

Reframing Renaming: A Guide for Community Engagement on the Future of Our Municipal Park

Purpose of This Document

To support meaningful, inclusive, and informed community engagement around the renaming of Kit Carson Park by reframing renaming as both a *normal civic process* and a *transformative opportunity*. This guide provides a conceptual foundation and practical outline to support respectful dialogue and collective decision-making.

Working Framework for Engagement

Inspired by Horacio Trujillo's presentation to the KCPRC (March 2025):

Renaming is not erasure—it's participation in shaping a fuller and more just historical narrative. This process builds on:

1. Recognition and Respect

- Understand that naming is a historical, political, and cultural act.
- Recognize that some names may reinforce harm, while others open doors to healing.

2. Truth & Accountability

- Share fuller histories of the region—including the impacts of colonialism, displacement, and Indigenous resistance.
- Offer space for multiple narratives and lived experiences.

3. Repair and Relationship Building

- Frame the renaming not as punishment or erasure, but as an act of community care.
- Engage diverse stakeholders (especially historically marginalized communities) in shared storytelling and visioning.

4. Aspirational Naming

- Invite proposals that speak to the **values, hopes, and spirit** of Taos.
- Naming can inspire future generations, deepen place-based identity, and reflect inclusive community pride.

Educational Talking Points for Engagement Events

Use the following suggested questions to spark reflection and open conversation:

- What stories are embedded in the name of the park? Who do they include—and who do they exclude?
- What values should our community's public spaces reflect today?
- How do we engage with past harms while also imagining a shared, inclusive future?
- What would a name look like that reflects **everyone's connection** to this land?
- What is a meaningful memory you have of the park, and how could more moments like it be encouraged for others?
- What would make you feel welcome and want to spend time in the park, beyond how it is now?
- What would draw more community members to the park, and how can we ensure it feels welcoming to those who are often left out?

Tools for Engagement

1. **Community Listening Sessions** – Invite open discussion grounded in history and identity.
2. **Historical Context Materials** – Share historical and other educational reading materials.
3. **Mapping Memory** – Ask participants to share personal and ancestral relationships to the land.
4. **Values Wall** – Co-create a visual display of the values people want reflected in the park's name.

- Narrative-Based Naming** – Encourage people to submit names with **storytelling**, not just suggestions.

Addressing Common Concerns: A Reframing Guide

Concern	Reframed Response
“It’s erasing history”	No, it’s adding to history —making it more complete and representative.
“The current name has recognition”	Renaming offers a new, value-based brand —one that better reflects Taos today.
“It’s a distraction”	Renaming is commonplace , and a part of regular civic improvement and justice work.
“It’s too political”	Naming is <i>inherently political</i> . Our job is to make it inclusive and participatory .

Timeline for Engagement Activities (May–October 2025)

Week	Engagement Focus
	Historical framing workshop + intro listening session
	Community forums (Pueblo, youth, elders, general)
	Values Wall installation
Ongoing (May–June)	Survey + digital storytelling submissions

Appendix: Sources & Inspirations

Key ideas, frameworks, and citations drawn from:

- Trujillo, Horacio (2025). *Taos Park Renaming as a Normal Act and Invaluable Opportunity*
- The Wilderness Society (2021). *It’s Time to Own Up to the Racism and Violence Embedded in Park Names*
- Gilio-Whitaker, D. (2022). *What It Means to Decolonize a Natural Feature*

- National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (2022). *A Guide to Changing Racist and Offensive Place Names in the U.S.*
- Burch-Brown, J. (2020). *Should Slavery's Statues Be Preserved*
- Nathalie Massip in *Caliban* (2012), "The Role of the West in the Construction of American Identity: From Frontier to Crossroads"
- Nicole Hassenstab, American University School of International Service (2025), "What's in a Name? The Geopolitics of Renaming Landmarks"
- Beth Williamson in *Geography Compass* (2023), "Historical Geographies of Place Naming: Colonial Practices and Beyond"
- *Words are Monuments* (2025), "What's in a Name? How Words Are Monuments"
- The Wilderness Society (2019), "Why We Must Teach the Ugly Side of Public Lands History"
- Valerie Fridland in *Psychology Today* (2024), "Why Words Matter: The Ideological Battle Over What We Call Things"
- Althea Cupo for the Research Group on University History (2019), "Recognition, Reinterpretation, and Restitution: Universities and Their Contested Pasts"
- Joanna Burch-Brown in *Journal of Applied Philosophy* (2020), "Should Slavery's Statues Be Preserved? On Transitional Justice and Contested Heritage"
- Christopher Eisbruger in *The Washington Post* (2020), "I Opposed Taking Woodrow Wilson's Name Off Our School. Here's Why I Changed My Mind"
- AP News Canada (2024), "Queen's University Drops Sir John A. Macdonald's Name: A Symbolic Step Toward Reconciliation"
- Derek Alderman et al. in *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* (2024), "Taking a Longer Historical View of America's Renaming Moment"
- Dina Gilio-Whitaker in *Sierra* (2022), "What It Means to Decolonize a Natural Feature"
- National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers and The Wilderness Society (2022), "A Guide to Changing Racist and Offensive Place Names in the United States"

- *A Restorative Place (2020), "Principles and Values of Restorative Justice"*
- *Dina Walters for the American Planning Association (2023), "Renaming Streets to Promote Reconciliation"*