
Building Naming Policy



Alberta 

This publication is issued under the Open Government Licence – Alberta
(<http://open.alberta.ca/licence>).

This publication is available online at <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/building-naming-policy>

Building Name Policy | Arts, Culture and Status of Women

© 2023 Government of Alberta | December 2023 | ISBN 978-1-4601-5912-5



Contents

Introduction	4
Policy Statement	4
Policy Outcomes	4
Guidelines for Building Naming.....	5
Implementation.....	7
Review of Policy	7

Introduction

Names play an important role in our society. They serve the practical purpose of labeling our surroundings and aiding in navigation. When used to identify landmarks, be they geographical features, communities, streets or buildings, they allow us to orient ourselves on the landscape and within our communities. Names also play a cultural role beyond that of the purely practical. The names we use to identify places reflect the heritage and values of our society, and serve as a medium to remember themes and events and to commemorate people whose accomplishments have importance to our collective values and experience.

Albertans across the province interact with government-owned and operated facilities in their everyday life, and these facilities are often central infrastructure in Albertan communities. The Building Naming Policy provides strategic direction in affirming and celebrating Alberta's rich history, culture, and natural heritage, and is intended to ensure an expansive view is taken of the stories to be recognized through building naming. The future naming of buildings provides the opportunity to share the lesser-known stories of Alberta's extraordinary history, reflecting the diverse fabric of the province.

The Building Naming Policy supports the government in recognizing and reflecting the broad population it serves. These guidelines for naming buildings support the ongoing implementation of the existing Diversity and Inclusion Policy for the Alberta Public Service, and Alberta's French Policy as part of the broader recognition of Alberta's diverse heritage and unique history.

This policy will be administered in accordance with applicable legislation.

Policy Statement

The Government of Alberta is committed to affirming the diversity of Alberta's history and the richness of the cultural and natural heritage that defines the province. The naming of Government of Alberta-owned and administered facilities throughout the province contributes to this goal by commemorating Alberta's people and places. This policy will provide guidance to champion and celebrate the themes, events, and people whose accomplishments have importance to Alberta's collective values and experience, sharing Alberta's extraordinary history with Albertans today.

The policy is intended to provide guidance to the Government of Alberta in selecting building names. For the purposes of this policy, the terms buildings and facilities are used interchangeably, with both including built structures as well as other designated spaces, such as gardens and plazas.

The policy is intended to apply to facilities owned and administered by the Government of Alberta, whether existing, under development, or proposed for future build, and excludes leased spaces. The policy excludes the naming of facilities owned or administered by municipal governments or the federal government, Government of Alberta agencies, and other public bodies, including schools, health facilities, and post-secondary institutions. The policy also excludes historic sites, courthouses, as well as facilities in designated special areas and improvement districts.

Policy Outcomes

- Albertans will have a greater awareness of Alberta's cultural and natural heritage, including of the exemplary individuals, events, and natural features that have contributed to the province, through the naming of facilities.
- The names of provincial facilities will contribute to an increased sense of civic literacy rooted in knowledge of Alberta's history.
- Names of provincial facilities in Alberta will reflect the rich history of the province, and Alberta's cultural and regional diversity.
- The selection of building names will strive to recognize Indigenous Peoples or individuals belonging to identifiable minority or historically marginalized groups.

Guidelines for Building Naming

1. General Principles

- 1.1. In selecting names, preference should be given to names that celebrate Alberta's natural and diverse cultural heritage, including:
 - individuals or events that have significantly defined Alberta's history or contributions to Canada;
 - plants, animals, landforms and geographical features distinctive to, or commonly associated with, the province as a whole or a region of the province.
- 1.2. Naming of buildings should reflect a deep understanding of Alberta's rich history and diverse cultural and natural heritage, and should be used as an opportunity to highlight the significance of people, events and natural heritage that have contributed to Alberta's history.
- 1.3. Names should take into consideration geographical and/or thematic connections to a facility, and communities affiliated with a facility's location.
 - 1.3.1. Facilities that serve regional populations may be given names substantially associated with the region, whereas facilities that serve all Albertans should be given names of province-wide relevance.
 - 1.3.2. Names may be associated with the functions to be housed within a facility.
- 1.4. Display names for buildings should be written using standard lettering and may be accompanied by words in other alphabetic writing systems where appropriate.
- 1.5. Facilities can be named in one language or in more than one language if appropriate (e.g. English and French, or English and a First Nations language).
 - 1.5.1. If a facility is named in more than one language, this should be reflected in Government of Alberta communications materials (e.g. if there is also a French name for a facility, that name would be used in French language news releases).
 - 1.5.2. The generic character of a facility name will be translated in Government of Alberta communications materials, as appropriate.
 - Generally, the name of a facility is composed of a generic and a specific character. For example, when considering the Violet King Henry Plaza, *Violet King Henry* is the specific character and *Plaza* is the generic character. The word for plaza may then be translated into other languages as required in communications materials.

2. Commemorative Names (Individuals)

- 2.1. The individual to be commemorated should have made a meaningful contribution to the development of Alberta, or a region of Alberta, such as excellence in their field or extraordinary service to the province and its citizens.
- 2.2. Commemoration of an individual through building naming should be done posthumously. It is recommended that a period of at least five years have elapsed following an individual's death before their name can be considered for adoption as a facility name.
- 2.3. In extraordinary circumstances where an individual has made a significant contribution to the development of Alberta, or a region of Alberta, commemoration of a living individual through building naming may be considered.

3. Commemorative Names (Events)

- 3.1. The event to be commemorated should have been significant in the development of Alberta, and should be connected to the region in which the facility is located and/or the functions to be housed within the facility.

- 3.2. It is recommended that a period of at least five years have elapsed following the event before it can be considered for adoption as a facility name.
- 3.3. In extraordinary circumstances, commemoration of a significant event through building naming may be considered prior to a period of five years elapsing.

4. Natural Names

- 4.1. Natural names should be reflective of Alberta's natural history or environment, and could include the names of local species of plants and animals, or refer to geological formations or geographical features found in Alberta or in the area in which a facility is located.

5. Selection

- 5.1. There may be public interest and community sensitivities related to a building's name. Therefore, where appropriate, public or relevant stakeholder and community input should be sought in the naming process. When determining if seeking public input is appropriate, consideration may be given as to the type of facility, whether it is accessible and widely used by the general public or a specific group, and/or if the facility has a commemorative name and is being renamed. Public input is not required, but may be sought, if the facility is primarily for internal government use.

6. Process

- 6.1. The ministry responsible for culture and heritage will maintain a database of names proposed, approved, and rejected.
- 6.2. Names should not be considered that:
 - could harm the integrity and reputation of the government;
 - imply endorsement of partisan positions;
 - are inconsistent with the Government of Alberta's commitment to diversity, inclusion, opportunity and community well-being for all Albertans; and/or
 - are inconsistent with the Government of Alberta's commitment to partner with Indigenous Peoples in pursuit of reconciliation.
- 6.3. Names that do not fall into the categories recognized in sections two, three, and four of this policy may also be considered for building names.
- 6.4. Potential or proposed names will be researched in order to develop an understanding, as full and nuanced as possible, of the person, place or thing being recognized or commemorated to ensure that the significance of the name to Alberta's heritage is fully understood.
- 6.5. If appropriate, in seeking public or relevant stakeholder and community input in building naming the following process is suggested:
 - 6.5.1. Determine the geographic area to be covered, or the service area covered by the building, as the names of buildings should be reflective of the area in which they are located.
 - 6.5.2. Engage local experts on potential names.
 - 6.5.3. Engage cultural community stakeholders, if applicable.
 - 6.5.4. Engage Indigenous communities within the building's geographical area and/or organizations representing urban Indigenous people.

7. Renaming

- 7.1. Commemorative names adopted for Government of Alberta facilities, including those named prior to this policy, should be intended to remain in place for the useful life of the building.
- 7.2. Facilities may be considered for renaming in circumstances where the name no longer meets or directly conflicts with the Guidelines outlined in this policy, or if there is another demonstrable reason for removing or changing the name.
- 7.3. Facilities named for operational utility should be maintained. If the renaming of an operational facility is proposed, consideration may be given to the operational perspective of the facility (e.g. buildings named after their geographical location).
- 7.4. It may be appropriate to consider renaming a facility if it was originally named to reflect its functional purpose, and a major capital renewal of the facility results in an expansion or change of that purpose.
- 7.5. The Government of Alberta retains the right to remove a name and to rename a facility.

Implementation

The Government of Alberta may propose a name, solicit proposed names or form a committee to recommend proposed names. A facility may be identified for naming or renaming prior to, or along with, the proposal of a name. A facility may also be appropriately matched to a recommended name after its selection if necessary.

The Government of Alberta may establish a committee to review and make recommendations on facilities for naming, and/or to create a list of potential building names for current and future use.

- The ministry responsible for culture and heritage will provide the necessary support to the committee.
- The committee will make recommendations that will be considered by the Minister responsible for culture and heritage.

The ministry responsible for culture and heritage will work with Alberta Infrastructure, Alberta Indigenous Relations, and if applicable, the department that owns the facility being considered for naming, to analyze and recommend proposed and potential names with potential facilities. Departments implicated in the facility's name through the services provided may also be included in the selection process.

The Minister responsible for culture and heritage will provide an official recommendation to the Minister of Infrastructure or, if appropriate, the Minister responsible for the department that owns the facility with a notification provided to the Minister of Infrastructure. The appropriate Ministers shall have the final decision on the naming of all government buildings.

Once the Minister responsible for culture and heritage and the Minister responsible for the department that owns the facility approve a building name, the method of announcing the naming to the public will be determined.

Review of Policy

- This policy will be reviewed periodically.
- The policy review is intended to ensure the policy meets the policy outcomes as outlined in this document.
- Staff from the ministry responsible for culture and heritage and Alberta Infrastructure will carry out the policy review jointly. Public engagement to inform the policy review may occur if appropriate.