

To: Mayor Steven Reed
From: The Montgomery Street Naming Committee
 Co-Chairs, Regina Moorer and Howard Robinson
 Nancy Anderson
 Edwin Bridges
 Elvin Lang
 Vanzetta Penn McPerson

Date: March 1, 2021

What: Report on Montgomery Street Names

Charge:

This Committee was tasked with studying place and street names in Montgomery and proposing reasonable changes that reflect contemporary core values of liberty, justice, and universal equality.

Values

This Committee identified individuals who reflect values or actions that are consistent with, or substantially at odds with, the ideals and principles articulated in the nation’s founding documents, including the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution.

The Committee has included a list of eleven (12) individuals who deserve having a Montgomery street named in their honor, and ten street names recommend for removal.

Street Name	Named for:	Rationale:
	Ralph David Abernathy	Forthcoming
	Johnnie Rebecca Carr	
	Nat King Cole	
	Virginia and Clifford Durr	
	Fred Gray	
	Vernon Johns	
	Percy Julian	
	John Lewis	
	Martin Luther King, Jr.	
	Mary Ann Neeley	
	Jo Ann Robinson	
	Solomon Seay Jr.	

List of ten (10) individuals who deserve having their name removed from Montgomery streets.

Clanton Avenue	James Holt Clanton	
Calhoun Street	John C. Calhoun	
Cortez Street	Herman Cortez	
Jefferson Street (East & West)	Jefferson Davis	
De Soto Street	Hernado de Soto	
Early Street	Jubal Early	
Jackson Street	Andrew Jackson	
Lee Street	Robert E. Lee	
Wallace Drive (North & South)	George Wallace	
Yancey Avenue	William Lowndes Yancey	

In response to the Mayor's charge the Committee used the following criteria to determine what names should be recommended for honor or removal.

Affixing Names

Renaming places, whether streets, parks, buildings, or other sites, for a person is honorific, in that we intend to honor the person's life through a gesture of public approval. This approval extends to a person's demonstrable values and exemplary behavior. The Committee has intended to select individuals whose life will inspire others to embrace those values and mirror that behavior. We believe this gesture will create a historical record approving the person's achievements

Affixing Name Criteria

We considered "**General Prominence**" which includes the nature and extent to which an individual actualized the principles of American democracy, promoted human equity and inclusion, and their notoriety in specific areas of achievement, including but not limited to business, education, civil rights, medicine and science, as well as the law and the arts.

The Committee considered "**Prominence in Montgomery**" with respect to the above-mentioned principles, and the nature and extent of the person's role in achieving those objectives in city of Montgomery, even if the person is not generally known beyond this city.

Another consideration was made for the "**Absence or Presence of Place Names for a Person.**" The Committee took into consideration whether or not a person did or did not already have any other place named in their honor.

"**Location and Complexity of a Name Change**" became another point of consideration, as the Committee looked at the visibility of a street, to what extent residents or businesses predominated the street, the length of the street, and finally the relationship of the proposed person to the location and or street.

The Committee took into consideration the "**Probable Response of Residents**" which could flow from the notoriety of the person whose name would be honored or taken down. The name and reputation of the person for which a street naming is proposed, could have implications on whether or not property owners would be receptive to approving or objecting to renaming.

Removing Name

Removing a street name is designed to adjust public acknowledgment and recognition of a person's influence and values. The Committee identified a set of goals for removing names from sites or places. They include the Committee's disapproval of the "Person's Values and Conduct," which form the bases of the person's recognition. The Committee also "Disapproves of the Prior Bestowal" of honor and prestige associated with the naming of a street, park, building, etc. We wish to "Prioritize Honor and Respect" other persons based on demonstrated values and exemplary behavior. So by including names for removal the Committee hopes to "Discourage Others From Emulating" the values and behavior of the prior person and in so doing to create a historical record of the public's disapproval of the person's values and conduct.

Removing Name Criteria

The Committee recommends for removal individuals we assert “**Dishonor American Values**” by repudiating the founding principles of American democracy, including but not limited to sedition or disloyalty to the United States. The Committee has assessed the nature and extent of the person’s role in debasing others or denying the humanity of others, especially when unredeemed by the person’s other characteristics or behavior.

The Committee has also worked to identify individuals whose actions have had an “**Adverse Impact on the Image and Appeal of the City of Montgomery.**” This is particularly the case when maintaining the street name honor exposes the city to adverse imagery in national and international discourse, prevents or discourages business and economic development, is repugnant to visitors as well as new residents, and is adverse to relocation to and from Montgomery by young residents.

To what extent does honoring such a person have an “**Adverse Impact on the Quality of Life,**” particularly if it devalues the citizenship and worthiness of a majority of the city’s residents? And where continued favorable recognition is inconsistent with promoting human equality and inclusion, and perpetuates a distorted account of American history that can prove counterproductive to our children’s education.

The “**Presence and Location of Places**” named for disreputable people, and the prominence and or frequency with which these names appear, can convey to residents and visitors an erroneous perception of community’s values.

Rationale

The Committee is compiling a description and rationale for each individual to be honored or to have their name removed. The rationale for each submission will follow this document and should be received no later than Friday, March 5, 2021.