

January 6, 2021

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

From: Paula Boggs Muething, City Manager

202002190

Subject: Process for Potential Name Change for Reading Road

REFERENCE DOCUMENT # 202001615

On September 28, 2020, the Neighborhoods Committee referred the following for a report:

MOTION, submitted by Councilmember Kearney and Young, WE MOVE for the entire stretch of Reading Road that is located within Cincinnati city limits, specifically from downtown Cincinnati to the edge of Reading, Ohio at Galbraith Road, to be named "President Barack Obama Avenue" in honor of the 44th president of the United States who became the first African-American elected to serve in the highest office in our country when he was inaugurated on January 20, 2009.

The following report details the process for street renaming and the costs associated for renaming Reading Road. Although the Committee of Names is not permitted to consider renaming a street in honor of a living person, Cincinnati City Council can request an exemption through a Notwithstanding Ordinance. The process to rename Reading Road could take approximately 5-7 months, including fabrication and installation of new signs at an estimated cost of approximately \$53K.

STREET RENAMING PROCESS

All permanent changes to street names must be reviewed through the Committee of Names process, which is facilitated by the Department of City Planning. (See attached policy.)

Upon formal application or request for a name change, the Committee of Names meets and votes on the request. The Committee of Names makes a recommendation to the Director of City Planning who then makes a recommendation to the City Planning Commission.

According to Section III. A. of the Committee of Names Procedures and Criteria (attached): "Proposals to name or rename City facilities to the name of a living person or persons will not be considered by the Committee."

Procedures and Criteria indicate that the Committee should conduct an informal survey providing notice to impacted property owners; best practice suggests providing notice to residents when an application is considered by or a recommendation is made to the City Planning Commission.

After a vote by City Planning Commission to approve or deny the street name change, an ordinance is prepared and transmitted to Cincinnati City Council for consideration. Upon approval, the Department of Transportation and Engineering (DOTE) fabricates and replaces signs.

HONORARY STREET NAMING

Any Councilmember can introduce a request for an honorary street naming. An honorary naming is used to celebrate a significant individual, place, or happenings; it does not formally change the name of the street. If approved, DOTE creates a sign bearing the honorary name and that sign is posted below the regular street sign.

IMPACTED AREA

A name change for Reading Road from the Central Business District north to Galbraith Road in the City of Cincinnati would impact 631 parcels, and potentially as many as 4,235 addresses, when considering free-standing structures, condos, and individual apartment units. Please note that a name change for Reading Road may also impact properties in Sycamore Township, the City of Reading, and the City of Norwood. Sycamore Township is particularly impacted in that the corporation line runs down the middle of Reading Road.

COST TO PROPERTY OWNERS

Although property owners do not have to change a street name on their property deed, as such a change is made upon the sale of property with a new deed reflecting the new street name, there are still other changes that a resident or property owner will need to make, including but not limited to notifying any utility, bank, insurance provider, credit card company or other service providers. Other personal or business-related updates may be required such as changes to stationery, invoices, checks, and any other printed materials.

COST TO CITY

There could be as many as 4,235 addresses in the City of Cincinnati impacted; therefore, the printing and mailing of postcards inviting residents, business owners, and property owners to comment on a proposed name change would cost roughly \$2,400. The cost to change signage associated with Reading Road would be approximately \$50,000. This cost includes fabrication and installation of signs at 87 intersections, at two signs per intersection, for a total of 174 signs.

SUMMARY

Although the Committee of Names Procedure and Criteria prohibits considering requests to rename a street in honor of a living person, City Council may move forward with this request through a Notwithstanding Ordinance. The process to rename Reading Road could take approximately 5-7 months, including fabrication and installation of new signs. The total cost to the City would be approximately \$52,400. A funding source for the cost must be identified before renaming can proceed.

Prior to consideration of the renaming, the cities of Reading, Norwood, and Sycamore Township should be engaged to determine the extent of impacts of a name change on their communities, businesses, and property owners. The City Administration can develop a proposal and cost analysis for such engagement for consideration with a requested Notwithstanding Ordinance.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Attachment

cc: Katherine Keough-Jurs, Director, Department of City Planning
John S. Brazina, Director, Transportation and Engineering