



**Stakeholder Advisory Group
Final Report and Recommendations
To the Mayor and City Council**

September 9, 2021

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background	4
Purpose	4
Process	5
RECOMMENDATIONS	6
City Seal	7
Monuments and Markers	9
Street and Neighborhood Names	12
Conclusion and Future Process Recommendations	15
Appendix A – Listening and Learning Sessions	16
Appendix B – Monuments and Markers List	21

Notes on the Report and Recommendations

The Lost Cause, as referred to in this report *“is an interpretation of the American Civil War (1861–1865) that seeks to present the war, from the perspective of Confederates, in the best possible terms. ... For this reason, many historians have labeled the Lost Cause a myth or a legend.”*¹

While some members of the Advisory Group were selected to represent specific community groups and organizations, this report, and the recommendations contained herein, have not been submitted for endorsement by those groups and organizations as a whole.

¹ <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/lost-cause-the/>

Background

In the midst of an increase in the national consciousness about social issues and the outcry for racial healing, the Fairfax City Council embarked on a process to engage the community on issues of concern to residents who live, work and play in the City. In recognition of the strength in the diversity within the community, the Council acknowledged the need for a broader community conversation around issues of racial and social equity, systemic racism, symbolism, and identity.

In the Fall of 2020, the Fairfax City Council developed and approved a process and timeline for “Connecting Fairfax City For All,” an initiative seeking to catalyze a process of listening and learning from the community to enable the City to discern what actions may be taken to create a more equitable and inclusive future community for all City residents, businesses, and visitors. The initiative had two facets – creating and implementing a series of community Listening and Learning Sessions, and the appointment of a diverse, 16-member Stakeholder Advisory Group to make recommendations to Council on a path forward that would promote the inclusiveness of the City in alignment with community values -- specifically by examining Confederate related street and place names, historical markers and monuments, and elements within the City seal.

Purpose

The Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG or Group), was created by the City Council with the purpose of “engaging in dialogue about issues regarding the City’s historical past and its current issues regarding equity, inclusion, and social justice in order to make recommendations to City Council to shape the desired future in alignment with Council’s goals of building an inclusive community.” According to its charter, the Group was expected “to engage in dialogue about ways in which Fairfax City can take actions to create a more inclusive community.” The SAG’s work “is not limited to, but will specifically include, examining and making a set of recommendations to City Council regarding the City’s nomenclature, Confederate-related street and place names, historical markers and monuments, and elements in the city seal.”

Process

The SAG was appointed in early January of 2021 and had its first meeting on January 28, 2021. The SAG meetings were designed and facilitated using an intentional process that enabled the SAG members to build relationships, share personal stories, and aspirations for the community and, develop a shared understanding of one another's perspectives. This allowed group members the opportunity to learn, expand their own perspectives, and collaborate to create collective recommendations for City Council consideration to enhance the City as a community that is welcoming to all. The Group members reflect a range of experiences, ages, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and areas of residence within the City, as well as businesses and community groups. For its first two meetings, the SAG members learned about one another, developed agreements on how the Group would operate and make decisions identified their desired method for decision making (striving for consensus where possible), discussed their perspectives about what makes for an inclusive community, and what they aspire Fairfax City to be as a place to live, work and play. These early conversations were critical in developing a strong foundation for more difficult conversations that followed. The SAG met twice a month, in small and large group settings where each conversation built off the challenges of the previous conversations. Through this process, the members learned and developed an understanding, respect, and an appreciation for each other's perspectives.

In a parallel process with the SAG meetings, the SAG members also participated in the City's Community Listening and Learning sessions, which were planned and coordinated by Susan Gray, Director of Historic Resources. The public was encouraged to participate in each Listening and Learning session. These sessions were held twice a month from February through June and included presentations from a range of speakers, including renowned historians and authors, non-profit and school leaders, and representatives from other local governments. These sessions also provided opportunity for facilitated dialogue with members of the community. The SAG members learned alongside each other and had the opportunity to hear perspectives of other community members – this awareness shaped their own conversations and deliberations on the issues they were charged with considering. (See Appendix A for full listing of Listening and Learning Session Topics)

Having engaged in this months-long multi-faceted process, the SAG now presents the following recommendations for City Council's consideration.

SAG
RECOMMENDATIONS
ON
*** CITY SEAL**
*** MONUMENTS AND MARKERS**
*** STREET AND NEIGHBORHOOD NAMES**

I. City Seal Recommendation

A. Principles

The Stakeholder Advisory Group developed the following principles when considering the appropriateness of the city seal. The city's seal should:

1. **Include elements that reflect our ideals of inclusivity and equity**
2. **Reflect a welcoming and inclusive community**
3. **Reflect the current residents and values of Fairfax City**
4. **Be simple and easy to understand**

B. Recommendations

The Stakeholder Advisory Group adopted the following recommendations:

1. **Discontinue using the current city seal. Develop a process to replace or revise the seal to remove elements that do not reflect the city's values and to retain elements that do reflect city values.**
 - a) **Elements that reflect city values and priorities and could remain on a new seal**
 - Current shape of design- reflects unity and works well with values of inclusivity and diversity
 - Consider keeping motto
 - Dogwood flowers
 - b) **Elements that do not reflect city values and priorities and should be changed on a new seal**
 - Should not single out historical individuals for representation on the seal
 - In particular, the following depictions should be removed:
 - Confederate Soldier, John Quincy Marr. The city seal should not honor Confederate figures
 - Lord Fairfax. The British Lord has no direct connection to what is geographically now Fairfax City. In addition, the current image is historically inaccurate
2. **Consider the following suggestions in developing a new seal:**
 - a) **Develop a community process or competition for developing a redesigned city seal that is consistent with these important elements**

- b) Change the focus of the seal away from individual people to broader themes about ideals, geography, or the diversity of the city**
- c) Reconsider the use of the Coat of Arms for more contemporary elements**

II. Monuments and Markers

A. Principles

The Stakeholder Advisory Group developed the following key principles to guide consideration of Markers and Monuments in the City:

- 1. Mark significant historical events to educate the public about them, not memorialize/celebrate the events**
- 2. Present accurate, objective, and complete information**
- 3. Place markers in accurate and appropriate locations, as closely linked to the location of the remembered event as possible**
- 4. Look for and make use of opportunities to educate/teach, adding more information where needed**
- 5. Consider the impact of markers and monuments on contemporary residents and visitors**
- 6. Broaden the scope of the history that is marked beyond the Civil War**
- 7. Respect cemeteries as resting places of human beings and refrain from dehumanizing them, instead add context where needed**

B. Scope of Recommendations

The list of monuments and markers in Fairfax City was divided into three categories (See Appendix B). The Group evaluated the list and chose to focus specifically on recommendations about the category of monuments and markers with specific Confederate connections, while looking for opportunities to expand the historical context of the full spectrum of monuments and markers. The Group expects that the historical experts responsible for those installations, including personnel in the City's Office of Historic Resources, will continue to look for opportunities to improve and revise these markers, but did not see the need to comment specifically on the content in light of the Group's focus and charge.

In the listing of monuments and markers with specific Confederate connections, after discussion about the scope of the charge and the ability of Fairfax City to impact change, the Group decided that it was outside its scope to make decisions on the Mosby Monument that is located on private property, so is not making a recommendation on this monument.

1. Considerations & Criteria for Recommendations on Current and Future Markers

- a) Proper and objective historical context is critical for any monument or marker, especially those that are connected to the Civil War.**

- b) Any language that explicitly or implicitly promotes or could be conflated with the pro-Confederacy/Lost Cause narrative on current markers needs to be changed or adequately contextualized and avoided on future markers.
- c) Exact verbiage and content should be developed by the Office of Historic Resources.
- d) There is a wealth of history in Fairfax City beyond the Civil War and Confederate legacy - future markers & monuments should recognize the broad spectrum of people, groups, events and time periods of historical significance in the City.

C. Recommendations

The Stakeholder Advisory Group adopted the following recommendations with regard to two categories of monuments and markers:

1. Cemetery Memorials

- a) The SAG spent considerable time deliberating about the two Civil War-related memorials in the City cemetery:
 - Monument to Confederate Dead
 - United Daughters of the Confederacy Monument

The SAG is not recommending any changes to these two memorials.

- b) The SAG is recommending an interpretive display or “wayside” interpretive marker that puts these two memorials into context, explaining who erected them, when and why. This could be incorporated with a larger marker or physical indicators of other (non-confederate or civil war) events related to the Cemetery space. The SAG was particularly interested in incorporating the story of the first African American school adjacent to the cemetery grounds. The SAG felt strongly about the need to respect the humanity of the soldiers buried under and around these memorials and leave them in place. The SAG recommends providing the modern audience more context about how and why those memorials were created and to provide a broader story about Fairfax City that does not emphasize only Confederate history.

2. Historic Markers

- a) The SAG reviewed the text and location of 7 historic markers that wholly or in part address Confederate-related history; these include:
 - Mosby’s Midnight Raid
 - Ford House/Building
 - Moore House
 - Joshua Gunnell House
 - W.P. Gunnell House
 - Old Town Hall

- Spies, Mosby, and Marr

The SAG was comfortable with each of the events/locations continuing to be marked in some way.

- b)** The SAG is recommending that the text of each of these markers be reviewed by the Office of Historic Resources and, where necessary, revisions be made to ensure historical accuracy and ensure non present a “Lost Cause” perspective on the historical events.
- c)** The SAG is making specific recommendations on several of the markers:
- Mosby’s Midnight Raid
 - Text needs revision to more objectively describe the events of the raid without relying on verbiage that is pro-Mosby/anti-United States (such as “to weaken the armies invading Virginia” and to change ‘anti-Union’ to ‘anti-United States’ or anti-United States Army”)
 - Location of the marker is incorrect to mark where the raid took place and should be considered for relocation to a more historically correct location in the City.
 - Ford House/Building, Moore House, Joshua Gunnell House and W.P. Gunnell House
 - A broader history of the locations could place the Confederate connection currently described in the markers in context.
 - Consider whether there is additional history that could be added about the sites.
 - Old Town Hall
 - While no immediate changes are needed, if and when the marker is updated, the reference to “Union” should be replaced with “United States Army.”
 - Spies, Mosby, and Marr
 - Support the planned revision of the text and maker to tell a broader story
- d)** Additionally, the SAG felt it is important for the City to use its historical markers program to acknowledge and address other elements of the City’s history, particularly the history of minority communities. One example of a new or updated marker discussed by the SAG is for Old Fairfax High School indicating that the school was originally segregated and when Fairfax public schools were desegregated.

III. Street and Neighborhood Names

A. Principles

The Stakeholder Advisory Group developed the following **key principles** that guided the Group in considering Street and Neighborhood Names in the City:

- 1. Names should foster a sense of community and welcoming and not be insensitive or hurtful. The Group believes that confederate and strong slavery associations are insensitive and hurtful to many members of our community.**
- 2. Consider impact of street and neighborhood names on future generations, and whether these names foster a sense of community and make it more welcoming.**
- 3. Inform the community on the reasons and rationale for changes**
- 4. Minimize negative impacts on residents or businesses of any proposed changes**
- 5. Maximize the lessons learned from other communities**

B. Scope of the Recommendations

The SAG recognizes that the goal of creating an inclusive community goes beyond changes to names of streets. In this section of the proceedings, the Group focused on the specific task requested of the SAG by the Fairfax City Council, while acknowledging additional steps that should be considered:

The charge was to “[e]ngage in dialogue about ways in which Fairfax City can take actions to create a more inclusive community... examining and making a set of recommendations to City Council regarding the City’s nomenclature, Confederate-related street and place names...”To accomplish this, the Group reviewed information from city staff on the origins and history of street and neighborhood names within the city.

The SAG, with support from city staff:

- 1. Decided on a list of terms/etc., that are insensitive or hurtful to many community members**
- 2. Considered street names and place names associated with Confederacy, Confederate soldiers as candidates for change**
- 3. Considered street names and place names with strong slavery connections as candidates for change**

C. Recommendations:

The Stakeholder Advisory Group adopted the following recommendations²:

- 1. The City Council should immediately adopt a policy regarding the naming of streets and neighborhoods based on the recommendations outlined here and begin implementation of a process to change the following street names:**

Streets and Neighborhoods Named for Specific Confederate Leaders/Soldiers or Closely Associated with the Confederacy, Slavery, or the “Lost Cause” -- this group includes any names referring to Robert E. Lee, John Singleton Mosby, Stonewall Jackson, or George Pickett, and includes:

- Lee Highway
- Old Lee Highway
- Old Lee Hills (Subdivision)
- Pickett Road*
- Old Pickett Road*
- Pickett’s Reserve (Subdivision)
- Mosby Road
- Mosby Woods (Subdivision)
- Plantation Parkway
- Confederate Lane
- Raider Lane
- Ranger Road
- Reb Street
- Scarlet Circle
- Singleton Circle
- Traveler Street
- Mosby Woods Drive
- Stonewall Estates (Subdivision)
- Stonewall Avenue
- Lee Street

² The representatives from Historic Fairfax City, Inc., and Mosby Woods Community Association abstained from this recommendation.

The group considered streets named after George Pickett (a Confederate officer). After extensive research, the group discovered that Pickett Road and Old Picket Road were named after a Fairfax attorney by the name of George Pickett in the 1950s. Given the clarification that Pickett and Old Pickett Roads did not have a direct Confederate connection, the group is not making a recommendation as part of this process, and recommends a future review under a different charge.

2. Because the way in which these changes are implemented is as important as the changes themselves, the City Council should adopt several key strategies:

- a. Engage the community in a process for selecting new street and neighborhood names.**
 - The city should intentionally engage residents who live on streets and in neighborhoods that are recommended for change, as well as similarly affected businesses.
- b. Minimize negative Impacts for residents and businesses on those streets.**
 - The city should adopt a plan to mitigate the financial impact for any residents, homeowners, or businesses located on the streets and neighborhoods being renamed. We propose having Fairfax City cover any costs to change licenses, etc. and to have as many changes as possible made by the City government itself.
 - Provide support for residents and businesses in making the changes. There should be a designated phone number to call that will connect residents with an employee who can assist those that need assistance.
 - Set a date for change with enough notice to give affected residents an opportunity to plan for the changes (this should be as soon as staff can identify is reasonably possible).
- c. Engage the Fairfax City Community in a reconciliation/healing process**
 - The Group recognizes that the issue of street and neighborhood name changes has caused tension and has impacted relationships among neighbors, particularly in Mosby Woods. A reconciliation or healing process is needed following the decision to allow the community members on all sides to move forward together to build a stronger Fairfax City community.
- d. Inform the community on the reasons and rationale for changes.**
 - Consider the impact of current names on future generations and whether these names reflect inclusivity, foster a sense of community and make it more welcoming. Make clear that the goal of these changes is to promote caring and inclusivity.
 - Focus on the modern-day impact of the names on community members.

- Recognize that looking forward to make changes does not require condemning actions or people of the past.
- Share a set of the most impactful facts from the Listening and Learning sessions that will serve to give perspective to our recommendation (i.e. - “Fair Facts”) - share lessons learned and/or approaches from other communities as highlighted in the Listening and Learning sessions
- Share benefits from making changes. For example, renaming could give us an opportunity to recognize local community members that have had a positive impact on Fairfax City. A ceremony could be held to honor those individuals, and a cash prize to those whose street name proposals are selected. We could also direct the rebranding work to local businesses and residents.

IV. Conclusion and Future Process Recommendations

While the SAG notes that symbolism of the city seal, monuments and markers, and street and neighborhood names is a crucial start to the task of achieving greater equity and inclusion, the Group also believes that Fairfax City has an opportunity to be a leader in bringing systemic changes to the lives of historically disadvantaged groups. The SAG acknowledges that further work remains to be done, perhaps through either this Group or others, to advance the City's values of equity and inclusivity in a variety of areas. The value of the SAG process was the ability to analyze the current state of an issue, look at the historical background, listen to experts, learn from other jurisdictions, and decide on a path forward specific to the history and values of Fairfax City. For example, numerous ideas, issues, and questions were raised as part of the Listening and Learning sessions that may warrant further attention in order to build a more inclusive and equitable community. The SAG recommends that the City Council consider adopting a process to continue this citizen review and recommendation process for other policy issues that impact equity and inclusion.

Appendix A: Listening and Learning Sessions

A. February 04, 2021

The first [Connecting Fairfax City for All](#) listening and learning session was held February 4, 2021. Fairfax City Historic Resources Director Susan Gray presented **“Fairfax: Crossroads of Conflict in the American Civil War, 1861-65: How Those Events and Personalities Have Been Memorialized and Interpreted.”**

[Watch the presentation \(External link\).](#)

B. February 11, 2021

Dr. Karen L. Cox, professor of history at the University of North Carolina, presents **“The Lost Cause and Confederate Monuments and Memory”** at 7 p.m. Facilitated discussion will follow her presentation.

The city was granted permission from the presenter to share the recorded session for five days.

C. February 25, 2021

J. Brent Tarter, historian and author and editor of the Library of Virginia’s *Discovering Virginia Biography*, presented **“The 1902 Virginia Constitution: White Supremacy and Disenfranchisement.”**

[Watch the presentation \(External link\).](#) (Start at the 8:00 mark.)

D. March 11, 2021

Jarrold Elwell and Michelle Juma from Enterprise Community Partners, Inc. presented **“The History of Now: Racial Equity and Housing in Fairfax City.”** Enterprise Community Partners is a non-profit organization whose mission is to increase the supply of affordable housing, advance racial equity, and build community resilience and upward mobility.

[Watch the presentation \(External link\).](#)

E. March 25, 2021

Mark C. Hopson, Ph.D., Director of African and African American Studies, and Associate Professor of Communications at George Mason University presents **“Reimagining America: Why All the Protests? Having ‘The Talk’ about Race and Racism”** at 7 p.m.

He is joined by Gina Castle, Ph.D., Assistant Professor at Saint John's University and author of *Talking Black and White: An Intercultural Exploration of 21st Century Racism, Prejudice and Perception*.
Dr. Hopson is the co-editor of a new book *Reimagining Black Masculinities: Critical Essays on Race, Gender and Public Space*.
[Watch the presentation \(External link\)](#).

F. Aril 08, 2021

Fairfax Schools: Racially-Separate to Desegregation to Diversity

Participate in a panel discussion on the racial segregation and desegregation processes in Fairfax Schools. Panelists are:

- Dr. Phyllis Pajardo, Superintendent, Fairfax City Schools
- Dr. Erin Lenart, Principal, Fairfax High School
- Dr. Mitch Sutterfield, School Board Member

[Watch the presentation \(External link\)](#).

G. April 22, 2021

Tom Gjelten, author of *Nations of Nations: A Great American Immigration Story* and a veteran National Public Radio correspondent, and Fairfax City Planner and Demographer Eric Forman present "**Fairfax City: Our Changing Demographics**" at 7 p.m.

Gjelten will present the historical context for our community's demographic shift since the 1965 Immigration Act. Forman will illustrate the city's population changes with charts, graphs, and statistics.

[Watch the presentation \(External link\)](#).

H. May 06, 2021

Merri K. Davis, Ph.D., founder and executive director of the The Center for Well-Being and Resiliency, LLC, presents "**Understanding Community Perceptions of Confederate Symbols within a Framework of Trauma**" at 7 p.m.

[Watch the presentation \(External link\)](#).

I. May 20, 2021

Panel Discussion at 7 p.m.: “Neighbors Together for Equity and Inclusion”

Panelists:

- Karla Bruce, chief equity officer, Fairfax County
- Dr. Wendi Manuel-Scott, co-chair, George Mason University’s Anti-Racism Inclusive Excellence Task Force
- Gretchen Bulova, director, Office of Historic Alexandria, and co-chair of Alexandria’s Remembrance Project

[Watch the presentation \(External link\).](#)

J. June 03, 2021

An expert panel will present “Researching and Making Decisions on Confederate Symbols and Street Names” at 7 p.m.

Panelists:

- Denice Dressel, MAHP, Fairfax County Heritage Resources, Department of Planning and Development
- Tanya Stern, AICP, Deputy Planning Director, Montgomery County (MD) Planning Department
- Rebecca Ballo, Historic Preservation Supervisor, Montgomery County (MD) Planning Department

[Watch the presentation \(External link\).](#)

K. June 24, 2021

Commemorating the Civil War: Listening to Community Voices

Panelists:

- Blake Myers, President, Bull Run Civil War Roundtable
- Jennifer Loux, Program Manager, Historical Markers Division, Virginia Department of Historic Resources
- Marion Cohen, African American Historian and Living History Interpreter

[Watch the presentation \(External link\).](#)

Appendix B: Monuments and Markers List

Specific Confederate Connections	Broader Civil War Focus	Other Historic Events/Places
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cemetery Memorials</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monument to Confederate Dead ● United Daughters of the Confederacy Monument <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Monuments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mosby Monument at Truro Church <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Markers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mosby's Midnight Raid ● Birthplace of the Confederate Battle Flag (removed) ● Capt John Quincy Marr: First Confederate officer Killed (removed) ● Ford House/Building ● Moore House ● Joshua Gunnell House ● W.P. Gunnell House ● Old Town Hall ● Spies, Mosby, and Marr 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Markers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manassas Gap Railroad ● General Corcoran ● A Diary on Walls: Union Soldier Graffiti 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Markers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Richard Ratcliffe's Mount Vineyard Plantation ● Draper House 1821 ● Arlington-Fairfax Railway ● Fairfax Rosenwald School ● Old Baptismal Area ● Old Fairfax High School ● Ratcliffe Cemetery ● Fairfax County Courthouse ● Old Fairfax Jail ● Ratcliffe-Allison-House ● Historic Fairfax Elementary School ● Fairfax Herald and Print Shop ● Fairfax Hay and Grain ● Nickell's Hardware ● Ralston's Store