



SUBJECT: Ryerson Park renaming

TO: Environment, Infrastructure & Community Services Cttee.

FROM: Recreation, Community and Culture Department

Report Number: RCC-01-22

Wards Affected: 4

File Numbers: 930-07

Date to Committee: January 13, 2022

Date to Council: January 18, 2022

Recommendation:

Approve Sweetgrass Park as the new name for the park formally called Ryerson.

PURPOSE:

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture

Background and Discussion:

In July of 2021 council supported a Motion Memorandum from the Mayor for the Renaming of Ryerson Park which included the following staff direction:

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.

Strategy/process

Since July staff have completed a three-phase engagement process with the community:

Phase 1 – August 24 to September 11, 2021 – Community Ideation

Resulted in over 560 responses.

Phase 2 – Review of Suggestions

A small group comprised of the Chair of the Inclusivity Committee, Stephen Paquette – resident and Indigenous elder, ward Councilor (councilor Stolte), and the author reviewed the community suggestions. The Trustee for the ward also attended the meeting to observe the process.

Using the *Naming of Corporate Assets Policy*, the small group reviewed the policy to determine which criteria would be weighted higher than other items. For example, the group felt that a name that reflected a sense of place and supports diversity and inclusivity, was more significant than honoring a person, persons, a family group living or deceased who have made a significant contribution to the community.

After coming to consensus of the evaluation matrix, and streamlining the list of names to remove duplications, or name that violated the policy, each member of the small team completed an individual rating and ranking of the suggested names.

At a consensus meeting the small group support the following themes

- Head of the Lake Park
- Unity Park
- Truth and Reconciliation Park

It was through that discussion that Stephen suggested that we pause to consult with an Indigenous linguist to see if there was an appropriate Indigenous word that might best reflect the theme.

Also, during the same discussion Stephen educated the group on, “Sweetgrass.”

Sweet grass is one of the sacred medicines to many First Nations. It is used as a purification medicine in ceremony to purify ourselves and to heal.

The planting and use of sweetgrass is widespread by most Indigenous cultures in this area. This transcendence and the use of sweetgrass resonated with the group.

After the meeting Stephen sought the advice of an Indigenous linguist. Upon consultation the linguist found it challenging to find the right word because of the complexity of language in different context.

The small group re-convened with this new information and decided to proceed with the list of the three names and add Sweetgrass to the mix and be transparent with the community where this name came from.

Phase 3 – Community Voting November 5-19, 2021

Community voting through the *Get Involve* page opened with a brief explanation of the four names.

Over 1,600 votes were cast by Burlington residents.

The results are:

Name	Percentage of Votes
Head of the Lake Park	16.1%
Unity Park	39%
Truth and Reconciliation Park	5%
Sweetgrass Park	40%

Options Considered

Committee has many options to consider:

1. Use the most voted name by the community which supports the community engagement process.
 2. Combine the most popular names for example – *Sweetgrass Unity Park*. This name also supports the community engagement process.
 3. Name the park the same as the recently announced re-named school *Makwendam Public School*. According to the Halton District School Board Press Release, “The name Makwendam, pronounced muck-kwen-dum, is the Indigenous word for “to remember” in the Anishinaabemowin language.” This would provide consistency between the two properties and does not honour the public engagement process.
 4. Any other name that committee would like to consider in accordance with the Naming of Corporate Assets policy, but it does not honour the public engagement process.
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Financial Matters:

There are a few costs to implement the park name change including the production of replacement signage as well as signage reflective of the truth and reconciliation - speaking about the past and why the name change and the City's aspirations for Truth and Reconciliation by re-naming the park. Cost is estimated to be \$5,000.

Staff are also looking at the installation of a medicine wheel or healing circle in the park as well as sweetgrass plantings. Staff have had some preliminary discussions with a potential donor to support the capital investment for the medicine wheel or healing circle. The donor would look for their donation to be matched by the City. Cost and feasibility of this work is unknown at this time. This opportunity will be further explored and considered as part of a future capital budget process.

Total Financial Impact

Total financial impact of implementing the name change is estimated to be \$5,000.

Source of Funding

Funding to be provided from existing capital order PR0122.

Other Resource Impacts

Adding a medicine wheel or healing circle in the park would require parks and open space staff to re-prioritize other planned works in order to accommodate this new potential project.

There may also need to be additional staff time allocated to maintain the potential new assets from Roads, Parks and Forestry staff because of the detail of care required to maintain and honour the space.

Climate Implications

As stewards of the park land at 565 Woodview Road and in honour of the people that occupied the land and called it home, staff honour using natural preventative maintenance practices whenever possible and in keeping with the carbon net neutral goals and objectives.

Engagement Matters:

As outlined in the background and strategy section there has been a three-stage community engagement process:

- Phase 1 Ideation for name submissions over 500 names were submitted.
 - Phase 2 – Focus group to refine the submission to three names for community voting, including consultation with an Indigenous linguist and listening to Indigenous voice on a potential name and adding the additional park name of Sweetgrass.
 - Phase 3 – Community voting with over 1,600 votes
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Conclusion:

After a three phase, three-month community engagement process the community has expressed two names of preference for the park at 565 Woodview Road, 40% of those that voted preferred Sweetgrass Park and 39% voted Unity Park. Although close and following the voting of the community, suggest that the name of the park as Sweetgrass Park to align the park with the purpose of the plant, as part of the City's, "*to purify ourselves and to heal,*" as the City's part in Truth and Reconciliation.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendices:

- A. Get Involved Burlington Community Voting report
- B. Get Involved Heat Map

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.