



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Staff Report

REPORT NO: CAO-2026-15
TO: Council on April 27, 2026
SUBMITTED BY: Jeff Willmer, Chief Administrative Officer
PREPARED BY: Jeff Willmer, Chief Administrative Officer
REVIEWED BY: Harold O’Krafka, Deputy CAO / Director of Corporate Services
DATE: April 14, 2026
SUBJECT: Prime Ministers Path – Licence of Occupancy

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report CAO-2026-15 Prime Ministers Path – Licence of Occupancy be received for information; and,

THAT Council grant custody of the Township-owned statues of prime ministers of Canada to Createscape Waterloo Region for a period of 20 years, and grant a licence of non-exclusive occupancy of property described as Block 102, Plan 58M-249, the extent of which is shown on Attachment A, in favour of Createscape Waterloo Region for the purpose of the installation and maintenance of statues of prime ministers of Canada for a period of 20 years, subject to Createscape entering into an agreement to the satisfaction of the Municipal Solicitor and generally as set out in Attachment B of Report CAO-2026-15; and

THAT Council direct staff to present a By-Law to authorize the Mayor and Clerk to enter into the agreement generally in accordance with the proposed agreement attached to Report CAO-2026-15, and to the satisfaction of the Municipal Solicitor, for the purpose of granting a Licence of Occupancy and conveying custody of the Township-owned statues of prime ministers; and

THAT Council confirm its commitment to cover the cost of reinstallation of existing statues as a one-time expense to a maximum of \$78,000; and

THAT the public donations in the amount of \$12,800 plus any future public donations to the Township for the Prime Ministers Path project be transferred to Createscape Waterloo Region; and

THAT the Township continue to accept donations for the Prime Ministers Path project, and provide receipts, only until December 31, 2026; and

THAT upon signing of the agreement by both parties the Prime Ministers Path Community Steering Committee be disbanded, as its purpose will have been fulfilled, and that references

to the “volunteer committee” in Council’s resolution of July 28, 2025, shall be deemed to refer equally to Createscape Waterloo Region.

SUMMARY:

This report recommends the granting of a licence of non-exclusive occupancy of Township park property for the purpose of re-establishing the Prime Minister’s Path project. It also recommends granting custody of the statues owned by the Township, and sets out the terms for the necessary legal agreement. It also recommends confirmation of the amount of the Township’s commitment to the cost of installing or reinstalling the existing statues, and the disbanding of the steering committee once the agreement is signed.

BACKGROUND:

At its meeting of July 28, 2025, Council directed staff to proceed with the re-establishment of the Prime Minister’s Path project under certain terms. A Steering Committee has been established, and its Terms of Reference were approved by Council at the January 26, 2026, meeting. The Terms refer to the hand-off of the project to an organization that is arm’s length from the Corporation of the Township of Wilmot.

The July 2025 resolution also states as follows:

“Ownership & Reinstallation

The Township shall retain ownership of all Prime Ministers Path statues and proceed with their full reinstallation at the current site, including the public unveiling of the four additional statues currently in storage. Relocation of the statues to another site or municipality will not be considered.

The Township will consider the logistical and financial burden of the reinstallation as a one-time expense, to be covered from existing capital or operational resources pending the return of a Staff Report or quote of such work.

No Further Public Funding

From this point forward, no additional municipal tax dollars shall be allocated to the Prime Minister's Path project. Ongoing Township financial involvement shall be limited to routine park maintenance, which is already part of existing operations. Additionally, some staff time or consultation may be required from departments such as Public Works and Parks & Recreation to support the volunteer committee in matters of site access, logistics, or infrastructure compatibility; however, this support shall be limited, non-programmatic, and provided only as necessary to ensure safe and responsible use of Township property.”

The entire Council resolution of July 28, 2025, is included for reference as Attachment C.

REPORT:

The Prime Ministers Path Community Steering Committee has had several meetings and has established subcommittees to move ahead with various aspects of the project. One of the first priorities is for the Township to make legal arrangements to grant custody of the statues to an

arm's length organization, and to grant a licence of non-exclusive occupancy on Township park property.

Arm's Length Organization

Createscape Waterloo Region is recommended to be the organization to have custody of the statues and to have the licence of non-exclusive occupancy of the park property. Createscape is well established, respected, local to Waterloo Region, and has a demonstrated commitment to the Prime Ministers Path project through its continued involvement since the project's early days.

Licence to Occupy the Park Property

In its July 28, 2025, resolution Council confirmed that the park property situated northeast of the Township's administrative offices will be the site where the Prime Ministers Path project will be re-established. The recommended legal mechanism to do this is the granting of a licence of non-exclusive occupancy for the purpose of the installation and maintenance of the statues and their ongoing display in the context of an educational approach related to the history, role, and impact of Canadian prime ministers.

Custody of Existing Statues

The Township owns statues of nine Canadian prime ministers, and by granting custody of them to Createscape would be delivering on its intent to make this project a community initiative rather than a municipal government initiative. The Township would remain a partner as the provider of the site and as the owner of those statues.

By committing to a long-term licence of occupancy the Township is confirming its ongoing commitment to this project as one of national significance being hosted locally. The initial term of the licence of occupancy is to be 20 years, with extensions for further terms of 20 years allowable upon mutual agreement of the parties. Any such extension could be allowed before the end of a 20-year term.

Reinstallation Costs for the Existing Statues

In its resolution of July 28, 2025, Council confirmed that "The Township will consider the logistical and financial burden of the reinstallation as a one-time expense, to be covered from existing capital or operational resources pending the return of a Staff Report or quote of such work." Council received Report CS-2025-19 regarding the reinstallation costs for the existing statues at its August 25, 2025, meeting. There are existing statues of nine prime ministers requiring six bases, as four are grouped together requiring one base. Estimated reinstallation cost is \$78,000 which includes a 30% contingency. As the Steering Committee is now preparing for a new launch of the project it is now appropriate to confirm the availability of this funding.

Community Donations

Since July of 2025 members of the public have donated \$12,800 to the Township for the Prime Ministers Path project. This funding should now be made available to Createscape as it starts to incur costs in preparation for reinstallation and unveiling. Any future donations to the Township for this project should be transferred to Createscape without the need for additional direction from Council. It is anticipated that in the coming months the project will be able to

accept donations directly, so that the Township's involvement should no longer be needed beyond the end of 2026. The Township's website would direct potential donors to the project's own website.

Disbanding of the Community Steering Committee

As the Prime Ministers Path project transitions to Createscape Waterloo Region, the continued role of the Prime Ministers Path Community Steering Committee as a formal advisory body to Council is no longer required. The Committee was established as a special purpose committee to provide advice to Council on the re-establishment and transition of the project; however, its mandate does not include authority to direct or implement the project independently, nor to oversee external organizations.

Disbanding the Committee will remove administrative and procedural requirements associated with a formal municipal advisory body (including formal meetings, quorum, and reporting obligations), which are no longer aligned with the project's needs. This will enable members and project partners to continue advancing their work more effectively outside of the municipal governance structure, consistent with Council's direction that the project proceed as a community-led initiative. Staff are currently providing administrative support to the Committee, and disbanding the Committee will eliminate this ongoing staff resource requirement.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE TOWNSHIP OF WILMOT STRATEGIC PLAN:

Healthy Community

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The licence is proposed to have a nominal fee of \$2.00 per year for the 20-year term. Details and options are set out in the proposed agreement.

The Township is responsible for insuring the statues, with the estimated cost of premiums being approximately \$1,000 per year per statue.

The cost of re-installation is estimated at \$78,000 which includes a 30% contingency. This can be paid from the Operating Reserve. The Steering Committee or Createscape may initiate the work and invoice the Township up to that amount.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Plan showing extent of easement
- B. Proposed Agreement
- C. Council Resolution of July 28, 2025