

The Path to Langston Boulevard:

How Lee Highway Was Changed to a Better Name



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2021, the County Board of Arlington, Virginia, renamed Lee Highway to Langston Boulevard, honoring John Mercer Langston, an American abolitionist, attorney, educator, diplomat, and the first Black member of Congress from Virginia. The effort to rename the highway was initiated by the Langston Boulevard Alliance (LBA), previously known as the Lee Highway Alliance (LHA), just one year before. It was part of a more extensive community effort called Plan Lee Highway, which sought to revitalize Arlington's five-mile Lee Highway corridor.

The renaming effort sprang from the LBA's goal to create a more welcoming and equitable place for all those who live near, work on, or visit the Lee Highway corridor. It was advanced by the national dialog stemming from the mass protests on racism and equity throughout the United States in 2020. Yet at its heart, the desire to rename Lee Highway grew from feelings like those expressed by two prominent members of Arlington's Black community in a moving video in 2020. Saundra Green, a longtime resident, recalled instances of injustice that she and others had experienced along Lee Highway years ago, and then said, "Usually when you name something—a street, a school, anything—you're naming it in recognition of contributions a person made to a cause, a country." Robert E. Lee did not deserve this recognition. Wilma Jones, a longtime community activist, furthered the sentiment, "[This Lee Highway renaming] needs to be something showing Arlington valuing ALL the stories, the lives Lee Highway has touched."¹

Previous renaming projects in Arlington, like the one for the Jefferson Davis Highway, had required direction from county and state government leaders, yet the project to rename Lee Highway was a uniquely grassroots and community-driven process. More than 65 citizens representing Arlington's diverse communities worked with the LBA, encouraging and collecting public feedback and evaluating and recommending a new name. Due to the determination and effort of these contributors, the project was completed in record time, with input coming from across the Arlington community.

This document outlines the history, progression, and outcomes of the renaming process based on the experiences of those who contributed to the effort. It was completed in conjunction with the *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews* conducted in November and December 2023, which contained input from people who were closely involved with the process. This document and the corresponding interviews were made possible by a historic preservation grant from Arlington County, Virginia.

¹ "[Renaming Lee Highway](#)," video, Lee Highway Alliance, September 2020.

SETTING THE STAGE

Lee Highway History

Lee Highway originated from two existing roads, Little Falls Road and Georgetown and Falls Church Road. Before the Civil War, these roads served as the primary transportation routes from Falls Church and other towns west of the Chain Bridge. Once the war ended, there was a national need for more accessible and improved transportation to Washington, D.C. In 1867, the Virginia General Assembly approved the establishment and creation of the Georgetown and Fairfax Road, the precursor to Lee Highway, which was completed by 1900.²

As the prevalence of automobiles grew in the early part of the 20th century, the need for paved roads increased. After the Lincoln Highway was completed through the northern part of the U.S., discussions began about creating an auto route across the South. David Carlisle Humphreys, a Lexington, Va. native, suggested this start by extending the Valley Turnpike, Shenandoah Valley's main road, to connect Gettysburg, Pa., and Chattanooga, Tenn., and naming it "Lee Highway." Humphreys organized a meeting on the topic in the winter of 1919 in Roanoke, Va. It was at this meeting that the Lee Highway Association was initially formed. Although Lee Highway Association plans for an East-to-West transcontinental route through Southern states would take years longer to achieve, the original Lee Highway was defined by the Virginia General Assembly in 1922 as running from Washington, D.C., to Bristol, Tenn. (Figure 1).³



Figure 1. Lee Highway in the mid-1920s between Falls Church and the Fairfax courthouse (Image courtesy of the Department of Transportation, Dr. S.M. Johnson Photo Gallery).

² "[Lee Highway Briefing Book](#)," Department of Community Planning, Arlington County, March 2017.

³ Weingroff, Richard F. "Dr. S.M. Johnson - A Dreamer of Dreams." U.S. Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration. June 2017.

Humphreys, whose father-in-law served under Robert E. Lee in the Confederacy, believed that the name for the route, “Lee Highway,” was “a fitting and permanent memorial to and tribute of love, admiration, and respect for General Robert E. Lee from the people of Virginia.”⁴ The veneration of the otherwise disgraced Confederate general was highly prominent in the Lost Cause movement found in this period of the Jim Crow South.⁵ Lee was portrayed in the Lost Cause movement as a champion of a Confederacy who fought for just and heroic causes, rather than for the continuation of slavery and White supremacy.⁶ The reality is that the Lee Highway name honored a person who fought viciously against the United States and represented a past in which the Confederacy fought to keep Black people enslaved.

Along Arlington’s section of Lee Highway, some of the richest history can be found in the Hall’s Hill neighborhood. Founded in 1865 by formerly enslaved people, Hall’s Hill (Figure 2) was and is the commercial and social center of the Black community on the corridor. Fourth-generation Arlingtonian Wilma Jones Killgo says, “Lee Highway has always been a pivotal part of our neighborhood. [It] actually was a thriving area of Black businesses. There were barber shops. There...was a food store. Fire Station 8, which was the first fire station that was started and manned by Black volunteers below the Mason-Dixon line, was started in 1918.... Lee Highway was a place of commerce and comfort in those blocks...But there were other areas that were not as safe, and we talk about it being Lee Highway.”⁷



Figure 2. Hall’s Hill neighborhood along Lee Highway in the 1950s (Image courtesy of Columbia University)

Racial Inequity in Arlington

Modern Arlington is a progressive metropolitan community, but that was not the case in its not-so-distant past. For many decades after its creation, the Lee Highway corridor lived under the specter of

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Connelly, Thomas Lawrence, *The Marble Man: Robert E Lee and His Image in American Society*, LSU Press, 1978, 108.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Jones Killgo, Wilma, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 3, 2023.

local and state Jim Crow laws that legalized racial segregation. The historically Black community of Hall's Hill, situated centrally along Arlington's section of Lee Highway, suffered through segregation and painful inequities.

Jones Killgo remembers it this way, "When I was a child... the neighborhood was segregated. White people have always owned property in Hall's Hill, but after the plantation era ended, after the Civil War, it became 100% Black residents. The neighborhood was walled in on all of the sides...with this as a boundary between the Black neighborhoods and the White neighborhoods (Figure 3)."⁸



Figure 3. A masonry portion of the Hall's Hill segregation wall - date unknown (Image courtesy of Columbia University).

Since Virginia was a segregated state, Black residents did not find much of Lee Highway as open and welcoming as it was to White residents. Jones Killgo remembers, "It wasn't very safe sometimes to be a Black person... I'm specifically speaking of the Cherrydale neighborhood that had the Ku Klux Klan chapter."⁹ According to Jones Killgo, many Hall's Hill Black residents worked for White businesses and families in Cherrydale but knew it might not always be safe for them to be there, especially at night.¹⁰ Jones Killgo notes that Washington, D.C., was not segregated then, so many Hall's Hill residents traveled along Lee Highway to the city for shopping and medical needs.¹¹ They knew they needed to be careful if they traveled Lee Highway back home from the city, especially late on Friday and Saturday night. She says, "We knew that it was only really in those [Hall's Hill] blocks of Lee Highway where we really felt safe."¹²

Arlington also had a dark history with White supremacy. The American Nazi Party was formed in Arlington by George Lincoln Rockwell in 1958. Rockwell, a Nazi sympathizer, and Holocaust denier,

⁸ Jones Killgo, Wilma, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 3, 2023.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

chose Arlington because of its proximity to the nation's capital.¹³ According to long-time Arlington resident Sandra Green, the American Nazi Party used to march down Lee Highway.¹⁴ Green also remembers one impactful run-in during her youth at the Calloway Church, which had been founded along Lee Highway in 1865 by formerly enslaved people. "Calloway Church played a major role in integrating the schools in Arlington...There was a meeting to integrate the schools, and...the Nazi party stormed into my church."¹⁵ In June of 1960, the American Nazis, led by Rockwell, harassed the Black students protesting segregation at the People's Drug Store lunch counter on Lee Highway (Figure 4).¹⁶ The American Nazi Party was headquartered in Arlington until 1983.¹⁷



Figure 4. 1960 People's Drug sit-in protest, showing one of the harassers with a Nazi armband (Image courtesy of Columbia University).

Modern Lee Highway

By the time the renaming effort began, Arlington's Lee Highway corridor had grown from a country road to a multi-lane urban thoroughfare. It ran through a vastly different community than when it began, a community that now sought inclusivity and equity and wished not to honor Lee's name.

Today's Langston Boulevard (formerly Lee Highway) spans the entirety of Arlington County for over five miles, from Rosslyn to East Falls Church. It is a "major commuter road" within the County, giving Arlington residents access to commercial goods and dining options.¹⁸ The corridor also plays a vital role as the main street for the County's northern neighborhoods.

¹³ Lindberg, Linda, "[A Look into 25 Years of the American Nazi Party in Arlington, Virginia](#)," AARP Virginia, April 19, 2023.

¹⁴ Green, Sandra, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 1, 2023.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ "[Arlington Lunch Counter Sit-Ins](#)," Arlington Virginia Historic Preservation, Accessed January 16, 2023.

¹⁷ Lindberg, Linda, "[A Look into 25 Years of the American Nazi Party in Arlington, Virginia](#)," AARP Virginia, April 19, 2023.

¹⁸ "[Lee Highway Briefing Book](#)," Department of Community Planning, Arlington County. March 2017.

Today's Langston Boulevard corridor is home to around 23,000 residents, representing 10 percent of Arlington County's total population. Around 6,000 jobs are hosted along the corridor, creating active and vital commercial districts. The corridor is a mix of commercial districts and multi-family developments, bordered mostly by single-family-home neighborhoods. Roughly 18 of these neighborhoods border the corridor, represented by 14 civic associations. About 1,885 market-rate affordable housing units are located along the corridor, representing around 13 percent of the county's total.¹⁹

Since its inception, the Lee Highway Alliance had been a community organization that believed it was time to reconcile Arlington's past and move to a brighter future. This reconciliation included renaming the highway as part of the Plan Lee Highway vision.

ORIGINS OF THE RENAMING

Local Sentiments and Initiatives

The effort to rename Lee Highway originated with the Lee Highway Alliance (LHA). The LHA was a nonprofit organization formed in Arlington, Virginia, as a coalition of civic associations seeking to "create a joint community vision for a more economically vibrant, walkable, attractive Lee Highway corridor – one that benefits neighborhoods and the business community."²⁰ Founded in 2012, LHA's ultimate goal was developing a new General Land Use Plan (GLUP) for Lee Highway that would guide future rezoning and development applications in Arlington.²¹

The LHA was founded and led by Arlington community activists Sandi Chesrown and Ginger Brown. They met with the Arlington County Board in 2012 to recommend creating a vision for the Lee Highway corridor since it had not been replanned in over 60 years. They aimed to create an improved "Main Street" corridor for the neighboring communities. Chesrown remembers how the planning effort slowly gained momentum, "Although it was not a priority for the County, they paid for gradual engagement over the years, including a Visioning Study."²²

LHA's collaboration with Arlington County on the Visioning Study in 2016 helped to lay the groundwork for a comprehensive, long-term plan that would focus on key community elements, including land use, housing, transportation and connectivity improvements, urban design, open space

¹⁹ "[County Board Update: Charge Announcement](#)," Arlington Virginia: Plan Lee Highway, September 25, 2018, 4.

²⁰ "[Lee Highway Alliance](#)," LinkedIn, Accessed January 5, 2023.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Chesrown, Sandi, Written Interview Responses, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 14, 2023.

and parks, historic and cultural resource preservation, economic vitality, sustainability, and access to public facilities.²³ This evolved into a more comprehensive process starting in 2019 called Plan Lee Highway (now Plan Langston Boulevard). The Visioning Study and, more so, the Plan Lee Highway effort engaged the community to help develop a development plan for Lee Highway that could be completed by 2050.

In this plan, Lee Highway would become a “Green Main Street” of vibrant neighborhoods, linking local businesses, mixed-use activity hubs, sufficient and mixed housing supply, and signature public spaces (Figure 5).²⁴



Figure 5. A map outlining the Plan Lee Highway planning area in Arlington, Va. The Core Study Area signifies the Lee Highway/Langston Boulevard route. (Image courtesy of Arlington County).

While name-changing was not outlined in either the Visioning Study or early Plan Lee Highway proposals, the LHA believed that the name of the corridor should be changed to “better reflect community values and provide a more welcoming environment to all the people who live and work there – both now and in the future.”²⁵ In a moving video produced by LHA, Wilma Jones Killgo, a longtime resident and Black leader in the Hall’s Hill neighborhood, said firmly, “I think that there comes a time in history when you need to change in order to move ahead.”²⁶

LHA believed that both “Lee” and the word “Highway” needed to change. The corridor’s namesake, Gen. Robert E. Lee, represented an unwelcoming history of slavery and racist practices, and the word “highway” did little to convey the attractive “Main Street” envisioned. Chesrown adds, “His name [Lee’s] should not be honored and does not reflect the aspirations of Arlingtonians. The word ‘Highway’ reflected badly on our goal of strengthening our ‘Main Street.’”²⁷

²³ [“Lee Highway: Community Visioning 2012-2016,”](#) *Lee Highway Planning Initiative*, Arlington, Virginia, November 2016, 4-6.

²⁴ [“The Future of Lee Highway: PLH Update Community Forum Meetings,”](#) Arlington, Virginia, Plan Lee Highway, January 22, 2021, 7.

²⁵ “Renaming of Lee Highway Moving Forward: Community Input Sought for Next Step,” Press Release, Lee Highway Alliance, October 26, 2020.

²⁶ [“Renaming Lee Highway,”](#) video, Lee Highway Alliance, September 2020.

²⁷ Chesrown, Sandi, Written Interview Responses, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 14, 2023.

The LHA had recommended renaming Lee Highway to the Arlington County Board in 2014 but was turned down.²⁸ Chesrown remembers, “We continued to recommend County engagement [in renaming] over the years. They turned us down repeatedly as they saw it as a difficult political process.”²⁹ Ginger Brown recalls, “It didn't seem doable. I mean, that's changing a state highway in Virginia...[It was] just a pipe dream.”³⁰

But the renaming of another highway nearby (Jefferson Davis Highway, Route 1 in Arlington) soon reignited the effort to rename Lee Highway. In April 2019, the Arlington County Board approved a resolution requesting that the Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) move to rename the Jefferson Davis Highway to the Richmond Highway.³¹ At the time, there was interest from the online retail giant Amazon in moving to the area and opening a major facility near Route 1. Brown remembers, “They [Amazon] were coming to the area, and they couldn't have one of the main streets that their building was going to be on named after this Confederate.”³² The Jefferson Davis name was removed.

By early 2020, momentum was growing for renaming Lee Highway. Events in the summer of 2020 pushed the process forward even faster as a global social and political movement awakened, highlighting the struggle for Black lives.

Societal Influences

On May 25, 2020, in Minneapolis, a 46-year-old Black man, George Floyd, was murdered by a White police officer, Derek Chauvin. After being arrested for allegedly using a counterfeit \$20 bill, Floyd initially complied with officers but began struggling when they tried to put him in the back of a police car, stating that he was claustrophobic.³³ Floyd was taken to the ground, and Chauvin began kneeling across Floyd's back and neck despite his protests that he could not breathe. His knee remained there even after

²⁸ Chesrown, Sandi, Written Interview Responses, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 14, 2023.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Brown, Ginger (Executive Director, Langston Boulevard Alliance) in discussion with the author, December 5, 2023.

³¹ “[Route 1 in Arlington is Now Richmond Highway](#),” *Government: Arlington Events*, Arlington, Virginia, Accessed January 7, 2024.

³² Brown, Ginger (Executive Director, Langston Boulevard Alliance) in discussion with the author, December 5, 2023.

³³ “[George Floyd is Killed By a Police Officer, Igniting Historic Protests](#),” *This Day In History: May 25*, History Channel, 2020.

Floyd lost consciousness and stopped breathing.³⁴ Videos from witnesses quickly spread throughout social media, leading to nationwide demonstrations.³⁵

Floyd's death was one of several killings of unarmed Black citizens, often by White police officers, in the first part of 2020.³⁶ Demonstrators quickly took to the streets to protest entrenched issues of racial inequality and police brutality. Protests became so prevalent that by early June, curfews were enacted in 200 U.S. cities.³⁷ These protests became generally known as the Black Lives Matter movement (Figure 6).³⁸



Figure 6. Protesters in the streets of Milwaukee on May 28, 2020, after the killing of George Floyd. (Photo courtesy of Josh Hild via Pexels)

The seriousness of the offenses, followed by the breadth of the protests, fed a scrutiny of police brutality in American police departments along with the rise of a national dialog on racism and equality.³⁹ The movement and dialog soon came to Arlington (Figure 7). Julius D. (JD) Spain, Sr., a leader in the Arlington NAACP and an LHA Working Group member, remembers the impact: "Post-George Floyd...that incident triggered communities across America, including the NAACP, to carefully examine not just police practices, but...how folks were treated from the highest levels of our government."⁴⁰

³⁴ ["Former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin Pleads Guilty in Federal Court to Depriving George Floyd and a Minor Victim of Their Constitutional Rights,"](#) Press Release, U.S. Department of Justice Office of Public Affairs, December 15, 2021. (Chauvin was convicted on April 20, 2021.)

³⁵ ["George Floyd is Killed By a Police Officer, Igniting Historic Protests,"](#) *This Day In History: May 25*, History Channel, 2020.

³⁶ ["George Floyd is Killed By a Police Officer, Igniting Historic Protests,"](#) *This Day In History: May 25*, History Channel, 2020.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ ["George Floyd is Killed By a Police Officer, Igniting Historic Protests,"](#) *This Day In History: May 25*, History Channel, 2020.

⁴⁰ Spain, Julius (JD) Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 3, 2023.



Figure 7. Protesters in Arlington, Va., taking part in the Arlington NAACP's "We Are Done Dying" Rally. (Photo courtesy of ArlNow.com)

The national dialog led to symbolic changes in communities around the United States. Statues honoring Confederates, enslavers, or racists were removed in several cities, and an unprecedented renaming movement began for buildings, schools, public spaces, highways, and streets.⁴¹ In his article *Place (Re)Naming*, professor Jordan Basher wrote, "Communities, activists, and advocates are challenging long-standing place names that valorize historical figures associated with slavery, racial segregation settler colonialism, and imperialism, and confronting a lack of racial ethnic and gender diversity in the place name."⁴²

Removing symbols of racism and hate from people's daily lives and experiences became a focus in Arlington. The LHA again pushed the Arlington County Board to rename Lee Highway, this time taking a different approach. They asked the County Board if they could develop a renaming process centered on local civic association input and community involvement rather than through traditional government channels. Brown remembers, "You know, we were doing this 30-year vision for a new corridor, a 'Green Main Street,' and Lee Highway wasn't the vision we had. We asked if we could create a process on our own without the County's involvement, and they did not object. So that is what we did."⁴³ Katie Cristol, Arlington County Board Chair at the time, remembers, "In the months after the murder of George Floyd, certainly in time spent reflecting on the racial inequities that we were aware of in Arlington...I think that really created the dry tinder. That was probably the spark that lit the fire that became the renaming [of

⁴¹ Brasher, Jordan P, "Place (Re) Naming," *The Routledge Companion to the American Landscape*, Taylor & Francis, 2023, 247.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

Lee Highway]. And a real credit to the then Lee Highway Alliance, [they] came to us and said, ‘Look, we're prepared to lead this process [of renaming].’”⁴⁴

On July 17, 2020, the Arlington County Board approved LHA’s approach and they jointly announced the beginning of the Lee Highway renaming process.⁴⁵ The renaming process had officially begun.

THE RENAMING PROCESS UNFOLDS

The Team

The renaming of Lee Highway took a significant team effort but started with a small group. Six individuals with extensive experience working within the Arlington community formed the Steering Committee for the Renaming of Lee Highway (Steering Committee); they were Ginger Brown, LHA co-founder and Executive Director; Sandi Chesrown, LHA co-founder and Vice President; Elaine Furlow, LHA Board Member, and Communications Committee Chair; Paul Holland, Chair, Plan Lee Highway; Maia Potok-Holmes, LHA staff Communications Manager, and Matt Weinstein, who would also become Chair for the Renaming of Lee Highway Working Group. The Steering Committee provided focus and direction for a larger community group, continued monitoring and encouraging progress, and ensured that the process stayed true to the LHA’s overall goals.

Because of the limitations and lockdowns caused by the COVID-19 virus at the time, the team had to be creative in planning the project. Furlow recalls the first Steering Committee meetings, “We met outside because of germ worries...outside on somebody’s deck all wrapped up in blankets.”⁴⁶ The COVID-19 virus had also indirectly provided the funding to bootstrap the project. Brown recalls, “We gave up our (LHA) lease, so that... sort of freed up funding. So, we left our office space, took the money, and did the Working Group with the money.”⁴⁷

One of the Steering Committee’s first objectives was to build a community coalition of 25 citizens to serve on the Working Group. They wanted to ensure the Working Group was representative

⁴⁴ Cristol, Katie, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 21, 2023.

⁴⁵ Garvey, Libby, email from Arlington County Board to Ginger Brown (LHA), June 22, 2020.

⁴⁶ Furlow, Elaine, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 1, 2023.

⁴⁷ Brown, Ginger (Executive Director, Langston Boulevard Alliance) in discussion with the author, December 5, 2023.

and diverse.⁴⁸ Brown explains, “We have one fantastic, historically Black neighborhood in [our Lee Highway area], but overwhelmingly our community is not diverse. We wanted to make sure that it [the Working Group] was reflective of the county as a whole.”⁴⁹

This diversity was important in garnering community support for renaming Lee Highway. Brown explains, “We sought out folks that would be representative of the county as a whole, including business owners. We knew that they probably had the most [at stake] financially.”⁵⁰

Chesrown notes, “Ginger [Brown] and I knew a lot of people due to our involvement with Plan Lee Highway, and we involved dozens of them in the renaming process.⁵¹ Others came from the existing Community Advisory Committee (CAC) at the LHA. This team had been active for a couple of years, providing input and insight to planning efforts and communication with the many civic associations along Lee Highway.⁵² The Working Group was rounded out to include delegates from civic organizations not already represented on the CAC, small business owners, and representatives of the Lee Highway business community. (The Working Group members and affiliations can be found in

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⁴⁸ Brown, Ginger (Executive Director, Langston Boulevard Alliance) in discussion with the author, December 5, 2023.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

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Weingroff, Richard F., "Dr. S.M. Johnson - A Dreamer of Dreams." U.S. Department of Transportation/Federal Highway Administration. June 2017.

Weinstein, Matt, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 3, 2023.

APPENDIX 1.)

Throughout the renaming process, the Working Group sought input from advisory committees comprised of subject-matter experts. The committees included the Branding Advisory Group, Business and Property Owners Advisory Group, Institutional Advisory Group, Transportation Advisory Group, and LHA's Communications Committee.

Another person involved in the renaming process was former County Board member, Mary Hynes. Hynes and Jay Fiset were County Board members who encouraged the early Lee Highway re-planning effort. They assisted with getting staff support for educational forums, and supported funding for staff help with educational walking tours.

Kicking Things Off

By September 2020, the Steering Committee's work was underway. They had sent out invitations for the 25 positions, and conversations with state government officials and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) were ongoing.⁵³ The Steering Committee also began developing a survey to the businesses along Lee Highway so that they could better understand businesses' concerns and incorporate their recommendations.

⁵³ "Revised Action Plan – Lee Highway Alliance Renaming Process," Meeting Notes, Steering Committee for the Renaming of Lee Highway, August 21, 2020.

At the same time, renaming efforts were underway in many corners of the U.S. To create a comprehensive plan, Steering Committee members researched how other municipalities and organizations had worked through renaming. Steering Committee member Elaine Furlow recalls finding that, "The city of Atlanta didn't want to do a piecemeal operation of renaming one place or one statue. They wanted an overall process and some guidelines. So, I looked at what they had. That was helpful before we even got into our actual work. Yale University had done the same. The University of Mississippi had also done some guidelines that helped our Steering Committee."⁵⁴ Because of such diligence, the Steering Committee was able to outline a framework for the renaming process quickly and set an aggressive plan and schedule.

The plan called for Working Group meetings in October to collect input and agree on the process, input on new names coming from the community and Working Group through November and December, and name selection and handoff to the County Board by early 2021.⁵⁵

On September 23, 2020, the LHA sent out a press release and community flyer

⁵⁴ Furlow, Elaine, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 1, 2023.

⁵⁵ Furlow, Elaine, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 1, 2023.

announcing the launch of the renaming process. The LHA outlined why the renaming was happening and why replacing “Lee” and the word “Highway” was important. It detailed the importance of community input and outlined how the name selection would happen and who would be part of the decision. Most important, the press release emphasized that the effort was not to decide “if” Lee Highway would be renamed but how it would be renamed. This allowed the renaming process to move forward quickly without extended debate about *whether* to do it.

The Working Group’s Approach

Sandra Green, a 70-year resident of the Hall’s Hill neighborhood, describes why it was so important to her to take part in the process, “When the suggestion came that we might want to look at lobbying to rename it, I was in 100%...while I have fond memories of growing up on Hall’s Hill, I want my grandkids to understand what was ugly about the highway [Lee Highway] and that things can be changed for the better.”⁵⁶

With such strong emotions, and with a dedicated and diverse Working Group ready to go, their first meeting was held on September

16, 2020.⁵⁷ This and all subsequent meetings took place virtually, using the video conference tool Zoom, because of restrictions on social gatherings due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

After input from members on their personal goals for the renaming process, Working Group Chair Matt Weinstein outlined the work ahead. Each member was asked to actively participate in three to four meetings over the fall and winter. Over that time, the members were charged to:

- Promote community involvement in the naming process and encourage family, neighbors, friends, colleagues, and others to send names to the LHA website.⁵⁸
- Fine-tune and agree on the criteria for choosing names for Lee Highway. Final selections also should be based on the LHA’s guiding principles and should help establish a welcoming, economically vibrant, and attractive corridor of neighborhood places.
- Use the criteria to evaluate names submitted by the public, narrowing the list down to a workable number.
- Work with the Advisory Groups (Branding, Transportation, Business and Property

⁵⁶ Green, Sandra, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 1, 2023.

⁵⁷ Chesrown, Sandi, “Meeting Minutes,” Working Group for the Renaming of Lee Highway, September 16, 2020.

⁵⁸ Chesrown, Sandi, “Meeting Minutes,” LHA Working Group on Renaming Lee Highway, September 16, 2020.

Owners, Institutional, and Neighborhoods) to review the working name.

- Outline choices to the public and create a poll for their input.
- Identify one top recommendation for a new name and two to four alternatives.
- Send the Working Group’s recommendations to the LHA Board for review, after which they will be officially submitted to the Arlington County Board.

Community Involvement

From the beginning, the LHA team knew that transparency and community involvement were crucial to the success of the renaming process. Steering Committee member Elaine Furlow had long been involved in local politics and championed community transparency, stating that the process would “go much better if the public that’s going to be affected has a voice in the decision that’s to be made. It’s their town. They live here.”⁵⁹

Every Working Group meeting was live-streamed on Facebook, and recordings were available on the LHA website. Meeting minutes, documents, and project timelines for the renaming process were also available. All the decisions and milestones were announced through press releases, social media channels, emails, coverage through local online outlets

⁵⁹ Furlow, Elaine, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 1, 2023.

ArlNow and DCist, and regional media outlets like NPR and WTOP.⁶⁰

Public feedback and comments were welcomed and collected through the LHA website, social media channels, email, and ArlNow. Some of the few negative responses or questions from the community centered on the possible cost to taxpayers of renaming Lee Highway. A more sizable number of the comments were positive or supportive.⁶¹ Local online outlet ArlNow also opened a public poll on the project. Nearly 58 percent of poll responses supported the project.⁶²

The LHA also engaged the public through community events. LHA staff attended local festivals, activities, and farmer’s markets to both educate the community and collect feedback.⁶³

A valuable means of community engagement was the Working Group itself, which consisted of community activists and representatives of local civic associations. Represented were members of the local NAACP, Calloway Church, Cherrydale Citizens Association, Yorktown Civic Association, and the

⁶⁰ “County Board Presentation,” Working Group for the Renaming of Lee Highway, December 12, 2020, 9.

⁶¹ “Comments Received by the Community During the Lee Highway Renaming Process - Sept-Dec 2020” Lee Highway Alliance, December 2020.

⁶² “[Morning Poll: Time to Rename Lee Highway?](#)”, *Opinion*, ArlNow.com, June 24, 2020.

⁶³ Brown, Ginger (Executive Director, Langston Boulevard Alliance) in discussion with the author, December 5, 2023.

Lyon Village Citizens Association, among others.⁶⁴ The LHA provided a transparent forum and created rules of engagement to help the process flow more smoothly (Figure 8).



Figure 8. Screen shot of the 2nd Working Group meeting which took place over remotely over Zoom due to Covid-19 restrictions (Image courtesy of Langston Boulevard Alliance).

Working Group member Sandra Green remembers, “When we had [Working Group] meetings, everybody didn't always agree on things, and each community may have had their own concerns as it related to their community... that's what I liked about the process, that the Alliance took the initiative to engage with each community, to hear what they had to say because what may have excited me may not have excited another community.”⁶⁵

Working Group representatives from these groups opened the door to a large and diverse audience, and helped open lines of communication and collect valuable feedback within their communities. Communications

⁶⁴ “County Board Presentation,” Working Group for the Renaming of Lee Highway, December 12, 2020, 8.

⁶⁵ Green, Sandra, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 1, 2023.

Chair Furlow notes, “There are a number of different civic associations along this five-mile stretch of Langston Boulevard...and it is a sort of ripple effect to be able to send out to those civic association’s presidents because they each have their own lists and ways of outreach.”⁶⁶

As a long-time resident and member of Arlington’s historic Calloway Church, Sandra Green provided the link to one of the better-organized community groups. She found the LHA community engagement with Calloway Church compelling, remembering, “Whenever the Alliance met with civic groups, they always met with Calloway as well... That's what I liked about the process. They were very transparent.”⁶⁷

The process also included significant local business outreach since the address change caused by the renaming effort could have affected their operating costs. Twenty-one businesses along Lee Highway participated in a survey to better understand their needs around renaming.⁶⁸ A dedicated meeting was held with Lee Highway business owners to hear their

⁶⁶ Furlow, Elaine, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 1, 2023.

⁶⁷ Green, Sandra, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 1, 2023.

⁶⁸ Brown, Ginger (Executive Director, Langston Boulevard Alliance) in discussion with the author, December 5, 2023.

thoughts, hopes, and concerns regarding the renaming process.⁶⁹

The main concern heard from the business owners centered around changing signage and branding when their addresses changed. This concern was mitigated with guarantees that keeping a Lee Highway or Route 29 address would still be acceptable after the change. Mail would continue to be delivered to Lee Highway or Route 29 addresses, and any changes in signage and such were optional rather than mandatory.⁷⁰

These businesses began actively participating in public outreach. Many provided flyers and QR codes to their customers at their business locations.⁷¹ This contribution was enhanced by local business owners in the Working Group, including Lauren Harris from Little Ambassadors' Academy and Grace Abi-Najm Shea from Lebanese Taverna.

Lauren Harris recalls the importance to her of representing local businesses, "There's a lot of smaller businesses on the highway, mom-and-pop shops that maybe don't have as much outreach happening to them, and I wanted to

make sure that their voices were heard."⁷²

Harris also describes why her involvement was so personally meaningful, "It meant something for me to start my business here in a space...that hasn't always traditionally been open to African American business owners in general. So, being a part to rename from something that was oppressive [Lee Highway] to something that was more community-based...I just ...wanted to be a part of that."⁷³

Collecting public input on what to rename Lee Highway was a critical component of community engagement. During September and October 2020, the Working Group began collecting the community's ideas on names. This included a variety of channels — mailings, flyers, and input through the LHA website and social media. The Working Group also involved students at the schools along the corridor. The initial engagement, through email, online, and phone messages, garnered 500 messages and 186 name suggestions (see APPENDIX 2: NAMES SUBMITTED BY THE PUBLIC FOR RENAMING LEE HIGHWAY).

After the Working Group had narrowed the suggested names to a small set, another public polling effort helped to identify the top choices. The LHA mailed out more than 8,000 postcards (Figure 9) and distributed flyers to the

⁶⁹ "Business and Property Owners Advisory Group: Renaming Lee Highway," Meeting Slides, Lee Highway Alliance, November 16, 2020.

⁷⁰ Brown, Ginger (Executive Director, Langston Boulevard Alliance) in discussion with the author, December 5, 2023.

⁷¹ Business and Property Owners Advisory Group: Renaming Lee Highway," Meeting Slides, Lee Highway Alliance, November 16, 2020.

⁷² Harris, Lauren, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 9, 2023.

⁷³ Ibid.

local community and businesses, directing them to the poll.⁷⁴



Figure 9. Postcard (showing front and back) that was sent to more than 8,000 homes in Arlington (Designed by Amber Haynes. Image courtesy of Langston Boulevard Alliance).

The Working Group further partnered with community groups and churches, including the League of Women Voters, Saint Mary's Episcopal, Rock Spring United Church of Christ, Unitarian Universalist, and Saint Andrew's Episcopal, to distribute the information in their newsletters.⁷⁵ Finally, the Institutional Advisory Group worked with local schools along the Lee

Highway corridor to poll students and deliver flyers home to their families.⁷⁶

Lauren Harris, a Working Group member and owner of three Little Ambassadors' Academy schools along Lee Highway, remembers the importance of involving families, "We put it in all of our newsletters... we had QR codes all over the building. We really wanted our community members to include our families. Parents with young children...don't always know exactly what's happening with the community because they're busy raising their young children. I wanted to make sure that they knew what was going on, so their voice could be heard as well...."⁷⁷

The Working Group's goal was to ensure that as many community members as possible could participate in the naming poll. For instance, all public material was created in English and Spanish (Figure 10).

⁷⁴ "County Board Presentation," Working Group for the Renaming of Lee Highway, December 12, 2020, 8-9.

⁷⁵ County Board Presentation, Working Group for the Renaming of Lee Highway, December 12, 2020, 8-9.

⁷⁶ "Institutional Advisory Group on Renaming Lee Highway," Meeting Slides, Lee Highway Alliance, October 14, 2020.

⁷⁷ Harris, Lauren, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 9, 2023.



Figure 10. Flyer for the renaming poll shown in Spanish (Image courtesy of the Langston Boulevard Alliance).

The Working Group process proved successful, encouraging multiple voices while moving forward toward the end result. Over 3,400 poll responses came in. Sandra Green remembers, “...[People] knew that there would be different voices...but that the way that the voices came together made it easier. They knew there would be challenges, but they were able to get through them kind of together. To the different people that facilitated parts of the process, they did a great job.”⁷⁸

Ginger Brown further attributes the project’s success to the organization and management skills of the Working Group Chair,

⁷⁸ Green, Sandra, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 1, 2023.

Matt Weinstein. “Matt was an excellent leader. From organizing the process to running open and inclusive meetings to working behind the scenes with the state legislature, he deserves a lot of the credit for how smoothly the process went.”⁷⁹

Narrowing In on a Name

While the Arlington community provided many suggestions, the Working Group did most of the legwork to select the final recommendations. With guidance from the Steering Committee, the Working Group had earlier compiled five rules and six criteria (Table 1) to guide its work.

Table 1. Naming Rules and Criteria.

RULES	
1.	Name does not include, play on, or refer to the word “Lee.”
2.	Name is not already used for another street or road in Arlington.
3.	Name is not racially, culturally, sexually, or ethnically offensive.
4.	Consider names separately from road types.
5.	Name does not include Highway.
CRITERIA	
1.	Name is welcoming.
2.	Name effectively brands the corridor.
3.	Name increases public understanding of cultural history and racial equity.
4.	Name promotes “Main Street” character in accordance with the revisioning under Plan

⁷⁹ Brown, Ginger (Executive Director, Langston Boulevard Alliance) in discussion with the author, January 24, 2023.

Lee Highway.

- 5. Name is not frivolous.
- 6. Name is relevant to Arlington/Northern Virginia and to place (history, flora, culture, landscape, etc.).⁸⁰

With the rules and criteria in place, the Working Group moved quickly to complete the naming process in November and December 2020. Its work included:

- Based on the rules and criteria, evaluating the names submitted by the community.
- Meeting to narrow the lengthy list of names down to a short list of possibilities.
- Working with the Advisory Groups to help finalize the short list of names.
- Polling the community to help rank the top names.
- Taking all inputs into account to select one name and four alternates.

When the public submitted the first 186 names, an intensive effort was needed to narrow them down.

The Branding Advisory Group suggested that names should be connected to local history, place, or flora/fauna; be short and easy to spell; and tell a good story. The Institutional Advisory Group suggested that names should not already be represented in Arlington, and that they should contain both a first and last

name if a historical figure was selected. The Business and Property Owners Advisory Group suggested that names be easy to remember and spell, be memorable for use in advertising, not be easily confused with other street names, provide a sense of place and legacy, be timeless, and not be frivolous or controversial.⁸¹

Then one Saturday, a subgroup of the Working Group met for a marathon, six-hour session to evaluate the 186 community submissions.⁸² Submissions were evaluated by the Working Group’s rules and criteria, measured against the goals of Plan Lee Highway and the LHA, and valued for the benefit of the community. The group narrowed the field from 186 to 20, creating the short list for the next public poll (see Table 2).

Table 2. Short list of names, in alphabetical order.

	NAME	MEANING
1.	Arcova	Acronym for AR lington CO unty VA .
2.	Community	Aspirational for a unified Arlington and sense of “Main Street.”
3.	Dogwood	Virginia State tree.
4.	Dr. Edward T Morton	Arlington’s first Black physician; local community activist.
5.	Ella Baker	Civil and human rights activist.

⁸¹ Ibid, 12-13.

⁸² Brown, Ginger (Executive Director, Langston Boulevard Alliance) in discussion with the author, December 5, 2023.

⁸⁰ “County Board Presentation,” Working Group for the Renaming of Lee Highway, December 12, 2020, 7.

6. Equity	Aspirational for a fair and just Arlington.
7. Greenway	Future goal for Lee Highway based on LHA principles.
8. Harmony	Aspirational for a unified Arlington.
9. Inclusive	Aspirational for a more inclusive Arlington.
10. Innovation	Aspirational for Lee Highway becoming a center of innovation.
11. James E Brown	Long time Hall's Hill resident; organizer of the Arlington lunch counter protests; NAACP president.
12. John Glenn	Marine Corps aviator, engineer, astronaut, businessman and politician; first American to orbit the Earth. Resident of Arlington for several years.
13. John M. Langston	American abolitionist, attorney, educator, activist, diplomat, and politician; First Black person elected to Congress from Virginia.
14. Justice	Aspirational for creating a more just Arlington.
15. Leonard "Doc" Muse	Opened the Green Valley Pharmacy in 1952, which was the only one to serve the Black community, and which became a community gathering space.
16. Maggie Walker	Businesswoman and teacher; first Black woman to charter a bank in the U.S. and serve as its president.
17. Main Street	Revisioning Lee Highway and revitalizing old commercial areas.
18. Mildred and Richard Loving	Plaintiffs in the Supreme Court case of 1967 that legalized interracial marriage

	in the U.S.
19. Necostin	Native American people who inhabited Arlington prior to the 17th century; acknowledgment to those who came before us.
20. Unity	Aspirational for a unified and inclusive Arlington.

After polling the public and narrowing the field, the Working Group met for the last time on December 9, 2020, to produce the four alternates and a single frontrunner for renaming Lee Highway.⁸³ One name took the lead: Mildred and Richard Loving Avenue.

The four alternates, in rank order, were John M. Langston Boulevard, Ella Baker Boulevard, Dr. Edward T. Morton Avenue, and Main Street.

Loving Avenue Emerges

Mildred and Richard Loving were an interracial couple who married in Washington, D.C., in 1957 because the laws in their home state of Virginia forbade White and Black people from marriage at the time (Figure 11).⁸⁴ Soon after returning to Virginia, they were arrested and prosecuted for the crime of marrying the “wrong kind of person.”⁸⁵ The Lovings were

⁸³ “Recommendation of the Working Group on the Renaming of Lee Highway,” Presentation to the Arlington County Board, Lee Highway Alliance, December 15, 2020, 5.

⁸⁴ Loving, Mildred, *Loving for All*, Statement for the 40th Anniversary of the *Loving v. Virginia* Announcement, June 12, 2007, 1.

⁸⁵ Ibid

allowed to leave Virginia to avoid imprisonment, but they soon decided to fight their conviction. Mildred Loving said they did not fight for a cause but for their love.⁸⁶



Figure 11. Mildred and Richard Loving in 1966, just before *Loving v. Virginia* (Image courtesy of UMass Amherst, Rowland Scherman Collection).

Lawyers from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the NAACP Legal Defense & Education Fund took their case to the U.S. Supreme Court in a landmark civil rights case, *Loving v. Virginia*. On June 12, 1967, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously against Virginia, with Chief Justice Earl Warren pronouncing such laws unconstitutional as a matter of both due process and equal protection law.⁸⁷

The Lovings' story resonated with Arlingtonians. Working Group member Julius (JD) Spain Sr. describes why the recommendation for the Loving name was so strong, "We say 'Virginia is...for lovers.' That's our theme. The Loving family had their context

behind all that they did, and honestly, for me, being a person from a mixed marriage... I felt good about that." Spain continues, "The recommendation tells a lot about the time... when marriages...people were under attack. That would have been a good story about how we, regardless of our race, color, creed, or religion...that we are all here... to live up to our values.... That we're an inclusive, vibrant, flourishing city. And I thought that was great."⁸⁸

Spain was one of many board members who supported the Loving name. In ranked-choice voting, 21 of the 25 members strongly supported Mildred and Richard Loving Avenue as the replacement name for Lee Highway.⁸⁹ On December 15, 2020, the LHA Board and the Working Group submitted their recommendation to the Arlington County Board.⁹⁰

However, Mildred and Richard Loving Avenue was not to be. Former Arlington County Board Member Katie Cristol remembers the county's historic preservation staff recommending doing some due diligence with

⁸⁸ Spain, Julius "JD," Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 3, 2023.

⁸⁹ "Recommendation of the Working Group on the Renaming of Lee Highway," Presentation to the Arlington County Board, Lee Highway Alliance, December 15, 2020, 5

⁹⁰ "Recommendation of the Working Group on the Renaming of Lee Highway," Presentation to the Arlington County Board, Lee Highway Alliance, December 15, 2020, 5

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Gregory, John DeWitt, and Joanna L. Grossman, "The Legacy of Loving," *Howard LJ* 51, 2007, 15.

the Loving family since they were known to be very private by nature.⁹¹

Cristol elaborates on what transpired next: "Charlie Clark was a columnist and a sort of amateur historian in Arlington...who followed this process with a great deal of interest. He had reached out to me, and said, 'Has anybody talked to them [the family]?' Charlie sent me an article saying that in another community [trying to rename something to Loving]...the comments from the family were really pointed. It wasn't just that 'we're honored,' but...it was like, 'don't do this; our family wouldn't have wanted this'."⁹²

Neither Mildred nor Richard Loving was living in 2020, but their family still resided in Caroline County, Virginia. According to Cristol, who reached out to an official there,⁹³ the Loving family members did not even want to discuss renaming Lee Highway in Arlington. At that point, it seemed clear that the family did not wish to be involved and that the renaming should not happen without the family's consent. The Arlington County Board notified the LHA of their findings.

⁹¹ Cristol, Katie, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 21, 2023.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Cristol, Katie, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 21, 2023.

Pivoting to Langston Boulevard

With their first pick out of the picture, the Working Group quickly pivoted to its top alternate, John Mercer Langston (Figure 12). Langston was an American abolitionist, attorney, educator, activist, diplomat, and politician who was the first Black person elected to Congress from Virginia.⁹⁴ He also had deep ties to Arlington dating back to 1867 when he was the Inspector General of the Freedman's Bureau, which managed Freedman's Village, the camp for formerly enslaved people, in Arlington.⁹⁵



Figure 12. John M. Langston, shown when he was a professor at Howard University around 1860-1875 (Image courtesy of the Library of Congress).

⁹⁴ "Recommendation of the Working Group on the Renaming of Lee Highway," Presentation to the Arlington County Board, Lee Highway Alliance, December 15, 2020, 6

⁹⁵ "Recommendation of the Working Group on the Renaming of Lee Highway," Presentation to the Arlington County Board, Lee Highway Alliance, December 15, 2020, 6

Working Group member Sandra Green explains the importance of John M. Langston to the Arlington community. “The name Langston has had an incredible impact on the lives of so many African American children who grew up along the Lee Highway corridor. The name tells the story of the dark [racial] history of Arlington County as well as the County’s brightest time — when the four [Black] students who went to Langston Elementary were the first four students to integrate the Commonwealth of Virginia. The name tells the whole story of how Arlington has evolved and grown over the years.”⁹⁶ Green also takes pride in knowing that the suggestion for John M. Langston came directly from one of the Calloway Church members.⁹⁷

The transition to Langston was a relatively easy one for the Working Group. The name was not without precedent in Arlington, where the formerly segregated John M. Langston School was located directly along Lee Highway, and the John M. Langston Citizens Association was working toward the civic well-being of the High View Park community.

Additionally, his name had been a strong second in the rank-choice voting, and it

was preferred by some Working Group members. Jones Killgo remembers, “I felt like that was the spirit of our ancestors saying, ‘Hey, sometimes things...aren't going your way, but they end up turning out for good.’ I have no issue with the people who wanted that street to be the Lovings...but I also think that in the long run, the contributions of John M. Langston to the fabric of Arlington [are], in my opinion, more important.”⁹⁸ The change was submitted to the LHA Board, where it was approved unanimously, with one abstention, and the baton was passed to the Arlington County Board.⁹⁹

OUTCOME

Working With Local and State Governments

The Arlington County Board moved quickly on the recommendation from the LHA Board to rename Lee Highway to Langston Boulevard. Libby Garvey, then Arlington County Board Chair, responded to the LHA confirming the next steps, “We will use the requests we are receiving to inform the Board’s discussions of Arlington’s 2021 Legislative Package, which will be finalized late this fall, in advance of the

⁹⁶ “Recommendation of the Working Group on the Renaming of Lee Highway,” Presentation to the Arlington County Board, Lee Highway Alliance, December 15, 2020, 6

⁹⁷ Green, Sandra, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 1, 2023.

⁹⁸ Jones Killgo, Wilma, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 3, 2023.

⁹⁹ “[County Board Agenda Item, Meeting of July 17 2021](#),” Arlington County, July 2021, 1.

January 2021 legislative session.”¹⁰⁰ However, the authority to officially rename and replace Lee Highway stood with the state.

During the Lee Highway renaming processes, Mary Hynes, a Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) member, assisted with understanding the legislative procedures for renaming a VDOT-owned road. She helped to navigate a complex process that would coordinate efforts between the Virginia General Assembly (House of Delegates and Senate), Arlington County, the CTB, and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)

The LHA and Arlington County Board first worked with the Virginia legislature to expedite the renaming of Lee Highway. Working Group Chair Matt Weinstein explains why this was necessary, “VDOT owns and maintains Langston Boulevard and...localities can't do anything unless they're given permission to do so by the State.”¹⁰¹

Coordinating with the Arlington County Board, Weinstein took the step to get the renaming of Lee Highway on the state legislative agenda. He explains, “I reached out to Del. Rip Sullivan...he was very senior in the House Democratic caucus... and asked if he'd be willing to patron the bill to do this [rename Lee

Highway], and he did.”¹⁰² Del. Sullivan, representing the 48th District of Virginia, introduced HB 1854, titled *U.S. Route 29; County Manager Plan of Government*, to the General Assembly. When HB 1854 was introduced, Sullivan reportedly stated, “It is long past time to rid the Commonwealth of the legacies of Jim Crow and the Confederacy.”¹⁰³

Surprising many involved, Sullivan’s bill went through with little opposition. Weinstein remembers it this way, “Every time the bill got to a committee or subcommittee, he asked me to be available to testify...and my recollection really was (that) there was almost no discussion about this in the General Assembly. All Democrats voted for it, and most Republicans voted against it. But there was no discussion. They just voted no.”¹⁰⁴

HB 1854 was passed in the Virginia House and Senate by February 27, 2021.¹⁰⁵ The bill stated, “the board of any locality that has adopted the county manager plan of government (Arlington County) to name any section of U.S. Route 29 located within the boundaries of the locality. The bill provides that

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Chesrown, Sandi, Written Interview Responses, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 14, 2023.

¹⁰⁴ Weinstein, Matt, Interview, By Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 3, 2023.

¹⁰⁵ “[HB 1854 U.S. Route 29; County Manager Plan of Government](#),” Virginia’s Legislative Information System, Session 1, 2021.

¹⁰⁰ Garvey, Libby, email from Arlington County Board to Ginger Brown (LHA), June 22, 2020.

¹⁰¹ Weinstein, Matt, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 3, 2023.

the Department of Transportation will place and maintain appropriate signs that will be paid for by the locality.”¹⁰⁶ Under HB 1854, Del. Sullivan got the Assembly to grant authority to the Arlington County Board to rename the Arlington section of Route 29. It was signed into law by then Gov. Ralph Northam three weeks later and was scheduled to go into effect on July 1, 2021.¹⁰⁷ This passed the authority to rename Lee Highway back to Arlington County.

On July 17, 2021, the Arlington County Board voted unanimously to “Rename U.S. Route 29 to ‘Langston Boulevard’ within the boundaries of Arlington County, Va.”¹⁰⁸ The name was shortened from John M. Langston Boulevard to Langston Boulevard to improve wayfinding and reduce the financial costs.¹⁰⁹ The Board also approved the change of another section of road in Arlington called Old Lee Highway (see Old Lee Highway).

After the County Board approved the name of Langston Boulevard, County staff worked with the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to gain its approval and create a plan with VDOT for replacing the Lee Highway signage. This included more than 70 local intersection signs and 8 large freeway

signs along Interstate 66.¹¹⁰ Arlington County bore the cost, estimated at up to \$300,000.¹¹¹

The process of renaming Lee Highway had gone from idea to law in less than 10 months. Arlington County would begin changing signs soon after (Figure 13). Concurrently, the LHA used this occasion to rename itself the Langston Boulevard Alliance (LBA).



Figure 13. Arlington County Board member Libby Garvey (left) and an Arlington County employee held up a Langston Boulevard sign in September of 2021 (Image courtesy of Libby Garvey).

The speed and efficiency of the renaming process were remarkable. Steering Committee Member Elaine Furlow thinks back on it this way, “The fact that the LBA was willing to do this...we had a clear sense of the charge and a game plan. I frankly think because LBA did it...We [now] have a track record of having done it in months rather than years.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ “[County Board Agenda Item, Meeting of July 17, 2021](#),” Arlington County, July 2021, 1.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 5-6.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 2.

¹¹² Furlow, Elaine, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 1, 2023.

Langston Boulevard Becomes a Reality

By Fall 2021, Arlington County began to notify residents that signs along Lee Highway would be replaced starting in mid-October.¹¹³

Meanwhile, the newly named Langston Boulevard Alliance (LBA) commissioned a mural of John M. Langston in the historically Black neighborhood of Hall's Hill. Painted by artist Kaliq Crosby, the mural portrayed the boulevard's namesake and commemorated the struggles for racial equality throughout Arlington (Figure 14).¹¹⁴



Figure 14. The John M. Langston mural in the Hall's Hill neighborhood of Arlington (Image courtesy of All Arlington).

On October 1, 2021, the LBA began a public celebration commemorating the renaming of Langston Boulevard with a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new John M. Langston mural (Figure 15 and Figure 16). The next day featured a festival that included a walking tour uncovering Lee Highway's history of racial

discrimination (Figure 17 and Figure 18).¹¹⁵

These events served as a triumphant conclusion to the hard work and dedication of the volunteers, activists, and government staff involved in the Langston Boulevard Renaming.



Figure 15. Announcement for the John M. Langston mural ribbon-cutting on October 1, 2021. (Image courtesy of the Langston Boulevard Alliance).



Figure 16. Ribbon cutting ceremony for the John M. Langston mural (Image courtesy of Cindy Kane Photography).

¹¹³ "Langston Boulevard Changes Coming Fall 2021," Postcard Mailer, Arlington County, October, 2021.

¹¹⁴ Taube, David, "New Mural Celebrates Langston Blvd Renaming," *Around Town*, ArlNow.com, September 20, 2021.

¹¹⁵ Tebo, Eliza, "Local Artists Headline Langston Boulevard Renaming Events," *Arlington Magazine*, October 1, 2021.



Figure 17. Pop-up gallery for the celebration of renaming Langston Boulevard (Image courtesy of Cindy Kane Photography).



Figure 18. Announcement for the Langston Boulevard celebration on October 2, 2021 (Image courtesy of the Langston Boulevard Alliance).

Old Lee Highway

Aligning to the success of Langston Boulevard, a separate process began to rename Route 309 or Old Lee Highway, a short stretch of nearby roadway. As the LBA reported at the time, “The County Board gave the go-ahead to conduct an abbreviated renaming process (over four months), with the expectation that two to three names would be delivered to the Board's October 2021 meeting.”¹

A small committee formed, comprised of LBA staff and representatives of the Waverly Hills Civic Association and Cherrydale Citizens Association, since Route 309 goes only through those two neighborhoods. The committee recommended that the road be called Cherry Hill Road after debating two alternatives, Waverly Way and Cherry Hill Lane. Following authorization from the General Assembly, support from the County Board, and approval from the CTB, Old Lee Highway was renamed Cherry Hill Road (Figure 19).



Figure 19. Map showing the newly renamed Langston Boulevard and Cherry Hill Road (Image courtesy of Arlington County).

The Significance of Langston Boulevard

What's in a name? When it came to renaming Lee Highway, the answer was "a lot." Renaming Lee Highway to Langston Boulevard was so important to Arlington resident Nadia Conyers and her young daughter Arrington (daughter and granddaughter of Working Group member Sandra Green) that they wrote a children's book about it. In the dedication of that book (*From Lee Highway to Langston Boulevard*), Nadia Conyers wrote, "...Changing names is part of moving from one period in history to another. Words matter. Names matter. And representation matters!"¹¹⁶

LHA Vice President Sandi Chesrown noted, "We cannot change the history of Virginia. But the names of streets and highways matter and indicate a community's contemporary values."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Conyers, Nadia and Arrington, *From Lee Highway to Langston Boulevard*, Self-Published, 2021.

¹¹⁷ "County Kicking Off Lee Highway Renaming Process," News, ArlNow.com, July 17, 2020.

Reflections on the Renaming Effort

Several citizens involved in the Langston Boulevard renaming effort have also reflected on why it was important to the current and future residents of Arlington.

"I think [it] was an important shift to articulate the county's actual values and priorities and correct a hundred years of tortured history. At the grander level...it shows what the community can do. None of us are elected officials, but we were able to come up with a process and do something that will have a lasting impact on the community. It shows what can be done if people put their minds to it and work together."¹¹⁸

Matt Weinstein

Working Group Chair; Land Use and Zoning Attorney

"I grew up on Lee Highway. Had all kinds of ties to Lee Highway. A lot of my interaction as a child was positive, but there were things that were going on during that time to my people that were not pleasant things. There were businesses that wouldn't cater to us on Lee Highway...there was a restaurant called Tops, it was one of those first hamburger places. Well, when I was growing up, we could not go into Tops and eat. We had to go to the back door and get our food through the window. So, there

¹¹⁸ Weinstein, Matt, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 3, 2023.

were things like that that were affiliated with Lee Highway that were ugly. Point blank, ugly. So, to change the name from Robert E. Lee, who was a racist beyond racist slaveholder...wanted no gains for African Americans...to change that name and have all the other aspects of life to change...with things integrated...with Blacks, having many more rights than they ever had...and to rename that corridor helps. It'll never erase it, but it helps. It brings a new dignity...It points to a new way of life on that corridor for me."¹¹⁹

Saundra Green

Working Group member; Calloway Church member and historian; third-generation Arlingtonian

"I think it's really important to know that the culture of the community, at that time, wanted to have a street name that was inclusive and not glorifying someone whose beliefs were not inclusive...It was really important for us, as Arlingtonians, to have a street that reflects our values of community...and all the things that we feel so proud of. When you think of those things you definitely don't think of him [Robert E. Lee]...It's important...for future generations to realize how to feel proud of the streets that they live on...they're going to ride their bikes on and walk on and do all these things [on]. And so, we

¹¹⁹ Green, Saundra, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 1, 2023.

took on this effort to make sure that you guys knew that you belong here."¹²⁰

Lauren Harris

Working Group member; Owner, Little Ambassadors' Academy

"The name change honors someone who is important to our history and has been instrumental to Virginia as the first Black Congressman, John Mercer Langston. This educational process will continue for many years as people see the name and want to learn about his many contributions, including his role as the founder of Howard University Law School and his lineage as the uncle of Langston Hughes, the incredible poet. For many years, the Hall's Hill community has also been known as the John M. Langston Civic Association, and our community center in their neighborhood is the Langston Brown Community Center. This association strengthens the historical linkages and elevates the visibility of Hall's Hill as the historical civil rights and Black heritage 'heart' of the corridor."¹²¹

Sandi Chesrown

Steering Committee member; VP, Lee Highway Alliance

¹²⁰ Harris, Lauren, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 9, 2023.

¹²¹ Chesrown, Sandi, Written Interview Responses, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 14, 2023.

“We live in a moment that was similar to the civil rights era in the 1950s and ‘60s. At a time when we had large-scale tragedy...that made world news and called many communities to reflect if everyone was getting treated equally...If our communities were living up to the ideals of who we are and what they represent. And so, Arlington County took a strong look at symbols and logos and highways, to see if it was reflective of the community of the time. The County...set out on a mission to rename the highway...to be more reflective and inclusive of the community. You know, Lee Highway, how it was changed to [Langston] Boulevard...that was a symbol of inspiration but also a symbol to not forget the challenges that many had in America...”¹²²

JD Spain

Working Group member; President, NAACP Arlington

“...America began to have a reckoning about its history...and some very brave people made decisions to try to bring an equitable view of what Arlington is about. I would say that unfortunately...the needle was moved...because of some terrible things that happened in our country, not just in Arlington, but...George Floyd's murder and police brutality. I am hopeful that the changing of the names and getting rid

¹²² Spain, Julius “JD,” Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 3, 2023.

of honoring people who really were not honorable...is going to make our community more of a welcoming community to all kinds of people. The people who have been here for generations... people who may not even be born in the United States, who may still see the United States as a beacon of freedom. But my hope is that...like Martin Luther King's famous quote about the arc of justice...it's slow, but it bends...to what is right. This change of Lee Highway to Langston Boulevard is just one of those little things that pushes that arc in the right way.”¹²³

Wilma Jones Killgo

Working Group member; President, John M. Langston Citizens Association; fourth-generation Hall's Hill resident

“I think about the twin achievements... of that long-range plan [Plan Lee Highway], which is a 40- to 50-year plan, and this idea of names [that] reflect our values. At a time when we were envisioning the future...there was such a desire to have a name that reflected this community's values of equity and inclusion. And...this is a community that has always had what I have come to think of as this fundamental tension of wanting to be progressive... and being attached to its status quo. I think more happened in those couple of years...of the racial reckoning prompted by the

¹²³ Jones Killgo, Wilma, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 3, 2023.

murder of George Floyd, with the seeds laid before that...our neighboring community, Charlottesville. The pendulum got yanked to progress and change and turmoil...and it caused a lot of conflict that I think needed to be had in Arlington. This [renaming] is a positive symbol of that moment of turmoil and change.”¹²⁴

Katie Cristol

Former Arlington County Board member

“I think most people can grasp that there's injustice of some sort. If we think back to giving women the right to vote...people now would be incredulous and say, ‘Why didn't they have it?’ People do need a kind of context. For example, my family went to Atlanta and to the Martin Luther King Museum...my kids, who were just youngsters then, saw a video in which a firehose was turned on Black people... when the kids found out that people had been treated that way with these forceful firehose blasts, and that it was not uncommon to be treated in bad ways like that...[they] just had trouble believing that. You have to give folks a context for the situation that was changed that made life better...And here this is a tiny thing [renaming Lee Highway] that we can do to try to remedy some of those

injustices of treating people as if they're not equal.”¹²⁵

Elaine Furlow

Steering Committee member; Lee Highway Alliance Communications Committee Chair

WORDS OF THANKS FROM LBA

The Langston Boulevard Alliance (LBA) set out with a clear goal to create a more welcoming and equitable community, in part by renaming Lee Highway. The LBA knew the importance of transparency and community involvement through its past work and interactions with community activists and civic associations. These deep community connections helped to power the Langston Boulevard renaming process, and showed how grassroots, community-driven projects can create a more inclusive long-term community vision.

The LBA gives heartfelt thanks to our community, both long-time residents and newcomers alike, and to the Arlington County staff for their many efforts and contributions that helped make this renaming effort a success.

¹²⁴ Cristol, Katie, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 21, 2023.

¹²⁵ Furlow, Elaine, Interview, by Bennett King, *Langston Boulevard Renaming Project Contributor Interviews*, November 1, 2023.

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APPENDIX 1: ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Langston Boulevard Alliance acknowledges these contributors to the Lee Highway renaming effort.

NAME	AFFILIATION
STEERING COMMITTEE	
Matt Weinstein	Member, Steering Committee and Chair of Working Group; LHA Board
Elaine Furlow	LHA Board and Chair, Communications Committee
Paul Holland	Chair, Plan Lee Highway; Waverly Hills Civic Association
Sandi Chesrown	Vice Chair, Plan Lee Highway and VP; LHA
Ginger Brown	Executive Director; LHA
Maia Potok-Holmes	Communications Manager, LHA Staff
WORKING GROUP	
Tom Wolfe	Leeway Overlee Civic Association
Wilma Jones Killgo	John M. Langston Citizens Association
Sandra Green	LHA CAC; Calloway Church
Jim Todd	Cherrydale Civic Association
Ben Keeney	North Highlands Civic Association
Richard Price	LHA Board and CAC; Woodmont Civic Association
Mike Cantwell	LHA Board; President Yorktown Civic Association
Bill Braswell	LHA CAC; Tara Leeway Heights Civic Association
Mike Hogan	LHA CAC; Old Dominion Civic Association
Diane Kelly	LHA CAC; President, Waycroft Woodlawn Civic Association
Andy Rude	LHA CAC; Lyon Village Civic Association
Lauren Harris	Owner, Little Ambassadors' Academy
Julius (JD) Spain Sr.	Arlington Branch President and Regional VP, NAACP
Minneh Kane	Woodmont resident
Annie Moyer	Sun Moon Yoga Studio
Grace Abi-Najm Shea	Lebanese Taverna
Lynn Coates	Representing Countywide Arts
Anika Kwinana	Chair, Arlington Arts Commission; Black Lives Matter and Arlington for Justice
Jeff Joseph	LHA Board, R.E.A.D
LHA COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE	
Edith Gravely	LHA Board and Heritage Committee; John M. Langston Citizens Association
Michele Cornwell	LHA Board; Represents Property Owner Lyon Village Shopping Center
Michelle Winters	LHA Board; Alliance for Affordable Housing; ; WWCA
Cindy Kane	Photographer
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Rick Morris	Executive VP, Smith & Harroff, PR & Marketing Firm; Founder LHA Library; resident Rock Spring

Pamela Gillen	LHA Board; Principal, ESOARC Architects
Patrick Brennan	LHA CAC; Maywood CA
Ellen Booth	Former National Geographic Marketing; Waverly Hills resident
Amber Haynes	Graphic designer for LHA; Waycroft Woodlawn resident
Don Partlan	Landscape architect, LHA Open Space; Waverly Hills resident
Greg Hamilton	Arlington Magazine
Desiree Stolar	North Rosslyn resident, marketing expert
BUSINESS AND PROPERTY OWNERS ADVISORY GROUP	
Michele Horwitz Cornwell	Lyon Village Shopping Center
Laura London	Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAH); LHA Board
Matt Rowan	VP, Dominion Electric
Tim Hughes	Bean Kinney Korman; Board of Arlington's Leadership Center for Excellence; Fellow of the DMV Diversity & Inclusion Institute
Connie Kousis	Lee Lexington Shopping Center
Anne Cronin	McEneaney Realtors
Devika Wimalkantha	BB&T/Truist Bank
Jimmy Hakima	KH Art Framing
INSTITUTIONAL ADVISORY GROUP	
Barbara Kanninen	Former Arlington School Board Member
Michael Weinstein	Leeway Overlee Civic Association; Lee Community Center
Daniel Seikaly	GlebeWood Civic Association
Maura Seikaly	GlebeWood Civic Association
Whytni Kernodle	Black Parents of Arlington
Kathy Dwyer	Senior Pastor, Rock Spring United Church of Church
Gordon Mantler	St. Mary's Episcopal Church
Renee Harber	Principal, Swanson Middle School
Ellen Smith	Principal, Dorothy Hamm Middle School; LHA partner, Make No Small Plans and Desegregation of Stratford
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY GROUP	
Chris Forinash	Transportation expert; Old Dominion Civic Association
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Kathy Stokes	Waverly Hills
Bruce Michaels	Waverly Hills
Harry Spector	Cherrydale condos
Elizabeth Baker	Tara Leeway
Walsh Colucci	Tara Leeway
John Ikeda	North Highlands
Michael Vora	Yorktown
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Joseph Gorman	
David Ansel	
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LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT PARTNERS	
Del. Rip Sullivan	Representative, 48 th District, Virginia House of Delegates
Mary Hynes	Commonwealth Transportation Board; Former Arlington County Board Member
Arlington County Board	
County Manager's Office Staff	
Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)	
Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)	
Arlington Department of Environmental Services (DES)	
Arlington Community Planning and Housing Development (CPHD)	

APPENDIX 2: NAMES SUBMITTED BY THE PUBLIC FOR RENAMING LEE HIGHWAY

SUGGESTED NAME	DESCRIPTION	SOURCE
Includes/Refers to the Word Lee		
Brig. Gen. Edward M. Lee	Was an American Union brevet brigadier general during the period of the American Civil War. He received his appointment as brevet brigadier general dated to March 13, 1865. Also known as an early supporter for women's suffrage.	Community Member
Bruce Lee	Lee Jun-fan, commonly known as Bruce Lee, was a Chinese, Hong Kong American actor, director, martial artist, martial arts instructor and philosopher.	Community Members
Francis Lightfoot Lee	Member of the House of Burgesses in the Colony of Virginia, an active protester regarding issues such as the Stamp Act, helped move the colony in the direction of independence from Britain, delegate to the Virginia Conventions and the Continental Congress. He was a signer of the Articles of Confederation and the Declaration of Independence as a representative of Virginia.	Community Member
General Charles Henry Lee	Charles Henry Lee served as a general of the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War.	Community Member
Grant & Lee	Grant: 18th president of the United States and Commanding General of Union Army.	Community Member
Lee	Commanding General of Confederate Army	Community Member
Harper Lee	American novelist best known for her 1960 novel <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	Community Members
Le	French word for "the"	Community Member
Lee	For Robert E. Lee	Community Member
Lehigh Way		Community Member
Lighthouse Harry Lee	9th Governor of Virginia and as the VA Representative to the U.S. Congress. Cavalry officer in the Continental Army. Was the father of Robert E. Lee.	Community Members
Philip Lee	Slave of the Custis family and nephew of George Washington's slave William (Billy) Lee.	Community Member
Rebecca Lee Crumpler	First Black female physician. Moved to Virginia after the Civil War care for newly freed slaves whom white physicians would not help.	Community Member
Rev. George W. Lee	Black civil rights leader, minister, and entrepreneur. He was a vice president of the Regional Council of Negro Leadership and head of the	Community Member

	Belzoni, Miss., branch of NAACP.	
Richard Henry Lee	American statesman and Founding Father from Virginia best known for the June 1776 Lee Resolution, the motion in the Second Continental Congress calling for the colonies' independence from Great Britain.	Community Members
The Robert E. Lee	Commanding General of Confederate Army and slaveowner.	Community Member
Samuel Philips Lee	Grew up in Fairfax County, was a U.S. Navy officer and a cousin of Robert E. Lee. When the Civil War came, he remained loyal to the Union, fought against the Confederacy, and rose to the rank of Admiral.	Community Member
Spike Lee	American film director, producer, screenwriter, actor, and professor	Community Members
Stan Lee	American comic book writer, editor, publisher, and producer. Was Marvel Comics' primary creative leader for two decades.	Community Members
William Lee	Born a slave but died a free man. William Lee was George Washington's slave and personal valet and served in the Revolutionary War.	Community Members
Lee Highway/Northern Virginia History		
Alfred Clark/Clark	In 1957, he became the first African American fire captain in Arlington County when he was put in charge of Fire station #8, which is located on Lee Highway and is a historic Arlington site.	Working Group Member and Community Member
Benjamin Banneker/Banneker	A Black, self-taught mathematician and astronomer who helped with the survey of Washington, D.C. that eventually culminated in the retroceding of land for Arlington to the Commonwealth of Virginia.	NAACP and Community Member
Charles P. Monroe	Arlington native, community-builder and only County Board Member to die at the dais	Community Member
Dr. Charles R. Drew	One of Arlington's own, the Black surgeon who pioneered blood plasma research in WW II that saved thousands of lives of American soldiers. Also established the first modern blood bank and bloodmobiles (earned the distinction "the father of the blood bank" – initially, he was not permitted to give blood due to being Black).	Branding Advisory Group Member, Community Member
Dr. Leonard "Doc" Muse	Opened the Green Valley Pharmacy in September 1952. When Green Valley Pharmacy opened, no other pharmacies in Arlington welcomed the Black community.	Community Members
Evelyn Syphax	Born Evelyn Reid in Lynchburg, Virginia and moved to Arlington. Taught in Arlington Public Schools. Because Arlington did not provide a preschool system for African-American youths, Evelyn launched the Syphax Child Care Center in 1963. She also started the first Montessori School program in the county.	Arlington for Justice
Frank Wilson	Longtime Arlington School Board Member.	Community Member
Gwendolyn Greene	A leader and participant in the Lee Hwy lunch counter sit-ins.	Community

		Member
James Parks	James Parks was a slave at Arlington House and was freed in 1862. Parks worked at Arlington National Cemetery for the rest of his life as an employee of the War Dept. He dug graves, performed maintenance work and helped construct nearby Forts McPherson and Whipple (which became Fort Myer). He is the only person buried in Arlington National Cemetery who was born on the property.	Branding Advisory Group Member
Joan Trumpauer Mulholland	American civil rights activist and a Freedom Rider from Arlington, Va. She is known for taking part in sit-ins.	NAACP, Swanson Middle School Student, Community Members
John Emmet	One of the first faculty at the University of Virginia and namesake of the Old Dorm.	Community Member
John D. Read	Lived near present-day Lee Highway in Falls Church. Was an abolitionist and part of the Pro-Union home guard. He was captured and later executed by Confederate raiders.	Community Member
Langston	American abolitionist, attorney, educator, activist, diplomat, and politician. First Black person elected to Congress from Virginia. Lee Highway runs right past the Langston-Brown Community Center.	Community Members
Necostin	An Algonquian-speaking people (also called Nacotchtanks) who lived on Roosevelt Island and on the shores of the Potomac River.(Roosevelt Island was originally called Necostin Island or Anacostien Isle.) Members of the tribe greeted John Smith in 1608. By the late 1600s, the Necostins left the area due to disease, war, etc.	Branding Advisory Group Member
Stratford	The first public secondary school in the Commonwealth of Virginia to desegregate. Located on Lee Highway.	Community Member
William Syphax	William T. Syphax was an Arlington home and apartment builder and developer who was active in civic, education, and church groups	Arlington for Justice and Community Members
Wunder	Reference to Wunder's Crossroads which was the Northeast corner of Lee Highway and North Glebe Road. Reference to the many APS schools along/near it (Tuckahoe, Langston, Discovery, Glebe, Hamm, Taylor, Key, etc.).	Community Member
Virginia History		
Commonwealth	"An independent country or community, especially a democratic republic" - Commonwealth of Virginia	Working Group Member and Community Member
Dred Scott	An enslaved Black man in the U.S. who unsuccessfully sued for his freedom and that of his wife and their two daughters in the <i>Dred Scott v. Sandford</i> case of 1857.	Community Member

Dorothy Hamm/Hamm	Leading figure in the civil rights movement in the Commonwealth of Virginia. An author, teacher, and elections officer.	Community Members
Henry Garnett Shirley	Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Highways, a leader in national highway policy and oversaw the development of an extensive state highway system in Virginia. Graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in 1896.	Community Member
Jouett	American farmer and politician in Virginia and Kentucky, but may be best known for his heroic 40-mile ride during the American Revolution.	Swanson Middle School Student
Loving	The Lovings were the plaintiffs in the landmark Supreme Court case of 1967 that legalized interracial marriage in the United States and was an important watershed event in the dismantling of Jim Crow race laws. "I think Loving Highway would not only be a lovely name, but also a potentially symbolic counterpoint to the name it replaces and a fitting expression of the kind of society that we are still striving to become."	NAACP, Steering Committee Member, Branding Advisory Group Member, Community Members
Monacan	With over 2,300 citizens, the Monacan Nation is a federally recognized tribe. Bear Mountain in Amherst County has been the home of the Monacan people for more than 10,000 years. The earliest written histories of Virginia record that in 1607, the James River Monacan (along with their Mannahoac allies on the Rappahannock River) controlled the area between the Fall Line in Richmond and the Blue Ridge Mountains.	Community Member
Oliver W. Hill	Black man from Virginia who was the lead attorney for the Virginia State Conference of the NAACP. He and his colleagues filed more legal challenges to segregation than any other lawyers in the South and successfully undermined segregation and discrimination in all walks of life. Was a leading lawyer in <i>Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward</i> - 1 of 5 suits consolidated in the Supreme Court case, <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> .	Working Group Member
Pocahontas	Indigenous woman notable for her association with the colonial settlement at Jamestown, Virginia. She was the daughter of Powhatan, the paramount chief of a network of tributary tribes in the Tsenacommacah, encompassing the Tidewater region of Virginia.	Community Member
Virginia is for Lovers	Slogan for the state of Virginia.	Community Member
U.S. History		
Atwater	Lee Atwater was an American political consultant and strategist for the Republican Party.	Community Member
Delano	Franklin Delano Roosevelt was an American politician who served as the 32nd President of the United States.	Community Member

Eleanor Roosevelt	American political figure, diplomat and activist. She served as the First Lady of the United States from March 4, 1933, to April 12, 1945. Advocated for expanded roles for women in the workplace, the civil rights of African Americans and Asian Americans, and the rights of World War II refugees.	Community Member
John Lewis	American statesman and civil rights leader who served in the U.S. House of Representatives, one of the "Big Six" leaders of groups who organized the 1963 March on Washington, led the first of three Selma-to-Montgomery marches across the Edmund Pettus Bridge. In an incident which became known as Bloody Sunday, state troopers and police attacked the marchers, including Lewis.	Community Members
Lincoln	16th President of the United States from 1861 to 1865. Led the nation through the American Civil War, signed Emancipation Proclamation.	Community Members
"Pick a name from one of the Algonquian, Siouan, or Iroquoian languages"	North American native languages.	Community Member
Ruth Bader Ginsburg or Ginsburg	Supreme Court Justice and advocate for gender equality and women's rights.	Community Members
Washington	1st President of the United States.	Community Members
Flora/Fauna/Landscape		
Cardinal	Virginia State bird	Community Members
Dogwood	Virginia State tree	Community Member
Redtail	In reference to the "red-tailed hawk" known for its short and typically red tail.	Community Member
Shenandoah	Shenandoah National Park extends along the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia. The Skyline Drive runs its length, and a vast network of trails includes a section of the long-distance Appalachian Trail.	Community Member
Sunset		Community Member
Neighborhoods, Places, and Roads		
29	Route 29	Community Members
Atlantic		Community Member
Arcova	Acronym for AR lington CO unty VA	Community Member
Arlington		Community

		Members
Arlington Main Street		Community Member
Arlington Ridge	Arlington Ridge is an unincorporated community in Arlington County	Community Member
Cherry Hill	Combination of Cherrydale and Waverly Place	Community Member
Cherrydale	Neighborhood in North Arlington	Community Member
Crossman	Crossman dairy farm that was in East Falls Church	Community Member
Dominion		Community Member
Falls Church-Georgetown		Community Member
Hall's Hill	Historically Black neighborhood on the Lee Hwy corridor. Home to Fire Station 8, Calloway Church, etc.	NAACP
Key	"Originates at Key Bridge, near Key Elementary School and Key Blvd"	Community Member
Leesburg	SR 7 is named Leesburg Pike all the way across Fairfax County.	Community Member
North Arlington	"Why not give it a simple name reflecting where it is?"	Community Members
Old Dominion		Community Members
Potomac	Potomac River; Potomac, Md.	Community Members
Rosslyn		Community Members
Rosslyn-Falls Church		Community Member
South Arlington Liberation		Community Member
Broader Ideals		
Abolitionist	Abolitionism, or the abolitionist movement, was the movement to end slavery.	Community Members
America		Community Member
Alliance		Community Member
Comity	Respectful and civil behavior toward others	Community Member
Community		Community Member

Connection		Community Member
Constitution		Community Member
Democracy		Community Member
Diversity		NAACP
Dream	"Arlington is a place where the American Dream is realized"	Community Member
Free		Swanson Middle School Student
Freedom		NAACP, Working Group Member, Community Members
Good Hope		Community Member
Greatness		Community Member
Greenway	Based on LHA's Guiding Principles	Working Group Member
Harmony		NAACP
Heritage		Working Group Member
Inclusionary		Community Member
Independence		Swanson Middle School Student
Innovation		Working Group Member
Inspiration		Community Member
International		NAACP
Justice		Community Member
Legacy		Community Member
Liberation		Community Member
Liberty		Community Members
Love		Community Member

Main Street	Used to denote a primary retail street of a village, town or small city. It is usually a focal point for shops and retailers in the central business district, and is most often used in reference to retail and socializing.	Working Group Member, Community Member
Memorial	"It is all-inclusive without threatening or choosing sides: Firefighters who risk their lives every day, healthcare workers who keep us from the harm of unseen contagions, military veterans who defend our freedom around the world, police officers killed in the line of duty, and on."	Community Member
Neighborhood		Community Member
Neighborly		
Patriot		Community Member
Progress		Working Group Member
Prosperity		Community Member
Reconciliation		Community Member
Union		Community Member
United		Community Member
Unity		Community Member
Racial Equity/History		
Angela Davis	American political activist, philosopher, academic, and author.	Community Member
BLM/Black Lives Matter	Political and social movement advocating for non-violent civil disobedience in protest against incidents of police brutality and all racially motivated violence against Black people.	NAACP, Community Members
Douglass	Frederick Douglass was an American social reformer, abolitionist, orator, writer, and statesman. After escaping from slavery in Maryland, he became a national leader of the abolitionist movement in Massachusetts and New York, becoming famous for his oratory and incisive anti-slavery writings.	Community Members
Emmett	Emmett Till was a 14-year-old African American who was lynched in Mississippi in 1955, after being accused of offending a white woman in her family's grocery store.	Working Group Member, Community Members
Harriet Tubman	American abolitionist and political activist. She escaped slavery and rescued approximately 70 enslaved people using the Underground Railroad.	Swanson Middle School student, Community Member

Ida B. Wells	American investigative journalist, educator, and an early leader in the civil rights movement. She was one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.	Community Member
Maggie Walker	Businesswoman and teacher, first Black woman to charter a bank and serve as its president in the U.S., achieved successes with the vision to make tangible improvements in the way of life for Black Americans.	Working Group Member
MLK/Martin Luther King	Social activist and Baptist minister who played a key role in the American civil rights movement.	Community Members
Monroe Trotter	Newspaper editor, real estate businessman, and an activist for civil rights.	Community Members
Nat Turner	Black American slave who led an effective, historical, and sustained slave rebellion.	Community Members
Thurgood	Thurgood Marshall was an American lawyer and civil rights activist who served as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court.	Community Member
Sojourner/Truth	Black abolitionist and women's rights activist. Truth was born into slavery in Swartekill, New York, but escaped with her infant daughter to freedom in 1826.	Community Member
Living Political Figures		
Barack Obama/Obama	45th U.S. President, first Black President of the United States. Could also fit Racial Equity/History.	Working Group Members, Community Members
Trump	46th U.S. President	Community Member
Military History		
Appomattox	Place where Gen. Lee surrendered to Gen. Grant causing the end of the Civil War and victory of the Union.	Community Members
Bedford Boys	Three sets of brothers from Virginia who were killed during the landing on D-Day.	Community Member
Chamberlain	Joshua Chamberlain was an American college professor from Maine who volunteered during the Civil War to join the Union Army. He became a highly respected and decorated Union officer, reaching the rank of brigadier general.	Community Member
David M. Brown	U.S. Navy captain and a NASA astronaut. He died on his first spaceflight, when the space shuttle Columbia disintegrated during orbital reentry into the Earth's atmosphere.	Community Member
Grace Hopper	American computer scientist and U.S. Navy Rear Admiral. One of the first programmers of the Harvard Mark I computer, she was a pioneer of computer programming who invented one of the first linkers.	Community Member

John Glenn	U.S. Marine Corps aviator, engineer, astronaut, businessman and politician. He was the first American to orbit the Earth.	Community Members
Mary Elizabeth Bowser (Mary Jane Richards Denman)	Was a slave turned Union spy during the Civil War.	Community Member
Meigs	Montgomery Meigs was a career U.S. Army officer and civil engineer who served as Quartermaster General during and after the American Civil War.	Community Member
George Catlett Marshall	American general, soldier and statesman. He rose through the U.S. Army to become Chief of Staff under presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman, then served as Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense under Truman.	Community Member
George Henry Thomas	George Henry Thomas was a U.S. Army officer and a Union general during the American Civil War, one of the principal commanders in the Western Theater.	Community Member
Grant/Ulysses S. Grant	18th president of the United States and Commanding General of the Union Army.	Community Members
Patton	General of the U.S. Army who commanded the U.S. Seventh Army in the Mediterranean theater of World War II, and the U.S. Third Army in France and Germany after the Allied invasion of Normandy in June 1944.	Community Member
Philip Sheridan	Career U.S. Army officer and a Union general in the American Civil War.	Community Member
Other		
All Lives Matter	Slogan that has come to be associated with criticism of the Black Lives Matter movement.	Community Member
Bee		Community Members
Fragile Snowflake		Community Member
Freed Slaves		Community Member
The Great American Way		Community Member
Highway McHighway Face		Community Member
LED	Led Zeppelin or LED Lights	Community Member
Poto	"Backside," "bum," "butt"	Community Member
Rainbow		Community Member
Roberta Flack	American singer/songwriter and activist	Community

		Member
Speedtrap		Community Member
Streety McStreety Face		Community Member
Virginia Creeper		Community Member
Western		Working Group Member
Woke	"Alert to injustice in society, especially racism"	Community Member