

Operational Services Report to
Executive Committee
2024 April 16

ISC: UNRESTRICTED
EC2024-0451

Saddle Ridge Park Naming Report

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to submit a proposed name (“Guru Teg Bahadur Park”) for the park space located at 39 Saddlepeace Way N.E. that will honour the Sikh community and advance social wellbeing.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

None

RECOMMENDATION(S):

Review or Release By: the date Council rises and reports.

1. Approve the name “Guru Teg Bahadur Park” for the park located at 39 Saddlepeace Way N.E.; and
2. Direct that the portions of this report be heard in-camera pursuant to subsection 23(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and remain confidential pursuant to Section 24(1)(a) & (b) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act until Council rises and reports.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 2024 APRIL 16:

That Council:

1. Adopt the name “Guru Teg Bahadur Park” for the park located at 39 Saddlepeace Way N.E.; and
2. Direct that the Report, Attachments, and Closed Meeting discussions remain confidential pursuant to Sections 23 (Local public body confidences) and 24 (Advice of officials) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, until Council rises and reports.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATION OFFICER/GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS

The General Manager concurs with this report.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Gobind Marg Charitable Trust Foundation secured over 1500 signatures of support to name a small community park in Saddle Ridge “Guru Teg Bahadur Park”.
- Administration supports the proposed name to further a sense of community as outlined in Municipal Naming, Sponsorship and Naming Rights Policy (CP2016-01), to align with the Social Wellbeing Policy (CP2019-01) by promoting a sense of belonging for various cultural groups within the community, and to advance the Anti-Racism Strategic Plan 2023-2027 by contributing to equitable public spaces.

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- Naming parks with a cultural association allows communities to celebrate their individual cultures, can enhance a sense of pride, and can result in residents feeling valued and appreciated. Additionally, it results in a celebration of the rich diversity of cultures we have within Calgary.
- There may be a potential risk with religious naming of this park and ensuring everyone feels welcome there.

DISCUSSION

The City of Calgary received a naming application for a park located at 39 Saddlepeace Way N.E. (Attachment 1). The naming application was submitted by the Gobind Marg Charitable Trust Foundation, who proposed the name “Guru Teg Bahadur Park”, in recognition of the ninth of ten Gurus, the founders of the Sikhism. Guru Teg Bahadur is honoured and remembered as the man who championed the rights for all religious freedom (Attachment 2).

The proposed park is located at the south end of Guru Nanak Gate NE. The site is also meaningful to the Sikh community in Saddle Ridge due to its adjacency to the Gobind Sarvar High School and a future Gurdwara (place of worship).

There is however a risk with religious naming; according to public engagement there is concern with respect to ensuring everyone feels welcome in this public park. Three of the oldest parks in Calgary are named St. George’s Island (the Zoo), St. Andrew’s Island and St. Patrick’s Island. Based on visual observation, these parks are regularly visited by diverse user groups and to date their religious naming has not been associated with lack of use.

The Community Anti-Racism Action Strategy (2023) acknowledges citizens have experienced discrimination based on religion and it is possible that some of the comments from the public engagement are based in discrimination.

EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public engagement was undertaken | <input type="checkbox"/> Dialogue with interested parties was undertaken |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public/interested parties were informed | <input type="checkbox"/> Public communication or engagement was not required |

The Applicant submitted more than 1500 signatures in support of the name “Guru Teg Bahadur Park”.

The City then conducted online engagement to gauge public support for the proposed name over a three-week period in November 2023. Engagement was advertised using paid social media targeting Saddle Ridge and surrounding communities and sandwich board signage was also installed in the park. There were 3,679 visitors to the Engage webpage, with 509 participants providing feedback. Clear support was not evident: while many people supported the name and believed it would celebrate their culture, others believed it did not fully represent the community or did not support religious naming in general. Please refer to the What We Heard Report for more information (Attachment 3).

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Letters of support provided by the Ward Councillor and two Calgary MLAs are included in Attachment 4. A formal letter of objection submitted by the Saddle Ridge Community Association is included in Attachment 5.

While the engagement indicated broad perspectives, Administration is still recommending the name “Guru Teg Bahadur Park” as part of our commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging. Community parks are small scale City-owned assets. These small-scaled parks functionally “belong” to the community and only thrive as public open space if the community is committed to their success. Support of community-led naming for these parks encourages a sense of belonging and pride.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

Naming the park “Guru Teg Bahadur Park” allows members of the Sikh community to celebrate their culture and contributes to their sense of pride, making residents feel valued.

Environmental

Not Applicable

Economic

Not Applicable

Service and Financial Implications

No anticipated financial impact

Costs of signage to be paid for by the applicant.

RISK

There is a risk associated with the proposed name as the What We Heard Report (Attachment 3) did include some concerns about potential community tensions and the impact on public use and access. Individuals from different religious backgrounds or non-religious individuals may not feel welcome or comfortable using the space. However, there is also the risk of not aligning with the Anti-Racism Strategic Plan and the Social Wellbeing Policy and The City’s perceived commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB). Administration has reviewed the context of this small community park, is committed to EDIB; and views this park naming as part of that commitment.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Confidential Map of Park
2. Confidential Naming Application
3. Confidential What We Heard Report
4. Confidential Letters of Support
5. Confidential Response from Saddle Ridge Community Association
6. Confidential Presentation

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Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Kyle Ripley, Director	Parks & Open Spaces/Operational Services	Approve
Doug Morgan, General Manager	Operational Services	Approve
Ryan Vanderputten, Director	Business & Engineering Services/Infrastructure Services	Inform
Michael Thompson, General Manager	Infrastructure Services	Inform
Erendira Cervantes- Altamirano, Director	Community Strategies/Community Services	Inform
Linda Kongnetiman, Managing Lead	Anti-Racism Program	Inform
Katie Black, General Manager	Community Services	Inform

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