

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
BUSINESS MEETING
ACTION ITEM**

SUBJECT: **Response to Board Member Initiative: Inventory of Confederate and Segregationist Symbols in Loudoun County**

ELECTION DISTRICTS: Countywide

CRITICAL ACTION DATE: At the pleasure of the Board

STAFF CONTACTS: Daniel Galindo, AICP, Planning and Zoning
Alaina Ray, AICP, Director, Planning and Zoning

PURPOSE: The purpose of this item is to respond to a Board Member Initiative (BMI) and present an inventory of Confederate and segregationist symbols located on public property or within the public right of way in Loudoun County for review by the Board of Supervisors (Board). Staff seeks Board direction on whether additional actions should be pursued on any items within the inventory.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the Board review the inventory as presented and provide staff with any further direction the Board deems necessary. Should additional research be desired, staff recommends the Board direct the Heritage Commission to conduct further research and compile a report to be presented back to the Board.

BACKGROUND: At the [Board Business Meeting on September 15, 2020](#), the Board directed (7-2: Buffington and Kershner opposed) staff to prepare an informational inventory detailing the symbols and their locations honoring or memorializing Confederate and segregationist figures or history in Loudoun County, in consultation with experts in Loudoun history where deemed necessary. The BMI identified the following categories to be included in the inventory: County-owned and Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)-owned road or street names, buildings, signs, logos, markers, monuments, battlefields, and other names or symbols in public spaces.¹

In response to this BMI, staff prepared an item including a scope of work for the creation of the inventory.² The Board approved (7-0-2: Buffington and Kershner absent) the scope of work at the [Board Business Meeting on December 15, 2020](#). The scope of work included the establishment of

¹ View the BMI Item [here](#).

² View the Response Item [here](#).

parameters for the methods by which the inventory would be developed as well as the items to be inventoried as detailed below.

Development of Inventory – The list of items to be included on the inventory would be developed with assistance from the public via: (1) submissions through a map-based public submission tool on the Loudoun County website, and (2) assistance from subject matter experts. The assistance of the public and subject matter experts was an attempt to supplement staff's efforts and enable the creation of an expansive list of items in a short timeframe.

Items to be Inventoried – The original motion initiating the BMI noted that the inventory would include County-owned and VDOT-owned road or street names, buildings, signs, logos, markers, monuments, battlefields, and other names or symbols in public spaces honoring or memorializing Confederate and segregationist figures or history in Loudoun County. The adopted scope further limited the items eligible for the inventory to those that:

- The Board has authority to directly rename or has significant influence with the entity responsible for renaming the inventoried item. Practically, this limited the inventory to items located on public property or within the public right of way in Loudoun County and outside of the incorporated towns. No private businesses, private organizations, private roads, or religious organizations are included in the inventory.
- Are named for: (1) a Confederate leader, (2) the Confederate cause, or (3) individuals or movements that promoted and implemented racial segregation laws in Virginia during the eras of Jim Crow (1896-1965) and Massive Resistance to desegregation (1954-1959) in Virginia.

In addition, the scope noted that schools and school mascots would not be included in the inventory as Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) is currently conducting an independent review of these items through a contracted consultant. That effort is anticipated to conclude by December 2021.

Public Outreach and Staff Research – After creating and testing the map-based public submission tool, staff issued a [news release](#) and social media announcements at the beginning of April to inform the public about the inventory project and request submissions. Staff also directly contacted a number of subject matter experts to inform them of the effort to create the inventory and seek their assistance in its development. These subject matter experts included the: Heritage Commission, Black History Committee of the Friends of Thomas Balch Library, Loudoun Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Loudoun Douglass School Alumni Association, and Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition.

Submissions through the publicly accessible tool on the Loudoun County website were originally scheduled to end on April 30 in order to provide staff sufficient time to prepare the inventory and accompanying item for a June Board Business Meeting. However, a few community organizations requested additional time to consider potential submissions, so the deadline for submissions was extended to May 17. This resulted in a one-month delay in providing a response to the Board.

Inventory – In addition to the information submitted by the public, staff reviewed a master list of road names used within Loudoun County maintained by the Office of Mapping and Geographic Information as well as the names of Loudoun County-owned parks and facilities against the names of prominent leaders in the Confederacy and the Segregationist movement/era. The results of staff’s review were combined with the public submissions that met the approved parameters noted above (see Items to be Inventoried) to create the inventory presented in Table 1 for Board review. As noted in the approved scope of work, staff conducted only minimal research which solely attempted to determine which items could be confidently listed in the inventory below.

Table 1: Inventory of Confederate and Segregationist Symbols in Loudoun County

Name of Item	Location	Entity that Controls Item/Name	Description	Additional Notes
Confederate Court	Catoctin District / Southeast of Lucketts	Loudoun County	Future Public Road	1. Unbuilt road that appears on an approved subdivision plat.
Early Avenue	Blue Ridge District / Just Northwest of Round Hill	Loudoun County	Public Road	1. Named for Confederate General Jubal Early.*
Fort Johnston Road	Catoctin District / Just Northwest of Leesburg	Loudoun County	Public Road	1. Named for Confederate fort. 2. Private road of the same name is located at eastern end of the public road.
Hampton Road	Blue Ridge District / Just Northwest of Round Hill	Loudoun County	Public Road	1. Named for Confederate General Wade Hampton.* 2. Portion of road located within Town of Round Hill.
Harry Byrd Highway	All Districts except Dulles	Commonwealth Transportation Board	Public Road	1. Named for Senator Harry Byrd, a leader of the Massive Resistance to desegregation. 2. The Board directed staff to move forward with initiating a process to rename the highway at the May 18, 2021 Board Business Meeting . ³

³ View the Proposed Process and Cost Estimate for Renaming Item [here](#).

Name of Item	Location	Entity that Controls Item/Name	Description	Additional Notes
Jackson Avenue	Blue Ridge District / Just Northwest of Round Hill	Loudoun County	Public Road	1. Named for Confederate General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson.*
Jeb Stuart Road	Blue Ridge District / Philomont area	Loudoun County	Public Road	1. Named for Confederate General James Ewell Brown “J.E.B.” Stuart.*
John Mosby Highway	Blue Ridge and Dulles Districts	Commonwealth Transportation Board	Public Road	1. Named for Confederate Colonel John S. Mosby. 2. The Board directed staff to move forward with initiating a process to rename the highway at the May 18, 2021 Board Business Meeting . ⁴
Lee Drive	Blue Ridge District / Just Northwest of Round Hill	Loudoun County	Public Road	1. Named for Confederate General Robert E. Lee.*
Longstreet Avenue	Blue Ridge District / Just Northwest of Round Hill	Loudoun County	Public Road	1. Named for Confederate General James Longstreet.* 2. Portion of road located within Town of Round Hill.
Mosby Heritage Area signage	Countywide	Virginia Department of Transportation	Signage (along public roads)	N/A
Pickett Road	Blue Ridge District / Just Northwest of Round Hill	Loudoun County	Public Road	1. Named for Confederate General George Pickett.*
* Early Avenue, Hampton Road, Jackson Avenue, Lee Drive, Longstreet Avenue, and Pickett Road are all roads within the Hillwood Estates subdivision. Round Hill Mayor Scott Ramsey informed staff that it is common knowledge within the community that these roads are named after Confederate generals.				

⁴ View the Proposed Process and Cost Estimate for Renaming Item [here](#).

ISSUES:

Names of Unknown Origin – As noted above, staff has not conducted significant research on all possible items that could be included in the inventory, so it is possible that other items may be appropriate to add. For example, Sterling Park contains streets named East Lee Road, South Lee Road, and Lee Court. These streets are located in an area with other streets seemingly named after presidents and statesmen, so it is possible that the roads were named for Robert E. Lee. However, staff was unable to determine the origin of these “Lee” road names through existing staff knowledge or the limited research conducted. If the Board desires additional research to be conducted after reviewing the inventory, staff recommends the Board direct the Heritage Commission to conduct further research and compile a report regarding Confederate and segregationist symbols in Loudoun County.

Kephart Bridge Landing – As directed by the Board, staff limited the contents of the inventory to Confederate and Segregationist figures and symbols. However, staff’s research of the names of Loudoun County-owned parks and facilities resulted in one name that staff believes should be highlighted for the Board even though it is outside the scope of the inventory. Kephart Bridge Landing is a canoe and kayak launch facility located within Elizabeth Mills Riverfront Park. The landing is accessed from Riverpoint Drive in the Lansdowne community.

Kephart Bridge Landing is named for George Kephart (1795-1870) who was an agent for Armfield and Franklin (later Price, Birch & Co) in Alexandria, Virginia from 1836 to at least 1858. It was the largest slave trading enterprise in the nation, and Kephart became wealthy in the interstate slave trade not only as an agent of the company but also as the owner of the Duke Street slave pens and a slave ship, the *Isaac Franklin*, which transported hundreds of enslaved people at a time from Alexandria to the port of New Orleans. Kephart owned both Coton and Belmont Plantations for a period of time, owning land along the Potomac River and the Leesburg to Alexandria Turnpike, crucial to his business of transporting the enslaved from port to port. He lived at Belmont from 1851 to his death in 1869, and he is buried at Union Cemetery in Leesburg.⁵

FISCAL IMPACT: Fiscal impacts resulting from any additional Board direction would need to be evaluated and presented to the Board in a subsequent report.

ALTERNATIVES: The following alternatives have been identified for the Board’s consideration:

1. The Board may direct the Heritage Commission to: 1) conduct further research on any items already submitted by the public, names of public roads within Loudoun County, and Loudoun County facility and building names that have not been included in the inventory of Confederate and segregationist symbols to determine whether additional items should be added to the inventory, and 2) compile a report of any results to be presented back to the Board; and/or

⁵ Information from [“The Ghosts of Belmont: from Margaret Mercer to George Kephart”](#) by Lee Lawrence, August 23, 2020.

2. The Board may direct staff to report back to the Board with a proposed process and cost to have a consultant undertake the research noted in Alternative 1; and/or
3. The Board may direct staff to report back to the Board with a proposed process and cost to initiate a renaming process for one or more roads included in the inventory; and/or
4. The Board may direct staff to report back to the Board with a proposed process and cost to initiate the renaming of the Kephart Bridge Landing canoe and kayak launch facility located within Elizabeth Mills Riverfront Park; or
5. The Board may take no action.

DRAFT MOTIONS:

1. I move that the Board of Supervisors direct the Heritage Commission to: 1) conduct further research on any items already submitted by the public, names of public roads within Loudoun County, and Loudoun County facility and building names that have not been included in the inventory of Confederate and segregationist symbols to determine whether additional items should be added to the inventory, and 2) compile a report of any results to be presented back to the Board.

OR

2. I move an alternate motion.