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**MAYOR DE BLASIO RELEASES MONUMENTS COMMISSION'S REPORT,  
ANNOUNCES DECISIONS ON CONTROVERSIAL MONUMENTS**

*Carefully considered recommendations from Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments and Markers resulted in decisions on several controversial monuments, as well as guidelines for future situations*

**NEW YORK**—Mayor de Blasio today announced decisions on several monuments on City properties, made after careful consideration of the recommendations and guidelines laid out in a report provided by the Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments and Markers.

“Thousands of New Yorkers got involved in this process, and there’s been an important conversation going on across the city,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “Reckoning with our collective histories is a complicated undertaking with no easy solution. Our approach will focus on adding detail and nuance to – instead of removing entirely – the representations of these histories. And we’ll be taking a hard look at who has been left out and seeing where we can add new work to ensure our public spaces reflect the diversity and values of our great city.”

The commission’s recommendations emphasize additive measures and public dialogue to ensure monuments and markers on City property are given accurate and inclusive historical context. Their report, which lays out a process for evaluating monuments or markers that may create controversy and strong public response in the future, can be found [here](#).

The Mayor embraces the commission's additive approach, its focus on careful historical analysis, and the open public process it recommends, and has instructed City agencies to translate the commission's recommendations into workable city procedures.

In addition to creating guidelines that can be applied to future scenarios, the commission’s report made recommendations on specific actions for four monuments and markers on City property. The Mayor’s decisions for City action on these specific sites are below:

- **J. Marion Sims statue** (5<sup>th</sup> Ave/103<sup>rd</sup> Street, Manhattan)  
The City will **relocate the statue to Green-Wood Cemetery** and take several additional steps to inform the public of the origin of the statue and historical context, including the

legacy of non-consensual medical experimentation on women of color broadly and Black women specifically that Sims has come to symbolize. These additional steps include: **add informational plaques** both to the relocated statue and existing pedestal to explain the origin of the statue, **commission new artwork** with public input that reflects issues raised by Sims legacy, and partner with a community organization to **promote in-depth public dialogues** on the history of non-consensual medical experimentation of people of color, particularly women.

- Canyon of Heroes/Henri Philippe Pétain plaque (Broadway, Lower Manhattan)  
The City will **keep all markers memorializing ticker-tape parades in place and explore opportunities to add context** such as wayfinding, on-site signage, and historical information about the people for whom parades were held. The Downtown Alliance has also partnered with the Museum of the City of New York to research more detailed biographical information on the individuals with markers along Broadway, and will make this information accessible through an app and web page.
- Columbus Circle  
The City will **keep the monument in place** and take additive measures to continue the public discourse, including **placing new historical markers in or around Columbus Circle** explaining the history of Columbus and of the monument itself, and **commissioning a new monument, at a location in the city not yet determined, recognizing Indigenous peoples.**
- Theodore Roosevelt statue (American Museum of Natural History)  
The City will **keep the monument in place and partner with the museum to provide additional context on-site through signage and educational programming**, which can offer multiple interpretations of the sculpture, the artist's intentions, and the nature of the piece as part of the history of AMNH. **The Department of Cultural Affairs will explore commissioning a new artwork in the vicinity to further those dialogues.**

Any permanent changes to City property – including relocation or addition of plaques and new work – must undergo a formal approval process by the Public Design Commission.

The commission's report makes a powerful argument for expanding the histories that are represented on City property through historical research and education, and by adding to the communities, individuals, and histories that are represented in statues, monuments, and markers. To support this effort, the Department of Cultural Affairs will commit up to \$10 million in capital funds over the next four years to create new permanent artwork honoring various communities that are underrepresented on City property.

The determination process for these new works will include extensive public engagement, as well as in depth historical research. The Ford Foundation has announced a grant of \$250,000 to establish the NYC Public History Project, supporting academic review of items on City property, New York City history, how these two intersect, and where there are opportunities to expand the history represented on public property to reflect the shared past of New Yorkers more fully.

The report also makes several recommendations regarding the potential for monuments to serve as anchors for curricula and other educational initiatives – an opportunity to examine how history is made, who gets to tell it, and how it’s represented publicly. The City will partner with nonprofit groups, educational institutions, and community organizations to foster additional public dialogue around specific monuments, as well as the City’s collection more broadly. In collaboration with DOE, Parks, DCLA, PDC and others, students in the city will be encouraged to actively engage with art, monuments, and markers through their studies of history, art, and society.

Throughout the review period, the commission also conducted extensive engagement with the public: more than 500 individuals attended public hearings, with nearly 200 offering verbal testimony, and an online survey received more than 3,000 responses. A summary of the public engagement process can be found at [nyc.gov/monumentscommission](https://nyc.gov/monumentscommission). The report recommends a framework for addressing future controversies regarding items on City-owned property based on this robust dialogue. Using public property as a site to explore and challenge the ways that people and their experiences are – or are not – represented in our collective histories presents an opportunity to spark dialogue and bring people together in an effort to foster a more inclusive understanding of what binds us together as a society. The commission’s recommended evaluation processes for art, monuments, and markers on City property embrace this vision for fostering public dialogue, creating new curricula, and promoting a more inclusive version of our shared past.

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