



NAMING COMMITTEE RENAMING RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION

That Executive Committee recommend to City Council:

1. That the Oliver Community League's request to rename its Neighbourhood name to Wîhkwêntôwin ᐃᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ be approved.
2. That Oliver Arena, Oliver Pool, and Oliver Park be renamed to Wîhkwêntôwin ᐃᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ Arena, Wîhkwêntôwin ᐃᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ Pool, and Wîhkwêntôwin ᐃᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ Park, respectively.
3. That the future "The Yards/116 St. LRT Stop" along the Valley Line West be renamed to "Wîhkwêntôwin ᐃᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ/116 St. LRT Stop".

Report Purpose

Council decision required.

Note: Erin McDonald, Chair, and Matthew Dance, Vice-Chair, Naming Committee; and Imran Ahmad, President, Robyn Paches, former President, and Robert Lees-Miller, Communications, Oliver Community League will be in attendance at the February 7, 2024, Executive Committee meeting to present, if selected.

Executive Summary

- The Naming Committee is recommending that City Council support the Oliver Community League's naming application to rename its neighbourhood from Oliver to Wîhkwêntôwin ᐃᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ
- Under Council Policy C509C - Naming Municipal Assets, renaming of significant municipal assets applications will be recommended by the Naming Committee to City Council for final approval.

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REPORT

The City of Edmonton's Naming Committee (the Committee) is comprised of up to seven volunteers appointed by City Council. The mandate of the Committee is to name the City's development areas, parks, municipal facilities, roads, honorary roads and wards, in accordance with, and subject to any exemptions or restrictions imposed by Bylaw 17138 - Naming Committee Bylaw and Council Policy C509C.

Council Policy C509C - approved in August 2021, introduced a new renaming section, which allows communities to bring forward renaming requests when the views or actions of the individual after whom a municipal asset is named no longer reflect Edmonton's current community values of equity and inclusion.

The Renaming Application

On August 29, 2023, the Oliver Community League presented a renaming application (Attachment 1) to the Committee. The presentation showcased how the neighbourhood's namesake Oliver does not reflect Edmonton's community values of equity and inclusion. The presentation also highlighted Oliver Community League's renaming process, community engagement, and a proposed new name for its neighbourhood.

The Neighbourhood

The Oliver Neighbourhood is located west of Downtown (Attachment 4). Its boundaries are 124 Street NW to the west, 105 Avenue NW to the north, and 111 Street and 110 Street to the east. Along the southern edge, its boundary runs alongside the bank of the North Saskatchewan River and the Victoria Promenade (100 Avenue NW).

Oliver is the most populated neighbourhoods in Edmonton. This vibrant neighbourhood stands out for its diverse demographic makeup, featuring a harmonious blend of students, young professionals, families and senior citizens. The neighbourhood is considered to have the most diverse range of ethnicities and one of the highest representation of the LGBTQ2+ community within the City of Edmonton. It is also known for its varied land uses, a diverse mix of housing options, and a thriving array of commercial services and institutions. When the Valley Line West is complete, this neighbourhood will be home to four LRT stops.

Frank Oliver

The Oliver name is derived from Frank Oliver. Oliver was a Canadian federal minister, politician, and known for establishing Edmonton's first newspaper, the Edmonton Bulletin. He also helped establish Edmonton as the new capital of the newly created Province of Alberta and its first school board. As Minister of the Interior, he was responsible for discriminatory Canadian

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government policies that targeted First Nations' land rights and Black immigration. He spearheaded many harmful policies that directly targeted Indigenous communities, people of colour, newcomers, and people with disabilities. He also oversaw the creation of residential schools during his time as a federal minister.

The Oliver School located at 10227 118 St NW was named after Frank Oliver in 1910 and opened in 1911. The community surrounding the school was known as West Edmonton but became formally known as Oliver in 1937 during a time in Edmonton's history when the surrounding communities adopted a school's name as its neighbourhood name.

The Renaming Journey

The Oliver Community League began its renaming process in 2020 when it started the #UncoverOliver campaign for its neighbourhood residents and Edmontonians to learn more about the negative impacts of Frank Oliver's influences, policies, and actions. In 2022, the Oliver Community League established a Renaming Circle. The Renaming Circle was Indigenous-centered and included a majority of Indigenous perspectives including perspectives from several of the racialized communities impacted by Frank Oliver's policies and legacies. Twelve people participated in Renaming Circle meetings and were identified and selected in a variety of ways. They are leaders in their communities who have been largely impacted by the legacy of Frank Oliver, were involved in the early stages of the process, or were approached because of their knowledge of the land, community, and history. The Renaming Circle worked with a team of consultants to develop a process that supported the community and those impacted by Frank Oliver, and to choose a new name that best represents the diversity and values of the neighbourhood. This work then supported the Indigenous Elders in consultation with the Renaming Circle, which together discovered a new name for the neighbourhood.

Wîhkwêntôwin ᐃᓄᓄᐃᓄᐃ

Wîhkwêntôwin ᐃᓄᓄᐃᓄᐃ, pronounced [WE-KWEN-TO-WIN), is nêhiyawêwin (Cree), and translates in English to "Circle of Friends". As stated in the "Oliver Renaming Project: What We've Heard Report" (Attachment 2), the name was chosen because it reflects the following:

- The importance of honouring the deep history and sacredness of this place, modern history, the present, and also moving forward into the future.
- The area as a sanctuary, gathering place, place of welcome and transition, a hub for many nations, tribes and languages, a place of hunting, fishing, and trade.
- The neighbourhood as a birthing place for modern Indigenous history, from being a place for the beginnings of Native Friendship Centres, a place of Métis association, and a gathering place for more recent Indigenous political activity.

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- The circle is a powerful symbol for different cultures and contexts, from geese gathering in a circle to protect each other, to circular encampments (Circle Encampment People - Papaschase Encampment), to Chinese cultural connections (you eat in a circle, you can join the circle and it never breaks, there is no beginning or end). A circle brings us together.
- Values of friendship, family, family-friendly and relationships.
- What the neighbourhood represents for many people today – gathering in green spaces like Paul Kane Park or coffee shops or bars in the area.
- The power of hearing the Cree language spoken, of land-back, and relationships with the land.

Naming Committee and Council Policy C509C

Upon reviewing Oliver Community League’s renaming application and receiving its presentation on August 29, 2023, the Naming Committee unanimously supported its renaming application. The Naming Committee is committed to adhering to the principles and values stated within Council Policy C509C, which focuses on diversity, inclusion, and recognizing and commemorating Edmonton’s Indigenous history and communities. The Naming Committee’s recommendations are also aligned with the Indigenous Framework, the City Plan, and the City’s commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Oliver Community League’s Renaming Application
2. Oliver Renaming Project: What We've Heard
3. Letters of Support
4. Neighbourhood Map
5. Oliver Neighbourhood Renaming Costs and Timeline