

To: Mayor and Board of Aldermen  
From: Mark Chilton  
Re: Martin Luther King Street Naming Issues  
Date: January 29, 2004

**Background**

The Board of Aldermen considered a request in 2003 to name a street in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. At that time, the Board concluded that it could not so name a street because of an inter-local agreement in Orange County that precludes the use of confusingly similar street names. Because there is a Martin Luther King Street in Chapel Hill already, it would cause 911/EMS response problems to create a second Martin Luther King Street.

More recently a group of Chapel Hill residents has proposed that Chapel Hill rename Martin Luther King Street, so that Chapel Hill might honor Dr. King's memory in a more prominent way. Specifically, it has been suggested that Airport Road in Chapel Hill should be renamed for Dr. King.

**Proposal**

I have been thinking about this issue for sometime because it was the subject of a question at a Candidates Forum in last fall's election. I would like to suggest that both Chapel Hill and Carrboro could designate the NC 54 Bypass as Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.

In order to carry out this plan, the Town Council would need to rename the existing street by resolution. Both Towns could then pass resolutions so designating the Bypass. A perfunctory review of the matter is required by NCDOT because the Bypass is a state highway.

I should also note that sometime in the late 1980's Fordham Boulevard was named after former UNC Chancellor Chris Fordham. Fordham Boulevard is only in Chapel Hill and is only the 15-501 Bypass (as opposed to the NC-54 Bypass).

I propose that we pass the following resolution in order to set the wheels in motion to name the Bypass after Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Resolution**

Now therefore be it resolved by the Carrboro Board of Aldermen that the Board hereby requests that the Town of Chapel Hill consider renaming Martin Luther King Street in Chapel Hill in order that the Towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro may designate the North Carolina Highway 54 Bypass from South Columbia Street to Old Fayetteville Road as Martin Luther King Boulevard.

This the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2004

**ATTACHMENT B**

**A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT THE TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL  
CONSIDER RENAMING MARTIN LUTHER KING STREET**

**Resolution No. 117/2003-04**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE TOWN OF  
CARRBORO:**

Section 1. The Board hereby requests that the Town of Chapel Hill consider renaming Martin Luther King Street in Chapel Hill in order that the Towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro may designate North Carolina Highway 54 Bypass from South Columbia Street to Old Fayetteville Road as Martin Luther King Boulevard.

Section 2. This resolution shall become effective upon adoption.

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN**  
**AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT**

ITEM NO. E(4)

MEETING DATE: January 21, 2002

**TITLE: Identifying a Major Road to Name After Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

<b>DEPARTMENT: PLANNING</b>	<b>PUBLIC HEARING: YES ___ NO _X_</b>
<b>ATTACHMENTS</b> A. Resolution B. TAB Resolution – November 7, 2002	<b>FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:</b> Dale McKeel – 918-7329

**PURPOSE**

In March 2002, the Carrboro Board of Aldermen adopted an Action Agenda. One of the actions listed is to “identify a major road to name after Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.” A report has been prepared. A resolution that accepts the report is recommended for the Board’s adoption.

**INFORMATION**

In researching the options for naming major road in Carrboro in honor of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., Town staff has identified two major impediments:

- Under road-naming conventions in place for Chapel Hill and Carrboro, the creation of new duplicate street names is not allowed, to reduce confusion for emergency response, mail delivery, etc. There is already a street in Chapel Hill, off Legion Road, named Martin Luther King, Jr. Street, so creating another street with this name in Carrboro is not allowed.
- The North Carolina Board of Transportation is authorized to designate portions of the state highway system in honor of persons. However, the Board does not name more than one facility for the same individual, and the Board of Transportation has already named a highway in Scotland County in honor of Dr. King.

In light of these impediments, the Board may wish to consider honoring Dr. King through another means (for example, public art or the naming of another facility such as a park). The Board may also wish to consider naming a major road to commemorate a prominent African-American or leader of the Civil Rights Movement. For example, the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) suggested the naming of roads to commemorate prominent women of the Civil Rights Movement, such as Coretta Scott King and Rosa Parks (Attachment B). Please note that the TAB recommendation was made before staff discovered the Martin Luther King, Jr. Street in Chapel Hill.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Administration recommends that the Board of Aldermen adopt the resolution (Attachment A) receiving this report.

**ATTACHMENT A**

**A RESOLUTION RECEIVING THE REPORT ON IDENTIFYING A MAJOR  
ROAD TO NAME AFTER REV. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**

Resolution No. 88/2002-03

WHEREAS, the Carrboro Board of Aldermen adopted an Action Agenda in March 2002,  
and;

WHEREAS, one of the items on the adopted Action Agenda is to "identify a major road  
to name after Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.," and;

WHEREAS, the Planning Staff has prepared a report on identifying a major road to name  
after Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Carrboro Board of Aldermen that the  
Aldermen has reviewed the report provided by the Planning Staff.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Carrboro Board of Aldermen that the Aldermen  
receives the report.

This is the 21st day of January in the year 2003.

**TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**RECOMMENDATION**

**November 7, 2002**

**SUBJECT: Identifying a Major Road to Name After Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Motion: The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) recommends Option # 3 (as presented in the staff report), Naming a New Publicly Built Road after Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and stated that, as a part of the road naming, consideration should be given to an educational component and a memorial garden. The naming of roads to commemorate prominent women of the Civil Rights Movement, such as Coretta Scott King and Rosa Parks should also be considered.

Moved: Ms. Ellen Perry

Second: Mr. Andreas Hay

VOTE: Ayes (Chris van Hasselt, Andreas Hay, Ellen Perry, Elizabeth Shay), Noes (None)

CHRIS VAN HASSELT  
TAB Chair (Lon)

11 / 7 /02  
DATE