

Commemorative Naming Policy

Approved by: Indicates the party who originally provided final approval for the Policy.

Approval date: Date when the Policy received final approval (GM or Council).

Effective date: Date when the Policy is deemed to go into effect (usually the approval date but it can be different (i.e. due to legislation effective date, etc.)).

Revision Approved by: Indicates the party that provided approval for the latest revision.

Revision / Review date: Date(s) when the Policy was reviewed and/or revision approved.

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Policy statement

The City of Ottawa recognizes that the practice of commemoratively naming eligible assets is an effective way of honoring the histories, stories and legacies of the community and is committed to taking an equitable, inclusive and sustainable approach to commemorative naming.

Respecting the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples, specifically the inherent rights of self-determination and free, prior and informed consent, the City of Ottawa recognizes the need for engagement and consultation with the Anishinabe Algonquin Host Nation, who are the true rights holders of the unceded traditional lands upon which the city of Ottawa is built.

Purpose

The main objectives of this policy are to ensure:

- An equitable, inclusive and sustainable commemorative naming program that honours the uniqueness of Ottawa, including its diverse communities and cultures, histories and legacies that have built upon and live on the traditional territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation;
- That the City has an effective policy and process to provide positive recognition to persons, events and accomplishments that are worthy of municipal celebration;
- All approved commemorative names will be determined for suitability through a transparent process based on the accuracy and verifiability of the information provided to support the application; and
- A clear, focused, efficient, and timely naming process that includes an open and transparent consultation process facilitating community participation.

Application

This policy applies to all City departments and employees, including full-time, part-time, temporary employees, summer students and co-op placements, and persons acting on behalf of the City (consultants, contractors), as well as Members of Council and the public with respect to commemorative naming of eligible municipal assets.

This policy does not apply to:

- Assets that are contractually named under a sponsorship agreement are not eligible for commemorative naming until the term of the sponsorship agreement, and any applicable extension rights have ended, and will not be considered until such time.
- Ceremonial street blades, commemorations from pre-amalgamation, or any other type of municipal plaque outside of the Commemorative Naming Program.
- National Capital Commission (NCC) roadways and provincial highways.
- Any asset related to OC Transpo, or emergency response under the authority of Emergency and Protective Services
- Any asset governed by an external City of Ottawa Board including:
 - Ottawa Public Library Board
 - Ottawa Police Services Board
 - Ottawa Board of Health
 - Ottawa Community Housing

The Commemorative Naming Program is not applicable to memorials marking an individual's death, or recognition of other life events or special occasions such as births,

celebrations, anniversaries, or condolences. This policy maintains the historical practice of accommodating the use of public assets for private memorials only under programs where a private contribution is made to enhance municipal properties. These applications will be referred to memorial programs (e.g. Tree Dedication Program and Commemorative Bench Program) or any similar programs that may be developed in the future.

Commemorations with national and international scope and meaning will be directed to Federal lands or other suitable programs.

Proposed street names received as part of the development application process will be considered under Municipal Addressing By-law (2014-78), except for those intended to be a commemoration.

Policy requirements

General principles

- The Commemorative Naming Policy will abide by and reflect the principles outlined in the overarching Municipal Commemoration Policy.
- This policy is principles-based with an emphasis on public consultation, a dignified process for nominations, and a commitment to an open and inclusive process.
- The City of Ottawa will strive to prioritize commemoration of local Ottawa individuals, histories, stories, and legacies with equitable representation of communities and cultures, including underrepresented and equity-denied residents in urban, suburban, and rural areas.
- Consideration of proposed Indigenous names will be Indigenous community led. Proposed names received in the Anishinabemowin Algonquin language, the language of the Host Nation, another Indigenous language, or a name recognizing the Host Nation or an Urban Indigenous individual, organization, event, or concept, will require engagement with the Host Nation through the Anishinabe Algonquin Consultative Circle prior to approval. Where such commemorations are approved, the plaque or sign erected to mark the commemoration will be in Anishinabemowin (Algonquin), the applicable Indigenous language, English and French.
- Requests for names received from the Anishinabe Algonquin Host Nation will be prioritized for review.

- A commemorative name shall only be used once, and all names will be subject to a qualifying vetting process to determine that its adoptions would not impede emergency responses or lead to confusion, to ensure clear wayfinding within the city of Ottawa and not impair the ability of first responders to respond to emergencies or deliver services.
- The City of Ottawa will consider all proposals for commemorative naming of an eligible municipal asset but is under no obligation to accept a proposed name.
- Commemorative names are not subject to a specific term or time limit and re-naming is generally discouraged; however, the City may consider requests to re-name commemorative assets after an asset has borne a commemorative name for 25 consecutive years.
- If a commemoratively named asset has reached end of life or is damaged beyond repair, there is no requirement to replace the asset and maintain the commemorative name.
- Where a park has been named after an adjacent street that was commemoratively named, the park itself will not be considered commemoratively named. Provided the adjacent street retains its commemorative name, the park can be considered available for commemorative naming.
- The annual number of commemorative names approved by the program will align with available implementation budgets to ensure its financial sustainability.
- The Commemorative Naming program will be run on a hybrid model where the applicant and the City share the costs associated with the commemorative naming.
- The department who owns an asset that has been commemoratively named is responsible for any costs associated with repair or replacement of a commemorative plaque, sign or other method of marking the commemoration.

Approved commemorative names shall not:

- Be or perceived to be discriminatory or derogatory of race, colour, ethnic origin, gender identity or expression, sex, sexual orientation, faith, political affiliation, disability, or other social factors.
- Result in or be perceived to have a primary intent to confer an overt commercial or competitive advantage, benefit or preferential treatment or advertisement to the named party, or a development, product, service, or a particular business.
- Duplicate any commemorative name, or contain any abbreviations, initials, or acronyms. Previously approved commemorative names, military rank, and names in the Anishinabemowin language are exempt.

- Unduly detract from the character, integrity of the community or aesthetic quality of the property or unreasonably interfere with its enjoyment or use.
- Place the City in conflict with any agreements established in the acquisition or management of the property.
- Convey, in the City's view, a political or social advocacy message that could, offend, anger, or insult a third-party by way of its strategic location, timing or other factors that detract from the positive intent of commemorations.

Commemorative naming eligibility criteria

To be considered for commemoration:

- The proposed name must align with the criteria outlined in one of the naming categories below.
- The contribution or significance of the proposed name must be well documented, verifiable, and/or broadly acknowledged within relevant communities.
- The reputation of a proposed name must align with positive community values to be considered for naming.

Individual merit

For proposed commemorative names of individuals, consideration of the request will be based on merit.

The individual being commemorated may be living or deceased. The individual, or next of kin, must consent to their name being commemorated by way of a signed affidavit.

The nominated individual must have demonstrated merit for municipal commemoration by:

- Performing a deed or activity in an outstanding or professional manner or to an uncommonly high standard that brings honour to Ottawa, Ontario, or Canada.
- Risking one's life or performing an act of exceptional courage.
- Exceptional dedication to community service to the citizens of Ottawa, Ontario, or Canada.
- Achievements or actions of local historic or cultural significance to the culturally diverse communities in Ottawa.
- Leadership and commitment in fostering equality, equity, and/or worked to reduce discrimination and/or foster community cohesion.

Collective or group merit

For proposed commemorative names representing a collective or group, the nominated collective of individuals or group must have demonstrated merit for municipal commemoration by:

- Performing a deed or activity in an outstanding or professional manner or to an uncommonly high standard that brings honour to Ottawa, Ontario, or Canada.
- Risking one's life or performing an act of exceptional courage.
- Exceptional dedication to community service to the citizens of Ottawa or Canada.
- Achievements or actions are of local historic or cultural significance to the culturally diverse communities in Ottawa.
- Leadership and commitment in fostering equality, equity, and/or worked to reduce discrimination and/or foster community cohesion.

Events of local significance

For proposed commemorative names in recognition of an event with significance to Ottawa, or reflects Ottawa's celebration of provincial or national events, or contributed to its unique heritage. The event may qualify if it:

- Represents a historical, cultural, or milestone event.
- Recognizes collective military efforts that have a strong local connection and were sanctioned by the Government of Canada.
- Does not convey, or be perceived to convey, a political or social advocacy message.
- Recognition of individual veterans may be considered for Commemorative Street Naming for Veterans.

Commemorative Street Naming for Veterans criteria

For proposed commemorative names for streets for veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces, the nominee must:

- Have served in the Canadian Armed Forces;
- Have lived in Ottawa; and
- Be deceased

Eligible municipal assets

Applications for commemorative names will be considered within two classifications of assets: Minor Assets and Major Assets. Only the assets listed below will be considered for commemorative naming.

Municipal assets categorized as “Minor Assets” available for commemorative naming include:

- Sports fields
- Cricket pitches
- Sports courts
- Ball diamonds
- Outdoor stages
- Fitness areas
- Outdoor rinks
- Theatre rehearsal studios
- Ancillary spaces within facilities – e.g. Lobbies, patios, courtyards, kitchens
- Permanent outdoor structures (excluding public art) e.g. Gazebos
- Programming areas within parks such as picnic areas, observation stations, docks and piers, and other amenities
- Field houses
- Neighbourhood park, community park, and parkettes (as described in the [Parks Development Manual](#)))

Municipal assets categorized as “Major Assets” available for commemorative naming include:

- District or City-wide parks (as described in the [Parks Development Manual](#))
- Facilities,
 - Recreation Complexes and their individual major components
 - Arenas, gymnasiums, indoor pools
 - Recreation and community centres
 - Theaters
 - Childcare centres
 - Long-term Care Facilities
- Any asset that is considered “city-wide” in its significance
- Municipal administrative buildings

The General Manager of RCFS is delegated the authority to add assets to these lists to assist in the efficient management of commemorations.

Municipal streets

Municipal streets and private roads are available as a commemorative naming asset.

Commemorative names for private roads may incur additional fees as per the Municipal Addressing By-law.

Commemorative naming application process

The City of Ottawa will accept applications for commemorative naming through an intake period twice annually.

Any member of the public may submit a nomination for consideration of the commemoration, via application, by the prescribed application deadlines.

Council may assign a commemorative name by resolution (motion), as outlined in the *Municipal Act, 2001*, notwithstanding the provisions included in this policy. The member of council bringing forward the motion will be responsible for assuming or securing an alternate source of funding for all associated costs of commemorations approved by resolution for the creation and installation of commemorative plaques and/or signs, the replacement of existing signs and the cost of any celebratory event. The proposed name should still be vetted through the Commemorative Naming Program to ensure there are no concerns with using the name.

Any applications received for an asset governed by an individual board will be forwarded upon receipt to that service for consideration and response.

Application requirements

All commemorative naming requests are to be submitted in writing by completing an application form and must include the supporting rationale for the proposed name, including:

For individual(s) or groups:

- A biography including:
 - Date and location of birth or dates of significance
 - Highlights of career and/or contribution to Ottawa, Ontario, or Canada

- Highlights of volunteer or community service
- Citations, awards, or recognitions
- Documentation to authenticate information in the biography (e.g. newspaper clippings, radio or television interview clips, certificates of merit, letters of support)
- Written affidavit signed by the individual, or next of kin, indicating consent to use the name (if none exists, letters of community support will be required)
- Applicants should seek concurrence from the ward councillor and an established local community association in which the asset exists as part of the application.

All applications are vetted by the Commemorative Naming Program for eligibility.

Vetting of the name includes consultation with:

- Ward Councillor
- Emergency and Protective Services
- Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services
- City of Ottawa Archives
- Addressing & Signs
- Planning, Development and Building
- Indigenous Relations
- For assets of City-wide interest, the Mayor's Office will also be consulted.

Incomplete applications, or those deemed ineligible based on policy criteria, will not be accepted and the applicant will be notified.

The applicant will be required to acknowledge financial responsibility for their share of the costs associated with the proposed naming if the application is successful.

All City staff shall actively offer and, upon request, provide or make arrangements to provide accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities in consultation with the person making the request.

Commemorative naming approval process

Application review

All commemorative naming applications that pass vetting will be presented to the Departmental Working Group (Working Group).

Applications will be reviewed and prioritized for approval and funding based on policy criteria.

The Working Group's rationale and comments for each application will be collected and retained, as per the [Records Management Policy](#), as part of the approval process.

Public consultation

Public notice and consultation shall be undertaken for all commemorative naming applications for minor and major assets.

The public consultation period shall last 30 calendar days.

Submissions and/or petitions received during the public consultation phase must be verifiable, including the submitter's first and last name.

Any petition must adhere to the guidelines outlined in Council's [Petition Policy](#) with respect to petition requirements.

The results of public consultation will then be compiled, along with the comments from the Working Group, for review prior to approval.

Public comments against a specific commemorative naming based on an overall objection to commemorations will not be factored into the assessment of the specific commemoration being assessed.

Minor asset

The General Manager of Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services, along with the General Manager responsible for the asset being named (if applicable), will review the results of the public consultation and findings of the Working Group.

The General Manager(s) will then review the findings with the Ward Councillor and seek their concurrence, along with that of the local community association, to proceed with naming the asset.

If the commemorative naming application is approved by the General Manager(s), Ward Councillor, and Community Association, the implementation of the approved commemorative name will commence.

If the Ward Councillor and/or the Community Association do not support the commemorative naming, the matter may be referred to Committee and Council for resolution by way of a legislative report should the applicant wish to proceed.

Major asset

The General Manager of Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services, along with the General Manager that owns the asset being named (if applicable), will review the results of the public consultation and recommendations of the Working Group.

Based on available funding, a legislative report shall be submitted to the appropriate standing committee and Council with recommendations for each commemorative name application prioritized for funding.

If approved, implementation of the approved commemorative names will commence and the names will be added to the commemorative naming registry.

Applications that cannot be considered within the annual funding allocation may be considered in the next application window. If not funded within one calendar year, the application must be re-submitted to the program for consideration. A commemoration may still be considered if there is an alternative funding source identified.

Municipal street naming

Vetting results and findings of the Working Group will be forwarded to the Building Code Service Branch for processing in accordance with the Municipal Addressing By-law.

If approved, a memo is issued by Building Code Services and the name is added to the list of available commemorative street names. There is no fee associated with approved commemorative names for new municipal streets, except for private roads and re-naming of streets.

Commemorative Street Naming for Veterans

All applications are vetted and processed by the Office of Protocol with assistance from the Commemorative Naming Program.

The application will be further vetted by Veterans Affairs Canada and the Poppy and Remembrance Committee of the Royal Canadian Legion who grant permission to utilize the poppy on the approved street sign for the annual Commemorative Street Naming of a Veteran.

The City of Ottawa selects one recipient per year and is under no obligation to accept an application for Commemorative Street Naming of Veterans.

The poppy symbol is reserved only for street name blades commemorating individuals approved through Commemorative Street Naming for Veterans by the Office of Protocol and shall not be used for any other commemorative naming.

Requests to re-name existing commemorative names

The City acknowledges that public views of collective memories can change over time, and as a result, some commemorations may no longer align with community sentiment or can be considered contentious by some.

A criticism of a commemorative name will not necessarily lead to de-commemoration, and changes to commemoratively named assets shall be discouraged. The City will consider requests to review an existing commemorative name on a case-by-case basis based on the provisions of the Municipal Commemoration Policy and the following criteria:

- The commemorative name is commemorating a living person who no longer meets the criteria for which they were commemorated;
- There is strong rationale that an existing name includes derogatory terms that might represent or be linked with discriminatory views and actions;
- Negatively represents or appropriates the culture of the Anishinabe Algonquin Host Nation or Urban Indigenous Peoples;
- Negatively represents or appropriates the culture of equity-denied groups;
- Is inconsistent with City by-laws or policies;
- There is strong support from the community impacted by the existing name; or
- Discredits the City of Ottawa.

Review process

Requests must be submitted along with clear evidence, as outlined in the application process.

The request and supporting documentation will be submitted to the Departmental Working Group to provide recommendations to the General Manager of Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services.

The General Manager will review the recommendations and determine next steps.

The City of Ottawa may initiate a review without an application from a resident.

Commemorative re-naming of minor and major assets

The renaming process shall be identical to the commemorative naming process; however, the public consultation process shall be 60 days.

The City may decline to proceed with re-naming of any named asset if it determines it is not operationally or fiscally responsible to proceed.

Commemorative re-naming of municipal streets

Applicant must submit a Commemorative Naming application as well as a “Highway Name Change” application and pay the associated non-refundable fee.

Applications require 75% + 1 approval of the residents/property owners on the desired street, and the Ward Councillor must concur with the proposed change before proceeding.

Application is vetted by Building Code Services and the Commemorative Naming Program.

Notice is provided to all property owners at the expense of the applicant and public notice is posted on Ottawa.ca. Residents who object to the re-naming must submit their objection in writing to Building Code Services.

Following the consultation period, if successful, the Chief Building Official will forward the proposed name to the appropriate Standing Committee for consideration.

Should the street name be approved, the cost of all replacement blades is at the cost of the applicant.

The City of Ottawa does not subsidize residents, property owners, or businesses for costs incurred as a result of a street name change.

Non-commemorative names

The City recognizes that there is community interest in naming or re-naming eligible municipal assets with non-commemorative names that are reflective of the site or specific neighbourhood or other notable attributes. Non-commemorative names may not be an individual, a group of individuals or an event of significance as described in this policy.

Non-commemorative names for minor assets, as described in this policy, may be considered under delegated authority along with Ward Councillor and established local

Community Association concurrence. A funding source must be identified by the applicant to cover the full cost of signage and installation of a non-commemorative name.

Non-commemorative naming for major assets, as described in this policy, will require approval by Committee and Council.

Proposed non-commemorative names, or names or words in the Anishinabemowin Algonquin language, another Indigenous language, or a name recognizing the Host Nation or an Urban Indigenous individual, organization, event or concept, will require engagement with the Host Nation through the Anishinabe Algonquin Consultative Circle prior to approval.

No plaques will be installed for non-commemorative names. The name will be displayed on an appropriate wayfinding sign at the site.

Responsibilities

Employees

- Direct relevant inquiries to the Commemorative Naming Program
- Work cooperatively with the General Manager of Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services, or designate, with respect to the provision of information and necessary approvals regarding eligible City assets

General Manager, Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services

- Approve all commemorative names within the General Manager's delegated authority
- Approve administrative amendments to this policy
- Approve additional eligible minor and major assets to assist in the efficient management of commemorations
- Authority to make minor edits to an approved commemorative name, if required. Examples include, but are not limited to improper spelling, punctuation or military abbreviations

General Managers

- Approve applications for assets not owned by Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services to proceed through the Commemorative Naming Program

Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services

- Administer the Commemorative Naming Program

Building Code Services

- Administer and approve Commemorative Street Naming applications

Office of Protocol

- Administer applications and approve Commemorative Street Naming for Veterans recipient

Working Group

- Provide recommendations related to commemorative naming applications to the General Manager of RCFS and the General Manager of the department to which the asset belongs

Emergency and Protective Services

- Provide way finding approval of proposed commemorative names

Council

- Approve this policy and any substantial amendments
- Approve any commemorative naming of a major asset

Monitoring/Contraventions

The City of Ottawa will consider all proposals for commemorative naming of an eligible asset but is under no obligation to accept a proposed name.

Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services Department is responsible for the administration of the Commemorative Naming Program and this policy.

References

Accessible formats and communication supports procedure

Municipal Commemoration Policy

[Petition Policy](#)

[Records Management Policy](#)

Sponsorship Policy

Park Development Manual

Legislative and administrative authorities

City of Ottawa, [Delegation of Authority By-law](#)

City of Ottawa, [Addressing By-Law \(2014-78\)](#)

Recordkeeping requirements

As per the Records Management Policy, Official Business Records generated as a result of the execution of this policy must be declared as such in the appropriate SharePoint site, RMS (Records Management System) or approved business system.

Definitions

Commemorative Naming: Act of remembering, honouring and sharing a community's collective memories by naming of a municipal asset and installation of a plaque.

Contentious Commemorative Name: a commemorative name with disputed, challenging or possible negative meaning or context. Communities, groups or individuals may disagree on the appropriateness of a commemorative name and whether they align or not with their collective memories. Some contentious commemorative names are contested on the grounds of human rights, reconciliation, inclusion, mutual respect or sustainable development.

Supporting Rationale: Documentation to support the validity of the commemorative naming application. Items may include official records, news articles, photos, letters of recommendation or support, etc

Fiscally Responsible: Should an application to rename a park, facility or asset be submitted, it would only be considered if it does not create a financial burden to the City of Ottawa. If a sign is relatively new and in good condition, it would not be financially responsible to incur unplanned costs in the name of commemoration.

Equity-Denied Group/Individual: Overarching term to represent individuals or groups of individuals who have experienced systematic barriers that exclude them from full participation and benefits in social, economic and political life, including Indigenous Peoples, Racialized People, Persons with Disabilities, 2SLGBTQQIA+, Francophones, and Women.

Highway: Public street

Non-Commemorative Names: Proposed names that are not commemorative in nature but are reflective of the site or specific neighbourhood or other notable attributes.

Re-Naming: A process in which an application is put forward to consider a new name for an asset already named.

Enquiries

For more information on this Policy, contact:

Commemorative Naming Program,

Recreation, Cultural, and Facility Services

613-580-2424 ext 27551

Namingottawa.ca

Appendices

Include links to supporting documents (e.g. templates, forms, charts, guidelines, etc.

These should not be embedded in the policy itself. Appendices are not part of the policy and can be amended without revision to the policy itself).