

Legacy Review and Renaming Requests – Interim Report

ISSUE

Requests for streets and facilities to be renamed in many cities have emerged, both in efforts to support Reconciliation in a proactive way, as well as to recognize historic names already in use that can be associated with acts of racism, oppression or other colonial actions.

Addressing these requests, in line with the City of Saskatoon’s goals for Reconciliation, requires input from various divisions and departments, as well as a comprehensive public engagement and communication approach, which is proposed to be undertaken through a Legacy Review Project.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Civic Naming Committee recommend to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development, and Community Services that this report be forwarded to the Governance and Priorities Committee for information related to the 2022/2023 Business Plan and Budget options.

BACKGROUND

A request to change the name of McPherson Avenue was considered at the Civic Naming Committee’s March 9, 2021 meeting. This resulted in the resolution:

“That the Administration report back with examples from other communities as to how to handle renaming requests of this nature, and in consultation with local stakeholders, include options about how Saskatoon could respond to renaming requests that come forward on the basis of historical context.”

City Council, at its Regular Business meeting held on June 28, 2021, resolved:

1. “That the Administration begin the process for the renaming of John A. Macdonald Road as a way to acknowledge the on-going harm in the community experienced by the Indian Residential School Survivors and the role that John A. Macdonald played in this part of history;
2. That the renaming process include public education and public engagement including:
 - Consultation with Indigenous community leaders, residential school survivors, Elders and Knowledge Keepers;
 - Direct communication with John A. Macdonald Road residents;
 - Informing Confederation Park neighbourhood residents;
 - A wider community public education campaign;

- A look at options to manage any costs of changing names and what tools could be used to facilitate a change; and
3. That the Administration report back not later than Quarter 4 of 2021 and include information related to the proposed Legacy Review currently being developed.”

[Council Policy C09-008 Naming of Civic Property and Development Areas](#), (Naming Policy) speaks to the policy, principles and procedures associated with the naming of streets and other civic property. The Policy also speaks specifically to Requests for Renaming, as well as Requests for Special Street Names. These components of the Policy address the logistical and legal impacts created by renaming a civic street, as there are impacts to each individual property on that street, should a renaming occur.

In 2016, a request for a Special Street Name was made for the 200 block of Avenue M South. This request was accommodated for the period of April – August 2016 and Administration was directed to bring back a policy to address special street name requests. This amendment to the Policy has since been made, which allows for these to be done as a temporary, one-year measure (unless extended by resolution of City Council), making this a form of an “honourary” street naming which does not change the legal street name.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Considering Civic Naming in Light of the Calls to Action

In efforts to support the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the City has actively considered how the activity of civic naming could be used. A few initiatives with this in mind include:

- a. The public process to name the Chief Mistawasis Bridge in recognition of the TRC;
- b. A number of additional names with an Indigenous theme were received through the Chief Mistawasis Bridge process, which were added to the Names Master List after vetting by an Indigenous Elder; and
- c. Reviewing the Naming Policy from an equity and inclusion lens, lead to changes in the composition of the Naming Committee, as well as changes to broaden the criteria used for screening names to proactively recognize diverse communities and those that foster equality.

The above-noted initiatives have all sought to support the TRC Calls to Action through naming new civic infrastructure, rather than consideration of renaming.

Creating a Safe and Welcoming Community for All

The potential for renaming, as either a proactive City-led action, or in response to specific requests, must be reconsidered in light of the TRC Calls to Action, as well as the City’s priority for work in the area of Reconciliation Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. To bring together a holistic response, a multi-departmental team came together and identified the need to look at the wider scope of naming, recognition, commemoration, and reflection of Saskatoon’s historical context. This led to the proposal to undertake a

Legacy Review Project that would explicitly consider the resolution of the Civic Naming Committee from March 2021 and would also address related aspects and consider how to address this topic within a broader approach of Indigenous Placemaking. Indigenous Placemaking can have a variety of meanings but would generally consider how to advance and create welcoming, safe and culturally reflective spaces, through co-development or partnership with Indigenous community. Methods to recognize and celebrate the histories, cultures and identities of Indigenous peoples and other diverse communities in Saskatoon will make the city a safer and more equitable place for all.

Approaches in Other Jurisdictions

As a topic which is very active across Canada and North America, there is a variety of work being done. A recent report from the City of Toronto related to their “Recognition Review” includes an extensive review of 430 case studies from around the world (as of May 31, 2021); the report can be accessed [here](#).

To supplement this extensive material, Administration reached out to contacts across Canada to gather information related to engagement practices and related experience that could help inform our approach. The City of Regina is undertaking a similar review and comparing approaches throughout will likely have benefits for both. Further work to summarize and document these approaches will be undertaken through the Legacy Review Project.

In addition to the work being done in other jurisdictions, reflecting back on the lessons learned and success factors identified from the public process of naming of the Chief Mistawasis Bridge will also help to inform the approach in the Legacy Review Project. These were previously reported to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services in the April 8, 2019 report on the [Naming of the North Commuter Parkway Bridge Public Engagement and Communications Overview](#).

Proposed Legacy Review Project Scope

This project will develop a phased strategy to address naming and recognition, as well as other aspects which could contribute to improving the recognition of the histories and cultures of Indigenous peoples and other diverse communities throughout Saskatoon. This strategy will seek to address changes to naming and recognition processes and policy frameworks while also embedding this process in a broader approach of Indigenous Placemaking.

A proposed scope of work has been developed as a starting point. However, it is important to note the scope and particular activities proposed for the project will be informed by learnings from the process for the renaming of John A. Macdonald Road. For example, materials to assist impacted residents with changing their civic/ mailing address and a proposed process to address associated costs, will be required for John A. Macdonald Road residents and will then be used in further work in the Legacy Review project.

The main activities proposed include the following:

- Creation of a Community Advisory Committee to guide the engagement on this topic, as well as assist in developing collaborative recommendations;
- Preparation of a Communications and Engagement Plan, informed by the Advisory Committee, including education and awareness materials;
- Development of a strategy to include recommended interim and/or short-term actions, as well as longer-term recommendations or action items aligned with an Indigenous Placemaking Approach;
- Propose amendments to the Naming Policy to address renaming requests in a manner recommended by the Advisory Committee;
- Identify specific street names and other specific civic assets that would be recommended for renaming and/or reinterpretation;
- Creation of support materials to assist residents that may be impacted by a street renaming to complete address changes;
- Identify and propose amendments, as required, to any other related Council policy or propose the creation of a new Council policy, as recommended by the Advisory Committee; and
- Investigation of opportunities for the City of Saskatoon and community partners to jointly pursue implementation of recommendations or action items.

As a broader review project which requires a comprehensive public engagement, communication and awareness approach, the current operational capacity of Administration is not sufficient to carry out this project. Additional staff resources will be required, which will be outlined in the Business Plan Option for this project.

A collaborative approach to this project will require input from a variety of departments including Indigenous Initiatives, Planning and Development, Communications and Public Engagement, City Clerks, Organizational Strategy Execution and Recreation and Community Development.

Status of the Renaming of John A. Macdonald Road

The following activities have occurred with respect to this request:

1. An Engage Page has been created, which includes the ability for individuals to submit an online comment form, includes links to education materials, and an online flyer which outlines the current activities.
2. A direct flyer drop was conducted by Councillor Kirton, Mayor Clark and others to all properties on John A. Macdonald Road. Opportunities for direct discussion occurred as well.
3. Administration has connected with the Saskatoon Survivors Circle to initiate discussions about this process and the planned engagement to be undertaken.
4. Administration has been investigating costs associated with the name change which would affect the residents of John A. Macdonald Road. Methods to mitigate or remove these costs are being explored.

Through further discussions with the Survivors Circle, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, Administration will work to determine an appropriate and safe engagement process. Involvement of the residents of John A. Macdonald Road in further engagement will also be determined.

Implications of Street Renamings

Costs associated with changing a street name under the current Policy would be borne by the individual property owners. The Policy currently states specifically that the City will not pay any costs associated with such a change. These costs include such items as:

- Changing mailing addresses for all correspondence (businesses and individuals);
- Changing driver's licence and other personal legal documents, which may include items like individual Work Visas; and
- Other items such as property titles registered with Information Services Corporation.

Beyond the above-noted costs to affected residents, there are administrative costs for a name change including changing street signs, updating of mapping and amending registered plans. While these costs are unbudgeted, they are considered less significant than the costs which might be incurred by property owners.

Street renaming which have impacts to individual property owners have not received support in the past because of the legal and logistical implications associated with the change. In consideration of the importance of Reconciliation, a new approach is required, and both the renaming of John A. Macdonald Road and the Legacy Review Project will inform a revised approach and create a new policy framework to work from.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

To date, there has been no direct funding to support the activities involved with civic naming. Staff support is provided by both Planning and Development as the Naming Coordinator, City Clerks (for Civic Naming Committee) and other technical reviewers.

A Business Plan Option for the Legacy Review Project has been created and will be included in the 2022/2023 Business Plan and Budget Deliberations. Funding will support the timely delivery of this project. Should it not be funded, Administration will have to reprioritize other work to achieve these outcomes and the timelines would be extended.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Further implications will be outlined as a result of the John A. Macdonald Renaming process and through the preparation of the Legacy Review Project. Implications will be identified as required in future reports.

A Communication and Engagement Plan, including education and awareness activities, will be developed as part of the Legacy Review Project.

NEXT STEPS

Administration will be proceeding with activities related to the John A. Macdonald Road renaming in 2021.

Further work on the Legacy Review Project will not occur until funding is secured. If no funding is allocated to this project in 2022, the timelines for achieving the goals of the Legacy Review will be adjusted and the teams involved will identify how work plans can be reprioritized to move this project forward.

REPORT APPROVAL

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