

## CITY OF PALO ALTO MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 13, 2007

TO: Policy and Services Committee

FROM: Council Members Cordell and Drekmeier

SUBJECT: Request To Consider Renaming A Park Or City Facility In Palo Alto In Honor Of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. And Coretta Scott King

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### RECOMMENDATION

We are asking for your support in directing City staff to further explore the possibility of renaming a suitable City park, plaza or facility in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King.

### BACKGROUND

As was discussed in our January 16, 2007 colleague's memorandum, we suggested honoring and recognizing the lives and legacies of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King through the renaming of a Palo Alto street as "King Boulevard."

Staff has investigated the feasibility of re-naming the Oregon Expressway as one alternative. Staff has subsequently learned that in accordance with Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors Policy Section 7.2 (G), County-owned expressways can not be re-named. Palo Alto City Policy 1-15 (Naming of City Facilities) provides criteria for re-naming City facilities, such as parks, plaza, and buildings. The naming criteria encourages names which "reflects the City's ethnic and cultural diversity." The process to nominate a new name for a facility includes the referral of the re-naming nomination to the Palo Alto Historical Association to evaluate the suitability of the name with the park or facility. Similarly, City Policy 1-16 (Naming of City Streets) outlines a process for involving the Historical Association in the selection of new street names. Staff has cautioned that re-naming a City street has disadvantages including risks to public safety in confusion of a street name (for emergency response), inconvenience to the residents of the street who must process change of address notices, and significant expenses to businesses of the street who must also modify advertising, promotion and letterhead materials. The City's Computer Aided Dispatch System and Geographic Information System would also need to be reprogrammed and cross-references established, a significant workload issue.

In order to identify a suitable City facility or street that might be appropriate for renaming in honor of the Kings, we ask that staff be directed to work with the Palo Alto Historical Association to nominate a park, plaza, City facility or street to be renamed. We would encourage staff and the Historical Association to consider naming the City Hall Plaza, re-naming Lytton Plaza, the Friendship pedestrian bridge between the Palo Alto Baylands and East Palo Alto, the Main Library or the Baylands Athletic Center as appropriate alternatives.

As part of the re-naming process, staff would return to the Policy and Services Committee with a recommendation that outlines the compelling reason the facility was nominated.