



Staff Report

File #: 22-304

Version: 1

Date: 7/11/2022

Item #:

TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Kristin Retherford, Interim City Manager

FROM: Peter Fernandez, PE, Public Works Director

SUBJECT:

Renaming Salem Parkway to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway.

Ward(s): 5

Councilor(s): Gonzalez

Neighborhood(s): Highland and Northgate

Result Area(s): Welcoming and Livable Community

SUMMARY:

The City Council initiated a proposal in 2020 to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by naming a prominent street in his honor. The City requested, and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) approved, renaming Salem Parkway to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway. Approval of this recommendation will direct staff to proceed with changing the street name signs to reflect the new street name.

ISSUE:

Shall City Council direct staff to proceed with changing the street name signs from Salem Parkway to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway?

RECOMMENDATION:

Direct staff to proceed with changing the street name signs from Salem Parkway to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

Salem Parkway is part of the State Highway System and is officially referred to by ODOT as State Highway No. 72. This roadway is a prominent connection between Interstate 5 and downtown

Salem. ODOT has jurisdiction over naming state highways.

In November 2021, Mayor Bennett submitted a request to rename Salem Parkway to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway (Attachment 1). This request addressed the Oregon Transportation Commission's policy on renaming facilities by highlighting the importance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to Oregon.

Per Oregon's policy on naming facilities, comments were solicited from the Oregon Geographic Names Board. In December 2021, the Oregon Geographic Names Board supported the proposed name change from Salem Parkway to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway.

The ODOT Director approved the requested renaming, subject to the City paying for replacement of signs. ODOT staff have prepared designs for the required replacement signs and provided an estimated cost. There are eight different designs (Attachment 2). The designs and estimated costs are based on refacing the existing signs and abbreviating the name to Dr. MLK Jr Parkway. With the abbreviation, the size of the signs and supporting structures do not need to be enlarged. The total estimated cost to design, fabricate, and install the signs is \$80,000. This includes two nights of lane closures on Interstate 5.

The FY 2022-2023 adopted City budget includes funds to pay for this renaming using the City's share of the State Highway Fund. The next steps for City staff will be to work with ODOT to initiate sign fabrication and installation. It is anticipated that work will be completed this summer or fall, subject to weather conditions and ODOT crew availability.

BACKGROUND:

In July 2020, City Council passed a motion directing staff to research the process for renaming Center Street in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Renaming Center Street would have been very complicated and require approval of three jurisdictions (Salem, Marion County, and ODOT). Additionally, there were hundreds of properties with addresses on Center Street which would have incurred costs associated with changing the street name on their addresses. Staff communicated this to City Council and, as a result, the renaming proposal was shifted from Center Street to Salem Parkway, which is solely owned and operated by ODOT. Due to its limited-access design, there are no private property driveways or addresses off of the roadway.

Robert D. Chandler, PhD, PE
Assistant Public Works Director

Attachments:

1. Letter from Mayor Bennett to ODOT (November 19, 2021).
2. Sign Design Details