

# City of Philadelphia



(Bill No. 240931)

## AN ORDINANCE

Authorizing and directing the changing of the name of Taney Street to LeCount Street, from West Toronto Street to West Somerset Street; from Ridge Avenue to Cecil B. Moore Avenue; from Master Street to Aspen Street; from Pine Street to Bainbridge Street; from Catharine Street to Christian Street; from Dickinson Street to Morris Street; and authorizing and directing the changing of the name of Taney Terrace, from Point Breeze Avenue to Jackson Street, to LeCount Terrace, all under certain terms and conditions

### *THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA HEREBY ORDAINS:*

SECTION 1. The Council of the City of Philadelphia makes the following legislative findings:

1. In 1857, Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, in the infamous landmark *Dred Scott v. Sanford* decision, declared that Black slaves and their ancestors “are not included, and were not intended to be included, under the word ‘citizens’ in the Constitution, and can therefore claim none of the rights and privileges which that instrument provides for and secures to citizens of the United States.”
2. Until the Reconstruction amendments to the U.S. Constitution, this decision barred the extension of citizenship rights to any person of African descent in the United States, preventing the utilization and enjoyment of their constitutional, which contributed to the events leading to the secession of Southern states and the outbreak of the Civil War.
3. One year after *Dred Scott*, some Philadelphians celebrated this bolstering of white supremacy by renaming Minor Street, running between 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> streets through Grays Ferry, Fitler Square, Fairmount, and Strawberry Mansion, to “Taney Street.”
4. For years there have been campaigns to rename Taney Street, but in Spring 2020 the goal took on a new sense of urgency following the murder of George Floyd.
5. A group of Taney Street residents and neighbors hosted a petition signing that received 2,807 signatures to rename the street. That group then began working with Councilmember Kenyatta Johnson’s office to design outreach efforts that were compliant with COVID restrictions. A virtual town hall was held, door hangers were placed, and a door-to-door postcard campaign up and down Taney Street was launched. All addresses on Taney Street were contacted in person at least three times.
6. The door knocking campaign allowed Taney Street residents to voice their opinions on what values they wanted their street’s name to reflect. Petitioners also received feedback from a telephone hotline.

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7. During the virtual town hall, resident views were heard in small group-facilitated discussions, which produced data showing that 89 percent of those on or within one block of Taney Street supported changing the street name.
8. Comments made by residents during the virtual town hall included “Taney Street is my home, but I am embarrassed by its roots in white supremacy,” and “My block is diverse and vibrant, and the exact opposite of what Justice Taney stood for. My neighbors deserve better.”
9. Other cities with public honorifics to Roger Taney have taken steps to remove them: In 2017, Baltimore removed its statue of Roger Taney alongside several other Confederate monuments. Weeks later, Annapolis removed their statue of Roger Taney from the Maryland State House grounds. And in 2022, Congress voted to remove a bust of Roger Taney from the U.S. Capitol and replace it with a bust of Thurgood Marshall.
10. In 2020, the Taney Youth Baseball League, which achieved national acclaim during their travel team’s 2014 Little League Mid-Atlantic Championship campaign and Little League World Series run behind the groundbreaking pitching of Mo’Ne Davis and the superb hitting of Major Leaguers Scott Bandura and Jared Sprague-Lott, changed their name to the “Philadelphia Dragons” after an extensive historical investigation of their namesake.
11. A second round of community engagement was launched in Spring 2021 to collect survey data and poll a new street name from Taney Street residents, with nearly 100 percent participation in each survey to narrow down the most popular choice: LeCount Street.
12. Caroline LeCount was an educator, Union supporter and civil rights activist born in South Philadelphia who became the first African American woman to pass the teaching exam. LeCount later became the second Black female principal in Philadelphia at the Ohio Street School (later renamed for her fiancé, famed civil rights icon Octavious V. Catto) in 1868. She graduated from the Institute for Colored Youth, later renamed Cheyney University, the oldest HCBU in the United States.
13. LeCount is often compared to Rosa Parks for her fight to integrate Philadelphia’s streetcar system in the 1860s. A member of the Ladies Union Association, she and other black women would ride streetcars to deliver supplies to troops fighting in the Civil War at the risk of forcible removal due to laws against Black riders. They would then appeal to the courts and the public to ban discrimination on streetcars.
14. LeCount’s story is one of tremendous poise and conviction in the face of discrimination. As Philadelphia grapples with the stain of white supremacy rooted in its history, let us turn the page on Chief Justice Roger Taney and acknowledge the intelligence and

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character demonstrated in Caroline LeCount’s lifelong fight for equality that embodies the spirit of Philadelphia maneto: *let brotherly love endure*.

SECTION 2. Pursuant to Section 11-304 of The Philadelphia Code, the Board of Surveyors of the Department of Streets is hereby authorized and directed to change the name of “Taney Street” to LeCount Street”: from West Toronto Street to West Somerset Street; from Ridge Avenue to Cecil B. Moore Avenue; from Master Street to Aspen Street; from Pine Street to Bainbridge Street; from Catharine Street to Christian Street; from Dickinson Street to Morris Street; and is hereby authorized and directed to change the name of Taney Terrace, from Point Breeze Avenue to Jackson Street, to “LeCount Terrace.”

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Bill, Passed by the City Council on November 14, 2024. The Bill was Signed by the Mayor on December 4, 2024.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Elizabeth McCollum". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "E".

Elizabeth McCollum  
Interim Chief Clerk of the City Council