

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY



Metropolitan Historical Commission  
Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission  
Sunnyside in Sevier Park  
3000 Granny White Pike  
Nashville, Tennessee 37204  
Telephone: (615) 862-7970

To: Metropolitan Council  
From: Metropolitan Historical Commission, Staff  
Date: May 26, 2021  
Re: Bill No. BL2021-745

An ordinance to amend the Geographic Information Systems Street and Alley Centerline Layer for the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, by renaming a portion of McGavock Pike to “Aerospace Way”, from Murfreesboro Pike to a dead end. (Proposal Number 2021M-004SR-001). Exhibit attached.

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The Quarterly County Court of Davidson County accepted the subject portion of McGavock Pike, making it part of the District Road System of the County, during its Quarterly Session of April 1943.<sup>1</sup> Called the “Vultee Boulevard Section,” the original length of this segment ran from Couchville Pike to Murfreesboro Pike, for a distance of about 2,798 feet or about 0.53 mile, and was completely paved.<sup>2</sup> This section of McGavock Pike was part of a rerouted segment of McGavock Pike constructed to bypass expansions of the Municipal Airport and maintain a thoroughfare from Murfreesboro Pike into Pennington Bend. A portion of this segment of McGavock Pike was eventually closed for construction of Briley Parkway, which opened here in October 1965.<sup>3</sup>

**Background Information – the name McGavock:**

The portion of McGavock Pike which this rerouted segment replaced originally served as part of a collection of roads comprising a route that ran from Mill Creek northward into McSpadden’s Bend (later, Pennington Bend).<sup>4</sup> The historic route was known by several names across multiple segments. Like many early roads, the various segments were named for adjacent property owners. The northernmost segment of this route passed by the property of David H. and Willie Harding McGavock. According to a report describing the 1200-acre plantation in 1855, the

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<sup>1</sup> Davidson County Quarterly Court, Minute Book X, page 76. April Term, 1943.

<sup>2</sup> Couchville Pike, from Murfreesboro Pike to McGavock Pike (0.72 mile), renamed Vultee Boulevard, Davidson County Quarterly Court, Minute Book X, page 157. October Term, 1943.

<sup>3</sup> Steve Korpan, “Briley Parkway Links City,” *Nashville Tennessean*, 3 November 1965.

<sup>4</sup> For a more complete accounting of the various names and segments, please see the [report submitted for BL2018-1252, renaming a portion of McGavock Pike to Knight Valley Drive](#).

McGavocks had “been in possession of the property but four years [1851]” and since that time had “made about a mile of turnpike road.”<sup>5</sup> The McGavocks, “one of Nashville’s most prominent 19th century families,” built Two Rivers Mansion on this property in 1859.<sup>6</sup> “At its zenith in the 1880s, the McGavock estate, located in the Pennington Bend...was 1085-acres in size and contained over 50 structures.”<sup>7</sup>

Although unlabeled, the entire route appears on Wilbur F. Foster’s 1871 Map of Davidson County.<sup>8</sup> In 1919, Davidson County officially accepted and mapped the numerous segments of the route that would eventually become known as “McGavock Pike.”<sup>9</sup> By January 1, 1936, the entire route, running about 13 miles in length, was known as McGavock Pike.<sup>10</sup> Details noted in the 1936 Code book of the Davidson County Highway Commission indicate that the Davidson County Quarterly Court renamed the majority of the route in April 1927, as recorded in Minute Book P, page 386. At that time, from Pennington Bend in the north to Murfreesboro Pike in the south, the court unified four segments of the route under the “McGavock Pike” name.<sup>11</sup>

In October 1938, at the request of the Nashville City Council, the Davidson County Quarterly Court met in a special session and approved the closure of the 0.88 mile segment of McGavock Pike from Couchville Pike to Murfreesboro Pike (formerly Cole Road/Lane) to allow for expansions to Berry Field.<sup>12</sup> This is the original section of McGavock Pike which the subject portion replaced. Berry Field, which opened in June 1937, is now part of the Nashville International Airport. In the decades that followed, construction of the Vultee Aircraft, Inc. factory and expansion of the airport through new runways and terminals required several adjustments to McGavock Pike and the road system between Elm Hill Pike and Murfreesboro Pike.

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<sup>5</sup> Encore Interpretive Design, LLC, “Two Rivers Mansion Master Plan” (Nashville: Metropolitan Board of Parks and Recreation, 2016, accessed 19 June 2018: <https://www.nashville.gov/Portals/0/SiteContent/HistoricalCommission/Plans%20and%20Structure%20Reports/2017%20TR%20MP%20Final%20reduced.pdf>), 38.

<sup>6</sup> Encore Interpretive Design, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Encore Interpretive Design, 4.

<sup>8</sup> Wilbur F. Foster and G.W. & C.B. Colton & Co. *Map of Davidson County Tennessee, from actual surveys made by order of the county court of Davidson County*. New York: G.W. & C.B. Colton & Co., 1871. Map. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2006626025/>. Accessed 22 May 2021.

<sup>9</sup> County Committee (Finley M. Dorris, Samuel G. Douglas, James R. Allen, and John Langham) and Engineers (Freeland, Roberts & Co.), *General Road Map, Davidson County, Tenn.* 1919. Metropolitan Government Archives. Tennessee, *Senate Bill No. 484, Private Acts* (1917), 441: 1375-1390.

<sup>10</sup> Davidson County Highway Commission, *1936 Code*, 8. The County Court renamed Williamson’s Ferry Road and Maxey Lane, running from Pennington Bend to Gallatin Pike, to McGavock Pike in April 1934, per Minute Book T, page 20.

<sup>11</sup> The renamed segments included Cole Road, Fanning College Road, Merritt Lane, and McGavock Road.

<sup>12</sup> Davidson County Highway Commission, *1940 Code*, 8. A hand-drawn line has crossed out the entry for this segment. “Path for Larger Airport Cleared,” *Nashville Tennessean*, 10 November 1938. Due to various delays, construction on the new route did not commence for over a year. It is unclear if the road was officially closed in the meantime.