

# Identity in Canada's Place Name Policy: A Knowledge Synthesis



## FINAL REPORT

**Lauren Beck, Victoria MacBeath, Amy Walker, and Justin Yoston**

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*Identity in Canada's Place Name Policy:  
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By

Lauren Beck

Victoria MacBeath

Amy Walker

Justin Yoston

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Background:**

Reconciliation Bridge in Calgary, AB typifies the issues facing settlements when it comes to naming. It used to be called Langevin Bridge, named for Hector-Louis Langevin (1826–1906), who was a proponent of the Indian Residential School System and a so-called father of Confederation. The name change comprised one of the final recommendations of the city's *White Goose Flying* report, published in 2016 as a means of advising the city on how to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action (2015). City council furthermore voted in favour of creating a plaque that explains the bridge's naming history, the Indian Residential School System, and the impact it had on Indigenous peoples as a means of facilitating dialogue between the city's citizenry and its Indigenous neighbours. A year later, a renaming ceremony celebrated the adoption of the new name, with Elders congregating at the bridge's north entrance. They offered prayers to the Creator asking for spiritual healing and harmony before walking across the bridge to the south side where drumming, speeches, songs, and dancing ensued.



*Image credit: Reconciliation Bridge. Courtesy of the City of Calgary.*

The city of Calgary offers a tool for naming that most settlements in Canada lack: a policy. While its overall purpose is to provide oversight and guidance on commemorative naming for events and people with outstanding achievements, service, or contributions to the community, the policy nonetheless outlines the process of implementing a new or different name. The policy also offers the opportunity to purchase or sponsor naming rights as a revenue stream to support municipal services, whether by companies or community groups. Other settlements—such as that of Toronto, ON—include references to future naming practices in their policy priority areas; this has led its

city council to vote in 2021 to remove names that commemorate Henry Dundas (1742–1811) for his reticence to abolish the transatlantic slave trade, and to replace those names with ones that celebrate Black people (City of Toronto 2021). In 2017, Vancouver, BC similarly implemented its “150 Place Naming Project” through which marginalized groups were prioritized for the city’s future.

As these examples demonstrate, commemorative naming presents challenges decades later when society re-evaluates its position on commemorating a person, particularly when identity is involved (Panagakos 2006; Lewthwaite 2009; O’Brien 2010; Post and Alderman 2014; Lehr and McGregor 2015; Sockbeson 2016). These shifts in values mirror, on the one hand, greater enfranchisement and inclusion of marginalized groups—particularly Indigenous people, women, and people of colour—while reflecting society’s broader desire to address or avoid past wrongs, on the other (see, for instance, Clairmont and Magill 1999). Naming policies of the sort adopted by Calgary, Toronto, and Vancouver vary widely in their specificity and goals, with many settlements lacking a policy or any recent municipal legislation on the subject.

This study collects municipal naming policies from across Canada, analyzes it, identifies gaps, and develops tools to help communities craft a robust policy when it comes to names, particularly as they bear on our identities.

### **Objectives:**

- To gather place name policy from all settlements in Canada to understand how identity is implied, and which groups are (de-)prioritized, for naming streets, public spaces, and public infrastructure;
- To clarify identity-related priorities stated within policy for future names;
- To gather solutions-oriented approaches to addressing inequality in Canada’s place names from the policy environment of Canadian settlements;
- To identify and inventory existing research tools created by incorporated settlements, such as name databases, name lists for future purposes, name history resources, etc.

### **Results:**

- A database of existing place name policy;

- A granular analysis of how identity is reflected in the name policy priorities of Canadian settlements;
- A network of municipal staff interested in following trends in policy development;
- A policy template for settlements to customize and adopt.

## **Full Report**

This study seeks to understand identity-related priorities in place name policy at the municipal level.

The project's scholarly objectives include collecting hundreds of naming tools currently housed on settlements' websites and placing them in an accessible web environment for others to use (<https://placenames.cemvc.ca/>). The public-facing database allows municipal staff and researchers from anywhere in Canada to research policy language on a subject of their choosing. Second, this research collects data (both policy and statistics) about naming practices that has never been available or examined before, making it accessible for future research.

The project also exposes gaps in policy across the country, whether in the form of policy that fails to elucidate means of including marginalized groups or where policy is lacking altogether. It also develops a model policy that settlements may choose to modify and adopt. Furthermore, the project creates a network of interested parties so that the project's findings can be shared with decision makers and policy implementers regarding names.

### **Background: The Scope of Municipal Name Policy**

There has never been a policy digest on naming practices within incorporated settlements in Canada. Unlike the provinces and territories, municipalities have significant latitude when it comes to naming streets and designated spaces within their communities.

The provincial and territorial toponymy offices have a relationship with the Geographical Names Board of Canada (a member of the United Nations (UN) Group of Experts on Geographical Names, which bases its recommendations on UN policy such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples). The provincial and territorial offices administer national policy for settlement names and geographical features (rivers, mountains, etc.), but they do not usually influence goals or historical naming practices within communities, for instance for streets, neighbourhoods, or municipal parks (Geographical Names Board of Canada [GNBC] 2011; for



the provinces and territories, see, for example, Alberta Geographical Names Program 2012; BC Geographical Names Office 2017).

This study identifies the contours of policy within incorporated settlements, being policy that for the most part is not regulated in some way by the GNBC and its provincial or territorial affiliates. It will also develop and offer a model policy that settlements presently lacking one might choose to customize and adopt.

While there are no scientific publications on the state of municipal naming in Canada, there are several scholarly works that flag issues with the status quo since the publication of Rayburn 2001 (Kearns and Berg 2002; Monmonier 2006; Schreyer 2014; Kostanski and Puzey 2016; Igdoura 2021; and Beck 2022). The authors of these works observe that settler-Canadians and their European predecessors prefer commemorative place names when places refer to people (especially non-Indigenous people). When such names project onto streets and parks, they later become subject to re-evaluation should society find something problematic in their legacies—as the dismantled street signs and statues of Cornwallis, Macdonald, and Ryerson attest.



*Image credit: A City of Saskatoon worker installs the sign for miyo-wâhkôhtowin Road, formerly John A. MacDonald Road. Mia Holowaychuk/650 CKOM.*

Most scholarship on this topic relates to other regions of the world (see, for instance, Alderman 2002; the essays in Berg and Vuolteenaho 2009; Alderman and Inwood 2013; and Rose-Redwood et al. 2017). Rich bodies of scholarship relating to the politics and racial implications of naming in Apartheid and post-Apartheid South Africa have resulted in frank discussions as well as action on the part of the public and government (Raper 1977; Raper et al. 1979; and Jenkins et al. 1996). Other studies from the same period offer a synthesis of scholarship on toponymy, for instance in the form of a bibliography (exemplified by Sealock and Seely 1967) or global-level study of how place naming has or should occur (Fuson 1970). Advice for place naming was the subject of a government-supported work published in the late twentieth century in Canada (see, for example, Hudon 1987) and internationally, for instance at the level of the UN (Raper 1996). In the 1950s-1990s in particular, several uncritical works about the country's provincial and territorial names were published (Kirkconnell 1954; Jones 1956; Hamilton 1996; and Barry 1997).

The authority to name streets rests with municipalities, whereas the provinces and territories oversee the naming of settlements and geographic features such as rivers and lakes. The names of schools normally fall under the jurisdiction of provincial and territorial departments of education, as does other infrastructure under the purview of other provincial and territorial departments.

Reviewing municipal policies has demonstrated that many Canadian municipalities have developed or are in the process of creating naming policies for municipal property, including street names and monuments. Policy provides guidance for a settlement's employees as well as community members about the procedures governing the creation and maintenance of names, and the rationale for embracing or not embracing certain varieties of name.

Many municipal naming policies also have common features, including:

- Describing procedures through which new names can be proposed or existing ones changed;
- Identifying decision makers within the municipality who will also provide guidance to community members who propose names or name changes;
- Outlining measures that make naming decisions transparent, for instance through broad community consultation, plebiscites and other forms of democratic decision making, municipal meetings open to the public, and so on;
- Stating the community's expectations, priorities, and objectives for names, for instance that they will reflect and celebrate the community's history while seeking out ways to better include marginalized groups and minimize racism and sexism in existing names;
- Stating any limitations to name changes or implementations, for instance that existing names will not normally be changed unless a majority of residents living on the affected

street agree, that new names will preferably emphasize certain priority areas (industry, landscape, women's contributions, etc.), or that any new name must have an explicit connection to the community;

- Indicating how third-party investment may influence names, for instance through a partnership with other levels of government and not-for-profit groups to create monuments, or for naming streets after corporations whose operations reside along the road in question.

In recent years, communities have also struck committees tasked with assessing existing names and to determine if they reflect the community's values, or whether they negatively represent certain demographics. In 2022, the City of Saint John, NB struck such a committee. It is composed of individuals from designated demographics and is tasked with determining the suitability of existing and future names. Alternatives to committees of this nature may include commissioning reports on existing names that assess how they represent the community, and the setting of targets for new or modified names.

When community concerns about existing names are brought to the attention of municipalities, a process is normally launched to determine what action, if any, should be taken. Concerns about existing names range from safety-related issues that arise when two or more street names are similar or contain the same words, to commemorative names that are now deemed inappropriate by some community members. Most changes to existing names occur due to safety-related concerns, although in more recent years values-related concerns have grown increasingly prominent.

Several communities, such as Fort Frances, ON, and Dryden, ON, have undertaken such a process in order to address the name of Colonization Road in both communities. These communities feel that "colonization" as a concept no longer reflects their values and the image that they wish to project. In the case of Fort Frances in northwestern Ontario, the town determined in 2021 that the street's name prevented it from taking steps toward reconciliation with a neighbouring Indigenous community. The settlement undertook an assessment about what costs and impacts may be incurred as a result of the name change, and it collaborated with Canada Post to offer free mail redirection for a period to the residents and businesses impacted. Throughout this process, Fort Frances recognized the need to develop a naming/renaming policy and invited public input. It also identified and liaised between residents and the various agencies and services that would be impacted by a name change.

Policies typically express principles governing street names. In the case of the Town of Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove, NL, its policy states several criteria that names must meet, and which characterize broader trends in naming policy across Canadian municipalities. According to its policy, names:

- Should be based on a theme honouring and promoting local history and culture, places, geography, natural features, etc.;
- May comprise full names of people who are both deceased and of historical importance internationally, nationally, regionally, or locally;
- May celebrate local residents who have made a significant contribution or sacrifice to the town;
- Must use conventional spelling and be easy to pronounce;
- Must not exceed three words, including suffixes and generics (i.e., High Marsh Road);
- Should not include “The”.

Furthermore, most naming policies discourage using commercial or corporate names, including those related to products and trademarks, as well as duplicate names that may cause difficulties for local services and emergency response units. Other communities welcome third-party support for the establishment and improvement of public spaces, giving rise to places such Cabela’s Court, Moncton, NB, a street built where a franchise of the outdoors retailer, Cabela’s, was located before the outlet closed in 2018 after only three years of operation.

Names given to spaces bequeathed by individuals are often commemorative in nature, as the Dan Lund Park Extension in the Sackville Waterfowl Park, NB demonstrates. This last reason for naming appears to have had broad influence in the Town of Sackville (now incorporated within the Municipality of Tantramar), with dozens of names awarded by land developers after the landowners who deeded their land for development.

Some policies incorporate some element of community consultation, whether through social media, surveys, requests for suggested names, and other means through which the community could express its support for implementing or changing names. The City of St. Albert, AB, took additional measures in its 2020 policy by creating a suggestion box on its municipal website, ensuring that submitted names would be received and considered on a rolling basis. Many policies also stipulate how individuals are to be commemorated. Following the example set by the City of Dryden, naming a street or monument after a living individual should require their written consent, whereas the policies of other communities expressly state that only deceased individuals may be commemorated.

Several policies indicate Indigenous groups as a priority area for new names, although many do not state how the consent and cooperation of the Indigenous group(s) with which that name may be associated will be obtained. In this light, when underrepresented groups are meant to be reflected through names and monuments, an important consideration for any name policy will be to ensure the demographics implicated by a name are consulted and involved in shaping the naming

process. Consultation will also ensure that names referring to groups, such as Indigenous people, are rendered in a form embraced by the community concerned.

Some communities set benchmarks with respect to inclusion. Moncton, NB, whose population speaks English, French, both official languages, and/or another language, requires that 45% of new names approved in any given year be in English and French, respectively, with the remaining 10% in other languages. To assist city staff in this endeavour, the city has created a name bank as its principal source of names for streets, trails, and civic facilities, with the possibility of alternative names being considered on an ad-hoc basis. Published online, the name bank allows community members and land planners to see which names are available for future named places.



*Image credit: Charlotte Street, named for the former landowner's daughter, Charlotte Wry, in Sackville, NB. Peter Barr.*

This approach to naming may allow the community to focus more intently on its priority areas for names rather than delegate naming to commercial planners developing the community's next subdivision. In the context of Sackville, many streets (i.e., Bernice Street, Charlotte Street) are named for the relatives of the individuals or landowners who developed those areas of the town, so the relationship between planners and street names is evident in many communities, and name banks that describe the meaning of a name—such as that of the City of Dieppe, NB—demonstrate the significant influence land developers have on a community's place names. In the balance, it can also be observed that streets, when named for women, often exclude surnames, whereas streets named for men almost always utilize surnames.

Name banks help make the process of naming more transparent and community centred. Names, once selected for use in Moncton, are then retired from the name bank after city council approves their implementation. The city's policy also makes explicit its intention to reflect the city's cultural, ethnic, and linguistic makeup, which goes beyond its commitment for a linguistic plurality that reflects the community's demographic composition to embrace other identity-related considerations.

Some policies outline the procedures for renaming a street. Most of them state at the outset that name changes will not be considered unless there are safety-related considerations, such that arise when two or more streets have similar names, which may confuse emergency service providers.

There have been other rationales for changing names. Moncton has a renaming policy that centres on the people most impacted by a name. When a name needs to be changed, the property owners and occupants of the street or named feature will be consulted, asked to review name possibilities in the city's name bank, and the city assists residents with the process of changing their addresses. In general, renaming streets and monuments is not common, nor encouraged by naming policies in Canadian municipalities.

Few naming policies address the underrepresentation of women in existing street names, choosing to focus instead on Indigenous people and on names that are problematic in nature (e.g., Colonization Road), even though the greatest demographic disparity between names and the community's population tends to be along the lines of gender. In this respect, women constitute 53% of the Town of Sackville, but only 18% of street names and monuments that reference specific people in that community refer to or include women.

While renaming is one possibility, another is recontextualization whereby streets such as Stanley Drive—named for George Stanley, who is also commemorated with a statue in downtown Sackville—could be renamed Ruth Stanley Drive in commemoration of his wife, one of Canada's first women lawyers and a recipient of the Order of New Brunswick. There is precedent in places such as Sackville for including first names alongside surnames, as demonstrated by Donald Harper Road.

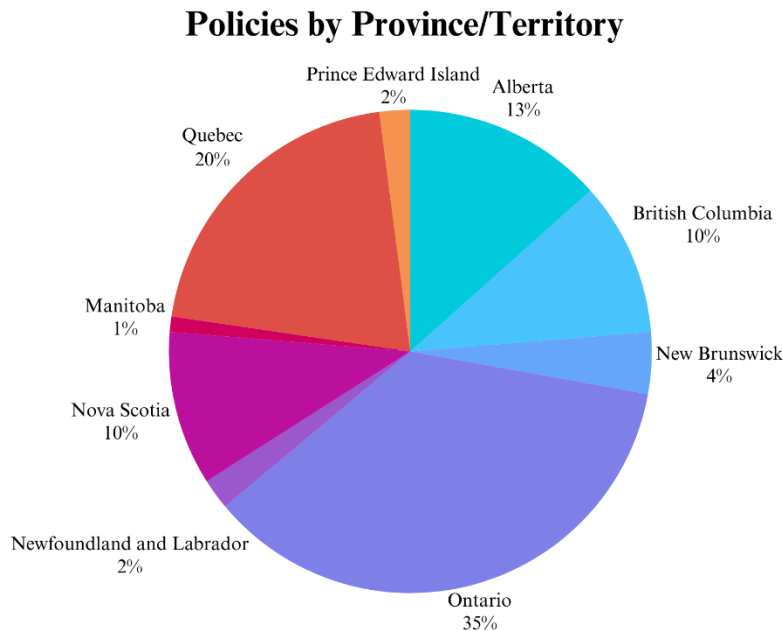
Few municipalities have policies regarding monuments that are not civic infrastructure (i.e., bridges, parks, greenspaces, etc.). In part, this may be because private and intergovernmental funding often supports monuments and shared infrastructure when they take the form of sculptures, plaques, and related material. Often municipalities become partners in establishing monuments of that nature, but in other cases, municipalities layer a third-party monument onto a civic property.

Overall, naming policy across the country trends in the direction of increasing diversity, addressing dated or offensive names, and creating systems through which naming is transparent and community centred. Yet, it remains to be confirmed how broad this trend is, which is why this study has undertaken an assessment of the policy landscape in Canada to confirm municipal

naming and commemoration priorities at the intersection of identity. This study also points to the need to implement policy more broadly, as most communities lack any policy about names.

## Methods

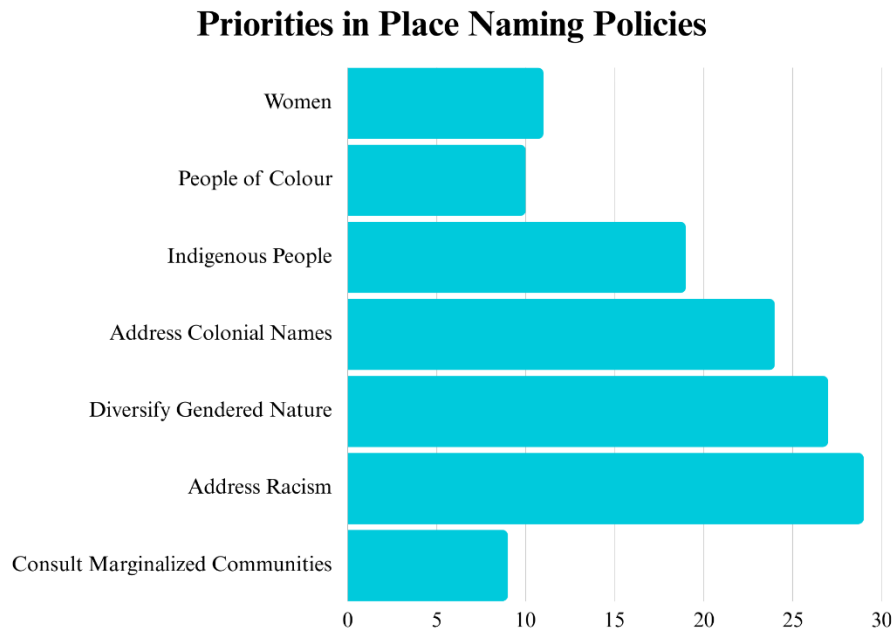
Using 2021 census data from Statistics Canada, population information was obtained for the 7,986 incorporated settlements across the country, of which 4,840 are inhabited. The research team systematically sought place name policy located on each settlement's website. This data was copied into the naming policy database. Settlements whose policy was not listed on the website were consulted via email with the hope that they would share their policy via email or confirm that no policy exists. Of the 4,840 settlements consulted, 159 (3.5%) have an existing place name policy.



One of the overarching objectives is to understand how many settlements lack or would like to implement a policy on place names, and in the balance, for those that already have policies, reviewing them exposed gaps in policy. Because the majority of settlements lack a policy, these gaps have informed our analysis and enabled us to ask additional questions—for example, whether larger communities tend to have more inclusive policies or whether smaller communities are more likely to set and even achieve inclusive naming goals.

Once incorporated into the database (<https://placenames.cemvc.ca/>), policy documents were analyzed for various identity-related factors, with information tabulated using a spreadsheet, to understand how gender, race, ethnicity—among other categories—are specified in policy. We flagged policy that identifies goals for future naming and collated research tools, including name databases and name banks, available on municipal websites that researchers might use for future research.

Settlements identified as lacking a policy through email exchanges were queried about whether they would be interested in receiving a draft policy based on our synthesis of existing policy. In this respect, we analyzed existing policy to create a model policy that settlements might wish to modify and adopt to fit their specific needs. The email list developed from this step in the project allows us to share our research findings with key interest groups and government decision makers.



## Results

### *Masculinity and colonization*

Based on historical studies, it can be estimated that 80-85% of names, when they refer to people, refer to men (Beck et al. 2022; Beck 2022; Sprows Cummings 2012; Dugas 1988). The gendered nature of Canada's names at all levels descends from the colonial naming practices introduced as early as 1492 by the likes of Christopher Columbus in the Caribbean region, and in the 1530s by the likes of Jacques Cartier when he reconnoitered what becomes Atlantic Canada. The sorts of names they and others like them reached for have had an indelible impact on the country's



toponymic landscape, and include Saint John, NB and St. John's, NL. In part, the preference for male names inspired by those of saints reflects the fact that in the early modern period there were many more male saints than female ones. Streets and parks that take their names from adjacent churches can perpetuate these trends at the municipal level.

By the late 1600s, however, a shift in naming practices occurred; fewer places were named for saints and more for colonial, military, and political officials. These categories of person, both then and today, also tend to commemorate men. While no policy about how place naming should unfold was developed or applied evenly at any level of government in Canada until the late 1800s, it is important to acknowledge the influence that the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) has historically exercised in promoting these categories as suitable ones from which to draw inspiration for future names.

The GNBC publishes and periodically updates its *Guiding Principles for Geographical Naming* (2011). Presently divided into 14 principles for existing and future names, Principle 6 states that the “names of pioneers, explorers and historical events connected with the area” are suitable categories for new names. As will be demonstrated throughout the balance of this report, policy frameworks along these lines appear to be directly responsible for reinforcing colonial naming practices and most municipal policies include a provision for commemorative naming that agrees with Principle 6.

### *Women and sexism*

There is a need for increased representation in place names for marginalized communities, including women. We estimate that about 15-20% of places are named after women. Many policies contain language relating to women<sup>1</sup> and we will highlight the policies of four settlements to consider the sorts of priorities that may or may not materialise in settlements' place naming practices and related tools.

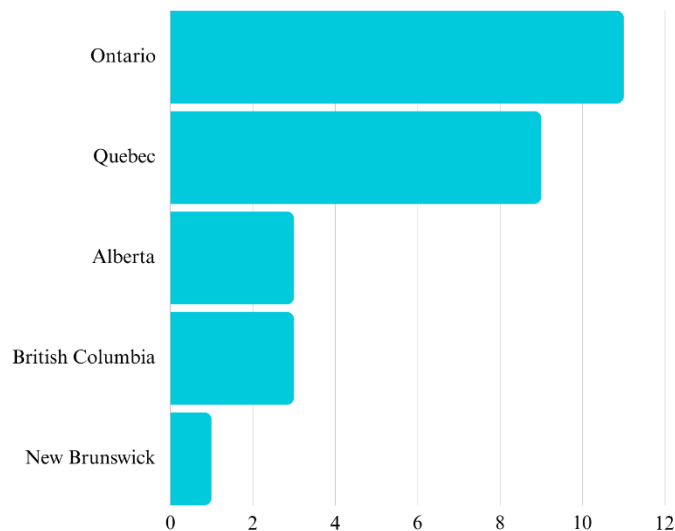
Out of 159 existing policies, 11 specifically prioritize women. Most settlements within this policy cohort state that future place names should increase the representation of women in place naming. Slightly less commitment is noted for the 27 places that mention the importance of diversifying the gendered nature of their names in some way, or for ensuring that names are not discriminatory in relation to gender identity and expression. However, usually the means through which this objective would be achieved remains unclear. But when communities possess name banks, a search for names associated with women produces mixed results, particularly because not all name banks explain the meaning of a name. Out of the places that specifically note that they are committed to

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<sup>1</sup> This data was collected by searching “woman, women, femme, femme, gender, genre.”

diversifying the gendered nature of place names, 11 come from Ontario, 9 from Quebec, 3 from Alberta, 3 from British Columbia, and 1 from New Brunswick.

**No. of policies that commit to diversifying the gendered nature of their policies**



Quebec's provincial toponymic committee has provided its settlements with some leadership on gender parity. As the only province with this type of province-wide policy, we could consider all Quebec policies as working toward gender parity because their provincial policy, from which all local policies seem to draw, notes that "les noms de femmes devront natamment constituer au moins 50% des nouveaux noms ajoutés annuellement à la banque," meaning that 50% of new names added to Quebec's provincial name bank should relate to women. This does not necessarily mean, however, that 50% of implemented place names will accomplish this objective because not all implemented names are new; some may involve renaming, and it remains unclear how a gendered balance will be accomplished in that case. Most local policies in Quebec explicitly state that they follow the naming practices outlined by the provincial government, meaning in practice that gender parity is more likely to be accomplished through future names, as demonstrated through a settlement's list of approved names (i.e., place name bank).

The Commission de toponymie du Quebec has developed an interactive map that displays places named after women (<https://cartes.toponymie.gouv.qc.ca/femmes>). As this tool makes evident, there are over 500 names relating to 100 remarkable women in the province, although it remains unclear if this data comprises a sampling or encompasses all names relating to women.

Several other settlements have lists of pre-approved names that will be used for future naming. These name banks will be important resources for communities, particularly for developers, however they must be structured in ways that support inclusion. Upon studying pre-approved name resources, it becomes clear that sexism can be perpetuated through these naming tools. Out of the name banks consulted, all had more men than women listed. Further, when women did appear, they were often listed in relation to the men to whom they were related. In looking at the people included on these name banks, there are many men celebrated for mundane purposes, such as for having owned property or stores in the area. Women are – for the most part – only included when their contributions are considered superlative, and in this way are often related to historically feminine pursuits such as education and nursing. Existing names that commemorate women almost always use their first names (in contrast, men are often noted by their last names), demonstrating another instance of difference in the way that men and women are represented through toponymy.

Of course, these observations demonstrate broader social values of what and who are significant enough to be proposed as worthy of place commemoration, which likely explains a lack of explicit language regarding women in most existing policies. Rather, most policies instead specify qualities or attributes that individuals must have to be deemed worthy of a commemorative name. These attributes include language such as “pioneer,” “veteran,” “historic figure,” and “previous property owner,” all of which have historically been men. As a result, when residents consult policy before submitting a proposal for a new name, the categories and examples provided in the policy predispose them to consider names relating to men.

Four policies demonstrate these tendencies and the different ways that communities attempt or fail to deal with gender inequality. The policy of Guelph, ON makes no mention of gender representation as a priority in future place naming or renaming. This is echoed in their list of pre-approved names; of ~184 names, only five relate to women. Out of these five, three are described in relation to a man to whom they were related, one by her profession, and another has no description beyond a name. Of this cohort, only 1 is listed by her last name.

Edmundston, NB attempts to have slightly more gender parity. Out of 97 names on its list of pre-approved names, 12 are women. Unlike Guelph, however, the name bank contains many place names not inspired by people (i.e., flora, fauna, cultural terms, etc). Like Guelph, Edmundston does not specify gender diversity as a priority, but nonetheless it has made progress in integrating them for the future.

Unlike Guelph and Edmundston, Burlington, ON explicitly states in its policy that preference will be given to names that “reflect cultural, ethnic, racial, and gender diversity by honouring historically under-represented groups such as women, Black and Indigenous communities, people of colour, LGBTQ2S and other communities.” It is unclear, however, how residents can submit these names and there appears to be no list of pre-approved names to consult.

In Sackville, NB 18% of place names are named for women. As observed in other communities, when places are named after women in Sackville, they are always named by their first names and tend to be related to nobility or described in relation to their male relations. Despite this lack of diversity, 73% of Sackville residents, in a survey on future place naming, want to see more places named after women (Beck et al. 2022). While Sackville does not have a place name policy, based on this data, it seems that the community has the will to implement changes in how it goes about determining future names.

In summary, few places in Canada prioritize naming places after women in their policies, few do so in practice, and even fewer have a clear means through which to propose names related to women. Future policies and policy priorities should address these issues by creating policies, place name banks, and accessible place naming forms where residents can propose place names related to women, with an emphasis on naming places after local women, ideally by both first and last names. Furthermore, when places are named after women, settlements with documentation of the meaning behind place names should focus on the achievements of the women themselves, and not their relation to men in the community.

### *Indigenous people and decolonization*

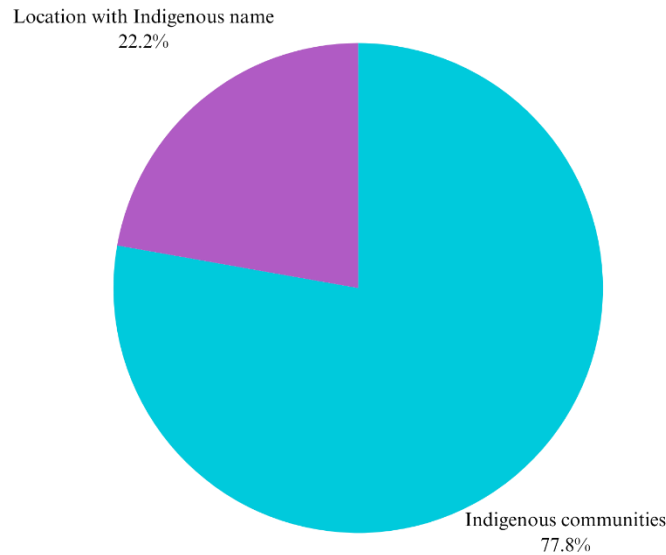
When it comes to the inclusion of Indigenous people and efforts toward decolonization within place naming policies, settlements take different approaches, including the preservation of pre-existing Indigenous names as well as consultation with Indigenous communities on place naming and renaming. We will explore efforts of inclusion and decolonization, particularly in policies from Quebec, Ontario, and Alberta.

Of the 159 settlements with a place naming policy, 18 (11.3%) settlements refer to Indigenous people.<sup>2</sup> Of these 18 policies, however, 14 (77.8%) reference Indigenous communities as an entity whereas the remaining 4 policies (22.2%) reference current locations with an Indigenous name, such as Wyandot Park in Blue Mountains, ON.

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<sup>2</sup> This data was collected using both general and specific community names, including “Indigenous,” “aboriginal,” “first nations,” “Métis,” “amérindiens,” “premières nations,” “Inuit,” “Wyandot,” etc.

## **Breakdown of Policies that Refer to Indigenous People**



Quebec's provincial toponymic committee has developed a province-wide policy, in addition to an Indigenous names policy explicitly intended for the province's settlements (<https://toponymie.gouv.qc.ca/ct/toponymie-autochtone/politique-quebecoise-relative-noms-lieux-autochtones/>). This policy specifies that “La Charte de la langue française, dans son préambule même, reconnaît aux Premières Nations et aux Inuit le « droit de maintenir et de développer leur langue et culture d’origine »,” meaning that as part of the Charter of French Language, Indigenous peoples (First Nations and Inuit) have the right to maintain and develop their traditional languages and cultures. Naming places in an Indigenous language supports the reclamation and development of traditional cultures and values. This policy is an excellent example of ways to include Indigenous voices in naming places on traditional lands and frequented locations, such as hunting grounds, as well as aid in the decolonization process throughout the province.

Another settlement that effectively includes Indigenous communities in place name policy is Toronto. Its policy provides for a consultative process with Indigenous communities when “proposed Ceremonial Street names are in an Indigenous language or recognize an Indigenous individual, organization, event or concept” while adhering to Indigenous naming practices. As noted earlier, the city's policy also prioritizes replacing existing commemorative names that are related to something or someone with discriminatory views with ones that relate to Indigenous people as a step toward decolonization.

Like Toronto, Burlington, ON is another settlement that prioritizes consultation with Indigenous communities. However, this policy differs from others in stating that consultation will be needed if deemed applicable or required by either provincial or federal governments. Beyond consultation, Burlington's policy states that preference will be given to names that align with specific criteria, including those that reflect diversity by honouring minority groups, such as Indigenous communities.

When looking at place naming policies for strong examples relating to decolonization, the policy of Kawartha Lakes, ON stands out because it indicates that linguistic differences between English and Indigenous languages will not be a determining factor in considering whether a name will be implemented in the community. The settlement's policy also outlines that, although it is against their place naming policy to accept names that contain punctuation or diacritical marks of that nature, an exemption will be made for Indigenous names that require such symbols or syllabics. These two factors further efforts toward decolonization by supporting not just the implementation of Indigenous names, but also the objectives of language revitalization and preservation.

With a different approach, the City of Cochrane, AB has committed to an ongoing process of developing positive relationships with local Indigenous communities. Through this relationship, Cochrane ensures that Indigenous communities are able to provide potential place names when new names are needed, as at present the city does not have a name bank. Although these steps are not integrated within the community's existing policy, it does qualify how a name can "have some historical significance to Cochrane such that the name shall reflect aboriginal activity." This combination of policy and community consultation acts as a best practice for the city.

By looking closely at these settlements, it becomes evident that there are limited places in Canada that are prioritizing decolonization and the inclusion of Indigenous communities in their place naming policies. Settlements are encouraged to develop a relationship with local Indigenous communities to agree upon some best practices and to ensure inclusion in future naming decisions. Future policies and priorities should work to include consultation with Indigenous communities and decolonize existing names that are considered discriminatory.

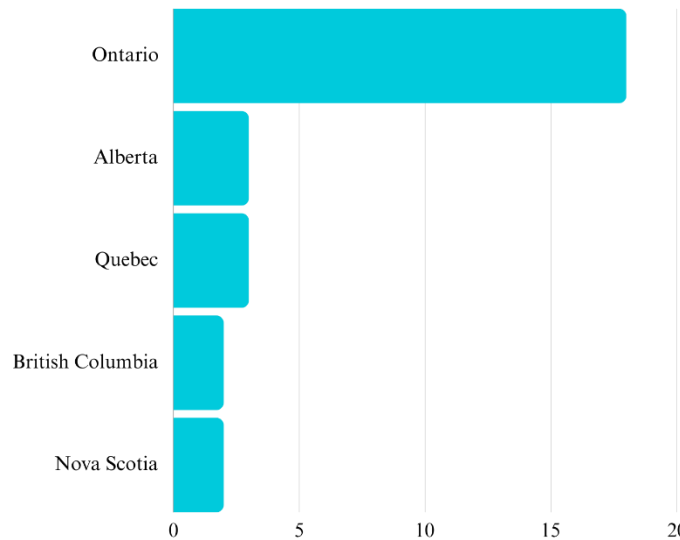
### *People of colour and racism*

In an effort to increase the inclusion and equity of all people in settlements across Canada, some policies provide specific guidelines for dealing with and avoiding racism and discrimination, whereas others do not make any such provision.

Out of 159 existing policies, 28 (17.6%) settlements prioritize inclusion and anti-racism efforts in relation to their place names. On the larger scale of inclusion, 10 policies prioritize diversity and underrepresented communities. Of the policies that focus on people of colour and anti-racism

efforts, 18 come from Ontario, 3 from Alberta, 3 from Quebec, 2 from British Columbia, and 2 from Nova Scotia. Three communities model useful approaches for promoting inclusion and anti-racism.

**No. of policies that commit to the inclusion of people of colour and anti-racism efforts**



Toronto, ON offers strong policy on this subject. According to its policy, street names, including ceremonial names, as well as the names of municipal properties must not be discriminatory or derogatory of race, colour, or other social factors. This policy also provides means of addressing existing street or property names that commemorate individuals viewed as having “discriminatory views and actions, including committing or perpetuating acts of racism or violence.” The city’s recent decision to change names relating to Dundas examples this last provision. The settlement also points to the importance of following other bi-laws and policies, such as its Human Rights and Anti-Harassment / Discrimination Policy, when making naming decisions.

In a similar fashion to Toronto, Newmarket, ON indicates within its policy that proposed names should not be discriminatory or derogatory of race or colour. It requires that proposed names be vetted and approved by the York Region Planning Department. Newmarket also maintains a list of pre-approved names, most of which are accompanied by a description of their significance. Of the 29 names presently on this list, 8 relate to Black individuals or communities. Some, like Henry Hisson (1867-1935), were freedom seekers, whereas others made other important contributions for future generations.

Like Newmarket’s inclusion of historically significant Black individuals, Montreal, QC maintains an online, searchable name bank that contains historical context for its names. When searching for “Black” within this database (<https://montreal.ca/toponymie/toponymes?theme=77>), 29 unique

names relating to people are listed, all of which now designate parks and street names. For Montreal, these names serve as a representation of the local Black community and its contributions and history. Most policy relating to commemorative names celebrating racialized groups focused on Black people.

After examining these policies, it becomes evident that big strides have been made by some settlements, but for the most part there remain significant gaps in how people of colour and anti-racism efforts are respectively included in policies and implemented across the country.

### *Changing or implementing a new name*

When it comes to suggesting new names or renaming places, settlements take an array of approaches: from how citizens can suggest names and how names will be stored, to how any proposal should be structured, and so on. A close examination of the policies of five settlements will demonstrate the most common approaches to proposing new or changing names.

Generally, when policies contain procedures or best practices for either naming a new place or requesting a new name, they often include guidelines for what information proposals must provide. They request supporting documentation from community members, information about the meaning or significance of the proposed name, and sometimes information about how the name might contribute to increasing the level of diversity and inclusion in place names. Proposals are often made through a form that citizens must complete and submit online, as in the case of Edmundston, NB, although some settlements request that written proposals be submitted by post or in-person, as in the case of Douro-Dummer, ON. Some settlements maintain name banks with suggested names that have been pre-approved as meeting their policy criteria, in the case of Guelph, ON, while most do not.

In terms of suggesting new names, 53 settlements (33%) have clear pathways for proposing new names. Some settlements provide itemized criteria for what qualities they look for in new names (many of which relate to the designated groups studied in this report). Some places also have specific guidelines for what to include in a proposal. The policies of 22 settlements state that they will not consider any sort of place name changes. Excluding places that make no mention of name changes, this means that 14% of policies discourage changing a place name. In the balance, 18 out of 159 settlements have a clear pathway for name change proposals, whereas 26 settlements have some provision for changing names, although the process lacks specificity within their policies. That means that 112 (70%) policies do not articulate how place name changes can be proposed.

Annapolis County, NS has a policy that demonstrates both a process for changing names as well as a reluctance to consider name changes in general. It notes in its policy that place name changes are “only considered in a very limited number of situations.” Citizens may request a name change



when it is related to safety concerns or “community identity, heritage, and traditions.” Those interested in requesting a street name change must complete a form and provide documentation that two-thirds of the affected population supports such a measure.

Likewise, Coaldale, AB requires its citizens to submit a written request to rename places and provide support from over 75% of impacted residents. Suggesting a new place name is also made through a written request. When a new place name or a name change is submitted, public consultation is sometimes conducted. Coaldale has a clear process for proposing these names and name changes; however, its policy does not vocalize encouragement for the prospect of either of these being implemented. Its policy states that “The town will consider proposals for street naming, but it is under no obligation to accept a proposal to name or rename a street or assign a ceremonial name to a street.”

Similarly, Laval, QC does not generally encourage renaming. Like many policies throughout Quebec, its policy privileges the status quo. Laval does, nonetheless, present people with a clear pathway for proposing new names. Place names and suggested changes can be submitted online, in person, or via email—making the process efficient and accessible for a wide variety of needs and technological literacy. The form requires people to include information about the significance of the proposed name or name change, and asks proposers to include pertinent documentation, although what is considered pertinent is not specified beyond requiring a biography of the person proposed to be commemorated with a name alongside sources supporting the biography.

Like Coaldale and Annapolis County, Toronto, ON specifies an amount of support needed to propose a name change (75% of residents in the surrounding area). To propose a new name or change a name in Toronto, the city provides a form with various options for accommodation needs, making it an efficient and accessible proposal process. The form can be submitted via email or post, and it asks citizens to answer questions about how the proposed name meets certain components of the name policy (including questions about how it might contribute to diversity and inclusion, what type of street name is being proposed, and a reasoning for the proposal). Although the language around discouraging place name changes exists, it is not as dismissive as in other policies. Toronto's policy acknowledges that it generally will not consider renaming a place if it has been named or renamed within the last 10 years, but it also does not discourage renaming due to the perceived status quo or historical ties associated with the name.

Finally, Douro-Dummer, ON exemplifies unclear policy language when it comes to proposing new names and name changes, the latter of which its policy generally discourages. The policy states that proposals should be made in the form of written requests, but it is uncertain where such requests should be submitted, although other criteria are clearly stated: all residents impacted by a road name change must sign the request to change the name, and a rationale and supporting documentation should be included. This policy also provides information about how to submit a

road recognition sign, but it is once again unclear as to where and how citizens should submit these requests.



*Image credit: Rue Saint-Louis, Montreal, QC, photo courtesy of Shot by MTI on Unsplash.*

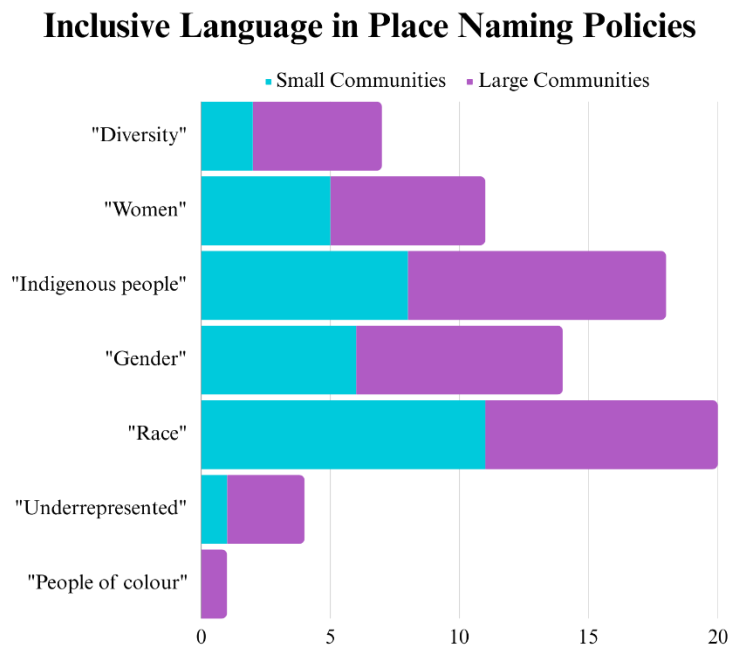
Some provinces, although they have place name policies, have little to no indication of how new names or name changes can be suggested by residents. Cape Breton Regional Municipality, NS, for example, notes in its policy that “Road renamings are subject to the approval of the General Committee and may be initiated by the Civic Addressing Coordinator, the General Committee, or by residents of affected properties. New names may be suggested by residents providing that any suggested name complies with all other policies in this Schedule; if no name is suggested, the Committee will select one based on the same criteria as new streets.” The policy does not indicate how residents can initiate a renaming process and it emphasizes that renaming must be initiated by residents of the affected properties, making renaming generally inaccessible and potentially inefficient.

Overall, while place naming policies exist across Canada, many of them lack clarity or discourage active participation in the (re)naming of municipal place names, either through specific language, or by making the process unclear, inefficient, or inaccessible.

*Differences between small and large communities*

Settlements that have developed a place naming policy tend to cater to the character and priorities of their specific communities. There remains a need, however, to bridge the gaps caused by exclusionary place naming practices of the past. To appreciate these considerations, we explore the differences between policies developed by small and large communities through a broad analysis of equity-supporting language, while looking closely at four settlements that effectively use inclusive language within their place naming policies.

For the purpose of this analysis, small communities are considered settlements with a population of 29,999 or fewer citizens, and large communities refer to settlements with a population of 30,000 or greater. Settlements in both categories include towns, cities, and municipalities, which indicates that the vocabulary for describing settlements is not dictated by population size. For this analysis, we will consider the sorts of equity-supporting terminology that settlements use in their policies.



Out of 159 policies collected, small communities comprise the majority, with 96 small communities having policies (60%), whereas the remaining 63 policies (40%) are from large communities. Of these policies, 22 policies (23%) belonging to those 96 small communities include word choices that broaden the reach of the policy when it is implemented, such as “diversity,” “race,” as well as “women” and “Indigenous peoples” (alongside synonyms and related terminology). Large communities indicate these particular keywords in 29 (46%) of their

63 policies. Together, there are 51 settlements and policies (36%) of the 159 that contain these keywords.

Generally, and with the exception of race, place name policies are more inclusive in large communities compared to small communities. That said, both small and large communities integrate inclusive language to support overall equality, as the following examples demonstrate:

- “Diversity” is mentioned in 7 policies, 2 in small communities and 5 in large communities;
- “Women” is mentioned in 11 policies, 5 in small communities and 6 in large communities;
- “Indigenous people” is mentioned in 18 policies, 8 in small communities and 10 in large communities;
- “Gender” is mentioned in 14 policies, 6 in small communities and 8 in large communities;
- “Race” is mentioned in 20 policies, 11 in small communities and 9 in large communities;
- “Underrepresented” is mentioned in 4 policies, 1 in small communities and 3 in large communities;
- “People of colour” is mentioned in 1 policy, in a large community.

As part of the small community cohort, the policy of Sylvan Lake, AB contains 3 of the above keywords to promote equality within its policy. “Diversity” and “gender” can both be found once and variations of “Indigenous” people including “First Nations” and “Métis” can be found in four places within Sylvan Lake’s policy. This policy clearly states that it is important to support and celebrate Indigenous cultures to foster a sense of belonging and true equality for all citizens. The naming criteria also makes clear that the community will “encourage that the names to be honoured reflect the heritage, cultural, ethnic or gender diversity of the community.” As this example demonstrates, equity-supporting language translates into a policy’s capacity to implement more inclusive naming practices and procedures.

Strathroy-Caradoc, ON is another small community that implements the use of three identity-related keywords. “Indigenous” can be found once in reference to history, landmarks, places, events, and culture. “Gender” and “race” can also be found once, respectively, within the policy, however their specific use differs from that of Sylvan Lake. Strathroy-Caradoc’s policy includes the criteria of names to avoid, including “discriminatory or derogatory names from the point of view of race, sex, colour, gender, creed, political affiliation or other social factors.” In this case, inclusive language provides examples of offensive names to be avoided.



Image credit: *Conor Samuel on Unsplash.*

Similarly, Toronto, ON is a large community that includes 3 keywords in its place naming policy. Tellingly, “Indigenous” appears 33 times, with multiple references to the requirement to consult Indigenous communities if a name is proposed in either an Indigenous language or for an Indigenous person. “Gender” and “race” can be found twice throughout this policy as part of its statement against derogatory names.

Burlington, ON, another large community, utilizes nearly all of the exemplified keywords. “Women,” “gender,” “underrepresented” and “people of colour” can all be found once, respectively, whereas “Indigenous” can be found twice and “diversity” can be found in four places within its policy. It also specifies a preference for names relating to underrepresented groups, among other criteria.

In addition to using inclusive terminology, these four communities have developed policies that encourage community engagement in suggesting potential names. These policies also contain detailed, step-by-step instructions on how to choose a name, how to go about renaming, as well as how to have the desired name approved.

Overall, however, of existing place naming policies in both small and large communities, many lack inclusive terminology that promotes and supports equality and inclusion.

## **Implications**

This research has made clear that significant inequalities exist in place name policy across the country. Both quantitative and qualitative studies about the influence of identity-related factors on place naming have shown that commemorative naming reinforces the masculine, white status quo and excludes people of other backgrounds. Many settlements have nonetheless implemented policy points and procedures that deliberately address inequality in place naming practices, although it remains to be seen how broadly such priorities have been embraced because most settlements lack a place name policy.

Beyond adopting a policy designed to ensure that future names exhibit greater inclusion and balance between demographics (see Appendix I: Place Name Policy Template), the sources from which settlements draw for policy leadership must also be addressed. While policy writing can be complex and executed by scholars, legal experts, or municipal staff, when drafting policy it is common to identify other authorities on this subject, in this case the provincial, territorial, and national place name offices. Certain provinces, such as Quebec, have developed specific language regarding the importance of crafting names that celebrate women, Indigenous people, people of colour, among others, whereas other jurisdictions have provided no such advice to settlements within its provincial or territorial borders.

Similarly, the outdated nature of the GNBC's *Guiding Principles* has broader implications because the provinces and territories look to the GNBC for guidance in place naming and associated best practices, just as settlements look to the GNBC alongside the provinces and territories for leadership or guidance while drafting their own policies. Despite these historical chains of communication and forms of place name governance, some settlements have tried to move beyond outdated guidelines and policy to articulate their own priorities. Recognizing that the patriarchal norms underpinning history have challenged our ability to see women or people of colour as pioneers or historical figures, some settlements have devised ways of inspiring the public to propose names more closely linked to the present. New categories for commemorative names will include educators, who in many communities may be more likely to be women than men, or women's firsts—the first woman mayor of the settlement, the first woman family doctor, the first woman business owner, and so on.

Other tools for remedying this gap in place naming practices beyond re-imaging and strengthening policy at the municipal, provincial or territorial, and national levels include reaching for related policies that bear on equality, diversity, and inclusion so that place naming policy aligns with EDI-focused objectives elsewhere in the municipality. Settlements could also impose a moratorium on commemorative naming in general or otherwise clearly articulate priorities that see designated groups prioritized for future names. A final tool that some settlements have created is a list of pre-approved names (or name bank) that mirrors the naming priorities articulated in municipal policy while ensuring that the future of naming is shaped by these priorities.

## Conclusion

Beyond the implications of this research, some additional observations can be made with respect to fomenting inclusive place naming practices in Canada. First, it is at the municipal level where the most progress has been made toward diversifying naming practices. In part, this is because settlements can set their own priorities and are not generally beholden to the influence of other departments or offices, in the case of the provinces and territories, who may have to consult departments of tourism, environment, culture, and so on before implementing a name or policy change. This autonomy at the municipal level should be viewed as an asset, on the one hand, while it also points to the need to reform how naming is overseen and to revise policy at the provincial, territorial, and national levels.

It is also difficult to measure progress moving forward because commemorative naming tends to rely heavily on the use of surnames. From a gendered perspective, without a complete name the demographic honoured with a commemorative name often remains unclear. This challenge points to a broader systemic problem that constrains the availability of place name data, particularly beyond settlements that already maintain a list of pre-approved names. At all levels of government, the identities relating to commemorative names tend to go unexplained, although it must be acknowledged that Quebec's provincial naming office has made significant progress by introducing a descriptive field meant to explain a place name's meaning.

This structural issue with how place name data is retained and consulted can be remedied by creating an additional metadata field in municipal name databases, and in the case of settlement names, the GNBC's database, where the name's meaning and links to policy and naming resources could appear for each settlement. The GNBC and most provinces and territories do not provide contextual nor historical information about names, nor do they take a leadership role in policy beyond the federal level, which is mirrored at the provincial and territorial levels.

Absent leadership from the provincial or territorial and national levels, more settlements must commit to embracing more inclusive naming practices and, in the balance, use their collective influence to force change at higher levels of government.

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## **Appendix I: Model Place Name Policy**

### **Purpose of this policy template**

After consulting all existing naming policy at the municipal level in Canada, a policy template was developed based on an assessment of best practices and priority areas, as well as policy gaps identified through this analysis.

This template's policy points are inspired by existing policy language embraced by some settlements in Canada and meant to elevate marginalized groups in place naming practices. Redundancy throughout is deliberate and demonstrates how certain values and principles can be applied under various circumstances and for varying objectives. The template should be adapted and edited to suit any settlement seeking to improve, replace, or create a policy regarding its place naming practices and procedures. Policy makers are welcome to reuse or edit parts of this policy as desired.

Settlements are also encouraged to consult and involve the place name practices of their province or territory in their naming policies. The template for the most part excludes policy for administrative and logistical purposes beyond name adoption and revision (i.e., definitions of "street," notification processes following name decisions by council, the involvement of Canada Post and other entities in accommodating new and revised names, procedures through which roads and subdivisions will be created, etc.).

### **Note on policy organization**

Generic terms (i.e., settlement, Committee) are employed in this policy template and suitable replacements (i.e., the City of Toronto, the Municipality of Tantramar) should be utilized as necessary.

Throughout the document, callouts in [square brackets] provide a description of required components that should be adapted to a settlement's circumstances. Endnotes provide further language for priority areas that settlements may wish to include in their policies.

Within the settlement's usual practices for documenting policies and their implementation, and for greater transparency, it can be helpful to include front or back matter where the settlement states the date upon which the policy became effective or was last revised, and who was responsible for approving and publishing the latest version of the policy.

Furthermore, by using an designated email address monitored by more than one individual (i.e., [placenames@community.ca](mailto:placenames@community.ca)), communication between the policy's key audiences and the place name decision makers employed by the settlement can be maintained in the event of staffing changes. This action will also relieve those responsible for website management of having to update the contact information of personnel who no longer administer the policy.

Should a settlement be unable to maintain a web-based list of approved names, the settlement may opt to publish the approved names on its social media platforms at regular intervals. Furthermore, should a web-based submission for proposals not be feasible, the form may also be circulated through the settlement's social media networks or made available for download on its website.

## **Policy on Place Naming Practices and Procedures**

**Purpose:** This policy outlines how place names, including streets, designated spaces within the community, creeks and other municipal bodies of water, and the names of buildings and monuments under the purview of the community, will be implemented, revised, and managed.

### **1. Definitions:**

**Authority:** As per the province's [or territory's] assignment of responsibility for place names upon the [settlement], the [settlement] employs decision makers<sup>1</sup> who serve on the Committee on Place Names (hereafter referred to as the "Committee") to administer this policy and determine the names of [list the categories of buildings, parks, streets, creeks, public streets, and monuments over which the settlement has naming authority].

**Designated groups:** Designated groups include women, people of colour, Indigenous peoples, LGBTQ+ peoples, linguistic minorities, newcomers and immigrants, and peoples living with disabilities.<sup>2</sup>

**List of approved names:** The [settlement] will maintain a list of names that have been approved by the Committee but not yet implemented.<sup>3</sup>

**Principles and values:** Principles and values inform how this policy is administered to make it a more welcoming place for future residents and to attract investment.<sup>4</sup>

### **2. Guiding principles and values:**

a. The [settlement] commits to cultivating a community that works toward achieving equality, diversity, and inclusion in its place name practices and policies.<sup>5</sup>

b. The [settlement] acknowledges its commitment to addressing historical forms of inequality.

c. The [settlement] recognizes the underrepresentation of designated groups and commits to addressing this imbalance.<sup>6</sup>

d. The [settlement] will maintain a list of its existing and approved names alongside a brief description of their meanings and origins on the settlement's website.

e. Naming practices are guided by the [provincial or territorial place name office, i.e., Commission de toponymie du Québec's best practices for naming (sections [Normes](#) et [Procédures](#))].<sup>7</sup>

f. Existing names will be considered for revision so long as the specified procedures are followed.<sup>8</sup>

### **3. Best practices:**

#### **a. [Settlement] administration and emergency services:**

- i. Duplicate names will not be considered.
- ii. Two or more names whose spelling or pronunciation is similar may be disallowed or revised.
- iii. Streets will normally maintain the same name for their entire length.
- iv. The Committee will normally consider new or revised name proposals that advance a name from the [settlement]'s list of approved names.

#### **b. Language:**

- i. Normally, Anglophone names will be rendered in English and Francophone names will be rendered in French using Latin characters.<sup>9</sup>
- ii. Indigenous names must be expressed in the form, spelling, and syllabics embraced by the Indigenous community to which they refer.<sup>10</sup>
- iii. Consent to use an existing Indigenous name must be obtained and documented.<sup>11</sup>
- iv. Names may not be excluded due to a perceived difficulty in pronouncing them.<sup>12</sup>

#### **c. Consultation:**

- i. Names that infer or relate to members of a designated group will be developed with or proposed by the designated group.<sup>13</sup>
- ii. The [settlement] will periodically launch a call to citizens for proposals for new or revised name proposals.
- iii. Policies and procedures for citizen consultation will be followed.<sup>14</sup>
- iv. Names approved for future use must be published on the [settlement]'s website so that the public may consult them.

#### **d. Varieties of name to be avoided:**

- i. Pejorative, divisive, discriminatory, oppressive, racist, or sexist names.
- ii. Colonial terms and their derivatives, such as pioneer, colonial, founder, royal, original, settler, loyalist, etc.
- iii. Names that have not been developed in collaboration with the groups implied by the name.
- iv. New commemorative names that do not celebrate designated groups.
- v. Commemorative names that do not include both first and last names.
- vi. Names that begin with definite and indefinite articles (the, a) and certain prepositions will not be considered.
- vii. Honorifics should normally be excluded.<sup>15</sup>

#### **e. Commemorative names and non-commemorative names:**

- i. Names that commemorate individuals will be assessed against this policy's Guiding Values and Principles.<sup>16</sup>

- ii. Names commemorating designated groups will be prioritized for revised and new names.
- iii. Non-commemorative names celebrating the landscape, flora and fauna, and key industries [along with other priority areas] will be prioritized.
- iv. Commemorative names may be inspired by an individual's artistic, cultural, community, economic, educational, literary, political, military, religious, scientific, social, and athletic achievements.<sup>17</sup>

**f. Sponsored names:**

- i. Sponsorship of names will be considered as a revenue stream supporting [settlement] services.<sup>18</sup>
- ii. Names that reflect the location of a business will not be considered.
- iii. Non-profit organizations may propose names without the expectation of a fee.

**g. Names that infer or relate to designated groups and subject matters:**

- i. Existing names will be studied periodically by members of the Committee to ensure they reflect names and associated spellings embraced by the designated group, and for commemorative names, that they contain both first and last names.
- ii. For an existing name that refers to designated groups generically, with dated, racist, or sexist terms, the Committee will pursue revising the name.

**4. Procedure for implementing a new name:**

**Any citizen can propose a new name through the following procedure:**

- i. Consult the [settlement]'s list of approved names, and complete and submit the Name Proposal Form [hyperlink to the form], ensuring all fields are complete.<sup>19</sup>
- ii. Proposals for new names do not require the support of other parties.<sup>20</sup>
- iii. The Committee shall consider new names at its [bimonthly] meetings.<sup>21</sup>
- iv. In the event a name is required for a new location, the Committee will convene after public consultation and the deadline for the reception of proposals has passed to discuss proposals.<sup>22</sup>
- v. According to the [settlement]'s normal operating practices, the finalization of the Committee's recommendation will occur as a normal agenda item of the next [monthly] meeting of the [settlement]'s council.<sup>23</sup>
- vi. The Committee and [settlement] staff shall ensure that accessibility supports and accommodations are made available to residents wishing to submit a proposal.

**5. Procedure for revising an existing name:**

**Any citizen can propose revising an existing name through the following procedure:**

- i. Consult the [settlement]'s list of approved names and complete and submit the Name Revision Proposal Form [hyperlink to the form], ensuring that all fields are complete.<sup>24</sup>

- ii. Proposals must be accompanied by the signatures of 20 supportive citizens who live on or are otherwise impacted by the name.<sup>25</sup>
- iii. The Committee will not normally consider revising the names of places should the majority of residents living there not support the revision, should the proposers not belong to the same constituency impacted by the name revision, or should doing so contravene Sections 2 and 3 of this policy.
- iv. The Committee will consider name revisions at its [bimonthly] meetings.<sup>26</sup>
  - v. In the event the proposed name will impact citizens beyond the proposers, the Committee will conduct broad public consultation, and invite and consider proposals for a new name.<sup>27</sup>
  - vi. According to the [settlement]'s operating practices, the finalization of the recommendation will happen as a normal agenda item of the next monthly meeting of the [settlement]'s council.

**6. Priorities for future names:** [Summarize priorities in bullet form from sections B and C].<sup>28</sup>

**7. Resources for place naming:** [Include locations of approved lists of names, name database, the provincial or territorial place name authority, and the Geographical Names Board of Canada, the provincial or territorial Municipalities Act].

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<sup>1</sup> [Determine who decides how and to what extent the policy is administered as per the settlement's governance and organizational model; for municipalities where authority is delegated to committee, consider the following:] Decision makers are members of the [settlement]'s Committee on Place Names (hereafter referred to as the "Committee"), which is comprised of 2 elected council members and 2 ex-officio members, in addition to a secretary appointed from the [settlement]'s administrative staff, who may vote in the event of a tie. Other decision makers, such as the [settlement]'s manager, mayor, or its council, may be consulted but do not themselves have decision making authority on the designation of names. [For smaller and rural settlements, consider the following:] The [settlement]'s Committee on Place Names (hereafter referred to as the "Committee"), which is comprised of 2 elected council members and 2 ex-officio members, in addition to a secretary appointed from the [settlement]'s administrative staff, who may vote in the event of a tie, will make recommendations regarding the adoption or revision of place names to council. Council will then determine whether the recommendations are approved according to its governance and operating procedures.

<sup>2</sup> [Specificity may be desired for any of these groups, i.e., Mi'kmaq, Fort Folly First Nation, Francophone minority, etc.].

<sup>3</sup> Normally an individual wishing to propose a new or revised name will be expected to have consulted and selected a name from this list. The list will be located on the [settlement]'s website [hyperlink to the list] and can be consulted in person upon request. The [Planning and Development Office], the [settlement]'s council, as well as developers, must consult the list of approved names prior to proposing names for new urban developments, infrastructure, or [settlement] features.

- <sup>4</sup> [These may come from the settlement's latest visioning document or be developed in consultation with stakeholders and should be reflected in the Guiding Principles and Values, Sections 2 and 3, of this policy].
- <sup>5</sup> [The settlement's policies on equality, diversity, and inclusion should inform this policy point].
- <sup>6</sup> ...with the objective of achieving parity between names that commemorate men and women or of reflecting the [settlement]'s demographic composition in terms of gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religious affiliation, etc..
- <sup>7</sup> [Reference to the settlement's provincial and territorial place name authority].
- <sup>8</sup> No name is protected from revision due to the perception of the historical consequence or importance of its honoree.
- <sup>9</sup> [Adjust to reflect the official language of the community and/or province.]
- <sup>10</sup> New Indigenous names will not be implemented without prior consultation and engagement with, and agreement from, the Indigenous constituency affected.
- <sup>11</sup> New names will not be implemented without prior consultation and insofar as the new name is proposed by the Indigenous constituency affected.
- <sup>12</sup> ...in recognition of the linguistic diversity of the community where English- or French- names may be difficult for many community members to articulate.
- <sup>13</sup> Consulting designated groups after a name is devised or proposed by individuals not affiliated with the designated group does not reflect this [settlement]'s aim to develop and administer more inclusive naming practices.
- <sup>14</sup> When new or revised names require consultation, effort will be made to provide a hospitable environment with beverages and snacks, and to remunerate participants for their time, transportation, and childcare costs.
- <sup>15</sup> In French, names that commemorate an individual should be compounded, i.e., autoroute M. Louis Bilodeau should be autoroute Louis-Bilodeau.
- <sup>16</sup> ...to ensure that existing names reflect the [settlement]'s demography and the residents it wishes to attract in the future.
- <sup>17</sup> New commemorative names should celebrate individuals. Preference will be given to individuals who have been deceased for at least [one year] who have contributed to the community, who have a clear connection to the community, and who model the sorts of citizens the community desires to raise and attract.
- <sup>18</sup> Sponsored names are subject to all requirements of this policy.
- <sup>19</sup> [Consider the following fields for the proposal form: the identity and address of the proposer; the location impacted by the name, if known; the name proposed; the meaning of the name (i.e., to whom or what the name refers); the multicultural check box acknowledging any cultural or identity-related element of the proposed name; and a justification for implementing the name].
- <sup>20</sup> If the proposal is deemed to have merit under Sections 2 and 3 of this policy, the Committee will consider the proposal.
- <sup>21</sup> Names proposed for undesignated places will be discussed and committee members will vote to enter the name into the [settlement]'s name bank.
- <sup>22</sup> Acceptable proposals will be discussed and ranked following this policy's Guiding Values and Principles and Best Practices, with the three highest ranked circulated for public input, after which the Committee will finalize its recommendation for council. The Committee may choose to enter the remaining names it considered meritorious into the list of approved names for future purposes.



<sup>23</sup> ... after which the new name will be added to the list of approved names or implemented for the new location.

<sup>24</sup> [Consider the following fields in the Name Revision Proposal Form: the identity and address of the proposer; the location impacted by the name; the name to be revised; meaning of the existing name (i.e., to whom or what the name refers); the reason for making a revision; the multicultural check box acknowledging any cultural or identity-related element of the proposed name; and a justification for revising the name].

<sup>25</sup> If the proposal is deemed to have merit under Sections 2 and 3 of this policy, the Committee will undertake broader consultation of the citizens and businesses impacted by the name.

<sup>26</sup> [Adjust the following procedure according to the settlement's governance and operating practices] Submissions will be discussed, and committee members will vote on whether the case is strong enough to consider revising the name. Should it deem that a revision is warranted, and should no citizens live in the area impacted by the revised name, the Committee will finalize its recommendation and proceed to Section 5.vi of this policy.

<sup>27</sup> After the deadline for the reception of proposals has passed, the Committee will consider public feedback and determine whether the name should be revised. Should it deem that a revision is warranted, new name proposals will be discussed and ranked following this policy's Guiding Values and Principles and Best Practices (Sections 2 and 3), with the three highest ranked circulated for public input, after which the Committee will finalize its recommendation for council.

<sup>28</sup> For new urban developments: names that relate to the thematic character chosen for the neighbourhood (flower and plant species of the area, women innovators from the community, etc.); for new leisure facilities: names that celebrate the achievements of athletes from the community; for revising colonial names: names that contribute to decolonization through the elevation of designated groups and their experiences in the area; for revising racist or sexist names: names that celebrate achievements of designated groups.