

CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA



|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Agenda Date:     | February 16, 2021  |
| Action Required: | Information only. No action is required.   |
| Presenter:       | Jeff Werner, Historic Preservation & Design Planner<br>Rachel Lloyd, chair, Historic Resources Committee |
| Staff Contacts:  | Jeff Werner, Historic Preservation & Design Planner<br>Alex Ikefuna, NDS Director                        |
| Title:           | <b>Historic Resources Committee review of Honorary Street</b>  |

**Background:**

On September 21, 2020, City Council passed a motion to request from the Historic Resources Committee (HRC) a review of and recommendations on the policy and process for the Honorary Street Designation program and input on the applications submitted for consideration.

The mission of the HRC is to advocate for historic preservation; to promote an appreciation of local historic resources, both tangible and intangible; and to encourage and coordinate, with appropriate municipal agencies, civic organizations, institutions and individual scholars, the documentation and interpretation of local history.

**Discussion:**

The HRC discussed this matter during its regular meetings on October 9, 2020, November 13, 2020, and December 11, 2020. The attached letter summarizes the committee's comments and recommendations, as requested by Council.

Additionally, subsequent to the HRC's review, the City's Department of Public Works (PW), who manages this program, has suggested modification to the size and placement of the honorary signs. In lieu of multiple signs attached to already crowded poles, install honorary signs separately and place one at each end of the designated street segment. This would allow signs to be appropriately sized and installed for the location and placed in a manner that, for navigation and 911 purposes, mitigated confusion related to street names.

For example, the image on the left is the City’s current practice. The image on the right is illustrative only of a single sign, installed separately from other signage.



This is conceptual only and the HRC has not reviewed or commented on the suggestion; however, staff felt it would be helpful to include it here and incorporate it into Council’s discussion.

**Alignment with City Council’s Vision and Strategic Plan:**

From the City’s Comprehensive Plan, *Historic Preservation & Urban Design*.

Education Programming. Goal 2.3: Continue to interpret historic resources to the community through markers, publications, events and other means. Strive to include the narratives and resources of under-represented groups and areas significant in our local history. Coordinate this interpretation of historic resources with City improvement projects and other city initiatives.

From the City Council Vision Statement.

Our community has world-class performing, visual, and literary arts reflective of the unique character, culture, and diversity of Charlottesville. Charlottesville cherishes and builds programming around the evolving research and interpretation of our historic heritage and resources. Through City partnerships and promotion of festivals, venues, and events, all have an opportunity to be a part of this thriving arts, cultural, and entertainment scene.

From the City’s Strategic Plan.

Goal 3.5 Protect historic and cultural resources. The historic and cultural resources in the city are economic development and tourism assets. They also represent a testament to the community’s past. The preservation of these resources is critical to protect the character of the city. The strategies and policies to preserve and sustain these resources include education, urban design, resource inventory, neighborhood conservation, resource protection, entrance corridor and other regulatory review, and technical assistance to property owners.

**Community Engagement:**

The HRC is a diverse group representing a broad spectrum of the community. Regarding the current requests for Honorary Streets, the HRC received comments from the public at its

meetings and via email. (See the attached notes.)

**Budgetary Impact:**

The program is funded through the Public Works maintenance fund. Should Council consider revisions to the policy and/or program, staff will coordinate with PW to evaluate—and advise on--any related cost impacts.

**Recommendation:**

Council should discuss the committee’s recommendations. If needed, Council may request additional input and/or clarification from the HRC.

**Alternatives:**

N/A

**Attachments:**

- HRC letter to Council dated December 16, 2020, with additional notes dated February 2, 2021.
- HRC meeting notes (excerpts related to this discussion) from October 9, 2020, November 13, 2020, and December 11, 2020.
- Location exhibits for streets.



610 East Market Street, Charlottesville, Virginia 22902

December 16, 2020

Ms. Nikuyah Walker, Mayor  
City of Charlottesville  
610 East Market Street  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902

RE: Honorary Street Designations, Policy and Applications

Dear Mayor Walker:

City Council voted at its September 21 meeting to refer the Honorary Street Designation process to the Historic Resources Committee for further review. Council directed the Historic Resources Committee to review both the policy and the remaining applications. This task is consistent with the committee's purpose: to promote an appreciation and interpretation of local historic resources, both tangible and intangible.

The Historic Resources Committee undertook the review process during its November 13 and December 11 meetings. The following attached notes provide the results of the review process and the related supporting background material.

1. Policy review recommendations
2. Application review recommendations
3. Other related recommendations
4. Links to meeting records

Representatives of the Historic Resources Commission are available to City Council to provide additional clarification if desired. If you have any questions, please contact me at (434) 284-0136 or [rwelloyd@gmail.com](mailto:rwelloyd@gmail.com).

Sincerely yours,

Rachel Lloyd  
Chair

## **Attachment 1 / Policy Review Recommendations**

The Historic Resources Committee advises City Council to consider the following updates for the Honorary Street Names policy:

### In general

The Historic Resources Committee recommends that City Council retain broad purview in the review and approval process for honorary street naming.

### In addition

1. Encourage nominations for a wide range of street name honorees, ideally associated with specific local historic resources on or near the street chosen for honorary naming
2. Provide options for temporary (perhaps 1-5 years) or permanent honorary street names, as specified by the applicant
3. Provide a flexible approach to the named street segment length—to be requested by the applicant but biased somewhat towards shorter street segments (for example: one block rather than a long multi-block street)
4. Create a mechanism to encourage greater geographical distribution of the honorary street names
5. Encourage applicants to consult with the nominee's family members/descendants before applying
6. Request 2-3 letters of support for each nomination; supporting letters may be from residents of the street or other interested parties
7. Consider limiting the honorary street names to numbered streets
8. Consider limiting the number of designees per application cycle, perhaps every two years
9. Provide information about the signs so applicants understand their technical design constraints and future appearance (for example, they will be the standard brown street sign with a limited number of text characters)
10. Improve the application to make it easier to fill out, substituting a set of simple short questions for the longer nomination essay
11. Do not require an application fee
12. Consider undertaking an annual review of honorary street names

## Attachment 2 / Application Review Recommendations

The Historic Resources Committee reviewed the applications based on the information provided in each document; their conformance to the intent of the policy and the application requirements; and further guidance described in the preceding attachment.

The Historic Resources Committee recommends City Council approve the following naming requests:

1. **Black History Pathway** on 4<sup>th</sup> Street NW between West Main Street and Preston Avenue
2. **Henry Martin Way** on 10<sup>th</sup> Street NW between West Street and Grady Avenue
3. **Gregory Swanson Way** on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NE between East High Street and East Main Street (please note: the Historic Resources Committee suggests that this designation be temporary until such time as the state can mark the location of this historically significant court case with a permanent state marker; please see *Attachment 3* for additional information)
4. **Via Poggio a Caiano** (please note: the Historic Resources Committee suggests that the applicant/city identify a different street for the honorary name than the ones listed in the application, perhaps closer to the streets named for other sister cities)
5. **Byers Snookie Way** on 10<sup>th</sup> Street NW between Preston Avenue and Henry Avenue

Applications for the following were not recommended for approval:

- The proposed *Vinegar Hill Way* conflicted with the proposed location of Black History Way, which had significant community support
- The proposed *Tony Bennett Way* and *Tony Bennett Drive* were not recommended due to the previous substantial national and community recognition of the individual and the committee's understanding that at least one of the streets noted for honorary naming is only partially located within the city limits
- The proposed honorary names for *Wilfred Franklin "88 Keys" Wilson, Jr.* and *Theodore Gilbert*, both musicians, were not recommended because no streets were identified in the applications and because the committee suggests that places associated with music, such as school music rooms or auditoriums, may be more appropriate locations for honoring these individuals
- The proposed *Waneeshee Way* (for indigenous people) was not recommended due to the apparent lack of engagement with the Monacan Nation and due to the apparent discrepancy between the language of the proposed term and the local language traditionally and historically spoken by Monacan people

### **Attachment 3 / Other Related Recommendations**

The Historic Resources Committee advises City Council to consider the following additional policies or actions related to honorary naming, in support of the guidance provided by the Blue Ribbon Commission on Race, Memorials, and Public Spaces regarding place names:

1. Create a special naming commission (permanent or ad hoc), composed of representatives from related committees such as the Human Rights Commission, the Historic Resources Committee, and others as appropriate
2. Provide additional interpretation for honorees on a website or in other material to retain a public record of their historical significance and achievement
3. Identify other naming opportunities associated with a wide range of themes and places: music rooms, libraries, gyms, auditoriums, athletic fields, playgrounds, and others
4. Consider pursuing state historic designation for the location of Gregory Swanson's 1950 civil rights case in the United States District Court in Charlottesville against the UVA Board of Visitors
5. Consider consulting with the Monacan Nation as appropriate for naming opportunities related to indigenous culture, history, and related topics

#### **Attachment 4 / Links to meeting records**

November 13

Link to Committee Packet

<https://charlottesvilleva.civicclerk.com/Web/Player.aspx?id=873&key=-1&mod=-1&mk=-1&nov=0>

December 11

Link to Committee Packet

<https://charlottesvilleva.civicclerk.com/Web/UserControls/DocPreview.aspx?p=1&aoid=831>

Link to meeting videos

<https://boxcast.tv/channel/arevwckqrofmm9t57myy>



Honorary Street Designations, Policy and Applications / Additional Comments 02.02.21

HRC member Jordy Yager offers the following commentary on the Henry Martin honorary street name application:

- *The historic naming proposal was for a residential street, and the applicant, who does not live in the neighborhood, had shown no signs of communicating with residents of 10th & Page.*
- *The historic naming proposal was for a street in a predominantly Black neighborhood that is currently undergoing a massive white-led gentrification and displacement process, and the applicant had secured only the endorsement of Preservation Piedmont, a white-led non-profit organization that, again, had shown no signs of communicating with Black 10th & Page residents about the naming proposal.*
- *Neither the applicant nor the endorsing party had shown any signs of trying to communicate with Mr. Martin's descendants.*

HRC member Phil Varner offers the following commentary on the Henry Martin honorary street name application:

*In my opinion, the process by which historic memorializations happen is more important than the outcomes. To my knowledge, not a single person or group with significant ties to the 10th and Page neighborhood has come out in support of this proposal, even after numerous times before Council. This points to a fundamental flaw in the way this proposal was initiated and the apparent lack of support.*

*I assume Ms. Craig has good intentions with wanting to memorialize Henry Martin. However, I find it problematic that a white woman who is not a City resident and does not have a specific connection to 10th and Page neighborhood (and even more so because it is a historically Black neighborhood) would initiate a process to honorarily name a street there. While this might have good intentions, the process does the opposite, by having yet another instance of something being imposed upon a minoritized community, without that community either initiating it or being the most integral part of it. Additionally, Preservation Piedmont, which does little work in 10th and Page, has formally supported this without getting input and support from residents of the neighborhood or Mr. Martin's descendants who live in the area.*

*Because of these factors, I believe this proposal should not go forward now, until significant community engagement can be done.*

Historic Resources Committee meeting notes from October 9, 2020, November 13, 2020, and December 11, 2020. Excerpts related to discussion of the City Honorary Streets Designation program.

## **October 9, 2020**

### **1. Call to order**

11:00 AM: Genevieve Keller calls the meeting to order. Both returning and new committee members introduce themselves.

Keller opens the floor up for public comment:

Jim Hingeley, Commonwealth Attorney for Albemarle County, speaks in support of application for honorary name designation of 3rd Street NE for Gregory Swanson.

Kristin Szakos also speaks in support of application for honorary name designation to recognize Gregory Swanson.

### **3. Resuming committee activities**

Regarding honorary street names:

Varner points out that not all street name proposals are related to historic resources. He raises the question of the policy HRC revise will limit itself just to historic-related names or all proposed names.

Duncan reviews the research she had done on other cities policies and circulated to committee.

Keller suggests that conversation about names should encompass other venues, like parks, rooms, schools. Smith points out that color of honorary street name signs is used elsewhere ± might be confusing.

Varner recommends that Sister Cities and Tony Bennett street name proposals be sent back to Council.

### **6. Wrap up and review items for next meeting agenda**

Committee further discusses honorary street naming policy and agrees to work on revising the policy at the following meeting.

## **November 13, 2020**

### **Honorary Street Names Policy Work Session**

Committee discusses existing street name policy and different ways the process might be amended. Committee develops following list of proposed recommendations for process:

- a) honorary names may either be temporary (5 years?) or permanent, as specified by applicant in the applicants' proposal
- b) there should be an annual review of existing street names
- c) the city should encourage a wide range of honorees, ideally associated with specific local resources
- d) improve the application to make it easier to fill out, substituting a set of simple short questions for the longer nomination essay

- e) create some supporting interpretation for the honorees in a website or other material to retain a record of their achievements/significance
- f) have a flexible approach to the named street segment length, to be requested by the applicant but biased somewhat towards shorter street segments—for example: a block rather than a full multi-block street
- g) signs will be the standard historic brown sign
- h) no application fee required
- i) consider limiting the number of designees per application cycle, perhaps every two years

Yager proposes forming a new 12-person naming committee, to be comprised of 3 members from our HRC, 3 members of the Human Rights Commission, 3 members of the public, and 3 of city staff/council/etc.

Hill clarifies that Council was interested in hearing HRC's perspectives on street names applications presented, in addition to recommendations on policy.

Keller speaks in support of reviewing received applications and making recommendations for approval to Council.

Committee reaches consensus to review submitted applications at December HRC meeting.

### **December 11, 2020**

#### 1. Call to order:

Lloyd opens the floor up for public comment:

James Hingeley speaks in support of Gregory Swanson Way designation.

#### 4. Continuation of Honorary Street Names Policy Work Session:

Committee resumes street names policy review from November meeting.

Varner suggests additional street names policy recommendation that Council shouldn't be limited by a specific set of criteria, and should be free to designate street names even if they don't fit a person or event criterion exactly.

Genevieve Keller acknowledges limitations in terms of numbers of characters on street signs. Keller asks that numbered streets be preferenced for naming.

Jordy Yager clarifies naming committee proposal, which would mainly be tasked with honorary street names.

Clay proposes a mechanism on the number of street names in specific parts of town.

Keller recommends that review of applications be biannual, and that the City consider other naming opportunities beyond streets.

Committee moves on to review received applications. After discussion, the HRC determined the following recommendations to be sent to Council:

The Historic Resources Committee recommends City Council approve the following naming requests:

- *Black History Pathway* on 4th Street NW between West Main Street and Preston Avenue.
- *Henry Martin Way* on 10th Street NW between West Street and Grady Avenue.
- *Gregory Swanson Way* on 3rd Street NE between East High Street and East Main Street. (Please note: the Historic Resources Committee suggests that this designation be temporary until such time as the state can mark the location of this historically significant court case with a permanent state marker.)
- *Via Poggio a Caiano*. (Please note: the Historic Resources Committee suggests that the applicant/city identify a different street for the honorary name than the ones listed in the application, perhaps closer to the streets named for other sister cities.)
- *Byers Snookie Way* on 10th Street NW between Preston Avenue and Henry Avenue.

Applications for the following were not recommended for approval:

- The proposed *Vinegar Hill Way* conflicted with the proposed location of *Black History Way*, which had significant community support.
- The proposed *Tony Bennet Way* and *Tony Bennett Drive* were not recommended due to the previous substantial national and community recognition of the individual and the committee's understanding that at least one of the streets noted for honorary naming is only partially located within the city limits.
- The proposed honorary names for Wilfred Franklin "88 Keys" Wilson, Jr. and Theodore Gilbert, both musicians, were not recommended because no streets were identified in the applications and because the committee suggests that places associated with music, such as school music rooms or auditoriums, may be more appropriate locations for honoring these individuals.
- The proposed *Waneeshee Way* (for indigenous people) was not recommended due to the apparent lack of engagement with the Monacan Nation and due to the apparent discrepancy between the language of the proposed term and the local language traditionally and historically spoken by Monacan people.

### **Emails received by HRC staff**


Preservation Piedmont expressed support for honoring *Henry Martin Way*.

Edwina St. James and Melanie Miller expressed concern that any naming of 2nd St. NE between East High and East Main not eliminate the section honoring Preston Coiner.

Charles Alexander expressed support for *Black History Pathway*.

David Norris and Evans Hopkins (of Richmond) expressed support for *Gregory Swanson Way*.

**Legend**

 City Limits



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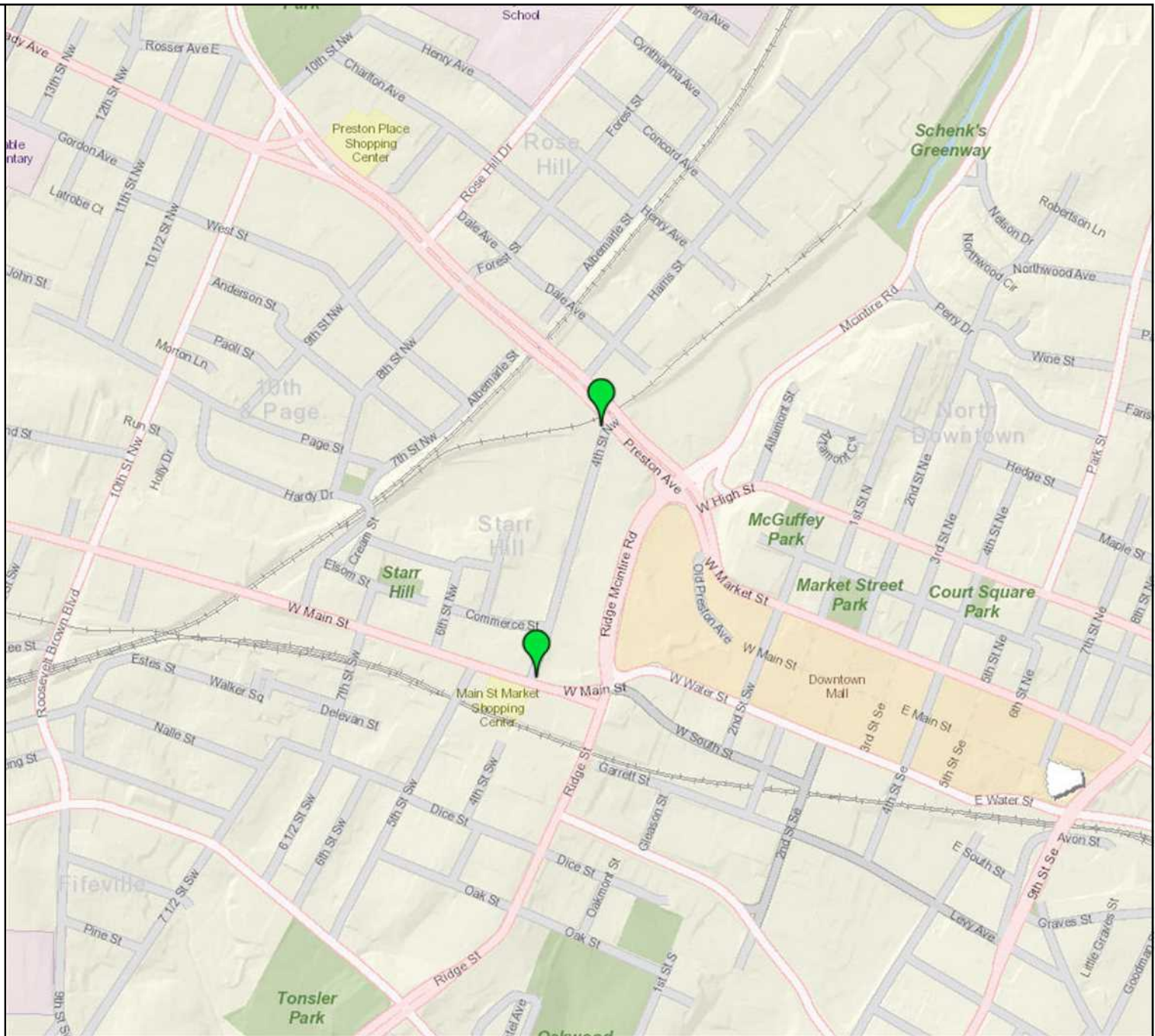
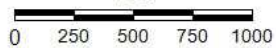
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Feet



**Title: Honorary Street - Black History Pathway**


**Date: 2/4/2021**

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**Legend**

 City Limits



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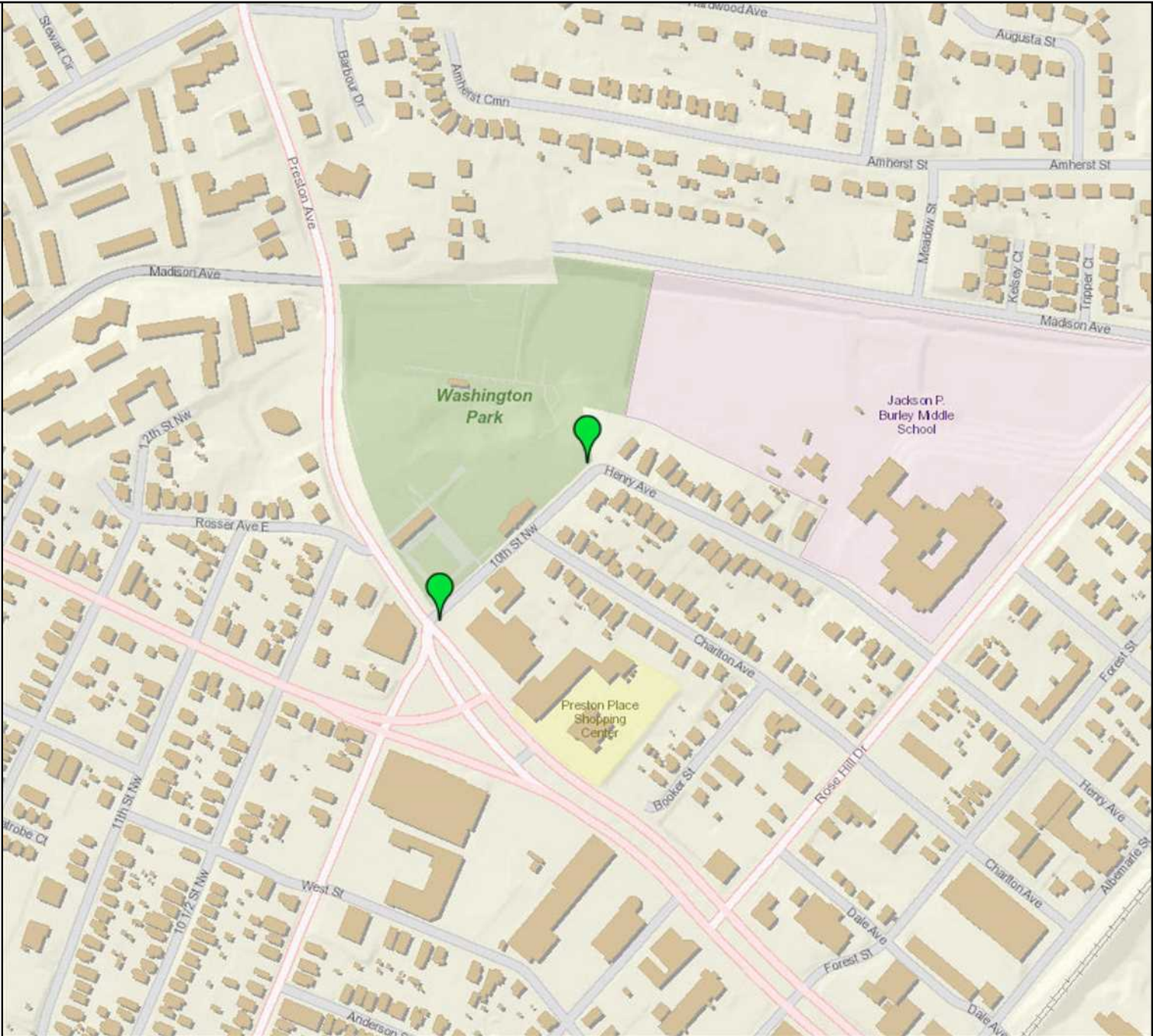
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Feet



**Title: Honorary Street - Byers Snookie Way**


**Date: 2/8/2021**

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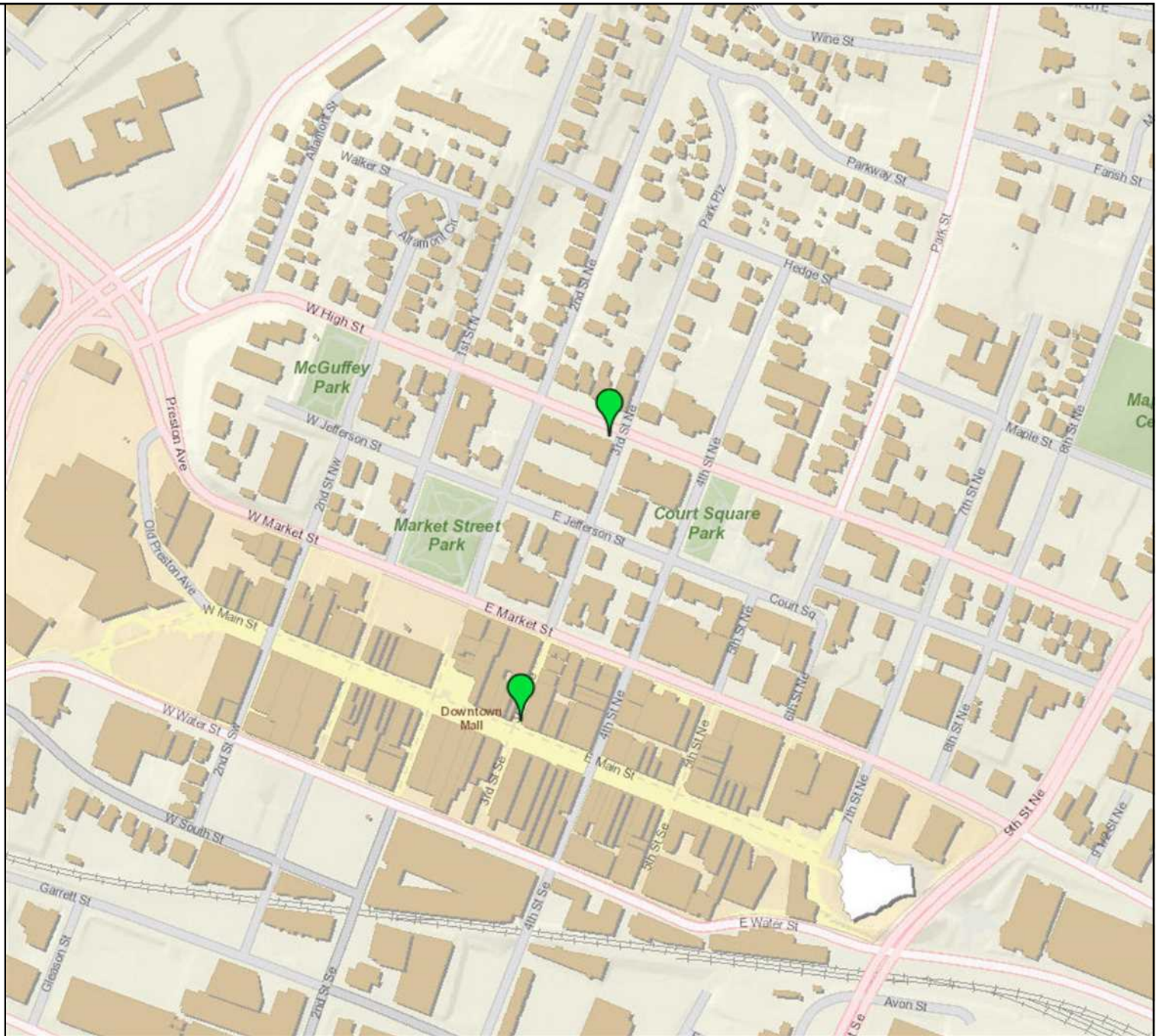
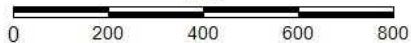
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Feet



**Title: Honorary Street - Gregory Swanson Way**

**Date: 2/4/2021**

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**Legend**

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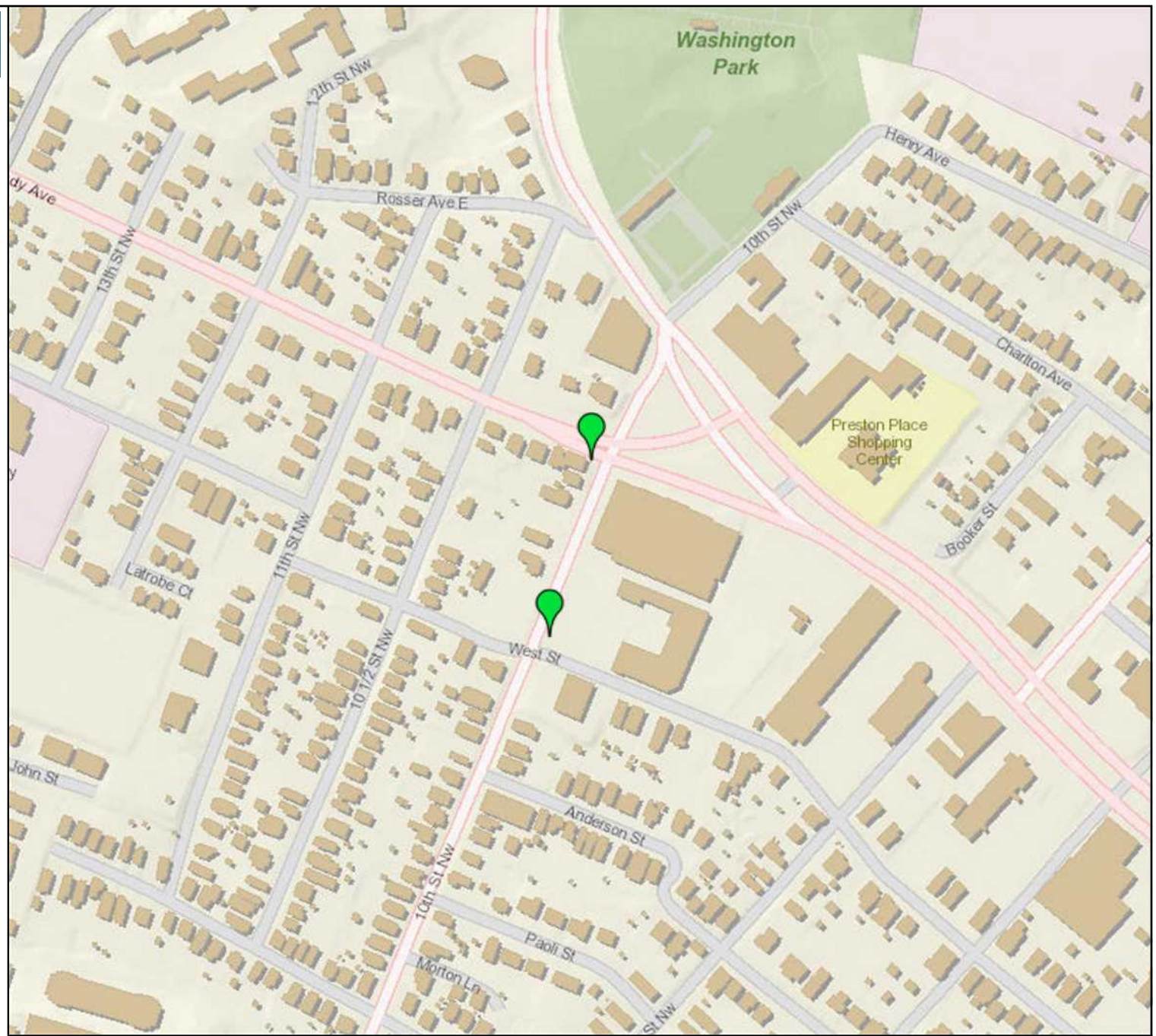
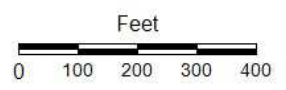
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**Title: Honorary Street - Henry Martin Way**

**Date: 2/4/2021**

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