

REPORT OF THE JORDAN AVENUE RENAMING TASK FORCE

July 14, 2021

1. Members:

- a. Elizabeth Mitchell, co-chair: Journalist and historian of Bloomington's African-American community, 42-year city resident, and community volunteer
- b. Alex Tanford, co-chair: Professor Emeritus, IU Maurer School of Law, 42-year city resident.
- c. Cedric Harris: Director of Bias Response, IU Division of Student Affairs.
- d. Tim Mayer: former member of City Council, resident of Jordan Avenue.
- e. Tom Morrison: IU Vice-President for Capital Planning and Facilities.
- f. Glenda Murray: Monroe County historian.
- g. James Wimbush: IU Vice-President for Diversity, Equity and Multicultural Affairs.

2. Recommendations

- a. For the reasons explained below, the Task Force unanimously and enthusiastically recommends that the section of Jordan Avenue from Davis Street to 17th Street be renamed "Eagleson Avenue," and the section from 17th Street to Fee Lane be renamed either "Fuller Lane" or "Mattie Fuller Lane." See the attached map.
- b. The Task Force also recommends that historical markers be erected on each section of the renamed street to provide details about the people for whom they are named.

3. Background:

- a. The IU Board of Trustees in October 2020 voted to remove the name of IU's seventh president from Jordan Hall, Jordan Avenue Parking Garage, and Jordan River. The vote followed recommendations by President Michael McRobbie, Provost Lauren Robel, the IU Naming Committee and a dedicated faculty committee whose review concluded that former President Jordan held views that conflicted fundamentally with the university's values in diversity and equity.
- b. The views of David Starr Jordan on eugenics and racial differences conflict also with the City's commitment to promote inclusion and equity in the community, so Mayor Hamilton asked that a Task Force be appointed to consider renaming Jordan Avenue.
- c. Because the university and the city each own parts of Jordan Avenue, a Task Force made up of community and IU leaders was formed and charged with recommending new names.

4. The two Jordan Avenues affected

- a. The main Jordan Avenue runs from Davis Street north through the IU campus to 17th Street. There are approximately 59 residences, 20 IU buildings/offices, and 13 sorority/fraternity houses with Jordan Avenue addresses. The businesses at the corner of Jordan Avenue and Third Street have Third Street addresses and are not affected. The south portion of the street is owned by the City and the northern portion is owned by Indiana University.
- b. The other Jordan Avenue, often called the North Jordan Extension, runs from 17th Street northwest to Fee Lane. It has approximately 16 sorority/ fraternity houses on it. It is owned entirely by Indiana University.
- c. City and university officials requested that the two streets have separate names because they are not contiguous, and that the names be distinct from and not easily confused with any existing street names.
- d. The names we suggest are recommendations only. Formal renaming must go through the Bloomington Plan Commission, a public hearing, the Indiana University Naming Committee, and be approved by the IU Board of Trustees, so they are not final until agreed upon by both city and university officials.

5. Process

- a. The Task force met four times: April 21, April 28, May 5, and June 30, 2021, for approximately one hour each time.
- b. The City issued a press release and created a website through which members of the public could suggest names and provide comments. Information appeared in the Bloomington Herald-Times, the IDS, and the B Square Beacon. More than 500 possible names were suggested, including suggestions that the name Jordan Avenue be retained.
- c. In addition, members of the Task Force submitted possible names and conducted historical research about many of the names suggested by members of the community.
- d. The Task Force acknowledges the large number of Purdue students who suggested “Purdue Avenue” and “Boilermaker Way.”
- e. The Task Force considered (i) names of people, (ii) names of plants, animals, and landmarks associated with Monroe County, the state, and the university, and (iii) conceptual names reflecting community values and principles.
- g. The process of public notice and hearing will be handled by the Plan Commission.

6. Criteria

- a. The Task Force developed the following general criteria: The streets should be named in honor of people who were long-time residents of Monroe County, made significant contributions to the community, and have not already received significant city and university honors and awards. Because the portions north of 10th Street are on the Indiana

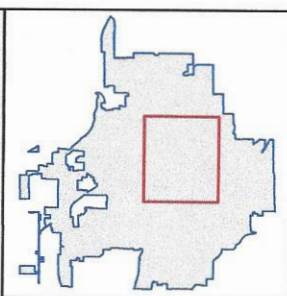
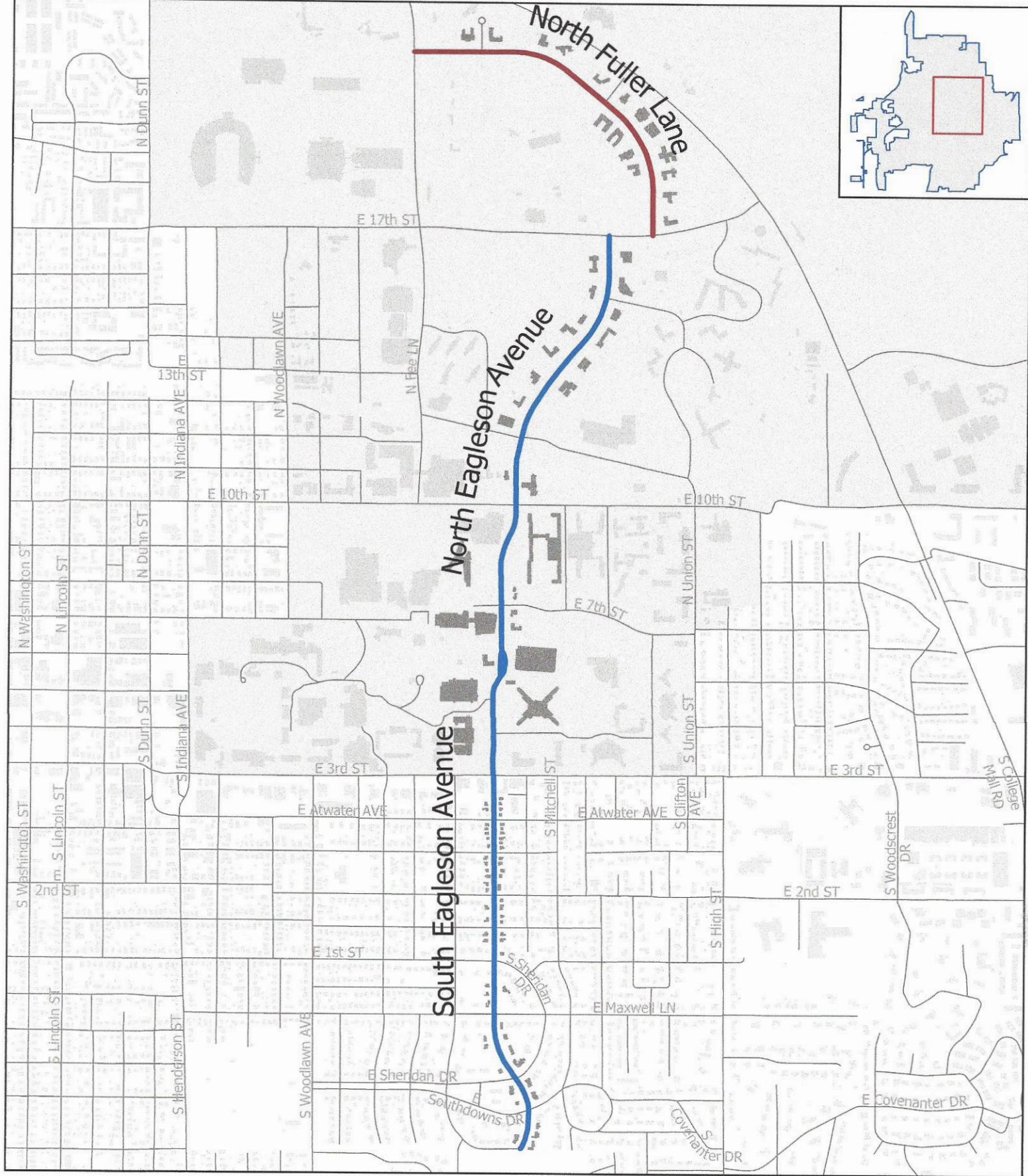
University campus. the new street names will have to be approved by the University. We therefore adopted its requirement that a person must have been dead for at least five years to have something named after them. We focused particularly on names from Bloomington's Black community, which has existed since the early 1800s but received little previous recognition.

- b. There were a number of strong candidates whose names we considered but who did not meet our criteria, primarily because they had not yet been dead for five years and/or there was already a street in Bloomington with a similar name.
- c. Ultimately, we felt that the names we have recommended clearly stood out from the rest of the field and warranted submitting only those two names.

7. Biographies

- a. Eagleson Avenue would be named for the Eagleson family, a prominent Bloomington family for four generations, whose members have made significant contributions to the city, the university, the state, and the nation.
 - i. **Halsion Vashon Eagleson**, 1851-1921. was born a slave. He came to Bloomington in the 1880s and became a prominent barber, one of the few occupations open to Black people. He had five children who attended Indiana University. In 1910, with legislative approval, he opened Industrial City, a home for "colored" orphans in Unionville.
 - ii. **Preston E. Eagleson**, 1876-1911, was the son of Halsion. He was the first Black athlete at IU, playing halfback on the football team from 1893-95. He entered law school in 1896, became a teacher and was the first Black student to earn a master's degree at IU. He was later ordained as a minister in the AME church. He was active in the Odd Fellows Lodge where he was elected Deputy Grand Master for Indiana.
 - iii. **Wilson Vashon Eagleson**, 1898-1933, was the son of Preston. He earned his B.A. from Indiana University in 1926 and shortly thereafter married Frances Marshall, IU's first Black woman graduate.
 - iv. **Frances Marshall Eagleson**, 1898-1987, enrolled at IU in 1915, reportedly with \$1.25 in her pocket. Four years later, she became the first Black woman to graduate from IU. The Neal-Marshall Center at IU is named for her, and a dormitory is named after her at N.C. Central University where she taught and served in the administration.
 - v. **Halsion V. Eagleson, Jr.**, 1903-1992, was an IU student and leader of the IU marching band. He was the first Black person to earn an "I" letter for band, but the award was delayed by a racial incident. He was kidnapped (reportedly by white students affiliated with the KKK) to prevent him from performing at a Purdue game and earning the letter. Three students were tried for the crime, but an all-white jury did not convict them. Halsion went on to become the first Black student to be awarded a doctorate in physics and the first to be elected to Sigma Xi, the honorary science society. A person of varied interests, Dr. Eagleson played the piano, saxophone, clarinet, and violin, and spoke fluent Spanish, French, and German.

- vi. **Elizabeth Eagleson Bridgwaters**, 1908-1999, was the granddaughter of Halson V. She earned her AB from IU in 1930 and had 88 hours of post-graduate work, but the only job she could get was at IU working in the kitchen. She rose to be supervisor of dining halls and went on to be the Director of the HUD Neighborhood Development Office at the city, a candidate for Mayor of Bloomington and Indiana State Representative, and an elected member of the MCCSC School Board. She was appointed to three state commissions under Governor Otis Bowen and received the Sagamore of the Wabash Award. Elizabeth was an active member of the National Council of Black Elected Officials and compiled photo exhibits for the Mathers Museum and the Monroe County Historical Museum used in various graduate student research projects, brochures and publications. She was ordained a minister in the AME Church at age 78 and was a local minister until the fall of 1998, when she was diagnosed with cancer. Elizabeth was voted Monroe County Woman of the Century in 1999.
 - vi. **Wilson V. Eagleson II**, 1920-2006, was the son of Wilson and Frances Eagleson. He started IU in 1940, but left to join the Army Air Corps. Wilson was one of the original Tuskegee Airmen who served in WWII. He retired in 1970 after a thirty-year career in the Air Force.
- b. Fuller Lane would be named for **Mattie Jacobs Fuller**. 1856-1940.
- i. Mattie was born a slave in Kentucky. She came to Bloomington at age 4 and remained a lifelong resident of the city. When she was 14, her mother died and she was bound out as an indentured servant for room and board. She was to Bloomington as Madame C.J. Walker was to Indianapolis, being one of the first women of color to own a hair care salon where she also sold her own line of skin lotions and vanishing cream. She was an accomplished musician and singer who was in great demand in the region. She was a central figure in the “Colored high society” of the era, often featured in the section of the Bloomington newspaper called “Among the Colored.” Mattie was a dedicated suffragist and the first Black person to own a telephone in Bloomington. She donated all of her earnings from entertainment, which amounted to \$13,000, to found Bethel AME Church, buying the lot and paying for the foundation to establish it. The church became an important place of refuge to the first generation of Black IU students. Mattie Jacobs Fuller was an entrepreneur, a philanthropist and a significant force in women’s suffrage who gave her heart, soul and finances to support this community, which she dearly loved.
 - ii. There was some sentiment on the Task Force for recommending “Mattie Fuller Lane” for educational reasons, on the assumption that people would be motivated to Google her to see who she was and would thereby learn something about the history of the Black community in Bloomington. This decision will ultimately have to be made by the University consistent with its naming policies.



Proposed Street Names and Extents

Jordan Avenue Renaming Task Force

Produced: 6/30/2021



For use as map information only, information is NOT warranted.