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City of Kelowna

Council Policy No. 394

New Civic Asset Naming

Responsible Department: Partnership & Investments	Adopted: 26/05/2025
Amendments: N/A	Last Reviewed: N/A

Guiding Principle

The City of Kelowna embraces its growing diversity and works with community partners to create great public spaces. The names applied to new civic assets reflect the natural beauty of the region and our collaborations with syilx/Okanagan people, and add to the story of our heritage.

Purpose

To outline how the City decides the name of a new civic asset.

Application

This policy applies to the naming of all new City owned and operated assets, including features and amenities within City owned and operated assets, street names and new assets that are replacing end-of-life existing assets. This policy does not apply to:

- Requests to re-name existing City assets.
- Assets that will be ultimately owned by third-parties.
- Assets developed by third-parties that do not require approval from the City or have a requirement to seek the City's input or direction on its asset names.

Definitions

"asset" means any tangible land-based project to add value or enhance public use.

"major asset" means an asset with a regional, City-wide or substantially multi-purpose use and/or an asset that consumes a significant land mass within the City of Kelowna boundaries.

"minor asset" means an asset with a singular, specific purpose; an asset contained within a major asset; or an asset with an intended use that is limited to a core area, a neighbourhood or an otherwise defined limited area of the City.

"features and amenities" means any built additions or value-add improvements made to an asset which support its enjoyment or use by the public, such as gathering spaces, water fountains, docks, pathways or gardens.

"dual naming" means the formal application of two names for a single asset, whether major or minor.

"settler" means the Europeans who arrived to the Okanagan Valley in the 1800s and their descendants who established the colonial economy and played a central role in the development of the City of Kelowna.

“syilx/Okanagan” means the distinct and sovereign Indigenous inhabitants of Kelowna and its surrounding region, today comprised of seven member communities: Westbank First Nation, the Okanagan Indian Band, the Osoyoos Indian Band, the Penticton Indian Band, the Upper Nicola Band, and the Upper and Lower Similkameen Indian Bands. The Colville Tribe in the United States is also part of the syilx/Okanagan nation.

“cultural community” means any group that demonstrates shared ethnic, geographic and socio-cultural experiences, attributes history and/or way of life.

“heritage” means artifacts, structures and sites which convey the history and evolution of an area over time.

“third-party” means any organization outside of the City of Kelowna including formal City partners, private enterprise, non-profits and other levels of government.

“wayfinding” means the practice of ensuring emergency first responders can reasonably locate the asset to promptly attend.

Policy Statements

Acknowledging the land and what it provides

1. New asset names will be primarily grounded in the land on which the asset is contained, using concepts such as:
 - a) Flora and fauna of the natural environment,
 - b) The natural assets and the culturally sustaining resources on the land where the asset is being developed,
 - c) References to the land’s historical or present day value to the people and cultures of our region.

Celebrating heritage and enhancing cultural learning

2. Interpretive information and cultural installations within public spaces will be used to enhance community awareness of syilx/Okanagan culture and settler contributions to the history and culture of the City, which may include explanations of the significance of an asset’s name as well as language learning features.
3. The City will seek to incorporate current local Indigenous knowledge into asset naming decisions and related interpretive information or cultural installations in public spaces.
4. The City will avoid routinely replicating historical names which have been applied to other assets already over time.
5. The City will avoid names which may be culturally divisive or historically contested, such as names known to the City which have been rejected or problematized by a local cultural community and language, figures or artifacts which are likely to generate polarized or oppositional reactions from the community.

Wayfinding and orienting the public

6. Asset names will help residents and visitors understand what the asset is used for and where to find it.
7. Asset names may be aligned to any adjacent neighbourhood naming convention, unless doing so would substantially contravene other statements within this policy.

8. Assets may also be named to help better define an area within the City.

Dual naming

9. Dual naming may be considered for an asset under the following circumstances:
 - a) Where the proposed name for a new asset presents challenges for emergency personnel or other wayfinding needs,
 - b) Where dual naming will contribute to cross-cultural learning through aligned or complimentary names in English and other languages,
 - c) Legal or regulatory requirements binding the City to certain name choices, or
 - d) Technical, operational or other forms of practical limitations requiring that dual naming be applied

Sponsorship and alternative revenue

10. Whether or not the naming of a new civic asset presents alternative revenue benefits to City of Kelowna taxpayers will be considered alongside other applicable name options for a new civic asset.
11. In cases where sponsorship may substantially contribute to the financial viability of a project, the asset will be named in accordance with Council Policy No. 376 Sponsorship and Advertising.

Major and minor asset naming approaches

12. Major asset names will communicate the scope and impact the amenity has within the City and region, with the following conditions:
 - a) Major asset names are context-specific, and the decision applied to one major asset name does not create a standardized naming convention for other similar assets in the future.
 - b) Major asset names will include appropriate amenity or use descriptors (e.g. Recreation Park, Aquatic Centre).
 - c) Options for major asset names will be presented to Council when research or engagement to determine appropriate options has been completed. Council is the ultimate decision-maker on major asset names.
 - d) The City will share contextual and historical information about the land as part of presenting new asset projects to the public such as in open house materials, web page content and reports to Council.
 - e) Major asset naming decisions may include public engagement, in accordance with Council Policy No. 372 Engage.
13. Minor asset naming decisions will be made by staff with a view to:
 - a) Building on existing neighbourhood naming conventions,
 - b) Avoiding repetitious or similar sounding names across minor assets,
 - c) Scaling the process of arriving at a name to reflect the scope and significance of the asset.

Third party naming requests

14. Third parties may submit written naming proposals to the City for consideration.
15. Submissions will only be considered if they do not contravene this policy and include evidence of community support and relevant contextual research supporting the proposed name.

Commemorative or philanthropic circumstances

16. Commemorative and philanthropic recognitions related to new civic assets will be determined in accordance with Council Policy No. 242 Commemorative Recognition (Plaques) in Parks.
17. Lands donated for a new civic asset will be recognized in accordance with Council Policy No. 242 and will not be treated as a separate asset but may be recognized through plaques, structures, monuments or other structures as defined in Council Policy No. 242 Commemorative Recognition (Plaques) in Parks.