



# PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

## POLICY NAME: Naming/Renaming of Parks and/or Recreational Facilities

**Policy Category:** Planning/Development/Construction

**Date Reviewed:** April 23, 2007

**Date Adopted:** May 2, 2007

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### Introduction

The naming or renaming of parks and recreational facilities is a complex and sometimes emotionally evocative since assigning a name is a powerful and permanent identity for a public place and/or facility. The naming and renaming of parks and/or recreational facilities often requires significant resources in terms of changing names on signs, maps, and literature. In addition, excessive and constant name changing can be the source of confusion to the public. The purpose of this policy, which is designed to replace an existing naming policy, is to provide guidance to those that have an interest in the naming and or renaming of the City's parks and/or recreational facilities.

### Policy Statement

It is the policy of Portland Parks and Recreation to reserve the name or renaming of parks and/or recreational facilities for circumstances that will best serve the interests of the city and ensure a worthy and enduring legacy for the City's park and recreation system.

To this end Portland Parks and Recreation supports consideration of naming requests within the following broad categories.

#### *Historic Events, People, and Places*

The history of a major event, place or person may play an important role in the naming or renaming of a park as communities often wish to preserve and honor the history of a city, its founders, other historical figures, its Native American heritage, local landmarks and prominent geographical locations, and natural and geological features through the naming of parks.

#### *Outstanding Individuals*

The City has benefited, through its evolution, from the contributions made by many outstanding individuals. This category is designed to acknowledge the sustained contribution that has been made by such individuals to the City and the development and management of the City's park and recreation system.

#### *Major Gifts*

Over the years, the City and Portland Parks and Recreation have benefited from the generosity of some of its residents, businesses, and foundations. On occasion, the significance of such donations may warrant consideration being given to requests from either the donor or another party to acknowledge such a gift by naming.

## Definitions

**Naming:** the permanent name assigned by City Council via an ordinance to a given park or recreational facility.

**Parks:** all traditionally designed parks, gardens, natural open spaces, and specialized parks under the stewardship of Portland Parks and Recreation.

**Recreational facilities:** major structures such as community centers, swimming pools, pavilions, tennis courts, sports fields, and fountains located within lands under the stewardship of Portland Parks and Recreation.

**Donations:** a donation of property, goods or cash generally with no expectation of return. If the gift is contingent upon a special request, it is made subject to “condition.”

## Guiding Principles

### *General Principles*

In considering proposals for the naming or renaming of a park and/or recreational facility, the following general principles will be taken into account either collectively or individually.

When naming a new park and/or recreational facility, the proposed name will:

- Engender a strong positive image
- Be appropriate having regard to the parks/recreational facility’s location and/or history
- Have historical, cultural or social significance for future generations
- Commemorate places, people or events that are of continued importance to the city, region, state, and/or nation
- Have symbolic value that transcends its ordinary meaning or use and enhances the character and identity of the park and/or recreational facility
- Have broad public support
- Shall not result in the undue commercialization of the park and/or recreational facility if it accompanies a corporate gift

### *Renaming a park and/or recreational facility*

Proposals to rename parks and/or recreational facilities whether for a major gift or community request are not encouraged. Likewise, names that have become widely accepted by the community will not be abandoned unless there are compelling reasons and strong public sentiment from the broader community for doing so. Historical or commonly used place names will be preserved wherever possible.

### *Naming/renaming parks and/or recreational facilities for Outstanding Individuals*

Naming or renaming a park and/or recreational facility for an outstanding individual is encouraged only for those who have been deceased for at least three years (this provision can be waived at Council’s directive) and where that person’s significance and good reputation have been accepted in the City’s, State’s and/or Nation’s history.

In considering the naming/renaming of a park and/or recreational facility after a deceased person, priority will be given to those who made a sustained and lasting contribution to

- Portland’s park and recreation system
- The City of Portland
- The State of Oregon
- The Nation

The naming of a park and/or recreational facility after people who may have lost their lives due to war or a tragic event will be considered only after the shock of such event has lessened within the community.

***Naming/renaming for Historic Events, People, and Places***

When a park and/or recreational facility is associated with or located near events, people, and places of historic, cultural or social significance, consideration will be given to naming that park and/or recreational facility after such events, people, and places. In considering such proposals, the relationship of the event, person or place to the park and/or recreational facility must be demonstrated through research and documentation.

***Naming for Major Donations***

From time to time, a significant donation may be made to the City that will add considerable value to the City’s park and recreation system. On such occasions, recognition of this donation by naming a new park and/or recreation facility in honor of or at the request of the donor will be considered.

As a guideline, the threshold for considering the naming of a park and/or recreational facility will include one or more of the following:

- Land for the majority of the park was deeded to the city.
- Contribution of a minimum of 60% of the capital construction costs associated with developing the park/recreational facility.
- Provision of a minimum 20-year endowment for the continued maintenance and/or programming of the park/recreational facility.

Donors seeking naming rights for major donations with respect to an individual will be encouraged to follow the principles that apply to naming a park for an outstanding person. Exceptions to this will be considered on their own merits. Portland Parks and Recreation reserves the right to rename any park and/or recreational facility if the person for whom it is named turns out to be disreputable or subsequently acts in a disreputable way. Naming parks and/or recreational facilities with a company name is not permitted by way of City Code. Corporate logos, insignias, brands or direct advertising text shall not be used in park and/or recreational facility naming text.

***Other Considerations***

To minimize confusion, parks will not be subdivided for the purpose of naming unless there are readily identifiable physical divisions such as roads or waterways. However, naming of specific major recreational facilities within parks will be permitted; under these circumstances such names should be different to the park name to avoid user confusion.

All signs that indicate the name of a park and/or recreational facility shall comply with Portland Parks and Recreation’s graphic and design standards. Specialized naming signage will not be permitted.

***Naming Text***

As Portland Parks and Recreation operates a large and diverse park system, it is important that the naming text assist in communicating the type of development and use. Therefore, the following terms will be applied as part of the naming process:

- ***“Park”*** applies to all parks that have been or will be developed primarily for recreational purposes. Such parks usually involve a high degree of landscape and recreational facility development.
- ***“Nature Park”*** applies to all parks where the primary purpose is the conservation of the natural environment. Such parks generally will have little or no development.

***Procedures & Guidelines***

These procedures and guidelines have been established to ensure that the naming or renaming of parks and/or recreational facilities is approached in a consistent manner.

***Requests for naming/renaming of parks and/or recreational facilities***

All requests for the naming or renaming of a park and/or recreational facility shall be made in writing to the Director of Portland Parks and Recreation, attention: Marketing and Business Development

Manager.

Requests should contain the following minimum information:

- The proposed name
- Reasons for the proposed name
- Written documentation indicating community support for the proposed name
- Description/map showing location and boundaries of the park
- If proposing to name a facility within a park, include a description/map showing the location of the facility.
- If proposing to rename a park or facility, include justification for changing an established name.
- If proposing to name a park or facility after an outstanding person, include documentation of that person's significance and good reputation in the City's, State's or Nation's history.

***Assessing and approving naming/renaming requests***

Upon receipt of a naming request by Portland Parks and Recreation, the relevant neighborhood association(s) shall be advised and their comments on the proposal will be invited.

The local neighborhood association will be notified of all naming/renaming proposals. Each proposal will then be considered by a standing committee that comprises the Director of Portland Parks and Recreation or his/her representative, a staff member from the office of the Parks Commissioner, a staff member from the Oregon Historical Society, a member of the Portland Parks and Recreation Board, and the Director of the Office of Neighborhood Involvement or his/her representative. This committee shall:

- Review the proposed request for its adherence to the policies of Portland Parks and Recreation
- Ensure that supporting information has been authenticated, particularly when an individual's name is proposed
- Take into consideration the comments of the relevant neighborhood association(s)

The standing committee will then present a recommendation to the Parks Commissioner who may either accept or reject any proposal. The Parks Commissioner may also seek to refer the matter to the Parks and Recreation Board for advice and/or convene a public meeting to gain additional information prior to making a decision prior to taking the matter to Council for a final decision.

***Communicating naming/renaming decisions***

The Marketing and Business Development Manager will be responsible for communicating the Park Commissioner's decision in relation to naming/renaming requests within two weeks of such a decision.

***Appeals***

Any person whose proposal to name/rename a park and/or recreational facility is denied by the Parks Commissioner may appeal to City Council by petition through the City Auditor.

**Related Policies, Procedures & Forms**

Sponsorship Policy

**Appendix**

**Additional Comments**

This policy updates Portland Parks and Receptions policy on the naming or renaming of parks facilities and features that was adopted in 1996.