



City of Saint Paul announces names of four new city parks at Highland Bridge

Final names were selected as part of a public naming process with input and feedback from community leaders

SAINT PAUL – Wednesday, April 21, 2021 The City of Saint Paul announced the names of four new city park spaces located within the Highland Bridge development project at the former Ford Motor Company site in Highland Park. The names were approved by the Saint Paul City Council during today’s meeting.

Name ideas were submitted during an open call to the public for suggestions as part of the community engagement process. Final selections were made based on feedback and input from members of the Dakota community and the Saint Paul Youth Commission and received support from the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission.

“I’m so excited to welcome these new parks to Highland Bridge and Ward 3,” said Councilmember Chris Tolbert. “The chosen names for these public spaces reflect a myriad of our city’s histories—honoring our Native community to whom this land belongs, our Union sisters and brothers who labored on the site for a century, our city’s interconnectivity with the rest of the region, and a very popular coyote in our neighborhood. I want to thank our Parks and Recreation Commission, Parks and Recreation Department, Saint Paul Youth Commission, members of the Dakota Community, and all the Saint Paul residents who participated in this process. Your time and energy ensured that our parks at Highland Bridge celebrate a comprehensive view of our region’s history.”

The four park names are as follows:

- **Gateway Park** (A reference to the location of the park as an important entry point to the city and the Highland Bridge development)
- **Assembly Union Park** (In recognition of the site’s industrial history and those who worked at Ford Motor Company, and specifically the importance of the workforce within the union labor movement and as contributing members of the surrounding communities)
- **Uŋči Makña Park** (“Mother Earth” in Dakota) Pronounced oon-CHEE Ma-KAH
- **Míča Park** (abbreviation for “coyote” in Dakota) Pronounced MEE-cha

The City has made it a priority to include Indigenous communities during planning aspects of the Highland Bridge development and an ad hoc group of Dakota community members was formed to review and provide feedback on the list of name suggestions.

“We are honored to have been asked to support the Highland Bridge development project by vetting and providing recommendations for the four community parks from an American Indian perspective,” said Maggie Lorenz, Executive Director of the Lower Phalen Creek Project and Wakan Tipi Center. “Projects like this that create place names that bring visibility, education, and interpretation of Dakota presence in our homelands are important, desired, and necessary to

create a more equitable and just city. We also believe the city has more work to do and we look forward to continued collaborations on projects that help bring visibility to Indigenous communities in Saint Paul.”

The City regularly engages the Saint Paul Youth Commission on policy matters and issues of equity. The Youth Commissioners reviewed the list of names and provided a list of suggestions that most resonated with them.

“The involvement of youth in the process of naming parks demonstrates a commitment to the future of our city,” said Grace Philippon, Saint Paul Youth Commissioner. “We are the next generation, and these are spaces we will use for years to come. Making sure park names reflect the history and values of our community is so important.”

Construction on the new parks is slated to begin later this year. For additional project information and latest updates, please visit www.stpaul.gov/HighlandBridgeParks.

About Saint Paul Parks and Recreation

Saint Paul Parks and Recreation is a nationally accredited and gold medal award-winning organization that manages over 180 parks and open spaces, AZA-accredited Como Park Zoo and Conservatory, 26 city-operated recreation centers, more than 100 miles of trails, an indoor and two outdoor aquatic facilities, a public beach, a variety of premium sports facilities, municipal golf courses, and Great River Passage – which is the new identity for all proposed public development along Saint Paul’s more than 17 miles of Mississippi riverfront. Saint Paul Parks and Recreation is recognized by the Trust for Public Land as the #1 Urban Park System in the USA in 2015, #2 in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and #3 in 2020. For more information, visit www.stpaul.gov/parks.

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