

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** March 19, 2020

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**TO:** Christopher Martino  
County Executive

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**FROM:** Ricardo Canizales  
Director of Transportation

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**RE:** Renaming Route 1 in Prince William County

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Background

Route 1 was adopted into the Virginia state highway system in 1918 and named "Jefferson Davis Highway" by the Virginia General Assembly in 1922. Until 2012, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) was expressly prohibited from changing the name of Route 1 through a statute in Virginia law that prevented the Board from renaming of any highway, bridge or interchange that had been named by the General Assembly. This statute was removed from the legislation in 2012, but the General Assembly did not include language explicitly granting the authority to the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

Due to the ambiguity of the legislation, it was subject to legal interpretation. The first opinion issued from the Attorney General's Office following the 2012 legislation advised that only localities that own their streets had the authority to rename their streets. As a result, the City of Alexandria moved forward with changing the name of Route 1 within their jurisdictional boundaries to "Richmond Highway," to be consistent with Fairfax County. In 2019, the Attorney General's Office issued a new opinion stating that the 2012 changes to the legislation showed "clear legislative intent to empower the CTB to rename transportation facilities that were originally named by the General Assembly." Following this opinion, the Arlington County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution requesting the Commonwealth Transportation Board to rename Route 1 within the jurisdiction of Arlington as "Richmond Highway" which was subsequently approved by the CTB.

Process

33.2-213 of the Code of Virginia has two legal requirements for renaming a roadway.

1. A resolution passed by the governing body of the locality
2. Approval from the Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board

Listed below are the recommended and legally required processes to meet these requirements:

*Advisory Committee (recommended).* Further analysis and cross agency input will be necessary to comprehensively identify impacts and develop a plan for moving forward in the process. The City of Alexandria and the CTB created a task force for these purposes which then presented recommendations to their respective governing bodies.

*Outreach to Affected Residents and Businesses (recommended).* Currently, there are 302 parcels of land and 816 premise addresses that would be affected by the name change. The City of Alexandria and Arlington both led robust public engagement campaigns, including online survey, stakeholder meetings and public hearings, and point to community buy-in as critical to their successful efforts to rename Route 1. Engaging impacted residents/businesses early in the process and providing significant opportunity for input will be key to identifying and addressing community concerns.

*Board Action (legally required).* The BOCS will need to approve a resolution requesting the CTB rename the portion of Route 1 within the boundaries of Prince William County. The County Attorney's Office shall advise on all legal obligations of the Board in consideration and approval of this resolution.

*VDOT Action (legally required).* The BOCS resolution will be sent to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) District Office for review. After review, the VDOT Maintenance Division will prepare the CTB resolution, ensure it is added to a CTB agenda and present the request to the CTB.

*CTB Action (legally required).* The CTB must consider the County's resolution at a public meeting and pass their own resolution legally changing the name. In consideration of the resolution from Arlington, the CTB held the meeting within the County. At the public hearing, the Secretary of Transportation read a letter of support from Governor and the Board heard testimony in support from key stakeholders, including the business community, represented by the Chamber of Commerce, Crystal City Business District and developer JBG Smith, and local civic groups. Local participation in the CTB public hearing is recommended but not legally required.

### Anticipated Costs

*Replacing Street Signs.* Localities are responsible for the full costs of changing the name on street signs. The only exception is if VDOT is scheduled to replace a street sign due to damage or as part of regular maintenance. In that case, the County would only be responsible for the cost of the new sign (not removal or installation costs). On Route 1 there are 30 signalized intersections and 25 non-signalized intersections. Sign removal and installation at signalized intersections requires lane closures and maintenance of traffic which raises the cost considerably. The planning level cost estimate for replacing the 55 street signs in Prince William County is approximately \$200,000.

*Staff Resources.* County staff will be responsible for serving on advisory committees, conducting public outreach, facilitating public engagement and drafting Board items and any accompanying memorandums and presentations for the proposed name change. Should the CTB approve the requested resolution, staff resources will be required to change street signs, update addresses in County systems and records and communicate all changes with affected residents and businesses as well as the general public.

Multiple County agencies would be responsible for carrying out various aspects of the above activities, including:

- **Transportation**- Planning, procurement and oversight of signage replacement.
- **GIS**- Updating all addresses in the County Mapper system, reporting changes to external systems, sending notifications, communicating with property owners and tenants and conducting field inspections.
- **Taxpayer Services**- Personal property and property tax billing system update.
- **Communications**- Internal and public notifications.
- **Fire Marshal**- Reprogram system which reports to E911 to reflect address changes for any affected property with a sprinkler system.
- **Development Services**- Update all Occupancy, Fire Protection and other applicable permits for affected properties.

Most of these tasks can be accomplished with existing staff resources. However, GIS will be responsible for the bulk of the systemwide changes and estimates the division will need two full time temporary staff for a period of 12-18 months to assist with the workload. The work requires Entry Level Analysts staff at a cost of \$20-\$30 per hour. The total salary cost for temporary staff would be between \$78,000 and \$175,000 (does not include seat management or any other applicable expenses). Additionally, GIS is required to send certain notifications by certified mail at a cost of \$7 per letter. One certified letter to each address would result in a cost of \$5,712, and it is often necessary to send multiple letters to one address.

*Permit Fees.* Properties on Route 1 with existing permits (i.e. Occupancy, Fire Protection) will need to have those permits reissued to reflect the new address. Certain localities across the nation, including the City of Phoenix, have set policies to waive fees for any required permits that result from a locality-initiated street change. Prince William County does not have this policy. However, the County has waived these fees in certain instances to reduce impact to businesses. A recent example is Innovation where 20 businesses impacted by a County driven address change had permit fees waived, and staff resources were used to file the permit requests on behalf of the businesses. If the County elects to waive fees for affected property owners of the Route 1 renaming the loss of revenue should be factored as a cost. Additionally, the road projects and development along Route 1 have resulted in nonconforming permits that may create challenges in reissuing permits.

*Change of Address.* Property owners are responsible for any costs associated with a change of address. For residences, these costs are negligible. For businesses, these costs include replacing signage, stationary and promotional materials, as well as updating legal documents that are specific to the business address (i.e. commercial tenancy agreements). GIS estimates this cost to be \$1,000 for the average business. Most addresses on Route 1 are associated with businesses, including many small businesses. Given prior disruptions these businesses in recent years as a result of widening Route 1, the County may want to consider a subsidy to local businesses to offset the costs of the address change. This could be a significant cost. For example, a 50% subsidy of \$500 per business for 800 businesses would amount to a cost of \$400,000.

### Additional Information

- The County typically notifies affected properties 12 months prior to a street name change.
- Following the name change in Arlington, the U.S. Post Office agreed to continue delivering mail addressed to the former name of Jefferson Davis Highway indefinitely.
- GIS will notify all major mapping systems of the street name change. However, certain private delivery and navigation services use third party data and there may be disruption to services associated with the name change that is outside the control of the County.
- The proposed name change will not impact emergency response.
- Policy prohibits street name changes to take affect near elections to avoid potential discrepancies with the voter registration system. Any proposed action must be timed accordingly.
- Following a street name change, the County conducts inspections to ensure property owners have complied with required action to change the property address. Certain businesses have multiple or international licensing and legal agreements that often lead to requests for extensions. County staff will need direction on how exceptions should be handled for a street name change of this magnitude.