



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER *Staff Report*

REPORT NO: CAO-2025-10

TO: Council

SUBMITTED BY: Greg Clark, Acting CAO

PREPARED BY: Greg Clark, Acting CAO

REVIEWED BY: Greg Clark, Acting CAO

DATE: May 12, 2025

SUBJECT: Prime Ministers Path – Working Group Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report CAO-2025-10 be received for information; and,

THAT the Wilmot's Prime Ministers Path Working Group Recommendations to Council, as included as Attachment 1, be received for Council consideration; and,

THAT Council refers Report CAO-2025-10 - Prime Ministers Path – Working Group Recommendations to the June 2, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting.

SUMMARY:

- The Working Group has provided recommendations in six areas which provide a path to returning the statues to the Township.
- The recommendations are a framework for the next stage of the project.
- Implementation of the recommendations will require resources, funding, people and time, which are beyond the current capabilities of Township staff.
- Overall engagement in the project was significant,
 - 300+ people attended engagement events

- 350+ people responded to survey and polls
- 85+ people participated in one-on-one or group meetings with the project consultants

BACKGROUND:

Wilmot's Prime Ministers Path project dates to 2013, it has had many different phases and gone through several major stages. The current report is in response to the removal of the statues in 2021, and aims to:

"Further, this option advances the work done by the First Peoples Group on behalf of the Township, using a collaborative approach to help to determine a path forward for the Prime Ministers Path statues." Council Report CAO-2024-03 Prime Ministers Path: Options for Next Steps – February 26, 2024.

Council approved in April 2024 to engage an external consultant to support Option 2 from the above report. In September of 2024 LURA Consulting Inc. was selected to support this work.

REPORT:

Engagement and Working Group

Over the course of the last eight months, LURA has supported the creation of a Working Group and carried out extensive engagement within the community, as outlined in Attachment 1 and Attachment 2. Township staff have supported this work administratively, providing logistical and communication support as well as assisting in ensuring the project maintain the original focus of reflecting the thoughts and feelings of the community.

The recommendations from the Working Group are organized into six key areas:

1. Governance & Structure
2. Funding
3. Inclusion
4. Education
5. Location
6. Truth & Reconciliation

Each recommendation supports the actions of the next, providing a path to a successful outcome for the display and engagement with the statues.

Staff Feedback

As the community engagement process was taking place, the Township project team was carrying out internal engagement with staff to better understand the impacts of the previous work and help determine necessary next steps internally.

Through this work two main concerns were identified; impacts on staff at the Administration Building, and level of worked required to be successful in implementing the recommendations.

Staff within the Administration Building were subjected to harassment regarding the statues when they were previously installed. Members of the public brought their feelings about the installation and the removal of the statues into the building and targeted staff. This behaviour

was not dealt with appropriately at the time and staff have concerns about the impacts of installing the statues outside the building again. Given the nature of the issues surrounding the statues, ensuring that staff who are in no way related to them are not targeted will be difficult if the statues were to return to the Administration building property. Parks & Facilities staff who were responsible for maintaining and cleaning the statues were also subjected to harassment while carrying out their work and were put into situations which made them feel uncomfortable. These situations have the potential to occur again regardless of where the statues are placed, if it is Township property.

The work required to deliver the recommendations of the Working Group is not within the mandate of a municipality and is beyond the capacity of the current organization. A project of this scope and scale would be a challenge for a major city with dedicated resources within an established Culture Department. The Township does a great job in programming Castle Kilbride and ensuring that it operates in a sustainable manner, however the work required for this project is beyond Castle staff's capacity. Installation and maintenance of the statues would require additional resources within Parks & Facilities area to meet the expectations of the recommendations.

If the intention of Council is to move forward and a Community Steering Committee is established, it is recommended that it be an independent body not reporting to Council. The development and coordination of the work of a committee of this nature is a full-time job requiring a unique set of skills that are not present at the Township. The Steering Committee would function much like a non-profit board, overseeing the work of individuals responsible for fundraising, research and development of educational materials, installation and maintenance of the statues as well as surrounding areas. The committee would also deal with any issues as they arise, such as potential protests, updates to educational materials as further information comes to light, changes in technology related to the presentation of materials, etc. Council and staff may have a role in supporting this work, as a partner, not as the direct owner of the work.

Next Steps

As a final step in the community engagement process, LURA will be hosting a Community Gathering on May 28, 2025, to allow the community to discuss the final presentation and Council's deliberations from the May 12, 2025, Special Council Meeting. This will close out this phase of the project.

At the May 12, 2025, Special Council Meeting, Council will have the opportunity to hear directly from the public on the recommendations attached as well as the overall Prime Ministers Path project. No decisions will be made at the May 12, 2025, meeting, and this report and the attached recommendations from the Working Group will be moved to the June 2, 2025, Committee of the Whole meeting for Councils further consideration.

At the June 2, 2025, Committee of the Whole meeting Council will develop a recommendation for approval based on the information gathered through the engagement process, the recommendations from the Working Group, the input of citizens at the May 12 meeting and their own conversations that will determine the next steps of the project.

The approved recommendation from Committee of the Whole will then be considered at the June 23, 2025, Council meeting, where it may be amended before it is finally approved.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT STRATEGIC PLAN:

Healthy Community

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

There are no direct financial impacts because of this report. Staff will provide estimated financial impacts based on Council's decision on next steps.

Based on the Working Group recommendations, funding will be required to support the Steering Committee in their work to develop a plan and the recommended educational materials. Site selection would enable the identification of associated costs for landscaping, installation and maintenance.

Options for external funding would be investigated as part of the work of the Steering Committee.

Current Project Budget

The total project budget is \$220,000, funded \$45,000 from a Federal Grant and \$175,000 tax supported. These amounts were approved as part of the 2021 Budget (\$75,000 tax), 2022 Budget (\$45,000 grant), and 2023 Budget (\$100,000 tax).

The expected budget for the current engagement was \$60,000, however, given the amount of time and level of engagement ultimately required to meet the expectations of the community and Council this budget was exceeded. Early in the process it was identified that this portion of the project would be overbudget. Additional funding will come from the CAO contingency budget.

Storage of the existing statues continues to cost approximately \$660 per month. Once Council has given direction, decisions regarding the storage of the statues can be discussed.

Stage of Project	Amount Spent	Year(s)
Legal Advice	\$12,657	2020
Initial Engagement – First Peoples Group	\$45,792	2021
Statue removal	\$29,409	2020 & 2021
Statue storage	\$31,190	2020 to current
Current Engagement	\$102,367	2024 & 2025
Total	\$221,415	

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Wilmot's Prime Ministers Path – Working Group Recommendations to Council
Attachment 2 – Prime Ministers Path – What we heard overall report