



## Loudoun County, Virginia

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Board of Supervisors Approves New Names for Route 7 and Route 50**

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors has voted to approve new names for Harry Byrd Highway (Route 7) and John Mosby Highway (Route 50) within Loudoun County. The Board's vote follows its September 2020 decision to inventory Confederate and segregationist symbols in the county, such as roads, buildings, markers and monuments, for renaming consideration.

“People who supported the enslavement of others and the segregation of Americans should not continue to be honored today by having roads and facilities named after them or statues on display to pay tribute to them,” said Board of Supervisors Vice Chair and Sterling District Supervisor Koran T. Saines. “The Board recommended these name changes and is taking additional steps to rename other features in the county that are within our purview because it is the right thing to do to demonstrate Loudoun is known as a moral and inclusive community.”

During the December 7, 2021 meeting, the Board approved changing the name of Harry Byrd Highway to Leesburg Pike and changing the name of John Mosby Highway to Little River Turnpike. These designations honor the names traditionally used for these roads, which were developed as major transportation and trade routes between Alexandria and the Shenandoah Valley in the early 1800s.

The Board's action affects the segments of Route 7 and Route 50 in unincorporated areas of Loudoun County. It does not affect segments of Route 7 and Route 50 within the county's incorporated towns.

The roadway names recommended by the Board will be sent to the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) in early 2022 for final approval. Approval by VDOT and CTB is required for state-controlled primary highways, such as Route 7 and Route 50.

Loudoun County conducted a thorough public process for identifying and recommending new names. A task force, comprised of community representatives and members of the county's Heritage Commission, was created to conduct research, engage the public, review public name submissions and recommend alternative road names to the Board.

Route 7 extends across the entire county and connects with Clarke County to the west and Fairfax County to the east. In Fairfax County, immediately adjacent to Loudoun, Route 7 is named Leesburg Pike. The name Harry Byrd Highway continues into Clarke County. Harry F. Byrd Sr. was the governor of Virginia from 1926 to 1930 and a U.S. senator from 1933 to 1965. A proponent of Virginia's highway system, he was an opponent of school desegregation. The State Highway Commission named Route 7 in memory of Harry Byrd in 1968.

Route 50 extends across the entire county and connects with Fauquier County to the west and Fairfax County to the east. The General Assembly named Route 50 in Loudoun and Fauquier counties in memory of John Singleton Mosby, a Confederate Army colonel, in 1982.

In addition to meeting local and state naming standards, the names were required to be appropriate to Loudoun County and Northern Virginia history and culture; reflect the natural or cultural geography of Loudoun County; not already used or sound like another street in Loudoun County; and be considerate, sensitive and respectful to all Loudoun County residents.

Once the highway renaming receives final approval from the state, Loudoun County will provide information and resources for those affected by the changes. The county is developing a grant program to assist impacted businesses with costs related to address changes.

For more information about the renaming of Route 7 and Route 50, including a link to sign up for updates about the project, visit [loudoun.gov/renaming7and50](https://loudoun.gov/renaming7and50).

### **Background & Future Action**

Renaming Route 7 and Route 50 are among several projects that have resulted from the Board's September 2020 decision to identify and review Confederate and segregationist symbols in the county. Since the review was completed in July 2021, the Board has approved measures to address, change or prohibit the current and future naming of county roads after Confederate or segregationist figures, symbols or slogans.

In addition to changing the names of Routes 7 and 50, the Board will also consider at its January 18, 2022, meeting whether to change the name of Kephart Bridge Landing, which is a trailhead and canoe launch facility located within Elizabeth Mills Riverfront Park. The landing was originally named for George Kephart, a slave trader who owned land along Goose Creek. Following a public process that included engaging the community on possible names, the county's Parks, Recreation and Open Space Board recommended changing the landing's name to "Riverpoint Drive Trailhead."

The county's inventory also identified Jeb Stuart Road, located in the Philomont area, which has been named for Confederate General James Ewell Brown "Jeb" Stuart since 1962, and Fort Johnston Road, just west of the Town of Leesburg, which references a Civil War-era fort named for Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston. On November 3, 2021, the Board approved moving forward on renaming these two roads. The county will soon begin a similar public road renaming process involving those in the area who may be affected by address changes resulting from the renaming.

In addition, the county will engage the Town of Round Hill in a coordinated effort to rename streets identified in the inventory that are located within the Hillwood Estates subdivision, because portions of some of these roads fall outside of Loudoun County's jurisdiction.

More information about the Board's initiative is available on the [Review of Confederate & Segregationist Symbols webpage](#).