

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
TRAFFIC ENGINEERING DIVISION
MEMORANDUM

GENERAL SUBJECT: Signs	NUMBER: TE-278.2
	SUPERSEDES: TE-278.1
SPECIFIC SUBJECT: Memorial/Dedication Bridges, Highways, and Highway Segments	DATE: December 5, 2014
	SUNSET DATE: None
DIRECTED TO: District Administrators Regional Operations Directors Regional Traffic Engineers Regional Operations Maintenance Managers Maintenance Division Administrator District Maintenance Engineers Residency Administrators	APPROVAL: /original signed by/ Raymond J. Khoury, P.E. State Traffic Engineer Richmond, VA Approved December 5, 2014

SUMMARY OF REVISIONS TO MEMORANDUM

- Revised to specify brown background instead of green background for memorial/dedication signs, as per the 2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and 2011 Virginia Supplement to the MUTCD.
- Reorganized to improve clarity.
- Revised to reflect changes in VA Code numbering/organization.

EFFECTIVE DATE

New signs: all memorial/dedication signs erected after the issuance date of this Memorandum shall be as specified herein to conform to the current edition of MUTCD.

Signs that have already been fabricated: Memorial/dedication signs with green backgrounds (but otherwise conform to these standards) that have already been fabricated can be erected. However, new fabrications shall conform to the standards in this memorandum.

Existing installations: for existing green-background memorial/dedication signs, these provisions shall be followed when the existing sign panel reaches the end of its useful service life:

- Non-conforming signs located *off* of the named facilities (signs on the under-passing highways, on approaches/ramps to the named facility) shall be removed; but only after those initially requesting the naming have been notified or all attempts to notify have failed.

- Non-conforming signs located on the named facilities shall be replaced, and a plaque could be erected as budget and schedule permit; but only after those initially requesting the naming have been notified or all attempts to notify have failed.

PURPOSE AND NEED

There has been a significant increase in the number of requests for naming transportation facilities in memory of persons or groups who have lost their lives while serving in the armed forces or as officers of the law; and in tribute to significant historical events/references. Many of these requests have been made to the General Assembly as opposed to being made to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), which is the mechanism to authorize naming of transportation facilities under the Code of Virginia.

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide consistency in the signs used to name transportation facilities in memorial/dedication to individuals, groups, or historical events.

BACKGROUND

Memorial/dedication signing shall be as per Section 2M.10 of the MUTCD, Section 2M.10 of the [Virginia Supplement of the MUTCD \(latest revision\)](#), and [§33.2-213 of the Code of Virginia](#).

Note that a Memorial/Dedication Highway/Bridge sign is not the same thing as a “typical” street name/bridge name sign (e.g. signs that read “Woodrow Wilson Bridge”, “Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel”, or “Jefferson Davis Highway”). Typical street name signs show officially designated names as they appear on maps, serve the purpose of providing route guidance (particularly on unnumbered highways), have green background, and are not addressed by this Memorandum.

STANDARD

In accordance with the MUTCD, memorial/dedication signs should not be at a location where they will interfere with the placement of other necessary highway signing, or where they will compromise the safety and efficiency of traffic flow. To be safe and effective, the MUTCD requires these signs to be limited to no more than three lines of short principal legend for quick comprehension. If more extensive information is desired for the memorial/dedication naming, then I-V2C plaques can be installed off the main highway as detailed below.

Section 1 - Memorial/Dedication Sign Procedures

The typical process for transportation facility naming is to obtain approval by the CTB through the adoption of a resolution. This is managed by the Maintenance Division in accordance with the Division’s program for Naming of Transportation Facilities by the CTB. The requirements of that program shall be considered in conjunction with this Memorandum to guide the management of memorial/dedication naming of transportation facilities.

Unless otherwise directed by the General Assembly or the CTB, the provisions below shall be followed in the sign design, legend, and placement of memorial/tribute signs for named bridge, highway, and highway segment facilities:

1. Signs shall be rectangular in shape, with white text on brown background.

2. Sign shall have either two lines (I-V2A sign) or three lines (I-V2B sign) of text, with the last line designated for the facility type - Memorial Bridge, Memorial Highway, etc.
3. In compliance with the MUTCD, logos and pictographs (including service decorations) shall not be allowed.
4. Memorial/dedication signs shall not interfere with the safety or efficiency of traffic flow.
5. Signs shall be posted only for direction of traffic on the facility and shall be limited to one sign at appropriate location in each direction of travel. Signs shall be located at the bridge for crossing, not on under-passing roads. Signs also shall not be located on the approaches/ramps to the named facility, only on the highway segment/highway itself.
6. Sign sizes and letterings shall be designed as appropriate for the message displayed and location of sign, as provided below and in the attached design guidelines:

Dimension	Non-Limited Access Highway	Limited Access Highway
Sign Width (I-V2A or I-V2B sign)	60" maximum	120" maximum
Sign Height (I-V2A two-line sign)	12"	30"
Sign Height (I-V2B three-line sign)	18"	36"

7. Unless otherwise directed by the General Assembly or the CTB, the cost for fabricating and erecting memorial/dedication naming signs will be borne by others in accordance with Virginia Code (§33.2-213) or other legislation.
8. As per §33.2-213, no name is allowed if it reasonably connotes something that is vulgar, racist, etc.

Section 2 - Memorial/Dedication to Individuals

A naming in memorial to an individual shall consist of only the name, and when requested and appropriate, abbreviated rank and title. An individual's name should appear as:

- First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name, Suffix (*William Q Public Jr.*); or
- First Initial, Middle Name, Last Name, Suffix (*W Quincy Public III*); or
- First Initial, Second Initial, Abbreviated Name/Nickname, Last Name (*W Q Bill Public*), (*W Q Scooter Public*).

The showing of both full given name and nickname should not be allowed. Suffixes such as Jr., III, etc. are allowed.

Ranks and titles should be avoided, but where necessary the appropriate abbreviated form should be used in accordance with the Federal military designations.

Section 3 - Memorial/Dedication to Groups

A naming based on a group's name should be kept to a minimum and appropriate abbreviations should be used when necessary to maintain sign size restrictions.

Example - the “555th Parachute Infantry Battalion Airborne Memorial Bridge” may be posted as, “555th Parachute Inf Bn Airborne Memorial Bridge”.

Section 4 - Memorial/Dedication to Events/Historical References

A naming in tribute to an event or in historical reference should be kept to a minimum to maintain sign size restriction; however, the abbreviation of words used in the official naming should be avoided. For example, “Old Blue Ridge Turnpike’ should read as such and not Old Blue Ridge Tpke (or Trnpk or Turnpk).

Section 5 - Memorial/Dedication Supplemental (I-V2C) Plaques

Supplemental I-V2C plaques with further information may also be erected. The purpose of these plaques is to provide the public with more information about the named individual or group than what can be shown on the I-V2A or I-V2B guide signs (for example, when they died in service to their country or what battalion they were in). These plaques shall only be erected in areas accessible by pedestrians and in accordance with the MUTCD guidelines, by placement in rest areas, scenic overlooks, recreational areas or other appropriate locations where parking is provided. This plaque may also be erected adjacent to a sidewalk or pedestrian pathway on the memorial bridge or highway.

Where these plaques are to be placed, VDOT shall work closely with the family or other representatives of the individual or group named on the memorial/dedication guide sign to develop the appropriate wording for the plaque. The plaque shall be a maximum of 24” by 24” in size and be white text on brown background. Sample wording is “*This bridge is named in memorial of Seaman 1st Class William Q Public, USS Richmond*”.

Unless otherwise directed by the General Assembly or the CTB, the cost for fabricating and erecting I-V2C memorial/tribute plaques will be borne by the locality or private entity requesting the sign in accordance with §33.2-213 or other legislation.

As with the I-V2A and I-V2B signs, no wording of the supplemental plaque shall be allowed if it reasonably connotes something that is vulgar, racist, etc.

REFERENCE

- Code of Virginia §33.2-213
- 2009 MUTCD
- 2011 Virginia Supplement to the MUTCD With Revisions
- Board of Supervisors Manual
- Land Use Regulations and Guidance Manual

CC:

Deputy Chief Engineer - Mohammed Mirshahi, P.E.
VCTIR Director - Dr. Jose Gomez, P.E.
State Maintenance Engineer - Emmett Heltzel, P.E.
FHWA Virginia Division Administrator - Irene Rico
Central Virginia Sign Shop – Chuck Koebel

ATTACHMENT A: Design Guidelines

	Memorial/Dedication Signs used on Limited Access Highways	Memorial/Dedication Signs used on Non-Limited Access Highways	I-V2C Memorial/Dedication Supplemental Plaque (used in areas accessible to foot traffic)
Two-line I-V2A Signs			
Three-line I-V2B Signs			

I-V2A and I-V2B signs shall be designed as per the Virginia *Standard Highway Signs* publication, latest revision. I-V2C Memorial/Dedication Supplemental Plaques shall be designed with the following guidelines:

SIGN	DIMENSIONS (INCHES)										MATERIAL
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Border Radius/Thickness	
I-V2C PLAQUE	24	24	Varies	1 Min	1 Min	--	1" Clearview 2-W	0.75 Min	--	R=1.5 T=0.5	Background: Brown ReflectORIZED Legend and Border: White ReflectORIZED

ATTACHMENT B: [CODE OF VIRGINIA §33.2-213](#) (Note: the text below is current as of December 2014. Refer to the hyperlink for the most recent Code of Virginia)

The Board shall have the power and duty to give suitable names to state highways, bridges, interchanges, and other transportation facilities and change the names of any highways, bridges, interchanges, or other transportation facilities forming a part of the systems of state highways. The names of private entities, as defined in § [33.2-1800](#), located within the Commonwealth shall not be used for such purposes unless such private entity pays the Department an annual naming rights fee as determined by the Board. The Department shall place and maintain appropriate signs indicating the names of highways, bridges, interchanges, and other transportation facilities named by the Board or by the General Assembly. The costs of producing, placing, and maintaining these signs shall be paid by the localities in which they are located or by the private entity whose name is attached to the highway, bridge, interchange, or other transportation facility. No name shall be given to any state highway, bridge, interchange, or other transportation facility by the Board unless and until the Board receives from the governing body of the locality within which a portion of the facility to be named is located a resolution of that governing body requesting such naming, except in such cases where a private entity has requested the naming. No highway, bridge, interchange, or other transportation facility previously named by the Board or the General Assembly shall be eligible for renaming by a private entity, unless such naming incorporates the previous name. The Board shall develop and approve guidelines governing the naming of highways, bridges, interchanges, and other transportation facilities by private entities and the applicable fees for such naming rights. Such fees shall be deposited in the Highway Maintenance and Operating Fund established pursuant to § [33.2-1530](#).

No name shall be eligible for the naming rights under this section if it in any way reasonably connotes anything that (i) is profane, obscene, or vulgar; (ii) is sexually explicit or graphic; (iii) is excretory related; (iv) is descriptive of intimate body parts or genitals; (v) is descriptive of illegal activities or substances; (vi) condones or encourages violence; or (vii) is socially, racially, or ethnically offensive or disparaging.