemorative initiatives. While many of the tenets of the Trust-STARS framework focus on authority, history and specific communities, sustainable development is beneficial for municipalities by helping to foster community wellness. This case study will discuss sustainable initiatives throughout the city of Toruń by first examining Nicolaus Copernicus University's (NCU) sustainable efforts; and how those were subsequently implemented within the city itself. The key takeaways from this case study will be grounded in what Toruń and NCU offer in terms of possibilities for culture and commemoration through integrated sustainability.

Relevance to Lethbridge:

Toruń Poland's population currently sits around 200,000, and as the City of Lethbridge is preparing to reach a population size of 150,000, Toruń can serve as a noteworthy guide for sustainable development and growth (World Population Review, 2025; City of Lethbridge, 2021). Despite cultural differences, Toruń's initiatives regarding sustainable development can be regarded as best practice as they exemplify the maintenance of usable public spaces to improve quality of life. Their efforts have also helped attain a UNESCO World Heritage Site designation for Outstanding Universal Value, which is a title the City of Lethbridge has communicated their interest in pursuing (Heritage Management Plan 2023). These factors make Toruń and NCU potent cases to examine for how a City of Lethbridge's size can feasibly incorporate elements of sustainable practices into city development.

Case Overview:

As Toruń is a mid-sized city, like Lethbridge, they often lack the resources that a larger urban center would. Despite this gap, Toruń is committed to sustainable development, specifically focused on ecological education, eco-friendly activities, protection of the environment, and spatial planning (Kleczkowska, 2021). These efforts towards sustainable planning are reflected not only within the city, but through other local institutions and organizations as well. Nicolaus Copernicus University (NCU) in Toruń has spearheaded these initiatives by creating a sustainable university campus through an edible garden, wildlife conservation efforts and the promotion of water conservation.

To guide sustainable development within the city, Toruń municipal government is guided by three main documents: the Revitalization Plan, the Local Spatial Development Plan, and the World Heritage Site Management Plan (the last of which explicitly connects to the SDGs) (Eremenko and Kraski 2025). Toruń's World Heritage Site Management Plan (WHSMP) offers a detailed analysis of specific SDGs and creates a legal and contextual framework for their localized implementation (Eremenko and Kraski 2025). While the plans include multiple SDGs,

their primary focus being, goal 11: to “make cities and human settlements safe, stable, sustainable, and inclusive,” (Eremenko and Kraski 2025). Toruń has also emphasised in city plans that “climate, environmental protection, and social aspects” should be prioritised while implementing the SDGs (Eremenko and Kraski 2025, 7).

While the City’s overall initiatives are grounded in the protection and maintenance of their heritage site, there are still valuable lessons to be gleaned from their efforts. The inclusion of the SDGs directly into City plans communicates their commitment to these efforts; the City itself has also proposed establishing a plan to hold themselves accountable for implementation and pursuit of the SDGs (Eremenko and Kraski 2025). Sustainability efforts throughout Toruń are not isolated to the municipality, other institutions throughout the city have also chosen to align their development goals with the UN’s SDG’s. This combined effort has helped the city maximise efforts for the application of sustainable development.

As was previously noted NCU has been Toruń’s closest partner and collaborator while implementing sustainable development initiatives. As for NCU themselves, The Young European Research Universities Network (Yerun, 2024) covered NCU's implementation of environmental initiatives such as The Urban Laboratory, edible garden, wildlife conservation efforts, and sustainable water usage. Yerun (2024) reported that NCU is also working to make their campus more accessible for people with disabilities, in hope that their accessibility upgrades will carry over into the rest of the city. Their edible garden is intended to not only provide food for students, but to teach them valuable growing skills and integrate food sovereignty (the right to define your own food systems and produce healthy culturally appropriate food using ecologically sound and stable methods) within campus life.

Through these initiatives NCU is encouraging healthy relationships with the natural land of their campus; revitalizing their green spaces and constructing houses for insects, small mammals, and bats to stimulate holistic development and encourage active citizenship in the campus community (Yerun, 2024). Yerun (2024) also reported that NCU has decided to halt purchases of plastic water bottles and instead install water fountains throughout campus to encourage sustainable water consumption. As sustainable development is such a high priority for the institution, NCU works to develop an open and inclusive environment in which trust, mutual support, and community integration are key facets (NCU Strategy 2021-2026).

NCU’s integration of sustainable practices and their care taken towards keeping and maintaining useable public spaces to improve the quality of life of humans, animals, and insects makes them stand out as best practice in aligning development projects with the SDGs to maximize sustainability while still growing. As Lethbridge has identified placekeeping, diversity, and interculturalism as a developmental goal, considering the SDG's when planning future projects would allow for meaningful and inclusive development. Toruń and NCU offer a glimpse into what alignment with the 17 SDG’s could look like in practice and provides a basis for how to implement these goals to support the natural world, create accessible spaces, and implement projects that give back to the community.

Alignment with the SDGs can also assist in placekeeping efforts by ensuring that projects are planned and completed with respect to the natural world. Keeping the environment in mind during planning and developing can help to minimize harm so that the natural world remains both functional and safe. In caring for the land during development, biodiversity is protected and can even be amplified through intentional landscaping. As Lethbridge is situated on traditional Blackfoot territory, it is important to recognize the role land plays in everyday lives and how interculturalism and connection can be fostered through positive interactions with the land.

Key Takeaways:

The key takeaways offered by this case study begin with the integration of sustainable mindfulness into City plans. Toruń does this by including specific mention of the UN's SDGs in their municipal plans, so that development will align with sustainability goals as well as any other overall visions for their city's growth. The inclusion of these considerations in the planning stages can help to ensure that sustainability is at the forefront of decision-making during development processes. Including sustainability goals directly in City plans can also help to ensure accountability throughout planning, development and review.

Nicolaus Copernicus University offers a rich breadth of initiatives that can easily be integrated into larger development projects. Edible gardens can be included into green space development and provide both economic growth through maintenance jobs and community-wellness opportunities, by providing food to residents who access the spaces. Considering wildlife conservation elements during development processes can also help in reducing the harm to ecosystems during land development, while initiatives to reduce plastic waste by constructing free drinking water sources has a double positive effect. Not only would the inclusion of water fountains in public spaces help reduce the City's overall waste production, but it can enhance community wellness by ensuring that residents have safe, clean drinking water accessible to them within public spaces.

NCU's commitment to creating safe and accessible spaces for visitors with limited or impaired mobility can also help to enhance community wellbeing and feelings of safety. By ensuring that spaces are accessible to all residents, spaces become more welcoming and can be used by a wider community of people. The inclusion of a diverse range of sustainable initiatives can play a role in both keeping and making place. If the City of Lethbridge were to pursue similar initiatives, they could expand their capacity for City development to integrate Blackfoot Traditional Knowledge as well create opportunities for enhanced feelings of cultural safety within public spaces.

Looking at this case in relation to the Trust-STARS framework, the concepts of sustainable development, and accessibility and cultural safety stand out. As the University and the city of Toruń have been developing a system to promote sustainable development, they have been able to establish greater trust in the community and work toward the other facets present within the

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framework, the first of which is accessibility and cultural safety. This case also demonstrates possible links to reconciliation, demonstrating how Lethbridge could potentially follow Toruń's lead to promote greater culture and commemoration within the region.

Chapter 7: Discussion

Using the case studies and concepts highlighted in Chapter 1 and 2, this discussion intends to help guide the City of Lethbridge in considerations they may wish to pursue regarding culture and commemoration structured through the Trust-STARS framework established in Chapter 3. Through the principles of Trust, Shared Authority, Truth-Telling and Education, Accessibility and Cultural Safety, reconciling through Placekeeping and Placemaking, and Sustainable Development and Community Wellness, this chapter seeks to ground the practical application of knowledge from the report into actionable recommendations and questions for consideration.

Trust

Trust is a fundamental component to successful relationships between governmental entities and community members. Such relationships have inherent power dynamics, and trust between parties can serve as a valuable tool for both communities and governing bodies. Establishing and maintaining trust are both equally important, and each may come with a unique set of challenges that vary depending on the nature of each relationship and cultural context.

Time is an important element of trust, as both building and maintaining trust can be lengthy processes. For example, the City of Calgary's Tomorrow's Chinatown initiative has been almost a decade in the making as it was first inspired by the 2016 *Cultural Plan for Calgary*. In the past 9 years, the City of Calgary has worked closely with members of the Chinatown community to develop the plan. Through community engagement sessions, active support, and efforts to include the community in decision-making processes, a trusting relationship between the City and the community has been maintained. This case study highlights that time, effort, and a willingness to support communities in their self-determination can have positive impacts for all. These benefits are also often felt within the economy, community well being, accessibility and cultural safety.

Another case which exemplifies trust in action is the City of Vancouver's commemoration framework. The City of Vancouver is on unceded land and has a long and diverse history, which is not accurately reflected in their current commemorative landscape. This truth has been acknowledged by the City, with recognition that rich, Indigenous histories must be better represented. In acknowledging this dissonance, the City is showing a commitment to truth-telling and reconciliation. While these efforts do not guarantee the establishment of trust, they are important steps to take for trust to emerge between diverse cultural groups and the City.

Working alongside Indigenous community members from the area can help to build trust, so long as the relationships are nurtured and maintained in a way that is meaningful to the community partners. When steps like these are taken, the City can gain a better understanding of what community members need; and residents feel heard, allowing to trust to be built. This case study is a great example of governing bodies working to reconcile harmful narratives by

including equity-deserving groups in the commemorative landscape and development process. Doing so allows for a more holistic telling of the past and shares a wider scope of perspectives within space.

Shared Authority

Sharing authority is an essential element in enhancing cultural vibrancy, as it creates room for diverse groups to represent and express their own unique forms of cultural heritage within the local commemorative landscape. As we have discussed the capacity for multiple narratives to exist, issues often arise with intersections or conflicts within the cultural landscape. Therefore, the need for shared authority has been defined to allow diverse groups to represent and share their own narratives. Recognition of these complex narratives can be achieved through community engagement and collaborative work that centres cultural groups within cultural initiatives, rather than the government acting as the sole voice of authority.

In New Zealand, the Māori were silenced and marginalized in favour of dominating, colonial perspectives. As the government made strides to enact inclusive language policy, there was pushback from non-Māori residents of New Zealand. This pushback was the result of facing conflicting narratives that challenged what they had previously acknowledged as the “correct” or only history of the country. Evaluating this tension showcases the importance of integrating change management and community engagement as tools to educate residents on big changes. Helping to transition community members can assist in the perception of change, while helping the wider audience understand the need for shared authority in righting harmful colonial narratives.

Through questions of significance and conflicting narratives, interculturalism can be a useful lens to employ. Embracing the multifarious nature of culture can create room for multiple narratives to be represented within a commemorative landscape. This magnified representation can then expand the scope of people and cultures that feel both welcomed and celebrated within city spaces. The redevelopment of Victoria’s Government Street showcases how embedding multiple cultural perspectives within development helped to foster safety while also including various perspectives of Canadian history. In this case: Indigenous history is merged with western history through their careful maintenance of the character of the street scape, which bleeds into the historic elements of Chinatown. The western colonial character of the space was intentionally maintained, as Indigenous community members advocated for the importance of representing that important part of history. In sum, all cultural narratives should be able to co-exist within public space to allow for a nuanced understanding of history through commemoration, and the vision for Government Street highlights how this vision of multiculturalism is achievable.

Therefore, it is important that the City of Lethbridge acknowledges the intersecting, and sometimes conflicting, narratives that reside within and around the city. By acknowledging diverse perspectives, the ultimate goal should be framed as a reminder that there is room for all

cultures to be recognised and shared. A multicultural perspective creates the capacity for multiple perspectives and narratives to coexist within one space and be viewed as equally important. In positioning all cultural histories and narratives as equal, we can begin to dismantle the hierarchies engrained within Canadian society. When multiple perspectives are honoured, it creates more room for people who identify with the dominant narrative to understand that their culture and history is not being discarded or erased, but that there is space for others to be recognised adjacently.

Accessibility and Cultural Safety

Cultural safety plays a critical role in enabling all community members to feel comfortable accessing and participating in public spaces and see themselves recognised in commemorations. It is important that diverse groups feel welcomed to participate in public events and participate in culture for trust to be built and maintained. If people do not feel culturally safe within public areas, it can not be truly accessible. Enhancing feelings of cultural safety also enhances the accessibility and usability of spaces.

In the New Zealand and Victoria case studies, we can see there is inequity in the way different ethnic and cultural groups feel within public spaces. Further, they demonstrate how community engagement strategies can be a useful tool to proactively shape development and suit the needs of cultural groups, ensuring that they feel welcomed and represented within public space. Shared authority plays a crucial role in facilitating such engagement sessions, as it allows cultural groups to advocate for themselves and help guide development, ensuring that their cultural safety is considered.

The structure and context of engagement sessions, education and implementation can also have an impact on the outcome of the initiative. Meaningful change requires structured engagement, which tools like the 9DF Framework can assist with. While consultation with diverse communities is a good place to start, power and authority must also be shared for meaningful change to occur. The Welcoming Winnipeg Committee demonstrated how a lack of structure, purpose and support led the committee of laypeople to feel demoralised in engagement spaces. Despite time, work, and effort put in by the committee, they faced discrimination from City Council, hateful comments from the public, and felt burdened the work put on them and the lack of recognition. Therefore, to counter these negative effects, cities implementing culturally diverse boards and committees to aid in implementation of cultural and commemorative initiatives, must consider how to place cultural safety at the forefront of engagement sessions. Without such efforts, members of equity-deserving groups would be placed at risk.

In contrast to Winnipeg, the cities of Calgary and Victoria exhibited good practice of community engagement and cultural safety. Both cities allowed community engagement sessions to influence and direct projects, rather than burdening participants with implementation. As was

explored in Winnipeg, when volunteer stakeholders are put in the position to implement changes regarding culture or commemoration by themselves, it puts them at risk for backlash and does not recognize or celebrate the work that they have done. However, building capacity for stakeholders to share ideas, advocate for the future of their communities, and see their work reflected in plans and implemented projects helped strengthen feelings of cultural safety in both Calgary and Victoria. Efforts for representation, reconciliation, and inclusion must be at the forefront of City initiatives to make public spaces more accessible and culturally safe.

One distinct effort made by the City of Calgary, because of its extensive community engagement, was the inclusion of multiple languages within City plans and signage for the Chinatown space. This case study highlighted the impact that offering plans in multiple languages can have on both accessibility and cultural safety. Through the inclusion of different languages within the engagement processes, they were able to reach a wider audience for participation. Further, the new development and improvements to the physical space of Chinatown will have signage in different languages. This inclusion will foster cultural safety and magnify the accessibility of the space by ensuring that a wider audience can read the signs.

To enhance cultural safety throughout Lethbridge, a similar approach to the adoption of the Blackfoot greeting Oki could be implemented. Integrating the Blackfoot language into other areas of development and planning could assist in integrating the culture throughout the city. Further, as was noted in the Indigenous Placemaking Strategy, the implementation of an Indigenous Advisory Committee would be crucial the implementation of culturally safe initiatives throughout the city. However, it is pertinent that the City of Lethbridge considers establishing this committee as a paid positions with adequate resources to best equip members to address the topic with necessary tools.

Further, as Lethbridge is a diverse city with many languages, the city should consider expanding which languages are used during community engagement sessions. Increasing the use of Spanish and Tagalog may help reach a broader community, increasing cultural safety and trust. Implementing the use of multiple languages can help to further enhance the cultural vibrancy of the city in accordance with Municipal Development Plan while also working to make community members feel safe and celebrated.

Education and Truth-Telling

Working towards a more inclusive society requires re-visiting history through an equitable lens. Governments can play an important role by listening to communities and identifying their needs when it comes to the impact of history and memory on community well-being. As, history deeply affects current cultural practices and must be considered when implementing inclusive initiatives. However, to truly address the impacts of history and memory, governments must equip truth-telling and educational practices within their cultural heritage initiatives.

The City of Victoria is a powerful case study in such action. The choice to remove the John A. Macdonald statue from outside City Hall was an intentional choice to consider the cultural safety of their residents and visitors due to the history of discrimination associated with the figure. This act demonstrated a meaningful action of re-evaluation and reconciliation. Further, Victoria highlights that to move forward in an equitable and inclusive manner, educational efforts are also required, as the City faced immense backlash for removing the statue. While an explanation was provided following the removal, the City now recognises that educational efforts must also be put in place throughout the entirety of the process to maintain trust throughout the entire process.

Education can be a valuable tool in instances such as Victoria's, as it provides opportunities for growth throughout multiple levels of a city's social ecosystem. By choosing to address and replace commemorations or symbology that reinforces harmful conquest or colonial narratives, governments communicate to their residents that they care about creating a safer and more welcoming environment. However, learning and unlearning can often go deeper. Education can be used to engage with community members so that changes to the cultural heritage landscape of a municipality are met with understanding and a willingness to grow, rather than confusion, pushback, or anger.

When large changes are made to culturally specific public realms without proper education, the risk of public resistance can be heightened. Abrupt changes may lead communities to feel like their heritage and history are being erased or disregarded. Without the inclusion of change management strategies, municipalities may face barriers when trying to understand changes to the commemorative landscape. Working with communities through public engagement, education sessions, feedback initiatives, as well as other collaborative strategies can help transition communities through large changes. Change management and education can also help communities gain a clearer understanding of why changes are occurring, and perhaps even be more welcoming to future changes.

The need to transition and educate the public on incoming changes is highly present throughout the New Zealand case study. An underlying theme in this case was the barriers associated with conflicting interpretations of the past. Pākehā (non-Māori) had difficulty seeing the value in changing the system in place, even though it upheld the colonial narrative of settlement and settler supremacy. While the Māori felt that change was necessary to represent a complete telling of history within the cultural landscape, the Pākehā often saw no value in narratives that did not uphold their own beliefs. This case exemplifies the tensions that can exist between cultural groups and the importance of government intervention to advocate for equity-deserving groups' rights to share their truths. As colonization has shaped many dominant narratives that are widely accepted today, it will take advocacy and truth-telling to shift perceptions of the past and move towards a complete and more holistic telling of history.

Lethbridge's efforts towards reconciliation draw strong similarities to the New Zealand case study. Change management and community engagement strategies would be valuable when

looking to educate non-Indigenous residents throughout the reconciliation process. Change management and community engagement strategies can be used individually or together to educate communities on the importance of truth-telling and change. Moreover, these strategies can help transition residents through changes that may be challenging for them to cope with or may present versions of history that do not align with their current understandings.

The City of Lethbridge can turn to change management and education to ensure that the role of the City and its intentions with projects are communicated clearly to residents. It is important for audiences to understand why changes are being made and to be thoroughly educated on the reasonings. Integrating these strategies into project plans would help reduce confusion and resistance from community members ensuring education can occur alongside development.

Change management can also be used during development periods to assist in transitioning communities throughout project completion. Allowing adequate time for residents to prepare for and process their stakes within changes occurring can help improve reception to completed projects and reduce feelings of anger or erasure. This process is exemplified in the City of Vancouver's proposed commemoration framework. The framework has been in the works for years, and community members have been actively engaged in different capacities throughout the development of the policy. Further, the City has been clearly communicating its intentions for the project as the process unfolds. The results of this process will hopefully see a smooth transition without widespread pushback to the changes as the plans become realized and integrated into the city's commemorative landscape.

Reconciling through Placekeeping and Placemaking

Reconciliation is an ongoing process that requires both effort and trust that each play a role in healing practices. Effort is necessary to display commitment, and trust can allow relationships to be reconciled after past harms. Through examination of specific placekeeping and placemaking strategies, we will look to understand how place can play a foundational role in reconciliation efforts. Historically, many diverse communities have either been displaced, barred from, or made to feel unwelcome when entering certain spaces. Because of these histories, place can serve as an asset when reconciling, as it can be both symbolic of the healing of past harms as well as practical for present day communities.

The City of Vancouver proposed commemoration framework intends to address monuments, memorials, and plaques throughout the city to best foster equity and belonging across all communities through a reconciliatory placekeeping/making strategy. In their framework, they acknowledge that there is an underrepresentation of equity-deserving communities' histories in their city's current commemorative landscape. The framework seeks to reduce these inequalities and uplift marginalized voices and stories through commemorations around the city.

Through community engagement and partnerships with Host Nations, the City of Vancouver hopes to build transparency and fairness within the commemorative landscape. Core tenets of the proposed framework include redress, decolonization, reconciliation, equity, and accessibility. Further, it will clarify Park and City roles in the implementation of the framework and seeks to keep and make space for host nations to assert self-determination in memory practice while reckoning with colonial histories. In the pursuit of the above goals, the framework intends to centre equity-denied communities and stories to foster belonging and connection across communities.

Similarly, the Trust-STARS framework seeks to represent equity denied communities in a similar manner. As Lethbridge is a multicultural society with a colonial past, reconciliation, placekeeping, and placemaking should always be incorporated into city plans and projects. The City of Calgary demonstrates another example of how cultural sensitivity and action can be done alongside reconciliatory action.

The Tomorrow's Chinatown in the City of Calgary exemplifies that understanding the role that placekeeping and placemaking is crucial within cultural efforts. Their ongoing redevelopment of their Chinatown area has been informed by maintaining a close relationship with the Chinese community. Through community engagement and multiple language plans being shared, the City has been informed by the Chinese community on what development would be most valuable to them for the space. Emerging from these efforts were improvements to public space, economic growth plans, and an integration of culture and commemoration into public use areas.

Calgary used these engagement sessions as a strategy to build and maintain good working relationships and trust with the Chinese community. The plans that were developed between parties and offered a structure for setting priorities, forming partnerships, assigning roles, and securing resources. In this case study, community engagement was a major asset in building a relationship on the foundation of trust. Listening to community members and supporting their goals and visions was one way for the City of Calgary to maintain its trust in them. Having signage posted in multiple languages considers the context of the city's historical relationship to the Chinese community within it, but also serves to keep and make a place for the community within Chinatown. Language assists in creating a culturally safe space, and feeling culturally safe and celebrated in a location where historical oppression occurred works to reconcile the past harm.

Through both Calgary's Chinatown and Vancouver's reconciliatory initiatives, we can see the importance of placekeeping and placemaking within commemoration. Vancouver's proposed commemoration framework served as a guide for the Trust-STARS framework and can also guide the implementation of a commemoration framework if the City of Lethbridge chooses to pursue that path. A framework that considers equity, narrative shifting, cultural safety, and diverse perspectives can be a useful tool in the context of Lethbridge. As our city navigates

reconciliation, being mindful of placekeeping and placemaking as acts of reconciliation can help inform future changes the City makes to its commemorative landscape.

Sustainable Development and Community Wellness

CC initiatives can often be more effective when embedded within wider development goals. In the Toruń case study, we can see an example of the government explicitly prioritizing sustainable development leading to positive outcomes throughout the city. The City of Toruń has stated their commitment to ecological education, eco-friendly activities, protecting the environment, and spatial planning (Kleczkowska, 2021). These commitments are not only one avenue to pursue increased sustainability throughout a city but can also integrate concepts of culture and commemoration within them. The integration of commemoration into development can be seen in initiatives such as planting native plants in memory of people or events, hosting eco-friendly activities such as walks or races to raise money for commemorative projects, or designating areas of nature reserves as a commemoration. Such initiatives can also increase community wellness by amplifying green spaces and connecting community members to create a sense of belonging.

Even if cultural development is not an explicit goal, assessing cultural impacts and opportunities can result in uncovering avenues to blend culture, commemoration, and development that may not have been seen at first glance. Community engagement sessions can also be a helpful tool to guide how culture can be incorporated into development ventures in a way that is meaningful to communities. When considering the specific context of Lethbridge, it is vital to acknowledge that the city is situated on the traditional territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy. With a deep and inherent cultural tie to the land, it is important that future developments within the city recognize the cultural importance of the land and proceed with respect.

Integrating the SDG's into planning and development is one tool that can be used to navigate the development of culturally significant land so that the health and well-being of the earth and ecosystems remains relevant throughout the process. While the Blackfoot communities of the region have been stewards of the land for millennia, it is important to recognize the role the City currently plays in honoring that land as well.

Not only does the incorporation of culture within City development allow for greater representation and increased place-attachment, but it also allows for greater funding opportunities. The City of Victoria's refresh initiative of Government Street, a famous tourist street that brings in revenue for the city, is funded by a federal downtown revitalization grant. There are ample opportunities for funding that may only be realized when cultural perspectives are prioritized and pursued. This funding can be found through collaboration with other levels of government, non-profit organizations, and other cultural actors (See Recommendation 2 for a list of possible cultural funding opportunities).

Limitations

The scope of our project is anchored to the City of Lethbridge perspective, which means our analysis and recommendations will be focused to making relevant recommendations. This means that although this analysis can prove useful to other considerations of culture and commemoration, it is best understood in context within the City of Lethbridge. More specifically, the context of the City's goals for enhancing cultural vibrancy, embracing interculturalism, and prioritizing reconciliation through placekeeping and placemaking. These goals are outlined in the City's Civic Culture Plan and Heritage Management Plan and have helped to guide and shape the work done in this report. While this method allowed for a targeted focus for the City of Lethbridge it does limit the applicability of our research and case studies.

Chapter 8: Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Implement a policy regarding culture and commemoration at the municipal level using the Trust-STARS framework. An example is provided in Appendix C – Draft Culture & Commemoration Policy

Recommendation 2

Utilise available grants and boost awareness of those grants to the public to help prioritize culture and commemoration within the municipal landscape through external funding. Some potential grants:

- [Canada Cultural Spaces Fund](#)
 - Improve the physical conditions for arts and heritage relation creation, presentation, preservation¹ and exhibition.
- [Canada History Fund](#)
 - Intended to encourage Canadians to learn about Canada's history, civic life and public policy.
- [Celebration and Commemoration](#)
 - Provides funding through grants and contributions to organization for community-based activities celebrating various Canadian Holidays.
- [Canada Arts Presentation Fund](#)
 - Intended to help provide access to a variety of professional artistic experiences in community for Canadians.
- [Youth Take Charge](#)
 - Designed to help strengthen youth attachment to Canada through engagement in the fields of history and heritage, civic engagement and youth service, arts and culture, and economic activities.
- [Indigenous Languages and Cultures](#)
 - Focused on supporting Indigenous cultures and languages as living elements of Canadian society. Intended to help reclaim, revitalize, maintain and strengthen Indigenous language.
 - While this grant is not currently intended for municipalities, it could provide a good opportunity to boost Indigenous language and cultural heritage within the community and provide a pathway for reconciliation.

¹ We recognize how preservation in the context of culture and commemoration perpetuates a colonial understanding of the topic as cultural heritage is constantly evolving. However, we believe that the grants presented in this recommendation should still be considered if the City of Lethbridge is willing to forgo traditional preservation traditions in favor of commemoration through memorialization or other methods not requiring the physical preservation of objects and/or space, allowing for multiple communities to utilize these grants. This is essential to abide by a reconciliatory approach, ensure cultural safety and sustainable development.

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- [Building Communities through arts and Heritage](#)
 - Supports for local festivals, community anniversaries and capital projects
- [The Heritage Preservation Partnership \(HPP\)](#)
 - Provides matching grants and scholarship funds to support initiatives that preserve and interpret Alberta's heritage
- [Heritage Awareness Grant](#)
 - This grant supports delivery of interpretive and public engagement projects that preserve, interpret and promote appreciation of Alberta's history

Recommendation 3

Consider potential commemorations that functionally serve the community. Functional commemorations can help development align with cultural outcomes of SDGs. By enhancing natural spaces and building people-first structures, commemoration can work to meet the needs of community members. This could look like:

- Constructing a water fountain alongside a memorial plaque as opposed to just a plaque.
- Adding commemorative elements to new bus shelters to honor the history of the street or landscape.
- Edible gardens and fruit trees, used to commemorate people or places while also providing free food and shaded rest areas to community members.

Commemoration can also be integrated into pedestrian infrastructure by incorporating plaques or engraving into sidewalks and walkways. Functional commemoration can be seen in projects such as the [Lethbridge Historical Society's Back Alley Naming Project](#), which encourages people to explore the city and learn aspects of Lethbridge's unseen history. Another example is [Tiffany Shaw's installation Pehonan](#), which offers both enriched cultural vibrancy through public art as well as a place to sleep or rest comfortably.

This recommendation would help maximize community wellness by providing necessities to life such as drinking water, food, and shelter from the elements while also combating the rise of hostile architecture. These pursuits can help ensure that Lethbridge is a welcoming and comfortable place to be for every member of society while also enhancing cultural vibrancy, aligning with the City's goals of fostering an inclusive and welcoming space. Functional initiatives can also make the city more livable and accessible to residents, and commemorations in this form can be very versatile. This versatility creates capacity for diverse representation and narratives to be shared in a way that is accessible to everyday use areas.

Recommendation 4

We recommend the City conduct community engagement with “casual citizens”. Focusing on more casual settings can work to include residents who are active in the city but might not actively seek out community engagement opportunities. This tactic would help to include a diverse range of perspectives rather than gathering perspectives of citizens who are already actively involved in community plans. Pursuing this recommendation could also help in crafting a more approachable image of the City, perhaps enhancing feelings of inclusivity and safety within the traditionally hierarchical space.

Recommendation 5

Integrate change management frameworks into community engagement efforts. This approach would assist in educating members of the public while they are participating in engagement sessions, while also working to transition community members through change in the process. In doing so, we believe that members of the community would be more accepting to cultural and commemorative shifts when they occur as the transition tactics have already been underway before the large changes happen.

This can be operationalized through the inclusion of plaques within commemorations to not only educate on the background and history, but to provide reason for the placement and nature of a monument. Another way this tactic could be useful is for potential codification of cultural actions, such as pride crosswalks, intangible festivals, or events. If community members have already been involved with engagement sessions where they receive information regarding possible future changes, the adjustment or backlash to initiatives may be reduced. Focusing on commemorations of histories and cultures that have previously been underrepresented or hidden will help communicate the City’s goals and intentions.

Recommendation 6

Work in collaboration or with guidance from the Buffalo Treaty when implementing commemorative efforts in the City of Lethbridge. As the City of Lethbridge is a signatory of the Treaty, they should continue to take actionable steps to implement its principles and articles. Articles of the Buffalo Treaty that we recommend the City prioritize in future cultural or commemorative projects include:

Article I- Conservation

Article II- Culture

Article V- Education

Article VII- Adhesion

Article VIII- Partnerships and Supporters

As signatories of the Buffalo Treaty, the City should intentionally act in alignment with the articles of the Treaty as well as the embodiment of the Buffalo.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the City tries to disperse cultural events and commemoration initiatives throughout different areas of the city. Consider prioritizing under-utilized areas of the city (West and North side specifically) when planning cultural and commemorative initiatives. The downtown core typically hosts a plethora of events and commemorative expressions. Other than that, the main areas that host cultural events are centres primarily centred on the South side of town (Henderson Lake Park & exhibition grounds).

The West and North sides of the city remain relatively barren in comparison. Initiating projects throughout the city could allow for culture to be shared with a wider audience and therefore increase the potential for cultural entanglement. As a large population of the student body lives on the West side, hosting events in Nicholas Shearan Park or in community spaces such as the University of Lethbridge or the YMCA could improve access or awareness. Including this demographic more intentionally would assist in showing off what culture Lethbridge has to offer, possibly improving student retention. Hosting events on the North side in areas such as Legacy Park may also provide greater access to communities that are not able to easily access the downtown core, or who do not feel welcome there.

As one core tenet of the Trust-STARS model focuses on accessibility, we think that expanding the areas of the city which host cultural events and mark commemorative spaces could make CC more accessible.

Recommendation 8

Prioritize sharing information, plans, notices, and public engagement initiatives in both English and Blackfoot. If possible, share these documents in other languages spoken by large demographic sections of Lethbridge as well. Doing so would enhance community engagement by making information more accessible to a wider audience. Further, it would work to build trust between Blackfoot communities, other cultural groups, and the City of Lethbridge.

As Oki is the official greeting of the City, it would be meaningful to expand on the integration of Blackfoot language. This recommendation could also work to provide valuable work opportunities to Blackfoot speakers and share the language with non-Blackfoot speakers. Creating plans in languages other than English will enhance the cultural vibrancy of the City and work to create feelings of cultural safety for residents who do not see their first language reflected in City plans and documents.

Recommendation 9

As the Civic Culture Plan recommends the implementation of Cultural Impact Assessments, similar assessments could be created to ensure culture and commemoration are on a common path. These includes Cultural Safety Assessment, a practice within health services that allow institutions to consider how cultural contexts can impact processes (Canadian Institute for Health Information 2024). The city could implement these processes to understand how cultural context specifically impacts interaction with CoL government.

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Appendix A – PIL Seminar Series

The 2025 Policy Innovation Lab (PIL) was a four-week intensive experiential learning opportunity that focused on **Culture and Commemoration**. Over the month of May, the authors of this report (Aliya, Jordan & Taryn) participated in a seminar series to build their understanding of relationships between the commemoration, cultural heritage, municipal planning, and policy making. Observations and knowledge gained from the PIL seminar series was foundational to understanding of culture and commemoration as well as the creation of the Trust-STARS framework presented in this report. The following pages will provide a summary of the PIL seminar series to demonstrate the foundations of this report.

Topic:	Themes/Takeaways:
Equity	• Gender Based Analysis • Negative/Positive power • Relationships between power & policy; narrative & truth; past & present • Placemaking vs. placekeeping
What is culture?	• UN 17 SDG's • Peacebuilding • Intercultural dialogue • Culture as the spiritual, material, emotional, and intellectual features that characterize a society or group • Tangible and Intangible cultural heritage
What is Commemoration? (Pannel Discussion)	• Commemoration as advocacy for underrepresented/historically silenced groups • Who has the authority to commemorate, and how do we protect commemoration? • Commemoration is culturally specific • Past/Present/Future; bridging living history • A tool of state power • Why do we preserve what we do? • Commemoration allows us to grapple with human morality. • Preservation? Good/Bad/Cultural context • <u>Current commemoration frameworks are largely European</u>
Introduction to Policy	• Policy can be understood as what governments choose to do, or choose not to do • Policy creation assigns a certain level of authority • Trust in public policy is important • Politics and Policy are related, but not the same thing • What is the relationship between public, government, place and money? Where do citizens fit into public policy?

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Introduction to Local Government	• Municipal governments are very dependant on provincial governments and house a wide political spectrum • Council members are not politically affiliated and are responsible for acting on behalf on the community • Good council policy should be purpose driven and benefit the entire community
What Is the Role of Municipalities in Commemorating?	• Heritage helps to form identity • Diverse spaces with iconic symbols and rich history are more expensive to develop • Commemoration can be integrated into city planning and projects • Revitalization of important spaces can be an opportunity to keep or make place
What Is the Role of Non-Governmental Institutions in Commemorating?	• Promote culture, language, intergenerational connections • Provide opportunities for cultural groups to celebrate their heritage and pass culture down through generations • Provide spaces for cultural commemorations • Assist in funding through grant applications • Promote freedom and safety, educate, and navigate generational differences
What is the Role of Community in Commemorating? • Participatory Approaches • Equity Approaches • Indigenous-led Approaches	• There is room for creativity when sharing culture and commemoration; co-production moves past just involvement • Trust with community members matters; public space can be used to build trust with communities • Uplifting Indigenous voices; considering the land in public art installations; reconciliation is inclusive, ongoing and intergenerational • Employing Indigenous people, allowing them to tell their stories in the commemorative landscape • Lived experience, considerations for the future, and democratically informed policy assist in collaboration between community members, activists, and governments • Youth are an underused and under considered resource; commemoration is not just a telling of the past but also a shaping of the future • Consider the assets of a community when seeking to commemorate in an area, consider the role that playfulness has on space
Field Day in Aisinai'pa (Writing on Stone Provincial Park & UNESCO World Heritage Site)	• Colonial influence vs. Indigenous ways of knowing • Creating space for multiple perspectives to exist at once • Recognizing that there will be instances in reconciliation where Indigenous voices and histories should hold more weight than non-Indigenous perspectives (the sacred landscape of Aisinai'pa being used as a campground, and not always being respected as heavily as it should)

Transforming Policy and Place	• The essential nature of change management strategies • ADKAR change management framework
Commemoration Case Studies • Municipal Neutrality Bylaws • City of Victoria	• Neutrality within policy is a fallacy • Significance of the codification of commemorative acts • Role of municipal government within questions of legitimacy of culture and commemoration • Importance of education and change management within government cultural initiatives
Commemoration Case Studies • Vancouver Chinatown and UNESCO • Africville	• Cultural heritage as a living, renewable, and evolving source focused on people and value • The relationship between tangible and intangible heritage • Intercultural connections between Chinatown and Indigenous communities • Importance of functional renewal that include commemorative initiatives • Importance of cultural initiatives independence from the government

Overarching Themes:

- History
- Generational trauma
- Non-neutrality
- Public engagement
- Importance of paid positions
- Change management
- Intergenerational connection
- Cultural entanglements
- Colonial influence
- Complexity of Cultural Heritage
- Importance of Interculturalism

Appendix B – UNDRIP Articles

Article 11	Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature. States shall provide redress through effective mechanisms, which may include restitution, developed in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, with respect to their cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free, prior and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions and customs.
Article 12	Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practise, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains. States shall seek to enable the access and/or repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains in their possession through fair, transparent, and effective mechanisms developed in conjunction with Indigenous peoples concerned.
Article 13	Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons. States shall take effective measures to ensure that this right is protected and also to ensure that Indigenous peoples can understand and be understood in political, legal and administrative proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other appropriate means.
Article 31	Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions. In conjunction with Indigenous peoples, States shall take effective measures to recognize and protect the exercise of these rights.

Appendix C – Draft Culture & Commemoration Policy

Draft Policy Utilising the Trust-STARS framework:

Policy Title: Culture and Commemoration Policy

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to guide the City of Lethbridge in respectful, inclusive and community-driven treatment of culture and commemoration in municipal spaces as defined by the Trust-STARS framework. This policy ensures that commemorative practices within the City work to implement visions detailed in the Civic Culture Plan (CCP) and Heritage Management Plan (HMP).

2. Policy Statement:

The City of Lethbridge recognises that culture and commemoration are powerful tools of storytelling, healing, education, connection and trust. It is therefore the policy of the City to implement and support cultural and commemorative practices that are:

- Rooted in trust and relationship building;
- Guided by principles of shared authority, truth-telling, accessibility, reconciliation and sustainability;
- Developed in full partnership with Indigenous peoples and other equity deserving groups;
- Reflective of both historic realities and contemporary values;
- Centered on community wellness, cultural safety and connection.

3. Policy Commitments:

- a. Trust as a Foundational Concept
 - i. All cultural and commemorative projects will be built on sustained, respectful and transparent relationships with communities.
 - ii. Trust-building will be treated as a long-term commitment, not a project-based activity.
 - iii. City staff will undergo regular training in relationship-building, cultural protocols, and community engagement practices.

- b. Shared Authority and Governance
 - i. Authority and power will be shared with Indigenous communities through the Indigenous Advisory Council.
 - ii. Community members, especially from historically marginalised groups, will be co-creators and equal partners in decision making initiatives regarding commemorative or cultural events.
 - iii. The City will provide paid opportunities for communities to participate in the development, design and governance of commemorative projects.
 - iv. Advisory bodies representing Indigenous, racialized, or equity-seeking groups will guide strategic commemorative decisions.
- c. Truth-telling and Historical Integrity
 - i. The City will actively support the inclusion of diverse, accurate, and previously silenced histories in all commemorative materials and installations.
 - ii. Commemorations must acknowledge historical harms and avoid glorifying figures or events that perpetuate oppression.
 - iii. Educational components will accompany all major commemorative efforts, in partnership with Knowledge-Keepers and historians.
- d. Accessibility and Cultural Safety
 - i. All commemorative spaces and programming must be physically, intellectually and emotionally accessible.
 - ii. Information regarding culture and commemorative efforts will be provided in both English and Blackfoot.
 - iii. Cultural safety will be prioritized from planning through implementation and will be measured through community feedback.
 - iv. Commemorative design will incorporate universal design principles, alternative communication models (audio, visual, tactile) and culturally affirming content.
- e. Reconciliation through Placekeeping and Placemaking
 - i. The City will support Indigenous-led efforts to reclaim, preserve and interpret places of cultural and historical significance.
 - ii. New public spaces for cultural expression and commemoration will be developed in partnership with Indigenous communities.
 - iii. All land-based commemorations will acknowledge the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy and respect Indigenous cultural protocols
- f. Sustainable Development and Community Wellness
 - i. Commemorative projects will contribute to the sustainable development and wellness of the community through infrastructure, public amenities and ecological stewardship.

- ii. All commemorative work must consider long-term impacts on community health, social connection and environmental sustainability.

4. Implementation Guidelines:

a. Planning and Consultation

- i. All commemorative projects must begin with early and ongoing consultation with affected communities.
- ii. Project teams must conduct:
 - A Cultural Safety Assessment
 - A Cultural Impact Assessment
 - An Accessibility and Sustainability Plan
- iii. Design and Development
 - Designs must reflect the input of collaborating communities and uphold the Trust-STARS framework:
 - a. Shared Authority
 - b. Truth-Telling
 - c. Accessibility & Cultural Safety
 - d. Reconciliation through Place
 - All signage or interpretation must be multi-modal and inclusive content and form.

b. Review and Maintenance

- i. Commemorative elements must be reviewed periodically for relevance, impact and alignment with evolving community values and the Trust-STARS framework.
- ii. The City retains the right to reinterpret, contextualize or remove commemorative elements found to be harmful or historically inaccurate through a community driven review process.
- iii. The City will maintain commemorative spaces with care, involving communities in stewardship as appropriate.

5. Roles and Responsibilities:

Stakeholder	Responsibilities
City Council	Approves Commemorative projects and policy updates; allocates funding; supports public accountability.
City Administration	Oversees implementation, internal training, policy monitoring and interdepartmental coordination. Oversees the creation of additional policies if necessary, remaining in line with the Trust-STARS framework.
Indigenous Advisory Council	Collaborate with City Staff to oversee and implement reconciliatory cultural heritage initiatives. Provide Guidance on incorporating Indigenous values, culture and commemorative practices.
Lethbridge Public	Participate in consultations, engages with commemorative spaces, and helps shape collective memory.

6. Evaluation and Reporting:

- a. The City of Lethbridge will produce a biannual Culture and Commemoration report, detailing:
 - i. Projects initiated or Completed
 - ii. Funding
 - iii. Community partnerships
 - iv. Educational outcomes
 - v. Environmental and/or social impacts
 - vi. Progress in advancing reconciliation and inclusion
- b. Evaluation will be guided by community defined success indicators.

7. Alignment and Compliance:

- a. The Trust-STARS framework
- b. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)'s Calls to Action
- c. UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)
- d. City of Lethbridge's Reconciliation Implementation Plan
- e. City of Lethbridge's Civic Culture Plan
- f. City of Lethbridge's Municipal Development Plan

8. Review Schedule:

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- a. This policy will be reviewed every five (5) years or as needed, in collaboration with community stakeholders, equity deserving groups and Indigenous Elders.