



Submit to: GENERAL COMMITTEE

Submission Date: September 12, 2011

SUBJECT: "Sun Yat-Sen" street name**PREPARED BY:** Regional Councillor Joe Li

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff to provide suggestions to the assignment of the street name "Sun Yat-Sen" to a major collector road in a new subdivision, not limited to dealing with developers on draft plans of new subdivisions as well as exploring other alternatives which are of minimal impact to existing residents and businesses.

PURPOSE:

This report is to update Council about the announcement made to the public on September 11, 2011 that Markham will have a street in the future to be named "Sun Yat-Sen" to honour the late Dr. Sun Yat-Sen (1866-1925), a very well-known and influential historical figure, as well as to mark this year the centennial anniversary of Xin Hai Revolution that he led in China in 1911.

BACKGROUND:**Public Announcement was made commemorating Xinhai**

The street name was officially announced to the public and the media during a ceremony held at the Civic Centre on September 11, 2011 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Xinhai Revolution, with Councillor Ho and myself as the event co-hosts.

Joined by Deputy Mayor Jack Heath who was attending on behalf of Mayor Frank Scarpitti, Vice-Minister Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council of China Yousheng Xu, Consul General from the Chinese Consulate in Toronto Ligang Chen and Parliamentary Secretary for Multiculturalism and MP for Willowdale Chungsen Leung, representing the Government of Canada, we unveiled of a dummy street sign and officially announced the "Sun Yat-Sen" street name.

The announcement was very well-received. Also in attendance were MP for Markham-Unionville Honourable John McCallum, MPP for Oak Ridges-Markham Helena Jaczek and elected officials of Chinese descent from four other GTA municipalities.

Impressed with Markham being the first municipality in Canada to be able to name a street after the late Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, Minister Xu has committed during his address at the ceremony that China will present Markham with a bronze statue of Sun Yat-Sen once the "Sun Yat-Sen" street is officially unveiled. He stated that the statue can be erected at a location as the Town sees fit, be it a park or the street itself.

"Sun Yat-Sen" street name initiative

Spearheaded by myself, this street name initiative was supported by Ward 6 Councillor Alan Ho and Ward 8 Councillor Alex Chiu. Without designating its assignment to a particular ward, the street name "Sun Yat-Sen" was circulated to Planning Department (Geomatics/GIS) in April 2011 for review and approval.

Within the same month, the street name was approved for use by the Fire Department and Region of York. It was placed into the Town's Street Name Reserve List awaiting Council approval in June 2011.

Subsequently, the street name was listed on the 2011 Second Quarter Update of the Street Name Reserve List which was submitted to Development Services Committee on June 21, 2011 and was approved by Council on June 28, 2011.

Dr. Sun Yat-Sen and Canada

The late Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, a physician-turned-nationlist, was recognized by Chinese around the world as the "founder of modern China". The Xin Hai (1911) Revolution he led in China overthrew the last imperial dynasty and founded the first republic government in Asia.

Being persecuted and hunted for promoting revolution from within China and realizing the potential for support among Chinese outside China, he spend most of the period between 1895 and 1911 travelling in overseas Chinese communities around the world for support. He visited Canada three times in 1897, 1910 and 1911 seeking political and financial support.

In Toronto, a bronze statue of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen was erected in Riverdale Park near the East Chinatown for more than two decades. In Vancouver, there is also a full-size Chinese garden in Chinatown, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden, which was built in 1985-1986.

Fruitful results reaped from recent China trip

Invited by the China Oversea Exchange Association, Councillor Ho and myself went on a 12-day trip to China in August 2011 together with eleven other municipal politicians of Chinese descent from Canada and the United States.

The 13-member delegation visited Xiamen, Zhangzhou, Chengdu, Tibet and Beijing. We were shown the local development that is planned for the next 10 to 15 years, welcoming business and offering trade opportunities. We could very well perceive that there is a lot of interest from China to do more trade and business investment and partnering with Canada.

During the trip, we were hosted by Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council Minister Li Hai Feng. We had the opportunity to meet with Minister Xu who said would be visiting Canada in September 2011. The trip further helped lay the groundwork for nurturing and facilitating closer relationships between Markham and China.

OPTIONS/DICUSSIONS:

Currently, the Town has already adopted street names such as “Foshan”, “Huadu”, “New Delhi” and “Karachi” which reflects Council’s objective in acknowledging the diversity of the Town’s residents and cultures. This new addition of “Sun Yat-Sen” just further adds to the multicultural characteristics of Markham.

Despite the announcement of the street name, a street has not been chosen yet. The assignment of the street name cannot be rushed. It will involve dealing with different developers in order to find the best appropriate street for this street name.

Ideally, the street name will be best to be assigned to a future street. Given the extent of the impact on existing residents or businesses and having regard for potential concerns with emergency services response resulting from a street name change, renaming an existing street will not be a preference.

However, local streets will also not be considered as an option. As the length and the capacity of the street demonstrate the level of respect expected, therefore, it is the longer the better in order not to downplay this prominent historical figure.

The street name is most ideal to be assigned to major collector road in a new subdivision. As for the street type for this street name, depending on the length of the street, horizontal or vertical, straight or curvy, “Avenue” will be preferred, followed by “Street” and “Road” respectively.

When “Sun Yat-Sen” street is officially unveiled, China would like to present Markham with a Dr. Sun Yat-Sen bronze statue, as promised by Minister Xu. The statue would be most ideal to be erected in a local community park as it might help turn the park into a tourist attraction.

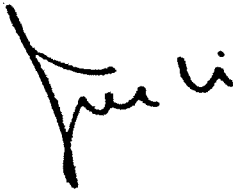
If erected in a neighbourhood park or on a residential street, it will not show the expected level of respect or reflect the significance of this statue which is a gift from China as well as a monument for people to pay tribute to this historical figure.

NEXT STEPS

While awaiting Staff to report back on and provide suggestions to the assignment of the street name, it would be implemental to approach developers and find the best appropriate major collector road in new subdivisions.

Upper Unionville can be considered as one of the options as mentioned during the public announcement that the area currently contains future streets which are to be named as "Foshan" and "Huadu", names of cities in China. However, there might not be a street of the ideal length among the remaining unnamed streets in the area.

If no major collector road is available, our options are not limited to exploring other alternative which are of minimal impact to existing residents and businesses, including renaming an existing road that is a short but a major one, such as Old Kennedy Road which is located near the two large Asian malls in Markham.

SUBMITTED BY:

Joe Li
Regional Councillor