

To: Mayor Tory and Members of the Executive Committee

July 1, 2021

Re: EX25.1 Recognition Review (July 6, 2021)

Here's a gentle technical solution to a maddening social problem. The problem is this: What to do about Dundas Street.

I know the Committee is not charged with *managing* the Dundas problem, or even to decide whether it is a *commemoration* issue, but only to recommend whether City Council should address it according to the process put forward by the City Manager. The pros and cons of the Dundas project and its details are being exhaustively canvassed by others. **So I have an idea for you, rather than an argument.**

It's this: Learn from a modern approach adopted in some languages that assign gender to nouns and adjectives. *Latina* and *Latino*, referring to women and men, is a well-known example. To eliminate gender references when they're not relevant or simply not wanted, the gender-neutral term **Latinx** was devised. **That x is both simple – and eloquent.**

Similarly, the name Dundas (Street) could be respelled instead of demolished. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission said that history should not be demolished or hidden, but renovated and reinterpreted. Suppose Dundas were subjected to what I'll call an Orthographic Solution. It might be redesignated **DundasX** – on the model of Latinx. But even better would be **XDundas**, which is easier to say and is full of significance. It also puts all the philosophically renamed streets and civic assets together in one place on alphabetical lists. Toronto might become justly famous for inventing this.

This simple idea could be added to whatever this Committee forwards to Council. First, it's obvious and loud – that is, it emphasizes the Dundas issue instead of disappearing it. Second, it's relatively cheap. Third, it's widely applicable and avoids acrimonious argument about what *new* names should be used.

As you know, the Dundas renaming is part of a continuum. (Just last year there was a successful campaign to rename Russell Street in the University of Toronto to Ursula Franklin Street. Russell was Peter Russell who supported slavery; Professor Franklin was an eminent scientist and feminist.) About a block from where I live are Dundas Street, Peter Street (that's Peter Russell again), and Simcoe Street (John Graves Simcoe was no saint by modern standards). And speaking of saints, the Anglicans recently renamed *Saint George the Martyr* church at Grange Park, to *Saint George by the Grange* because of the alarming implications of the Islamic term martyr. And just think of all the Toronto streets named for saints in Christianity, a proselytizing religion that historically forced people to confess and convert or face the pain of death. I said I wouldn't argue – but a Domino Effect today seems inevitable. Look at the ongoing debate in North York about whether to name a street, a park, or *anything* after Rob Ford.

The addition of an X to Dundas seems a practical approach to the question of whether this Committee will recommend to Council something that could realistically be done in the *present*, in order to shape the *future*, rather than trying to disappear the *past*. **XDundas** sounds like a solution, don't you think?

Max Allen | President, Grangetown Condominiums at Village by the Grange | www.grangetown.ca
78 St. Patrick Street, Toronto M5T 3K8 | 416-593-1238 | mallen6@sympatico.ca