



Place Name and Asset Policy in New Brunswick Municipalities

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Canada's Place Names & How to Change Them

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[https://www.concordia
a.ca/press/placena
mes.html](https://www.concordia.ca/press/placenames.html)



- Municipal reform in NB:
Amalgamation / Réforme municipale
au N-B : regroupement municipal
- New community names created /
Création de nouveaux noms de
communautés
- Policies must be updated / Les
politiques doivent être mises à jour

Hierarchy of Place Name Authorities in Canada

1

Geographical Names Board of Canada



National level

Approves federal and provincial/territorial proposals.



Proposals submitted for approval

2

Provincial and territorial toponymy office or specialist



Provincial and territorial level

Responsible for names within their jurisdictions, including community names.

3

Municipal



Municipal level

Responsible for names within their jurisdictions, including street names.

1. Historical Context for Naming in NB / Contexte historique de la dénomination au N-B
2. Recent Calls for Change / Appels récents au changement
3. Supports for Municipal Policy Reform / Soutiens à la réforme des politiques municipales
4. Policy Renewal Project (Join Us!) / Projet de renouvellement des politiques (joignez-vous à nous !)

1. Historical Context for Naming in NB / Contexte historique de la dénomination au N-B

- Catholic names / Noms catholiques (*St. John*)
- Descriptive names / Noms descriptifs (*Baie des Chaleurs*)
- Appropriations of Indigenous names / Appropriation de noms autochtones (*Gaspé*)
- French vs. English naming and language tension / Dénomination française ou anglaise et tensions linguistiques
- Reassertion of Indigenous names / Réaffirmation de noms autochtones (*Elsipogtog*)
- Preference for commemorative names / Préférence pour les noms commémoratifs (*Moncton*)

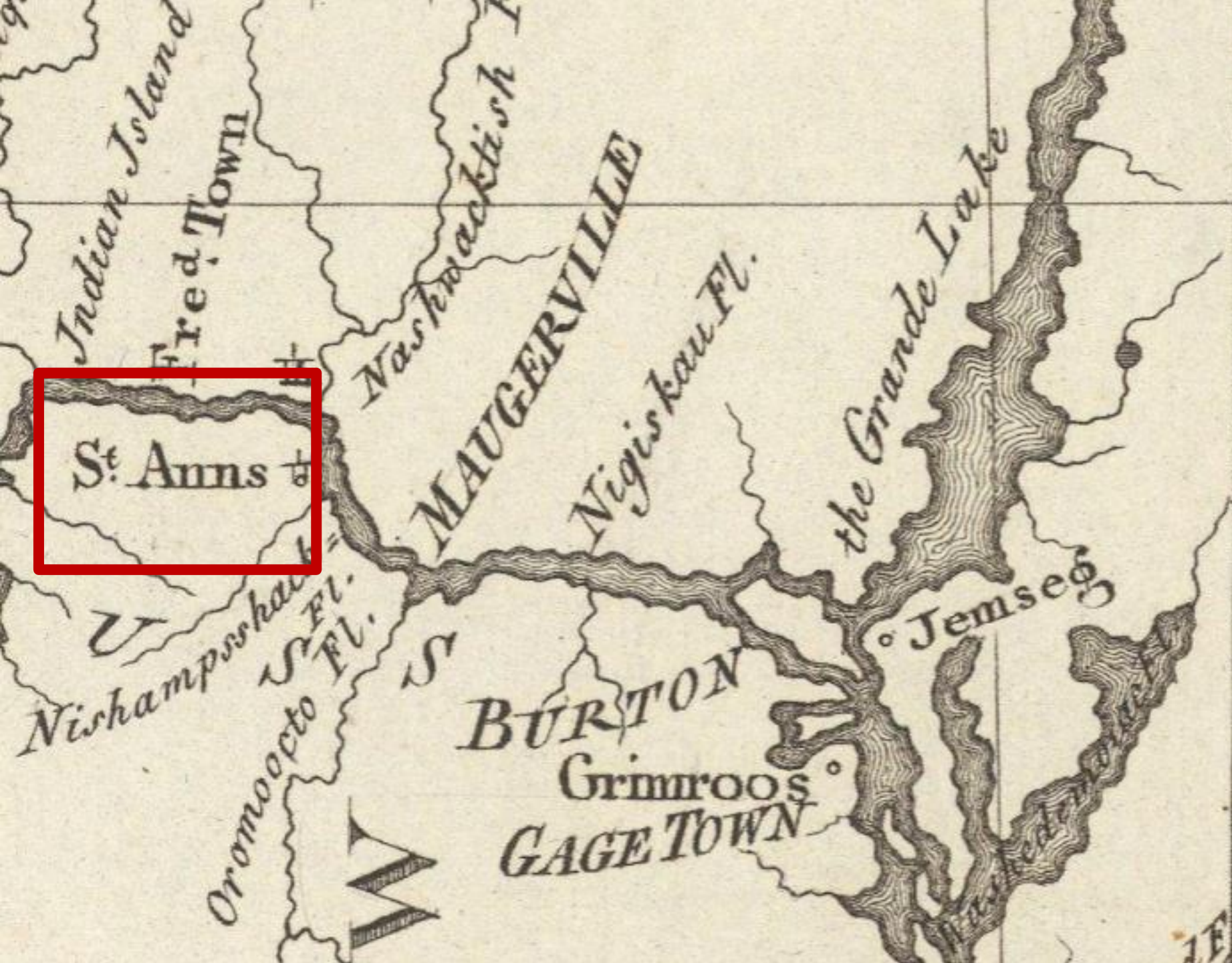


Gaspay (Gaspé)—Mi'kmaq
for “end of our territory” /
Mi'kmaq pour
« la fin de notre territoire »

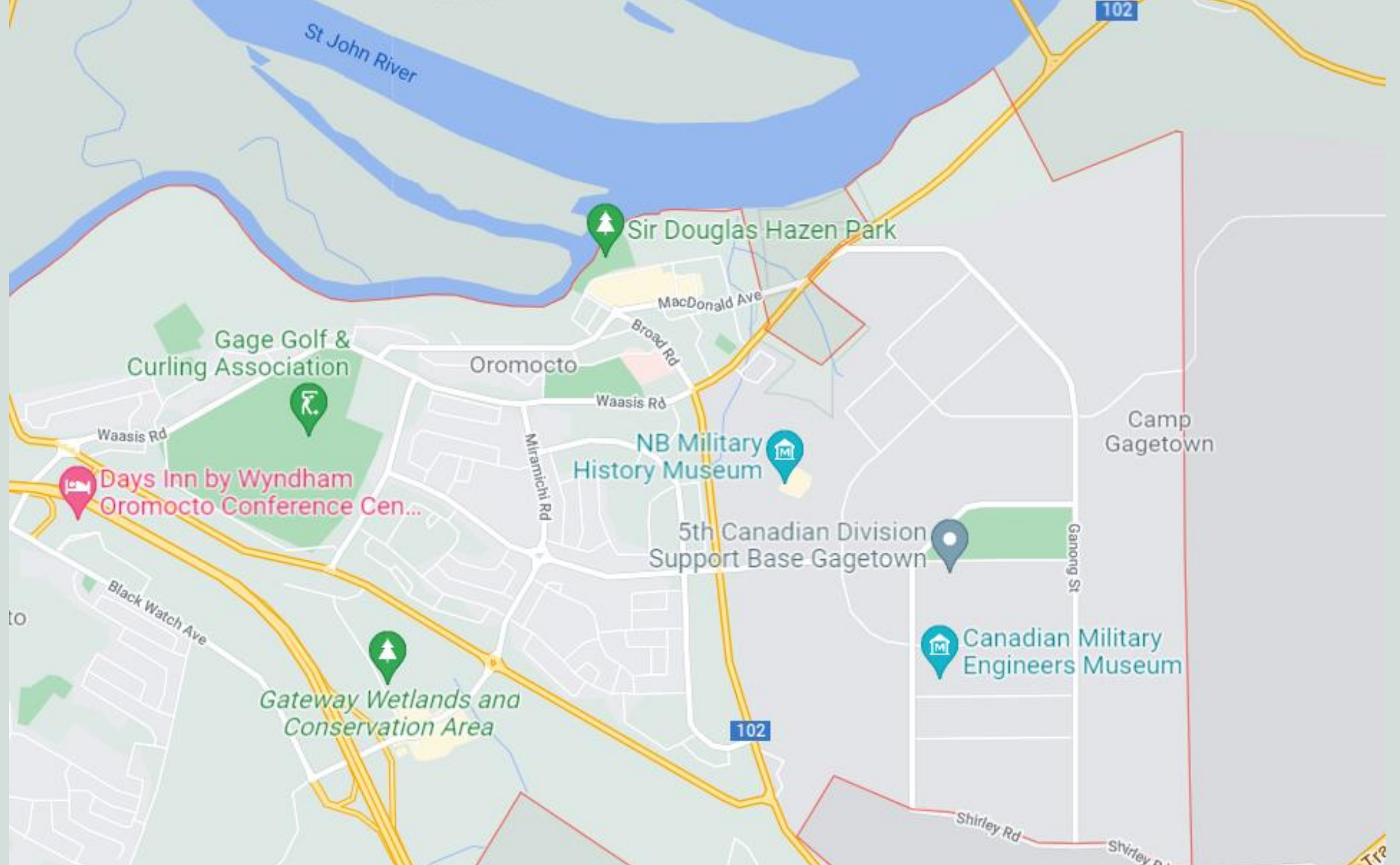
gespeg, kespe'k

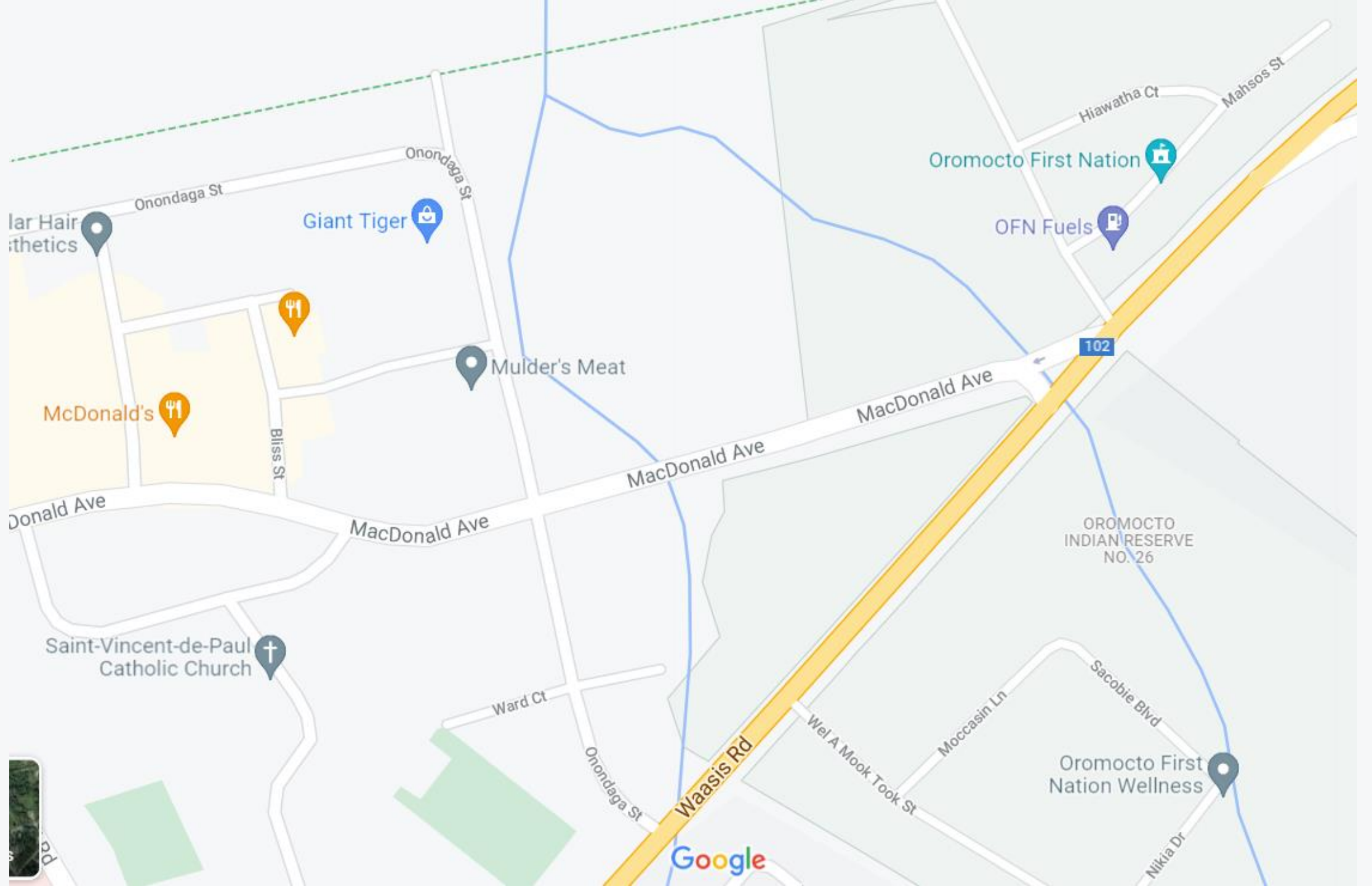


Samuel de Champlain, *Carte géographique de la Nouvelle Franse* (1613).



Sotzmann's map of Maine showing the Fredericton area / Carte du Maine de Sotzmann montrant la région de Fredericton (Hamburg, 1798).





2. Recent Calls for Change / Appels récents au changement



PREMIÈRE NATION DE
ELSIOGTOG
FIRST NATION





Welamukotuk Wellness

 Directions

 Save

 Nearby

 Send to your phone

 Share

 8 Mahsos St, Oromocto, NB E2V 4M4

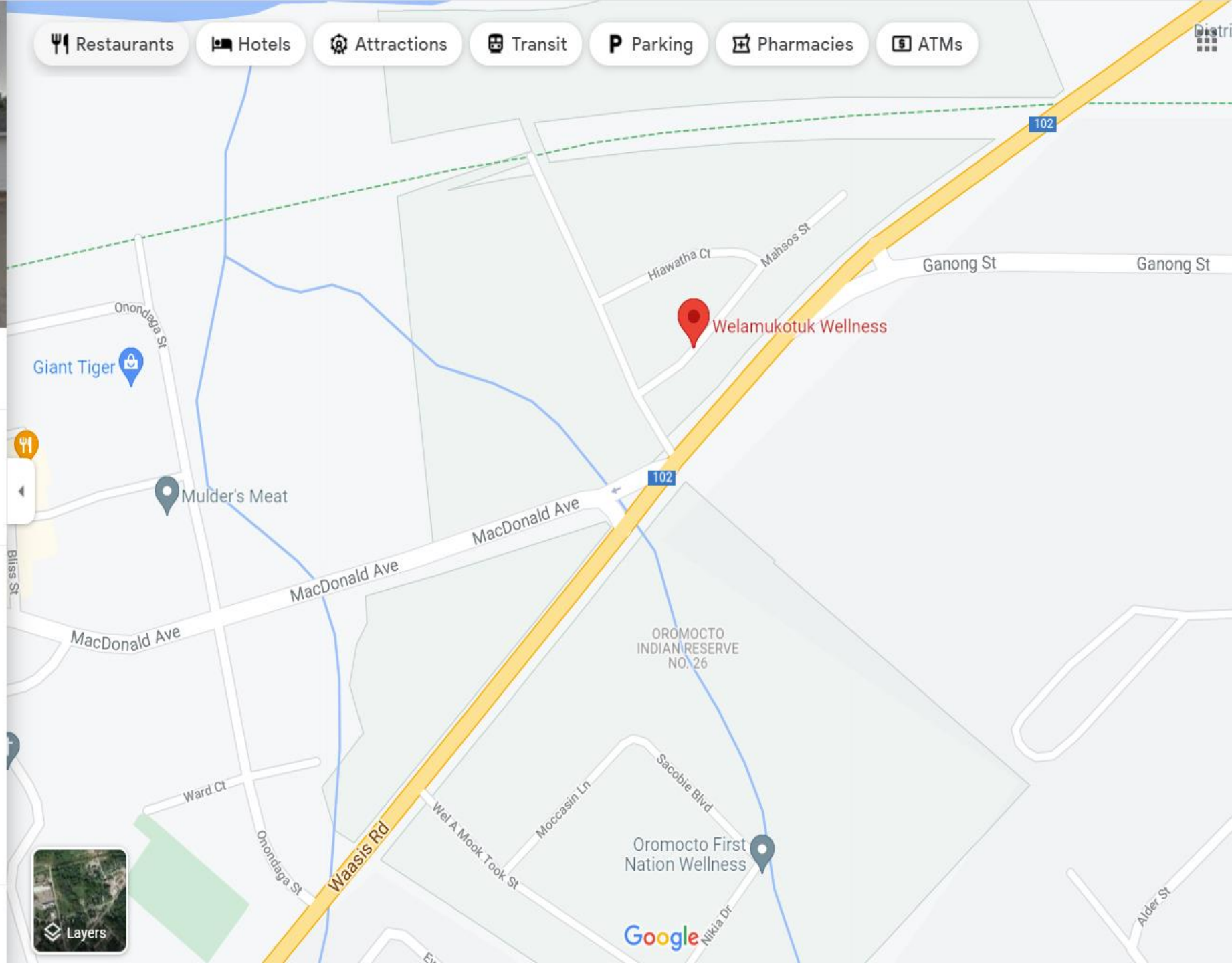
 VG3P+7J Oromocto, NB

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Wolastoq

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It has been suggested that this article be [merged](#) into *[Saint John River \(Bay of Fundy\)](#)*. ([Discuss](#)) *Proposed since February 2023.*

Wolastoq ([Maliseet-Passamaquoddy](#): “The River of the Good Wave”), changed in 1604 by [Samuel de Champlain](#) to *Fleuve Saint-Jean* (English: **Saint John River**), is a river flowing within the [Dawnland](#) region for approximately 418 miles (673 km) from headwaters in the [Notre Dame Mountains](#) near the [Maine-Quebec](#) border through [New Brunswick](#) to the northwest shore of the [Bay of Fundy](#). The river and its tributary [drainage basin](#) formed the territorial countries of the [Wolastoqiyik](#) and [Passamaquoddy](#) First Nations (named Wolastokuk and Peskotomuhkatik, respectively) prior to European colonization, and it remains a cultural centre of the [Wabanaki Confederacy](#) to this day.

As the longest river between the [Chesapeake Bay](#) and the [Gulf of Saint Lawrence](#), the Saint John offered one of the best transportation corridors for First Nations refugees to retreat from the English colonization of North America's Atlantic coast. The Wolastoqiyik and their [Acadian](#) allies retreated upstream after English victories in the [French and Indian War](#) to establish the [Republic of Madawaska](#) on the remote upper river. Inhabitants of the upper river rejected both [Canada](#) and [United States](#) sovereignty until the present [Canada–United States border](#) was established by the [Webster–Ashburton Treaty](#) of 1842. The lower river has been developed for agriculture and industry, while the United States portion of the river upstream of [Madawaska](#) flows through the sparsely populated [North](#)



Université de Moncton Study (2023)

- Concern: Robert Monckton was complicit in the Acadian expulsion /
Préoccupation : Robert Monckton a été complice de la déportation des Acadiens.
- ~ \$4.6 millions
- Community consultation + historical analysis / Consultation communautaire et analyse historique
- Decision: Maintain the name because the university was named after the City and not the man / Décision : Maintenir le nom, puisque l'université porte le nom de la ville et non celui de la personne

Municipal Amalgamation and Naming Processes (2023) / Regroupement municipal et processus de dénomination (2023)

- Creation of 77 municipalities + 12 regional districts / Création de 77 municipalités et de 12 districts régionaux
- ~ \$108 millions
- Provincially led process requiring new community names / Processus dirigé par la province nécessitant l'adoption de nouveaux noms de communautés
- Result: New communities require new policies / Résultat : les nouvelles communautés nécessitent de nouvelles politiques

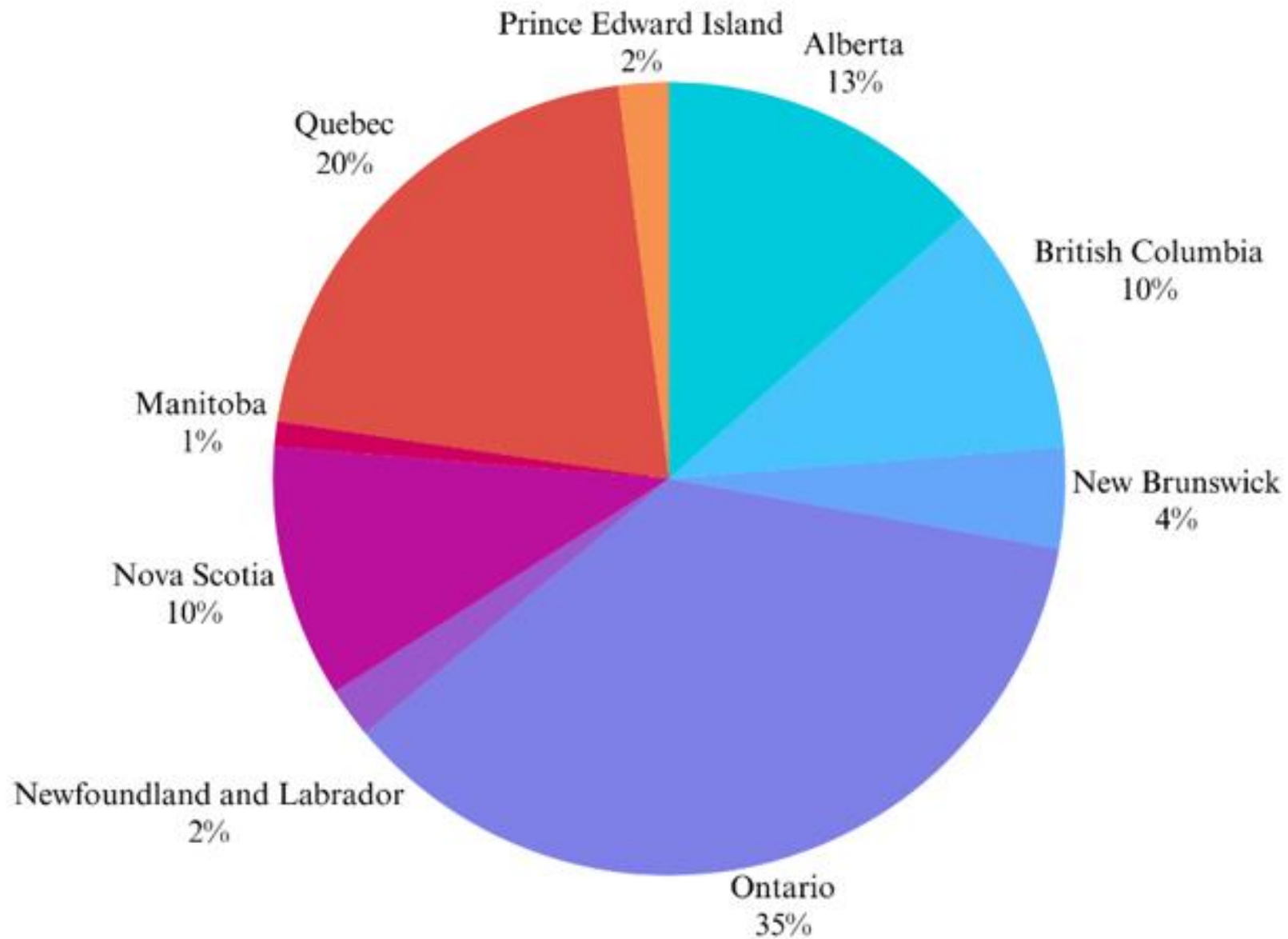
3. Supports for Municipal Policy Reform / Soutiens à la réforme des politiques municipales



CHARLOTTE ST

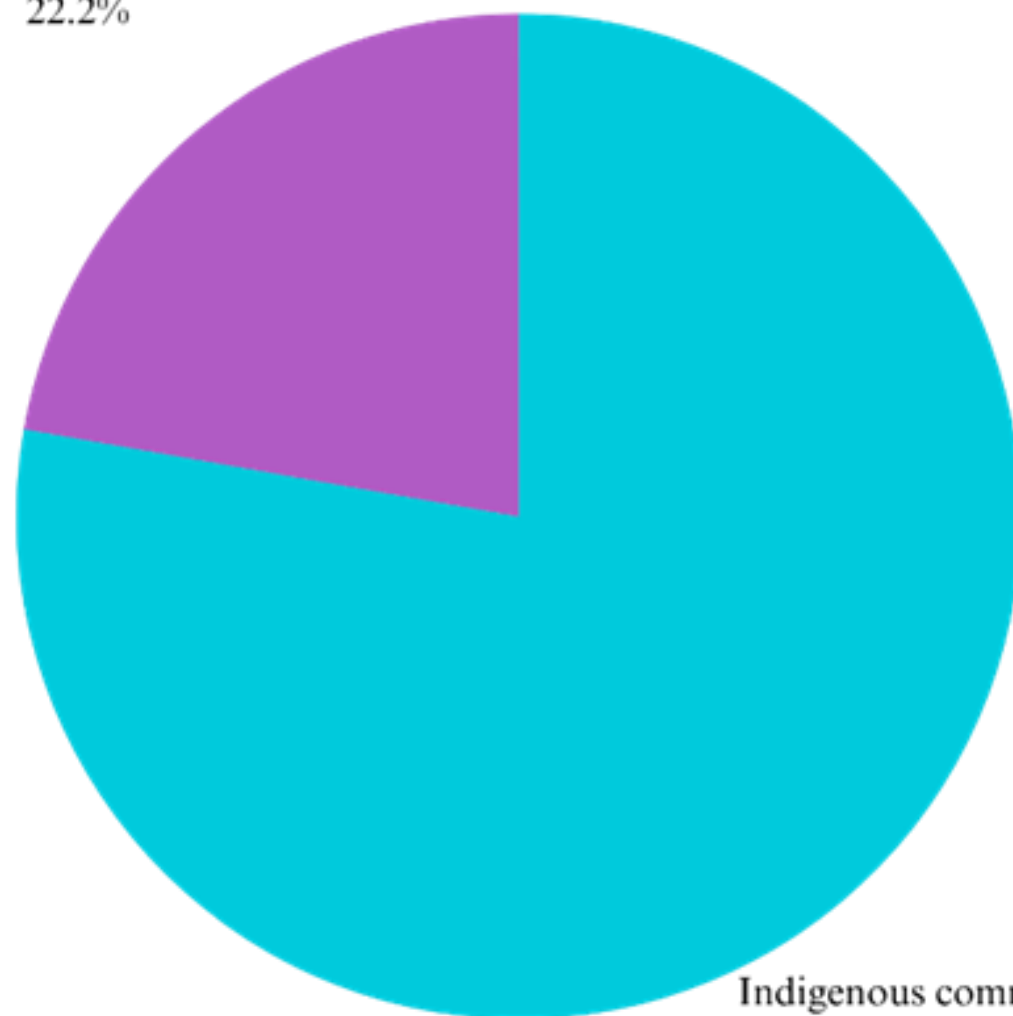
<https://placenames.cemvc.ca/>

Policies by Province/Territory



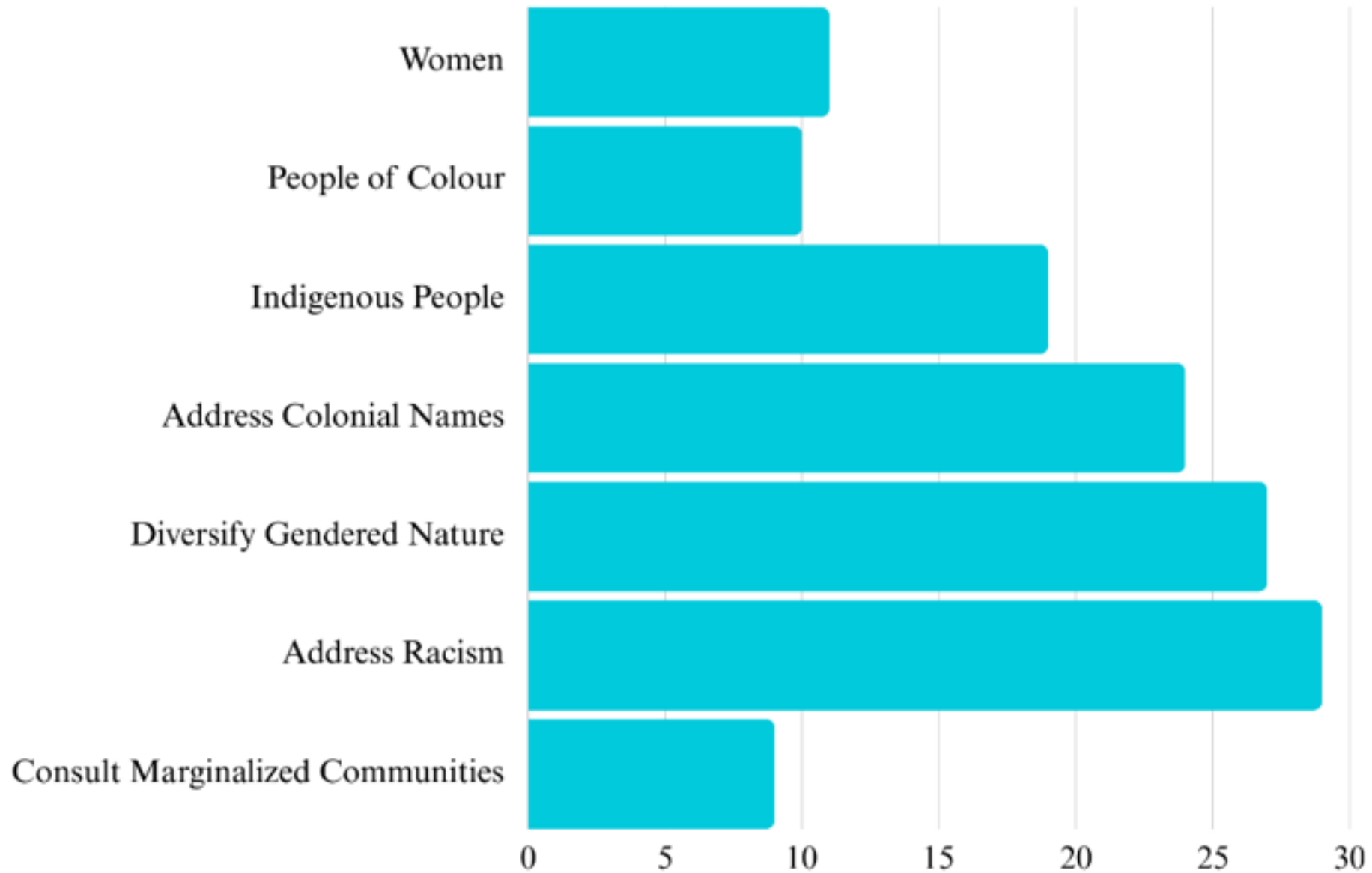
Breakdown of Policies that Refer to Indigenous People

Location with Indigenous name
22.2%

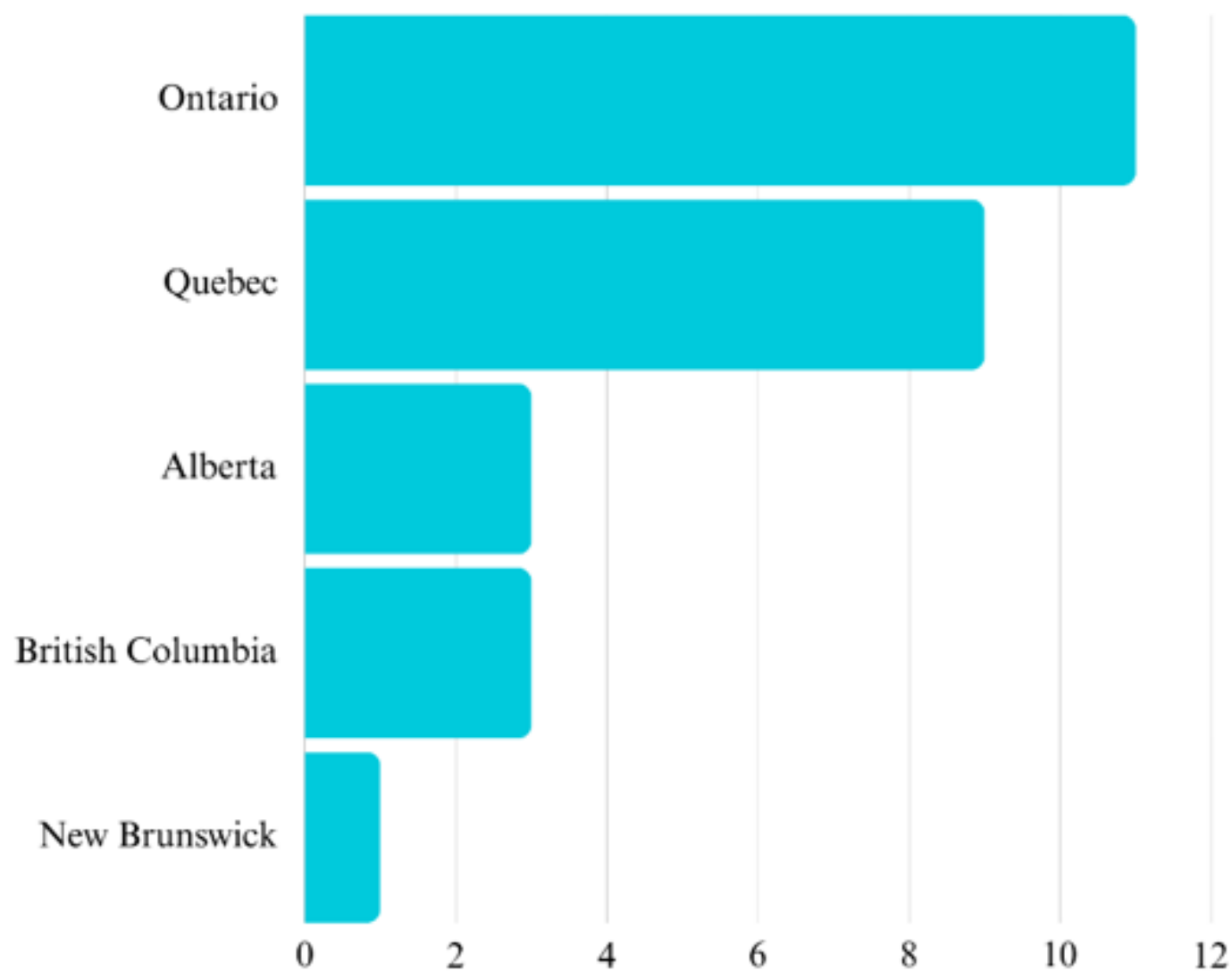


Indigenous communities
77.8%

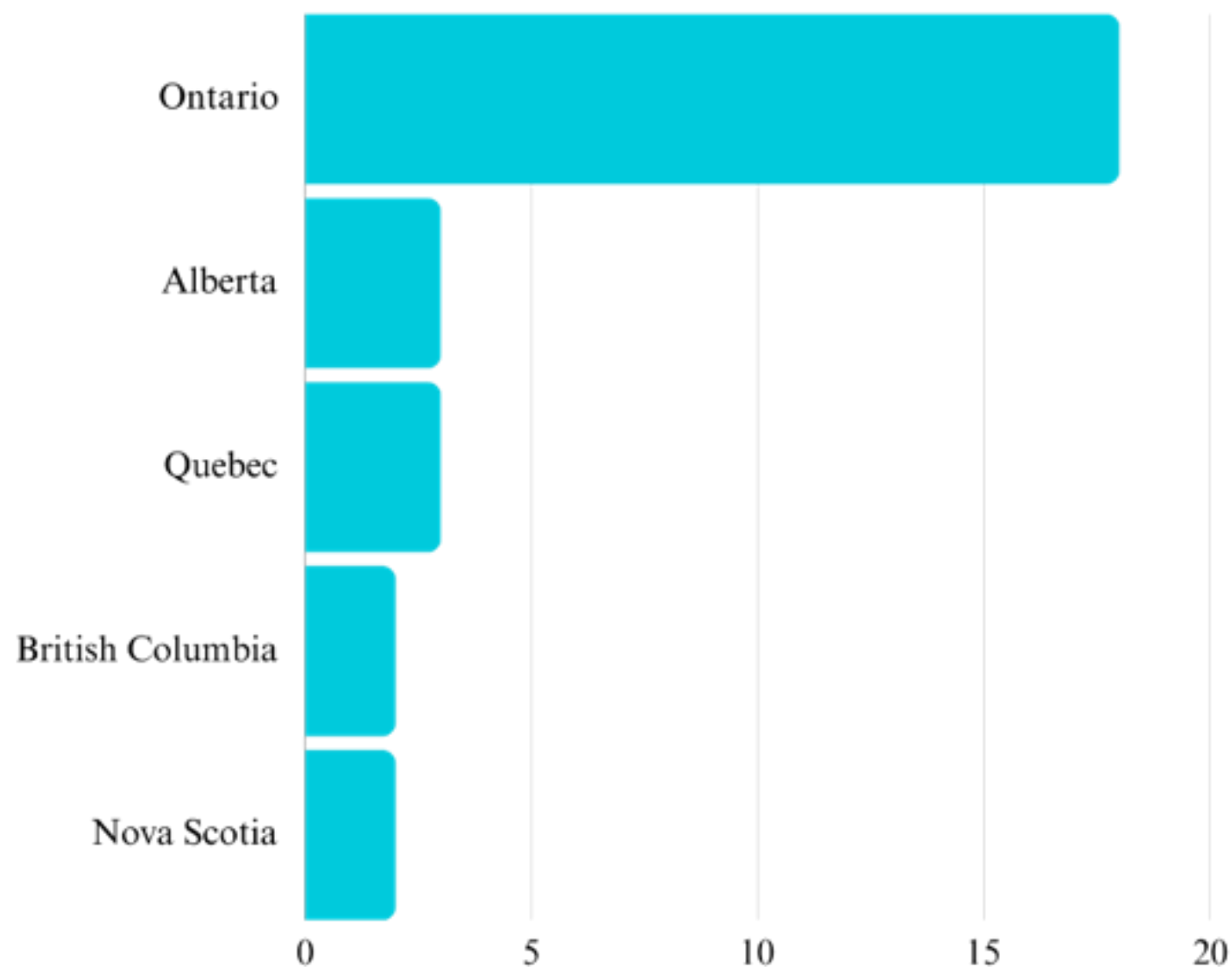
Priorities in Place Naming Policies



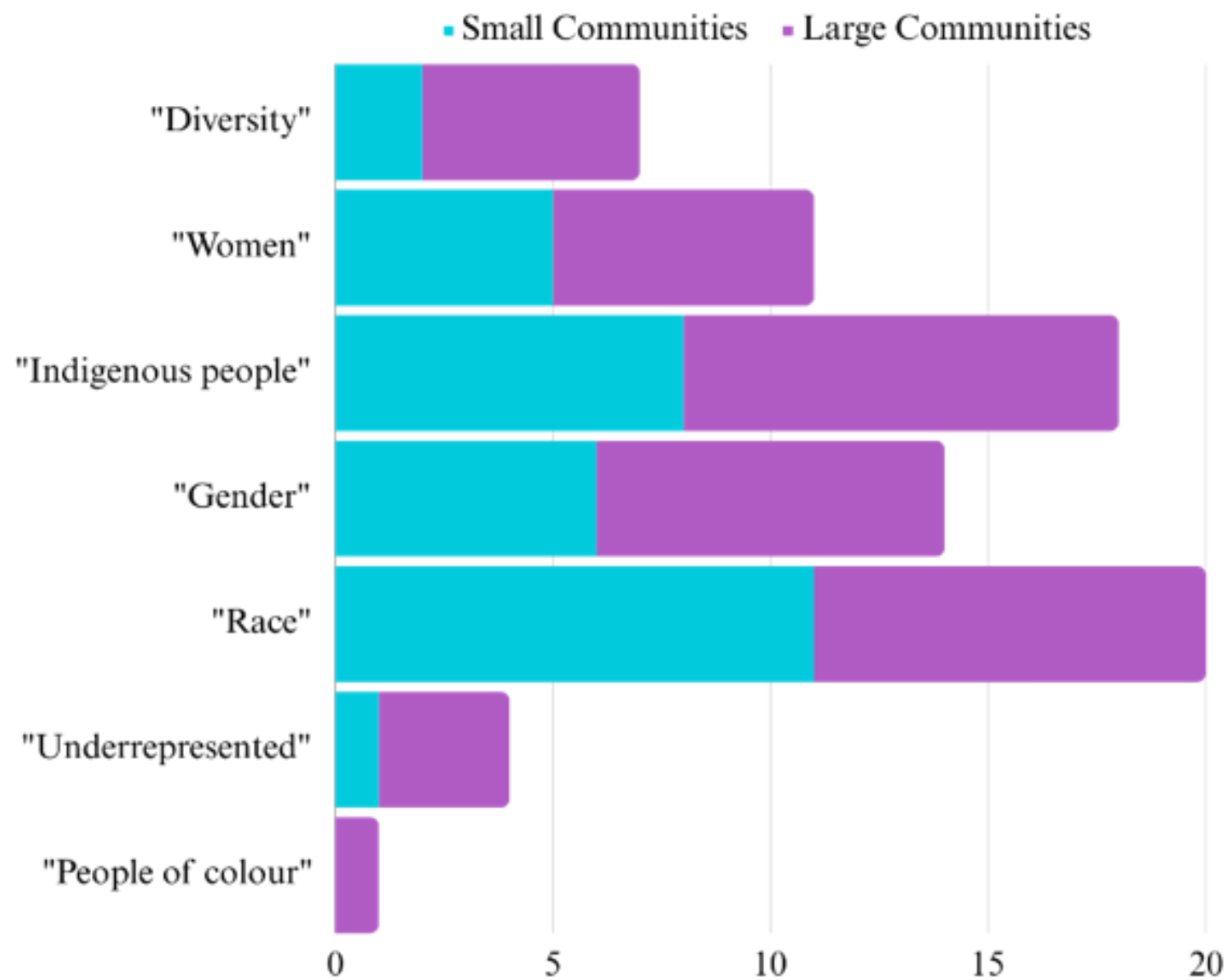
No. of policies that commit to diversifying the gendered nature of their policies



No. of policies that commit to the inclusion of people of colour and anti-racism efforts



Inclusive Language in Place Naming Policies



Key Findings / Principales conclusions

1. Connect policy to other value statements / Relier la politique aux autres énoncés de valeurs
2. Address demographic gaps deliberately / Comblér délibérément les écarts démographiques
3. Broaden categories for commemorative names / Élargir les catégories de noms commémoratifs
4. Prioritize marginalized groups / Accorder la priorité aux groupes marginalisés
5. Use first and last names / Utiliser les prénoms et les noms de famille
6. Pre-approve names / Préapprouver les noms

Key Challenges / Principaux défis

1. Many municipalities look to the provinces for policy models / De nombreuses municipalités s'inspirent des provinces comme modèles de politique
2. Provinces and territories follow naming principals of the Geographical Names Board of Canada (explorers, pioneers, etc) / Les provinces et les territoires suivent les principes de dénomination de la Commission de toponymie du Canada (explorateurs, pionniers, etc.)
3. Dated policy at the federal level is mirrored by other levels of government / Des politiques fédérales désuètes sont reproduites aux autres niveaux de gouvernement
4. Opportunity for municipalities to innovate policy / Une occasion pour les municipalités d'innover en matière de politiques



Our Names, Our Home

*Report on the Town of Sackville's
Street Names and Monuments*

April 2022

- Recent case studies into Canadian and municipal naming and asset policy / Études de cas récentes sur les politiques canadiennes et municipales en matière de dénomination et de gestion des actifs
- Help dealing with divisive or dated names / Soutien pour gérer les noms controversés ou désuets
- Community consultation about naming priorities and values / Consultation communautaire sur les priorités et les valeurs en matière de dénomination

Case Study / Étude de cas: Sackville, NB (2022)

~135 named places (streets, parks, monuments) / ~135 lieux nommés (rues, parcs, monuments)

Phase 1: Research existing names to understand who and what they signify / Effectuer une recherche sur les noms existants afin de comprendre ce qu'ils représentent et qui ils commémorent

Phase 2: Launch a community survey to collect feedback on trends and values for naming in the community / Lancer un sondage communautaire afin de recueillir les commentaires sur les tendances et les valeurs en matière de dénomination au sein de la communauté

Case Study / Étude de cas: Sackville, NB (2022)

~135 named places (streets, parks, monuments) / ~135 lieux nommés (rues, parcs, monuments)

Phase 3: Research policy trends in Canada / Étudier les tendances des politiques de dénomination au Canada

Phase 4: Final report with recommendations for creating a policy / Produire un rapport final présentant des recommandations pour l'élaboration d'une politique

Case Study / Étude de cas: Guelph, ON (2025-27)

~1,500 named places (streets, parks, municipal buildings) / ~1
500 lieux nommés (rues, parcs, bâtiments municipaux)

Phase 1: Research existing names to understand who and what they signify / Effectuer une recherche sur les noms existants afin de comprendre ce qu'ils représentent et qui ils commémorent

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Case Study / Étude de cas: Guelph, ON (2025-27)

~1,500 named places (streets, parks, municipal buildings) / ~1
500 lieux nommés (rues, parcs, bâtiments municipaux)

Phase 3: Conduct focus groups with key interest groups /
Organiser des groupes de discussion avec les principaux
groupes d'intérêt

Phase 4: Revise existing policy with the goal of making it more
inclusive and flexible; send to City Council for approval /
Réviser la politique existante afin de la rendre plus inclusive et
plus souple, puis la soumettre au conseil municipal pour
approbation

Name Classification Tool / Outil de classification des toponymes

1. Uses LLM and several AI agents to analyze a spreadsheet of names / Utilise un LLM et plusieurs agents d'IA pour analyser une feuille de calcul contenant des noms
2. Classifies names according to gender, language group, type of name (descriptive, commemorative), etc. / Classe les noms selon le genre, le groupe linguistique, le type de nom (descriptif, commémoratif), etc.
3. Analyzes the data for key observations = data with which municipalities can assess their naming priorities / Analyse les données afin de dégager des constats clés, permettant aux municipalités d'évaluer leurs priorités en matière de dénomination

Who are your streets named after?

A street name is a small act of public commemoration. This project counts who Guelph has chosen to honour, and shows how sure we are about each answer.

The problem

Why it matters

Missing names

Guelph results

The data

Fun facts

BAKER ST ALEXANDRA ST WILFRID LAURIER CRT AMALIA CRES HANLON RD BRYANT RD MAPLE ST SPEEDVALE AVE E WOOLWICH ST WYNDHAM ST N
MACDONELL ST CHURCH LANE QUEEN ST KING ST DUBLIN ST N EDINBURGH RD N YORK RD GORDON ST NORFOLK ST ALICE ST ALLISON PL AMY CRT
ANN ST ANNMOORE CRES ABERDEEN ST ACKER ST ALBERT ST ALLAN AVE AMOS DR BENNETT AVE CLAIR RD E CLAIR RD W CONROY CRES
CROSSINGHAM DR ABBEYWOOD CRES ACORN PL ADMIRAL PL AIRPARK PL AJAX ST ADAMS LANE



Screen capture from our name classifier app for the City of Guelph's names and assets / Capture d'écran de notre application de classification des noms appliquée aux noms de lieux et aux actifs de la Ville de Guelph

Take the data with you

Download every street with its category, namesake and confidence, or browse the full classified list.

Download all streets (CSV)

Browse every street

Search street names

e.g. Baker, maple, Coulin

Confidence

Any confidence

All

Men

Women

Women and men

Not a person

Gender unknown

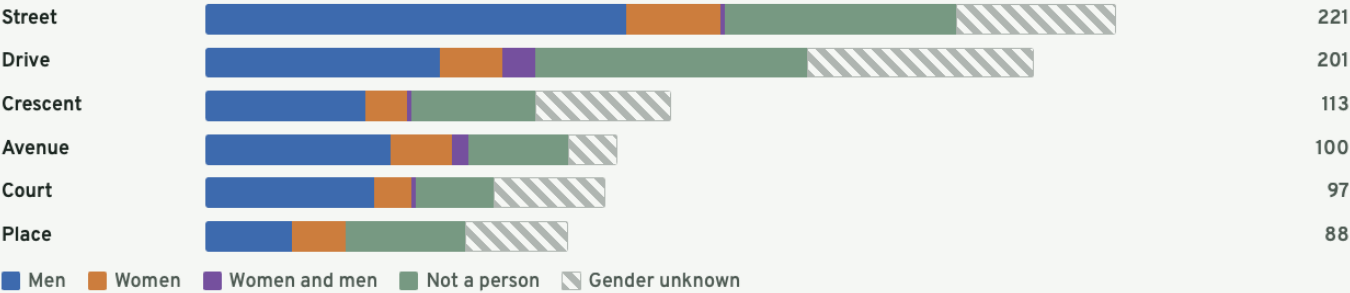
Showing 20 of 1101 streets

Street name ▲	Who	Type	Named after	Confidence
ABBEYWOOD CRES	Not a person	Place	ABBEYWOOD	Low
ABERDEEN ST	Men	Person	John Campbell Hamilton-Gordon, Earl of Aberdeen, Governor General	Medium
ACKER ST	Men	Person	ACKER, SIDNEY	High
ACORN PL	Not a person	Flora	ACORN	High
ADAMS LANE	Gender unknown	Person	Adams (surname; exact person not identified)	Medium
ADMIRAL PL	Not a person	Generic	ADMIRAL	Medium
AIRPARK PL	Not a person	Generic	AIRPARK	Medium
AJAX ST	Not a person	Historical Event	AJAX	Medium
ALBERT ST	Men	Person	Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, consort of Queen Victoria	High
ALEXANDRA ST	Women	Royalty	ALEXANDRA	High
ALGOMA DR	Gender unknown	Person	Unverified candidate: Algoma / Ojibwa (Anishinaabe) nation	Medium
ALGONQUIN RD	Not a person	Indigenous	ALGONQUIN	High
ALICE ST	Women	Royalty	ALICE	High

Screen capture from our name classifier app for the City of Guelph’s names and assets / Capture d’écran de notre application de classification des noms appliquée aux noms de lieux et aux actifs de la Ville de Guelph

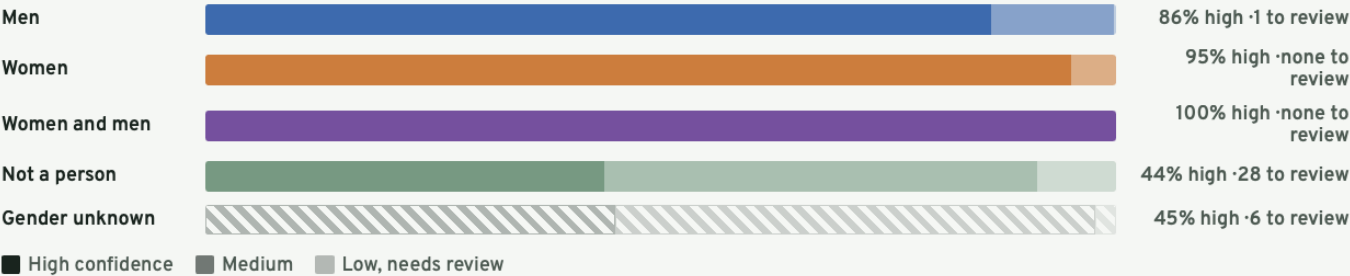
Which street types honour whom

The six most common street types. Bar length is the number of streets.



How sure are we?

Overall, 65% of streets are high confidence. Only 35 of 1,101 still need a closer look. Darker bar = more sure. The number on the right is the share we are highly sure about — a quality score, not an error rate.



A few things the data shows

For every street named after a woman, there are 3.9 named after a man.

Street is the most common street type: 221 of 1101 streets (20%).

The name **HANLON** opens 5 different street names, more than any other.

The longest street name is **WILFRID LAURIER CRT** at 19 characters. The shortest is **MILL** at 4.

781 streets commemorate people, **171** places, **144** nature, and **4** Indigenous names.

The last **34** hard cases were classified with NLP, neighbourhood patterns and ranked local candidates, not a street-level naming citation.

Screen capture from our name classifier app for the City of Guelph's names and assets / Capture d'écran de notre application de classification des noms appliquée aux noms de lieux et aux actifs de la Ville de Guelph

What we do

1

Sort every name

Clean the list, match vocabularies, Irwin comments and the official veteran street map, then research the leftovers.

2

Mark how sure we are

Each result is high, medium or low confidence, so a person can check the low ones first.

3

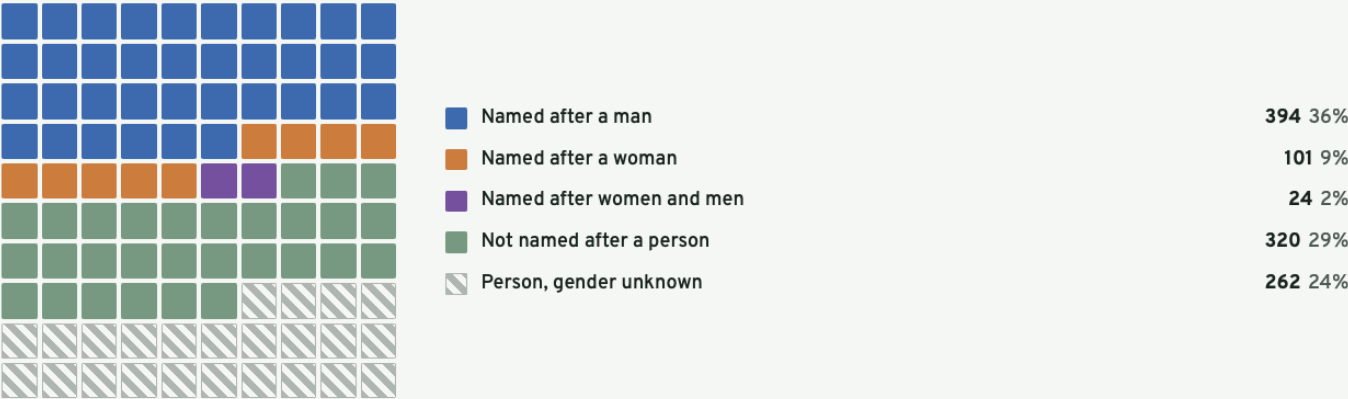
Hand back something usable

Charts, a searchable list, and a CSV your staff can work with.

Male, female, not a person and unclassified are simplifications. Some streets honour families, groups, or people the record doesn't describe. Read the counts as a pattern, not a verdict on any one street.

What the pipeline found in Guelph, Ontario

We classified 1,101 street names. About 36% honour men, 9% honour women, 2% honour women and men, 29% are not named after a person, and 24% are people whose gender we could not confirm.



Each square is about 11 streets.

Screen capture from our name classifier app for the City of Guelph's names and assets / Capture d'écran de notre application de classification des noms appliquée aux noms de lieux et aux actifs de la Ville de Guelph

4. Policy Renewal Project: Join Us! / **Projet de renouvellement des politiques (joignez-vous à nous !)**

- 2027-2029
- Seed funding already secured / **Financement de démarrage déjà obtenu**
- Research team + infrastructure in place / **Équipe de recherche + infrastructure déjà en place**
- University-community partnership / **Partenariat entre l'université et la communauté**

Purpose / Objectif: Create or Update Policy / créer ou mettre à jour une politique

1. Craft **flexible name and asset policy**/ies that reflect historical and contemporary values, demographic distribution, language diversity, and the environment / **Élaborer une ou plusieurs politiques souples en matière de dénomination et de gestion des actifs** qui reflètent les valeurs historiques et contemporaines, la répartition démographique, la diversité linguistique et l'environnement
2. Ensure that policy is informed by **community engagement and consultation** / **Veiller à ce que ces politiques soient éclairées par la mobilisation et la consultation de la communauté**

Purpose / Objectif: Create or Update Policy / créer ou mettre à jour une politique

3. **Address gaps deliberately**, i.e., new names will reflect the community's demographic or linguistic composition; prioritize marginalized groups for any new commemorative names / **Comblér délibérément les lacunes observées**; par exemple, les nouveaux noms devraient refléter la composition démographique ou linguistique de la communauté, et les groupes marginalisés devraient être priorisés pour toute nouvelle dénomination commémorative

The Benefits / Les avantages

1. **Access to research tools** unavailable elsewhere in the country / **Accès à des outils de recherche** qui ne sont offerts nulle part ailleurs au pays
2. **Analysis of existing place names and assets** according to gender, profession (i.e., veteran), language, etc. / **Analyse des noms de lieux et des actifs existants** selon le genre, la profession (p. ex., ancien combattant ou ancienne combattante), la langue, etc.
3. **Access to our research team** to investigate municipal priorities / **Accès à notre équipe de recherche** pour examiner les priorités municipales

The Benefits / Les avantages

4. Support and templates for **community consultation** (i.e., surveys, focus groups) / Soutien et modèles pour **la consultation communautaire** (p. ex., sondages, groupes de discussion)
5. Support for documentation for **renewed policy** (i.e., report on existing names, policy scan of the province and country, policy templates) / Soutien à la documentation **d'une politique renouvelée** (p. ex., rapport sur les noms existants, analyse comparative des politiques à l'échelle provinciale et nationale, modèles de politiques)

Your Commitment / Votre engagement

1. Municipal staff provide access to policy and name-related data /
Le personnel municipal fournit l'accès aux données liées aux politiques et aux noms
2. Municipal staff manage community consultation with our support /
Le personnel municipal gère la consultation communautaire avec notre soutien
3. Costs of community consultation are borne by the municipality /
Les coûts de la consultation communautaire sont assumés par la municipalité

Your Commitment / Votre engagement

4. Municipal staff finalize revised policy with our support / Le personnel municipal finalise la politique révisée avec notre soutien
5. Consider creating internships with partners such as the province and CEWIL / Envisager la création de stages en collaboration avec des partenaires tels que la province et CEWIL

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<https://placenames.cemvc.ca/>