



## CITY COUNCIL REPORT

**TITLE:**

**HONOURARY STREET NAME – JAMES EHNES WAY  
LOCATED AT THE 200/300 BLOCK OF 20TH STREET**

**PRESENTER:**

Ryan Nickel

**DEPARTMENT:**

Planning & Buildings

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**DATE:**

4/10/2026

**CLEARANCE / APPROVALS:**

Ryan Nickel            General Manager

Dave Wardrop        City Manager

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That the proposed honorary street name being James Ehnes Way be approved and that honorary signs be installed between the 200/300 block of 20<sup>th</sup> Street for a period of five (5) years from the date of this approval, and that all costs associated with building and installing the signs be borne by the City.

**BACKGROUND:**

James Ehnes was born in 1976 in Brandon, MB. He began violin studies at the age of 4, at age 9 he became a protege of the noted Canadian violist Francis Chaplin. As a concert violinist, he won numerous awards and prizes throughout, including two Grammy Awards and twelve Juno Awards.

In 2005, James was honoured by Brandon University with a Doctor of Music degree (honoris causa) and in 2007 he became the youngest person ever elected as a Fellow to the Royal Society of Canada. In 2010, the Governor General of Canada appointed James a Member of the Order of Canada.

James Ehnes will be returning to Brandon in May to perform at Brandon University's Lorne Watson Recital Hall as part of his 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday concert tour. To honour his arrival, the Mayor with support from the Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium (Attachment B) and Brandon University (Attachment C) has requested the addition of an honorary street name to be placed in the 200/300 block of 20<sup>th</sup> Street along Brandon University's west corridor and next to the Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium (Attachment A).

The Planning Commission at their meeting held April 15, 2026, approved Administration's recommendation

for approval, a copy of the Resolution is attached (Attachment D).

**ANALYSIS:**

In accordance with the Street Names Policy & Procedure, the honorary street name, James Ehnes Way, conforms within the criteria for naming a street after a person, "who achieves a deed or activity performed in an outstanding professional manner or of an uncommonly high standard that brings considerable benefit or great honor to the City."

The honorary street name allows Council to recognize contributions of residents while maintaining the primary street name for wayfinding purposes. No address changes would take place. Once approved, an Honorary Street Sign Topper can be installed at the approved location of 20<sup>th</sup> Street & Princess Avenue and 20<sup>th</sup> Street & Louise Avenue for a 5-year period. Upon expiry, the applicant may re-apply for the sign to remain or it can be removed and retained by the applicant.

**LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS:**

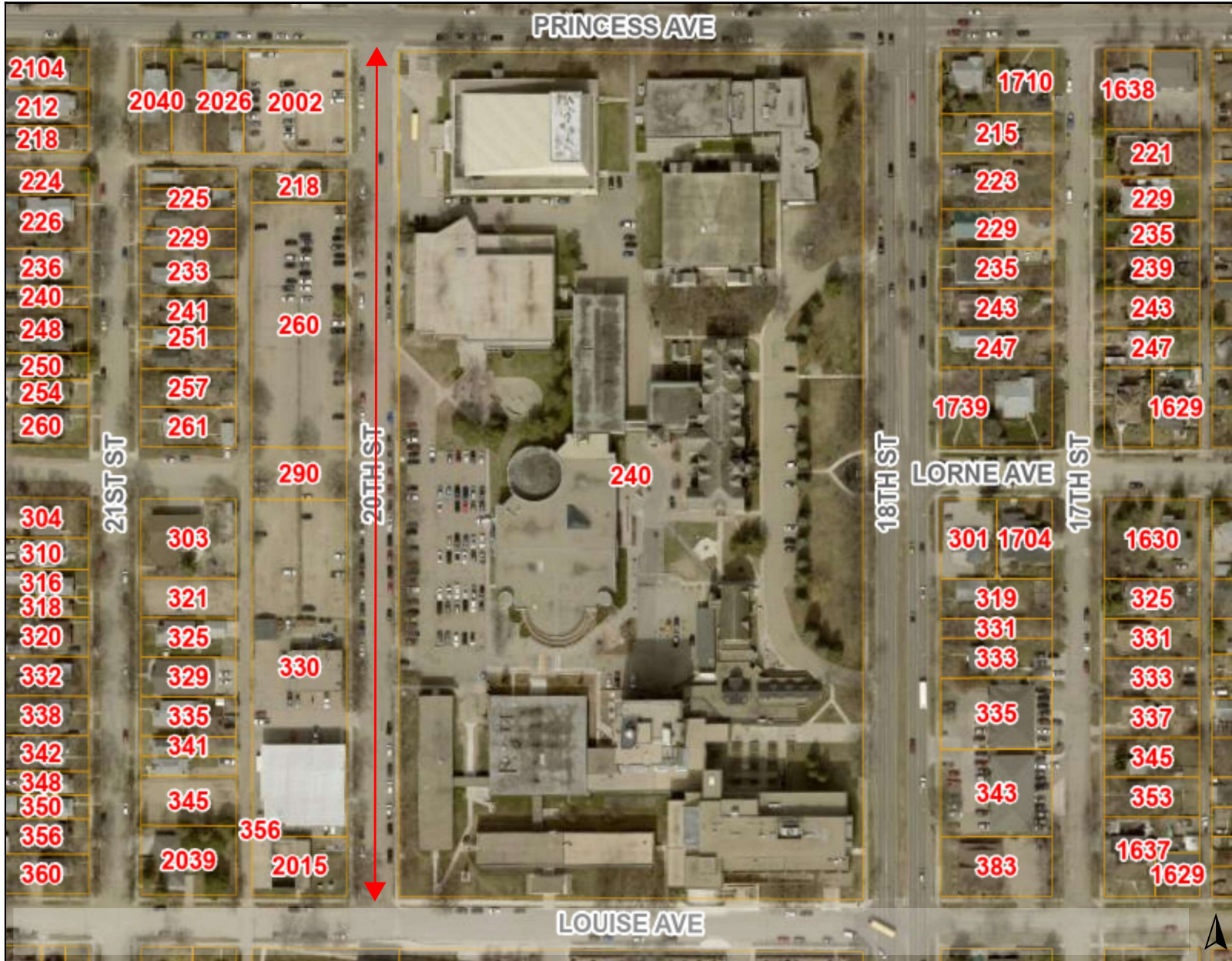
The proposal meets the conditions within the City's Street Names Policy & Procedure.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**




Due to this being brought forward by a member of City Council (the mayor), the City of Brandon will be covering the nominal costs of the signage and installation, as sign manufacturing and installation will be done in-house.

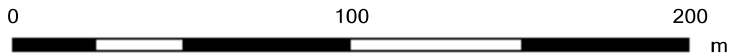
**CONCLUSION:**

That the proposed honorary street name being James Ehnes Way be approved and that honorary signs be installed between the 200/300 block of 20<sup>th</sup> Street for a period of five (5) years from the date of this approval, and that all costs associated with building and installing the signs be borne by the City.



**Legend**

- COBRA\_v3\_0\_MapService\_Internal
- Property Lines 
- City Limits 
- Street Names 



This map is a user generated static output from an Internet mapping site and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable.

THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION

**Notes**

# Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium

April 2, 2026

Dear Mayor Fawcett and members of Brandon City Council,

The Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium wholeheartedly and enthusiastically supports honorarily naming the 200/300 block of 20<sup>th</sup> Street to James Ehnes Way.

James Ehnes' exceptional achievements have brought sustained distinction to the city, the province and Canada as a whole. As one of the most internationally accomplished individuals born in Brandon, he is a powerful example of how small cities can produce world-class artists when they invest in culture and education. Not only a successful individual, but he is also a living ambassador for Brandon's cultural identity and a role model for young musicians across Manitoba, demonstrating that elite international careers can originate locally. A Grammy-winning, globally recognized artist who was born, formed and educated in Brandon, and repeatedly credits his hometown in connection with his career, James represents Westman as a centre of artistic excellence on a global stage, and enhances our reputation far beyond regional or provincial boundaries.

A street naming doesn't just celebrate fame; it acknowledges the long-term return on Brandon's investment in arts and education, embodied in an individual whose achievements are already formally recognized at a provincial and national level. The honorary naming of the block would serve as a visible and lasting acknowledgement of James Ehnes' significant impact in this community. His achievements have created lasting recognition for Brandon that continues to this day. His honours place him among Canada's most respected cultural figures. His family and early training are inseparable from the city's cultural institutions. With the location of the 200/300 block of 20<sup>th</sup> Street, it would also stand as an inspiration for future generations of music students and concert goers. The Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium would be proud to have the honorary street name displayed on the corner of Princess and 20<sup>th</sup> street for all our patrons to see.

Sincerely,



Kaitlyn Mitchell  
WMCA General Manager

April 6, 2026

Dear Mayor Fawcett and Members of Brandon City Council:

Brandon University enthusiastically supports the proposal to rename the 200/300 block of 20<sup>th</sup> Street in honour of James Ehnes. This is a fitting tribute that speaks to the impact that James has had as one of the most celebrated and successful former residents of our city. Equally fitting, this honorific acknowledges the impact that our cultural institutions have had on this wonderful artist and, by extension, arts and culture writ large.

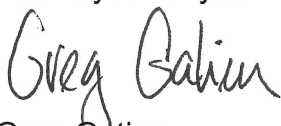
As many of you know, James grew up as part of a family that, in leaving a significant artistic legacy in our community, was deeply connected to 20<sup>th</sup> Street. Alan, James's father, was a deeply respected and long-serving member of the School of Music's faculty where he helped shape the careers of countless musicians and music educators. Barbara, James's mother, ran a highly successful dance school and, among other things, served effectively on the Board of the Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium (WMCA). Not surprisingly, James spent a significant part of his formative years on 20<sup>th</sup> Street, studying violin with beloved School of Music faculty member Francis Chaplin, rehearsing with School of Music piano professor Don Henry, and performing frequently in the Lorne Watson Recital Hall and in the WMCA. Much of his musical foundation was laid in our School of Music on this storied block of 20<sup>th</sup> Street.

From these caring and nurturing roots, James Ehnes became one of the most important performers of his generation. His artistry has been recognized by the Recording Academy of the United States, which has awarded him with two Grammys. The Canadian Association of Recording Arts and Sciences (CARAS) has awarded James with twelve Junos, making him Canada's most awarded classical musician. In 2021, James was recognized as the Artist of the Year at the Gramophone Awards, perhaps the most prestigious award in his field. James has built and sustained a remarkably successful career as a concertizing soloist and chamber musician, performing with virtually all major orchestras and leading conductors and regularly appearing in the most important recital halls and festivals. The accolades that have been bestowed on James are earned. He is an artist of the highest calibre who has been consistently inspiring audiences for decades.

In supporting this proposal, it is meaningful that James has made considerable and generous effort to maintain connections with his hometown and with the people and places that contributed so meaningfully to his development as a person and artist. The love, gratitude, and admiration that we have for him is reciprocated. James treasures opportunities to reconnect with our School of Music and Conservatory, and he speaks highly of our community whenever given an opportunity. He truly cares about our wonderful city and reminds us that we are lucky to live in Brandon.

If there is any further information I could provide that would assist you in bestowing this honour upon James Ehnes, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at any time. I can be reached at [gatieng@brandonu.ca](mailto:gatieng@brandonu.ca) or (204) 724-5948.

Thank you for your service and for considering this worthy proposal,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Gatien". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Greg Gatien  
Dean of Music  
Acting Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

cc: Dr. Christine Bovis-Crossen, President and Vice-Chancellor, Brandon University;  
Dr. Leanne Zacharias, Acting Dean of Music and Professor of Cello, Brandon  
University; Ms. Kerry DuWors, Professor Violin, Brandon University.