

Fairfax County Confederate Names Task Force Overview

In July, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors established the Confederate Names Task Force (CNTF) to review the names of Lee Highway (U.S. Route 29) and Lee-Jackson Memorial Highway (U.S. Route 50), and to make recommendations to the Board on:

- (a) whether to change the names of one or both roadways; and
- (b) if such a recommendation is made, provide recommendations on proposed alternative names.

Both highways were named or renamed for Confederate Generals between 1919-1922. Some community member concerns about the appropriateness of these names prompted the Board of Supervisors to establish the CNTF to review the issue. The work of the Task Force will be concluded by the end of 2021. Final decisions on the roadway names be made by the Board. Provided below are brief overviews of each highway and the basis for their names. You can learn more about the Fairfax County Confederate Names Task Force at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/confederate-names-task-force>

Highway Overviews

Lee Highway (U.S. Route 29) in Fairfax County

- The highway sections under consideration consists of 14.11 miles of US 29 in Fairfax County in two sections (split by the “Lee Highway-Fairfax Boulevard” combined section within the City of Fairfax)
- Lee Highway, named for Robert E. Lee in 1919, was one of more than 100 named “auto trails” and coast-to-coast routes that linked existing roadways and were established and named at the dawn of the automobile age.
- Lee Highway was designed to traverse southern states between Washington DC and San Diego and Lincoln Highway was established to traverse northern states between New York and San Francisco
- In Virginia Lee Highway includes sections of US 29, US 211 and US 11 to Chattanooga, TN where the highway continues west to San Diego
- Much of the original highway transiting southern states is still known by the name “Lee Highway”, some other jurisdictions in Virginia have announced changes to the name.

Lee-Jackson Memorial Highway (U.S. Route 50) in Fairfax County

- The highway section under consideration consists of 8.43 miles of US 50 from the City of Fairfax through western Fairfax County (US 50 is named Fairfax Boulevard within the City of Fairfax and is named Arlington Boulevard in eastern Fairfax County)
- From the City of Fairfax to Aldie (Loudoun County) US 50 follows the original roadbed of the Little River Turnpike, originally a private “macadamized” toll road built between 1801 and 1806 from Alexandria to Aldie - it became a public road in 1896, named Little River Turnpike.

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- Lee-Jackson Memorial Highway was named for Robert E. Lee and Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson in 1922.
- Many Civil War battles and skirmishes were fought at locations along or near the Little River Turnpike in Fairfax County – including Jackson’s flank march east down the Little River Turnpike after the 2nd Battle of Manassas and the ensuing Battle of Ox Hill. This battle, fought on September 1, 1862, near West Ox Road and the Little River Turnpike, pitted Lee’s and Jackson’s forces of the Army of Northern Virginia against elements of three divisions of the US IX and III Corps.

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