

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Information on Bridge Naming

► Naming Bridges and Highways

How do Bridges, Highways and Interchanges get named?

Bridges, highways, and interchanges in Virginia can be named by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) or by action of the General Assembly. The naming of a facility by the CTB occurs at the request of a local jurisdiction, which must agree to bear the costs of providing, erecting, and maintaining appropriate signs.

Applicable laws and regulations:

Under Section [33.2-213 of the Code of Virginia](#), the CTB can name a bridge, highway or interchange to honor a deceased person. The General Assembly may name a bridge or highway or interchange for any purpose or person (deceased or alive) through a bill that is enacted into law. The CTB may not name a bridge, highway, or interchange that has previously been named by the General Assembly.

The most current version of Traffic Engineering Division Memorandum [TE-278 Memorial/Dedication Signs for Bridges, Highways, and Highway Segments](#) and the most current revision to the "Virginia Supplement to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)" shall be used by local governments as a guide in selecting the text for the proposed sign. All new signs will be erected with brown background. Exact location, sign size, and other display details will be at VDOT discretion. For memorial bridges, VDOT allows one sign for each direction of road on either the underpassing or the overpassing roads; signs may be placed on both underpassing and overpassing roads with Residency Administrator approval and if space permits.

Shorter names are preferable, e.g. "Trooper John Smith Memorial Highway" instead of "Trooper John Brian Smith, III Memorial Highway". Shorter signs are more readable, less distracting to passing motorists, less expensive, and lessen the likelihood that the sign text will need to be shrunk or scrunched in order to make the sign fit within the right-of-way.

The procedure for local governments to request the CTB name a bridge or highway:

1. Localities are urged to discuss the proposed memorial naming with their [Residency Administrator](#) prior to passing a formal resolution. The Residency Administrator can advise the Locality of any practical concerns with regards to the proposed bridge/highway/interchange. For example, at some bridges/interchanges it may be difficult to find an appropriate location to place a sign where it would be visible to passing motorists without blocking sight distance to other critical signs or other traffic control devices; in such instances the Residency Administrator may suggest an alternate bridge/interchange. Moreover, the Residency Administrator can advise the Locality if the length of a proposed naming might result in an excessively wide sign that will be difficult to place within the right-of-way.
2. A request, in the form of a formal resolution from the local government, must be provided to the Residency Administrator or other designated local VDOT manager. ([See Example](#)) The resolution must indicate that the local jurisdiction will pay all costs for the sign, though funding may come in part or in full from the family or a support group.
3. The Residency Administrator forwards the request, with resolution, to VDOT's District Office for review.
4. The Residency or District forwards the request, with resolution, to the Maintenance Division's Roadway Inventory Management Unit for review and action.
5. VDOT's Maintenance Division prepares the necessary CTB resolution, ensures the action item is on the CTB agenda, and presents the request to the CTB.
6. If the CTB approves, the Maintenance Division notifies the District Office and Residency Administrator responsible for installing the signs.
7. The Residency notifies Maintenance Division when the signs are installed.