



## Staff Report

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**File #:** 20-272

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**Item #:** 5.a.

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**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Councilor Chris Hoy, Ward 6

**SUBJECT:**

Motion from Councilor Chris Hoy regarding renaming Center Street and the Center Street Bridge after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods

**MOTION:**

I move that City Council direct staff to provide a resolution for City Council's consideration to initiate the renaming of Center Street and the Center Street Bridge "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr" and "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Bridge," respectively, along with a report outlining the process and potential procedural and legal issues associated with the renaming.

**DISCUSSION:**

Salem has no prominent streets, parks or other city properties honoring the importance of the civil rights movement. As Oregon's capitol, our city should be leading the way in this effort. While there are many appropriate choices for such an honor, we should start with someone with a legacy that is understandable and relevant to our community. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr is such a figure. Center Street and the Center Street Bridge are prominent within our community and are utilized by residents from all neighborhoods and visitors just passing through. Renaming Center Street will bring due attention.

From [www.share.america.gov](http://www.share.america.gov) <<http://www.share.america.gov>>:

"Throughout the 1960s, he was arrested during nonviolent protests in Alabama, Florida and Georgia. While incarcerated after one such arrest, in 1963, King penned the Letter from Birmingham City Jail, outlining the moral basis for the civil rights movement. That August, he delivered his famous 'I Have a Dream' speech to more than 200,000 people gathered on the National Mall in Washington.

March 7, 1965, became known as Bloody Sunday because voting-rights marchers were beaten

by state troopers and civilians as they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama. The violence turned them back, but the ordeal led King to call for another, longer march (pictured) - an 87-kilometer-long, Selma-to-Montgomery march for voting rights.

In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, which banned discrimination in employment, public accommodations and other aspects of life. King attended the signing of the act into law (pictured). He continued to press for a law to ensure that blacks could not be denied the right to vote by discriminatory practices such as literacy tests, and, in 1965, Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act. King received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.

On April 4, 1968, King was assassinated on the balcony outside his Memphis, Tennessee, hotel room. At his funeral, thousands of mourners marched through Atlanta behind a mule-drawn wagon bearing his coffin.

In a posthumously published essay titled 'A Testament of Hope,' King urged black Americans to continue their commitment to nonviolence, but also cautioned that 'justice for black people cannot be achieved without radical changes in the structure of our society.'"

#### Dr. King's Legacy:

##### Nonviolent protest

Fighting prejudice

Pursuing social justice

Service to others

#### Attachments:

None.