

AFGHANISTAN MONUMENT

(National Monument to Canada's Mission in Afghanistan)

- The National Monument to Canada's Mission in Afghanistan will recognize the commitment and sacrifice of Canadian men and women who served in Afghanistan, as well as the support provided to them by Canadians at home.
- In August 2020, Veterans Affairs Canada and Canadian Heritage jointly issued a news release announcing the five teams selected to develop design concepts for the National Monument to Canada's Mission in Afghanistan.
- We are continuing to work closely with Canadian Heritage and the National Capital Commission on next steps, including a public viewing and an online survey following the development of all finalist teams' design concepts.
- Throughout this project, the Government of Canada is engaging and consulting with a cross-section of stakeholders, including Veterans, Canadian Armed Forces members, police services members and others who participated in the whole of government mission, as well as families and Indigenous communities.
- While this initiative continues to be a priority, some milestones and next steps in the project may be impacted by COVID-19.

BACKGROUND – AFGHANISTAN MONUMENT **(NATIONAL MONUMENT TO CANADA’S MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN)**

Statistics

Over 40,000 Canadian Armed Forces deployed to Afghanistan between 2001 and 2014. Many Canadians died as a result of their service in Afghanistan, including Canadian Armed Forces members, a diplomat, foreign aid workers, a government contractor and a journalist. The mission in Afghanistan is Canada’s fifth most costly military engagement in terms of lives lost. Thousands of Canadian Armed Forces members were also injured—physically and psychologically—during the mission.

Project

On May 8, 2014, the Government of Canada announced that a monument will be built to commemorate Canada’s mission in Afghanistan. The project budget, which was included in Budget 2014, is five million dollars. Veterans Affairs Canada is the project proponent funding this initiative, whereas Canadian Heritage—the federal department responsible for national monuments on federal lands in Canada’s Capital Region—is the project manager and the National Capital Commission—responsible for design and land use approval on federal lands in the Capital—is responsible for project implementation and will assume ownership of the monument upon its completion.

Determining the most appropriate site for the Monument has been critical (e.g. visibility, accessibility, etc.); site feasibility studies and stakeholder consultations have been an important part of the process. In June 2019, the National Capital Commission Board approved the site located across from the Canadian War Museum on LeBreton Flats.

In August 2019, Canadian Heritage launched the Request for Qualifications, phase one of the design competition process, which invited teams of professional artists, architects, landscape architects, and other urban design professionals to submit their qualifications for consideration in this competition. The Request for Qualifications closed on February 27, 2020. In May 2020, five finalist design teams were selected, from the 24 submissions received, by the seven-member independent jury established for the design competition process. VAC and Canadian Heritage jointly issued a news release on August 24, 2020, announcing the names of these teams.

In early 2020, VAC undertook consultations with stakeholders on design considerations for the Monument. An online survey was made available to Canadians in January 2020. Over 4,000 people responded, with 72% having a link to Canada's military and/or the mission in Afghanistan. Following this, two in-person consultations were held in February 2020. The first meeting included members of the VAC Ministerial Commemoration Advisory Group as well as representatives of organizations that took part in the whole-of-government mission. The second meeting included representatives of the Algonquin of Pikwakanagan First Nation and the Algonquin of Kitigan Zibi Anishinaabe First Nation. Feedback received from these consultations helped inform the development of design guidelines (approved by the National Capital Commission's Board of Directors on April 23, 2020), which will help to guide finalist design teams in developing their concepts for phase two of the design competition process, the Request for Proposals. Results of these consultations were made public on VAC's website on June 4, 2020.

Next Steps

VAC continues to work closely with Canadian Heritage and the National Capital Commission on next steps. Now that the finalist design teams have been selected, and as the design competition moves into the Request for Proposals phase, teams will work to develop their design concepts. This includes a virtual site visit led by Canadian Heritage and the National Capital Commission and expected to take place in October 2020, when finalist design teams will have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the Monument site using drone imagery and videos. Teams will also have the opportunity to obtain additional details related to phase two of the competition. Canadian Heritage will then coordinate a public viewing of the design concepts as well as an online survey over May and June 2021. Following this, the jury will again meet to review the finalist teams' design concepts and select the winning design, expected to take place in July 2021, with the winning team being notified in August 2021. It must be noted that the fluidity of the COVID-19 situation may affect these dates.

Other Memorials

A separate Kandahar Airfield Memorial, built to honour the memory of the fallen during Canada's campaign in Afghanistan, was repatriated to Canada at the end of the mission and is now permanently housed within a

purpose-built pavilion—named Afghanistan Memorial Hall—at the National Defence Headquarters Carling Campus in Ottawa. In addition, the Ontario provincial government has announced its plans to proceed with a memorial within the legislative precinct at Queen’s Park, which will recognize Canada’s fallen from the war in Afghanistan as well as the attacks on September 11, 2001. While these memorials recognize those who served in Afghanistan, they are separate initiatives from the National Monument to Canada’s Mission in Afghanistan and we have no involvement.