PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

POLICY NAME: Naming of Parks, Natural Areas, Recreational Facilities, and Regional Trails.

Policy Category: Information/Communication

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I. INTRODUCTION

"The name we give to something shapes our attitude toward it." Katherine Paterson, novelist

The act of naming is significant and meaningful. A name can invoke powerful emotions, create images and help to recall history. The naming of a park, regional trail, facility or natural area is intended to be a permanent act, and therefore should be approached in a thoughtful manner. The name of a park, regional trail, natural area or facility should take into consideration the past, present and future history of the land, its use and our relationship to it.

This policy provides Portlanders and Portland Parks & Recreation a systematic and consistent approach to naming our major assets, consisting of parks, natural areas, recreational facilities, and regional trails.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

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

B. Portland Parks & Recreation strives to name parks, natural areas, recreational facilities, and regional trails to best reflect the significance of a feature and the community it serves, while also providing a worthy and enduring legacy for the City of Portland's parks and recreation system. The name of park assets must be appropriate to the location and remain relevant as the community grows and changes.

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

1. **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. This history may include its founders, other historical figures, its Native American heritage, local landmarks and prominent geographical locations, and natural and geological features.

2. **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.

3. **Major Gifts**
   Over the years, the City and Portland Parks & Recreation have benefited from the generosity of 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.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Naming: the permanent name assigned by Portland Parks & Recreation to a given park, natural area, recreational facility, or regional trail.

B. Park: open space owned or managed by Portland Parks & Recreation for active or passive recreation and/or aesthetic values. This includes all traditionally designed parks, gardens, and specialized parks under the stewardship of Portland Parks & Recreation.

C. Natural Area: open space owned or managed by Portland Parks & Recreation for a mix of natural resource and passive recreation values. These properties generally have limited development except for those improvements needed to allow users to access these natural resources. A few properties are also referred to as "Nature Parks."

D. Recreational Facility: major structures such as community centers, swimming pools, stadiums, and fountains located within lands under the stewardship of Portland Parks & Recreation.

E. Regional Trail: Regional trails connect Portland to adjacent communities or to regionally significant natural features such as rivers and streams, often across several neighborhoods. These trails are included in Metro's Regional Trails Plan. Typically, paths in parks or contained within a natural area are considered local access trails, not regional trails. The definition is based on length and purpose, rather than on width or material.

F. Donation: the giving, to Portland Parks & Recreation, of property, goods or cash generally with no expectation of return.

G. Sponsorship: the giving of financial or in-kind support from an individual or corporation for a specific service, program, facility, park, or event in return for certain benefits.

IV. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A. Portland Parks & Recreation names parks, natural areas, recreational facilities, and regional trails. 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 park asset, the proposed name will:

1. Engender a strong positive image
2. Be appropriate, having regard to the park asset's location and/or history
3. Have historical, cultural or social significance for future generations
4. Commemorate places, people or events that are of continued importance to the city, region, state, and/or nation
5. Honor and respect native and tribal communities
6. Have symbolic value that transcends its ordinary meaning or use and enhances the character and identity of the park and/or recreational facility
7. Have broad public support
8. Avoid undue commercialization of the park and/or recreational facility

V. PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES

A. Review Committee

An ad hoc committee appointed by the Director will review naming suggestions for Portland Parks & Recreation assets. The committee will consider names based on the criteria outlined below and with consideration of public comment.

B. Naming Categories

In general, naming of Parks assets will fall into one of the following categories:

1. Naming 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, recreational facility, regional trail and natural area 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, including consideration of impacts on disadvantaged communities.

2. Naming for Outstanding Individuals

Naming a park and/or recreational facility for an outstanding individual is allowed posthumously (at least 3 years since date of passing), and where that person's significance and good reputation have been accepted in the City's, State's and/or Nation's history.

When considering the naming of a park, recreational facility, regional trail and natural area after a person, consideration will be given when:

a. The person was exceptionally dedicated or demonstrated excellence in service in ways that made a significant contribution to the land, community, Portland Parks & Recreation, the City of Portland, State of Oregon, or the United States;
b. The person volunteered and gave extraordinary help or care to individuals, families, or groups, or support to the community;
c. The person risked his or her life to save or protect others; or
d. The person demonstrated commitment to equity, inclusion and justice.

3. Naming for Donations

A significant donation made to Portland Parks & Recreation that adds considerable value to the City of Portland parks and recreation system may be recognized through naming.

As a guideline, the threshold for considering the naming of a Park asset will include one or more of the following:

a. Land for the majority of the park was deeded to the City by the donor.
b. Contribution of a minimum of 60% of the capital construction costs associated with developing the park/recreational facility.

c. Provision of a minimum 20-year endowment for the continued maintenance, operation and/or programming of the Park asset.

Donors seeking to name an asset associated with major donations in honor of an individual must follow the principles and process that apply to naming a park for an outstanding person. Exceptions will be considered by the Commissioner in Charge in consultation with the Director and Naming Advisory Committee.

Naming parks, natural areas, recreational facilities or regional trails with a company name is prohibited. Corporate logos, insignias, brands or direct advertising text shall not be used in Portland Parks & Recreation facility naming.

4. Renaming

The renaming of parks, facilities, regional trails and natural areas may be allowed, but is discouraged. Name changes will be subject to a critical review that includes consideration of the original justification for the current name, the value of prior contributors, and the rationale for changing the name. The renaming process includes the community advisory committee and all other steps in the Naming process.

C. Naming Conventions

1. Names that are currently in use will not be considered
2. Names that are discriminatory or derogatory will not be considered
3. The Commissioner in Charge of Portland Parks & Recreation may require a process to identify an alternate name for a park, facility, regional trail or natural area if the name is determined to be inappropriate, incorrect or offensive

D. Naming Application Process

Any person, group, or organization may submit an application to name or re-name a park, facility, regional trail or natural area. The application should be submitted to the Director of Portland Parks & Recreation.

Applications should contain the following minimum information:

1. Name of applicant
2. Proposed name for asset
3. Background/support for proposed name
4. Demonstrated community support for the proposed name
5. Identification of interested/impacted stakeholders
6. Description/map showing location
7. If proposing to name a recreation facility within a park, include a description/map showing the location of the facility within the park
8. If proposing to name a Park asset after an outstanding person, documentation of that person's contribution to the City's, State's or Nation's history
9. If proposing to re-name a facility, the application should also include background information on the current name and the rationale for requesting a new name

E. Naming Approval Process

A detailed step by step process is listed at the end of this document. What follows is a summary of that process.

Upon receipt of a naming application by Portland Parks & Recreation, the relevant Neighborhood Association(s) and community-based organizations will be advised and their comments on the proposal will be invited.

Proposals will be considered by an advisory committee representing (but not limited to):

1. The Director of Portland Parks and Recreation
2. The Parks Commissioner
3. The Oregon Historical Society
4. The Portland Parks Board
5. The Native Community Advisory Committee
6. The Neighborhood Association(s), and/or a member of the Coalition Parks Committee in which the facility is located.
7. Communities of color and/or immigrant/refugee communities

The Assistant Director will assign a staff person to assemble and support the advisory committee. This staff person will take notes and convene meetings. The Commissioner and Director of Portland Parks & Recreation will approve committee membership. The goal is to appoint a

committee representing the broad range of demographics and interests of Portlanders, with specific attention to equity.

The advisory committee will:

1. Elect a chairperson to lead meetings
2. Review proposals for adherence to this Naming Policy
3. Ensure that supporting information is authenticated and validated, particularly when an individual's name is proposed
4. Solicit and take into consideration the comments of stakeholders and community members, including the Neighborhood Association(s), District Coalition, and other recognized or acknowledged groups.

The advisory committee may suggest modification of the name proposed by an applicant, with the agreement of the applicant.

Once the advisory committee has identified a preferred name, the recommendation will be presented to the Director of Parks & Recreation in writing by the supporting staff person. A recommendation from the committee must have either the consensus of the committee, or a 2/3 majority vote in support of the name.

The Parks Director may solicit feedback from the Parks Board and/or the public to gain additional information.

The Director will present a recommendation to the Parks Commissioner, who may accept or reject any proposal. The Parks Commissioner may also refer the matter to the Parks Board for advice, and/or convene a public meeting to gain additional information prior to making the naming decision.

F. Research

It is essential that any name, especially names referencing individuals and/or families be thoroughly researched. Some suggestions for learning more about the history of a name include:

1. Historic Plat Maps and Sanborn Maps
2. Oregonian Archives: Available through Multnomah County Library
3. Google search for online documents or references

4. Library search for documents or references (ask a research librarian for assistance)
5. Oregon Historical Society: http://www.ohs.org/research/ has some online information, some hard copy information.
6. US Census Archives
7. National Archives: http://www.archives.gov/index.html
8. PP&R Park History (online, hard copy)
9. Area tribes and native community groups
10. SHPO - State Historic Preservation Office
11. Oregon Geographic Names Board - their purpose is to supervise the naming of geographic features within the state of Oregon and to make recommendations to the USBGN, which has final approval authority. The Board also serves in an advisory capacity to federal, state, and local government by reviewing administrative name proposals.

G. Communicating naming decisions

Once a recommendation from the Director has been made and the matter decided by the Parks Commissioner, the Assistant Director will be responsible for communicating the decision to applicants, the Parks Board and the advisory committee within two weeks. When a new name has been chosen, the Parks Commissioner and the Director will publicize the name and direct its use thereafter. **All graphical representations within the parks system are subject to design standards.**

H. Appeals

Any applicant whose proposal to name/rename a park and/or recreational facility is denied by the Commissioner of Portland Parks & Recreation may appeal to City Council by petition through the City Auditor, within 30 days of the issuance of notice of the Parks Commissioner's decision. The Commissioner in Charge of Parks will schedule a public hearing on the appeal within 30 days of the Auditor's receipt of the appeal.

VI. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

A. Interim Names

Portland Parks & Recreation sometimes acquires land. Portland Parks & Recreation will assign the new parcel a name on a temporary basis following established data management systems.

In general:

1. Parcels acquired contiguous to another that are intended to expand the site will be named for the original site
2. New, free standing parcels acquired with the intention of future development as a park will be named based on the street infrastructure (e.g. 52nd & Alberta property)
3. Natural Area acquisitions will be named for prominent or significant geographic features, if present, and approved by Parks Director.

B. Policy Update

This policy updates naming or renaming policies adopted in 1996 and revised in May 2007.

VII. NAMING PROCESS STEPS

A. Timeline:

The naming process should be completed prior to the opening of a new park or facility.

1. **Step One** – Public notification of naming opportunity made by PP&R Public Involvement staff to applicable organizations including but not limited to: Neighborhood Association(s), District Coalition(s), Diverse Civic Leadership partners, New Portlanders Advisory Council, Coalition of Communities of Color, Venture Portland, Portland Business Alliance, Portland Parks Board, other stakeholders and participants in design process. A minimum of 45 days will be provided after notification to submit a naming application. Public notification of the naming opportunity will be made at least six months before the projected date for dedication of the facility.

   Assistant Director will assign a PP&R staff person to the naming process.

2. **Step Two** – Applications to name a park are completed and submitted to the Assistant Director of Portland Parks & Recreation.

Acknowledgement of receipt of applications is conveyed either electronically or by letter or phone within one week of receipt of application.

3. **Step Three** – Staff will review submitted proposals for completeness and adherence to the guidelines.

4. **Step Four** – The committee will be recruited by the staff person and approved by the Director and Commissioner.

5. **Step Five** – The advisory committee to review naming proposals will be convened within three months of the application deadline.

6. **Step Six** – The advisory committee reviews proposals, conducts additional research and develops a written recommendation for the Director. If none of the submitted proposals are acceptable to the committee, the committee may submit a new proposal based on their discussions and public input. All advisory committee discussions will be held in open public meetings. Notes from meetings will include reasons for and against submitted names. The amount of time required to complete this work will depend on the number of proposals, amount of research and level of controversy in the process.

7. **Step Seven** – Director reviews recommendations with the Commissioner and either;
   a. Accepts the advisory committee recommendation,
   b. Declines the advisory committee recommendation, in which case the advisory committee may choose one of three options:
      i. The advisory committee continues review of other submissions; or
      ii. The advisory committee may suggest a new option based on their discussions and public input to date; or
      ii. The process starts over with a new solicitation of names.

The Director will respond to any advisory committee recommendation within two weeks of receiving the recommendation.

8. **Step Eight** – The Director reviews the recommended name with the Commissioner.

9. **Step Nine** – The Commissioner makes the naming decision.

10. **Step Ten** – Applicants (including all who submitted names) will be notified of the Commissioner's decision within two weeks via email and/or mailed letter, along with directions on how to appeal the Commissioner's decision to Council via the City Auditor. Appeals must be submitted within 30 days of mailed notice of the decision. Otherwise, the Commissioner's decision is final.

11. **Step Eleven** – If appealed, the Commissioner in Charge will schedule a public hearing before Council within 30 days.

12. **Step Twelve** – The decision of the City Council is final.

13. **Step Thirteen** – The Commissioner and Director announce the final decision, publicize the name and direct its use thereafter.