

**PROPOSAL FOR A PUBLIC  
COLLABORATIVE TO CREATE AN  
INCLUSIVE HISTORY  
AND COMMUNITY-BASED  
HERITAGE FOR VICTORIA**



# *PROPOSAL FOR A PUBLIC COLLABORATIVE TO CREATE AN INCLUSIVE HISTORY AND COMMUNITY-BASED HERITAGE FOR VICTORIA.*

## **SITUATION BRIEF # 30**

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Existing written, commemorated and celebrated histories of Victoria have been exclusionary. A common bias has privileged the white-settler narrative over that of others including marginalized minorities (race, nationality, religion, colour, gender) - and in particular has sidelined Indigenous presence.

This initiative proposes a public dialogue to address this issue and make first steps in correcting the “colonial” agenda. In short: deconstruct the traditional and currently received narrative and reconstruct a shared inclusive community memory.

The historical time-frame encompasses pre-contact history of the region through phases of settlement and development to present day.

### **Proposal**

Create a collaborative that would position the First Nations voice at the core of reimagining an inclusive history of the region.



## **Methodology**

A research program building on existing research initiatives such as the University of Victoria's existing collaboration with the Esquimalt, Songhees and Wsenec Nations (students, elders, knowledge-keepers, academics). It would comprise a series of talking circles to give voice to minority sources and points of view drawing on traditional knowledge and oral culture, living documents such as the environment, natural and built landscape and the arts, as well as archival and archaeological evidence. A public record would result from note-taking, video and audio records, also associated background research documents. Final compilation and editorial work would remain in the hands of a leadership drawn from the participants.

## **Outcomes**

The results would form the agenda for further collaborative story-building in a wider community: professional and public historians, traditional knowledge keepers, heritage advocates, educators, youth and community stakeholders

to critique the accepted historical paradigms, envision and articulate a more equitably community identity for Victoria. This would build consensus for new approaches, recommend further research agendas, start the formation of a new knowledge base and a plan for public education and information programs.

Furthermore, such an initiative would create and test a model that could be extended to Settler groups and communities in the region, from Metis First Nation to Asian and Black communities.

### **Employment and Training**

The program would employ a cadre of First Nations and other students with various disciplinary interests over several years to organize and document the learning circles, conduct archival research, organize the results then communicate the outcomes.

### **Practical results**

- Create a comprehensive reference resource
- Establish a framework for a community-wide site interpretation programs
- Prioritize an indigenous place re-naming initiative
- Build First Nations education curriculum resources
- Underpin local indigenous cultural tourism projects
- Support on-going federal and provincial historic plaques and markers review
- Initiate new public commemorations of significant places, people and events
- Revive traditional and ceremonial leisure activities: sports, games, music, theatrical performances.



## Skills development

Students would develop skills in the following areas:

- Curatorial: identification and management of tangible and intangible heritage resources
- Research: investigation and analysis of historical evidence
- Archival: collection, care and organization of historical records
- Interpretation: development of public learning programs
- Teaching: building curriculum support materials, engaging youth
- Scientific: fieldwork research and documentation
- Leadership: team organization, planning and direction
- Videography: technical expertise for recording, editing and production
- Electronic media: creating software for on-line knowledge access
- Journalistic: transcribing and reporting
- Communications: communicating with general and specialized publics

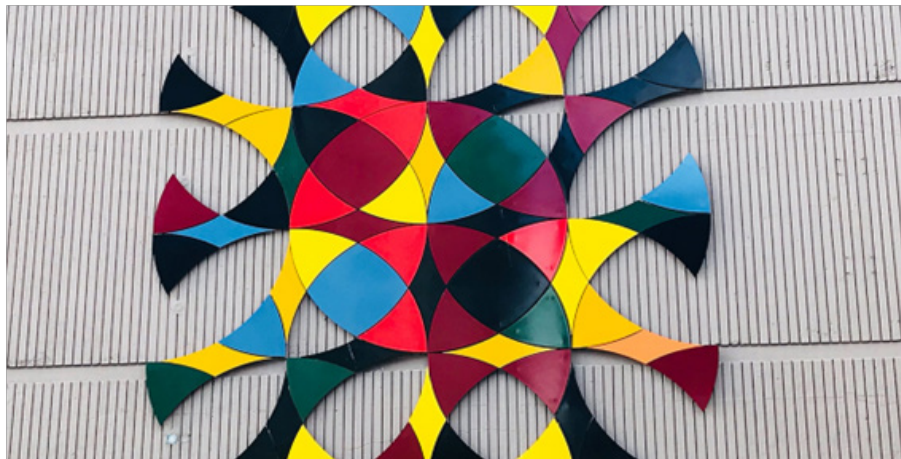
## Business case

The project process and outcomes would support:

- Visitor heritage sites, museums and programs (commercial and non-profit) within the region revising their exhibition and visitor programs to address cultural bias
- Initiatives by local First Nations in developing tourism-based cultural enterprises, including cultural centres, guided tours and performance events
- Traditional craft, arts production and retailing enterprises
- New media products: film, broadcast television, interactive media

## Observations

- If undertaken with as suggested, how might it be organized?
- What might be the multi-year costs of such an initiative?
- What sources for financial support might be explored?
- Is there capability or interest to engage other minority voices: Metis Nation, Black Awareness, Asian Migrants, etc.?
- What steps and approvals are needed to engage in developing such a capability?



## Resources

Songhees Culture Marine Tours Project <https://www.timescolonist.com/business/indigenous-tourism-songhees-nation-plans-marine-tours-that-honour-its-culture-4687771>

University of Victoria Indigenous Plan 2017-2022 <https://www.uvic.ca/assets2012/docs/indigenous-plan.pdf>