



Renaming of Route 7 and Route 50

Public Input Meeting - Evening Session

Wednesday September 29, 2021, 6:00pm – 7:00pm

Meeting Summary

Project Team Representatives:

John Thomas, Kelly Griffin, Susan Glass (Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure, DTCI)

Shawn Zelman, Heidi Kellum (Public Affairs and Communications, PAC)

Mike Fauss, Kristin Brown (Office of Mapping and Geographic Information, OMAGI)

Heidi Siebentritt (Department of Planning and Zoning, DPZ)

Task Force Members in Attendance:

Mark Miller, Task Force Chair, Catoctin District appointee

Grafton DeButts, Task Force Secretary, Leesburg District appointee

Robin Burke, At-Large appointee

Board of Supervisors – Aides in Attendance:

Christi Maple, Blue Ridge District

Public Observers:

Michael Leahy

Barbara Patton

Connor Quinn

Kathleen Quinn

Neal Augenstein

Michelle Cavucci

Introduction and Purpose

John Thomas, DTCI's Assistant Director, Transportation Planning and Traffic Engineering, facilitated introductions of the project team and provided the project background. DTCI Project Manager, Kelly Griffin, shared the project status, short list of Board of Supervisors (Board) approved names for Route 7 and Route 50, reviewed opportunities for public input, and provided the next steps. Mark Miller, Chair of the Task Force, provided an update on the role and mission of the Task Force. The project team answered questions it received.

The following questions were answered during the meeting:

Q1: How did the Task Force narrow down the names to the current short lists from the original list of names submitted by the public?

A1: County staff provided the Task Force with a list of all names submitted by the public that met both the County's and VDOT's naming criteria. The Task Force reviewed the list provided by Loudoun County (County) staff and tasked themselves with coming to the August 11, 2021 Task Force meeting with a list of top choices for each member. At the August 11, 2021 meeting, the Task Force reviewed each member's individual list of top choices to determine if more than one Task Force member shared the same road name preference. If there was overlap between the Task Force members' lists of top choices that received a majority vote, those names automatically made the list. Thirteen of the 16 Task Force members were present, so seven votes were needed to reach majority. Next, the Task Force moved on to reviewing the names that appeared on multiple Task Force member lists; those names were voted on. The process continued until the Task Force voted on all names until the short list of names was created; the names that appear on the short list received a majority vote.

Q2: Why can't Route 7 and Route 50 be used for the roadway names (i.e. just numbers)?

A2: Pursuant to the Loudoun County Codified Ordinance, road names are required in addition to the Route number. This question has been raised numerous times throughout this process. One thing to keep in mind is that although Route 7 and Route 50 may be easy for the traveling public to reference the roads, there are residences and businesses on both roadways who need specific street addresses.

Q3: Will the final roadway names end with Highway?

A3: A road name consists of two parts: Street Name and Street Type; Highway is a street type. Street types in Virginia and Loudoun County have specific meanings. For example, the street type "Lane" almost always refers to a private easement in Loudoun County. The current street type for both Route 7 and Route 50 is Highway; therefore, Highway is recommended to be added to any of the names on the short list. However, Pike and Turnpike would also be permitted as they describe primary highways.

Q4: What does the asterisk on the list of names mean (ex, Leesburg Pike)?

A4: This topic was discussed at the Board meeting on September 21, 2021. Leesburg Pike and Little River Turnpike, Route 7 and Route 50, respectively, were originally excluded from consideration per the Board's direction because the names considered must adhere to the requirements in Loudoun County Codified Ordinance. Leesburg Pike and Little River Turnpike do not meet the criteria of the Ordinance because they are considered duplicates. Duplicates relate to the street name; in the case of Leesburg Pike, Leesburg is the street name and Pike is the street type. A street with the name Leesburg currently exists elsewhere in the County. Likewise, Little River is the street name and Turnpike is the street type; a street with the name Little River currently exists elsewhere in the County. This was denoted for further discussion and to bring this topic to the Board's attention.

Q5: What is included in the ranking survey?

A5: The survey contains questions requesting general information. It also contains two questions asking the public to rank the short list of road names in order of preference.

Q6: What criteria are going to be used to determine the final recommendation? Is it mainly based on the survey results?

A6: The staff recommendation will be the names that are ranked as the public's top choice in the survey. After review of the survey results, it is possible that the Task Force may have a different recommendation; if this situation occurs, it will be noted in the issues section of the staff report that will be prepared for the Board to select the new road names.

Q7: Once a name is selected, will we be able to start using the new name right away -- for mail and deliveries, etc.?

A7: Once the Board selects the final name, VDOT will prepare a package for the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to receive final approval. This is anticipated to take approximately 1-3 months. Following CTB approval, engineering documents will be prepared to change the road names on traffic signals and highway signs and those plans will be submitted to VDOT for review and approval. Once the plans are approved, the new signs will be fabricated, and they will be installed. The schedule for these tasks is dependent on VDOT's review timeline; therefore, at this time, a definitive date cannot be determined. To the best of our ability, the County will synchronize the address change with when signs are installed. Once we know the implementation schedule, the County will send notification letters to property owners in advance to inform them of the date when they should begin using their new address.

Q8: Is it known at this point which of the short-list names will end in HWY or PIKE?

A8: Staff recommends that Highway be used as the street type except for Leesburg Pike and Little River Turnpike. If either of those names are chosen, Pike or Turnpike would be used as the street type.

Q9: Do you understand the rationale for the ordinance that doesn't permit numbers in the names of roadways? This seems to be a common feature of road names elsewhere.

A9: The rationale for assigning addresses in Loudoun County pertains to public safety response. In the event there is an emergency, if the street name were also a number, there is a potential for error when the information is entered into the Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) system. Using a number for the route number for the street name also has the potential to complicate receipt of mail orders for residents and businesses who are located along on the roadway.

Q10: Has the Task Force received any negative feedback regarding removing the prior names? (Mosby and/or Byrd)

A10: During the public outreach campaign, several comments were received stating that the road names do not require changing. Several comments were also received asking why the county is going to spend money on this effort. While these are not naming suggestions, the feedback has been shared with Board of Supervisors (Board), and this information was also shared with Task Force as part of their decision making process. Additionally, this feedback will be included in the staff report which will be presented to the Board in early December 2021.

Q11: Is it possible that Clarke County will keep the name Harry Byrd Highway and could that cause confusion?

A11: At this time, Clarke County is not initiating any road name change. Therefore, the road name for Route 50 will change when leaving Loudoun County and entering Clarke County. Emergency response systems are designed to accommodate road name changes at the county borders.

Q12: Who makes the final decision for the names?

A12: Approvals are required from two entities: Loudoun County and the State of Virginia. The State of Virginia (Virginia Department of Transportation) and the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) are involved because Route 7 and Route 50 are primary highways. The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors (Board) will select Loudoun County's final name choice. Once the final name has been selected by the Loudoun County Board, the name selection will be forwarded to (VDOT). VDOT will prepare an item for a future CTB meeting to request final approval from the CTB.