



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Branch Renaming: Jane/Dundas

Date: May 29, 2024
To: Naming Committee
From: City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to recommend that the Jane/Dundas branch be renamed the Daniel G. Hill branch. The new branch name complies with the Toronto Public Library Board's [Naming Policy](#), aligns with the City of Toronto's [Commemorative Framework](#), and will represent a historic milestone as the first Toronto Public Library (TPL) branch named after a Black Torontonian.

As part of the larger Dundas Street Renaming Project and renaming of City of Toronto assets bearing the Dundas name, City Council has requested that the Toronto Public Library Board rename the Jane/Dundas branch to remove the Dundas name by Q3 2024. Renaming the branch after a prominent Black Torontonian aligns with the City's [Guiding Principles for Commemoration](#), which encourage greater equity and inclusion in placemaking and promote a broader understanding of history and its legacy on communities.

Daniel G. Hill III was a pioneer and champion of human rights in Canada. He was also a distinguished writer and historian on the history of Black people in Canada, a recipient of the Order of Canada (OC), and the Order of Ontario

(OOnt). He helped to establish the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Ontario Black History Society, and worked tirelessly throughout his career to fight against discrimination for Ontarians from all social, racial and religious backgrounds.

Public engagement conducted in April 2024 found community perspectives on the proposed name reflect the mixed public attitudes to the City's broader initiative to rename City assets bearing the Dundas name. In total, 40% of respondents to an online survey agreed or strongly agreed with the name Daniel G. Hill III branch, 10% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 49% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposed name change. However, 18% of total respondents indicated through their comments that the reason they disagree is not because of the specific name proposed, but because they are opposed to changing the branch name in general. A summary of this community feedback is included in this report.

Based on community feedback about the length of the originally proposed name of Daniel G. Hill III branch, as well as accessibility issues with using Roman numerals and consistency with current library branch naming conventions, the name being recommended for approval is the Daniel G. Hill branch.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Naming Committee:

1. approve the name Daniel G. Hill branch for the library branch located at 620 Jane Street and recommend this name to the Toronto Public Library Board for approval.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The renaming of the Jane/Dundas branch is estimated to cost approximately \$60,000, and can be accommodated within the 2024 Capital Budget and Plan.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and agrees with it.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

A focus on equity is embedded throughout TPL's Strategic Plan to ensure that library services and actions break down barriers to access and increase inclusion. This focus includes a commitment to ensure that everyone who wants to use the Library feels welcome and represented in TPL's spaces and is able to access services. The renaming of this branch also aligns with TPL's strategic priorities of Opening Up Our Public Space, and Providing the Vital Ingredients for a Democratic Society.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

TPL's Equity Statement outlines the Library's commitment to creating and maintaining work and public service environments where everyone is welcomed, included and supported, and that are grounded in tolerance and mutual respect, so that Library customers, stakeholders, staff and the public can freely and equitably access or deliver Library services which meet the changing needs of Torontonians.

The renaming of the Jane/Dundas branch aligns with TPL's commitment to create culturally safe and relevant spaces that reflect the diversity of Toronto's population and empowers equity-deserving groups. Renaming the branch to honour a prominent Black Torontonian provides an opportunity to confront anti-Black racism, increase awareness and amplify the voices of the Black community in Toronto.

DECISION HISTORY

At its [February 22, 2016 meeting](#), the Library Board requested staff identify a future naming opportunity to recognize Daniel G. Hill III.

At its [July 14, 15 and 16, 2021](#) meeting, City Council requested the City Manager work with the Community Advisory Committee to consider recommending different names for Old Dundas Street, Dundas Square and the various civic assets currently named for Dundas to reflect Toronto's rich culture, heritage and diversity.

On December 13, 14 and 15, 2023, City Council approved [Member Motion MM13.29 - Confronting the Legacy of the Transatlantic Slave Trade: Renaming Civic Assets Bearing the Henry Dundas Name](#), and requested the Toronto Public Library Board to rename the Jane/Dundas Library, in collaboration with the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, and the two local Councillors, such that the name Dundas is removed, to be completed by the second or third quarter of 2024.

At its February 26, 2024 [meeting](#), the Naming Committee received a report for information on the approach to public consultation to assess community support and provide an opportunity for feedback on the proposed new name for the Jane/Dundas branch. The report stated that TPL would present the Naming Committee with a summary of community feedback, along with a recommendation for a name.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

TPL's [Naming Policy](#) requires that names for library branches, rooms, programs and collections be approved by the Board, including honorary naming or naming with a gift.

The policy outlines the naming of branches based on the following priorities:

- the Library will give priority to naming its buildings after their geographic location, either the community or the street location where they are situated;
- alternatively, consideration will be given to naming, where appropriate, after the type of service or function offered at that branch; and
- in exceptional circumstances, consideration will be given to naming a branch after an individual whose contribution to the Library or the City of Toronto is well documented and is widely recognized and valued. At least two years shall have passed since the individual's death.

The [City's Commemorative Framework](#) was approved in July 2022 to prioritize commemorations in public spaces significant to Indigenous Peoples, Black communities, and equity-deserving groups. The community-centred approach addresses who and what is recognized, commemorated or honoured through City street names, monuments and property names.

To encourage greater equity and inclusion in placemaking, and promote a broader understanding of history and its legacy on communities, the City has codified six guiding principles for commemoration through the framework.

Proposals to commemoratively name or rename a street or City property must:

1. be informed by historical research, traditional knowledge and community insights;
2. be supported by communities through meaningful engagement;
3. honour Indigenous ways of knowing and being;
4. prioritize commemorations significant to Indigenous Peoples, Black communities and equity-deserving groups;
5. connect to Toronto, Ontario or Canada's histories and cultures; and
6. share knowledge and stories behind commemorations.

TPL's Naming Policy, which was last updated in 2014, will be reviewed and proposed updates will be presented to the Naming Committee and Board for approval in 2024. Updates to the policy will reflect the City's Guiding Principles for Commemoration, relevant aspects of the City's Property Naming Policy, as well as the learning from the recent process for renaming of two branches, including Jane/Dundas.

COMMENTS

Background and Context

On December 13, 14 and 15, 2023, Council approved [Member Motion MM13.29 - Confronting the Legacy of the Transatlantic Slave Trade: Renaming Civic Assets Bearing the Henry Dundas Name](#). As part of that motion, City Council requested that the Toronto Public Library Board rename the Jane/Dundas branch, in collaboration with the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, and the two local Councillors, such that the name Dundas is removed, to be completed by the second or third quarter of 2024.

Library staff are recommending renaming Jane/Dundas branch after a prominent Black Torontonian to align with the City's Guiding Principles for Commemoration. This approach also supports TPL's commitment to creating culturally safe and relevant spaces that reflect the diversity of Toronto's population, confronting anti-Black racism, increasing awareness and amplifying the voices of the Black community in Toronto. If approved, this will be the first TPL branch named after a Black Torontonian.

Jane/Dundas branch is located at 620 Jane Street within ward 4 Parkdale-High Park, and borders ward 5 York South-Weston to the north. In both wards, the Black community represents the largest visible minority population. In ward 5, the Black community comprises 24.0% of the population, compared to 14.0% in the city as a whole¹.

In 2015, the Ontario Black History Society contacted TPL to consider renaming the Scarborough Civic Centre branch for Dr. Daniel Grafton Hill III with a presentation to the Library Board. Although [the Board decided](#) to retain the existing branch name in order to raise the profile of the Scarborough Civic Centre, the Board also directed staff at that time to consider a future naming opportunity to recognize Dr. Daniel Grafton Hill III.

The City's Guiding Principles for Commemoration include that any proposed commemorative names be supported through meaningful community engagement where the knowledge and stories behind the commemorative naming is shared. A public engagement process was held in April that included an educational component to inform the community about the rationale for the renaming, as well as an online survey to gather community feedback on the proposed name of Daniel G. Hill III branch.

About Daniel G. Hill III

Daniel G. Hill III (1923-2003) is a recipient of the Order of Canada (OC), the Order of Ontario (OOnt), and a pioneer and champion of human rights in Canada. He was also a distinguished writer and historian on the history of Black people in Canada.

Originally from the U.S.A. and the great-grandson of American slaves, Daniel G. Hill III moved to Canada in 1950 to study at the University of Toronto and, after completing his PhD in sociology, was appointed the first director and later the Chair of the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC).

Daniel G. Hill III worked tirelessly to establish the Ontario Human Rights Commission throughout the 1960s and transformed it from a tiny office with a small staff into a major public agency in the Province of Ontario with statutory

¹ 2021 Census Data. [Ward 5 Demographic Profile](#)
[Ward 4 Demographic Profile](#)

powers. As Director of the OHRC, Daniel G. Hill III diligently fought discrimination for Ontarians from all social, racial and religious backgrounds.

Daniel G. Hill III resigned from the Commission in 1973, to establish the first human rights consulting firm in Canada, and advised a number of high profile clients including the Government of Ontario, the City of Toronto, the Toronto Star, and the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission.

In 1978, Daniel G. Hill III co-founded the [Ontario Black History Society \(OBHS\)](#). This was the first public organization focused on the history of Black people in Canada. Daniel G. Hill III was its president for the first six years.

Daniel G. Hill III published his seminal book, "[The Freedom Seekers: Blacks in Early Canada](#)", in 1981, which was the first popular history on the topic. The book had a wide readership and remains available in Canadian libraries. He also wrote "A Brief Pictorial History of Blacks in Nineteenth Century Ontario" that was published by the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Daniel G. Hill III was appointed Ombudsman for the Province of Ontario in 1984, a position he held until his retirement in 1989. As Ombudsman, he advocated on behalf of citizens who felt they had been mistreated by the government.

Daniel G. Hill III received the "Outstanding Service to Humanity" award presented in May 1984 by the Canadian Labour Congress, was awarded the Order of Ontario in 1993 and was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1999.

With his wife Donna Bender Hill, Daniel G. Hill III raised three children who were born between 1954 and 1958 – Dan, Lawrence and Karen. As part of the research conducted for background on this renaming opportunity, staff [came across an essay](#) written by Lawrence Hill, one of Daniel G. Hill III's children, and a prominent Canadian author. In the essay Lawrence writes about his relationship with his father, and how he experienced a "radical mid-life transition...As we all graduated from adolescence, he grew up with us and became a better father, the man we so wanted him to be." This was a transition from how he describes his father in earlier years "could turn violent—physically and emotionally" with him and his siblings at times. This transition was so

significant that Lawrence describes how later in life “Our relationship became beautiful.... He became an entirely different father—loving and supportive.”

More information about the life of Daniel G. Hill III is [available through the Archives of Ontario online exhibit](#).

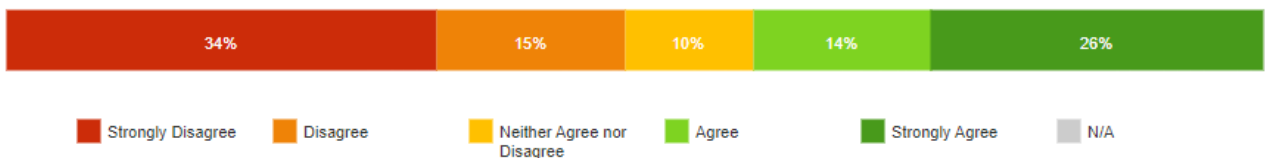
Summary of Public Consultation Feedback Results

The consultation process was launched with an online survey that was open from April 16, 2024 until May 1, 2024. The goal of the survey was to inform the community about the rationale for the renaming through an educational component about the legacy of Daniel G. Hill III on the TPL website, and provide an opportunity for feedback on the proposed new name.

The survey had a strong response from the community with 680 respondents. The survey was available to the public on the Library [website](#) and emailed to branch customers. It was also sent to the councillors for wards 4 and 5 to share with their constituents to further engage community stakeholders. Flyers promoting the survey were posted at the Jane/Dundas branch, as well as at three other local branches. Of the 680 survey respondents, 375 provided additional feedback about their reasons for supporting or not supporting the proposed name.

Overall, the results reflect the mixed attitudes to the City’s broader initiative to rename City assets bearing the Dundas name. In total, 40% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the name Daniel G. Hill III branch, 10% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 49% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposed name.

The suggested name for the Jane/Dundas branch is the Daniel G. Hill III branch. After learning about the renaming process and the legacy of Daniel G. Hill III, do you support this proposed name?



N 680

However, 18% of total respondents indicated through their feedback that the reason they Disagreed or Strongly Disagreed is not because of the name

proposed, but because they are opposed to changing the branch name at all. Reasons given include that it was a perceived waste of resources, that they are opposed to removing the Dundas name from City assets generally, and that they want to keep the existing name.

Of the remaining 31% of survey participants who Disagreed or Strongly Disagreed with the specific name choice being proposed and provided a feedback on the reason, the largest proportion (39%), indicated they preferred a location-based name rather than naming the branch after a person,

- 28% said they preferred a name with a connection to the local area,
- 12% preferred an Indigenous name,
- 12% preferred an alternative name; and
- 11% felt the name was too long.

A sample of comments related to these reasons for not supporting the proposed name include:

- “The name should be something that relates to this neighbourhood or people from this neighbourhood.”
- “I am not in favour of naming public infrastructure after individuals. That’s why we are in the situation we are now.”
- “I think the library name should reflect the community so it is easy to find.”
- “Recognize that he was a great and heroic individual but I think we need a name that reflects the geographic area including the Indigenous origin, given the proximity to the river and its history.”
- “The name is too long and difficult to remember.”
- Some participants also suggested alternative commemorative names for prominent Black Torontonians including Dr. Rita Cox, Abraham Shadd, and Portia White.

More than a quarter of respondents (26%) indicated that they strongly agree and 14% agree with the name, and many people took the time to provide a comment elaborating on their support for the name.

A sample of comments indicating support for the name include:

- “I think it is cool that my library will be the first to be named after a local Black hero.”
- “I think it is time to commemorate the Black leaders in Canadian society, and I am for the name change.”
- “If it must be renamed, this is an excellent choice.”
- “I knew nothing about him but I should have. And that’s the point of naming a library after him!”
- “Wonderful initiative, and naming the branch after Mr. Hill is particularly fitting for this neighbourhood.”
- “I will be proud to have the Daniel G. Hill III branch as my home branch.”

Additional engagement and research

In 2015 when the name was originally proposed, [Lawrence Hill provided a letter](#) to the Board indicating his enthusiastic support of naming a library branch after his father. TPL staff have been in contact with Lawrence Hill recently regarding the current opportunity, and he has re-confirmed the family’s support for the naming of the branch after their father.

TPL staff have worked with Economic Development and Culture staff to ensure alignment with the City’s Commemorative Naming Framework and the learning from the broader Dundas renaming initiative. Councillors for ward 4 (Gord Perks) and ward 5 (Frances Nunziata) were also kept informed throughout the public engagement process. The Ontario Black History Society also re-confirmed their strong support for the naming of the Jane/Dundas branch after Daniel G. Hill III, expressing that they are “thrilled and honored” that a library branch will be named after a Black History icon and founder of their organization.

Proposed name

The name originally proposed for community feedback was the Daniel G. Hill III branch. However, a number of participants in the community engagement survey expressed that the name felt too long and cumbersome. Accessibility standards also discourage the use of Roman numerals, which can be difficult to read for those who rely on screen readers. The recommended proposed name of Daniel G. Hill branch addresses these concerns and is consistent with current

library branch naming conventions (for example, Lillian H. Smith branch and Maria A. Shchuka branch).

CONCLUSION

The City has requested the Library Board rename the Jane/Dundas branch by Q3 2024. While the community engagement survey responses reflect the mixed public reaction to the broader Dundas renaming initiative, the results also show community support for the proposed name and recognition of the legacy of Daniel G. Hill III. This report therefore recommends that the Jane/Dundas branch be renamed the Daniel G. Hill branch.

The proposed name complies with the Library Board's [Naming Policy](#) and the City's Commemorative Framework, which encourages greater equity and inclusion in placemaking, and promotes a broader understanding of history and its legacy on communities.

A commemorative plaque describing the accomplishments of Daniel G. Hill III will be created and installed in a prominent location at the branch. As part of the renaming process, Library staff will continue to provide education opportunities to inform the community about the legacy of Daniel G. Hill III and the importance of recognizing the contributions of equity-deserving communities through commemoration.

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SIGNATURE

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