

DRAFT
WASHINGTON AS COMMEMORATION
Capital Cities Case Study Research Study

**Developed by the National Capital Planning Commission,
in conjunction with the National Park Service**

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Introduction

As part of the *Washington as Commemoration* study, staff from the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) and the National Park Service (NPS) are researching practices for establishing commemoration in other international and domestic U.S. capital cities. *This research is not scientific* and is intended to generally place Washington’s practice for establishing commemoration on federal lands within a broad comparative context.

A short summary document, “Key Findings,” is followed by detailed case studies as appendices. Each summarizes the policies and processes involved with commemoration in each city. Research is based on interviews with key officials and other sources (as noted). This research is ongoing; additional case studies may be added in the future.

The following cities were selected as the first case studies:

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Approach

Note: Interviews are conducted in a conversational format and are not scientific.

Staff interviewed public officials in each city and the discussion centered around the following questions and topic areas:

1. How are new national commemorations in the city selected?
 - a. Who generally proposes new commemorations?
 - b. Who are the key decision-makers?
 - c. Are commemorations considered one at a time or en masse?
 - d. What role do the public and elected officials play in the process (formally or informally)?
2. Are there guidelines regarding the types of commemorations appropriate for public land? If so, who implements these?
3. Are there broad national themes/narratives that commemorations should complement? If so, how was that guidance developed?
4. How are commemorations paid for and maintained? (private or public sponsorship)
5. When does funding come into the process? (proposal, design, construction, maintenance)
6. Are there strategies for developing commemorations intended to honor current and future events (for example, a memorial to all wars or a memorial to all victims of communism)?
7. How many commemorations does the city average every 5, 10 years?
8. How do the other capital cities address “gifts” from foreign governments?
9. Do the cities utilize functional elements, such as streets, plazas, etc. to commemorate?
10. Are monuments ever decommissioned? If so, where do they go (i.e. museums)? Process?
11. Are there commemorations that are “added on to” with interpretations from subsequent generations or events?
12. In the opinion of the interviewee, what recent commemorations in his/her city are most successful?
13. What themes/stories are absent?

Key Findings from Capital Cities Case Studies

The summary below outlines some of key common features that characterize how each city approaches commemoration.

THE BASICS: Who proposes / approves / funds new commemorations?

- **In all cities, citizens and organizations are the primary initiators of ideas for new works.** On rare occasions, government agencies or leaders have proposed monuments.
 - In four cities, it is standard practice for monument proponents to fund development and maintenance of new commemorations (Ottawa, London/Westminster*, Boston, St. Paul). In Canberra, monument proponents fund development, but perpetual maintenance is through public funding. In Boston, a majority of works receive partial funding from a public trust managed by the city. In Berlin, most major memorials are funded by the federal government in reparation for WWII.
- **The governing body responsible for approving new commemorations varies widely.** The list below is generally organized from the highest level of elected officials to appointed officials:
 - Berlin: Bundestag or Senate of Berlin
 - Canberra: Canberra National Memorials Committee (CNMC) – members include Prime Minister, majority and opposition leaders in the Senate, etc.
 - St. Paul: Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB) – 12 members including Lt. Governor, 4 state House and Senate representatives, etc.
 - Salt Lake City: City Council
 - London (City of Westminster): Public Art Advisory Commission (subset of the City Council, federal agencies have oversight depending on location and nature of work)
 - Ottawa: National Capital Commission (NCC) Executive Board
 - Boston: Public Art Commission (appointed by the mayor)
- **Five cities require the subject of a commemoration to be approved by the governing body first before design and siting occurs.** In each city, the same governing body has approval authority over the subject matter, location, and design of the work (Ottawa, London/Westminster, Boston, St. Paul, Salt Lake City). The CNMC implicitly endorses subject matter as part of its site selection and design review process.
- **All of the cities have staff dedicated to provide background information and recommendations.** Two cities also have standing outside advisory expert panels of historians, architects and/or landscape architects (Ottawa, St. Paul). In Ottawa, the Advisory Committee on Planning, Design and Realty, reviews all major NCC or external party projects that require federal land use and design approval.

SITE MATTERS: Policies related to location

- **Two cities have passed moratoriums on new commemorations in their most prominent locations** (Boston, London/Westminster) and three have developed informal practices or formalized policies to divert new works to other areas (Ottawa, Canberra, St. Paul).
 - Both cities with moratoriums have added new commemorations despite the policy against new works (Boston: 9/11 Memorial, London/Westminster: Princess Diana, 7/7 Memorial).
 - Ottawa has developed a 3-tier hierarchy of available sites with specific evaluation criteria used to determine to which tier a proposed memorial subject belongs.

* Westminster contains the bulk of greater London's central area, including the most important royal and government buildings.

CONTENT MATTERS: Policies related to subject matter and themes

- **Two cities have catalogued existing works based on subject matter or theme** (Ottawa, Canberra). Both cities try to locate new works near related institutions or commemorations with similar subject matter.
 - St. Paul also tries to co-locate commemorations based on shared subject matter, although this is a much easier task since there are only 12 existing or planned works on the capitol grounds.
 - London/Westminster requires a historical connection between the site and the subject of commemorations. Berlin distinguishes between works located on historically-accurate sites and “sites of national memory,” such as the Monument to the Murdered Jews of Europe.
- **Ottawa is the only city that has a policy to actively encourage new commemorations with underrepresented themes.** Key officials in three cities said they remain neutral regarding the subject matter for new works (Boston, Canberra, London/Westminster, St. Paul).
- **Three cities have specific restrictions against the duplication of subject matter** (Ottawa, Canberra, St. Paul). Boston is at the opposite end of this spectrum due to its communities and neighborhoods with strong ethnic identities; for example, each of four different neighborhoods has its own commemoration to the Vietnam War.

THE ROLE OF DIPLOMACY: Foreign gifts and works related to international people or events

- **All of the national capitals noted challenges in accepting gifts from other nations or establishing memorials to leaders of other nations.** Some examples include:
 - Both Ottawa and Canberra turned down proposals to erect a statue of Mahatma Gandhi on federal land because the peace did not have direct historical ties to the host country. In Canberra, the statue was eventually erected on private or locally-owned public land.
 - A memorial to the Victims of Totalitarian Communism memorial is under development in Ottawa, but the NCC required the work to focus on Canada’s role as a land of refuge. The NCC used a similar approach with the proposed memorial to Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko; however, the proponents decided to locate the work on private property to retain more control over the design and message.
 - The issue of foreign gifts is one of the reasons that the City of Westminster’s new commemoration policy requires a historical connection to the physical location of a new monument.

OTHER FEATURES

Waiting period - Four cities impose a minimum waiting period of 10 years after an event or death of an individual before the subject can be proposed for commemoration (Ottawa, Canberra, London/Westminster, St. Paul). Salt Lake City and Boston permit commemoration of living individuals. Many interviewees described increasing pressure to commemorate victims immediately. In Berlin, most commemorations for the last 20 years have been related to WWII.

Alternatives to permanent commemoration - A number of cities have proposed interesting alternatives to permanent monuments:

- London: policy suggests that monument proponents consider trees, gardens, events, memorial endowments or two-dimensional memorials such as trees or plaques
- St. Paul: has developed a Court of Honor with small plaques that can be purchased to honor a military group, individuals or events
- Salt Lake City: has developed a list of public assets that can be named to honor a person or event

Relocation - Four cities specifically allow works to be relocated or renamed if their useful life outlasts the desire for commemoration or if the land needs to be expropriated for major civic works (Canberra, London/Westminster, Ottawa, Salt Lake City).

Design Competition - Five cities advocate or require design competitions for new works (Berlin, Boston, London/Westminster, Canberra, St. Paul).

Data Collection - Boston has a database of 600 existing works (includes both public art and commemorations) with approximately 20 active proposals at any one time. In Ottawa, the NCC has a database to manage existing works (includes commemorations, public art, plaques and interpretation panels) and a second database with a list of potential sites for future commemorations with detailed information and photos for each location.

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