





The Prince George's County Responsible Legacy Task Force, established by Council Resolution-81-2019, revised by CR-9-2020 and extended by CR-71-2021, was charged with reviewing all County monuments, parks, street names, County buildings, and other places of honor, and creating a process to determine the future of names linked to a prejudiced past.

Note: The Task Force did not include Prince George's County Public Schools buildings/facilities, as the school system has its own workgroup.



PURPOSE/CONTEXT

The County Council established this Task Force in the fall of 2019 following the August 2017 "Unite the Right" rally, also known as the "Charlottesville Protest," amid the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic and social justice and equity movement. In direct response to the "Unite the Right" rally, communities throughout this nation began discussions about removing and replacing monuments, statues, and names symbolizing slavery, oppression, and racial injustice.



RLTF MEMBERS

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Chair, Maryland Municipal League/Prince George's County Municipal Association
(Appointed by County Council)

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Vice Chair (Appointed by County Executive)

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RLTF PROCESS

The Responsible Legacy Task Force held monthly virtual meetings beginning in October 2020, heard presentations, and discussed best practices with representatives from surrounding jurisdictions, community, and governmental partners and experts in the field. Task Force members reviewed inventories and researched names given to monuments, parks, streets, county buildings, and other places of honor in our County and sought to provide the Council with a fair and reasonable process to determine the legacy of names linked to a prejudiced past.



RECENT COUNTY EXAMPLE



One recent example of a County building renaming was the dedication of the Wayne K. Curry Administration Building at 1301 McCormick Drive in Largo in 2018. Former County Executive Rushern L. Baker established an ad-hoc committee of governmental staff to coordinate the renaming and dedication process for the building. While former County Executive Wayne K. Curry, the first African American to hold the position in the County's history, would qualify under the process and rubric this Task Force is recommending. It should be noted there was no formal process followed in this renaming.



POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The Task Force considered a wide range of policy issues. The potential impact, costs, and administrative burden were all considerations in the creation of any renaming process. Moreover, the Task Force recommended process includes public comment and input. The Task Force also considered who should have standing to initiate the renaming of a street, building, or monument, how a concerned party could initiate the renaming process, and what should be included in that process. This process will also include appeals or redress for potentially aggrieved parties.



RUBRIC/CRITERIA

The Task Force suggested conduct criteria for County agencies using memorialized and/ or named individuals or entities. The Task Force created a rubric to help determine whether an individual was linked to a prejudiced past and if so, provided a scoring system. The criteria specifies both honorable and dishonorable conduct, as well as mitigating factors, and assigns numerical values to each.



CASE STUDIES

The Task Force provided three (3) case studies utilizing the conduct criteria and the methodology to assist decision-makers and agencies with reviewing applications for naming and/or renaming of a County-maintained monument, building, or other facility or dedication of public places.



MICHELLE OBAMA, FORMER FIRST LADY

Michelle Obama, former First Lady, graduate Princeton University magna cum laude, Harvard Law School, Associate Dean University of Chicago; Vice President Chicago Medical Center, Author & Public Speaker.

Utilizing the recommended rubric (Final Report pages 21-24) former First Lady Michelle Obama scored a perfect score for naming or renaming.



MD 210 – INDIAN HEAD HIGHWAY



This highway runs 20.86 miles from Potomac Avenue in Indian Head in Charles County north to the District of Columbia boundary in Forest Heights, where the highway continues into Washington, DC as South Capitol Street. Indian Head Highway was constructed by the U.S. federal government as a military access highway in the mid-1940s to connect Washington with the Indian Head Naval Proving Ground and Fort Washington.

Utilizing the recommended rubric (Final Report pages 25–27) MD 210 Indianhead Highway would qualify for a renaming.

- Notes:** (1) MD 210 is a State highway therefore the County does not have authority for renaming;
2) The Maryland General Assembly passed HB 1433 - State Highways – Designations – Piscataway Highway which required the State Highway Administration to designate Maryland Route 210 as the Piscataway Highway.



GOVERNOR ODEN BOWIE

Oden Bowie (1826-1894), a native son of Prince George's County, was a Planter/Slave Owner, Soldier, Businessman and State Legislator and Governor from 1869-1872 during Reconstruction after the Civil War (1869-1872). County Street name in Upper Marlboro.

Utilizing the recommended rubric (Final Report pages 28–31) would qualify for a renaming.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force recommends a dual approach that includes policy changes and statutory provisions (policy changes for M-NCPPC authorized names and a bill or resolution for County Council) – one for County Street names and another for County facilities. This can be facilitated by using a standard application form for all agencies responsible for naming or renaming decisions. The Task Force also recommended certain procedures, including decision making roles, timeframes and appeals, involving naming or renaming. See the Final Report for details.



CONCLUSION

The Prince George's County Responsible Legacy Task Force spent over a year committed to research and understanding the fiscal impact, seeking community input, policy and legal framework creation, and effectiveness, culminating in recommendations to address and ensure equality and diversity inclusion in the County. The Task Force also understands the balancing required which existing streets or public places within the County may be named or dedicated in honor of individuals and organizations while preserving the integrity of those buildings and public places that have already been historically connected or dedicated with the name of an individual or organization.

Webpage/Q & A

RLTF Webpage link - <https://pgccouncil.us/806/Responsible-Legacy-Task-Force> (as updated)