

City Council

MM13.29	ACTION			Ward: All
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Confronting the Legacy of the Transatlantic Slave Trade: Renaming Civic Assets Bearing the Henry Dundas Name - by Councillor Chris Moise, seconded by Mayor Olivia Chow

** This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.
 * This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate.*

Recommendations

Councillor Chris Moise, seconded by Mayor Olivia Chow, recommends that:

1. City Council direct the Yonge-Dundas Square Board, in collaboration with the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, to adopt the new name Sankofa Square selected by the Recognition Review Community Advisory Committee and report to City Council through the Executive Committee as part of the Report on the Governance Review of Yonge-Dundas Square, to adopt the recommended new name by the end of the second quarter of 2024.
2. City Council request the Toronto Public Library Board rename the Jane/Dundas Library, in collaboration with the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, such that the name Dundas is removed, to be completed by the second or third quarter of 2024.
3. City Council direct the Toronto Transit Commission Board to:
 - a. rename the Dundas subway station in collaboration with the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and Toronto Metropolitan University such that the name Dundas is removed and there is no net impact on the City of Toronto’s budget, to be completed by the fourth quarter of 2024.
 - b. rename the Dundas West subway station in collaboration with the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and in consultation with the Recognition Review Community Advisory Committee such that the name Dundas is removed, to be completed within the TTC’s 10-year capital plan and preferably by 2025.
4. City Council direct the Executive Director of Social Development, Finance and Administration, in collaboration with the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture, the General Manager of Transportation Services, and the Chief Communications Officer of Strategic Public and Employee Communications to undertake public education campaign and strategic communication efforts to acknowledge the impact of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and slavery in keeping with the International Decade for People of African Descent and report to the Executive Committee in the fourth quarter of 2024 aligned with an update on the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, and request the Mayor consider \$50,000 to fund this program in each of 2024 and 2025.

5. City Council direct the City Manager to pause work on the remaining recommendations in 2021.EX25.1 until Council provides direction to resume.

Summary

In June 2020, City Council received a petition signed by close to 14,000 individuals calling for Dundas Street to be renamed, citing its namesake Henry Dundas' role in delaying the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

In July 2021, City Council voted to rename Dundas Street (2021.EX25.1). Council directed the City Manager to convene a Community Advisory Committee to develop a shortlist of new names for Dundas Street and other City-owned assets bearing the Dundas name, and a transition plan to support impacted residents and businesses.

A 20-person Recognition Review Community Advisory Committee (CAC) convening Black and Indigenous leaders, along with other diverse residents and business owners living and working along Dundas Street, was formed in fall 2021. Members were recruited through the City's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit and the Indigenous Affairs Office, in partnership with City Councillors representing wards that include Dundas Street. The membership of the CAC represents a broad spectrum of leaders from Toronto's Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving communities. The CAC met regularly over the past two years, with a brief hiatus over the municipal election.

Working within a consensus decision-making model, after two years of broad consultation, research and discussion, the CAC at its December 12, 2023, meeting unanimously selected a new name for Yonge-Dundas Square. The proposed new name for this prominent city asset is Sankofa Square. The concept of Sankofa, originating in Ghana, refers to the act of reflecting on and reclaiming teachings from the past which enables us to move forward together.

Reason for Urgency:

This Motion is urgent as it relates to considerations for the 2024 budget process.

Background Information

Member Motion MM13.29