

Recommendations of the Committee

After deliberating over the placement, purpose, and category of the various monuments and street names associated with the Confederacy around the City of Atlanta, the committee considered principles to review.

In general, four themes emerged as a result of public comment that can be used when considering action with respect to monuments and street names: glorification, omission, education, and compassion.

Some monuments glorify the Lost Cause of the Confederacy, thus promoting a distorted view of the Civil War and supporting the restrictive laws of the Jim Crow era. These monuments primarily represent the history of white Southerners, omitting the many other narratives occurring simultaneously that played important roles in shaping history. These monuments can be valuable educational tools, but only when they are presented in such a context that corrects the misconceptions about the Civil War intrinsic to Lost Cause mythology and embodied by many of these statues.

Admittedly, the lack of education about the causes and consequences of the Civil War contributes negatively to efforts to determine the best course of action in regard to these monuments. Finally, all of these issues should be dealt with compassionately, since many people in Atlanta have emotional connections, both positive and negative, to these monuments and street names.

When considering monuments, the particular facts surrounding each monument should be considered, since monuments were erected in different time periods, by a variety of groups, and with different goals in mind. When considering Lost Cause monuments, including statues located at courthouses and other civic spaces, courses of action might be different than recommendations for monuments erected in a cemetery. While cemetery monuments still cause a visceral reaction for some individuals, those monuments were erected with a different primary purpose in mind than Jim Crow-associated monuments: mourning the dead.

In the future, the Committee recommends that the City develop and propose a set of principles to use when determining whether a street should be renamed or a monument be moved or contextualized. These principles can be developed through the creation of a committee, such as the committee created at Yale University for the purpose of developing principles on renaming. The Yale principles, also adopted by the University of Mississippi, could be a useful place to start when developing a process through which street names should be considered. In the meantime, it seems obvious to the committee that the names of any high-ranking Confederate officers that are attached to street names be considered for renaming on an expedited basis.

This assertion, however, raises further questions: what degree of connection to the Confederacy should be a consideration for removal or renaming? Should a bust of Sidney Lanier be removed

because his service as a Confederate soldier outweighs his significant contributions to literature, poetry, and art? Grant Park is named for Lemuel Grant, the engineer who designed the defensive fortifications around Atlanta during the Civil War; however, he donated the land on which Grant Park was established and was thus honored with the park naming. Should the park be renamed? The development of a set of principles can help future city councils, mayors, and residents of Atlanta discuss these difficult questions and make decisions based on a uniform process for contemplating removal/relocation, contextualization, and renaming.

In light of these reflections, the committee makes the following specific recommendations to the City Council and Mayor:

1. **Oakland Cemetery Monuments:** The Historic Oakland Foundation should continue to care for the Confederate Obelisk and *Lion of the Confederacy*, but must add contextualization to the satisfaction of the City of Atlanta. The City of Atlanta should investigate the ownership of these monuments. Depending on the results of a title search, title should be conveyed to the Historic Oakland Foundation with appropriate protective easements and covenants. This act would ensure the monuments can receive the proper contextualization, interpretation, and care. It further guarantees no taxpayer funds are used to support these monuments. The committee also recommends that the flag pole located adjacent to the obelisk be moved to another appropriate location in the cemetery and that the Confederate flag no longer be flown.
2. **Peace Monument at Piedmont Park:** Because this monument falsely depicts the character of the post-Civil War reconciliation by reflecting Lost Cause mythology in the language used in the inscription and omitting from its narrative the experience of African Americans, the Committee recommends that this monument be removed from public display and preserved in City storage. The Committee further notes that the current location of the Peace Monument may be an appropriate place for an additive monument honoring Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, or other underrepresented historical figures associated with Atlanta.
3. **Walker Monument:** Because of its close proximity to the city limits, the committee recommends that the City legal department confirm that the monument is within the City of Atlanta. B*ATL has raised a substantial amount of money to restore and care for this monument and the nearby McPherson monument. This monument represents an important companion to the McPherson monument when telling the story of the Battle of Atlanta. The committee recommends that B*ATL be responsible for appropriate contextualization of this monument. It is the opinion of the committee that this monument is a battlefield marker and does not serve a purpose of glorification, but rather is a reminder of an important historical event. Public comments indicated that the neighborhood has embraced the two monuments and its site on the location of the battlefield as an important part of its identity. The committee supports retention of the monument and its continued support by B*ATL and the adjoining neighborhoods.

4. Peachtree Battle Monument: Because this monument falsely depicts the character of post-Civil War reconciliation by reflecting Lost Cause mythology through the language of its inscription and omitting the experience of African Americans, the committee recommends that the monument be removed from public display and placed in City storage. The Committee further recommends replacing this monument with a factual marker that acknowledges the facts of the battle in an appropriate historical manner.
5. Sidney Lanier Bust: The committee determines that the bust is not a Confederate-related monument. The bust was installed for reasons unrelated to service in the Confederate Army. Its removal is not a recommendation of the committee.
6. Immediately change Confederate Avenue, East Confederate Avenue, and any street named after Nathan Bedford Forrest, John B. Gordon, Robert E. Lee, Stephen Dill Lee, or Howell Cobb. The aforementioned were significant Confederate military leaders and actively involved in white supremacist activities after the war, making them undeserving of the honor of a street name in Atlanta.
7. Establish a working group to determine which of the identified streets are named for Confederate leaders as a result of their military service and expedite a process for removal with the approval of street residents, under the streamlined process suggested below.
8. Establish a process for considering street names associated with the Confederacy, with stipulations to make the process affordable and ensure that full and appropriate research is conducted. Lower or waive the fees charged and lower the threshold required for approval of the name change from 75% of property owners to 50% of the residents or property owners approval for Confederate-related street names. Under the current process, only the input of property owners is required for approval of a name change, but the committee recommends, in the case of street names associated with the Confederacy, that this right be extended to rental residents.
9. The City of Atlanta lobby the state legislature to change the law to permit local decision-making with respect to Confederate monuments.
10. The Committee recommends that the City establish a successive process to determine future criteria and principles governing the removal/relocation, contextualization, and/or renaming of street names and monuments determined in future to glorify the Confederacy, the slave trade, or other historic atrocities. This process could take the form of a longer-standing committee, which should also identify opportunities for the conceptualization, interpretation, creation, and installation of monuments and counter monuments at prominent historical locations throughout the city; for example, a monument in the Five Points area and at Piedmont Park. The Committee also recommends that the City work with the Georgia Historical Society to support their historical marker program which has been focusing

statewide on recognizing underrepresented individuals and communities to add more diverse markers in the City of Atlanta. The Committee further recommends that the successive process or committee be comprised of recognized local and regional historians, academicians with expertise in Southern and Atlanta history from the Civil War period to Civil Rights Era, individuals with experience in public interpretation and explanation of historic events and people, and community leaders and residents from the City of Atlanta. The Committee finally recommends that the successive process or committee include robust community outreach and engagement.

Appendix A