

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL**

**TO:** MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

**SUBJECT: POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR NAMING AND COMMEMORATION POLICY  
FRAMEWORK**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT** staff be authorized to prepare policies for naming and commemoration in alignment with the policy directions presented in Section 3.0 and the draft framework presented in Attachment 2 of the report titled “Policy Directions for Naming and Commemoration Policy Framework”, as amended at the Executive Committee of Council meeting, dated July 7, 2025,

**REPORT**

The Executive Committee of Council, at its meeting held on July 7, 2025, received the attached report seeking Council authorization to prepare policies for naming and commemoration based on the policy directions and draft framework included in this report.

Arising from discussion, the Committee called for the following amendments to the draft framework:

- Updating Section 1a (Scope of Naming and Commemoration Framework) to add “Honouring Individuals” as an additional policy to develop within the scope of the Naming and Commemoration Framework.
- Updating Section 1b (Guiding Principles, Criteria and Definitions of Naming and Commemoration Framework) to reflect that “Naming, commemoration, and decommissioning decisions must align with the principles and criteria.”
- Updating Section 2a (ii) (Civic Assets Naming Policy, Naming Standards) to “Names must not be a member of Council or other elected or appointed representative of the City of Burnaby or any order of government while they are holding office, or a City staff member while they are employed at the City.
- Updating Section 2b (ii) (Street Naming Policy, Naming Standards) to “Naming after an individual is only considered under exceptional circumstances. A street may be named after a living person with the approval of Council.”

Staff also undertook to incorporate the following feedback in future development of the policy:

- clearly outline the roles of staff, Council, and Council committees in receiving and considering suggestions provided by the public, including a process for unsolicited proposals received by Council and committees of Council; and
- consider including guidance on how the North American Phonetic Alphabet (used for transcribing Indigenous languages) and non-Roman characters should be displayed on street signs and for the names of civic assets.

Staff have made the requested changes to Attachment 2 and the recommendations are now before Council for a final vote.

On behalf of the Executive Committee of  
Council,

Councillor S. Dhaliwal  
Chair

Councillor P. Calendino  
Vice Chair

**TO:** EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL (ECC)

**FROM:** GENERAL MANAGER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

**SUBJECT:** **POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR NAMING AND COMMEMORATION  
POLICY FRAMEWORK**

**PURPOSE:** To seek authorization to prepare policies for naming and commemoration based on the policy directions and draft framework included in this report.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** staff be authorized to prepare policies for naming and commemoration in alignment with the policy directions presented in Section 3.0 and the draft framework presented in Attachment 2 of the report titled “Policy Directions for Naming and Commemoration Policy Framework,” dated July 7, 2025.

## **1.0 POLICY SECTION**

The Executive Committee of Council (Executive Committee) is responsible for making recommendations to Council on the naming of civic assets, including parks, civic buildings, and facilities, and for recommending approval of the design and content of commemorative plaques to be installed in civic assets, including plaques commemorating the namesake of an asset, and building opening plaques.

This report is supported by the following documents:

- Official Community Plan (1998);
- Burnaby Procedure Bylaw (2024);
- Corporate Strategic Plan (2022);
- Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Framework and Strategy (2024);
- Equity Policy (2020);
- Interim Guidelines and Procedures for Naming Civic Assets (2024); and
- Civic Buildings – Council Official Opening Plaques Policy (2024).

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

At its November 20, 2023, meeting, Council authorized staff to implement action items outlined in the *Implementation of the Heritage Policy and Programs Review* report, including:

*Develop a policy to guide the naming of civic facilities (including parks) and streets, and a commemoration policy to guide the City’s official commemoration of important*

*places, people, and events through plaques and other commemorative works. The policy will be reflective of the City's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, and to equity, diversity, and inclusion<sup>1</sup>.*

At its December 16, 2024 meeting, Council adopted the recommendation of the Interim Guidelines and Procedures for Naming Civic Assets report (Attachment 1), which includes development of a Burnaby Naming and Commemoration Policy. The report outlines key steps to develop the policy, including preparation of policy directions to be advanced to Council upon recommendation of the Executive Committee.

Consistent with this approach, the policy is being created through a three-phase process (shown below) which includes input from a staff Project Working Group (PWG), consisting of staff from multiple City departments; review of existing policies and Terms of Reference; best practice research; ongoing meetings with Host Nations; and engagement with key stakeholders.



The policy will build on previous work completed under the Burnaby Heritage Policy and Programs Review, including the Burnaby History and Heritage Thematic Framework (2022) and the Interim Guidelines and Procedures for Naming Civic Assets (2024), and is being developed in the context of the Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Framework and Strategy (2024) and Equity Policy (2020).

## 2.1 Existing Policies

A summary of City of Burnaby policies reviewed for this work is provided below:

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<sup>1</sup> The City's commitments to reconciliation and equity are articulated in the Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Framework and Strategy (2024) and Equity Policy (2020).

Policy Title/Topic	Description	Date of Adoption
Naming of Freeman of the Municipality, Park Names, and Street Names	Delegates the naming of streets to the Director of Planning (now the General Manager of Planning Development).	November 15, 1982
Implementation of the Heritage Policy and Programs Review	Authorizes staff to develop and advance policy to guide the naming of civic assets and streets, and the City's official commemoration of important places, people, and events.	November 20, 2023
Proposed Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Framework and Strategy	Identifies development of a Naming Process Policy as a priority.	August 26, 2024
Civic Buildings – Council Official Opening Plaque Policy	Outlines requirements for the production of plaques that commemorate the opening of a civic facility.	September 23, 2024
Interim Guidelines and Procedures for Naming Civic Assets	Confirms the role of the Executive Committee in recommending names of civic assets to Council and also identifies that a commemorative sign will be installed in new facilities named after an individual.	December 16, 2024

Both the Civic Buildings – Council Official Opening Plaque Policy and the guidance for plaques commemorating namesakes included in the Interim Guidelines and Procedures for Naming Civic Assets will be updated to reflect direction received from Council on March 3, 2025, that the Terms of Reference for the Executive Committee be amended to include responsibility for review and recommendation to Council for wording and content for commemorative plaques installed in parks, civic buildings and facilities.

## 2.2 Policy Gaps

The review of existing policies revealed gaps, including:

- There is no guidance for the naming of civic assets outside of those specifically identified in the Interim Guidelines and Procedures for Naming Civic Assets;
- Policy for the naming of streets does not include provisions for decommissioning street names;
- Policy for the approval of commemorative plaques addresses only a subset of the commemorative plaques implemented by the City;

- There is no established protocol for First Nations naming, which would enable the City to request or receive the gift of a First Nations name, or to request translation of an existing name into Indigenous languages; and
- There is no guidance available to the public to suggest names or subjects for commemoration, or to alert the City to names or commemorative plaques that should be considered for decommissioning or updating.

The draft policy directions outlined in Section 3.0 of this report and the draft framework presented in Attachment 2 are intended to reflect direction from Council, address gaps, and consider best practices identified through research (including interviews that provided input from community stakeholders and initial Host Nations engagement).

### **3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION**

This report provides draft policy directions and an initial draft policy framework for discussion and input. The draft policy framework is provided as Attachment 2.

The draft framework includes:

- An overarching policy framework with a single set of guiding principles, decommissioning criteria and definitions.
- Specific policies nested within the framework that share standard elements, including policies for:
  - Naming civic assets
  - Naming streets
  - Commemorative plaques and interpretive signage

The final framework will also include a Protocol for First Nations Naming, to establish a process for receiving the gift of a First Nations name for a civic asset or street, or for the translation of an existing name into Indigenous languages.

It is noted that the policy framework is intended to be expandable, enabling new or updated policies to be nested within the framework in the future. Areas for future consideration could include policies related to commemorative works other than commemorative plaques, such as monuments. Burnaby's Public Art Policy (2023) currently guides the City's approach to public art and includes consideration for the development of monuments and commemorative statuary under the policy. There is also an opportunity to update and integrate policies related to the City's official recognition of events of significance. Currently, these are guided by Burnaby's Proclamations Policy (2021), Flag Policy (2018), and guidelines for lighting requests.

With Council's adoption of the recommendation of this report, staff will continue development of the policy framework and nested policies as outlined in Attachment 2. Through the rest of 2025, staff will work to refine the draft framework, for additional review. Following framework adoption, staff will prepare procedures to support policy implementation.

### **3.1 Policy Directions**

The draft framework (Attachment 2) reflects input received during Phase 1 research and engagement, including the following directions:

- Respect Indigenous naming through a Protocol for Indigenous Naming (forthcoming).
- Provide a clear process for naming, commemoration, and historical interpretation suggestions by community members.
- Minimize the impact on existing property owners if a street name is decommissioned.
- Improve collaboration across departments and streamline internal processes.
- Support Council's discretion and decision-making over naming civic assets, formal commemoration through plaques, and decommissioning of names and formal commemorations.
- Continue support of the General Manager of Planning and Development's role for naming streets.
- Leverage the Community Heritage Commission's expertise for guidance on interpretive signage on Burnaby's history.
- Acknowledge and record decisions to decommission existing names and plaques.

### **3.1.1 Indigenous Naming**

Through engagement with Host Nations and stakeholders, we heard that Indigenous naming should follow cultural protocol, take place early in the process, and minimize barriers to Host Nations' participation. This includes steps such as clearly communicating when there are opportunities for Indigenous naming and providing compensation to recognize the time and contributions of Host Nations.<sup>2,3</sup> It was also noted that it will be important to distinguish between the gift of an Indigenous name and translation into Indigenous languages.<sup>2</sup>

### **3.1.2 Community Suggestions**

Project Working Group discussions highlighted the need for a transparent and inclusive process that enables community members to propose names for civic assets and streets.<sup>4,5</sup> In 2021, the Executive Committee also recommended that commemorative processes include opportunities for the public to submit proposals for commemoration.<sup>6</sup> For private streets, stakeholder engagement supported continued collaboration with City staff to identify private street names, guided by flexible principles and standards.<sup>7,8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Meeting with Tsleil-Waututh Nation. (January 30, 2025).

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Simon Fraser University's Indigenous Naming Project Leads. (December 4, 2024).

<sup>4</sup> Project Working Group Meeting. (September 11, 2024).

<sup>5</sup> Project Working Group Meeting. (November 4, 2024).

<sup>6</sup> City of Burnaby. (February 3, 2021). *Executive Committee of Council Meeting: Item 4.1*.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with BC Housing. (January 10, 2025).

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Aquilini Development. (January 15, 2025).

### 3.1.3 Streamlining the Process

The Project Working Group also emphasized the importance of streamlining the overall naming and commemoration process, while ensuring staff review of community submissions.<sup>5, 9</sup> Best practice research found that requiring community submissions to align with policy principles, criteria, and standards is a common approach among Canadian municipalities.<sup>10,11,12,13</sup> Maintaining a list of suggested names will also support City staff in advancing a suggested name for discussion at a closed Executive Committee meeting.<sup>14</sup>

The draft framework clarifies the responsibilities for commemorative plaques and historical interpretive signs. The draft framework is aligned with updates to the Executive Committee's Terms of Reference, which include responsibility for reviewing and recommending plaque content for commemorative plaques created for the opening of parks, civic buildings, and facilities.<sup>15</sup> It also complements the Community Heritage Commission's role in education, special projects, and stewardship of City-owned heritage resources.<sup>16</sup> Definitions outlined in Burnaby's Civic Buildings - Council Official Plaques Policy will be reviewed and updated to align with the Naming and Commemoration Framework ("Framework").

### 3.1.4 Decommissioning

Project Working Group members emphasized that decommissioning street names should only occur under exceptional circumstances, and property owners may need City support if an address change is required.<sup>9</sup> This support could be commensurate with the scale of change and the number of property owners impacted.<sup>17</sup> Research revealed that some municipalities require public consultation when a naming proposal will result in a change of street address, and some provide support to affected property owners and residents.<sup>10, 18</sup> In line with the Interim Guidelines for Naming Civic Assets (2024), the draft framework ensures transparent and public communication following a decision to decommission a name or formal commemoration.

## 4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A range of community stakeholders were identified by staff and interviewed as part of the policy research. Stakeholders include the Burnaby School District, Metro Vancouver Regional Parks, Simon Fraser University staff responsible for engagement for Indigenous naming, Aquilini Development Group, and BC Housing. The Host Nations were invited to

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<sup>9</sup> Project Working Group Meeting. (2025, January 29).

<sup>10</sup> City of Toronto. (2022). *Commemorative Framework*.

<sup>11</sup> City of Vancouver. (forthcoming). *Commemoration Framework*.

<sup>12</sup> City of Edmonton. (2021). *Naming Municipal Assets*.

<sup>13</sup> Halifax Regional Municipality. (2021). *Administrative Order 46, Respecting HRM Asset Naming Policies*.

<sup>14</sup> City of Burnaby. (2025, March 11). *Council Meeting: Item 7.3*.

<sup>15</sup> City of Burnaby. (2025, March 11). *Council Meeting: Item 7.3*.

<sup>16</sup> City of Burnaby. *Community Heritage Commission Terms of Reference*.

<sup>17</sup> Project Working Group Meeting. (2025, April 8).

<sup>18</sup> City of Christchurch. (2023). *Naming Policy*.

participate in initial meetings with the project team to discuss their interests in the work; there was a high level of interest in engaging on this topic, and one meeting has been held to date.

With Council's authorization of the recommendation of this report, input on the draft framework will be requested from the Host Nations through the referrals process. Stakeholders who were previously engaged in the project will be provided with an update and copy of the draft policy directions and invited to provide additional input. Work on the Protocol for First Nations Naming will be undertaken in collaboration with the four Host Nations.

A web page with information on the project will also be created within the Burnaby.ca website, to enable members of the public with an interest in the work to engage on the project.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Resources for the development of this policy are available within the operating budget of the Planning and Development Department. Financial considerations for implementation of the policies will be included in a future report.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee-Ann Garnett, Deputy General Manager Planning and Development, on behalf of  
E.W. Kozak, General Manager Planning and Development

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Interim Guidelines and Procedures for Naming Civic Assets (2024.12.16)  
Attachment 2 – City of Burnaby Naming & Commemoration Framework: Draft Policy  
Directions

## **REPORT CONTRIBUTORS**

This report was prepared by Lisa Codd, Planner 2 and reviewed by Lily Ford, Planner 3, Mikelle Sasakamoose, Director Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and Johannes Schumann, Director Community Planning.