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**Staff Report to the Clark County  
Historic Preservation Commission**

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TO: Clark County Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Jacqui Kamp, Planner III

DATE: Sept. 20, 2017

FILE: HST #2017-00004, Consideration of removal of Jefferson Davis Highway Marker from Clark County Heritage Register

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**I. SUMMARY**

The Jefferson Davis National Highway Marker, currently located at 24024 NW Maplecrest Rd (Parcel No. 215362000) was nominated by the United Daughters of the Confederacy and listed on the Clark County Heritage Register by the Clark County Historic Preservation Commission in 2002. At that time, it was located at the Clark County Historical Museum on Main Street in Vancouver, WA.

In 2007, the marker was moved from the museum grounds to its current location on private property fronting the southbound lanes of Interstate 5 near Ridgefield. The relocation of the marker required review by the Clark County Historic Preservation Commission. On Dec. 11, 2007, the commission voted to keep the marker on the register and approve the Certificate of Appropriateness.

In the wake of violence after an Aug. 12 rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, Clark County received several comments and questions about the Jefferson Davis Highway Marker listed on the Clark County Historic Register. The comments include requests that the marker be removed from the website and heritage register. Since the Clark County Heritage Register is maintained by the Clark County Historic Preservation Commission, those comments were forwarded on to them and were discussed at their monthly meeting on Tues., Sept. 5. At the Sept. 5 meeting, the commission voted to schedule a public hearing to consider removing the Jefferson Davis Highway Marker from the register.

**II. BACKGROUND**

The Jefferson Davis Memorial Highway was conceived in 1913 by the United Daughters of the Confederacy (U.D.C.) as a transcontinental highway through the south, dedicated to Jefferson Davis,

the first and only President of the Confederate States of America. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, “it was common during that time for private organizations to identify a route, give it a name, and promote its use and improvement.” Eventually the Jefferson Davis Highway was extended north along the Pacific Coast via U.S. 99, with the designation completed in 1939 in Washington State. One highway marker was placed in Vancouver at the southern end of Highway 99 and one at the northern end in Blaine. Because the route had an existing number (following adoption of the U.S. numbered highway system in 1926), the new name was hardly used. (Exhibit f)

According to documents in the nomination file, the granite marker originally was placed on Highway 99 (Main Street) just west of the Covington House in 1939. Documents indicate it was moved in 1951 when Highway 99 was widened. According to a 2002 article in The Columbian, it was moved into storage by the city of Vancouver in 1997 or 1998. In 2002, the marker was moved to the Clark County Historical Museum, and soon after, it was nominated to and placed on the Clark County Heritage Register. In 2007, the marker was moved from the museum grounds to its current location on private property off Interstate 5 near Ridgefield.

Per Clark County Code 40.250.030 (F), any building, structure, site, object or district may be designated for inclusion in the CCHR if it:

- is significantly associated with the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering or cultural heritage of the community;
- has integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association;
- is at least fifty (50) years old, or is of lesser age and has exceptional importance;
- and falls into at least one of eleven other categories.

The 2002 nomination (Exhibit b) for the highway marker claimed that it met the eligibility for the Clark County Heritage Register and that it met 3 of the eleven additional categories as follows:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of national, state or local history;
4. Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the county’s history;
5. Is associated with the lives of persons significant in national, state or local history;

The Aug. 22, 2002 staff report findings were:

- It was older than 50 years;
- That it was significantly associated with the history and cultural heritage of the community because the highway and the women’s movement to commemorate the highway are part of the county’s history;
- Although the monument is no longer sited in its original location, it does have its original design, materials and feelings;

- The only category that staff supported for the additional category was #4. Staff stated, “*The special element of the County’s history that is reflected is that of the Daughters of the Confederacy’s grassroots project for the designation and commemoration of Highway 99. As is stated in Section 8, page one, of the National Register materials; “The Jefferson Davis Highway from coast to coast is the largest project ever accomplished by an American women’s organization...” Regardless of whether it was the largest project ever, it is thought by staff to be of historic significance. (Aug. 22, 2002 Jefferson Davis Highway marker staff report – Exhibit b)*

After the staff report was presented at the Sept. 10, 2002 Historic Preservation Commission meeting, the notes reflect a discussion regarding the marker’s ineligibility for the Washington Heritage Register and National Register of Historic Places. The state determined that a marker did not have symbolic value and that it had lost integrity because it was moved from its original location. (Exhibit d)

Then commission member, Holly Chamberlain, discussed how she believed the marker was significant to our history because it was chosen to be placed in Clark County instead of somewhere else in the state which was unique to Clark County. She further discussed how she would like the nomination amended and expanded.

Chamberlain’s motion:

*Moves the Jefferson Davis Highway Marker be placed on the Clark County Heritage Register given that the nomination be expanded to include the addition of a paragraph of biographical information on May Avery Wilkins. That the nomination include, if it can be obtained, but specifically why it was originally placed farther up Main Street and also why it is placed where it is. Also for the nomination to have proofreading for purposes of clarification. With reference to the findings in the staff report. The motion was seconded and carried 3 to 1. (Exhibit c-minutes and audio)*

Current historic preservation staff has reviewed the entire file and have yet to find an amended nomination that reflects the request of the 2002 Historic Preservation Commission for the approval of the nomination to the Clark County Heritage Register.

In 2007, the marker came before the Historic Preservation Commission for a Certificate of Appropriateness application for its relocation from the museum to its current location off I-5. Staff’s recommendation was that the marker was no longer eligible for listing because it was no longer located on a part of the old Highway 99 route that it was commemorating.

The commission approved the Certificate of Appropriateness for the relocation of the marker with the recognition of the efforts of the Washington Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy with the condition that the story of their effort be documented and displayed at the marker to explain the significance to visitors of the site. The vote was two to one. Since that time, additional objects have been placed at the site including the plaque explaining the story of the UDC. The marker that was

placed in Blaine, WA has also been placed at the site, along with signage about the park and two flags, one confederate flag and one Betsy Ross Union flag. (Exhibit a)

As stated in the summary, after the violence that occurred in Charlottesville on Aug. 12, many members of the public have requested that the marker be taken off the county website and the Clark County Heritage Register. On Sept. 5, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission voted to schedule a hearing to consider removing the Jefferson Davis Highway Marker from the Clark County Heritage Register. (Exhibit f)

**III. HISTORIC NAME**

Jefferson Davis Highway Marker

**IV. COMMON NAME**

Jefferson Davis, Highway 99, Marker

Under Title 40.250.030 (F)(4), the Historic Preservation Commission may initiate removal of a site from the Clark County Heritage Register.

**V. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

It is a granite marker that has the following inscribed:

Jefferson Davis Highway No. 99  
Erected by the Washington Division United Daughters of the Confederacy  
Erected June 1939

**VI. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**Nomination Criteria**

**Clark County Heritage Register:**

There are four questions to be answered in order to determine the eligibility of any property.

The property must:

- a. Be at least 50 years old,
- b. Be significantly associated with the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or cultural heritage of the community,
- c. Have integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and
- d. Fall into at least one of the categories identified in CCC 40.250.030 (f). The applicant's nomination argues that the marker fell within three of the eleven categories. They are stated below.

The 2002 nomination argues that the marker's area of significance fell in three areas as identified below and in 40.250.030(F).

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of national, state or local history;
4. Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the county's history;
5. Is associated with the lives of persons significant in national, state or local history;

The commission will need to include their findings for the criteria as part of the motion and approval process.

**VII. EXHIBIT**

- a. Current photos of site
- b. August 26, 2002 Clark County Heritage Register Staff Report, Nomination
- c. Aug. 26, 2002 Meeting Minutes and audio
- d. July 2, 2002 State of Washington Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation letter
- e. 2007 Certificate of Appropriateness Staff Report, Application, and Decision of HPC
- f. U.S. Dept. of Transportation - Federal Highway Administration – Jefferson Davis Memorial Highway by Richard F. Weingroff
- g. Public comments received