



MEMORANDUM

City of Alexandria, Virginia

TO: NAMING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

DATE: SEPTEMBER 24, 2025

SUBJECT: PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS STREET RE-NAMING

Background

On January 10, 2023, then Mayor Justin Wilson introduced a proposal to rename streets in the City of Alexandria that are named for Confederate military leaders. Many of these names were established by a 1953 ordinance requiring that north-south streets, "insofar as possible," be named after Confederate leaders. This ordinance was enacted one year after the City's annexation of the West End, where many of the affected streets had not yet been named, and just prior to the landmark Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, such acts were part of a broader segregationist backlash, including the naming of streets and public buildings after Confederate figures.

City staff have confirmed that 41 streets in Alexandria are named for Confederate soldiers. Of those, 21 were named in 1953. At then Mayor Wilson's request, the Historic Alexandria Resources Commission (HARC), with support from the Office of Historic Alexandria, compiled a list of individuals and places worthy of recognition. Special consideration was given to underrepresented communities, particularly Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), women, and historically marginalized groups, as well as to previously retired street names.

The City Council Naming Committee was tasked with overseeing the renaming process. The committee met on September 28, 2023, to review the first set of candidate streets and new names and held a public hearing on November 30, 2023. During the hearing, residents expressed a mix of support and concern, including notable advocacy from Jordan Street residents to rededicate the street to honor Thomasina "Red Hawk" Jordan, the first Native American to serve in the U.S. Electoral College and a former Alexandria resident. Early Street residents suggested renaming the street for either Charity Earley, a pioneering Black woman in the U.S. military, or James Early.

Following the hearing, the Naming Committee forwarded recommendations to City Council for a public hearing and vote. Outreach included letters to affected residents and businesses, temporary signage along selected streets, and FAQs posted to the City's website.

The following name changes were approved by Council:

- **North Breckenridge Place → Harriet Jacobs Street**
- **Forrest Street → Forest Street**
- **Jordan Street → Thomasina Jordan Street**
- **Early Street → Earley Street**, in honor of Charity Earley

The U.S. Postal Service and major mapping systems were notified of approved changes. New street signs were installed in spring 2024.

Proposed Strategy for the Next Phases

To build on the momentum of Phase 1 (2023–2024), staff recommend the following phased approach:

Phase 2: 2025–2027

Focus on renaming 9 of the remaining 18 streets identified in the 1953 ordinance. Recommended new names should be drawn from HARC’s recommendations, community suggestions (including research by local students), and previous names retired in 1953.

Interns from Episcopal High School and middle school students from Hammond Middle School have contributed suggestions, which staff have refined to avoid confusion with existing Alexandria street names. These proposals will be brought to the Naming Committee in Fall 2025 for further consideration.

Phase 3: 2027–2029

Identify the next set of 9 streets for renaming. Names will be determined closer to implementation to allow for new public input and to reflect emerging community feedback.

Phase 4: TBD

Address remaining Confederate-related street names not tied to the 1953 ordinance.

Rationale for Phasing

Phasing allows for manageable staff capacity, budget allocation, and robust community input. Each phase will include a mix of residential, commercial, and low-density streets. Delaying name selection for later phases also ensures the flexibility to incorporate future suggestions from students, historians, and community members.

Ongoing Efforts and Next Steps

Since the Naming Committee’s last meeting in October 2024, staff have been:

- Conducting research and gathering name recommendations from:

- The HARC list
- High school interns
- Middle schoolers at Hammond Middle School
- Pre-1953 street names
- Refining recommendations to eliminate similar-sounding names that could interfere with 911 dispatch or mail delivery.

Recommendations for Phase 2 (attachment #1), including new name proposals and implementation phasing, will be presented to the Naming Committee in Fall 2025. The committee will then:

1. Hold a meeting to review and select names
2. Conduct a public hearing
3. Make formal recommendations to the full City Council

ATTACHMENT #1

PHASE 2: 2025–2027 – STREET RENAMING PROPOSALS

Street Names Suggested for Re-Dedication

1. Calhoun Avenue

Length: 0.17 miles | **Addresses:** 9

Named for: J. Lawrence Calhoun, Major, CSA

Proposed Name: *Robert Calhoun Avenue*

Robert “Bob” Calhoun was a Yale-educated attorney and a respected Republican member of the Alexandria City Council, serving from 1976 to 1982, including as Vice Mayor. He was known for his intelligence, civility, and focus on transportation policy. He also contributed to the founding of the DASH bus system and child custody law reform. Naming the street for Robert Calhoun retains the “Calhoun” name while shifting the honor to a local civic leader. There would be no change to any systems as this would be an honorific renaming.

2. Stevens Street

Length: 0.36 miles | **Addresses:** 21

Named for: Clement H. Stevens or Walter H. Stevens, both Confederate generals

Proposed Name: *Moses Stevens Street*

Moses Stevens was a pioneering Black businessman in post-Civil War Alexandria. He ran a successful livery business, founded Mt. Jezreel Baptist Church, and was an early

adopter of telephone and automotive infrastructure in the city. Renaming the street for Moses Stevens reclaims the name to honor a leader who made lasting contributions to Alexandria's civic and economic life. More information on his life may be found [here](#). There would be no change to any systems as this would be an honorific renaming.

3. Frost Street

Length: 0.16 miles | **Addresses:** 3

Named for: Daniel Marsh Frost, Brigadier General, CSA

Proposed Names: *Frost Street*

Frost Street (Retain with new honoree)

While the name "Frost" remains the same, it could be rededicated to **John Frost**, a Union soldier from Alexandria who is buried in the Alexandria National Cemetery. This reframing would shift the honor from a Confederate general to a Union supporter.

Note: Crawford was the pre-1953 name of the street. There is a Crawford Street in Fairfax County and reverting back to this name will likely not be approved by public safety.

Streets With Suggestions for Renaming

4. Iverson Street

Length: 0.13 miles | **Addresses:** 144

Named for: Alfred Iverson, Jr., Brigadier General, CSA

Proposed Name: *Edmonson Street*

Mary and Emily Edmonson were Black sisters born into slavery who made national headlines after their escape attempt aboard the schooner *Pearl* in 1848. After being captured and imprisoned at the Bruin Slave Jail in Alexandria, they were eventually freed with the help of their father and abolitionist supporters. The sisters later became well-known abolitionists. Today, they are honored with a statue in Edmonson Plaza, near the site of their imprisonment. Changing the name to "Edmonson Street" not only aligns with Alexandria's history but also maintains a similar phonetic structure to "Iverson." This name was proposed by an Episcopal High School intern and was also included in the HARC recommendations.

5. Beauregard Street

Length: 2.38 miles | **Addresses:** 588

Named for: Pierre G.T. Beauregard, General, CSA and designer of the Confederate battle flag

Proposed Names: *Banneker Street* or *South Walter Reed Drive*

- **Banneker Street**

Benjamin Banneker was a free African American mathematician, astronomer,

almanac writer, and surveyor who assisted in the original boundary survey of Washington, D.C., including the area at Jones Point in Alexandria. He publicly challenged Thomas Jefferson on issues of slavery and racial equity. Banneker's contributions to science and civic history make him a powerful figure to honor. The name change from Beauregard to Banneker is also logistically practical, as both begin with "B" and are of similar length. This proposal was submitted by an Episcopal High School intern. *Note: This suggestion may face challenges from a public safety perspective because of how many streets are named Banneker in the region.*

- **South Walter Reed Drive**

Prior to 1953, Beauregard Street was named South Walter Reed Drive, honoring Dr. Walter Reed, a U.S. Army physician renowned for his work on yellow fever. Renaming the street to its pre-1953 name would also allow continuity with Walter Reed Drive in Arlington, similar to how Jefferson Davis Highway was renamed to Richmond Highway across jurisdictions. *Note: This rename would require considerable coordination with Fairfax and Arlington to ensure addressing does not overlap.*

6. Wheeler Avenue

Length: 1.1 miles | **Addresses:** 110

Named for: Joseph Wheeler, Brigadier General, CSA

Proposed Names: Wheel Avenue

Note: The street's original name before the 1953 ordinance was Old Mill Road.

Restoration of this name may cause confusion with public safety as it is too similar to Mill Road.

7. French Street

Length: 0.35 miles | **Addresses:** 75

Named for: Samuel G. French, Brigadier General, CSA

Proposed Names: *Cornelia Street*

Cornelia Street

Cornelia was the street's original name prior to 1953. While it lacks historical significance, it is a neutral option. *This is may be too similar to the recently approved Amelia Street in the Eisenhower development.*

Streets recommended to be renamed in Phase 2 without new naming suggestions

8. Floyd Street

Length: 0.32 miles | **Addresses:** 53

Named for: John Buchanan Floyd, Brigadier General, CSA

Note: Staff considered Rabbi Emmet Allen Frank led Beth El Hebrew Congregation from 1954 to 1969 and was a prominent civil rights advocate during Alexandria's school desegregation era. Despite opposition, he persistently spoke out in sermons against segregation and racial injustice. The name "Frank" is phonetically similar to "Floyd" and the street is located near Beth El. This proposal was recommended by an Episcopal High School intern and included in the HARC list. However, there is a Frank Street in Fairfax County and public safety would not approve of the same name.

9. Bragg Street

Length: 0.17 miles | **Addresses:** 42

Named for: Braxton Bragg, General, Confederate States Army (CSA)

New names submitted for consideration with a connection to Alexandria (not previously on the HARC list):

- **Yar Street**

One such resident was **Nasrat Ahmad Yar**, an interpreter for U.S. forces who resettled in Alexandria with his family after fleeing Afghanistan in 2021. He was tragically killed in Washington, D.C., in 2023. Students at Hammond suggested naming the street "Yar Street."

New names submitted for consideration with a connection to Alexandria (not previously on the HARC list) that have public safety considerations:

- **Sarah Brady Street**

Sarah Brady was a leading gun control advocate and longtime Alexandria resident, best known for her work with the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. After her husband, Jim Brady, was shot and permanently disabled during the 1981 assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan, Sarah became a prominent national voice for stronger firearm regulations. She played a key role in passing the 1993 Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act. The Bradys lived in Alexandria for many years, and Sarah remained active in civic life. This name was suggested by students at Hammond Middle School. *Note: There is a Brady Street in Fairfax County and this would likely not be approved by Public Safety.*

Phase 3: 2027–2029 (Future Names to Be Determined in 2027)

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| 1. Gordon Street | 6. Donelson Street (possible renaming to Kerry Donley St.) |
| 2. Imboden Street | 7. Chambliss Street |
| 3. Van Dorn Street | 8. Pegram Street |
| 4. Stevenson Street/Square | 9. Rosser Street |
| 5. Dearing Street | |