# Welcoming Winnipeg – Renaming Singh Trail Park to Komagata Maru Park

***Feedback Summary***

December 2021

## Welcoming Winnipeg

The Welcoming Winnipeg initiative is just one aspect of the reconciliation process the City of Winnipeg is committed to, and will help ensure that the contributions, experiences, and perspectives of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit are reflected truthfully in our stories, historical markers, and place names.

To date, this has included Council passing a motion to adopt the Welcoming Winnipeg: Reconciling our History Policy. This policy was developed to guide the City in making decisions regarding requests to create new, add to or remove/rename historical markers and place names and resolve the absence of Indigenous perspectives, experiences and contributions in the stories remembered and commemorated.

This new process includes posting change requests on the City of Winnipeg website for two weeks, to provide the opportunity for residents to provide feedback by:

- Completing a short online survey;
- Calling 204-986-4549 and leaving a voice message;
- Registering to appear as a delegation before the Committee of Community Members.

## Background

All City park renaming requests now go through the Welcoming Winnipeg process which is about ensuring a proactive lens of balance, inclusion and Indigenous perspectives is used when making changes to the City's historical markers and place names.

A request was submitted by a member of the public to rename Singh Trail Park to Komagata Maru Park. This park is located in the Point Douglas ward. Details of the request can be found here.

Residents were invited to provide feedback from December 1, 2021 to December 15, 2021.

Following the collection of feedback, input was provided to the Committee of Community Members to make a recommendation for Council's consideration.

## Promotion

Opportunities to provide input on the renaming were promoted using the following methods:

- City of Winnipeg website – posted December 1, 2021
- Welcoming Winnipeg e-mail distribution list with over 190 recipients – December 1, 2021
- Internal City of Winnipeg e-mail distribution list – December 13, 2021
- City of Winnipeg Facebook post with 27,345 followers – December 7, 2021
- City of Winnipeg Twitter post with 103,400 followers – December 7, 2021

## What We Heard

34 responses were received through the online survey. 1 voice messages were received.

In response to the question: Do you think the Committee of Community Members should support this request?

- 27 respondents said yes
- 3 respondents said no
- 5 respondents said undecided

Examples of reasons identified for not supporting the change were:

*"The Komagata Maru was the name of a Japanese ship chartered to being passengers to Vancouver. Is this the best name to use to describe this group of people that tried to immigrate to Canada? What is the link between what happened in Vancouver and Kolkata to the City of Winnipeg?"*

*"Did additional immigration impact the extent to which Indigenous populations were mistreated? Did it violate the spirit of Treaty No. 1 in particular?"*

Examples of reasons identified for supporting the change were:

*"I think that is a superb idea. I think that I think that this is a very important change name because that incident was so racist and*

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*so unwelcoming and so actually horrific and I know there's been a stamp honoring this event and I think it would be wonderful if Winnipeg actually named the trail in Point Douglas with a marker explaining the actual reasoning behind this horrific racist event that happened."*

*"It's a big part of the Indian community and can be learning experience for other communities. Personally, growing up in Winnipeg and attending school here, I never learned about this because it's not a part of the curriculum. Seeing the name or hearing about it will hopefully express interest in people to go and look up what it means."*

*"This request supports the promise to make the name change that was made to this segment of our population. As long as this space remains open to all peoples in the original spirit and intent present at the making of Treaty No. 1, then I believe this promise should be honoured. It was a sad chapter in their history and another one in the history of this country. While there are many sad chapters concerning the original peoples of this country, we cannot penalize others who were welcomed in the spirit of the original reason Treaty was made - to welcome all peoples to come and share in the bounty of this great land."*

## How Input was Considered

Below is a summary of changes that have been made, based on input.

| What We Heard | How It Was Considered |
|---|---|
| Lack of Indigenous significance in the request. | Although not an incident that directly impacted Indigenous peoples, the Committee of Community Members considered how this event highlights Canada's racist colonial policies of the time to limit or exclude the movement of certain groups of people. This practice also extended to Indigenous peoples, as exemplified by the pass system, which restricted the movement of First Nations by requiring them to have a pass approved by the reserve's Indian agent to leave the community, for any reason. |
| Unclear about the connection of the Komagata Maru event to the city of Winnipeg. | The Committee of Community Members approached this request through a proactive lens of balance, inclusion and Indigenous perspectives. Committee members considered how the legacy of this event continues to resonate with the Sikh community and how it can serve as an educational opportunity to the larger Winnipeg community. |