

1/9/24 – FINAL DRAFT

City of Madison Honorary Street Name Program & Criteria

Section 1: Program Purpose

The City of Madison is creating a new program to allow streets to have Honorary Street name to offer an opportunity to honor people or events that are part of Madison's hidden history and that have not traditionally been recognized.

City Staff researched program from other cities, and in July 2021, The City conducted a Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative Analysis (RESJI) of the existing street naming program and found both racial and social inequities of the current policy. The RESJI Analysis also found that changing official street names is very expensive and requires current residents and businesses to change all identification materials to match their new addresses, including but not limited to ID cards, voting registration, and financial accounts. This negatively impacts many communities, especially people with low incomes, or who have barriers to voting.

The Honorary Street Name Program is a way to help recognize and celebrate people from traditionally underrepresented communities, as well as recognize Indigenous place names within the City's public spaces. This program does not change official street names (for the reasons mentioned above) but allows the City to honor individuals, events and places with Honorary Street Name signs, placed above the official street name.

*In **XXX 2024**, the City of Madison Common Council adopted RES-24-**XXXX** (File No. **XXXXX**), which created the Honorary Street Name Program. This Policy outlines the criteria for Honorary Street Names, the process for applying for a new Honorary Street Name, and the process for designating a new Honorary Street Name.*

This program is government speech. When the City speaks, it has maximum discretion to choose whatever the City considers important. The City can choose, as an expression of "government speech," to honor or not honor anything. Honorary Street Names are not official street names and may not be used in addresses.

Section 2: Criteria for Approval of Honorary Street Names

All Honorary Street Names may only be considered under the following meet the following criteria and/or guidelines in three areas, (A)Historic criteria, (B) Street Eligibility Criteria, and (C) Program guidelines, below.

A. **Historic Criteria:** The application **must demonstrate** how it meets one of three eligible criteria:

1. **Honoring the historically unrepresented:** Honorary Street Names shall honor people or events that have not traditionally been recognized or celebrated venerated in street names e.g. people that are BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities and/or women, are part of Madison's hidden histories, and/or and who have made significant contributions to underrepresented

communities of Madison in arts, music, literature, science, economics, cultural advancement or humanities or who provided extraordinary civic or humanitarian contributions.

- a. Applications can reference or use the City of Madison Underrepresented History Survey ([LINK](#)) as a basis for nomination
 - b. People or events not currently in the Underrepresented Survey could be added if research and history was approved the Landmarks Commission through this nomination process.
2. **Honoring Indigenous Place Names:** Honorary street name applications must coordinate with Ho-chunk or other Tribal Nations on the application to honor indigenous place names at their historic locations.
 3. **Honoring former street names:** Very rarely, official street names are occasionally changed and can be controversial due to the old street name being lost to history. To recognize the historic name of a street before it was officially changed, honorary street name signing may be used to recognize the original name of the street.

B. Street Eligibility: All Honorary Street Names must meet following street eligibility requirements:

1. The proposed designation may not duplicate an official street name.
2. Only local or collector streets as designated by the [City of Madison Street Functional Class Map](#) are eligible, - e.g. no arterials or highways.
3. Application should avoid complicated intersections with multiple streets coming together as determined by Traffic Engineering.
4. State Street and Streets around the Capitol Square are ineligible.
5. Streets with shared jurisdiction with another municipality are ineligible (Monona, Shorewood, Fitchburg etc.)
6. If an application is considered and rejected, the same nominee may not be requested for a period of five years.
7. Any Designation shall cover a maximum of two contiguous blocks and shall be applied to a single street.
8. When a section of street has received a designation, no other applications for that section of street shall be considered while it has that designation.
9. Once a portion of a longer street has an honorary name, other sections of the street are not eligible to be considered for honoring any others.

C. Program Guidelines: The following guidelines are not requirements, but shall be considered during the review and approval of Honorary Street Names:

1. Honorary Street Names should have a demonstrable connection to the location of the street proposed for an honorary name.
2. If the Honoree is a person, they must be deceased for at least three years prior to street naming.
3. If the Honoree is a person, the applicant should contact relatives of the person to get permission to name the street if at all possible.
4. Proposed Honorary Street Names may not honor a person/event/place already honored elsewhere in the city (park, public building, etc.)

Section 3: Process for Designation

A. Application

1. City Staff will develop a nomination application form available to the public. Nominations from the public, alders, or residents from within the City are all allowed.
2. Application must include the following:
 1. Alder notifications
 2. Family, or Tribal notifications and permission if at all possible.
 3. Application shall be accompanied by a relevant research, biography or reason(s) for honoring, and must illustrate how the nomination meets eligibility criteria A, B and C above.
 4. Application shall include a map or description indicating the blocks for the Designation.

B. Application vetting:

1. Application is made to the City Engineering Division and circulated to staff including but not limited to staff from Traffic Engineering, Planning, Engineering, and the Department of Civil Rights.
2. Staff will review to determine if the application is complete and sufficient, confirming historical accuracy, and meets required criteria and guidelines from A, B, and C above to move forward.
 - a. Staff can use existing resources to confirm accuracy (i.e. Underrepresented Historic Resources Survey) – but as the survey is not comprehensive, additional history research may be required to confirm the application’s accuracy.
 - b. Staff will determine if the application meets the criteria. Applications that do not meet the criteria will not move forward.
 - c. If an application meets the criteria, staff will forward the Application to the City Engineer for approval.

C. Application Approval:

1. The application and staff recommendation shall be reviewed by the City Engineer as an exercise of government speech of the City of Madison.
 - a. The City Engineer will approve or deny the application and may at any time and for any reason, request input on an Application from the City’s Landmarks Commission.
 - b. If the City Engineer, with or without consultation from the Landmarks Commission, recommends approval and affirms that the application meets criteria and is complete and sufficient, the Traffic Engineering Division will work to manufacture and install the signs as outlined below.

D. Complaints

The City retains the right to remove an honorary street sign at any time, for any reason. This could include removal after receiving a complaint.

Section 4: Sign Design, Installation and Maintenance

A. Sign design features:

1. Once a Honorary Street Name is approved, the street shall retain its official legal street name (for address purposes, etc.)
2. Sign Design: Signs shall be brown with white lettering and located above the official green street name sign. Any signs or markings in the right-of-way that are installed under this program must be compliant with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), and state and federal law.
3. Installation:
 - a. The Department of Transportation shall issue two signs, each to be installed on an existing pole at either end of the section of street designated.
 - b. The Department of Transportation's cost of installation and removal shall be paid from the DOT budget.
 - c. Traffic Engineering Division shall design, fabricate and install the signs.
4. Maintenance:
 - a. If sign is damaged, stolen, or vandalized, Traffic Engineering Division shall replace the sign up to three times over ten years. After that period the sign will no longer be replaced.