



## Motion Memorandum

**SUBJECT:** Renaming of Ryerson Park

**TO:** **Environment, Infrastructure & Community Services**  
**Cttee.**

**FROM:** Mayor Marianne Meed Ward

**Date to Committee:** July 8, 2021

**Date to Council:** July 13, 2021

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### **Motion for Council to Consider:**

Direct the Director of Recreation, Community and Culture to initiate the renaming process for Ryerson Park in keeping with our naming policies, ensuring equity, diversity and inclusion is reflected in the new name, and report back to committee with a recommendation for a new name by November 2021.

### **Reason:**

At the June 16, 2021 meeting of the Halton District School Board, Trustees unanimously approved a motion to rename Ryerson Public School on Woodview Road in Burlington in accordance with the Board's Naming and Renaming Schools Policy and Governance Procedure.

As part of the Board motion, the Chair of the Board sent a letter to my office to inform me of the initiation of the HDSB process to rename the school.

A city-owned park adjacent to the school also bears the Ryerson name.

Ryerson Public School and adjacent Ryerson Park are named after Egerton Ryerson for his contributions to the Ontario education system, however, Ryerson was also instrumental to the design of Canada's residential school system. In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada concluded this assimilation amounted to the genocide of Indigenous people.

The City of Burlington is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion, and the names we choose for our municipal properties must reflect that commitment – both going forward, and in retrospect. As part of that commitment City Council recently unanimously endorsed the Halton Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Charter produced by the Halton Equity and Diversity

Roundtable. We have also recently updated our naming policies to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion is integrated in all our asset naming.

There have been growing calls to remove Ryerson's name from public buildings and institutions, including Ryerson University in Toronto, where a report on the matter is expected to come before their president and board of directors this fall.

I support the change the HDSB is making and the reasons behind it.

Our indigenous community needs to enjoy our parks and public spaces without a reminder of one of the architects of the residential school system and the legacy of harm it created for their people. Renaming our city park is one step we can take toward reconciliation with our indigenous residents. In preparation of this staff direction, I have reached out to Giima (Chief) Laforme of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Angela Bellegarde – Indigenous Lead for Halton Our Kids Network, and Lynne Simons/Eddy Robinson at Halton Region (Eddy is the Indigenous Advisor for Halton) for their input and they all said they are supportive of the process to reconsider the name and look at other options.

We have also received questions from residents about reviewing the names of other assets in our city. We are committed to listening and participating in that dialogue, in partnership with our residents, stakeholders, Burlington Inclusivity Advisory Committee and others. We will be guided by our community and partners on the best way to embark on these conversations, and will provide further details as they are known.

### **Outcome Sought:**

That in recognition and support of Burlington's Indigenous community and in accordance with the city's naming policy, the name of Ryerson Park be changed to better reflect the city's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

### **Vision to Focus Alignment:**

- ☐ Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
- ☐ Improve integrated city mobility
- ☐ Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment
- ☒ Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture
- ☐ Deliver customer centric services with a focus on efficiency and technology transformation

Motion Seconded by: Not Required  
Share with Senior Staff ☒

Approved as per form by the City Clerk,

Reviewed by the City Manager - In accordance with the Code of Good Governance, Council-Staff Relations Policy and an assessment of the internal capacity within the City to complete the work based on a specific target date (quarter/year).

**Comments:**

City Clerk:        Approved as per form.

City Manager:    Approved