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Town of Aurora

# Municipal Naming Policy

Community Services Department

Contact: Manager, Business Support, Community Services Department

Approval Authority: Council

Effective: September 25, 2024

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## Purpose

This policy establishes the processes and criteria for naming, renaming, or dedicating municipal assets and facilities such as parks, and recreation centres. The main objectives of this policy are:

- To continue the current practice of naming municipal assets after significant geographical, neighbourhood and historical features.
- To recognize, on an exceptional basis, significant contributions that organizations or individuals have made to public life and the well-being of the people of Aurora.
- To ensure a clear, efficient, and timely naming process.
- To ensure the application of key criteria to determine the validity of a commemorative name.
- To ensure a proper approval process and the importance of the role of legislative bodies (i.e. Council approval) are acknowledged.

## Scope

The policy applies to all Town employees and people acting on behalf of the Town, as well as members of Council and the public with respect to naming of municipal assets.

The policy is not intended to address:

- Individual memorial dedications such as commemorative benches, trees, or plaques.
- Naming rights/Sponsorship opportunities of individual amenities within parks, recreation, and culture facilities, such as arenas, pools, meeting rooms, program rooms, sports fields, etc. (Addressed through the Recreation Facility Sponsorship Program.)
- Street naming, which is addressed in the Street Naming Policy.

## **Definitions**

For the purpose of this Policy, the following definitions shall apply:

**Amenities** – Individual components of a Municipal facility or park such as playgrounds, sports fields, pools, arenas, trails, gazebos, etc.

**Asset** – Any municipal facility or park, but not including specific amenities thereof.

**Commemorative** – The official naming of a municipal park or facility after a person, persons, or family name.

**Council** – The council of the Town of Aurora.

**Municipal Facility** – Town-owned facilities in their entirety, such as the Aurora Community Centre, Aurora Sports Dome, Church Street School, etc.

**Street Naming Registry** – A central repository of all approved street names, as per the Street Naming Policy.

**Naming Rights** – Refers to the granting by the owner of the right to name a piece of property or portions of a property, typically in exchange for financial consideration.

**Parks** – Shall include parkland, open spaces, valley lands, environmentally-protected areas; references to Parks shall be in their entirety, and not include individual amenities including but not limited to trails, playgrounds, lawns, recreation fields/courts, courtyards.

**Sponsorship** - A marketing-oriented, contracted arrangement that involves the payment of a fee or payment in-kind by a company or person(s) in return for the right to a public association with an activity, item, person, or property for mutual commercial benefit. Sponsorships may be in the form of financial assistance, non-cash goods or a contribution of skills or resources.

**Town** – The Corporation of the Town of Aurora, its departments, and staff.

## **Policy**

### **General Provisions**

The naming, renaming and dedication of municipal assets shall be the responsibility of the Council of the Town of Aurora.

The intent of naming is for permanent recognition or, where approved by Council for the purpose of providing sponsorship opportunities, such as in the naming of a community recreation centre (e.g., Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex).

The renaming of municipal assets is strongly discouraged as it significantly impacts the Town and the community.

### *Naming Principles*

When a municipal asset is named or renamed, the following principles shall be considered:

- Names shall be unique; name duplication and use of similar sounding or spelled names is discouraged.
- Names should give a sense of place, continuity, belonging and celebrate the distinguishing characteristics and uniqueness of Aurora.
- Names should maintain a long-standing local area identification with the residents of Aurora.
- Names should promote pride in the Town of Aurora, acknowledge local heritage, history, and recognize unique features and geography (such as names that relate to local history, places, events, native wildlife, flora, fauna and natural features or unique characteristics of a neighbourhood or area).
- The rationale associated with the use of a particular name shall be understandable to the majority of Aurora residents.
- Names from the Street Naming Registry may also be considered, at the discretion of Council.
- Names shall not be discriminatory, derogatory, or political in nature; names conveying a secondary negative or offensive connotation, any sexual overtones, inappropriate humour, slang or double meanings shall be avoided.
- Names shall assist with emergency response situations by being consistent with street names and geographical locations.
- Names with hyphens, apostrophes or dashes shall be discouraged but may be considered on an individual basis.
- Names may honour the significant contributions of an individual or family, including elected or appointed public officials, Town administrative officials or staff, which

shall not be considered unless the official has retired from public office.

- Names may recognize the contributions of organizations such as a partnership or sponsorship with or without financial contributions.
- The form of signage shall be consistent with Town signage guidelines.
- The cost associated with a naming/renaming (including but not limited to signage, ceremonial costs, legal costs, etc.) will be the responsibility of the Town when the naming/renaming has been initiated by the Town or when naming/renaming is part of a sponsorship agreement. The cost will be the responsibility of the community or corporate entity when the naming/renaming has been initiated by the community/corporate entity, unless otherwise approved by Council.
- The Town of Aurora makes all final decisions concerning what is placed or occurs on Town property and in its facilities.
- Naming of an asset shall not imply endorsement of a company or its products and services and should prohibit partners from making statements which suggest a company's products and services are endorsed by the Town.
- Naming of a park or facility should not result in or be perceived as giving any preferential treatment with respect to procurement or any commercial dealings with any private entity or with respect to any Town policy and procedure.

### *Prioritization*

Priority shall be given to naming, renaming or dedicating municipal assets after:

- The area or street in which the property or facility is located to provide a geographical association to help the public to locate a park, bridge, or facility more easily.
- The most dominant "constant feature either within or nearby" the selected site such as an associated significant ecological or natural resource feature.
- A historical name related to Aurora's heritage and/or historical folklore.
- An event or person of international, national, or provincial significance.
- An organization or individual to recognize:
  - particular activities and significant contributions to the community; and/or
  - outstanding contributions and/or sponsorships made toward the

development and/or enhancement of a property or facility.

### **Specific Criteria for Commemorative Naming**

Where the commemorative naming of a municipal facility or park, is being requested, at least one of the following criteria shall apply:

- The nominated individual shall have demonstrated excellence, courage, or exceptional service to the citizens of the Town of Aurora, the Province of Ontario and/or Canada, including veterans of military conflicts.
- The nominated individual shall have an extraordinary community service record.
- The nominated individual shall have worked to foster equality and reduce discrimination.
- The nominated individual shall have a direct relationship or association that existed between the place of residence or community efforts undertaken by the individual and the property, facility, or amenity to be named.
- The nominated individual may be recognized for a significant financial contribution to a park or facility, where that contribution significantly benefits the community that the park or facility serves.
- The nominated individual name shall have historical significance.

Where the name of an individual or organization is so used, approval shall be obtained from the individual (his/her family) or the organization for such naming.

#### *Single Use*

A commemorative name should only be used once. The single use of a commemorative name shall apply as of the effective date of this policy.

#### *Renaming of Commemoratively Named Assets*

The names of municipal assets named commemoratively should not be changed unless it is found that the individual's personal character is, or was, such that the continued use of their name for a park or facility would not be in the best interest of the community.

## **Processes**

The naming process for municipal assets may involve a different course of action depending on the circumstances surrounding the request/requirement for naming.

### *Council initiated naming/renaming*

- Council may at any time initiate the process of naming an asset by Member Motion.

### *Staff recommendation for naming/renaming*

- Staff shall review this policy to ensure that the proposed name conforms to the criteria herein.
- Staff prepare a report to Council for consideration.

### *Third party initiated naming/renaming*

- Upon receipt of a proposed asset naming/renaming, staff shall review the proposal with the CAO.
- Upon approval from the CAO, staff shall review the third-party request against the criteria outlined in this policy, and if determined to meet the criteria, staff will prepare a report to Council for consideration.

Town of Aurora Council has the final authority for approving any naming of a municipal asset.

## **Renaming**

Generally, changing the name of an existing asset is not encouraged. However, if it is deemed appropriate to change the name, the renaming process shall be identical to the naming process and require Town Council as the final authority for approving the proposed municipal asset name. However, the renaming of an existing commemoration shall be subject to a minimum of a 60-day public consultation period. If an application is intended to displace an existing commemorative name, before a Renaming Application is accepted, the nominator must have written permission from the family or next of kin of the person that is to be displaced. Where a renaming has been initiated because of a development proposal, the proponent may be required to resolve any opposition that may exist to the renaming, prior to the presentation of a report to Council.

## Renaming process:

1. Requests for renaming of a public asset shall be submitted in writing to the appropriate department (e.g., Community Services for renaming of recreation facilities, Operational Services for renaming of parks).
2. Staff will conduct, where possible, comprehensive research into the history and rationale associated with the existing name of the facility being proposed for renaming. This will include communicating with any remaining family descendants of the named person, the Aurora Museum and Archives, and the Aurora Historical Society.
3. The receiving department shall submit a Report to Council outlining the details of the renaming request and all of the pertinent history associated with the pre-existing facility name and outline any potential conflicts that the renaming may present. The report will include all aspects of the renaming proposal including approximate financial implications associated with revision to maps, signage, and other printed material.
4. Following the direction of Council, staff will circulate appropriate notice of the proposed renaming to the following interested stakeholders and public, advising of the intended name change and a timeframe within which to submit any comments.
  - a. Remaining family members or individuals that can be identified and are in any way associated or connected with the existing asset name.
  - b. Family members or individuals associated with the proposed new name of the asset.
  - c. The Aurora Historical Society.
  - d. The public at large, through appropriate media and the Town's website for a 60-day period.
  - e. Responses will be received from any of the above contacts for a period of 60 days from the date of the initial communication.
5. The above process does not apply to renaming of an Asset currently named in accordance with a Sponsorship, where that sponsorship agreement is nearing conclusion.

## **Other**

A Member of Council may also request that a municipal asset be considered for renaming, in accordance with the renaming process outlined above, through a member motion.

## **Responsibilities**

### **All Staff**

Staff shall refer all requests for naming or renaming of a municipal asset to their department head.

### **Management**

Management shall refer all requests for naming or renaming of a municipal asset to their department head and provide support in reviewing the requests where appropriate.

### **Executive Leadership**

The Executive Leadership Team shall provide appropriate direction to staff and report to Council in accordance with this policy.

### **Specific Departments**

The Community Services Department shall be responsible for the administration of this policy as it pertains to the naming/renaming of Facilities, Facility Amenities, and Park Amenities that fall within the scope of the Recreation Facility Sponsorship Program.

The Operational Services Department shall be responsible for the administration of this policy as it pertains to the naming/renaming of Parks and Park Amenities.

## **References**

1. Street Naming Policy
2. Park Bench Donation Program
3. Memorial Tree Planting Policy
4. Recreation Facility Sponsorship Program

## **Review Timeline**

This policy will be reviewed 5 years after the initial approval date.