

City of Camas Recognition and Naming Policy

Section 1. Purpose

1. The purpose of this policy is to establish clear and consistent criteria and processes for naming or renaming City-owned public facilities and streets. This policy is intended to ensure that names reflect the City's history, values, and sense of place and provide inclusive and respectful recognition of individuals, cultures, and natural features significant to Camas.
2. This policy should also be followed in reviewing or preparing official comments or recommendations to state, federal, and/or intergovernmental boards taking actions regarding geographic names, naming, or renaming.

Section 2. Applicability

1. This policy applies to the naming or renaming of City-owned public facilities and streets, including:
 - a. Streets, in accordance with the Street Naming Manual
 - b. Parks, trails, open spaces, and associated amenities
 - c. Buildings, including meeting rooms and other interior spaces
 - d. Major infrastructure systems and components, including bridges
2. This policy does not apply to routine donor recognition elements, such as bench plaques, donor walls, engraved pavers, or similar features installed under an approved fundraising, memorial, or sponsorship program, provided that the recognition does not constitute the official naming of a public facility or grant naming rights. Any proposal to name a facility, portion of a facility, or public amenity in recognition of a donation, sponsorship, or other contribution remains subject to this policy.

Section 3. Naming Criteria

1. **Context, geographic location, and natural or geological features.** Names may be based on the facility's geographic location, existing or commonly recognized place names in the vicinity, and distinctive, predominant, or defining natural or geological features of the area, including native flora and fauna.
 - a. Names selected under this subsection should have a clear, direct, and meaningful connection to the site and contribute to a coherent sense of place within the surrounding area.
 - b. Facilities may be given official designations based on existing place names in the vicinity, including names associated with topographical

features, waterways, neighborhoods, nearby landmarks or schools, or historically recognized sites.

2. **Historical significance.** Naming proposals with historical significance should meet one of the following criteria:
 - a. The name is associated with a historically significant event or events reflecting broad patterns of Camas's history, including its mill town origins.
 - b. The name is associated with the lives of people of citywide significance in Camas's past.
 - c. The name would highlight previously under-documented or poorly understood historical narratives.
 - d. The name reflects a distinctive architectural or engineering achievement, specific to buildings and other infrastructure.
 - e. The City encourages the thoughtful use of Indigenous place names and languages, when appropriate, after consultation with tribal representatives to ensure accuracy, respect, and cultural integrity.
3. **Civil service and individual recognition.** Facilities may be named for individuals who have made a significant and positive contribution to the City of Camas or whose life and work are meaningfully connected to the community, including through public service, civic leadership, or historical significance. Relevant contributions may include:
 - a. Leadership in civic organizations, public institutions, or community initiatives devoted to improving the quality of life in Camas.
 - b. Accomplishments by individuals from Camas who have achieved distinction or recognition in their field and whose association with Camas is well documented.
 - c. Historically significant individuals who lived in, worked in, or are otherwise closely associated with Camas, or who made notable visits or contributions that are part of the City's documented history.
 - d. Leadership in events, programs, or efforts that have broadly enriched the cultural, civic, or social life of Camas residents.
 - e. Facilities shall not ordinarily be named for living individuals, although exceptions may be considered when significant contributions or unusually outstanding public service would so justify, and when the individual is no longer serving the City in an official capacity.
4. **Contributions.** Except for public streets, facilities may be named for an individual or organization if that entity has made a significant direct property, monetary, or in-kind contribution toward the acquisition, development, construction, or substantial improvement of that facility.
 - a. Naming consideration and duration shall be proportional and appropriate to the scale and public benefit of the contribution.

- b. Naming consideration may be appropriate only when a transaction includes a donation, discount, or other contribution that provides a clear public benefit beyond fair market value. Properties sold to the City for fair market value should not be named for the seller.
 - c. Contribution-based naming may be permanent or time-limited, as determined by the applicable naming authority and documented in a written agreement. Perpetual naming rights should not be granted unless expressly approved by the City Council.
- 5. **Segments of property.** For buildings and facilities, portions of a facility may have another name than that of the entire facility.
- 6. **Renaming.** Renaming existing public facilities or streets is generally discouraged and should be undertaken only after careful consideration of historical context, community input, and potential impacts. Renaming proposals must demonstrate a clear public benefit and alignment with this policy. For facilities whose names have been listed on general usage maps for fifty years or more, name changes should only be considered when the proposed name is supported by other City policies, priorities or initiatives.
- 7. **Clarity and Pronunciation.** Names should support clear communication for the public and emergency responders. Names from any language are appropriate when their spelling in the Roman alphabet and pronunciation can be clearly conveyed and is consistently used. Names should not duplicate or closely resemble existing names in a way that could create confusion for the public or emergency responders.

Section 4. Naming Authority

- 1. The Community Development Director is responsible for designating the names and numbers of City streets pursuant to the Street Naming Manual.
- 2. The Public Works Director designates the names of all new infrastructure systems and components.
- 3. The Library Board of Trustees is responsible for designating the names of any new Library facilities, including rooms or other library spaces.
- 4. The Parks and Recreation Commission is responsible for designating the names of any new City parks, trails, open spaces, and associated amenities.
- 5. The City Council is responsible for any other naming or renaming of existing facilities, or for any naming of a living individual or individual who has been deceased for less than ten years, including those facilities in 4.1 through 4.4.
- 6. The City Council has ultimate authority in all naming decisions, including those in subsections 4.1-4.4.

Section 5. Naming Procedures

1. Naming proposals may be initiated by City Council or City staff, members of City boards or commissions, and members of the public.
2. All proposals must be submitted in writing and include:
 - a. The proposed name, the rationale for the proposal, and an explanation of how the proposal satisfies the criteria in this policy.
 - b. Background information on the individual, place, or concept being honored.
 - c. Any historical, cultural, or community significance.
 - d. Disclosure of any associated donation, sponsorship, or naming rights request.
3. Proposals must be submitted to the appropriate naming authority identified in Section 4. The naming authority may approve or deny the proposal or refer it to the City Council with a recommendation for action. Proposals subject to Section 4.5 require City Council approval. Unless City Council approval is required or the proposal is referred to the City Council, decisions made under subsections 4.1 through 4.4 are final.

Section 6. Alternatives to Permanent Naming

1. The City recognizes that permanent naming is not always appropriate or necessary. The City may favor an alternative form of recognition when permanent naming or renaming would cause operational confusion, substantial public expense, displacement of an established name, or other impacts disproportionate to the proposed recognition.
2. Alternatives may include interpretive signage, plaques, public art, or other forms of recognition that provide context and education while preserving flexibility for future community needs. City departments may also consider temporary or time-limited recognitions, such as proclamations, interpretive displays, or digital storytelling elements that highlight community history, cultural heritage, or individual contributions. Alternatives to permanent naming should generally satisfy the criteria in Section 3.