

**THE UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY
COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM**

SUBJECT: Naming of East Broad Street Bridge Over North Oconee River as Weaver D's Bridge – Automatic for the People

DATE: November 5, 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The proposed action would rename the East Broad Street Bridge at North Oconee River as Weaver D's Bridge – Automatic for the People.

BUDGET INFORMATION:

REVENUES: N/A

EXPENSES: \$450 FY26 Signs and Markings Operating Budget

FUNDING SOURCE: Traffic Engineering General Operating Budget

COMMISSION ACTION REQUESTED ON: January 6, 2026

PURPOSE:

To request that the Mayor and Commission approve the naming of East Broad Street Bridge over North Oconee River as "Weaver D's Bridge – "Automatic for the People"".

HISTORY:

1. On September 7, 1999, Mayor and Commission (M&C) approved a new policy for the Naming of ACCGov Owned Facilities.
2. In July 2017, Mayor Denson assigned the Government Operations Committee (GOC) with the tasks of updating the 1999 policy.
3. On December 5, 2017, the M&C approved a new policy for the Naming and Renaming of Public Facilities, Parks, Natural Areas, and Amenities.
4. On March 2, 2021, the M&C approved an updated policy for Naming of Public Facilities, Parks, Natural Areas, and Amenities that detailed the volume of community support required and provided new opportunities for public input. The policy further required that an individual must be deceased a minimum of three years before a facility can be named in his/her honor.
5. On March 7, 2023, the M&C approved another updated policy for Naming and Renaming of Public Facilities, Parks, Natural Areas, and Amenities that reduced the requirement of time an individual must be deceased from three years to one year.

6. On January 8, 2024, department directors from Leisure Services, Planning Department, and Transportation and Public Works (T&PW) met and discussed the inclusion of roadway infrastructure, such as bridges and intersections, into the existing Naming of Public Facilities Policy.
7. On March 5, 2024, M&C approved the revised Policy (**Attachment #1**), the Naming and Renaming of Public Facilities, Street Infrastructures, Parks, Natural Areas, and Amenities Policy and Procedure, adding Street Infrastructures such as Bridges and Intersections to the existing policy.
8. On January 13, 2025, T&PW staff received application to name the bridge at East Broad Street and the North Oconee River as the “Weaver D’s Bridge – “Automatic for the People”” (**Attachment #2**). Per policy, staff provided applicable petition forms and a copy of the policy to the applicant.
9. On April 18, 2025, T&PW staff received petition package from the applicant and began application and signature verification process as required by the Naming of Public Facilities Policy.
10. On June 27, 2025, the Manager’s Office forwarded the East Broad Street at the North Oconee River Public Facility and Street Infrastructure Naming Application to M&C.
11. On October 25, 2025, Mayor Kelly Girtz directed staff to present an agenda for M&C consideration for the Naming of East Broad Street Bridge Over North Oconee River to “Weaver D’s – “Automatic for the People””.

FACTS & ISSUES:

1. The naming and renaming of roadway infrastructure such as roadway intersections and bridges applies for ACCGov fully-owned bridges and roadway intersections and does not apply for bridges or roadways owned by the State of Georgia.
2. The Naming of Public Facilities Policy includes the naming and renaming of ACCGov-owned bridges and intersections and it follows the same process as Parks and Amenities (**Attachment #1**).
3. Per the policy, the cost to install new signs and/or replace all existing signs will be added to future naming/renaming requests as a new capital request by the affiliated department.
4. Weaver D’s Delicious Fine Foods was established in 1986 and is located at 1016 East Broad Street in Athens Georgia. The owner, Dexter Weaver, is the first to have used the phrase “Automatic for The People,” that was later adopted by the band R.E.M. as the title of their internationally recognized 1992 album. Weaver D’s institution is a cultural linkage that has attracted visitors and attention to Athens and continues to be cited by local media and tourism.

5. The naming application of the East Broad Street Bridge Over North Oconee River to “Weaver D’s Bridge - “Automatic for The People”” meets policy requirements and is being presented for M&C consideration.
6. If approved, staff will install two (2) signs with brown background and white letters on each side of the bridge as per the approved policy with available budget.
7. This recommendation supports the following Strategic Plan Goal Area & Strategy:
 - Good Neighbors, Strategy F: *Examine, understand and improve public safety policies and processes to enhance public trust.*

OPTIONS:

1. Mayor and Commission approve the naming of East Broad Street Bridge over North Oconee River as “Weaver D’s Bridge – “Automatic for the People””.
2. Mayor and Commission deny the request to the East Broad Street Bridge over North Oconee River.
3. Mayor and Commission defined option.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED ACTION: Option #1

DEPARTMENT: Transportation & Public Works

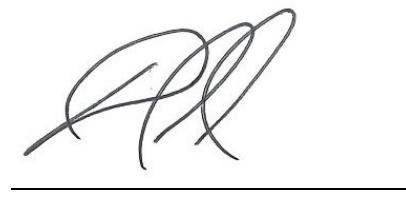
Prepared by: Rani Katreeb, Assistant Director



11/07/25Stephen Bailey
Director

Date

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS:

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION: Option #1

December 10, 2025

Bob Cowell, Manager

Date

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment #1: COM-002 Policy

Attachment #2: Weaver D's Bridge – Automatic for the People Application

POLICY AND PROCEDURE STATEMENT

THE UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY, GEORGIA

POLICY SUBJECT: Naming and Renaming of Public Facilities, Street Infrastructure, Parks, Natural Areas, and Amenities

POLICY AND PROCEDURE NUMBER: COM-002 (Revised March 5, 2024)

EFFECTIVE DATE:

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a uniform procedure for the official naming and renaming of public facilities, street infrastructure, parks, natural areas, and their amenities owned and operated by the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County to ensure that they are easily identified and given names that are consistent with the values and character of the area, neighborhood, and community served.

II. Definitions

- **Public Facility:** A building owned and/or operated by the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County.
- **Parks:** Open space for active and/or passive recreation and/or aesthetic values. Includes traditionally designed parks under the stewardship of the Leisure Services Department.
- **Natural Areas:** Open space with a mix of natural resource and passive recreation values. Generally possess limited development except for those improvements needed to allow visitor access.
- **Amenities:** Any component within a building or park to include trails, ball fields, outdoor courts, shelters, playgrounds, etc.
- **Street Infrastructure:** A bridge or an intersection owned and maintained by the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County.

III. Policy

It is the policy of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County to name existing, newly acquired, developed, or unnamed public facilities, street infrastructure, parks, natural areas, and amenities and to rename existing public facilities, street infrastructure, parks, natural areas, and amenities based upon the procedures set forth in this policy. Every naming should best serve the interest of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County and provide a worthy and enduring legacy, while remaining relevant as the community grows and changes.

IV. Guiding Principles

This policy establishes a set of standards and guidelines for the naming and renaming of public facilities, street infrastructure, parks, natural areas, and amenities. The following guiding principles will be taken into account, either collectively or individually, throughout the review process:

- Enhance a sense of community within Athens-Clarke County
- Engender a strong positive image
- Ensure public facilities, street infrastructure, parks, natural areas, and amenities are easily identifiable
- Be appropriate, having regard to the asset's location and/or history
- Ensure consistency with values and characteristics of Athens-Clarke County
- Have historical, cultural, or social significance for future generations
- Ensure quality of name
- Have broad public support
- Encourage and recognize monetary and/or land donations by individuals, businesses, or groups

V. Naming/Renaming Procedure

Names may be nominated by:

- The Mayor;
- A Commissioner;
- The Director of the affiliated department;
- Neighborhood Associations;
- Individuals and Civic Organizations; or
- Authorities that operate an Athens-Clarke County-owned building.

Process for submittal and review:

- Considerations for naming of public facilities, street infrastructure, parks, natural areas, and amenities must be made through the completion of the "Naming of Public Facilities, Parks, Natural Areas, and Amenities Application" and submitted to the Director of the affiliated department. The application should contain the following minimum information:
 - The proposed name
 - Reasons for the proposed name
 - Written documentation indicating community support for the proposed name to include a petition, which will be provided by the affiliated Athens-Clarke County department.
 - The petition should only be signed by people currently living in Athens-Clarke County above the age of 18.
 - The petition should show a printed name and address of each signer.
 - The number of signatures required are based on the following criteria:
 - For naming a street infrastructure, park, building, or natural area – 1,000 signatures to include a minimum of 100 or one-third (1/3) of the population living within a one-mile radius of the location to be named.
 - For naming an aquatic facility, ball field, group shelter/pavilion, gymnasium, or trail – 400 signatures to include a minimum of 60 or one-third (1/3) of the population living within a one-mile radius of the location to be named

- For all other amenities – 100 signatures
- If proposing to rename an existing asset, include justification for changing an established name.
- If proposing to name an asset after an outstanding person, include documentation of the individual's community involvement, civic contributions, and public service.
- The Director of the affiliated department will review the application, conduct appropriate research, and present the findings to the Manager.
- The Manager shall consult with the Mayor and Commission to determine the next review step.
- The Mayor and Commission decide to either:
 - Request the Manager to have staff perform additional research and/or conduct a public hearing,
 - Assign the application to a committee for further review and to make a recommendation for the Mayor and Commission, or
 - Request the Manager to have staff prepare an agenda report for the Mayor and Commission.
- A public notice of the recommended Qualifying Name will occur twice during a sixty (60) day period in the local newspaper(s).
- For the duration of the sixty (60) day period, a sign will be posted at the entrance of the location to be named informing the public of the proposed name change.
- At the end of the sixty (60) day period, the Director shall submit the Qualifying Name along with a summary of the public comments to the Manager and Commission for consideration.
- Following approval of a name by the Mayor and Commission, the affiliated Department will install signage designed according to the existing specifications for signage.
- If at any point within the review process the application is denied, the Director of the affiliated department will notify the applicant in writing of the denial.

VI. Naming and Renaming Considerations and Criteria

It is the policy of the Athens-Clarke County Unified Government to use the following considerations and criteria when naming public facilities, street infrastructure, parks, natural areas, and amenities:

- Neighborhood or geographic identifications
- A historical figure, place, event, or other instance of historical or cultural significance
- Natural or geological features
- An individual that has been deceased for at least one year, who:
 - has made a significant land and/or monetary contribution to the particular public facility, park, natural area or amenity at issue,
 - has performed extraordinary or outstanding public service for the good of the community, and/or
 - was an outstanding community leader who made significant civic contributions to Athens-Clarke County.
- Names that duplicate or that are very similar to existing public facilities, street infrastructure, parks, natural areas, or amenities shall not be considered in order to avoid confusion.

- Naming may not conflict with public grant funding policies established by state and/or federal grant funding programs.

Renaming: A name selected for a public facility, street infrastructure, park, natural area, or amenity should be bestowed with the intention that it will be permanent, and changes should be strongly resisted.

Proposed name changes shall be subject to the same considerations and criteria set forth in this policy for the naming of public facilities, street infrastructure, parks, natural areas, and amenities.

VII. Business Naming Policy

- Where naming rights are purchased for a corporate entity or business, the naming rights shall be limited to no longer than the life of the corporate entity.
- Benefits which may violate other Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County policies or ordinances will not be included in any agreement.
- The following criteria must be met for any corporate entity or business applying for corporate naming rights:
 - Does not discriminate against any person, employee, member, or volunteer on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, gender, sexual preference, age, marital status, ancestry, national origin, or physical or mental disability, in compliance with all federal, state, and local laws and statutes.
 - Name does not have connotations that by contemporary community standards are derogatory or offensive.
 - Does not constitute violations of law.
 - Does not participate in unethical business practices as determined by a court of law.
 - Does not exploit participants or staff members of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County.
- The Mayor and Commission reserves the right to reject any corporate naming request.

VIII. Recognition

Markers may be placed in facilities, street infrastructure, parks, natural areas, and amenities to recognize those individuals or groups being honored or memorialized. These identifications shall be approved by the affiliated department Director and conform to sign policies. All recognition must be in keeping with the character as defined by the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County. The Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County reserves the right to modify or remove any marker if deemed appropriate for governmental purposes.

IX. Exclusions

- The dedication of small park amenities with an identifiable lifespan and not intended to be permanent (i.e. park benches, tables, etc.), shall be addressed under a separate Leisure Services Department policy.

X. Responsibilities

The Director of the affiliated department shall administer this policy.

XI. Exceptions

The Athens-Clarke County Commission may make exceptions to this policy when warranted by exceptional circumstances.

Any pending renaming request submitted to Athens-Clarke County Unified Government before March 3, 2021 will not be affected by any changes or updates to this policy and will be immediately sent to the Mayor & Commission for consideration.

Recommended By:


Rani Katreeb, Interim Director
Transportation & Public Works

Date: January 30, 2024


Blaine Williams, Manager

Date: 2-14-2024

Approved by the Commission of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County on: 3-5-2024



Clerk of Commission



THE UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY
Naming of Public Facilities, Parks, Natural
Areas, and Amenities Application

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Please review the Naming and Renaming of Public Facilities, Parks, Natural Areas, and Amenities policy for information on the rules and process.
2. Contact the appropriate Athens-Clarke County Government (ACCGov) Department Director, or designee, if you have questions or need additional information.
3. Complete this application form in its entirety to include a written narrative to support the nomination for consideration.
4. If proposing a name after an outstanding person, include documentation of the individual's community involvement, civic contributions, and public service in Athens-Clarke County.
5. Provide evidence of community support by completing the petition form provided by ACCGov. Reference policy for more information on completing a petition.
6. Once completed, return the application form and all attachments to the appropriate ACCGov Department.

Applicant Name: Dexter Weaver
 Mailing Address: 460 Whitehead Rd City/State: Athens/ Zip: 30606
 Home Phone: N/A Work Phone: 706-254-2936 Cell Phone: 706-353-7797
 Email Address: 25Weaverds@gmail.com
 Organization (if applicable): Weaver D's Fine Foods

Proposed Name/Change

Request to Name: Weaver D's Bridge - "Automatic for the People"

Facility
 Park
 Natural Area
 Amenity

Other

Bridge (E. Broad St. Bridge) + Weaver D's

Criteria:

Neighborhood or geographical identifications
 A historical figure, place, event, or other instance of historical or cultural significance
 Natural or geological features



An individual, living or deceased, who:

- has made a significant land and/or monetary contribution to the particular public facility, park, natural area or amenity at issue,
- has performed extraordinary or outstanding public service for the good of the community, and/or
- was an outstanding community leader who made significant civic contributions to Athens-Clarke County.

Current name of Facility, Park, Natural Area, or Amenity (if applicable)

N/A

Facility, Park, Natural Area, or Amenity Address:

E. Broad (Bridge @ MLK+Wilkerson)

Proposed New Name:

Weaver D's Bridge - "Automatic for the People"

Once the application has been processed and reviewed, the applicant will be notified of the next steps in accordance with the policy for Naming and Renaming of Public Facilities, Parks, Natural Areas, and Amenities.

Attachments: Written Narrative of Support

Documentation of Community Involvement, Contributions, and/or Public Service (if naming for an individual)

Completed Petition