



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Traci Leach, Deputy City Manager

Date: February 24, 2026

Reference: Research for Naming on Non-Park Facilities

2040: Sustainable Government

Introduction:

This item is presented for Council discussion and direction regarding development of a policy regarding the renaming of non-park City facilities. At the Council meeting in October 2025, staff was asked to provide information regarding elements that could and should be considered for a policy guiding the renaming of non-park facilities.

Background:

Staff reviewed policies from Addison, Denton, Frisco*, Grand Prairie, and Plano*. Several key themes are presented below for consideration. At the conclusion of each theme, staff has offered several questions that can help Council articulate their policy direction for development of a potential policy.

Defining “Community Leader” with Integrity and Rigor

Perhaps the most substantive theme concerns the definition of a “community leader.” Naming a public facility after an individual is among the highest forms of civic recognition. The research indicates that no two cities take the exact same approach to their definition of “community leader.”

The Town of Addison sets a high and detailed bar, requiring substantial, lasting contributions and long-term service. The City of Denton provides broader criteria—residency, moral character, and exceptional contributions—allowing more interpretive flexibility. Meanwhile, the City of Grand Prairie offers a narrowly tailored policy for former councilmembers or retired staff, emphasizing length of service, retirement status, and distinguished impact. Frisco named their City Hall after a long-time City Manager, but they did not have a policy around non-park renaming.

Taken together, these case studies reveal a tension between specificity and flexibility. Highly detailed criteria promote rigor and protect the honor from being diluted. More general criteria allow adaptability and council discretion.



Another important theme is timing and ethics. Grand Prairie requires that staff members be officially retired before a facility can bear their name avoids conflicts of interest and preserves institutional integrity. Similarly, they exclude currently sitting council members from eligibility protecting against perceptions of self-dealing.

- **Council Policy Consideration:** The following questions are offered for discussion regarding defining “community leader:”
 - What criteria should be considered for honoring individuals with a facility renaming? Should they be deceased? Should there be residency or contribution requirements? What is the definition of “community impact?”
 - Are there prohibitions on who could be considered for renaming (ie- staff or council members)?

A Transparent and Inclusive Creation Process

A second overarching theme from this review is the importance of a naming process that is both structured and participatory. Coppel already has a precedent and clear policy for park naming: convening a committee of the Park Board to research and recommend names. This model reflects a desire for deliberation, consistency, and informed decision-making.

Other cities, such as the Town of Addison and the City of Denton, allow individuals and organizations to submit naming applications. The research also emphasizes that while processes should exist for residents to request renaming, such actions should be supported by significant community interest. Should the Council desire to create a policy, a hybrid model—committee-led evaluation combined with public submissions—would balance vetting with civic participation.

- **Council Policy Consideration:** The following questions are offered for discussion around the process for renaming:
 - Where should renaming facilities originate?
 - Who should have decision-making authority to recommend a renaming (ie- directly through a resident recommendation? If so, who do residents make those recommendations to- a board or direct to Council?)?
 - If recommendations should originate from a Board, who is on that Board?

Aligning Naming Priorities with Civic Purpose

A third major theme is clarity of purpose in what names are meant to communicate. Coppel’s existing park-naming ordinance prioritizes natural features and physical characteristics. However, facilities serve different symbolic and practical functions than open land/recreation areas.

Names are more than honorary gestures; they orient residents and visitors, reinforce institutional identity, and communicate values. For non-park buildings and facilities, current naming conventions have focused on function and activity, which creates clarity, but not much excitement or meaning. Reconsidering the naming priorities to include function and activity would be recommended should the Council desire such a policy. Further, articulating how those new priorities integrate into the current ordinance for park renaming would support alignment between name and mission.



- **Council Policy Consideration:** The following questions are offered for discussion regarding developing clarity around naming priorities:
 - What changes, if any, would the Council like to see if function and activity were integrated into a policy that identifies a clear list of naming convention priorities?
 - Are there facilities that are off limits to renaming? If so, which ones and why? Is there specific criteria to be considered when identifying which facilities should be eligible for renaming?

Continuity, Stability, and Respect for Precedent

Finally, the research consistently returns to the principle of continuity. Once a name is established, it becomes part of the City’s narrative and collective memory. In this sense, the naming policy is not merely administrative—it is historical. It determines how the City records its values, honors its contributors, and signals its priorities to future generations. Denton’s policy explicitly discourages renaming except under exceptional circumstances, honoring the decisions of previous councils and respecting descendants.

- **Council Policy Consideration:** The following questions are offered for discussion regarding the role of precedent and stability of existing facility names:
 - Where does continuity rank in importance for the purposes of a renaming policy?
 - Are there criteria (separate and apart from the definition of “community leader”) that should be met before a renaming occurs? If yes, what criteria would the Council like considered and prioritized?

Conclusion

The four themes outlined in this memo share the collective research conducted around existing policies in place today for some of our neighbors. Should the Council desire staff to develop a policy, thoughtfully addressing these themes can assist staff in developing a policy to create a naming framework that not only guides present decisions but also safeguards the City’s legacy for decades to come.

*Frisco and Plano have Park facility policies, but do not have policies for non-park facilities.

Benefit to the Community:

Coppel has had a policy in place for naming park facilities to honor those who have made significant contributions to the City’s quality of life for many years. Expanding the scope of this effort would allow for additional individuals to be recognized through the renaming of facilities outside of the park system amenities.

Legal:

N/A

Fiscal Impact:

Unknown, though should a policy be developed and approved by the Council, additional costs could be incurred to implement this policy in the future.



Recommendation:
None.