

INTRODUCED: April 14, 2025

A RESOLUTION No. 2025-R016

To express the Council's support for establishing a policy for reviewing and approving honorary street sign designations.

Patron – Vice President Jordan

Approved as to form and legality
by the City Attorney

PUBLIC HEARING: APR 28 2025 AT 6 P.M.

WHEREAS, the Council may, by ordinance, designate city streets with honorary street signs to memorialize individuals for their civic, cultural, humanitarian or historically significant contributions to the city of Richmond; and

WHEREAS, in recent years the volume of honorary street sign nominations has increased significantly, from eight over a seven-year period in 2011 to 2017 to 62 over a six-year period in 2018 to 2023; and

WHEREAS, the Council agreed upon an informal "moratorium" on new nominations in 2024 so that staff from the Office of the Council's Chief of Staff could research the practices of

AYES: 8 NOES: 0 ABSTAIN: _____

ADOPTED: APR 28 2025 REJECTED: _____ STRICKEN: _____

nearby localities with written policies on the consideration and approval of honorary street signs and make recommendations on such a policy for the City; and

WHEREAS, staff from the Office of the Council Chief of Staff, having completed said research and a survey of Councilmembers on various decision-points, recommended that the Council formally adopt a resolution adopting a new policy;

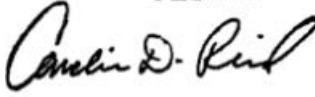
NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND:

That, beginning July 1, 2025, the Council hereby establishes the document entitled “Honorary Street Sign Policy” a copy of which is attached to this resolution, as the City of Richmond’s policy for nominating, installing, and unveiling new honorary street signs.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

CITY ATTORNEY’S OFFICE

A TRUE COPY:
TESTE:

City Clerk



Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

Office of the Council Chief of Staff

Ordinance/Resolution Request

TO Laura Drewry, City Attorney

THROUGH Matthew Slaats, Interim Council Chief of Staff
Office of the Council Chief of Staff

FROM Will Perkins, Senior Legislative Services Manager
Office of the Council Chief of Staff

COPY Katherine Jordan, Councilmember, 2nd District
Tabrica Rentz, Deputy City Attorney
Danielle F. Smith, Assistant City Attorney

DATE April 4, 2024

PAGE/s 1 of 4

TITLE Council Policy on Honorary Street Signs

This is a request for the drafting of an **Ordinance** ☐ **Resolution** ☒

REQUESTING COUNCILMEMBER/PATRON

Katherine Jordan, Councilmember

SUGGESTED STANDING COMMITTEE

Government Operations

ORDINANCE/RESOLUTION SUMMARY

Resolution to establish a Council policy for reviewing and approving honorary street sign designations.

BACKGROUND

This Resolution establishes a Council policy for reviewing and approving honorary street sign designations.

Recent History of Honorary Street Sign Designations:

- Staff from the Office of the Council Chief of Staff (OCCOS) office gathered a tally of recent honorary street sign designations by year. The frequency of honorary designations has increased significantly in recent years, from eight such designations over a seven-year period (2011-17) to over 10 designations per year in four of the last six years (2018-2023) for a total of 62 new honorary signs. See attachment for further details.
- Further, staff from the Department of Public Works (DPW) expressed concern that they were being asked not only to absorb the costs of fabricating and installing each honorary sign (estimated at \$700 each), but also convening frequent community ribbon cutting events celebrating the unveiling of each new sign – a task outside of their subject matter expertise that has become increasingly burdensome.
- In response, City Council members instituted an informal “moratorium” on approving new honorary street sign designations in 2024 while staff reviewed best practices in other localities and developed this proposed policy.

Research on Best Practices in Other Localities:

- Staff reviewed honorary street naming policies in two other nearby localities with existing honorary street naming policies: Norfolk and Portsmouth.
 - In Norfolk, residents or groups seeking to nominate a person for an honorary street sign must apply to the City Council for consideration. Additionally, there is an annual limit on the number of honorees (seven per year, one in each ward) for permanent placement of signs to be paid for at no cost to residents.
 - In Portsmouth, residents request Council approval (without a formal application), but applications are reviewed by the City’s planning department and paid for by requestors. Portsmouth also has an annual limit.
- OCCOS staff consolidated their findings into a draft “Proposed Honorary Street Naming Process” document (attached). Special thanks to Ms. Joyce Davis for compiling this research and draft document.
- Government Operations Chair Katherin Jordan (2nd District) reviewed Ms. Davis’s draft process at her committee’s December 2024 meeting. Members could not come to a consensus on a specific policy, and asked OCCOS staff to develop a survey for members on various decision points. Will Perkins presented survey findings at the committee’s January 22, 2025 meeting:
 - 8 of 9 Councilmembers participated in the survey.
 - 5 of 8 members prefer that an outside body receive and review nominations prior to Council consideration, but there was no consensus on which body should do so.
 - 5 of 8 members prefer an annual limit on the number of honorary street sign nominations per year, but there was no consensus on the specific annual limit.
 - 7 of 8 members prefer that DPW be budgeted to pay for the manufacture and installation of honorary street signs.
 - Most members (6 of 8) agreed that only people should be eligible for this honor including both living and the dead (8 of 8), and that honorees should have to be or have been Richmond residents (7 of 8).
 - There was no consensus among members on the frequency with which the Council should consider nominations, however “monthly as

received" received the most votes (3 of 8) followed by semi-annually and quarterly (each received 2 of 8 votes).

- Councilmember Jordan considered amending the duties of the city's History and Culture Commission ("HCC", established via Ord. 2018-269; Code of City of Richmond Section 2-1187 *et. seq.*) to require that they review nominations through a formal application and vetting process. Unfortunately, the HCC is still in its early stages with fulfilling its formal duties and requested that this additional duty not be added at this time. Further, as mentioned above, there was no consensus among members as to whether the HCC was the appropriate body to review candidates prior to Council consideration.

Proposed New Policy:

- Based on the above research and input from administration agencies, Councilmember Jordan proposes the following new policy be adopted via Resolution taking effect July 1, 2025:

Purpose: Establish a policy for honorary street signs in the City of Richmond, VA with clear responsibilities for the City Council and the Department of Public Works.

Role of City Council: The City Council is responsible for receiving, reviewing and approving nominations for honorary street signs via resolution as well as hosting unveiling ceremonies (with support from the Office of the Council Chief of Staff).

Nominations:

- Residents, community organizations and others may submit nominations to Councilmembers for consideration at the full Council.
- Nominations should include written documentation of the nominated individual's connection to the City of Richmond, a description of his/her qualifications for receiving this honor, and a letter from a local civic association if applicable.

Eligibility and Qualifications:

- Nominations must be for individuals, who may be alive or dead, but must have been a resident of the City of Richmond for a significant period of their life.
- Nominees should be considered based on their historical or cultural significance, including any significant contributions to the community and City of Richmond.

Annual Limits:

- The City Council shall approve no more than 10 nominations for honorary street signs per fiscal year at no more than two formal Council meetings per year.

Unveiling Ceremonies

- The chief patron Councilmember for each approved honorary street sign may help facilitate an unveiling ceremony to celebrate with community members.

Role of Department of Public Works: The Department of Public Works is responsible for manufacturing, installing and maintaining honorary street signs, including installing replacement installations as necessary.

Budget

- The Department of Public Works should be budgeted in its general fund for this task, which as of Fiscal Year 2025, was estimated to be \$700 per installation.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Fiscal Impact Yes ☒ No ☐

Budget Amendment Required Yes ☐ No ☒

Estimated Cost or Revenue Impact:

\$7,000 (\$700 per sign x 10 signs per year) for the Department of Public Works.

The Department of Neighborhood and Community Services has subject matter expertise in managing community events and sufficient resources to manage any unveiling ceremonies scheduled.

Attachment/s Yes ☒

“Proposed Honorary Street Naming Process”



Richmond City Council

The Voice of the People

Richmond, Virginia

Office of the Council Chief of Staff

Honorary Street Sign Policy

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Honorary Street Sign Nomination Form

The Richmond City Council invites residents and community organizations to submit nominations for individuals to be recognized with an Honorary Street Sign to be manufactured, installed, and maintained by the City's Department of Public Works.

Please complete the following application, including submission of at least one letter of support from a local civic association (if applicable) and send it to a City Councilmember: <https://www.rva.gov/richmond-city-council/council-contacts>.

Applicant Information:

Name of Nominator (Individual or Organization): Click or tap here to enter text.

Contact Person (if organization): Click or tap here to enter text.

Address: Click or tap here to enter text.

Phone Number: Click or tap here to enter text.

Email: Click or tap here to enter text.

Relationship to Nominee: Click or tap here to enter text.

Nominee Information:

Full Name of Nominee: Click or tap here to enter text.

Connection to City of Richmond, VA (check all that apply):

☐ Born in Richmond, VA

☐ Raised in Richmond, VA

☐ Graduated from a Richmond, VA educational institution

☐ Represented Richmond, VA (please explain below):

Click or tap here to enter text.



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Qualifications:

Describe in detail the Nominee's historical or cultural significance, including any significant contributions to the community and City of Richmond:

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Requested Location:

Street name and block # (if applicable): [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Neighborhood: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Council District: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Supporting Documentation:

Please attach to this form a letter of support from a local civic organization (if applicable) from the neighborhood or community in which you request that the honorary street sign be placed.