

Martin Luther King Jr. Task Force  
Report & Recommendations  
to the  
Portland City Council



*"When we let freedom ring,  
when we let it ring from every  
tenement and every hamlet,  
from every state and every  
city, we will be able to speed  
up that day when all of God's  
children, black men and white  
men, Jews and Gentiles,  
Protestants and Catholics, will  
be able to join hands and sing  
in the words of the old spiritual,  
'Free at last, free at last. Thank  
God Almighty, we are free at  
last.'"*

*- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*



December 2008

# Martin Luther King Jr. Task Force

## Members

Councilor Daniel Skolnik and Rachel Talbot Ross, Co-Chairs

Jan Beitzer	Portland Downtown District
Steve Bromage	Maine Historical Society
Rabbi Carolyn Braun	Temple Beth-El
Bishop Steve Coleman	Williams Temple Church of God in Christ
Dennis Crowley	Great Portland Landmarks
Richard D'Abate	Maine Historical Society
Susannah Ford	NAACP Portland Branch
Donna Gaspar	University of New England
Susan Hopkins	Portland School Committee
Rev. Ken Lewis	Green Memorial AME Zion Church
Regina Martin	Portland Chamber of Commerce
Wells Stayley Mays	NAACP Portland Branch
William Nelligan	Portland Youth Advisory Committee
Jamie Parker	Friends of the Parks Commission
Abraham Peck	University of Southern Maine Academic Council for Post Holocaust Jewish, Christian and Islamic Studies
Regina Phillips	NAACP Portland Branch
Jonathan Reitman	Interfaith Maine
Joshua Tingley	Portland School Committee
Dawud Ummah	University of Southern Maine Muslim Chaplin
Sandy Wright	League of Young Voters

### Staff:

Rachel Talbot Ross, Director, Equal Opportunity & Multicultural Affairs  
Pat Finnigan, Asst City Manager  
Alex Jaegerman, Planning Division Director  
Judith Rosen, Administrative Asst

Martin Luther King Jr. Task Force  
Report to the Portland City Council  
December 2008

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# Martin Luther King Jr. Task Force

*"Whatever your life's work is, do it well. A man should do his job so well that the living, the dead, and the unborn could do it no better."*

*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

## **Introduction**

On April 7, 2008, 40 years and three days after his assassination, the Portland City Council passed Order 193-07-08, introduced by Councilor Daniel Skolnik, to establish the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Task Force. The purpose of the Task Force was to identify and evaluate public sites in Portland and the Greater Portland area which would be appropriate to name after Dr. King, and make recommendations to the City Council regarding the selected site. (Appendix A)

In his statement explaining the purpose of the Order, Councilor Skolnik noted that more than 600 U.S. cities in 39 states have honored Dr. King with a permanent memorial: "Dr. King's message was so powerful in his time because it went to the heart of America's biggest problems: racism, poverty and war. I think we can agree that his message still resonates today." Councilor Skolnik continued: "It is fitting that we create a daily reminder in our largest City of the hope for true community that Dr. King gave voice to."

## **Members**

The Council Order establishing the Task Force included a broad spectrum of people and organizations which should be represented on the Task Force including representatives of the Portland City Council, NAACP Portland Branch, Portland School Committee, Greater Portland Landmarks, Portland Youth Advisory Committee, Portland Downtown District, the Faith Community, and the University. (Appendix B)

On May 19, the City Council appointed a 20 member Task Force which was co-chaired by Councilor Dan Skolnik and Rachel Talbot Ross, Director of Equal Opportunity & Multicultural Affairs. The committee met 8 times. In addition, subcommittees and members held additional meetings with stakeholder groups and others in the course of doing their work.

## **Scope of Work**

In order to accomplish its tasks, the members researched the processes used by other communities to name sites generally, as well as the approach communities have used to create memorials or other public displays which commemorate the work of Dr. King. Special note was given to the National MLK Jr. Memorial ([www.mlkmemorial.org](http://www.mlkmemorial.org)), and the Martin Luther King and Coretta Scott King memorial that was dedicated at the University of Maine in Orono in October 2008. (see Appendix C for additional information)

*"Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."*

**Mission.** The Task Force agreed that it was essential to begin its work by establishing a Mission Statement. The Mission Statement would help guide its work and help answer people who now or in the future might ask why we are honoring Dr. King. provide background to the member of the public regarding this project. The Mission Statement states:

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**Martin Luther King Jr. Task Force  
Mission Statement**

To honor and celebrate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the City of Portland and its residents proclaim their appreciation for a great man whose life has made our city, state, and nation a better place to live.

Communities in every corner of the world including over 700 in the United States have honored Martin Luther King Jr., because he was a great civil rights leader, a great religious leader, and a great American leader. His life's work reminds us to pursue dignity for each individual, social and economic equality, and justice for every American.

These values know no boundaries. They serve as a compass to guide our city daily on a path away from discrimination, racism, poverty and injustice; They steer us towards justice, equality and freedom for all people who live, work, visit or call Portland home.

This commemoration connects Dr. Martin Luther King's beliefs and legacy to the daily life of our city. His messages of international peace and fundamental fairness are ones we want to convey to our children. In honoring Dr. King we move Portland closer to realizing his dream of a more just and humane world by making it our own.

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**Site Selection Process.** The Task Force spent most of its time developing agreement on the criteria that they and the City should use to select a site to name after Dr. King. To assist them, the Task Force reviewed the process used by several other communities to name sites or establish memorials (see Appendix C). Some of the criteria discussed by the Task Force included:

- Site should be highly visible
- Should be a place of celebration and joy to inspire people to continue the momentum
- A place of distinction that instills respect (not a street or highway)
- Accessibility – open area, trees, waterfront, etc
- Reasonable cost
- Visible to visitors and citizens
- Usefulness – more than a plaque
- A contemplative place
- Acceptable to broad community
- Developed through a community process
- Should be multi-pronged – not just one commemorative

- Could have small and large ventures – short & long term
- Educational – younger generation isn't as aware of MLK
- Include a week long event/celebration
- Should include historical component
- Part of the annual MLK symposium
- Could be included as part of a new community development (school etc)

The Task Force established three primary principles to use to identify potential places to name after Dr. King. The principles that were agreed upon were that the site or memorial needed to:

- Be visible and central, to serve as a daily reminder of Dr. King's life and values
- Be inspirational, in its design and as a space for reflection
- Be enduring, to stand the test of time and be a lasting tribute to Dr. King. It should not be a place that will be abandoned or fall into disrepair

The Task Force considered a range of locations which could be named after Dr. King or which could be sites of a memorial. Among the locations considered were:

- The eastern waterfront
- Eastern Promenade
- Ocean Gateway
- Bayside Trail
- Payson Park
- Tommy's or Post Office Park
- Lincoln Park
- The Jetport
- A school, such as the new Ocean Ave elementary school
- The Public Library
- Franklin Arterial
- I-295
- Commercial St.
- Marginal Way
- Fore River Parkway

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. "

After considering the range of potential sites and the site criteria, the Task Force narrowed the sites to three areas:

- Waterfront: in the vicinity of Ocean Gate
- Downtown: Tommy's Park and/or Post Office Park
- Bayside: The Bayside Trail in the vicinity of the new Maine Health/United Way building

The Task Force members went on a field trip to review these potential sites to determine their suitability. They then discussed the strengths or drawbacks of each site (see Appendix E Minutes of October 24, 2008).

**Recommended Site.** After thorough discussion and review, the Task Force members unanimously concluded that the Bayside Trail was the preferred site and met all the criteria for a memorial site. The specific site under review is located near the new Maine Health/United Way building. This site is central, visible, and accessible. It will be visited by many people from Portland, the region and beyond. In fact, it is the belief

of the Task Force as well as Portland Trails, that the trail will attract people who will discover the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. memorial, but it will also introduce the Bayside Trail to people who are specifically seeking the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. memorial site.

Because the Bayside Trail is new, it does not require anything to be re-named. Because the Bayside Trail is yet to be built and is in the design phase, it provides an opportunity for a new space to be created without disrupting or displacing other uses. It allows the Dr. King memorial to be designed as the inspirational and enduring space envisioned by the Task Force and ultimately the community whom, the Task Force hopes, will be involved in the design process. Just as importantly, the Trust for Public Lands and Portland Trails both have expressed support for establishing a memorial commemorating Dr. King on the Trail. In addition, the developers of the new Maine Health/United Way "Bayco" building, have expressed support for the location.

***Beyond a Place Name.*** The Task Force was honored to be charged with identifying a site to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As it considered the options and the meaning of Dr. King's life, the Task Force also faced the issue of: was it was enough? In the course of its work, it became increasingly clear that the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his legacy deserved to be part of the fabric of our daily lives which transcends a static site named after Dr. King.

The Task Force was committed to fulfilling its charge from the City Council to review potential sites to name in honor of Dr. King and recommend the site(s) to the City Council. The Task Force has concluded that naming a site is only part of the task; it will take more than just erecting a sign that names

a place after Dr. King. The Task Force's recommendation to the Council involves creating a memorial site which must be designed and funded. The Task Force feels a responsibility to cultivate the necessary financial and other resources to create the memorial site.

In addition, the Task Force agreed that to be a truly meaningful tribute to the legacy of Dr. King, the City needs to consider a way to bring Dr. King's values to life in a very real and tangible way for the people of Portland and beyond. Of special concern to the Task Force is the responsibility to ensure that people in the future, especially young people, would know and learn about Dr. King, what he stood for, and his life's work.

The Task Force discussed a number of potential endeavors which would accomplish this continuous examination and understanding of Dr. King's ideals. Concepts ranged from creating incubator space to promote and foster business creation to promote economic justice and help people become self-sufficient, or teaching urban farming to create jobs while providing locally grown produce that would benefit the community, to establishing a Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Center which, among other things, could sponsor community lecture series, events, or promote social justice and other projects which would employ the principles of Dr. King's work. Such a center could provide the platform to explore issues of peace, social and economic justice, human dignity and what steps we as a community we need to take to make our community more just, safe, and inclusive. One idea was to establish such a center in a space located in the new

*"An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity. "*

Maine Health/United Way building, since it would be in close proximity to the proposed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial. The Task Force discussed this idea with the developers of the building. Although they did not commit, they were open to further discussions.

Ultimately, the Task Force believes that the most important way to celebrate Dr. King's life and legacy is for citizens to work to promote social and economic justice, work to end poverty, and get involved locally to create a better community.

To begin this next phase, the Task Force agreed that at the January 19, 2009 Martin Luther King Jr. Day breakfast, the Task Force would inform the assembly on its work and present its proposal to build a Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. memorial on the Bayside Trail, introduce the new web site that has information about the MKL memorial and how to become involved, invite people to be part of the capital campaign to build the memorial, and start a dialogue on how best to ensure the message of Dr. King is experienced in our daily lives.

### **Recommendations and Next Steps**

The Task Force voted to make the following recommendations to the City Council:

1. Recommend to the **City Council** that a section of the Bayside Trail, near the Maine Health/United Way building be set aside as a memorial to be named in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King

2. Recommend to the **City Council** that the Council establish a Martin Luther King Jr. Commission which would be staffed by the City Manger's designate and be comprised of members of the public, Councilors, and staff which would:

*"All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence. "*

- (a) Using a public process, work with City staff and the Bayside Trail organizers to design the memorial;
- (b) work with the City and other community organizations to raise funds to build the memorial. Funding sources would include private contributions, foundations and grants. (The Task Force is not seeking general fund monies).
- (c) work with the owners of Maine Health/United Way to ensure the memorial complements the trail and the building.
- (d) Develop on-going community programs and events to bring the work of Dr. King to life

2. Recommend to the **City Council** that to perform its work the Commission would be allocated up to \$5,000 annually. The initial funds through June 2009 would be funded through the City Manager's Office: Equal Opportunity & Multicultural Affairs, to pay administrative costs including web site design, advertising, printing, office supplies, etc.

If the City Council accepts these recommendations, the Task Force Co-Chairs will make a presentation at the 2009 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day breakfast to inform the community about the work of the Task Force and the proposed memorial. The Task Force will also unveil a City website which will inform people about the work of the Task Force, the Commission (if established), encourage community involvement in creating

and funding the memorial, and alert people to volunteer opportunities in the community to further the ideals of Dr. King. In short, it will be a resource to raise awareness and help people turn Dr. King's words into actions.

## **Conclusion**

The members of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Task Force are grateful for their opportunity to serve on this Task Force and play an integral role in finding a way to recognize Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and create an opportunity people to be introduced to him or reacquainted with his work. Portland has an abundance of natural and other sites which offer naming opportunities, but it is our conclusion and our recommendation that the site which best meets the spirit of our charge and provides an opportunity to create a unique space befitting Dr. King is to create a memorial site on the Bayside Trail.

We believe we have accomplished the Council's charge to us by identifying and recommending a site to name after Dr. King to commemorate his legacy. However, in the course of our deliberations, the Task Force members concluded that Portland needs to act to create a living and enduring tribute. Therefore, we also recommend that the Council appoint a citizens commission which can carry on the work of developing the memorial. Many of us would be willing to continue into the next phase to ensure the memorial is completed.

Beyond the task of fundraising, we also believe the City has an important role to play in providing stewardship of Dr. King's legacy in a way that makes it meaningful to the people of Portland. Therefore we also recommend that the City Council establish a citizens commission, whose mission will include raising public awareness of Dr. King's principles, celebrating his life by encouraging civic discourse on social issues which confront us, and fostering public engagement in addressing issues of equality, race, social and economic justice, non-violence, freedom, and peace.

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*"Everybody can be great, because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."*

*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

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## *Acknowledgement and Appreciation*

The Task Force wishes to thank Judith Rosen of the City Manager's staff who organized our meetings and kept the records of our work. We also thank the Portland Mayor and City Councilors for their foresight, and City Manager Joe Gray for his support.

# Appendix

- A. Council Order
- B. Task Force Members
- C. Place Name Guidelines
- D. Mission Statement
- E. Meeting Minutes

Order 193-07/08  
| Passage: 4/7/08 9-0  
EDWARD J. SUSLOVIC (MAYOR)  
KEVIN J. DONOGHUE (1)  
DAVID A. MARSHALL (2)  
DANIEL S. SKOLNIK (3)  
CHERYL A. LEEMAN (4)

**CITY OF PORTLAND**  
IN THE CITY COUNCIL

JAMES I. COHEN (5)  
JOHN M. ANTON (A/L)  
JILL C. DUSON (A/L)  
NICHOLAS M. MAVODONES (A/L)

**ORDER ESTABLISHING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. TASK FORCE**

**ORDERED**, that the Mayor appoint a task force for the following purposes:

\*to identify public sites in Portland and the Greater Portland Area (e.g. parks, bridges, public buildings, city streets, highways) as candidates to be named for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and

\*to evaluate these sites for viability and steps involved in naming or re-naming the sites.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDERED**, that the Task Force would consist of a representative from – or consult as needed with – each of the following groups:

Portland City Council  
South Portland City Council  
Cumberland County Commission  
Greater Portland Council of Governments  
Portland School Committee  
Member of Legislative Delegation  
Greater Portland Landmarks  
NAACP Portland Branch  
Portland Faith Community  
Portland Youth Advisory Committee  
The League of Young Voters  
Portland's Downtown District  
Portland Community and Regional Chambers  
Portland Friends of the Parks Commission

**BE IT FURTHER ORDERED**, that the Task Force report back to the City Council on its findings, and recommend one or more sites for City Council consideration.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDERED**, that staff from the following Portland departments will be made available to the Task Force as needed:

Parks Department  
Public Works Department  
Planning and Development Department

Com 8-07/08  
 Feb 15 5-19-08

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.  
 NAMING TASK FORCE MEMBERS

<u>Member</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Daniel Skolnik	City Council
Rachel Talbot Ross	Portland Office of Equal Opportunity & Multicultural Affairs
Susan Hopkins	Portland School Committee
Joshua Tingley	Portland School Committee
William Nelligan	Portland Youth Advisory Committee
Brian Chick	Portland Downtown District
Regina Martin	Portland Community Chamber
Wells Stayley Mays	NAACP Portland Branch
Regina Phillips	NAACP Portland Branch
Susannah Ford	NAACP Portland Branch
Jamie Parker	Friends of the Park Commission
Sandy Wright	League of Young Voters
Bishop Steve Coleman	Williams Temple Church of God in Christ
Jonathan Reitman	Interfaith Maine
Dawud Ummah	University of Southern Maine Muslim Chaplain
Rabbi Carolyn Braun	Temple Beth-El
Rev. Kenneth Lewis	Green Memorial AME Zion Church
Abraham Peck	University of Southern Maine Academic Council for Post-Holocaust Jewish, Christian and Islamic Studies
Richard D'Abate	Maine Historical Society
Susie Bock	African American Collection of Maine
Pat Finnigan	Assistant City Manager, Staff

- **Atlanta, Georgia** -- The Martin Luther King Jr. Drive in King's hometown is a major landmark for tourism. It borders the Atlanta University Center, a conglomerate of historically black colleges and universities that includes King's alma mater Morehouse College.
- **Los Angeles, California** -- In 1983, Santa Barbara Boulevard in South Los Angeles was renamed Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, three years before President Ronald Reagan signed a law declaring Dr. King's birthday a national holiday. That event was celebrated the first ever Kingdom Day Parade, an annual tradition held on the street between Crenshaw Boulevard and Western Avenue.
- **Oklahoma City, Oklahoma:** The Northern section of Eastern Avenue, from E. Reno Avenue north to N. 63rd Street, was renamed "Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard" in honor of his impact on the Oklahoma City and the nation. MLK boulevard is the principle N-S Avenue in Oklahoma City's Eastside section, home to the state's largest African American community. Prominent landmarks along the boulevard include many of Oklahoma City's top attractions, such as the Oklahoma City Zoological Park, Remington Park, and Omniplex Science Museum. Other institutions of note include Bassett Correctional Center, Ralph Waldo Ellison Public Library, the recently rebuilt campus of Frederick Augustus Douglass High School, and the YWCA Branch. It is legend that Dr. King interviewed to become pastor of the historic Baptist Church in today's Deep Deuce Historic neighborhood, but church officials turned him down due to his youthful age.
- **Washington, D.C.** -- Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE, (formerly Nichols Avenue, SE) is the main commercial street in the part of Southeast Washington east of the Anacostia River. It intersects Malcolm X Avenue, SE (formerly Portland St., SE) near Bolling Air Force Base and St. Elizabeths Hospital. Also very near the street is the home of Frederick Douglass, the famous abolitionist, for whom a major city bridge along South Capitol Street is named. Other streets and bridges streets named for prominent civil rights figures are Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue, NE and the Whitney Young Bridge along East Capitol Street.
- **New Orleans, Louisiana:** Melpomene Avenue was renamed Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. Several murals of King are painted along the boulevard. The boulevard is also near a King statue and memorial on Claiborne Avenue, and the boulevard is part of the route of New Orlean's annual Martin Luther King Day parade. The boulevard is located in Central City, which is historically the city's largest African American commercial district and a major hub for the Uptown African American community.

- **New York City, New York:** Four blocks of 125th Street through Harlem, designated Doctor Martin L. King, Jr. Boulevard. The street features Apollo Theater, a famous center for African American music.
- **Portland, Oregon** -- Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard features a large statue of King in front of the Oregon Convention Center.
- **Raleigh, North Carolina** -- Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard features the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Gardens with a life size statue of Dr. King.
- **Seattle, Washington:** In 1983, an eight-mile stretch of State Route 900 between Seattle and Renton was renamed from Empire Way to Martin Luther King Jr. Way. At the time the area was roughly 70 percent black.
- **Oakland and Berkeley, California:** Grove Street, which stretched for several miles north from Downtown Oakland into North Berkeley, was renamed Martin Luther King Jr. Way in 1984. The street had once represented the dividing line between neighborhoods where minorities could and could not live or buy property.
- **Little Rock, Arkansas:** In 1992, High Street was renamed Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. The street, which begins next to the Arkansas State Capitol building, is home to parades and community events. Martin Luther King Jr. Interdistrict Magnet Elementary School is located on the street.
- **Savannah, Georgia:** Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard features the Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum.
- **Cleveland, Ohio:** Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, formally Liberty Street, used to be a very run down, and dangerous part of the east side of Cleveland. The road is surrounded by a public park, with many lakes, and playgrounds. During the 1980s Martin Luther King Jr. Drive was very dark at night, which is when most of the criminal activity took place. Currently, there are street lights every 10-20 feet, as well as spotlights surrounding the nearby parks. The road is known for its old, beautiful overpasses.
- **Charlotte, North Carolina:** In 2006, Second Street in Uptown was renamed to Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. It runs through what was once the predominantly Black neighborhood of Brooklyn, which was demolished in the 1960s to make way for expansion of the central business district.
- **Baltimore, Maryland:** The original name of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard was Harbor City Boulevard. It was renamed in honor of King shortly after it opened. The boulevard separates the predominantly black neighborhoods of West Baltimore from the downtown central business district.

- **Austin, Texas:** Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard is seen as a major roadway leading to the University of Texas in the 2000 film *Road Trip*.
- **Fayetteville, Arkansas:** Fayetteville City Council voted in January 2008 to officially rename Sixth Street, which passes through the city's historically black neighborhood as well as the southern boundary of the University of Arkansas campus, to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. Wal-Mart headed a petition of 71 businesses opposed to the renaming.
- **Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania:** The Martin Luther King Jr. East Busway, a bus rapid transit line, runs 9 miles from Downtown Pittsburgh to Rankin via Shadyside, East Liberty, Homewood, Edgewood, and Wilkinsburg. It is used by an average of 25,000 people each weekday.
- **Cincinnati, Ohio:** Martin Luther King Drive is a major crosstown artery in Cincinnati. It connects the west side of the city to the east, running through several historic uptown neighborhoods .

## STREETS NAMED AFTER DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Streets named after Martin Luther King, Jr. can be found in many cities of the United States, and in nearly every major metropolis in America. The number of streets named after King is growing every year:

- As of 2003, there were over 600 American cities that had named a street after King. More than 75% of these streets were in six Southern states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. King's home state of Georgia had the most, with 75 streets as of 2001. Only 11 states in the country did not have a street named after King.
- In 2004, NPR reported that there were some 650 American streets named after King, and more are added every year.
- In 2006, Derek Alderman, a cultural geographer at East Carolina University, reported that more than 730 American cities had named a street after King. 70% of these streets were in seven Southern states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Texas. King's home state of Georgia had the most, with 105 streets. Only 11 states in the country did not have a street named after King.

There are also a number of other countries that have honored King, including no less than ten cities in Italy.

### Prominent examples:

- **Miami and Hialeah, Florida:** Northwest 62nd Street (East 9th Street in Hialeah) is called Martin Luther King Boulevard since he gave speeches all across the South, including the city of Miami. Ironically, he gave one of his speeches at a church near the intersection of East 8th Street and LeJeune Road. It is unknown when the road got this name. But some Hialeah residents say it was in the middle of the 1970s.
- **Chicago, Illinois:** In 1968, Chicago became the first city in the country to name a street after King. Today, Martin Luther King Jr. Drive features a Tribute to the Great Northern Migration (a statue honoring the thousands of African Americans who migrated north to Chicago) and a Victory Monument for the Eighth Regiment (featuring a statue of a WWI African American soldier).
- **Selma, Alabama:** In 1976, Sylvan Street was renamed Martin Luther King Street. King spent many days along Sylvan Street working for civil rights in the 1960s, especially by speaking at First Baptist Church and Brown Chapel. Brown Chapel is the background in a famous Time magazine photograph of King in the 60s. Today, there is a monument honoring King in front of Brown Chapel. Brown Chapel was also the beginning of the route of the infamous Bloody Sunday

- **Atlanta, Georgia** -- The Martin Luther King Jr. Drive in King's hometown is a major landmark for tourism. It borders the Atlanta University Center, a conglomerate of historically black colleges and universities that includes King's alma mater Morehouse College.
- **Los Angeles, California** -- In 1983, Santa Barbara Boulevard in South Los Angeles was renamed Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, three years before President Ronald Reagan signed a law declaring Dr. King's birthday a national holiday. That event was celebrated the first ever Kingdom Day Parade, an annual tradition held on the street between Crenshaw Boulevard and Western Avenue.
- **Oklahoma City, Oklahoma:** The Northern section of Eastern Avenue, from E. Reno Avenue north to N. 63rd Street, was renamed "Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard" in honor of his impact on the Oklahoma City and the nation. MLK boulevard is the principle N-S Avenue in Oklahoma City's Eastside section, home to the state's largest African American community. Prominent landmarks along the boulevard include many of Oklahoma City's top attractions, such as the Oklahoma City Zoological Park, Remington Park, and Omniplex Science Museum. Other institutions of note include Bassett Correctional Center, Ralph Waldo Ellison Public Library, the recently rebuilt campus of Frederick Augustus Douglass High School, and the YWCA Branch. It is legend that Dr. King interviewed to become pastor of the historic Baptist Church in today's Deep Deuce Historic neighborhood, but church officials turned him down due to his youthful age.
- **Washington, D.C.** -- Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, SE, (formerly Nichols Avenue, SE) is the main commercial street in the part of Southeast Washington east of the Anacostia River. It intersects Malcolm X Avenue, SE (formerly Portland St., SE) near Bolling Air Force Base and St. Elizabeths Hospital. Also very near the street is the home of Frederick Douglass, the famous abolitionist, for whom a major city bridge along South Capitol Street is named. Other streets and bridges streets named for prominent civil rights figures are Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue, NE and the Whitney Young Bridge along East Capitol Street.
- **New Orleans, Louisiana:** Melpomene Avenue was renamed Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. Several murals of King are painted along the boulevard. The boulevard is also near a King statue and memorial on Claiborne Avenue, and the boulevard is part of the route of New Orlean's annual Martin Luther King Day parade. The boulevard is located in Central City, which is historically the city's largest African American commercial district and a major hub for the Uptown African American community.

## The U.S. Board of Geographic Names

### Commemorative Naming Policy

In the United States, thousands of people have contributed and will continue to contribute to society in many different ways. Many deserve to be honored. Such recognition can take many forms, including scholarships or charitable funds established in an individual's name, a commemorative plaque, or a donation to support some aspect of the individual's education, career, or recreational interests.

Commemorative naming of geographic features is but one of many options to consider when memorializing individuals and their accomplishments.

Although the Board realizes that such recognition may be desirable, it is neither possible nor appropriate to approve every commemorative naming proposal submitted. To evaluate objectively the increasing number of commemorative requests received each year, the Board uses the following principles, policies, and procedures in making decisions:

- **Section 1**—The U.S. Board on Geographic Names will consider proposals for assignment of the names or nicknames of deceased persons to geographic features in the United States and areas under the jurisdiction of the United States. The Board will not consider names that commemorate or may be construed to commemorate living persons. In addition, a person must be deceased at least 5 years before a commemorative proposal will be docketed for consideration.
- **Section 2**—The person being honored by the naming should either have had a direct long-term association with the feature or have made a significant contribution to the area or State in which it is located.
- **Section 3**—A proposal commemorating an individual with an outstanding national or international reputation will be considered even if the person was not directly associated with the geographic feature.
- **Section 4**—All commemorative name proposals must meet the same basic criteria required of any other name proposal.

# Commemorative Naming Guidelines

## Geographical Names Board of Canada

### **I – Introduction / Background**

In the fall of 2004, the Commemorative Naming Policy Working Group of the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) was formed to draft national guidelines on commemorative naming.

Existing documentation on commemorative naming from federal, provincial, and territorial naming authorities was reviewed.

It was apparent that formal guidelines on commemorative naming, as well as a related set of procedures, would promote and achieve consistency across Canada.

#### **Definition: Commemorative Naming**

For the purposes of these guidelines, commemorative naming refers to the naming of natural or cultural features after persons or events, as a way to honour or memorialize the person or event in question.

### **II – Objective**

To encourage the standardization of existing policies, principles, and procedures associated with commemorative naming throughout Canada.

### **III - Guiding Principles**

When proposing or considering a commemorative name, the following principles will be adhered to, unless they conflict with an existing policy of the naming authority in question:

1. A proposed name will only be considered for persons posthumously; a minimum of five years must elapse from the date of death before a commemorative name proposal will be considered. For events, at least twenty-five years must have elapsed since the occurrence of the event.
2. A commemorative name will only be considered for subjects with a strong association with the area or feature, or of outstanding significance to the cultural legacy or development of the area, the province, or the nation.
3. A proposed name will be supported by the local community and reach beyond a single or special interest group.

## TORONTO

### Criteria for name selection

1. Streets should generally be named after people, places, events and things related to the City and citizens of Toronto. Proposed names should meet one of the following criteria:
  - a. to honor and commemorate noteworthy persons associated with the City of Toronto
  - b. to commemorate local history, places, events or culture
  - c. to strengthen neighborhood identity
  - d. to recognize native wildlife, flora, fauna or natural features related to the community and the City of Toronto
  - e. to recognize communities which contribute to the ethno-racial diversity of Toronto
2. Consideration should be given to names of local area or historic significance.
3. Names of living persons should be used only in exceptional circumstances.
4. Only a person's last name should be used as a street name unless additional identification is necessary to prevent duplication with an existing street name in Toronto and surrounding municipalities.

### Street type designations

1. Street type designations, depending on roadway function, length and configuration exist to define the character of a street. The following designations should be consulted:
  - a. **Street, Avenue, Road, Boulevard** - for major thoroughfares or streets of several blocks in length
  - b. **Drive, Trail, Way** - for streets which are winding or curved
  - c. **Terrace, Gardens, Grove, Pathway, Heights** - for minor or short streets
  - d. **Lane, Mews, Close** - for narrow streets generally used for service
  - e. **Crescent** - for streets which form a crescent
  - f. **Court, Place** - for cul-de-sacs
  - g. **Circle** - for streets that are circular
  - h. **Gate** - for a short street that provides an entrance to a subdivision
  - i. **Square** - for streets that form part of a square
2. Qualifying words may be used when a newly created street is in actuality an extension of an existing street which cannot be renumbered or for which no municipal numbers are available. North, South, East, West and Upper or Lower are appropriate qualifying words.



## Martin Luther King Jr. Task Force Mission Statement

To honor and celebrate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the City of Portland and its residents proclaim their appreciation for a great man whose life has made our city, state, and nation a better place to live.

Communities in every corner of the world including over 700 in the United States have honored Martin Luther King Jr., because he was a great civil rights leader, a great religious leader, and a great American leader. His life's work reminds us to pursue dignity for each individual, social and economic equality, and justice for every American.

These values know no boundaries. They serve as a compass to guide our city daily on a path away from discrimination, racism, poverty and injustice. They steer us towards justice, equality and freedom for all people who live, work, visit or call Portland home.

This commemoration connects Dr. Martin Luther King's beliefs and legacy to the daily life of our city. His messages of international peace and fundamental fairness are ones we want to convey to our children. In honoring Dr. King we move Portland closer to realizing his dream of a more just and humane world by making it our own.

**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.  
TASK FORCE  
Wednesday, June 11, 2008  
Room 24 – City Hall  
5:30 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Councilor Dan Skolnik, Rachel Talbot Ross, Co-Chairs; Bishop Steve Coleman, Reverend Kenneth Lewis, William Nelligan, Jamie Parker, Regina Phillips, Jonathan Reitman, Wells Staley-Mays, Joshua Tingley, Dawud Ummah, Committee Members; Pat Finnigan, Judith Rosen, City Staff.

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 p.m. Committee members were introduced and welcomed.

Rachel Talbot Ross gave an overview regarding the establishment of the committee. Over 740 cities and 41 states have a commemorative for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Maine is not one of them. The City Council passed an order establishing a committee to identify public sites in the Greater Portland area as candidates to be named for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Councilor Skolnik stated that next year is Dr. King's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and he would like to have a commemorative unveiling by January 19, 2009, the national King holiday.

A power point presentation showing examples of public sites and place names from other states and cities was given by Rachel Talbot Ross. She also went over commemorative naming guidelines (see attached) and noted there are no City guidelines for this. Criteria from the committee will need to set.

Committee members discussed guiding principles and actual site possibilities. The following recommendations were made:

**Guiding Principles**

- Site should be highly visible
- Accessibility – open area, trees etc. – waterfront area
- Reasonable cost
- Visible to visitors and citizens
- Usefulness – more than a plaque
- Contemplative niche
- Acceptable to broad community
- Minority community included in process
- Multi-pronged pieces – not just one commemorative
- Price shouldn't be first concern – not around money/budget
- Could have small and large ventures – short & long term
- Educational piece – younger generation isn't as informed
- Week long event/celebration
- Should include historical component

- Could be included in new community developments
- Connection to Freedom Trail – could enhance both ventures/Malcolm X, etc.
- Where Dr. King visited in Maine/Portland is an important piece
- Include other towns, colleges, etc.

**Actual Sites**

- Lincoln Park
- Waterfront
- Tommy's or Post Office Park
- Schools
- Portland International Jetport
- Ocean Gateway
- Highways – 295

Discussion followed regarding meeting schedules and agenda items for next meeting. Members recommended meeting the **2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of the month from 8:30-10:00 a.m. in Room 209, City Hall.** The meeting dates are:

**July 11<sup>th</sup>**

**August 8<sup>th</sup>**

**September 12<sup>th</sup>**

**October 10<sup>th</sup>**

To use people's time and talents most effectively, the Committee decided to establish leadership teams. Members can choose more than one team to participate in. Each team will be responsible for leading the discussion of the full committee around their applicable issues. Teams are:

- 1) **Site Selection** – identify the logistics, cost, history, etc. of each nominated site. Site visits by this team may take place.
- 2) **Research** – gather accurate information regarding MLK Jr.'s connection to Portland/region, and ensure any documents we develop are historically accurate
- 3) **Fund development** – identify potential funding sources, grant opportunities, public/private financing, etc.
- 4) **Writing Team** – compose a narrative which clearly states our purpose and final Recommendations.

All members should e-mail Judy Rosen at: [jhg@portlandmaine.gov](mailto:jhg@portlandmaine.gov) with the leadership team/teams they wish to participate on and if they would like to chair the team. All teams should meet before the July meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Judith Rosen  
Secretary pro tem

**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**  
**TASK FORCE**  
**Friday, July 11, 2008**  
**Room 209 – City Hall**  
**8:30 a.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Councilor Dan Skolnik, Chair; Rabbi Carolyn Braun, Zannah Ford, Susan Hopkins, Regina Martin, Regina Phillips, Committee Members; Patricia Finnigan, Judith Rosen, Staff.

The meeting was called to order at 8:45 a.m. Councilor Skolnik introduced committee members.

Councilor Skolnik gave an overview of the task force mission and what was discussed at the June meeting.

Review of the task force structure and timeline was discussed. At the June meeting, 4 sub-committee groups were created; **fund development, research, site selection, and writing**. Committee members who had not signed up for a committee did so. Councilor Skolnik noted that decisions will be made by the Task Force, but the sub-committees are intended to work on specific tasks that will help the Task Force complete its mission. Discussion followed regarding the committees.

**Next Steps:** The August 8<sup>th</sup> meeting will be used for a field trip to visit potential sites.

Two of the sub-committees will be meeting the week of July 14<sup>th</sup>.

**The writing sub-committee** will meet on **Wednesday, July 16<sup>th</sup> in Room 209 of City Hall at 9:00 a.m.** Committee members thus far are: Councilor Skolnik, Susan Hopkins and Jonathan Reitman.

**The Site Committee** will meet **Wednesday, July 16<sup>th</sup> in Room 209 of City Hall for a brown bag lunch at 12:00 Noon.** Committee members thus far are: Councilor Skolnik, Rabbi Carolyn Braun, Bishop Steve Coleman, Pat Finnigan, William Nelligan, and Regina Phillips.

**All committee members are invited to participate in sub-committee meetings, and anyone who has not signed up for a sub-committee is encouraged to do so.**

Councilor Skolnik thanked committee members. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

Judith Rosen  
Secretary pro tem

## **Minutes**

### **Martin Luther King, Jr. Task Force**

Friday, August 8, 2008  
City Hall - Room 209  
8:30 a.m.

Attendance: Co-Chairs: Dan Skolnik, Rachel Talbot Ross; Members: Jonathan Reitman, Dawud Ummah, Susannah Ford, Regina Phillips, Abe Peck, Steve Bromage, Susan Hopkins, Staff: Pat Finnigan

Councilor Skolnik called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. After introductions of members, Councilor Skolnik asked Co-Chair Rachel Talbot Ross to provide an overview of the leadership teams that were established to work on specific tasks identified by the Task Force.

Rachel explained that the Task Force had established four teams that would take the leader on the following tasks:

- The Research Team which is responsible for ensuring the work of the Task Force is historically accurate
- The Writing Team whose first task is to draft a Mission Statement and to document the work of the Task Force
- The Fund Development Team which will be responsible for identifying and seeking public and private revenue sources to fund the recommendation(s) of the Task Force
- The Site Selection Team which is responsible for scoping out potential sites which the Task Force can consider to create a memorial to Dr. King.

**Timeline.** Councilor Skolnik thanked Rachel for her explanation of the tasks before the members. He said it was his goal to have the Task Force complete its work before the end of October in order to have recommendations to present to the City Council before the end of the year. His hope was to announce the Task Force's recommendation and the City Council's action to honor Dr. King at the January 2009 Martin Luther King, Jr. breakfast. That event will mark MLK Jr's 80th birthday and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NAACP.

**Writing Team: Mission Statement.** Councilor Skolnik reported on the work of the Writing Team. Their first project was to develop the Mission Statement. Councilor Skolnik reviewed the draft Mission Statement (attached) and asked for feedback. The Task Force members discussed the concepts they wanted it to convey in the Mission Statement:

Abe said he thought a stronger ending was needed to evoke more emotion. Susan agreed and suggested that it add "making his dream our dream" for example.

Jonathan said that as written it could apply to any great civil rights leader; we need to make it compelling to answer the question of why we have chosen Martin Luther King Jr.

Steve noted that Portland has a long record of commitment to civil rights. Susan added that Portland was one of only nine refugee resettlement communities in the U.S. to accept people from anywhere.

Jonathan noted that the Mission Statement should make a connection to Portland's values and what we stand for and how we are aligned with Dr. King's agenda including such issues as revitalization of urban centers and economic justice.

Abe stated that Dr. King was a martyr. He had dedicated his whole life to the cause of civil rights, peace and justice and he had given up his life.

Steve said that we needed to honor and memorialize Dr. King in a way that is befitting of him and what he stood for, not just for the sake of wishing to honor him.

Abe noted that the people who already believe in the principles Dr. King stood for attend the annual MLK Jr. Day breakfast and participate in other such events. He suggested that the Portland memorial needed be a way to raise awareness of all people who encounter it and give people a reason to pause and think about how Dr. King lived his life and what that means for people now and in the future.

Councilor Skolnik stated his belief that the memorial needed to be highly visible, something that many people would encounter daily, and hard to ignore. He did not believe that the selected site had to be a location that Dr. King actually visited.

Rachel then encouraged the Task Force members to discuss *Guiding Principles* for the memorial. She suggested that the Task Force should focus on such themes as Dr. King's commitment to:

- Peace
- Freedom
- Economic Justice
- Interfaith relations
- Non-Violence
- Equality

Susan said she hoped that we would root this endeavor in "celebration and joy to keep the momentum going" to inspire people, especially young people, about what Dr. King stood for. She said each generation has the responsibility to pass that on.

Abe noted that Maine has an identity as a peace leader.

Steven stated that we are and want to be a community known for our courage to address injustice and inequality and that we take on issues of justice.

Jonathan noted that it is our duty to live our lives modeling Dr. King. The work of the Task Force should create a daily, visible reminder of the work that Dr. King did, and the work we have left to do and need to do.

Rachel said she liked the concept of courage, staying true to and questioning things as they are, staying engaged and conscious of the issues that exist. The memorial should make us all think. It can not be a token.

Susannah said that the memorial should be something that can unify us as a community.

The Task Force then discussed specific sites. Rachel directed people's attention to the criteria used by Toronto which could be useful in the Task Force's deliberations. Specific sites that were discussed included, Congress Street (high visibility), Tommy's Park (as a place of gathering and visibility). The concern was expressed that if we selected an area with a very well known popular name, people may never adapt to a new name or recognize it as a Dr. King memorial. Steven also noted that the Task Force should be aware a creating cultural conflicts by renaming existing places that have meaning to people.

The Task Force then went on a "virtual tour" by viewing a PowerPoint presentation of sites around the City to help generate discussion and pros and cons of particular locations.

At the completion of the virtual tour, the Task Force agreed it would be helpful to invite members of the City's Planning and Historical Preservation staff to brief them on plans for the Franklin Arterial as well as other developments that could impact the site selection process.

The Task Force adjourned at approximately 10:00 a.m.



Minutes  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Task Force

Friday, September 26, 2008  
City Hall - Room 209  
8:30 a.m.

Attendance: Co-Chairs: Dan Skolnik, Rachel Talbot Ross; Members: Janis Beitzer, Jonathan Reitman, Dawud Ummah, Susannah Ford, Regina Phillips, Abe Peck, Bill Nelligan, Steve Bromage, Regina Martin, Susan Hopkins, Staff: Pat Finnigan

**Call to Order; Minutes**

Councilor Skolnik called the meeting to order at approximately 8:43 a.m. After introductions of members, Councilor Skolnik, the members reviewed the Minutes of the August 6 meeting. Members noted 2 changes: January 2009 marks Dr. King's 80<sup>th</sup> (not 90<sup>th</sup>) birthday and Portland was 1 of 9 communities (not 3) resettlement communities that accepts people from anywhere. (approved Minutes attached)

**Site Selection**

To help the Task Force with selecting a site for a memorial, the Task Force invited Alex Jaegerman, the City's Planning Division Director, to discuss some of the redevelopment efforts that are underway. Alex focused on Bayside, the Bayside Trail, and the Eastern Waterfront (including the Maine State Pier and Ocean Gateway area) as the primary areas for discussion, with some discussion of the Western Waterfront.

Task Force members asked whether any of the sites had any political pitfalls, or regulatory processes that the Task Force should be aware of. Mr. Jaegerman said that if the Task Force intended to erect a monument or some sort of art, the Public Art Commission would need to review it. He also said that the Trust for Public Land (TPL) and Portland Trails would need be included in any discussion involving the proposed Bayside Trail. Rachel Talbot Ross said that the Public Art Commission had been consulted regarding the Freedom Trail marker project. She said the Historic Preservation Commission had also been consulted.

The Task Force discussed the concept of narrowing the list of possibilities to 2 or 3 places/ideas and the need to involve stakeholders. Members also discussed the balance between having a project that could be completed and announced at the 2009 MLK Day Breakfast, and taking sufficient time to create a project thoughtfully for the long term.

Members acknowledged that depending on eth type of project selected could impact the amount of time needed to accomplish it. There are short term and long term projects – or perhaps a combination or a multi-faceted approach. Ultimately everyone agreed agreed that whichever course the Task Force selected to take, the final outcome should have a definite impact. To have such an impact, several members said that the Task Force needed a Strategic Plan to accomplish its mission.

Specific ideas that were suggested included: Preference for a park, place or gathering place, since those were places that could engage the community. The Bayside Trail area, or the new park planned for the Maine State Pier project were mentioned as possibilities; the Bayside Trail lends itself to being able to tell the story of MLK, civil rights and all the values he stood for; another idea to meet that criteria was Tommy's Park; the former Jordan Meat area is a good candidate since it can be a gathering place and its central location in the commercial district could speak to the issue of economic justice; the new building being developed by Maine Health and United Way will have a conference room which could present a number of partnering opportunities; the timing of the renovations of the Public Library could also present a good opportunity for partnering.

Based on the wide ranging discussion of suggestion and ideas, the Task Force agreed it was time for a field trip to look at some of the possible sites including the Ocean Gateway and Maine State Pier area, Tommy's Park, Bayside, and any other sites along the route. The date of the field trip is **Fri. October 10** at 8:30 a.m. Staff will reserve a van and let Task Force Members know where to meet.

### **Mission Statement**

The Task Force discussed changes to the Mission Statement to make it stronger. Upon motion by Dawud Ummah, seconded by Abe Peck, the changes to the Mission Statement were adopted. (Please see attached.)

### **Next meetings:**

As previously discussed, the next meeting will be a field trip on Friday, October 10 at 8:30 a.m.

The following meeting will be on **Friday October 24 at City Hall at 11:00 a.m.** Please note the special time.

Adjourned at approximately 10:20 a.m.

**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. TASK FORCE MEETING**  
**Friday, October 24, 2008**  
**City Hall – Room 24**  
**11:00 a.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Co-Chairs: Councilor Dan Skolnik, Rachel Talbot Ross; Members: Janis Beitzer, Bishop Steve Coleman, Zannah Ford, Abraham Peck, Jonathan Reitman, Wells Staley-Mays, Dawud Ummah; Guest, Nancy Akers; Staff: Judith Rosen.

The meeting was called to order at 11:10 a.m. by Rachel Talbot Ross. She then gave an overview of the last meeting which was a site tour of 3 potential sites for a memorial to Martin Luther King, Jr. Task Force members started at the Waterfront, then went to Tommy's Park and Post Office Park and then to the Bayside Trail. Rick Knowland from the Planning Department spoke to members regarding the Bayside Trail.

Jan Beitzer spoke with Brian Petrovic, United Way Chairman of the Board who is interested in this project. Rachel spoke with Meg Baxter from United Way who is also interested in the project. Trust for Public Land who designed Bayside Trail, is also excited about the project. They do not have a name for the Bayside Trail yet and could possibly name it for Martin Luther King. Rachel met with the Trust once and will be attending another meeting on October 30<sup>th</sup>. There was also discussion with Meg Baxter regarding the use of space in the new United Way/Maine Health Care building for a temporary site for the Martin Luther King Community Center.

Rachel Talbot Ross mentioned The University of Maine in Orono will be dedicating a park after Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta King on October 31<sup>st</sup>. This will be the first official memorial in the State of Maine for Martin Luther King, Jr.

Committee members then went over each of the 3 sites and discussed the pros and cons of each.

**Waterfront**

**Pros:**

Would have international flavor (cruise ships, etc.)  
Waterfront still under development  
Could broadcast to the world that Portland is an inclusive city

**Cons:**

Waterfront project very up in the air  
No one knows what the final plan will be  
Not happy about location  
Not a place where people "hang out"  
No diverse population  
Has political problems

Jonathan Reitman recommended taking this site off the table for now and to re-visit it after the other challenges are resolved. Committee members agreed but want it included in the final report as a potential site for a later time.

### **Tommy's Park & Post Office Park**

#### **Pros:**

- Lot of people walk through
- Young people gather there
- Lot's of commercial traffic
- Tommy's Park has not been officially named by the City
- Post Office Park has not been officially named by the City. Post Boxes were given to the City by their Sister City program in Japan
- Could have outdoor lecture series/music
- Local vendors could display their wares (immigrant community)
- People already go to these parks
- Right in the middle of the downtown community
- Visitors visit there
- Would be a daily reminder
- Activist group gather there
- Could have exhibits of community diversity
- Existing information booth

#### **Cons:**

- People of color don't go there
- Very small space
- In historic district – whatever is proposed would go through a review process
- Isn't a "contemplative" space
- Is a tourist and business area – not for people who live outside the peninsula

### **Bayside Trail**

#### **Pros:**

- United Way/Me Health new building could be temporary MLK community center
- Big space
- Buy in from surrounding business community
- Access to community
- Breaking ground this spring
- Could potentially get first floor space
- Bring in programming
- Would be a community initiative

#### **Cons**

- Could be seen as located in "minority Neighborhood"
- Difficult to see short-term
- Will be a construction site for next few years

Committee members discussed how to propose recommendations stating the need to be mindful of long-term vs. short-term recommendations. Dawud Ummah recommended mounting future plans at Tommy's Park for citizens to see.

There is a lot of enthusiasm for the Bayside Trail area being the site.

**Next Steps:**

Rachel Talbot Ross will go to the Trust for Public Land meeting on October 30<sup>th</sup> and affirm that the committee wants to work with them on possible naming and design.

Pat Finnigan will have discussions with Meg Baxter and Brian Petrovic of United Way regarding temporary space for a community place to gather and do programming.

Councilor Skolnik will talk with fellow Councilors and Joe Gray regarding this project.

There should be outreach to stakeholder groups informing them of what is going on. There should be a meeting with stakeholders invited. Some of these include:

Portland Landmarks

Abyssinian Church

Maine Preservation

East Bayside Association

Bayside Neighborhood Association

Parkside Neighborhood Association

Islamic Society

Root Cellar

Whole Foods

Planet Dog

DHS

Mike Bobinsky, Tom Civiello from Public Services

International Fellowship – Pastor Mutima

Historic Preservation – Deb Andrews

Maine Health

United Way

The next meeting of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Task Force will be **Thursday, November 6, 2008 at 3:00 p.m. in Room 209, City Hall.**

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

## MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. TASK FORCE MEETING

Thursday, November 6, 2008

City Hall – Room 209

3:00 p.m.

**ATTENDANCE:** Co-Chairs, Councilor Dan Skolnik, Rachel Talbot Ross; Members: Janis Beitzer, William Nelligan, Regina Phillips, Dawud Ummah; Dennis Crowley, Greater Portland Landmarks; Pat Finnigan, Judith Rosen, City Staff.

The meeting was called to order at 3:07 p.m. Rachel Talbot Ross gave an update on her meeting with the Trust for Public Land Design Sub-Committee regarding the Bayside Trail. Bayside Trail is the leading candidate for the MLK memorial. The design sub-committee is comprised of representatives from Portland Trails, Friends of the Parks, Trust for Public Land and City Planners. They are very enthusiastic about having a memorial honoring Martin Luther King Jr. They explained that trails are usually named geographically so people will know where the trails are located, but they are excited about having an MLK Plaza and Community Center within the trail site. The short term goal would be the MLK Plaza which would be a contemplative place etc. The long term goal would be building an MLK Center with an educational component and place for community to gather.

Rachel Talbot Ross spoke with Meg Baxter from United Way. She will set up a meeting with Meg Baxter and Bob Caron from Maine Health Care to discuss using their new building for a block of rooms for the MLK Center.

**Next Steps:** meet with Bayside design team to identify what space would be used for the MLK Plaza. **Timeframe:** The MLK breakfast on January 19<sup>th</sup>. Task Force could unveil something stating their intention and invite the community to join in the endeavor. Rachel Talbot Ross recommended joint billing with United Way, Portland Land Trust and Maine Health Care showing their support as well.

Regina Phillips suggested a poster giving an update on what the committee has been doing as well as putting a page in the MLK booklet.

Dan Skolnik wants to unveil more than an idea. He wants something substantial to show the framework of what we are doing. There could be a schematic of the Bayside Trail and where the MLK Plaza/Center would be.

Dennis Crowley & Dan Skolnik suggested memorializing Coretta Scott King as well as Martin Luther King, Jr. as part of the Bayside Trail. Rachel Talbot Ross and Regina Phillips went to the University of Maine-Orono Martin Luther King/Coretta Scott King Park dedication. There were over 500 people at the unveiling. It took over 2 years to complete from start to finish. They used pillars with quotes from Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King. It was very impressive.

**Next Steps:** Committee should meet in the next 2 weeks to talk about the framework becoming a reality; invite stakeholders to join in the public process; identify Bayside Trail site; create a schematic with a map for Tommy Park; name groups involved who have come together in support of this project; give working group a name; create webpage on City website to include mission statement, minutes of meetings and stakeholders; promotional schematic at Tommy's Park showing the potential site; use the MLK Build a Dream website to find out information.

Rachel Talbot Ross suggested an unveiling of the schematic at Tommy's park and could make it a fundraiser with a reception afterwards. This would be on February 12<sup>th</sup>.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

- 1) Meet with MIS Department on website creation
- 2) Meet with Deb Andrews (Historic Preservation) regarding signage
- 3) Meet with Planning Department regarding schematic
- 4) Set-up sub-committee meeting for framework & working group
- 5) Meet with Bill Caron of Maine Health Care, Meg Baxter & Brian Petrovic of United Way regarding space in their building (Rachel, Pat & Dan)
- 6) Rachel Talbot Ross will speak with Maine Humanities Council regarding the February 12<sup>th</sup> unveiling
- 7) Will Nelligan will look into the National MLK Memorial website

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, November 12<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 Noon, Room 209, City Hall to discuss and vote on recommendations to be presented to the City Council.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., TASK FORCE MEETING**  
**Wednesday, November 19, 2008**  
**Room 209 – City Hall**  
**8:00 a.m.**

**ATTENDANCE:** Co-Chairs, Councilor Dan Skolnik, Rachel Talbot Ross; Members: Steve Bromage, Bishop Steve Coleman, Susan Hopkins, Regina Martin, Jaime Parker, Regina Phillips, Jonathan Reitman, Wells Staley-Mays; City Staff: Pat Finnigan, Judith Rosen.

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 a.m. Dan Skolnik welcomed members and gave an overview of the work done so far. He mentioned that the Bayside Trail is the leading candidate for the MLK memorial. Rachel Talbot Ross discussed the 2 meetings she had been to with the Trust for Public land and their enthusiasm about having an MLK memorial at the trail. There is going to be a public forum regarding Bayside Trail on Saturday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> at 12:30 p.m. Rachel will be helping facilitate that meeting. She will discuss the MLK Plaza concept at that time.

Rachel discussed next steps. A report will be given to the full City Council regarding the work the task force has been doing and the action plan. The Task Force wants to form a Commission from this group to work on the long-term initiative. Rachel and Pat Finnigan had a conversation with Maine Health Care and United Way for a potential site for a Martin Luther King, Jr. Center in their new building. They agree with the concept and vision but could not commit to giving space. Their building has 8 floors – all but the top floor is occupied at this time. There would have to be fundraising for this venture. Hopefully Maine Health Care and United Way would be a partner in finding a room or space for the Center.

There is no money allotted for this venture. There will need to be fundraising. Jamie Parker mentioned that the Bayside Trail will be using landscaping and that committee members could work with their design team regarding landscaping for the plaza.

Rachel discussed asking the City for an allocation of money. Money will be needed for signage, working with the Bayside Trail design team and creating signage in Tommy's Park.

Dan asked the group for consensus regarding incorporating Coretta Scott King into the naming of the plaza. Members felt the plaza should be named for only Martin Luther King and that a garden within the plaza should be named for Coretta King.

Jonathan Reitman suggested that something be shown at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast in January regarding the memorial to get the public involved.

City staff will be writing a draft report and recommendations to be presented to the full Council. Task Force members will approve the report before it goes to Council.

A motion was made for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Task Force to approve creating a report for the City Council recommending Bayside Trail for the MLK memorial, creating a commission to implement the short and long term components and to ask for an allocation of seed money to fund the work of the commission. Moved by Sarah Thompson, second by Regina Martin. PASSED unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., TASK FORCE MEETING**  
**Wednesday, November 21, 2008**  
**Room 209 – City Hall**  
**Noon**

**ATTENDANCE:** Co-Chairs, Councilor Dan Skolnik, Rachel Talbot Ross; members: Rabbi Carolyn Braun, Abe Peck, Dawud Ummah, Bill Nelligan, Zannah Ford; and staff Pat Finnigan.

The meeting was called to order at 12:10 p.m. Councilor Dan Skolnik welcomed members and gave an overview of the work done thus far including the conclusions of the Task Force meeting on November 19. Rachel Talbot Ross updated the members on the Bayside Trail meeting on Saturday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> at 12:30 p.m. and the importance of the Task Force members participating in that so ensure the MLK Plaza concept would move forward.

Rachel and Dan recapped the discussion and conclusions of the Task Force members at the meeting held on Nov. 19. The members held a very enthusiastic discussion of the possibilities. Abe Peck noted the need to build coalitions including K-12 and college students. Rabbi Braun noted the importance of bringing the project to the community as a concept so people would feel welcome to participate in its design and development. The members discussed the concept of having an MLK Center which could be an incubator of economic development and teaching skills for sustainable development. The members agreed that this effort needed to be on-going and grow over time. They concurred with the recommendations reached at the Nov. 19 meeting. On a Motion by Zannah Ford, seconded by Rabbi Braun, the Task Force voted unanimously to develop a report to the City Council recommending the Bayside Trail as the site of the MLK memorial, creating a commission to implement the short and long term components, and request an allocation of seed money to fund the work of the commission. PASSED unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 1:20 p.m.