

Renaming Close-Springhurst Parkette in Honour of Diane Rajaram

Date: June 16, 2026

To: Toronto East York Community Council

From: General Manager, Parks and Recreation

Wards: 4 - Parkdale-High Park

SUMMARY

City Council adopted the Commemorative Framework at its July 2022 meeting. The Framework provides guidance to the public, Elected Officials, and City staff regarding the commemorative naming and renaming of streets and City properties, and the consideration of proposals for new and existing commemorative monuments.

This report considers an application to rename Close-Springhurst Parkette, located at 70 Close Avenue, to “Diane Rajaram Parkette”.

Parks and Recreation, in collaboration with the Economic Development and Culture and Strategic Partnerships, reviewed the application. The review concluded that the naming proposal satisfies the criteria of the Property Naming Policy and aligns with the Guiding Principles for Commemoration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Parks and Recreation recommends that:

1. Toronto and East York Community Council adopt the renaming of Close-Springhurst Parkette at 70 Close Avenue to “Diane Rajaram Parkette”.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The costs associated with the production and installation of a new park sign will be accommodated within the 2026 Approved Operating Budget for Parks and Recreation.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial implications as identified in the Financial Impact section.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council on July 19, 20, 21 and 22, 2022, adopted the following:

1. City Council adopt the City of Toronto Commemorative Framework, consisting of:
 - a. the Guiding Principles for Commemoration in Attachment 1 to the report (June 27, 2022) from the City Manager, as amended by Part 2 below;
 - b. the revised City of Toronto Street Naming Policy in Attachment 2 to the report (June 27, 2022) from the City Manager;
 - c. the revised City of Toronto Property Naming Policy in Attachment 3 to the report (June 27, 2022) from the City Manager; and
 - d. the revised City of Toronto Public Art and Monument Donations Policy in Attachment 4 to the report (June 27, 2022) from the City Manager.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.EX34.6>

COMMENTS

Community Councils have delegated authority to decide property naming matters that comply with the City of Toronto Property Naming Policy.

An application has been submitted to Strategic Partnerships to rename Close-Springhurst Parkette in commemoration of Kissoondai (Diane) Rajaram (1955–2023). The proposed name is “Diane Rajaram Parkette.” The application includes a brief biography, evidence of community engagement, and letters of support from colleagues, residents, and local community organizations.

Parks and Recreation consulted with Strategic Partnerships and Economic Development and Culture to review this proposal. Staff have confirmed that the proposed naming aligns with the City of Toronto Property Naming Policy and the Guiding Principles for Commemoration. Accordingly, staff recommend that Community Council rename Close-Springhurst Parkette located at 70 Close Avenue as “Diane Rajaram Parkette”.

The proposed name was circulated for comment and is acceptable to Toronto Police Service, Toronto Fire Services, and Toronto Paramedic Services.

The following summarizes the review of the proposed name, undertaken in accordance with the City’s Guiding Principles for Commemoration and the City of Toronto Property Naming Policy.

As outlined by the applicant and verified through staff research, Diane Rajaram was an active and well-regarded Parkdale community member, volunteer, and activist. She was involved with Parkdale Community Legal Services (PCLS), the Parkdale Tenants Association (PTA), the Parkdale Residents Association (PRA), and the Workers Action

Centre (WAC), while also working as a Personal Support Worker. Through her volunteer work with community organizations and as part of her professional duties, Rajaram advocated for the rights of migrants, immigrants, refugees, racialized workers, low-income renters, seniors, and tenants.

In 2014, Rajaram was elected to the board of the PCLS and in 2017, she served as the President of the PTA. She went on to volunteer with both organizations for many years. Rajaram was substantially involved in the 2017 Parkdale Rent Strike, in which over 300 tenants protested rent increases, ultimately securing several concessions from landlords. She is featured in a documentary about the rent strike titled *This is Parkdale* (2017), and in local news coverage of the event by *Now Toronto* and the *Toronto Star*. In recognition of her years of service to the Parkdale community and organization of the rent strike, PCLS awarded Rajaram the Dorothy Leach Community Award in 2017. The application also notes that Rajaram was widely recognized as a consistent first point of contact for neighbours in times of crisis. She is described as offering compassion and practical support, while leveraging her community connections to assist others in accessing essential resources.

Parkdale Community Legal Services has a long-standing partnership with Osgoode Hall Law School of York University to deliver the Intensive Program in Poverty Law, which enables law students to engage with poverty law through the lived experiences of Parkdale residents. During her time with PCLS, Rajaram supported this program and contributed to the learning of a generation of participating law students.

The application demonstrates strong evidence of community engagement through letters of support from Parkdale residents and community members. Also included in the application package are letters of support from the leadership of the organizations Rajaram worked with, including the Chair of the Parkdale Residents Association, the Executive Director of Workers Action Centre, an Associate Professor with Osgoode Hall Law School, as well as Councillor Gord Perks (Ward 4, Parkdale-High Park). Collectively, these letters reflect broad community endorsement and consistently characterize Rajaram as a passionate, tenacious, and inspiring community leader.

In summary, as outlined in the application and confirmed through staff research, Kissoondai (Diane) Rajaram was an active and highly regarded member of the Parkdale community. Her volunteer and advocacy work reflect an enduring and long-term commitment to social justice and community service.

Recommended Park

Close-Springhurst Parkette is an existing park located at 70 Close Avenue, immediately adjacent to Rajaram's former residence.

The City leases the parkland from an adjacent private property owner. Staff reviewed the current lease agreement and concluded that the lease does not include any prohibitions on naming the parkette. Staff sent the owner a letter informing the owner that the City will replace the existing sign in 2026 and that the new sign will identify the parkette as "Diane Rajaram Parkette". The owner confirmed receipt and did not raise any objections. The local ward Councillor has been consulted on the above and approves

this renaming.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Terry Ricketts
General Manager, Parks and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Aerial View of Parkette

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