

PARK NAMING TEST PROCESS OVERVIEW

What:

Most City of Vancouver parks are named after neighborhoods or by housing developers. Vancouver Parks and Recreation would like to use the soon to be developed “North Image Park” site as an opportunity to explore changes to the current park naming process to increase civic engagement, highlight the diversity of our community and honor Vancouver’s history.

Why:

Parks are a public resource valued by residents of all racial, ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Greater intentionality in park naming can serve to educate and inspire community members and build common ground across disparate groups. Using the “North Image Park” site to test a new naming process allows us to examine, edit and measure the success of the process prior to codifying it as policy.

The Parks and Recreation Department seeks to better represent the diversity of Vancouver through park naming. What people see around them positively or negatively shapes their expectations for themselves and for each other. We believe naming some parks after local figures from underrepresented backgrounds can help residents see themselves and one another as valued parts of our shared history.

Challenges:

Drafting a new park naming policy that relies on real people has potential pitfalls, especially if candidates are not properly vetted. Creating an inclusive, collaborative process requires significant relationship building to ensure that historically underrepresented voices are heard and valued.

How:

- Identify community stakeholders who represent the rich diversity of Vancouver, Washington. Stakeholders may include non-profits; educational institutions; heritage organizations; and those that serve marginalized identities or historically underrepresented groups.
- Collaborate with community stakeholders to create a list of potential candidates for park naming. Candidates should:
 - Have a direct connection to the City of Vancouver, Washington.
 - Embody positive character traits that promote civic pride.
- A list of at least 4 candidates but no more than eight candidates will be compiled for vetting.
- Contacts at Clark County Historical Museum will research the initial list of candidates and provide a brief for each candidate.
- Members of the stakeholders group and 3 members of PRAC will comprise a Naming Committee to review the candidate briefs and narrow the list to a final ballot of at least three but no more than five candidates for public review.
- A robust public outreach campaign will present the final candidates to residents. Information about each candidate will be distributed to educate residents on their choices. Community feedback will be gathered regarding the process and candidates selected.
- Results of the public input will be passed along to the Naming Committee who will present their recommendation to the full PRAC for recommendation to City Council.
- Once approved, the name will be publicly announced prior to the new park dedication and the will be included as part of the park opening ceremony. Historical significance is included on park webpage; additional public education signage may also be explored.