



The 3rd National  
**Joint Conference of Librarians of Color** | 2018  
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**Oregon State**  
University

## *Campus Connections to White Supremacy: Reconciliation through Community Engagement and Historical Research*

Joint Conference of Librarians of Color  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
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Natalia Fernández, Associate Professor,  
Curator and Archivist of the Oregon Multicultural  
Archives and OSU Queer Archives  
Oregon State University OSU Libraries and Press:  
Special Collections and Archives Research Center  
[natalia.fernandez@oregonstate.edu](mailto:natalia.fernandez@oregonstate.edu)  
Pronouns (she/her/hers)

## About Me, the OMA and OSQA



<http://guides.library.oregonstate.edu/oma>



<http://guides.library.oregonstate.edu/osqa>

My name is Natalia Fernández, and I am an associate professor and the Curator and Archivist of the Oregon Multicultural Archives (OMA) and the OSU Queer Archives (OSQA) at the Oregon State University Special Collections and Archives Research Center. My mission for directing the OMA and the OSQA is to work in collaboration with Oregon's African American, Asian American, Latino/a, Native American, and OSU's LGBTQ+ communities to support them in preserving their histories and sharing their stories.

# The Evaluation of Building and Place Names ~ National Conversations



*"Why do building and place names matter?"*

Questions to Consider...

1. Who named [monument]? For what purpose?
2. What is the relationship between the person who named [monument] and the monument itself?
3. Who is erased from the history? Who is present?
4. What other history is this like?
5. What is the social or cultural context of this history?
6. How is this history relevant to today?

Source: <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/names-do-matter>

To begin, a common question when the conversation topic of building and place names comes up is "why do building and place names matter?" And at first, it may be difficult to articulate the importance to someone, so instead you could ask them some questions to have them critically engage with their own options, and engage in conversation with them. When you begin to try to answer these questions, first, it may help people realize how much information they lack, and also, it can help them begin to realize why they do matter.

# The Evaluation of Building and Place Names ~ National Conversations



## *Building and Place Names Matter*

Why are communities, including colleges and universities, across the United States are challenging the existence of memorials associated with the confederacy and white supremacy?

- They play an important role in how community members interact with, remember, and revere their histories
- They are symbolic of the long historical threads of racism, institutionalized discrimination, and the use of public spaces to perpetuate dominant narratives

# The Evaluation of Building and Place Names ~ National Conversations



## **Brown University**

"After Brown University's Report on Slavery, Silence (So Far)" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 24, 2006  
["Stained by Slavery: How Craig Steven Wilder Exposed Higher Education's Past"](#)

## **George Mason University**

"George Mason Faculty Calls on Leaders to Abandon Scalia Name for Law School" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 27, 2016  
"George Mason's Plans to Honor Scalia Spark Protests Over University's Direction" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 29, 2016

## **Princeton University**

"In Sticking with Woodrow Wilson, Princeton Seeks to Contextualize His Legacy" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 05, 2016  
"Report of the Trustee Committee on Woodrow Wilson's Legacy at Princeton" (pdf is available online)

## **University of Oregon**

["Fuller Picture of Deady's Life Complicates Decision to Rename University of Oregon Building"](#)  
["University of Oregon Trustees Hear Impassioned Plea to Retain Deady Name on Campus Building"](#)  
[Process for Considering the Demeaning of Deady and Dunn Halls](#)  
[Deady Hall and Update on Black Students' Demands](#)

## **U. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**

"Chapel Hill Replaced KKK Name, but Not the Debate" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 28, 2017

## **Westfield State University**

[Massachusetts Board of Higher Education Request for Committee and Board Action](#)  
[Massachusetts Board of Higher Education Approval of BHE Naming Rights Policy](#)

## **Yale University**

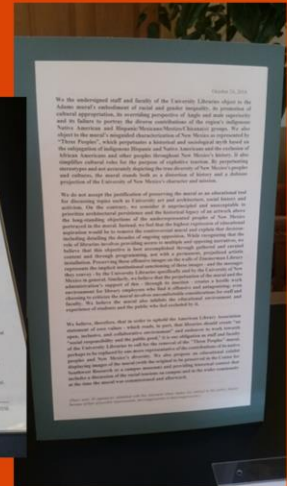
"Students Vent Frustration as Yale Leaves a Slavery Champion's Name Intact" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 29, 2016  
"Yale Will Rename Calhoun College for Adm. Grace Hopper" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 11, 2017

Just to name a few examples of universities (there are also cites and schools) that have had namesake debates

# The Evaluation of Building and Place Names ~ National Conversations



The Three Peoples Mural (1939) UNM Zimmerman Library



# The Evaluation of Building and Place Names ~ Local Conversations



## What about in your communities?

Have you heard or read about a renaming process?

Is your local community considering undertaking an evaluation process?

Are you currently engaged in an evaluation process?

Have you gone through an evaluation process?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, do you know if librarians, archivists, museum curators, etc. have been involved in these processes?

How many of you have heard or read about a renaming process?

How many are considering undertaking an evaluation process?

How many are currently engaged in an evaluation process?

How many of you have gone through an evaluation process?

Do you know if librarians, archivists, museum curators, etc. have been involved?



# The Evaluation of Building and Place Names ~ Local Conversations



Librarians, archivists, museum curators, etc. should be involved!

Case Study:  
OSU Building and Place Names Evaluation Process

Archivists and special collections librarians are often called upon to provide historical context, and have the opportunity to engage their communities in productive and transformative discourses.

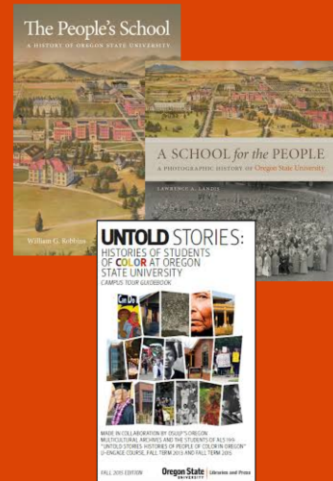
For the purposes of this presentation, we are moving forward with the understanding that building and places names do matter, and I am going to use the Building and Place Names Evaluation Process at OSU as a case study.



# The Evaluation of Building and Place Names ~ at OSU

## About OSU

- Located in Corvallis, Oregon; est. 1868. Is a PWI, in a predominantly white college town
- History of students of color protesting injustices since the late 1960s
- 2015 “Students of Color Speak Out” and subsequent establishment of the Office of Institutional Diversity
- Building renaming is common on campus; new buildings are named after individuals for a variety of reasons
- Reconciliation efforts and actions by the university to address past injustices are part of an ongoing process



## The Evaluation of Building and Place Names ~ at OSU



As an institution, we asked ourselves:

“What does it mean for OSU to value equity and inclusion if individuals after whom its buildings are named did not?”

The community of Oregon State University (OSU) recently underwent a building and places names evaluation process, and the archives and archivists were integral throughout the process. When OSU names a building, it speaks to its values and efforts towards creating an institution that respects and affirms the dignity of all individuals and communities.

Therefore, OSU community members who raised concerns regarding campus buildings whose namesakes may have held or espoused racist or otherwise exclusionary views, posed an important question: “What does it mean for OSU to value equity and inclusion if individuals after whom its buildings are named did not?”

One of the most important components to this undertaking was the university administration at OSU was firm and consistent in its talking point that whether or not an individual agreed with the idea that building and places names matter, they matter to the institution, and the evaluation process is going to happen.

## The Evaluation Process



- Formation of a Building and Place Names (BPN) committee
- Development of the Evaluation Criteria
- Responding to a Student Protest
- Creating a Communications Plan
- Providing a Team of Scholars Historical Research Assistance
- Designing and Implementing a Community Engagement Plan
- Decision Making Process
- Announcing the Decision
- Engaging in a Renaming Process
- Planning for Permanent Education Accessible to Community Members

Beginning in 2016, OSU began a process to answer this question by developing evaluation criteria, working with community stakeholders, responding to a student protest, providing a team of scholars historical research assistance, and most in fall term of 2017 designing and implementing a community engagement plan.

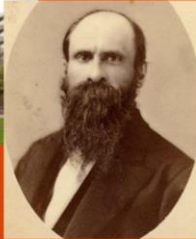
Earlier this year, we hosted a renaming process, and deciding upon new names. We have yet to begin our next step of planning for permanent education accessible to community members.

As you would expect, there are many steps to an evaluation process such as this, and in the time we have, I am going to be selective regarding the details of various steps in the process in terms of how in-depth I choose to go – my main focus will be the historical research and community engagement parts of the process.

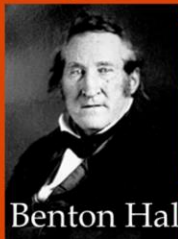
## The Evaluation Process Outcomes



Arnold Dining Center /  
Benjamin Lee Arnold



Avery Lodge /  
Joseph C Avery



Benton Hall and Annex /  
Benton County – Thomas Hart Benton



Gill Coliseum / Amory T. "Slats" Gill

I am not going to talk about the history of the building namesakes nor judge the outcome of the evaluation process. This session is about process itself, so I will go ahead and let you know the outcomes.

On November 29, 2017, OSU's President Edward Ray announced that of the five Corvallis campus buildings that underwent an evaluation – including the publication historical reports and community engagement sessions – three would be renamed, and all five would have permanent education materials created about them and made available to the public.

The five buildings under evaluation, based on claims of white supremacist views of their namesakes, were: Arnold Dining Center, Avery Lodge, Benton Hall and Benton Annex, and Gill Coliseum. The primary reasons for evaluation of each of the building namesakes were as follows:

- Benjamin Lee Arnold, OSU's second president (1872-1892), came from a slave holding family and served in the Confederate Army.
- Joseph C. Avery, Corvallis co-founder and early supporter of then Corvallis College, Avery had ties to the *Occidental Messenger* newspaper, which advocated for slavery

prior to Oregon voting whether or not it would become a pro- or anti-slavery state in the late 1850s.

- Thomas Hart Benton, a United States senator from Missouri, who was a well-known advocate of westward expansionist policies and his belief in the supremacy of the white race. Although in the case of Benton Hall, the building was named after the residents of Benton County, which was named for the senator, the association could not be removed. Benton Annex, a building that has been home to the Women's Center since the early 1970s and was named Benton Annex at about the same time as a matter of pragmatism.
- Amory T. "Slats" Gill, longtime OSU basketball coach during the 1920s-early 1960s, who was accused of resisting to racially integrate the OSU men's basketball team. The university will retain the names of Gill Coliseum and Arnold Dining Center and will determine a new name for Avery Lodge, as well as for Benton Hall and Benton Annex.

# Session Agenda



## Lessons Learned

- Formation of a Building and Place Names (BPN) committee
- Development of the Evaluation Criteria
- Responding to a Student Protest
- Creating a Communications Plan
- Decision Making Process

## Descriptions of the Processes and Lessons Learned

- Providing a Team of Scholars Historical Research Assistance
- Designing and Implementing a Community Engagement Plan

One of the session learning objectives was for you to be able to adapt the information learned from the Oregon State University case study to develop, design, and implement historical research plans, community engagement initiatives, and permanent education proposals for local communities. The majority of the presentation will be in a “lessons learned format” with more detailed explanations of the historical research and community engagement components of the process.

# Formation of a Building and Place Names (BPN) Committee



## Lessons Learned

- Request to be a part of the process, from start to finish
- Set boundaries regarding your time and commitment to the process
- Educate committee members about archives and the work of archivists
- Build trust among committee members
- Ensure your department and colleagues are clear on your role and theirs
- Voice your opinion and push back on the administration as needed
- Be transparent with the public as to the who's who of the process

Committees and Groups: <http://leadership.oregonstate.edu/building-and-place-names/about/committees-and-groups>



# Development of the Evaluation Criteria



## Lessons Learned

- Review other institutions' evaluation criteria and determine if you will adapt it or create your own
- If applicable, create criteria broad enough to address future evaluations not just building namesakes currently under review
- Include information regarding planned permanent education
- Directly connect the criteria to requests for community input and community engagement activities

Criteria: <http://leadership.oregonstate.edu/building-and-place-names/evaluation-process/renaming-criteria>

# Responding to a Student Protest



## Lessons Learned

- It's not just about the building names
- There is an urgency to the process, but a need to "get it right"
- The process needs to include facilitated, small group discussions
- Need for historical research to address misinformation
- Need to address community FAQs
- Always remember that it's about the students who feel excluded and harmed by the institution's racist past – and present



Student Protest, February 28, 2017





**What I hear when I'm being yelled at  
is people caring really loudly at me.**

# Creating a Communications Plan

## Lessons Learned



- Communications Committee
  - ~ determine roles
  - ~ follow protocol but also assess when to deviate
- Community Stakeholders
  - ~ identify / set meetings with student groups, alumni representatives, non-university specific community members, etc.
- Website
  - ~ provide photos and (minimal) historical information and context
  - ~ online form for feedback collection \*based on the evaluation criteria\*
  - ~ ensure transparency and provide as much content as possible
- Press
  - ~ develop talking points, as well as a clear narrative
  - ~ place the institution front and center

# Decision Making Process



## Lessons Learned

- Be clear about the process and timeline
- Place the ultimate decision on the administration
  - ~ Community input
  - ~ BPN committee and workgroup discussion and meeting with the President
  - ~ Architectural Naming Committee meeting with the President
- Document the process and make a version of that documentation available to the public
- Be prepared for push back on the decision



OSU President Ed Ray, 2003-present

# Providing a Team of Scholars Historical Research Assistance



## The Process



LibGuide <https://guides.library.oregonstate.edu/osu-buildings-history>



Historical Reports

### Pre-Historical Scholars Team (about 6 months)

- Research on the history of building naming processes and guidelines at OSU – how buildings are named and who makes those decisions? What buildings have been renamed and why?
- Research regarding the misinformation shared during and after the student protest
- Identification of relevant materials – additions to the LibGuide as needed
- Digitize materials as able / needed (i.e. Avery newspaper)
- Two students as assistants ~ research and LibGuide creation

### Historical Scholars Team

- Team of 5 scholars, including a team leader, all selected based on their expertise
- Scholars from OSU and one non-OSU professor, mostly history, but also sociology (we knew and had worked with most of them)
- Timeline of about 2-3 months, August-Oct 2017
- Meeting with scholars on a regular basis – lots of emails
- Set up a google drive to share digitized content
- Prioritized their requests
- Read and gave feedback on drafts (a good relationship already existed)
- Communicated community feedback, when appropriate (i.e. people for OH interviews and individuals with additional information)
- Trusted them to be the great scholars that they are

# Providing a Team of Scholars Historical Research Assistance



## Lessons Learned

- Begin the research process early, anticipate needs and do not wait to be asked
- Plan for the appropriate amount of staff and student assistance
- Build in extra time to assist scholars and develop research plans
- Review and discuss content researched with the scholars, if desired
- Provide constructive criticism to report drafts, if requested
- Share the information uncovered with other committee members as needed



# Designing and Implementing a Community Engagement Plan



## The Process ~ Goals

- Provide information, enable dialogue and build community consensus on the importance of acting on OSU's mission and values through evaluating building names and places;
- Review the history of these buildings and their namesakes in the context of OSU's history;
- Transparently engage the community in this process by reviewing and discussing findings;
- Enable OSU community members and stakeholders to openly, constructively and safely share their views on this subject;
- Reconcile the building namesakes' views or actions with the contemporary values of the OSU community and the university's mission;
- Gather community and stakeholder input on whether to change the names of the buildings; Share and explain the history of these buildings and places and their namesakes, regardless of any decision.

Community Engagement Information: <http://leadership.oregonstate.edu/building-and-place-names/evaluation-process/community-engagement>

Community Engagement Team ~ me and two members of the Office of Institutional Diversity. Community members were asked to think deeply and critically about the purpose of building and place names, the legacies of individuals after whom university buildings and places are named, and how evaluating these names advance Oregon State's values and mission to create an educational environment that respects and affirms the inherent dignity of all individuals and communities. We treated this as we would a class session with clear goals and learning objectives and we shared that with the community.

# Designing and Implementing a Community Engagement Plan



## The Process ~ Calendar

### Community Engagement Sessions

Session One, September 28, 5:30pm-7:30pm

Session Two, October 2, 12pm-2pm

### Building Name Evaluation Sessions

Arnold Dining Center Discussion - Wednesday, October 11, 5:30pm-7:30pm

Avery Lodge Discussion - Monday, October 16, 5:30pm-7:30pm

Benton Hall and Annex Discussion - Tuesday, October 17, 5:30pm-7:30pm

Gill Coliseum Discussion - Thursday, October 19, 5:30pm-7:30pm

### Community Input Analysis

A qualitative summary and assessment of the data gathered during the community engagement process is available online

*All community engagement sessions were recorded and are available online*

## Community Engagement ~ 2 Parts

Part 1 ~ overview of why the university is engaging in this process

Part 2 ~ building specific discussions

We had a very tight timeline (our term at OSU begin in late September and the decision announcement deadline was late November)

Engagement Session To Dos ~ keep times and locations consistent; keep format and speakers consistent

# Designing and Implementing a Community Engagement Plan



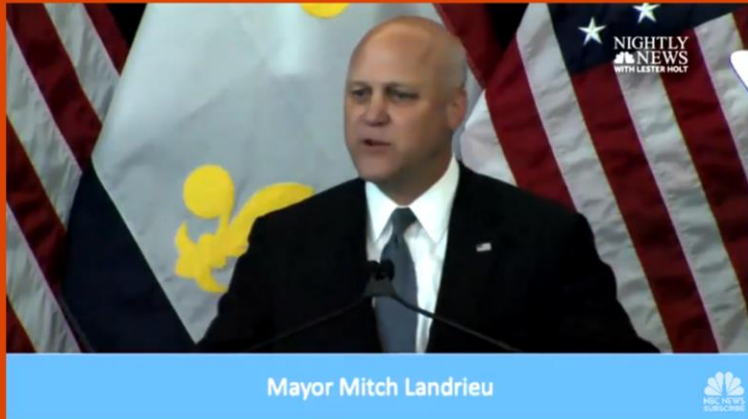
## The Process ~ Part 1

- Began with intentions and expectations
- How did we get here?  
The national conversation and OSU context; the reasons why it is important to reflect on our past
- What happens next?  
The process timeline, what happens after the evaluation process is complete i.e. a remaining process and the permanent education component
- Workshop Plan  
Review "Intentions of RESPECT"  
Watch 9 min video of New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu speech, May 2017  
Engage in facilitated discussion with trained facilitators and note-takers

## Intentions of RESPECT

- Recognize your communication style
- Examine your own perceptions and assumptions
- Speak from your own experiences
- Participate honestly / Pass openly
- Engage in the learning process
- Consider confidentiality, seek curiosity
- Take responsibility for your actions

# Designing and Implementing a Community Engagement Plan



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j81MkNgnXuY>

# Designing and Implementing a Community Engagement Plan

## The Process ~ Part 1



### Facilitated Conversation Questions

- 1) What do you think the difference is between remembering history and revering history?
- 2) What does "reconciliation" mean to you? What does reconciling the past with the present mean to you?
- 3) Consider this quote from President Bush at the 2016 opening of the African American Museum in Washington D.C.: "A great nation does not hide its history. It faces its flaws and corrects them." What are your reactions to this statement? How do you think this statement connects to evaluating the names of buildings at OSU?
- 4) What does or could it feel like to walk into a place named after a person who stands for something at odds with your values, or the values of the university?
- 5) At this point in history, what story do you want OSU to tell through the names of its buildings? Through its language, symbols, and actions?

The speech explored the importance of examining and learning from history in order to pursue reconciliation. The video was intended to provide a springboard for dialogue about these issues.

# Designing and Implementing a Community Engagement Plan



## The Process ~ Part 2

- Repeat of Part 1 Content
- BPN committee co-chair presentation on the significance of building names and an explanation of the evaluation criteria
- BPN co-chair presentation on the historical research findings based on the reports produced by the scholars
  - ~ historical review team, purpose, and process ~ building history
  - ~ namesake history and controversies ~ summary points
- Workshop Plan
  - Review "Intentions of RESPECT"
  - All tables had copies of the criteria, the historical reports, & presentation slides
  - Engage in facilitated discussion with trained facilitators and note-takers



# Designing and Implementing a Community Engagement Plan

## The Process ~ Part 2



Facilitated Conversations, based on the evaluation criteria

Should a building be renamed because the “context” of an individual’s life and legacy is inconsistent with OSU’s contemporary mission and values?

“Context” is evaluated by the following criteria:

- Actions taken by an individual vs. viewpoints held by an individual
- The individual's public vs. private persona
- The progression of an individual’s viewpoints and life as a whole
- Whether and how an individual’s actions and viewpoints aligned with OSU’s mission and OSU’s and society’s values at the time
- How the current OSU community engages with the “context” of an individual’s life



# Designing and Implementing a Community Engagement Plan

## Lessons Learned



- Develop sessions that feature both information sharing and ample time for engaged dialogue (have contingency plans i.e. talk with public safety)
- Know your audience (students, F/S, alumni, non-OSU); assign tables randomly
- Be transparent about the process and repeat key pieces of information
- Recruit and train facilitators and note-takers
- Connect the evaluation criteria to the facilitated conversation prompts
- Outline participant expectations, review “Intentions of RESPECT”
- Administrators were present but did not participate (Pres. Ray was not)
- Do NOT have an opportunity for comments to the room by participants

# Renaming Process



Winter-Summer 2018

- The university president set criteria for the new names
- The university's building name website included a comment tool to submit naming recommendations online
- A community meeting on new names was held in April 2018
- Three committees, made up of faculty, staff and students, evaluated the proposed names and prepared a list of top choices to be considered by the university administration

In considering new names for these buildings, President sought:

- A name for Benton Hall that appropriately recognizes the many contributions of Benton County community residents in the 1860s and 70s that supported the founding of this university. This community support for higher education has continued for many years and remains strong today.
- A name for Benton Annex that appropriately recognizes the building as home to the Women's Center, a valued student resource center.
- In considering a new name for Avery Lodge, please think about names that portray a sense of the geography or place that OSU's Corvallis campus has in the Willamette Valley; the university's 150-year history as Oregon's land grant and statewide university; or the building's purpose. For example, Avery Lodge is home to the Family Resource Center, a childcare center, the Human Services Resource Center and University Housing and Dining Services administrative offices.

## Renaming Process



**Champinefu Lodge** ~ The word means “At the place of the blue elderberry” Blue elderberries are specific to the Willamette Valley and the areas around our campus are where Calapooia tribal members historically would travel to harvest blue elderberries

**Community Hall** ~ A name to reflect the contributions of local residents in establishing this university, and helping it reach its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary and excel as Oregon’s statewide university

**Hattie Redmond Women and Gender Center** ~ Hattie Redmond was a leader in the struggle for women’s suffrage in Oregon in the early 20th century

With the assistance of Siletz tribal leaders and Native American linguists and historians, I have decided that Avery Lodge will be called Champinefu Lodge. In the dialect of the Calapooia tribe, which inhabited this region, the word Champinefu is translated to mean “At the place of the blue elderberry.” Blue elderberries are specific to the Willamette Valley and the areas around our campus are where Calapooia tribal members historically would travel to harvest blue elderberries. Phonetically, this name is pronounced: CHOM-pin-A-foo.

Benton Hall will be renamed Community Hall to reflect the contributions of local residents in establishing this university, and helping it reach its 150th anniversary and excel as Oregon’s statewide university.

And Benton Annex will be named the Hattie Redmond Women and Gender Center. Hattie Redmond was a leader in the struggle for women’s suffrage in Oregon in the early 20th century. The right to vote was especially important to Hattie, who was a black woman living in a state that had black exclusion laws in its constitution. Her work is credited with laying the groundwork for the civil rights movement in Oregon in the mid-twentieth century.

## How to Access More Information



- Contact me ~ feel free to email me [natalia.fernandez@oregonstate.edu](mailto:natalia.fernandez@oregonstate.edu) if you would like a copy of this presentation, if you would like more details about the process, or would like to chat over the phone
- Review the OSU BPN Website ~ <http://leadership.oregonstate.edu/building-and-place-names>
- Read the article ~ be on the lookout for a case study to be published in the *Journal of Western Archives* later this year / early next year

### Website Content:

- Committee Members
- Timeline
- Historical Reports
- Videos of the recorded community engagement sessions
- Currently, the site includes information about the renaming process

Q & A

