

Burnaby Naming and Commemoration Framework

DRAFT

Draft for review – June 2, 2025



1. Naming and Commemoration Framework

a. Scope

This framework provides a set of overarching principles to guide the City's approach to naming and commemoration. Nested within the framework are policies on:

- Naming of civic assets
- Naming of streets
- Commemorative plaques and interpretive signage
- Honouring individuals (ex. Freedom of the City)

The aim of the framework is to ensure consistency across policies, while allowing flexibility for future policy development.

b. Guiding Principles, Criteria and Definitions

The following draft principles, criteria, and definitions aim to provide clarity, transparency, and alignment across policies under the framework. Naming, ~~and~~ commemoration, and decommissioning decisions must align with the principles and criteria.

i. Guiding Principles

- Create opportunities to raise the visibility of Indigenous presence on the lands and share Indigenous culture and history.
- Reflect diversity and advance equity, inclusion and belonging.
- Build awareness of Burnaby's unique histories and development.
- Strengthen placemaking and reflect community creativity, stories, and landscapes.
- Allow for flexibility and adaptability in response to community needs over time.
- Improve transparency and ensure consistency in the naming and commemoration process.
- Avoid honouring individuals who do not reflect the principles of this policy and the City's commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and reconciliation.
- Avoid misrepresenting or appropriating the culture of Indigenous Peoples or other cultural communities.
- Avoid duplication and names that create confusion and/or limit public access.

ii. Criteria for Decommissioning

- A name or commemoration will be considered for decommissioning when an asset reaches its end of life and is replaced or removed.
- A name or commemoration may be considered for decommissioning if it does not reflect the guiding principles as outlined in this policy.

iii. Definitions

- "Commemoration" refers to recognizing the enduring significance or memory of people, places, events and/or ideas.

- “Decommission” refers to ending the use of a name or removing a commemoration while maintaining its historic records.

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2. Framework Policies

a. Civic Assets Naming Policy

i. Scope

This policy will guide the naming and decommissioning of names for civic assets, including:

- Parks, open space, trails and facilities operated by the City;
- Facilities operated by a third party on City-owned land, as directed by Council;
- Park and facility features (e.g. trails, sports boxes, rooms) as directed by Council; and
- Bridges, overpasses, bike lanes or other forms of transportation infrastructure, as directed by Council.

ii. Naming Standards

- When proposing a name based on geography (including a street or neighbourhood name), topography, history or culture:
 - Use of the name “Burnaby” should be reserved for assets that serve the community as a whole.
 - Geographic names should correspond to their location, either by reflecting existing names or natural, cultural and/or built characteristics.
- When naming after an idea or event, names should suit the character and meaning of the place.
- When naming after an individual:
 - Preference should be given to individuals with a sustained period of service to the City and/or the community.
 - Names must not be a member of Council or other elected or appointed official representative of the City of Burnaby or any other government while they are holding office, or a City staff member while they are employed at the City.
- Names must not duplicate the name of a similar asset in the City of Burnaby.
- Names must align with the guiding principles.

b. Street Naming Policy

i. Scope

The Street Naming Policy will guide the naming and, under exceptional circumstances, decommissioning of names for:

- Public streets
- Private streets

ii. Naming Standards

- Names must consider emergency response and Canada Post addressing standards, policies, and practices.
- Names that duplicate the name of an existing street in Burnaby or in adjacent municipalities are generally not permitted but will be considered in limited circumstances.
- Geographic names should correspond to their location, either by reflecting existing names or natural, cultural and/or built characteristics.
- Naming after an individual is only considered under exceptional circumstances. A street may be named after a living person with the approval of Council. ~~Names must not be after a living person.~~
- Preference is for individuals with a sustained period of service to the City and/or the community.
- Naming after an idea or event should suit the character and meaning of the place.
- Names must align with the guiding principles.

c. Commemorative Plaques and Interpretive Signage Policy

i. Scope

This policy guides the creation and alteration of commemorative plaques and interpretive signage. This includes:

- Interpretive signage;
- Commemorative plaques in or at parks, civic facilities, or other civic assets that commemorate the name of the facility or its namesake;
- Council official opening plaques; and
- Other commemorative plaques approved by Council with the purpose of honouring an individual or organization or commemorating an event.

Out of scope:

- Public art plaques;
- Commemorative plaques for sale (e.g. plaza pavers, Presenting Burnaby Parks program);
- Wayfinding signs;
- Building signs;
- Advertising signage;
- Recognition plaques for sponsorship and donation; and
- Exhibition signage organized by the Burnaby Village Museum.

ii. Standards

Standards for commemorative plaques and interpretive signage will be developed at a future date

iii. Definitions

“Commemorative plaques” refer to plaques formally approved by Council with the purpose of honouring an individual or organization or commemorating an event (including the opening of a civic facility or park).

“Interpretive signage” refers to signage that is educational or informational, including signs that support placemaking and awareness of Burnaby’s history.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

This section provides a high-level summary of the roles of community members, staff, Council, and the Host Nations. Detailed procedures will be created in a future phase of the policy development.

Staff will incorporate the following considerations 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.
- 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.

a. Community Members

This framework provides for some community participation in naming and commemoration activities. Under the framework, community members can contribute to the naming of civic assets and streets by:

- Submitting names for consideration; and
- Requesting decommissioning.

Formal processes will be established to provide this opportunity to the public.

In addition, community members can provide input into the decommissioning of a street name when public engagement is required.

Community members can also submit suggestions for commemorative plaques and interpretive signs, or request decommissioning or review of plaques and signs, through an established process.

b. City Staff

This framework assigns staff several areas of responsibility:

- Establishing processes for receiving community requests and submittals;
- Managing lists of potential civic asset and street names;
- Researching community suggestions and evaluating their alignment with the policy;
- Advancing one or more names, along with the list, to the Executive Committee when a name is required for a civic asset;
- Determining the names of new City streets;
- Researching requests to decommission the name of a street or civic asset, and advancing the request and research results to the Executive Committee;
- Advancing requests to create, edit, or decommission commemorative plaques, along with an analysis of the request, to the Executive Committee;
- Outlining the financial implications when advancing requests to decommission;

- Communicating decisions to decommission to the public and relevant agencies, such as Canada Post and emergency services;
- Supporting residents and businesses in changing addresses when a street name is changed;
- Implementing the Protocol for Indigenous Naming for any streets that will receive the gift of an Indigenous name, or for translation of existing names into Indigenous languages;
- Managing interpretive signage and making operational decisions, including removing or updating existing signage;
- Considering community suggestions for interpretive signage, including new signage, edits, or decommissioning; and
- Informing and seeking input from the Community Heritage Commission (CHC) regarding new interpretive signage or changes to existing signage.

c. Host Nations

This framework seeks Host Nations involvement in naming and decommissioning activities and aims to facilitate the gift of a name should there be interest from the Host Nations. For naming of civic assets and streets, involvement on the part of Host Nations could include:

- Receiving a list of civic assets and/or streets that could receive an Indigenous name
- Communicating to the City which projects are of interest for the gifting of a name
- Translating a selection of existing street names into Indigenous languages
- Recommending a name for possible decommissioning through the public process, or through the Director of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Discussions are underway with the Host Nations to determine their roles in the creation of commemorative plaques and interpretive signage.

d. Committees of Council

This framework confirms the role of the **Executive Committee** in:

- Identifying a name for a civic asset and making a recommendation on the name to Council
- If receiving the gift of an Indigenous name for a civic asset, following the Protocol for Indigenous Naming
- Reviewing and making recommendations to Council on:
 - the decommissioning of a name for a civic asset or street
 - the decommissioning or editing of a commemorative plaque
 - the content and design of:
 - plaques that commemorate the namesake of a civic asset
 - plaques that commemorate the opening of a civic asset
 - other plaques that formally commemorate a person, place, event, or idea

In addition, it recognizes the role of the **Community Heritage Commission (CHC)** in:

- Reviewing and providing input into:

- plans and content for new signage that interprets Burnaby's history
- the removal or updating of existing interpretive signage

e. Council

- This framework confirms the role of Council in:
 - Considering the recommendations of the Executive Committee for:
 - The naming of a civic asset
 - The decommissioning of a name for a civic asset or street
 - The content and design of a commemorative plaque
 - The decommissioning or editing of a commemorative plaque
 - Receiving the gift of an Indigenous name on behalf of the City, in alignment with the Protocol for Indigenous Naming