

STREET NAMING GUIDE  
for  
MEMPHIS AND SHELBY COUNTY, TENNESSEE

I. GENERAL

The purpose of this guide is to provide assistance to developers and their engineers during the process of choosing street names for public streets and private drives in new developments submitted for approval. This guide has been prepared by the City Engineer's Office with the cooperation of the Shelby County Engineer's Office, the Address Assignment Department of Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division and The Memphis and Shelby Office of Planning and Development. The users of this guide should understand that the information has been prepared so as to inform the reader about the rationale for choosing street names as well as examples of acceptable and unacceptable names. This is, however, only a guide; and the acceptability of some street names cannot be determined merely by applying these guidelines. Some cases will require an inspection of the exact layout of the street system and the relationship of adjacent streets in order to determine the best street name.

II. PURPOSE OF STREET NAMES

Street names together with the house number assigned to each structure provide a unique identity for every lot, building and house in Memphis and Shelby County. This applies equally to both public and private streets. The uniqueness of the address is important in quickly identifying each structure without confusion; not only in an emergency, but in day to day activities of people searching out a particular destination, mail delivery and the delivery of goods and services to residential and commercial buildings:

III. DEFINITIONS

- Street Any public right of way for vehicular and pedestrian travel and access to abutting properties; a generic term for any public thoroughfare whether it is designated an Avenue, Boulevard, Cove, etc.
- Private Drive Any privately owned roadway which provides frontage and an address for a parcel or parcels of property.
- Label The part of a street name that provides a distinctive identity to a street. In the name North McLean Boulevard, "McLean" is the label.
- Designator The part of a street name that indicates the type of street being named. In the name North McLean Boulevard, "Boulevard" is the designator. A list of approved designators is provided at the end of this guide.
- Directional Prefix An indicator of the directional relationship that a segment of street has with the established North-South or East-West Meridian (baseline). In the name North McLean Boulevard, "North" is the directional prefix.

Meridians	The North-South and East-West Meridians are defined in the City Code, Section 34-97, and fall generally along the following lines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) <u>Meridian A</u>, which separates the eastern and western segments of a street, generally follows the alignments of Florida Street, Tennessee Street and North Second Street (projected northwardly).</li> <li>(b) <u>Meridian B</u>, which separates the northern and southern segments of a street, generally follows the alignment of Madison Avenue and Walnut Grove Road.</li> </ul>
Directional Suffix	An indicator of the directional or relative geographical relationship between two streets that share the same label and designator. In the name Cherry Circle South, "South" is the directional suffix.
Name	The complete street name - consisting of the <u>label</u> followed by the <u>type</u> - plus any <u>directional prefix</u> or <u>suffix</u> .
Cul-de-sac	A singular street with only one point of access to a through street and having no streets intersecting it.
Cul-de-sac System	A group or system of intersecting cul-de-sacs with only one point of access to a through street via the main stem of the system.

#### IV. STREET NAMING PROCEDURE

1. Street names shall be reflected on the Final Plat of development submitted to the Office of Planning and Development (OPD) and shall also be listed on the accompanying Final Plat Data Sheet.
2. OPD shall circulate the Final Plat and Data Sheet to all reviewing agencies, including the MLGW Address Assignment Dept. and the City and/or County Engineer's Office.
3. The MLGW Address Assignment Dept. shall review the street names for address number compatibility. Their comments shall be entered on the Data Sheet and forwarded to the City Engineer except for "CO" cases which shall be forwarded to the County Engineer.
4. Final approval of street names is the responsibility of the City and County Engineers upon their review of the Final Plat and receipt of comments from MLGW and other agencies. The approved street names or request for revisions will be forwarded to the Developer's engineer with the plat mark-up.

#### V. RENAMING OF STREETS

The renaming or changing of existing street names shall be handled through the Street Name Change procedure stipulated in the Subdivision Regulations. Applications for street name changes are submitted to OPD for processing.

## 1. STREET NAMING GUIDELINES

1. Duplication of an existing street name is unacceptable. Neither the reuse of a complete street name nor the reuse of a label with a different designator is acceptable except as otherwise permitted herein.
2. A street name that phonetically sounds the same as an existing street name but has different spelling is unacceptable.  
Example: Forrest Ave. and Forest Ave.; Cats Cove and Katz Cove
3. Certain designators are reserved for use with specific types of streets.
  - COVE - For use only with the name of a singular cul-de-sac (dead end) street. All cul-de-sacs shall use "Cove".
  - COURT - For use only with the name of the main stem of a cul-de-sac system of streets. All such streets shall use "Court".
  - AVENUE - For use with streets having an east/west directional alignment.
  - STREET - For use with streets having a north/south directional alignment.
  - PLACE - For use with a short street segment, usually one block long.
  - BOULEVARD - For use with arterial streets on the Major and PARKWAY Road Plan, usually constructed with medians.
  - CIRCLE - For use with a street that intersects the same street twice, does not extend beyond the street it intersects and has no intersecting streets other than cul-de-sacs along its length.
4. A street name must contain a label and a designator (consult the list of approved designators located at the back of this guide). Directional prefixes and suffixes (North, South, East & West) are added if necessary.  
Example: River Bend is unacceptable. River Bend Drive is okay.
5. The label of a street name may be up to 14 characters in length including the space between words for labels comprising two words.  
Example: Woodfield Park Drive is okay - the label is 14 characters long. Rosehill Valley Drive is unacceptable - the label is 15 characters long.
6. Directional prefixes are used only when the street intersects (or is proposed to intersect) a Meridian and has (or is planned to have) a segment of roadway located on both sides of the Meridian.  
Example: North McLean Boulevard is north of Madison Avenue;  
South McLean Boulevard is south of Madison Avenue.

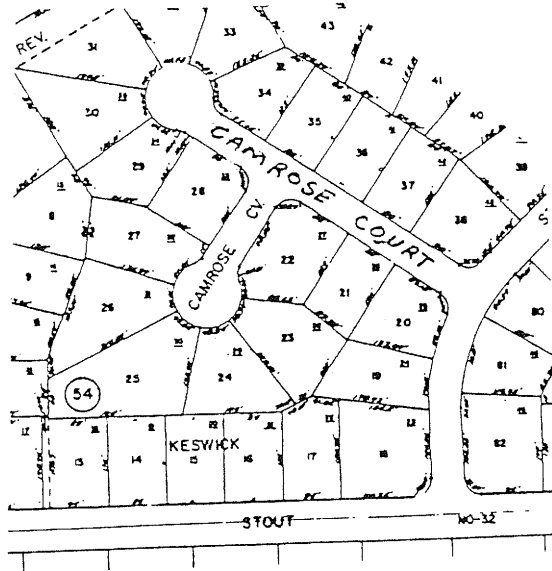
7. A label may be one or two words in length.  
Example: Either Oakgrove Lane or Oak Grove Lane is okay. However, if Oakgrove Lane exists, a request for Oak Grove Lane would be considered a duplication and would therefore be unacceptable.
8. Labels exceeding two words in length are unacceptable.  
Example: Oak Grove Lane is okay; Wild Oak Grove Lane is unacceptable.
9. Labels containing cardinal directions (north, south, east & west) as part of the label are unacceptable.  
Example: Southwick Drive is not acceptable.
10. Labels cannot use a designator as part of the label.  
Example: Morning Trail Road is unacceptable because "Trail" is a listed designator.
11. Street names using a foreign word or foreign spelling not familiar in the English Language should be avoided.
12. Street names should not use the first and last name of a person nor should they use two proper names.  
Example: Marilyn Monroe Avenue is unacceptable; Marilyn Avenue or Monroe Avenue is okay. Mary Elizabeth Lane is unacceptable.
13. Using a street name linked to a business located on that street (vanity name) or using the full name of a person in commemoration should be avoided.
14. The use of initials or numerical references in labels should be avoided. The exception to this rule is the long-established numerical street names in the CBD area (North Second Street).  
Example: G. Washington Avenue is unacceptable; Washington Avenue is okay. First Court and Five Place are unacceptable.
15. Punctuation in a street name is unacceptable.  
Example: Jack-O-Lantern Lane or David's Lake Cove are unacceptable; Lake David Cove is okay.
16. Extensions of streets or street segments lying on the same alignment which could be expected to connect should continue the same name. Two street segments lying along the same alignment that intersect on opposite sides of a cross street should also continue the same name.
17. Streets located along the alignment of an arterial roadway reflected on the Major Road Plan shall utilize and maintain the name designated for that arterial by the Major Road Plan and the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

18. When a new street is proposed which will replace an existing street on a different alignment (usually an arterial roadway), and the new street is to use the street name of the existing street, the existing street should be given a new name with a unique label unlike the name assigned to the new street. The existing street name shall be changed through the O.P.D. Street Name Change procedure.  
Example: The use of "Old", "New", "Little" or "Extended" is an undesirable method to differentiate between the existing street and the proposed street on a new alignment.  
Old Summer Ave., Old Lamar Ave., Little Southern Ave., Perkins Extended, New Getwell Rd., & New Brownsville Rd. are all examples of undesirable street naming choices.
19. The geometric requirements for horizontal street alignment in the Subdivision Regulations will neither be affected by the choice of a street name nor the termination of one street name and introduction of another name along a street system.  
Example: Two perpendicular segments of a loop street must be connected by a curve of appropriate radius even if each segment receives a distinctly different street name; i.e., the two loop segments are considered to be connected by a curve in the road; they do not intersect at right angles at a conventional intersection.
20. The continuity of a single street name should be maintained throughout the entire length of a street to the fullest practical extent even if the street changes alignment. A second street name should be introduced when:
- a. the curvilinear street alignment begins to adversely affect the logical assignment of street addresses, or
  - b. the street intersects another street twice, or
  - c. the introduction of a new street name is called for based on one or more of these guidelines.

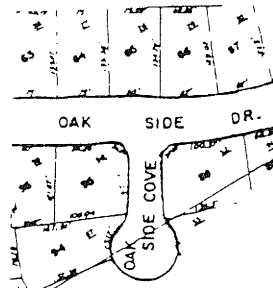
It is difficult to express specific dimensional guidelines to determine when a curvilinear street alignment requires a change in street name. Therefore, a case by case judgment by MLGW Address Assignment and the Engineering Department is necessary.

21. Cul-de-sac Naming: Due to the proliferation of cul-de-sacs (dead end streets) in current subdivision designs, special consideration and special guidelines are associated with the naming of cul-de-sacs.
- a. All single branched cul-de-sacs shall have "Cove" as the designator.

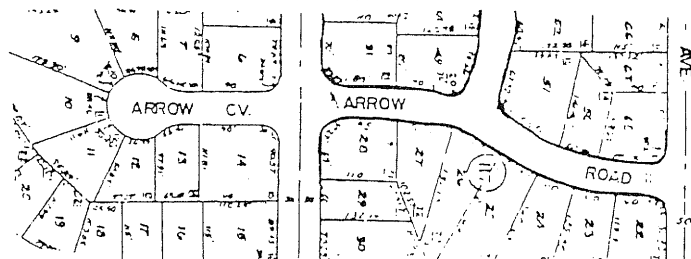
- b. The main stem of a cul-de-sac system, which provides the only point of access from a through street to the system, shall have "Court" as the designator. This designator shall continue along the entire length of the main stem until its termination at a cul-de-sac bulb. The single-branched cul-de-sacs that intersect the main stem shall all be designated as "Cove".



- c. A cul-de-sac may use the label of the through street it intersects. However, a cul-de-sac may not use the label of an existing street which it does not intersect.  
 Example: The name "Adams Cove" is okay if it intersects Adams Ave.; but the name "Adams Cove" is unacceptable if the cove intersects Madison Ave. and "Adams Ave." is an existing street name located elsewhere.



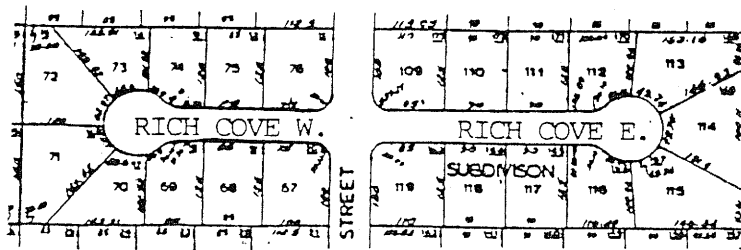
- d. When a through street crosses an intersection and its alignment beyond the intersection continues to a cul-de-sac termination, the cul-de-sac segment of the street shall retain the label of the through street but use "Cove" as its designator.  
 Example:



- e. A directional suffix may be used with a pair of cul-de-sacs which meet all of the following criteria:
- 1) The two cul-de-sacs must share the same label.
  - 2) The two cul-de-sacs must lie along the same alignment and intersect the same cross street.
  - 3) The maximum length of each cul-de-sac shall not exceed 200 feet.

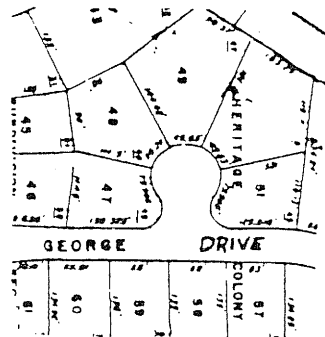
If directional suffixes are used, they shall be assigned to reflect the relative position of each cul-de-sac with the intersecting cross street.

Example: "Rich Cove East" shall be assigned to the cul-de-sac lying east of the cross street. "Rich Cove West" shall be assigned to the cul-de-sac lying west of the cross street.

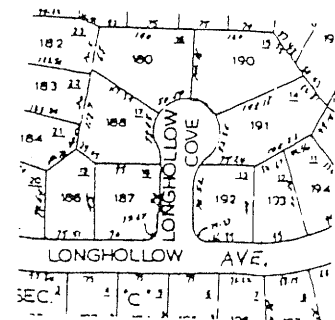


If the above criteria are not met, directional suffixes are unacceptable; and each of the two cul-de-sacs shall use unique labels.

- f. A cul-de-sac shaped bulb along one side of a street that has no more than three (3) lots which have frontage only on the bulb (excluding the corner lots) will not require a separate street name for the bulb. The three (3) lots on the bulb can be assigned addresses on the through street.

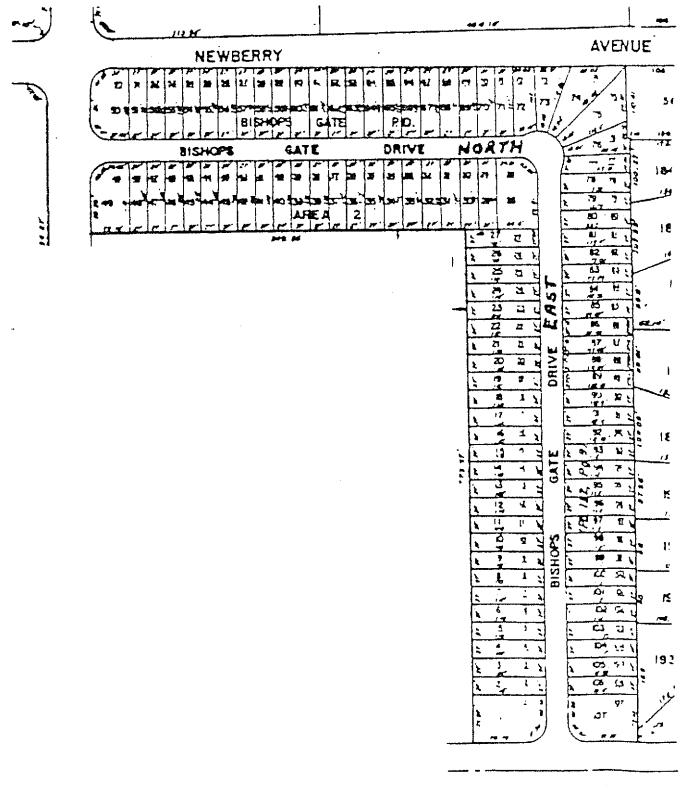
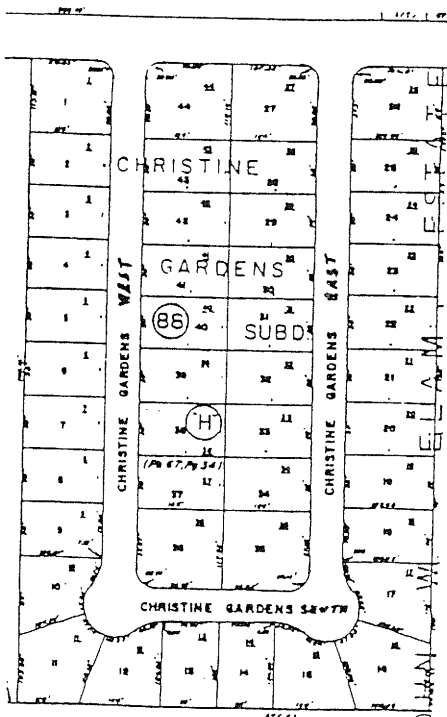


Only three lots;  
Bulb is a part of George Drive.



Four lots on cove;  
Separate street name required.

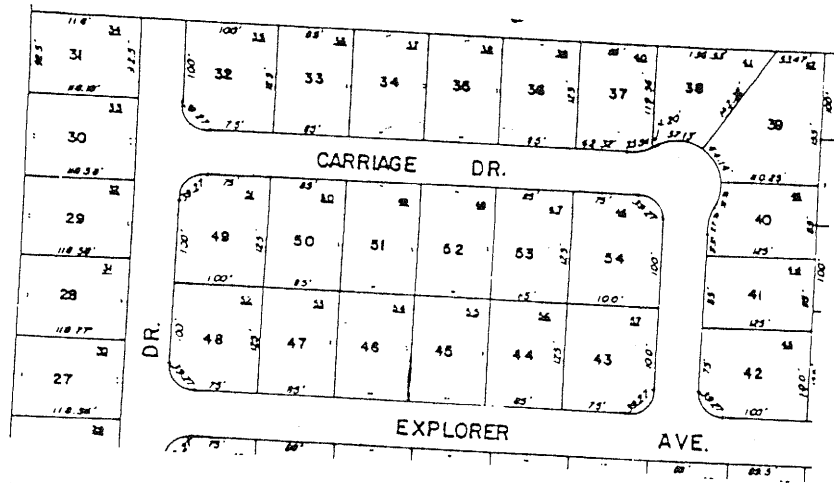
22. Loop Street Naming: The group of local streets that change direction one or more times, often intersecting the same street twice, are generally referred to as "loop" streets, "circles" and "L" streets. Due to the abrupt changes of direction and their intersection of the same street twice, these street types present more difficult problems than any other street type in assigning street names and address assignment. Therefore, special guidelines are associated with the naming of the street types.
- Loop streets that intersect the same through street twice must use at least two different street names along the loop alignment so as to avoid creating two identically named intersections with the through street.
  - A Directional suffix may be used on individual legs of a loop or "L" street using the same street label and type. The term "leg" means a generally tangent segment of a loop street having other street segments adjoining it which follow alignments generally perpendicular to the tangent segment.



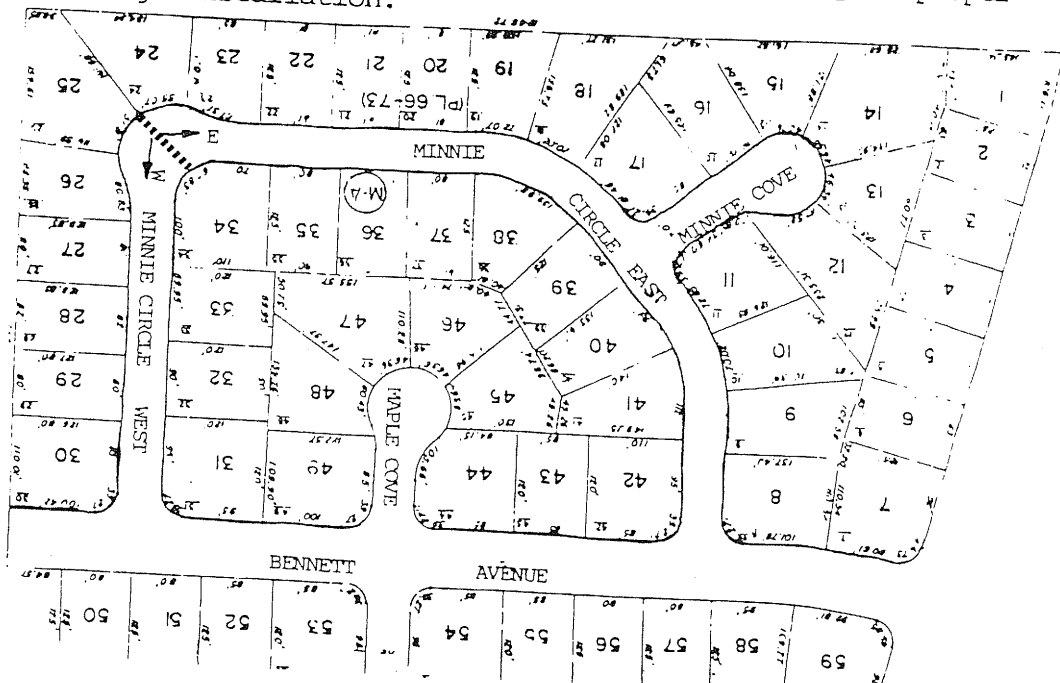


- c. It is not necessary that every leg of a loop or "L" street have a directional suffix or unique street name. If one or more of the legs are short in length and have relative few lots, it is probable that two adjacent legs can be properly addressed utilizing a single street name. Therefore, an "L" street, which does not intersect the same street twice, may use only one name along its entire length if one leg is relatively short. Likewise, a three or four legged loop street may require only two street names in order to comply with guideline #22.a. above.

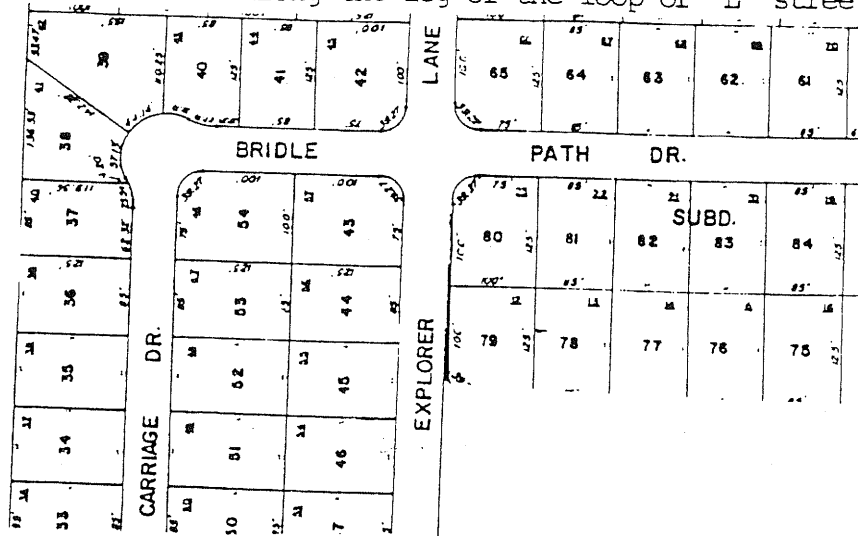
NOTE: It is difficult to express specific dimensional guidelines for these determinations. Therefore, a case by case judgment must be made by MLGW Address Assignment and the Engineering Department to determine if one name is sufficient or if several street names are required along a multi-legged loop or "L" street.



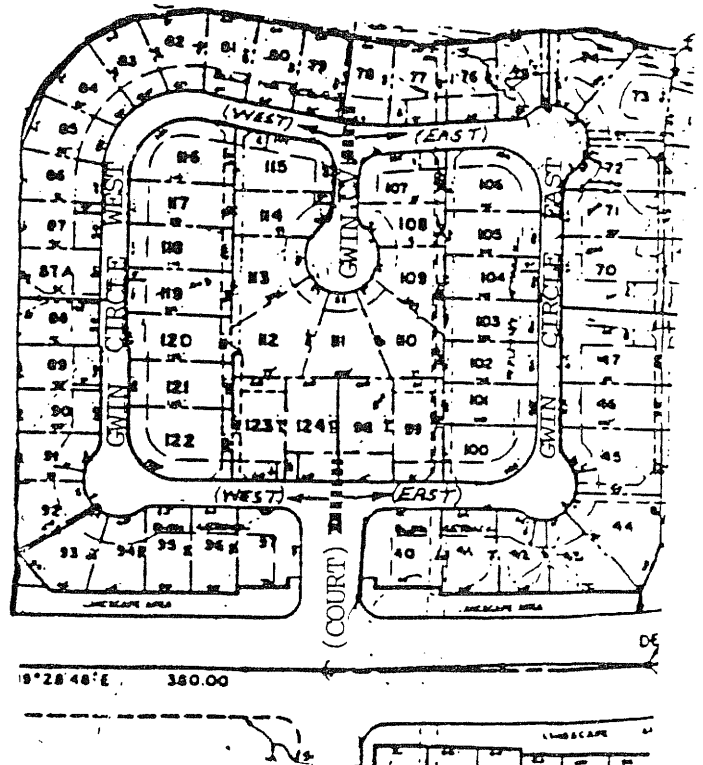
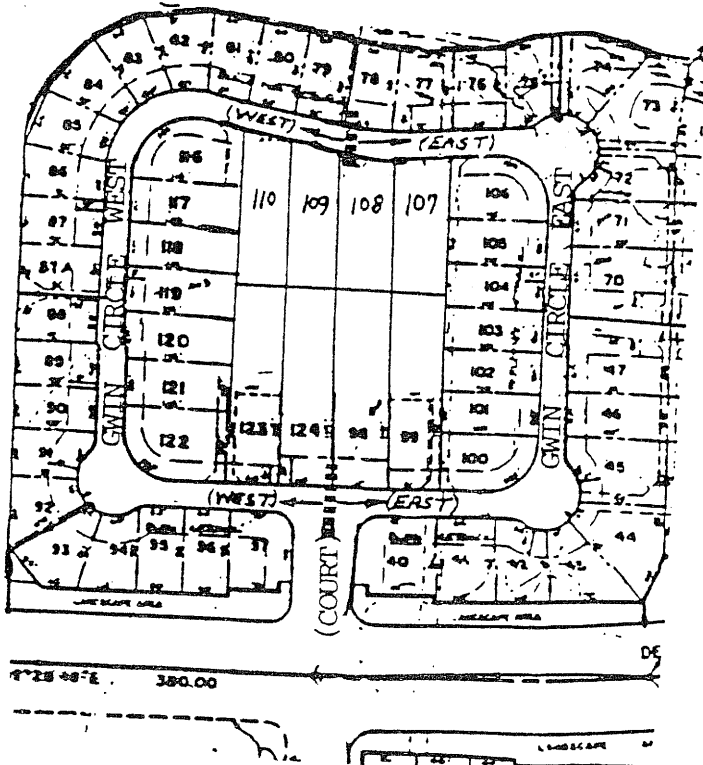
- d. If another street intersects a loop or "L" street at the point where the loop or "L" street changes cardinal direction, it is preferable to continue a singular name on the loop or "L" street through the intersection and change the loop street name at the next change of direction. Otherwise, the intersection will involve three street names resulting in potential confusion and difficulty in proper street sign installation.



- e. If a leg of a loop or "L" street intersects a cross street opposite a local street, the name of the local street may extend across the intersection and along the leg of the loop or "L" street.

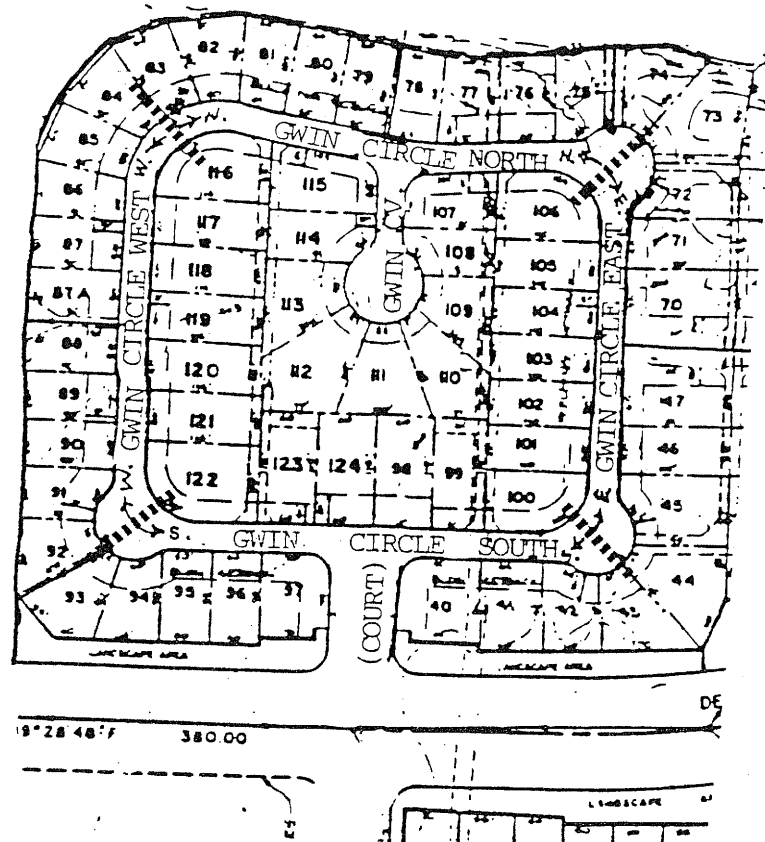


- f. Loop or circular streets with a single, central entry street can have street names assigned several different ways as reflected in the following examples. The chosen pattern may be affected by the length of the legs on the loop street as well as the intersection location of internal cul-de-sacs. The entry street should be designated as "COURT" unless it aligns with an existing street intersection on the through street.



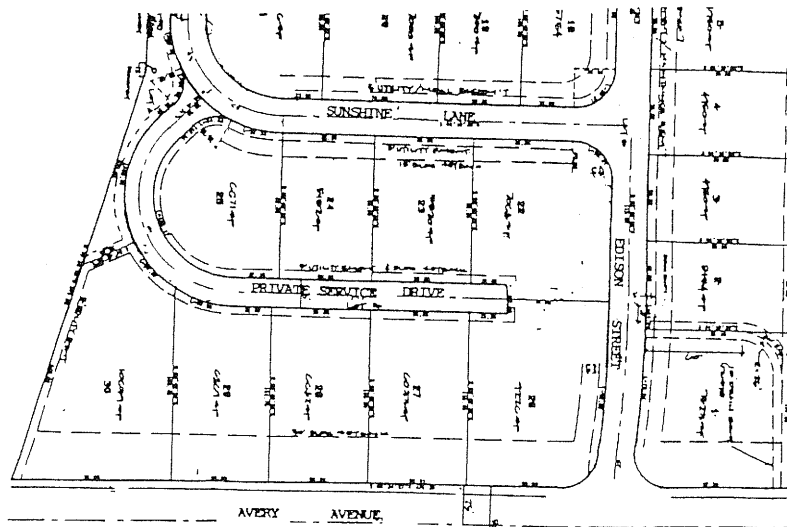
Example A: Two street names with "East" and "West" suffixes. The street name change occurs at the entry street and mid-block directly north of the entry street.

Example B: Two street names with "East" and "West" suffixes. The street name change occurs at the entry street and at the intersection of the cove along the north leg of the



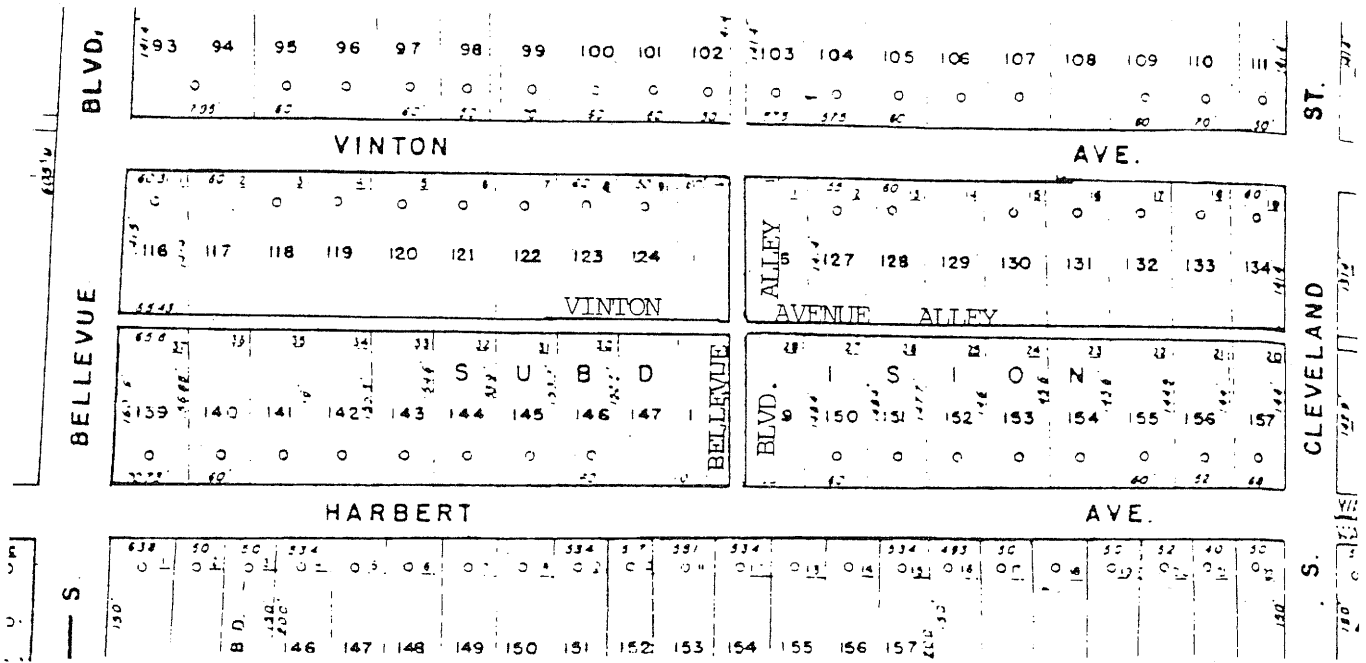
Example C: Four street names with four directional suffixes. The street name changes occur at the cardinal directional changes of the loop street.

23. Private Service Drives that provide secondary access, usually to the rear of a lot, do not have addresses assigned on them and are not given any official street name.



24. Public Alleys carry the name of the nearest parallel public street as follows:

- a. North-South alleys carry the name of the first public street west of the alley.
- b. East-West alleys carry the name of the first public street north of the alley.



LIST OF ACCEPTABLE STREET NAME DESIGNATORS

Designator

- Alley
- Avenue
- Boulevard
- Circle
- Common
- Court
- Cove
- Crossing
- Drive
- Fairway
- Highway
- Lane
- Loop
- Mall
- Parkway
- Pass
- Path
- Pike
- Plaza
- Place
- Point
- Road
- Square
- Street
- Terrace
- Trace
- Trail
- Way