



the most powerful tools for preserving and developing the tangible and intangible heritage of nations that the recognition of this date would serve to encourage linguistic diversity and multilingual education. A handful of UNESCO members including Canada brought this resolution forward indicating that these qualities and concepts represented universal values that strengthen the unity and cohesion of societies.

The proposal from Mr. Islam was well received by the Public Art Advisory Committee; they recommended that Mr. Islam take his concept forward to Council and that he include further information regarding site selection criteria, his budget requirements and fundraising plans.

Mr. Islam appeared before Council on February 26, 2007, where he presented his proposal for a Mother Language monument and asked Surrey Council for support in principle for his project and requested that a site on City land be identified to house this public art installation. Council referred this proposal to staff and asked for a report regarding potential sites for this art donation.

## **DISCUSSION**

Mr. Islam has received broad community support for this project concept. (See Attachment A for a list summarizing these letters of endorsement). In addition Mr. Islam has become a member of the Arts Council of Surrey and their status as a not for profit charitable organization will allow them to collaborate on grant applications. His fundraising goal for the project is \$200,000.

Mr. Islam understands that this project will require the development and distribution of a call to artists for design proposals, and then a selection panel will be recruited to identify the best artist and design. This panel's recommendation will go forward to the Public Art Advisory Committee and Council for final approval. Although the design is still to be determined it will be original and unique to Surrey. In accordance with the Public Art Program – Gifts, Donations and Acquisition Guidelines, this monument would be donated to the City and become part of the City's permanent public art collection.

Staff met with Mr. Islam to discuss site criteria. Generally he envisions the monument sitting on a concrete base that is approximately 20 ft. x 40 ft. The location would ideally have an adjacent plaza or assembly space for up to 500 people. To support these ceremonial events the site must have adequate parking, security, washroom facilities and opportunities for indoor reception space. The site should be highly visible, accessible, and prominent and make a strong statement about the importance of the concepts of preserving mother languages and promoting cultural sharing. The site should have the potential to become a cultural tourism destination.

Parks, Recreation and Culture staff and the proponent for the Mother Language Monument met and considered three potential locations for the installation: the grounds of City Hall, Bear Creek Park, and Holland Park. It is proposed that once preliminary design concept has been established, the design concept and a final proposed site location will come back to Council for approval. Attachment B provides a brief outline of the three sites being considered.

## CONCLUSION

Surrey's Cultural Strategic Plan states: "The diversity of Surrey (geographic, ethnic, cultural) is one of its greatest assets and a characteristic which makes it unique. Opportunities to celebrate this diversity through cultural sharing are integral to the success of the Cultural Strategic Plans..." The City of Surrey is a leader in exploring new ways to champion intercultural inclusivity, promoting cultural sharing and celebrating our diverse communities. The City has expressed this through policies, establishing committees and implementing public art and special events with related themes. Given the City's commitment to diversity, providing a letter of support in relation to the fundraising efforts to establish a Mother Language Monument is consistent with Council priorities. A letter of support from the City to Mr. Islam will assist him in his efforts to secure donations. A proposed location for the Monument will come to Council for approval once a design concept has been developed through the public art process.

Laurie Cavan  
General Manager  
Parks, Recreation and Culture

## **ATTACHMENT A**

The following Federal and Provincial dignitaries have provided supporting letters:

- Honorable Gordon Campbell, Premier, Province of British Columbia
- Honorable Wally Oppal, Attorney-General, Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism, BC
- Honorable Michael De Jong, Minister Responsible for Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, BC
- Stephen Owen, MP, Vancouver – Quadra, BC
- Penny Priddy, MP, Surrey-North, BC
- Nina Grewal, MP, Fleetwood-Port Kells, BC
- Raymond Chan, MP, Richmond, BC
- Sukh Dhaliwal, MP, Newton – North Delta, BC
- Dave S. Hayer, MLA, Surrey-Tynehead, BC
- Blair Wilson, MP, West Vancouver – Sunshine Coast – Sea to Sky Country, BC

The following local dignitaries and community services leaders have provided supporting letters:

- David Suzuki, David Suzuki Foundation, BC
- Eyob Naizghi, Executive Director, (MOSAIC) Multilingual Orientation Services Association for Immigrant Communities, BC
- Christine Mohr, Executive Director, OPTIONS: Services to Communities Society, BC
- Rebecca Shields, Executive Director, Deafblind Services Society of British Columbia, BC
- Michael Nicholson, Executive Director, Canadian National Institute of the Blind, BC
- Mandakranta Bose, Professor Emeritus, (UBC) The University of British Columbia, BC
- Charan Gill, Executive Director, Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society, BC
- Tom Avendano, President, Multicultural helping Housing Society, BC
- Deborah Jacobs, Director, Squamish Nation Chief's & council's Office, BC

The following municipal governments supported International Mother Language Day proclamations in 2007:

- City of Surrey, B.C.
- City of Vancouver, B.C.
- City of Richmond, B.C.
- City of Burnaby, B.C.
- City of North Vancouver, B.C.
- City of New Westminster, B.C.

## **ATTACHMENT B**

### **Option 1 - City Hall**

City Hall is a potential location for the Mother Language Monument, as it possesses many amenities and features that would be of benefit to visitors to the monument and to public celebrations of International Mother Language Day. It is centrally located for all Surrey residents, has ample parking, direct access to public transportation, access to electricity, proximity to catering facilities, washrooms, and meeting rooms, and has room for large group assembly in City Hall's beautiful gardens. Being the site of the administrative centre for the City of Surrey, the location would demonstrate the City's support for linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.

### **Option 2 - Bear Creek Park**

Bear Creek Park is a City level park and popular destination point for residents of Surrey. A number of locations within Bear Creek Park are being considered as potential locations for the Mother Language Monument as it has ample parking, indirect access to public transportation, access to electricity and washrooms, proximity to assembly buildings such as the Bear Creek Pavilion and Surrey Arts Centre, and a number of outdoor spaces suitable for large group assemblies and celebrations. Many annual events and celebrations are currently staged in the park. Bear Creek Park has some potential to support the Mother Language monument.

### **Option 3 Holland Park**

Holland Park is also a potential location for the Mother Language Monument. Holland Park, the City's first urban park, already includes many art installations that are integrated with the park garden and plaza designs. Visible from adjacent roadways and sky train, the park has direct access to public transportation, some on site parking, future public washrooms, and room for large group assembly in the newly installed park grounds. The park is highly structured and the existing custom designed features and public art pieces will limit the size, context and focus of the monument should it be installed at Holland Park.