

Section: Parks and Administration	Policy # 5810-20
Subject: Park Bench Donation Policy	Revision #

PURPOSE

The Park Bench Donation Program offers individuals and organizations an opportunity to honor a person, group, or significant event in a meaningful way. Contributions made through this program also benefit the City of Courtenay's parks and the community. Park bench donations enhance the City's parks and trails while aligning with the City's vision for parks as inclusive, accessible spaces that promote well-being.

This policy establishes a framework to ensure consistent decision-making regarding the acceptance, placement, and maintenance standards for donated park benches.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- All park bench donations within City of Courtenay parks and trails.
- Park bench donations made by individuals, families, or organizations.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

The Director of Recreation, Culture and Community Services is delegated authority by Council to approve the Park Bench Donation Program procedures and requirements for acceptance of a park bench donation within the Park Bench Donation Policy guidelines. Any changes to the program will be based on consultation with subject matter experts, including a review of best practices of other jurisdictions with bench donation programs.

POLICY

1. Ownership of Park Bench Donation and Term

All donated park benches and plaques accepted through the Park Bench Donation Program will become the sole property of the City.

The park bench donation term will not be in perpetuity. The donation period will be for ten years. The park bench donation will conclude at the end of the ten-year term with the removal of the plaque.

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After the term concludes, the park bench donation and plaque may be disposed of at the sole discretion of the City of Courtenay. Donated park benches will not be provided to the donor at the end of the Term.

The donation of a park bench does not constitute ownership of the land or surrounding area where the bench is located. The City reserves the right to relocate benches due to operational or capital project needs. If the relocation is permanent, staff will work with the donor to determine an alternate acceptable location.

2. **Plaque Ownership and Responsibility**

Plaques will remain City property once donated and may be returned to the donor at the end of the term. Donors are responsible for keeping their contact information current. Plaques may be returned to the donor if the donor can be contacted. If the donor cannot be contacted, plaques will be stored for up to one year and then recycled. The City will not be responsible for stolen, vandalized or damaged plaques. If a plaque is stolen or vandalized, the donor may request a replacement plaque at a fee established through the City's Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 1673, 1992, including future amendments.

3. **Park Bench Donation Fee and Cost Recovery**

Donation fees will be set at 100% cost recovery, covering the purchase of a new park bench and plaque, installation, administration, and maintenance. Fees will be established through the City's Fees and Charges Bylaw No. 1673, 1992, including future amendments. Before the park bench donation fee is accepted by the City, a completed and signed form outlining the donor's agreement to the program terms and conditions must be received and approved by staff. The Park Bench Donation fee must be paid in full before the City accepts the park bench donation.

A charitable tax receipt will be issued for the bench donation to one donor, excluding the plaque cost.

4. **Plaque Guidelines**

The wording on the plaque must conform to the approved inscription guidelines for donated benches. Language shall be uplifting, in the present tense, and befitting in a recreational park setting, and:

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- a. Will not be memorial markers or contain wording indicating year of birth and death dates;
 - b. No political advertisements, endorsements, or slogans, nor any commercial business advertising or promotional messaging, shall be permitted on a donated park bench;
 - c. Plaque messaging will not contravene the City's official statements in support of 2SLGBTQIA2S+, inclusion, equity, and the creation of safe spaces within City facilities and parks, nor conflict with the City's current or future anti-racism policies;
 - d. All language on donated bench plaques must be non-denominational;
 - e. No discriminatory language or hate speech language will be permitted;
 - f. Plaque messaging should be appropriate in a recreational park setting; and
 - g. Is subject to the approval of the Director of Recreation, Culture and Community Services or their delegate.
5. **Bench Style**

The style of bench will be determined by staff in accordance with the City's Park and Donation Bench Guidelines. Staff reserve the right to change these design standards, depending on manufacturer availability, feasibility, and other circumstances.

6. **Plaque Specifications**

Plaque size, material, and text limitations will be set by the City according to City standards.

7. **Maintenance**

The City will maintain the donated bench in accordance with park bench maintenance standards as part of the City's bench inventory. If a donated bench is vandalized, damaged, destroyed, or defaced to an extent that, in the opinion of staff, replacement is required within the 10-year term, that will be done at no cost to the donor. The replacement will be a similar bench or, if not available, a new bench; however, the original 10-year donation term will still apply. Only City of Courtenay staff may alter, maintain, repair, or replace a donated park bench.

8. **Location and Design**

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Bench locations will be selected based on the City's Park and Donation Bench Guidelines, and park bench donations will be accepted provided there is an available location for a bench as determined by the City. At the end of the 10-year park bench donation term, if the original donor decides not to donate a new bench at the location, the location may be offered to another donor on the waitlist and then to the broader community. If the owner decides to donate a new park bench at the same location, the original plaque may be installed onto new bench if it is still in good condition and meets the City's standards.

9. **Acceptance of Park Bench Donations**

The City of Courtenay reserves the right to accept a donation through the Park Donation Bench Program at its discretion.

10. **Program Expansion**

The Director of Recreation, Culture and Community Services is authorized to expand the donation program into other park amenities, provided the expanded program aligns with the principles, objectives, standards, and requirements established within this Policy.

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