Samuel de Champlain Monument Working Group

FINAL REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS

July 2019
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### Reference Material

- Audio Clip: Residential school survivors' stories motivated people to make Canada better, says Murray Sinclair | CBC Radio
- Souvenir Booklet of the Champlain Monument at Orillia, Updated, Folder Champlain Monument, File Orilliana, Orillia Public Library.
- http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf
- https://www.rcaanc-cirmac.gc.ca/eng/1450124405592/1529106060525
The purpose of this paper is to summarize the findings of the public consultation process undertaken by the Samuel de Champlain Monument Working Group.

The Samuel de Champlain Monument Working Group was established in the Fall of 2018 with a mandate to pursue public consultation and report back to Council and the Parks Canada Agency on an appropriate path forward for Orillia’s Champlain Monument that is respectful and representative of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives.

Following the Monument’s removal for restoration work in 2017, the Parks Canada Agency and the City of Orillia experienced a rise in inquiries and media attention related to the piece. This included varying degrees of support for and opposition to the Monument stemming from its representation of First Nations.

With this in mind, the Working Group set out to establish a robust public consultation process to encourage participation and fully understand the issues surrounding the piece. We were committed to developing an informative, inclusive, and transparent process that included public workshops, one-on-one stakeholder meetings, focused presentations by request and an online questionnaire.

The final recommendations of the Working Group were not arrived at lightly; the information presented herein demonstrates the complexity of the issue and controversy surrounding the Monument. They were developed after careful consideration of the information available to us through the public consultation process, input from subject experts, research of the current debate over monuments in general, and the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. As mandated, the recommendations are meant to be respectful and representative of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives and seek to honour the past within the context of contemporary knowledge and wisdom.
The Champlain Monument is a public art installation located within the City of Orillia’s Couchiching Beach Park on a parcel of land owned and maintained by the federal government. It was erected to commemorate the advent into Ontario of Europeans under Champlain’s leadership, and as a symbol of goodwill between the French and English. Mr. Charles Harold Hale, publisher of the Orillia Packet newspaper and community advocate, first proposed the idea of the Monument to officers of the Orillia Canadian Club following a trip to Quebec and St. John, New Brunswick, both of which have their own tributes to the French explorer.

Orillia was the logical site for the piece as the nearest town to the Huron-Wendat capital of Cahiagué. Champlain came to the area with the Huron-Wendat to strengthen trade relationships and left with first-hand knowledge and experience of their culture and traditions. Records show that they arrived at Cahiagué (which was believed to be near present-day Warminster) on August 17, 1615, and was welcomed into the village by Chief Darontal. Champlain notes in his journal that they passed through The Narrows just outside of Orillia in September and later returned to Cahiagué, where he wintered before setting out for Quebec in 1616.

**THE UNVEILING**

The Monument was commissioned to mark the 300th anniversary of the French explorer’s arrival in the region. The unveiling was scheduled for August 17, 1915, but the work was delayed due to World War One. It was finally revealed on July 1, 1925, in front of roughly 10,000 spectators. Dignitaries included the Honorable Rodolphe Lemieux, Speaker of the House, along with Vernon March, the sculptor, Grand Chief Ovide Siou of the Hurons at Lorette, now the Huron-Wendat of Wendake, Chief Big Canoe, and honourary Chief John Bigwind of the Chippewas of Rama First Nation.
The delay afforded Orillia the opportunity to garner national attention in the Monument’s unveiling. The relationship between French and English speaking Canadians had long been strained, which was further compounded by conscription. With this in mind, the ceremony grew into a celebration of European exploration and the promotion of good will between English and French Canada, a sentiment reflected in the final wording of the plaque.

**MONUMENTAL FACTS**

The Monument was created by Mr. Vernon March of Farnborough, Kent, England, the sculptor who would later go on to fashion the War Memorial in Ottawa. Orillia’s Champlain Monument includes a 12-foot bronze sculpture of the French explorer dressed for court along with two sculpture groups and an interpretive plaque. The plinth that it is standing on is made of Benedict Stone, cast in situ, from Montreal and weighs 45 tons. The budget was set at $20,000 but the delay due to the war added $14,000 to the project, primarily due to inflation of the price of bronze.

The men who posed for the piece were Chippewas from Rama First Nation. “Stories are told of the men walking to Orillia from Rama for the work and posing for 9 to 10 hours for the piece,” stated Mark Douglas, Elder - Chippewas of Rama First Nation. While the Huron-Wendat were the major trading partners with the French in 1615, they eventually moved to Wendake due to war and disease. The Huron-Wendat Nation of Wendake, QC, are known descendants.

**HURON-WENDAT NATION REPRESENTATION**

Despite its grandeur and artistic merit, the Monument has faced scrutiny for its singular, colonial perspective.

The sculpture groupings were designed to emphasize Champlain’s role in bringing Christianity and Commerce to New France. Noted in the souvenir booklet of the 1925 unveiling, they portray the Huron-Wendat at the feet of Christianity and Commerce as though they are receiving these gifts. Yet, the Huron-Wendat were not passive observers but major
trading partners with the French. They guided Champlain from the habitation in Quebec to
the area to strengthen these relations, involving the French explorer in a war expedition
against the Iroquois threatening Huron-Wendat territory.

He was welcomed by Chief Darontal into the village of Cahiagué, the Huron-Wendat capital
and fished at The Narrows, just outside of Orillia where Lake Couchiching meets Lake Simcoe
before setting out for Iroquois country south of Lake Ontario. He was wounded in the
advance and wintered in Cahiagué as Chief Darontal’s guest. During this time, he would have
gained first-hand knowledge and experience of the Huron-Wendat culture and traditions.
This complex and cooperative relationship between Champlain and the Huron-Wendat
people is lost in Orillia’s Monument. While helping to set the Monument apart from others
observed by Hale, its portrayal of the Huron-Wendat people is a reflection of the prevailing
attitudes of superiority rather than historical events.

In 1913 when the piece was commissioned, Indigenous people had few rights. They were not considered
Canadian citizens and therefore did not have the right to vote. The Indian Act took away their right to practice their
culture, restricted their access to the courts, and took away their right to gather in order to protest or even to
educate their children. First Nations people were not involved in the re-enactment of Champlain’s arrival with
the Huron-Wendat held during the Monument’s unveiling, portrayed instead by non-Indigenous
performers. The Chiefs in attendance would have required special permission to be there through the
Department of Indian Affairs.

Undeniably a remarkable artistic achievement honouring the
French explorer, the Monument falls short in its accurate depiction of the reciprocal
relationship Champlain had with the Huron-Wendat people and the important role they
played in his trade mission and survival.
RESTORATION WORK

Ownership and maintenance of the Monument, together with the parcel of land upon which it sits, was transferred to the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources in 1955. Today, the Parks Canada Agency is the Monument’s steward and maintains the piece. In 2015, the Agency conducted a full condition assessment on the Monument amidst growing concern related to the state of the steps and plinth. The final report recommended that both be replaced along with the foundation and that conservation work on the statues be conducted at the same time.

Restoration work began in 2017 and was set out in three phases:

- **Phase 1** - Demolition and removal work with construction of a new foundation.
- **Phase 2** - Conservation work on the bronze statues and masonry steps along with the fabrication of a new plinth.
- **Phase 3** - Replacement of the staircase, plinth, and Monument.

To date, the foundation and staircase have been re-constructed on the original site. The bronze sculptures have been re-conditioned and are being stored until further consultation with stakeholders.

DEVELOPMENTS

Since conducting the condition assessment, a number of developments have impacted the restoration project:

- In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission completed its mandate, publishing 94 calls to action. In it was a commitment from the federal government to a renewed Nation-to-Nation relationship with Indigenous peoples based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership.
- The restoration project and 400th anniversary commemorations of Champlain’s arrival within the region have raised the profile of the Monument in the media. Concerns over
the Monument’s representation of the Huron-Wendat people have been raised by members of the public and Indigenous communities with the Parks Canada Agency and the City of Orillia.

➢ In 2017, The Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario approved the following motion as part of their Annual General Meeting, "To contribute $25 000 toward the commissioning of an alternative art project in the vicinity of the current Champlain Monument in Orillia to address the bias and insensitivity of the current Monument and to demonstrate our support for the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission."

➢ Orillia City Council and the Honorable Catherine McKenna, also received letters from the Huron-Wendat Nation expressing their concerns with the Monument’s representation of its people. They were looking for further engagement in finding alternatives to the Parks Canada Agency’s Champlain Monument in Orillia, stressing the importance of working together in developing constructive educational initiatives that reflect and showcase a common history within the area.

➢ Correspondence has also been received by the Parks Canada Agency and the City of Orillia from residents supporting the return of the Monument in its original state, including a petition from 59 residents (Petition # 421-02974 – dated Nov. 28, 2018).

As a result, the Parks Canada Agency placed the restoration project on hold and would not be reinstalling the Monument until further consultation could occur. To that end, the city of Orillia and Parks Canada jointly established a Working Group to pursue inclusive public consultations and report back to Council and the Agency on an appropriate path forward for the Champlain Monument that is respectful and representative of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives.
At the request of the Parks Canada Agency, the creation of the Samuel de Champlain Monument Working Group was ratified by City of Orillia Council on August 16, 2018 and met formally for the first time in October 2018. The Working Group consisted of the following voting members:

- Parks Canada Agency (Co-Chair)
- City of Orillia (Co-Chair)
- Chippewas of Rama First Nation
- Huron-Wendat Nation
- Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario
- Citizen at Large – City of Orillia resident
- Citizen at Large – City of Orillia resident

The Citizen(s) at Large were advertised for and chosen by the City of Orillia by the means of a call for submissions. A total of (6) complete submissions were received and vetted by the City of Orillia Working Group Representatives.

The Working Group set out to develop a fulsome and inclusive consultation process that included the creation of a Discussion Paper, a Frequently Asked Questions document, (3) Public Workshops in Orillia, (4) Discussion Meetings in Rama First Nation, and a Questionnaire.

Before the consultation process was officially launched, the Working Group invited a cross-section of subject matter experts to make one-on-one presentations to the Working Group. The purpose of these presentations was to aid the Working Group in understanding the history and issues surrounding the Monument. A total of (2) meetings were held to accommodate (6) presentations along with a visit to Regent Park Public School where members of the Working Group met with student leaders.
Launched on the City of Orillia’s website on February 22, 2019, the public was encouraged to attend a workshop and read through the Discussion Paper and FAQ’s document before taking part in the questionnaire. The questionnaire asked the following:

1. **Have you had an opportunity to participate in any of the following?**
   - [ ] I have attended a workshop.
   - [ ] I have attended a workshop and have read the FAQ.
   - [ ] I have read the discussion paper.
   - [ ] I have read the discussion paper and attended a workshop.
   - [ ] I have read the discussion paper, FAQ and attended the workshop FAQ.
   - [ ] I have read the discussion paper and FAQ.
   - [ ] I have read the FAQ and attended a workshop.

2. **What is your preferred option for a path forward for the Monument that is respectful and reflective of the area’s shared history?**
   - [ ] Reinstall it as is with the addition of educational and interpretive pieces adjacent to the Monument.
   - [ ] Bring back the figures but in a different configuration.
   - [ ] Do not reinstall it within the City of Orillia.
   - [ ] Other, please specify.

3. **Tell us why you chose your answer to Question 2.**

4. **The plaque accompanying the Monument states the following.** “Erected to commemorate the advent into Ontario of the white race, under the leadership of Samuel de Champlain, the intrepid French explorer and colonizer, who, with fifteen companions, arrived in these parts in the summer of 1615 and spent the following winter with the Indians, making his headquarters at Cahiagué, the chief village of the Hurons, which was near this place. A symbol of goodwill between the French and English speaking people of Canada.”

   **What would be your preferred option for the plaque?**
   - [ ] Return it as is.
   - [ ] Update the wording.

5. **Please provide any other comments you may have regarding the Monument.**
   **What is your postal code?**
For those that wished to engage in a deeper conversation around the Monument there were a total of (3) public workshops held at various times and locations within the City of Orillia and (2) in Rama First Nation by their representatives on the Working Group.

A comprehensive media campaign was undertaken to ensure the public was aware of the consultation process.

- A memo was provided in the Council Information Package on February 15, 2019.
- An advertisement was placed in the Orillia Today newspaper distributed weekly free of charge to each household in Orillia. The ad ran a total of (5) times - Feb 27, Mar 6, March 14, April 4 and 11.
- Social media posts were published on the City of Orillia social media channels.
- 1000 “info cards” were distributed by the Working Group at workshops and at the Orillia City Centre.
- The Orillia City Centre Front lobby TV displayed a rotating ad from February 25, 2019 to April 30, 2019.
- Details regarding the consultation were published in the Information Orillia Hub newsletter every week starting Mar 5, 2019 to April 30, 2019.
- Invitations were sent to Elders within Rama First Nation and information regarding the process was included as part of their community meeting agenda.
In Orillia, the workshops were facilitated by Michael Jones and Erin Dixon.

Michael Jones is a leadership educator, author and Juno nominated pianist/composer. He has served with the Banff Centre, the Fetzer Institute and many other leading edge universities and centres of learning. He has also been a guest speaker and conference facilitator for a variety of companies and organizations including Quaker Foods / PepsiCo Global Nutrition Group, The Greenleaf Centre for Servant Leadership, the International Leadership Association and many others. Locally he has been Chair and Co-Chair of the Community Cultural Roundtable for many years. Michael is widely recognized for his innovative work in bringing together authentic leadership with his music, creative artistry and dialogue practice to further the work of place-making, personal transformation and collective learning. Throughout his work he asks how leaders can re-imagine places as living systems inspired by nature, art, community and our deepening humanity.

Walking with vision and all of life in mind, Erin Dixon shares her Otipemisiwak-Métis heritage and passion for life – from Indigenous science to living systems transformation. At home Erin is a committed co-chair and facilitator for Feather Carriers Leadership for Life Promotion [Indigenous Community Development Circle] and works with leaders and change makers nationally at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity where she is lead faculty for the Truth and Reconciliation through Right Relations offering and Wise Practices for Indigenous Leaders. She currently supports research towards the emergence of the Turtle Island Institute at Waterloo University and on Wise Practices in Truth and Reconciliation through right relations for the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. A living landscape of synergy and reciprocity has brought her together with her mentor Michael Jones - Wasan Island, Tamarack Institute, The Nature Conservancy of Canada, The Good Work Institute at Bard College and the Garrison Institute amongst other constellations. Erin carries a BA in Law and Environmental Studies and a MA in Global Leadership from Royal Roads University, with post-graduate certification in Eco-Psychology. In 2017, Erin had the opportunity to attend a month-long systems change residency, “Getting to Maybe” hosted at the Banff Centre and in 2015 grounded through the Bioregionalism by Design offering at Schumacher Institute hosted by Regenesys Institute.
Together with the Working Group, an audio/visual presentation was created to open the Public Workshop sessions, followed by break-out groups to discuss and debate (3) key questions related to the Monument. These questions were:

1. **What is the story currently being told through the Monument?**
2. **What is the story we want to tell?**
3. **How do we go about telling this story? Challenges? Opportunities?**

Participants were also invited to storyboard their thoughts and ideas using a variety of tools, such as colour-coded post-it notes and large format table graphs. At the end of each break-out session, a member of each group was invited to report on the discussions of the group for debate among the workshop participants as a whole. Over the course of the (3) workshops, approximately 100 citizens took part. At the end of each workshop, the participants were invited to take part in the on-line questionnaire. Paper copies of the questionnaire were also provided, both at the workshops and at City Hall and were inputted manually by the City of Orillia Parks, Recreation and Culture Department.

In addition, the Samuel de Champlain Monument Working Group Representatives from Rama First Nation presented at a community meeting in January 2019 and have met with the Elders Council on 4 different occasions. During this process approximately 85 people participated.
Over the course of the (2) month public consultation process, 1080 unique responses where gathered using both on-line and manual questionnaires. The results were tabulated by the Parks Canada Agency’s Chief Social Scientist under the Agency’s External Relations and Visitor Experience Directorate.

It is important to note the questionnaire was a voluntary feedback tool/survey. While it was open to everyone in the community, only those that chose (self-selected) to provide feedback did so. In addition to the questionnaire, the Working Group considered all sources of feedback to reach our recommendations.

The following table details the home province of respondents;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>1053</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Edward Island</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yukon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within Ontario, the following table details respondents by postal code;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orillia, ON</td>
<td>685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrie, ON</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto, ON</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kawartha Lakes, ON</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midland, ON</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterborough, ON</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton, ON</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchener - Cambridge - Waterloo, ON</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oshawa, ON</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottawa - Gatineau, ON/QC</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**THE RESULTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater Sudbury, ON</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guelph, ON</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London, ON</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Bay, ON</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owen Sound, ON</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarnia, ON</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Catharines - Niagara, ON</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasaga Beach, ON</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belleville, ON</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collingwood, ON</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston, ON</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk, ON</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strong MIZ (rural towns)</strong></td>
<td><strong>182</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moderate MIZ (rural towns)</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weak MIZ (rural town)</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Territory (non-classified postal codes – not recognized or partial)</strong></td>
<td><strong>61</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*to classify rural towns, need the city with the postal code (as there can be many small towns in a single rural postal code) - Some of the rural towns may be associated with Orillia or Midland (due to L3V), but system did not code*
Question # 1

1. **Have you had an opportunity to participate in any of the following?**
   - I have attended a workshop.
   - I have attended a workshop and have read the FAQ.
   - I have read the discussion paper.
   - I have read the discussion paper and attended a workshop.
   - I have read the discussion paper, FAQ and attended the workshop FAQ.
   - I have read the discussion paper and FAQ.
   - I have read the FAQ and attended a workshop.

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**THE RESULTS**

- **Read Discussion Paper and FAQ:** 42%
- **Read FAQ Section on Champlain Monument:** 31%
- **Read Discussion Paper:** 20%
- **Read Discussion Paper, FAQ, and Attended Workshop:** 6%
- **Attended a Workshop/Information Session:** 1%
- **Read Discussion Paper and Attended Workshop:** 1%
- **Read FAQ and Attended Workshop:** <1%
Question # 2

2. What is your preferred option for a path forward for the Monument that is respectful and reflective of the area’s shared history?

- Reinstall it as is with the addition of educational and interpretive pieces adjacent to the Monument.
- Bring back the figures but in a different configuration.
- Do not reinstall it within the City of Orillia.
- Other, please specify.

Themes noted in the “Other” category include but are not limited to:
- dialogue with Indigenous communities
- dialogue with descendants
- reconfiguration or removal of figures
- moving the Monument to a different location
- commissioning of a new Monument

THE RESULTS
Question # 3

3. Tell us why you chose your answer to Question 2.

While the answers to the question are open and subjective, themes around the questions were centre on the following, but not limited to;

**Adding Context:** These are associated with what new content could be added to existing or new plaques/displays around the Monument to provide larger story/context around societal changes.

**History:** These are associated with the idea that you cannot change the past. Removing the statue does not erase or change the history/events. Should not rewrite history due to changing societal views. Needs to be kept to learn from and see how far society has come.

**As Art:** Different ways of expressing that the statue is a work of art, not a political statement of actual historical representation. As art, there is artistic license and that license was not intended to offend.

**Community:** Comments centre on the issue that the statue captures an event in time (where Champlain stayed). Also that the Monument has “always been there” and is part of the fabric of the community.

**Figures:** Comments centre around people feeling that the Monument does not represent today’s values or that of their community.
4. The plaque accompanying the Monument states the following. “Erected to commemorate the advent into Ontario of the white race, under the leadership of Samuel de Champlain, the intrepid French explorer and colonizer, who, with fifteen companions, arrived in these parts in the summer of 1615 and spent the following winter with the Indians, making his headquarters at Cahiage, the chief village of the Hurons, which was near this place. A symbol of goodwill between the French and English speaking people of Canada.” What would be your preferred option for the plaque?

☐ Return it as is.
☐ Update the wording.
WHAT WE HEARD

Following the Workshops, the Facilitators were invited to a Working Group meeting to share what they heard and observed from the workshop series. The following list details the themes that were evident throughout the process:

- The strongest opinion was to reinstall the Monument.
- A strong lack of education regarding the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was present.
- The Workshops were lacking in representation from certain demographics that could add differing perspectives such as residential school survivors and youth.
- There were many candid and unique conversations involving many different themes.
- Strongly charged opinions were also present.
- Cross-cultural conversations were developed as the Workshops progressed, showing active learning and an evolution of thinking within the groups.
- The capacity of the community to build partnerships and bridges was evident.
- The ability to look to the past while envisioning our future was a key discussion topic.
- Settler and First Nation co-evolving was also a present theme as well as respecting the uniqueness of the diverse cultures here today.
- References were noted “to the land between”, a transition zone between the Canadian Shield and the St. Lawrence Lowlands and what ecologists call an ecotone: the edge of a homogeneous ecosystem. During the time of Champlain as well as throughout history, this is a sacred place for First Nations peoples.
- Legacy stories were also explored, linking Champlain/Mnjikaning/Mariposa together along a trail as we walk the journey together.
- The concept of the “gift of truth” was also expressed, and along with education, more needs to be done to showcase the Monument and explain the many truths that exist.
- The theme of “opportunity” also came through during the sessions, the opportunity to teach, to change, and to demonstrate Reconciliation in a concrete and meaningful way.
Similar themes also emerged from the workshops participants. The following list details many of the thoughts and feelings shared through the process.

**The Monument as Art:** artistic integrity, political views as art, spectacular/powerful/beautiful, evokes emotion, compromises a piece of art (should it be changed), inclusion of interpretation/education/storyboards, reconfiguration

**The Monument as a piece of history:** is it accurate, what was the intent, relations between English and French Canada, revisionist history, fear of losing our history, lack of education

**The Monument in our community:** memories, part of our community, celebration, togetherness, public place vs. a museum, commemoration

**Perceptions on the Monument:** colonialism, religion, superiority, respect, equality, healing, impression of outside influences at work, commerce, the story as an organic and evolving entity, censorship, majority opinion vs. human rights, truth and reconciliation, oppression, responsibility, relationships, hope, balance, equality and inequality, spirituality, evolution, division, dominant, submissive, disrespectful, consensus, bias, goals, preserve, culture, hierarchy of harm, contemporary view, evolve, offensive, partnerships, tragedy, compromise, conquest, opportunity, customs, perspective, open-mindedness, patronizing, abusive, racist, Call to Action 45.111
While the Working Group has worked to summarize the many discussions, arguments and emotional stories heard throughout the consultation process, the words of the participants themselves are the most powerful. Below is a selection of comments that were gathered.

“Monument does not actually portray the history accurately.”

“The Monument is an accurate representation of how people interpreted history in the 1910’s.”

“Let’s celebrate & tell the stories of all. Build relationship through the monument. The monument has been cleaned and refurbished. Let’s take this cleaning to heal & clean the relationship between peoples. Put the monument back and add the “rest of the story”. The true story of the love between Champlain & the First Nations people. Let’s be a part of healing. Put the monument back & build on it, not rip it apart. Let’s tell a new story.”

“The removal or changing of a monument (or public art installation) does not change history BUT leaving this particular monument as it is tells a false story.”

“Is this the story we want to tell?”

“Piece is representative of the time it was created vs. historically accurate.”

“Is this what we want to perpetuate, the idea of inequality?”

“The monument is itself history, a testament to Orillia’s forefathers.”

“We are not destroying statues/history. We are correcting an offensive and inaccurate perspective in history.”

“Don’t see how it could be split – the Indigenous People are what makes it unique.”

“Our challenge and opportunity is how to proceed in a way that supports reconciliation.”

“It is part of our history and heritage, and it is beautiful. It is a wonderful pretext to understand our history and background, and teach it to our children and future generations.”

“Story told depends on audience and period – so dominant Christianity raising a cross meant spreading on Christ’s words at one time – but now means residential schools, subjugation!”

“Whether or not this monument is an accurate depiction of Canada’s history, it is undeniably a part of Orillia’s history. Put it back up, along with information detailing who commissioned
it, designed it and created it. It is not an historic representation, but a work of art and should be presented as such.”

“I am not a believer in historical revisionism. Do not detract from this wonderful work of art that the Orillia citizens of the day put so much emotional and financial resources into. Life is a progression and removing or altering the way markers is a mistake. Reinterpret in situ and let the additions be the means of comparison for the teaching opportunities. Let’s recognize that at that particular time French-English relations were predominant and the greatest threat to national unity.”

“The Monument is a world famous piece of art. To change it in any way for any reason would be wrong. Would you change any other piece of art, perhaps the Mona Lisa?”

“My 12 years old education cheated me! When I was out on the west coast 15 years ago and being acquainted with the Indigenous Peoples there in their cultures. I was never taught about them which is understandable but why wasn’t I taught about Indigenous People here in Ontario?”

“It is a part of the town’s history. At the time it was created racist attitudes prevailed and no one really understood they were racist (in the sense we do today) - the supervision committee (Hale, Frost, Curran, et al) had only the best of intentions. Given that the design of the monument precludes a modification of the statue to tone down the white superiority, it would be a mistake to try. To my mind, additional interpretive information explaining the monument as a piece representative of an era with different attitudes than today would allow for more informed discussion of the Native issues of today than either removing the statue or trying to change it would. This could do more for Native rights and our (government) treaty obligations than much of the obfuscation that seems to have gone on by politicians since the monument was built. Every visitor to our park could see a tangible example of past white superiority and Native subjugation first hand. It just needs to be thoughtfully pointed out.”

“For its aesthetic value, and as a memory of how we have and could see history, I have to say I like the statue. But, having studied a lot of public history, I know monuments are about three moments: the moment the statue represents, the moment the statue is erected, and the current moment, as it is public art. So it is more about who we were, and who we are, rather than history. It will always be who we were, but it doesn't have to be who we are.”
Since October 18, 2018 and during the course of its Mandate, the Samuel de Champlain Monument Working Group met a total of 13 times. Collectively, the Group logged a total of approximately 450 hours of research, consultation and meeting time. This figure does not take into account any time that individual members spent working in their respective roles.

The Public Consultation period was open for a total of 67 days on the City of Orillia website and garnered 1080 unique responses.

After our last public workshop concluded, the Working Group met on (3) three occasions to synthesize and evaluate all of the opinions gathered. As demonstrated by some of the comments included in this report, public opinion covered a broad range, from restoring the Monument “as is”, to restoring the Monument “as is” with additional interpretation, to not installing the Monument at all or to exploring an alternate configuration of the figures.

In arriving at our final recommendation, we endeavored to operate with humility, understanding that the recommendation that we deliver is as important in this present day as were the decisions made during the creation of the original Monument.

While there were many spirited discussions around the table, and at times heightened emotions, the Working Group remained committed to working co-operatively and with deep respect for each other and the organizations that were represented.

This recommendation represents a consensus of the (7) seven Working Group members. Part of that consensus was an understanding and appreciation of the work of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

As published in 2015, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada believes that in order for Canada to flourish in the twenty-first century, reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canada must be based on the following principles.

1. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* is the framework for reconciliation at all levels and across all sectors of Canadian society.
2. First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, as the original peoples of this country and as self-determining peoples, have Treaty, constitutional, and human rights that must be recognized and respected.
3. Reconciliation is a process of healing of relationships that requires public truth sharing, apology, and commemoration that acknowledge and redress past harms.

4. Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples’ education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity.

5. Reconciliation must create a more equitable and inclusive society by closing the gaps in social, health, and economic outcomes that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

6. All Canadians, as Treaty peoples, share responsibility for establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships.

7. The perspectives and understandings of Aboriginal Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers of the ethics, concepts, and practices of reconciliation are vital to long-term reconciliation.

8. Supporting Aboriginal peoples’ cultural revitalization and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, protocols, and connections to the land into the reconciliation process are essential.

9. Reconciliation requires political will, joint leadership, trust building, accountability, and transparency, as well as a substantial investment of resources.

10. Reconciliation requires sustained public education and dialogue, including youth engagement, about the history and legacy of residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal rights, as well as the historical and contemporary contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canadian society.

As the deliberations of the Working Group continued to unfold, it became apparent that we are very much still in the “Truth” stage of Truth and Reconciliation. While the Monument is certainly a testament to the skill of the artist and the values of its visionaries, the lack of on-site interpretation detailing the history of Champlain’s arrival in the area and his interaction with First Nations leaves visitors without context.

Extensive interpretation detailing the complex history shared between Samuel de Champlain and the First Nations that guided and assisted him during his journey would be required to be able to tell a fulsome story.
Even if extensive interpretation was developed in tandem with the Monument, it is clear from the public consultation process that the current configuration can colour the perceptions of visitors to the Park. In addition, the risk that is taken with passive interpretation is that it can be overlooked or ignored.

Therefore, the Samuel de Champlain Monument Working Group respectfully makes the following recommendations:

1. That the Samuel de Champlain Monument be re-installed with only the central figure of Samuel de Champlain atop the plinth and that this installation occur immediately.

2. That the First Nations figures along with the figures of the Fur Trader and Missionary be the subject of further consultation with First Nations. It is the hope of the Samuel de Champlain Monument Working Group that future work, with the aim of re-imagining their presence in the immediate vicinity of the original Monument, will result in a meaningful and concrete example of Reconciliation.

3. That the text of the original Monument’s “in-set plaque” be updated so that it will honour the original intent within the context of contemporary knowledge and wisdom.

4. That additional interpretive signage/pieces be developed and created with the participation of First Nations representatives to tell a historically accurate story of Samuel de Champlain and his relationship with First Nations.
CONCEPTUAL DRAWINGS
examples received through the consultation process