

August 27, 2021

Mr. Tim Burkman  
City of Grand Rapids  
300 Monroe Ave NW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Dear Mr. Burkman:

On behalf of the Moving Ahead for Remarkable Civil rights Heroes (MARCH) Committee, and in conjunction with our efforts to honor Martin Luther King Jr and Cesar E. Chavez, we write to request the City of Grand Rapids commemoratively designate these streets to recognize their history and those who live and conduct business there as Franklin Street and Grandville Ave.

There are few leaders who are as well known for making a lasting impact on civil rights in the United States than Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar E. Chavez. Their nonviolent activism for equality for African and Latino Americans shaped the civil rights movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Honoring their lives and legacy by boldly and jointly renaming these streets will be unifying act for our City and promote our shared goals of creating a welcoming environment for all.

This request satisfies the conditions of City Commission Policy No. 1000-20 H: Required Conditions for Commemorative Designation (abbreviated below) by satisfying the following conditions:

1. The proposed commemorative name or designation shall either be informational in nature or of memorial or historical significance.
  - a. This request is both informational and highlighting the historical significance. It signifies that these streets were formerly named as such and highlights the history of the streets for those residents.
2. If the proposed name is that of a person, it must be of a deceased person having made a recognized contribution to the community or to a portion of the community where the memorial way is to be designated.
  - a. The official name change is for two civil rights leaders named above and the commemorative is not that of a person.
3. The proposed name shall not be so similar to an official street name as to be confusing to the public.
  - a. These are the official names currently. The intention is to commemorate the history of the current names and provide residents and business owners certainty. It will not be confusing as this will be done in coordination with the official name change – which is the focus of this effort.
4. The commemorative designation shall be limited to that portion of the street or that portion of the community where the designation is significant.
  - a. The commemorative would be for the entirety of the street, which is where they are both currently named.

Sincerely,



Lupe Ramos-Montigny  
Co-Chair  
MARCH

CC: Eric DeLong  
Lou Canfield



Robert S. Womack  
Co-Chair  
MARCH



July 1, 2021

City of Grand Rapids  
Tim Burkman, City Engineer  
300 Monroe Ave. NW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Dear Mr. Burkman,

On behalf of the Moving Ahead for Remarkable Civil Rights Heroes Committee, M.A.R.C.H., we are submitting this letter to formally request the City of Grand Rapids to begin the process of renaming Franklin Street to Martin Luther King Jr. Street and Grandville Avenue to César E. Chávez Avenue, in accordance with City Commission policy No. 1000-20. As the history in our community suggests, these remarkable Civil Rights Heroes have been celebrated and honored in many significant ways: 2 commemorative streets, 1 park, 2 schools, scholarships, and annual celebrations, to name a few.

There are few leaders who are as well known for making a lasting impact on Civil Rights in the United States as Martin Luther King Jr. and César E. Chávez. Their non-violent activism for equality for African and Latino Americans shaped the Civil Rights movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Honoring their lives and legacy by boldly and jointly renaming these streets is a unifying act for our city. It promotes our shared goal of creating a welcoming environment for all. Attached is a short telegraph that expresses their unity, in Cesar's own words! We believe the City of Grand Rapids, given its current interest in equity, equality, and inclusion, is ready to promote history and culture to the city by moving ahead with this intentional action.

Prior to submitting this request, M.A.R.C.H. has conducted outreach to the residents, businesses and institutions along both corridors. COVID-19 stopped us in our tracks days before our first community meeting, but that didn't stop us from rebounding and hosting virtual sessions to hear from the community. We are thrilled at the support we have received from the stakeholders of these corridors. Now that we have completed our initial focused engagement on these two streets, we are ready to expand to the broader surrounding community in a more public fashion.

We believe our request satisfies the conditions that need to be met as outlined in City Commission Policy No. 1000-20, abbreviated as follows:

1. **The proposed name shall be widely recognized as meriting remembrance.**
2. **The name must be of a deceased person well known to citizens of all walks of life for a specific contribution and sacrifice.**
3. **The proposed name shall have been acknowledged by other national, state or community organizations.**
  - a. In addition to the federal holidays, both of these leaders have been honored across the United States through the naming of parks, monuments, streets, schools, libraries, university buildings, and more.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to answering any questions you may have and sharing more broadly our efforts at future public hearings to meet the requirements. We can be reached at [marchcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:marchcommittee@gmail.com).

Sincerely,



Honorable Lupe Ramos-Montigny, Co-Chair



Honorable Robert Womack

## **MARCH Committee**

Honorable Senita Lenear  
Ms. Shekirua Mack  
Mr. Javier Olvera  
Ms. Zoraida Sanchez  
Honorable Milinda Ysasi

## **Committee Partners**

Mr. Marco Bulnes  
Mr. Omar Cuevas  
Ms. Connie Dang  
Mr. Frank Coronado

Ms. Arnetta Fudge  
Ms. Teresa Hendricks  
Ms. Sharon LaChappelle  
Mr. Joshua Lunger

## **City Advisors**

Mr. Eric DeLong  
Mr. Lou Canfield  
Mr. James Hurt

CC: Mr. Mark Washington, Mayor Rosalynn Bliss & The Grand Rapids City Commission,  
Mr. Eric DeLong, Mr. Lou Canfield, Mr. James Hurt, Mr. Joel Hondorp