

MEMORANDUM

TO: Portland Planning Commission
FROM: Professor Gilbert Paul Carrasco, Brigadier General Michael Caldwell, Cully Association of Neighbors Chairperson Kathy Fuerstenau
SUBJECT: Historian Panel report to Planning Commission regarding the current application to rename a Portland City Street "César E. Chávez Boulevard" - FINAL
DATE: April 23, 2009

On April 20, 2009 the Historian Panel for the City of Portland Street Renaming Process reached its findings regarding the current application to rename a Portland city street after labor and civil rights leader César E. Chávez (1927 – 1993). Applying the criteria in City Code Chapter 17.93, the Panel found that:

1. César E. Chávez is an appropriate person after whom a street may be renamed.
2. The name "Grand Avenue" has historical significance and the street should not be renamed.
3. The name "Broadway" has historical significance and the street should not be renamed.
4. The name "39th Avenue" does not have historical significance and may be renamed.

I. OVERVIEW

Background

The Historian Panel is tasked in City Code Chapter 17.93 to evaluate proposals to rename a Portland city street and is limited in its review to determine only the appropriateness of the proposed honoree and the historical significance of the streets proposed for renaming. The Historian Panel comprises three Portland citizens, all appointed by the Commissioner-in-Charge of the Bureau of Transportation. The Historian Panel members are Professor Gilbert Paul Carrasco of the Willamette University College of Law, Brigadier General Michael Caldwell of the Oregon National Guard, and Cully Association of Neighbors Chairperson Kathy Fuerstenau.

The Historian Panel conducts all its work according to public meetings law, in an entirely neutral and transparent manner. It does not recommend whether a street should be renamed, but only whether a street may be renamed, based upon the "appropriateness of the proposed honoree" and "historical significance of the street proposed for renaming." The Historian Panel presents its recommendations to the Portland Planning Commission, which in turn makes its recommendations to the Portland City Council. City Council makes a final determination.

Portland City Code Chapter 17.93 Renaming City Streets

The Historian Panel applies the following code language:

17.93.010 (A) Criteria For Renaming a City Street. Any individual or organization may apply to the City to rename a City street. City streets may only be renamed after a prominent person. Such prominent person must be: (1) a person who has achieved prominence as a result of his or her significant, positive contribution to the United States of America and/or the local community; (2) a real person; and (3) a person who has been deceased for at least five years.

17.93.020 (A) Selection of Street to be Renamed. The name of the street proposed for renaming shall not be changed if the existing name is of historic significance, or the street is significant in its own right.

The Historian Panel applies the following criteria:

“Appropriateness” of the proposed honoree: The honoree must be a “real person...who has been deceased for at least five years” and who has “achieved prominence as a result of his or her significant, positive contribution to the United States of America and/or the local community.” The HP may consider the following:

- Diversity relevance
- Name has withstood or will withstand, the test of time
- Well-known
- Well-liked or respected
- Excites allegiance or following

“Historic significance” of the current name or “significance in its own right” of the street proposed for renaming: The name of the street to be renamed currently enjoys a particular meaning or importance within a particular period of social or political events, and relating to a particular community or geographic area. The HP may consider the following:

- Was the street named after a “prominent” person, as defined in the code?
 - Does the street name commemorate an event or “concept” whose importance is equivalent to that of a “prominent” person?
 - Is the name of the street associated with some aspect of local history or culture?
 - Are the street and its name related to a legacy of place-based memories that evoke an emotional response?
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II. METHODOLOGY AND TIMELINE

Methodology

The Historian Panel engaged in a comprehensive review process lasting from November 2008 through April 2009. During this time, the Historian Panel's activities were informed by the Advisory Panel to the Historian Panel and facilitated by consultants Marshall Mediation.

During this process the Historian Panel completed the following activities: Defined its criteria for review for "appropriateness" and "historical significance;" held two panel meetings to clarify process and procedures; held three public hearings to gather public testimony; reviewed written comments; collected additional historical background on questions raised in public testimony; made findings related to the criteria for "appropriateness" and "historical significance;" presented its ultimate findings to the Planning Commission.

Timeline

- July 2008: Historian Panel is empanelled by appointment from then Commissioner Sam Adams. Members are Professor Gilbert Paul Carrasco, Brigadier General Michael Caldwell, and Cully Association of Neighbors Chairperson Kathy Fuerstenau.
 - November 4, 2008: Historian Panel first meeting. Establish roles, responsibilities and drafting process for criteria definitions, informed by input from Advisory Panel.
 - November 21, 2008: City Auditor verifies first batch of signatures, allows for submission of second batch of signatures by no later than February 4, 2009.
 - January 26, 2009: Applicants César E. Chávez Boulevard Committee submits a completed application with second batch of signatures to City Engineer office.
 - January 23 – February 20, 2009: City Auditor process to verify second batch of signatures.
 - February 12, 2009: Historian Panel Process and Procedures meeting. Formal adoption of criteria definitions; establish public hearing schedule and review of public input related to the criteria.
 - February 20, 2009: City Auditor declares CECBC application complete, triggering the public comment and review process.
 - February 21 – March 6: City Engineer Process, postcard survey mailings to all owner/occupants abutting the streets proposed for renaming.
 - March, 2009: City of Portland launches César E. Chávez Boulevard Street Renaming process webpage on City website: www.portlandonline.com. The webpage provides an email option for submitting public comments related to the process. City staff relay all criteria-related comments to the Historian Panel.
 - March 7 – May 5: Historian Panel public comment and review process, including a 14-day extension granted by the Planning Commission.
 - March 23, 30, and April 6, 2009: Historian Panel public hearing for Grand Avenue, Broadway, and 39th Avenue, respectively, to collect testimony related to the criteria for review.
 - April 20, 2009: Historian Panel public meeting to review all criteria-related testimony received in public hearings, through the City website, and by mail. Historian Panel drafts its findings and recommendations to the Planning Commission.
 - April 28, 2009: Historian Panel presents its findings and recommendations to the Planning Commission.
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III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings: Appropriateness of the proposed honoree

Applying the criteria above in Section I, we find that César E. Chávez is an appropriate person after whom a Portland city street may be renamed.

1. César E. Chávez was a real person who has been deceased for at least five years. César E. Chávez lived in the United States his entire life from 1927 – 1993. He was born in Arizona and worked throughout the country, though principally in California, as the co-founder of the United Farm Workers, a labor union for farm workers. He worked as a farm worker, labor leader, and civil rights icon. In the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., César E. Chávez promoted the use of nonviolence as an effective organizing tool.

2. César E. Chávez achieved prominence as a result of his significant, positive contribution to the United States of America and/or the local community. Many books, celebrations, schools, and public spaces in the United States are dedicated to César E. Chávez. César E. Chávez led the United Farm Workers from its inception in 1962 until his death in 1993. His use of nonviolence and his dedication to the cause of raising awareness of unsafe labor conditions for farm workers and the use of hazardous pesticides, earned him national recognition and respect around the country and from civil rights leaders including Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., Jesse Jackson, and many others. In 1994, after César E. Chávez death, President Bill Clinton presented his widow with the Medal of Freedom, this country's highest civilian honor, saying that César E. Chávez "faced formidable, often violent opposition with dignity and nonviolence."

Findings: Historical significance of the streets proposed for renaming

Grand Avenue

Applying the criteria above in Section I, the Historian Panel finds, by a vote of two to one, that the name "Grand Avenue" is historically significant.

The name "Grand Avenue" was changed in 1893 from the original "5th Avenue" to increase the street's prominence in East Portland as a commercial avenue by giving it a more imposing street name. By naming Grand Avenue, city builders and civic leaders in the 1890s intended to develop a specific commercial concept, attract businesses, and designate a commercial artery through East Portland. Since then, Grand Avenue has enjoyed over 100 years of designation as a significant commercial spine through East Portland. We find that the name "Grand" indeed means "grand", "significant" and "important." The intentional renaming of the street and the focus on developing a grand avenue in the center of the district contributed to the development of the commercial core of the former city of East Portland and to the commercial history of our city. That meaning echoes in the commercial district that exists today.

Evidence of the success of past intentions exists in the designation of several impressive commercial buildings along Grand Avenue on the National Register of Historic Place and the creation of a historic district specifically named after the former city and the street at its heart: “The East Portland / Grand Avenue Historic District”.

During our public hearings, several witnesses asserted that Grand Avenue was named after the Grand Army of the Republic following the Civil War. We researched these assertions and found no connection between the naming of Grand Avenue and the Grand Army of the Republic.

Professor Carrasco dissented from the majority’s view on the ground that he is of the opinion that the criteria in the Code were not properly applied as to the historical significance of the name, “Grand Avenue.”

In conclusion, we find that the name “Grand Avenue” has sufficient historical significance to preclude its renaming.

Broadway

Applying the criteria above in Section I, by a vote of two to zero (with the chair abstaining) we find that the name “Broadway” is historically significant.

Based upon testimony we received and the insight provided by our Advisory Panel, we find that the name “Broadway” has always had a unique brand identity in Portland. In 1913, after the Broadway Bridge was built, Portland City Council changed the name of 7th Avenue on the west side to Broadway to match its east side counterpart. (Note that the Broadway Bridge would retain its name should the street be renamed.) Broadway was intended by city builders to be a main street of the city, with busy theaters, high-end retailers, hotels, restaurants, financial institutions, and fashionable architectural landmarks, thus creating unmatched development opportunities for Portlanders. Evidence of the historic nature of the street exists in the 13 buildings along Broadway that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Evidence of the City’s intention to retain and enhance the unique character of Broadway exists in several City plans. The 1972 Downtown Plan identified Broadway as the principal entertainment street in Downtown adding to the color and vitality of Downtown and called for strengthening the concentration of theaters, restaurants and hotels along Broadway. The 1983 Downtown Design Guidelines called out specific guidelines for the “Broadway Unique Sign District” along SW Broadway, and these guidelines have been carried forward in subsequent plans and are included in the Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines still effective today. The 2002 PDC design plan to develop the NW Broadway district is also included, highlighting Union Station and other historic buildings along Broadway.

As Portland grew rapidly in the early 20th century, transportation in Portland during the 1920s was driven by the city’s commitment to promoting Broadway as the city center. The Broadway streetcar created a vital link for Portlanders to get to work and navigate the city. In 1925, Broadway became the first city street to shine with a new lighting system. Throughout the 1920s, while the majority of Portlanders lived on the east side, many of them relied upon the

Broadway streetcar to cross the river to get to work. Without city planners' commitment to building local history around Broadway and the Broadway streetcar, it is unlikely that Irvington, Sullivan's Gulch, Elliot, Hollywood and Grant Park would have developed as they did.

Today, businesses continue to establish themselves along Broadway to benefit from the "Main Street" connotation of the name. Indeed, many businesses include the name "Broadway" in their business and building names. Many witnesses reported a sense of pride in the heritage and cachet that the name "Broadway" renders.

In conclusion, we find that the name "Broadway" has sufficient historical significance to preclude its renaming.

39th Avenue

While 39th Avenue is a significant street with a rich history, by unanimous vote, the Panel does not find that its name has sufficient historical significance to preclude its renaming.

We heard many thoughtful arguments during the public hearings in support of maintaining the numbered name, including preserving the character of Laurelhurst Park and its surrounding neighborhood, honoring the local replica of a famous 1874 statue of Joan of Arc, and adhering to the original "Philadelphia System" of platting North-South streets with numbered names as a straight-forward method of navigating through the city.

We appreciate the care and attention with which witnesses presented the arguments above. However, we find that the historical significance of a unique park, neighborhood, or landmark does not in itself create the historical significance of the street name running alongside or through the notable space. We further find that while the Philadelphia System is notable in its usefulness for platting city streets in general, it does not ascribe unique historical significance to the name "39th Avenue", especially where the City of Portland has historically shown a willingness to change the names of numbered streets (for example, "5th Avenue" to "Grand Avenue" and "7th Avenue" to "Broadway"). Finally, we find as a general rule that numbered streets are rarely historically significant names.

Respectfully submitted,

Professor Gilbert Paul Carrasco, Chair

Date

Kathy Fuerstenau, Member

Date

Brigadier General Michael Caldwell, Member

Date

ATTACHMENT A: SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY IN PUBLIC HEARINGS

Overview

On March 23, 30 and April 6, 2009, the Historian Panel for the street renaming process held three hearings to receive public testimony on the current application to rename a Portland city street César E. Chávez Boulevard, after labor and civil rights leader César Estrada Chávez (1927 – 1993). The Historian Panel received testimony from the César E. Chávez Boulevard Committee (Applicants), 20 neighborhood and business associations, and 113 Portland residents. In addition, 31 individuals submitted written testimony. Following is a summary of the public comments received during the Historian Panel review period.

Appropriateness of the Proposed Honoree, César E. Chávez

In support of the proposed honoree

- ◆ The Board of Multnomah County Commissioners issued a proclamation honoring the spirit of César Chávez.
 - ◆ State Senator Jackie Dingfelder endorses the renaming of a street for César Chávez.
 - ◆ This year on César Chávez's birthday (March 31) Governor Kulongoski issued a proclamation to recognize Farm Worker Awareness Week; and Portland State University sponsored several events in honor of César Chávez.
 - ◆ César Chávez has lasting ties to Oregon from his visits to Salem, the University of Oregon, Lewis and Clark College, and Mount Angel. Every year for the past 19 years, an annual student leadership conference in Oregon named for Cesar Chavez, has taught 1,405 Oregon high school students about his life and legacy.
 - ◆ César Chávez brought awareness about unfair working conditions and the dangerous use of pesticides. Let us work together and make positive changes.
 - ◆ César Chávez's values, path of nonviolence, and lifelong work of improving the working conditions of farm workers is an inspiration, locally and globally.
 - ◆ César Chávez is worthy of this recognition for his work using nonviolent means to provide social justice and equity for all.
 - ◆ We all benefit from the bounty of the 175,000 farm workers in Oregon. Honor the dignity and contributions of these extraordinary people.
 - ◆ The streets of any city belong to all of its residents, and honoring César Chávez by renaming a street would give future residents and Latinos pride about the street on which they live and travel.
 - ◆ Latino youth are in dire need of role models. By honoring César Chávez, we demonstrate to Latino youth that their culture can produce leaders that everyone can honor.
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- ◆ Acknowledge César E. Chávez's work for social justice and bring more inclusiveness to our community with a street renamed after him.
- ◆ We are going to be so proud when we name a street after César Chávez. This will tell Latino youth they belong here and their culture and contributions make Portland a better place. Send a message of power, hope and inclusiveness.
- ◆ César Chávez is a hero to so many people in this country. He thought about the good of all and of the community as a whole.
- ◆ Recognize the contributions of César Chávez to promote self worth, community pride, and sense of belonging. Implement the concept of inclusiveness.
- ◆ Let's celebrate diversity, goodwill and include the richness of other cultures.
- ◆ Naming a street after César Chávez will propel the change we'd like to see in the city.
- ◆ César Chávez was influential in my decision to become an educator and naming a street after him would send a clear message that we honor American heroes of all colors.
- ◆ My father learned English and became a citizen because of the educational programs initiated by César Chávez.
- ◆ Portland has been known by many names in the last several thousand years. See how the positive of naming a street after César Chávez blesses all of us.
- ◆ César Chávez is a hero and an influence to me and others, locally and globally. Let's celebrate his inspiration and life's work by naming a street after him.
- ◆ I would be proud to have any of the three streets in consideration named after this great man.

In opposition to the proposed honoree

- ◆ There are many other significant historical figures, including several directly connected to [the street proposed for renaming, here, Grand Ave.].
 - ◆ César Chávez has nothing to do with the background of individuals and businesses on [the street proposed for renaming, here, Grand Ave.].
 - ◆ There is no connection or authenticity in the consideration of renaming [the street, here, Grand Ave.] to honor César Chávez.
 - ◆ César Chávez eschewed personal recognition. He would not want a street renamed for him.
 - ◆ Not all of César Chávez and the United Farm Workers activities were nonviolent. There were many acts of violence in relation to César Chávez. I lived in Salinas, CA in the 1970s and was caught in the violence of striking farm workers, organized by César E. Chávez. On the road I commuted on for my job, I was jeered and shouted at, as well as having rocks and bottles thrown at my car. [HP note: Historical research did not corroborate the involvement in or support of César Chávez regarding any such activities].
 - ◆ There are many famous individuals associated with the labor movement in this country. It shows partiality to honor just one person.
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Historical Significance of the name, Grand Avenue

The existing street name is historically significant

- ◆ Grand Avenue's place in the history of Portland is marked by commerce. Grand Avenue is the "commercial spine" of the East Portland / Grand Avenue Historic District.
- ◆ Originally platted as 5th Street, Grand Avenue was renamed in 1893 to increase its prominence in East Portland and to have a more imposing street name.
- ◆ Grand Avenue was named after the Grand Army of the Republic in the Civil War.
- ◆ Many business names are names synonymous with the name of Grand.

The existing street name is not historically significant

- ◆ Every street name evokes an emotional response. Grand Avenue was not named after a prominent person, event, or concept.
- ◆ The historical significance of Grand will remain because of the historic district [regardless of its name].
- ◆ Significance is in the power of the place, not the name of Grand Avenue.

Historical Significance of the name, Broadway

The existing street name is historically significant

- ◆ Broadway's place in the history of Portland is marked by its prominence as a main street of the city. It was named as part of a well-considered plan to create a street by that name that could be nationally recognized as a first-rate, cultural urban center.
 - ◆ There are 14 separate properties on Broadway that are listed on the National Historic Register. No other street in Portland can top Broadway – it contains 3% of the city's Historic Register properties.
 - ◆ In 1913, the Portland City Council voted to change the West side street "Seventh Avenue" to Broadway. The pre-existing Broadway on the East side of the river fed naturally on to the Broadway Bridge. The name Broadway was thoughtfully applied to this new unifying thoroughfare joined by a bridge and flamboyant theaters.
 - ◆ High-end retailers, hotels, restaurants, publishers, broadcasters, and financial institutions developed property along Broadway's fashionable thoroughfare. To echo the pride of place and significance of their address, builders created exciting new architectural landmarks on the street. Broadway represented unmatched development opportunities for realtors.
 - ◆ City planners made sure that Broadway had the first and best of all services to encourage development along its axis. It was argued that the east side of the Broadway Bridge was the
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geographic center of “a great metropolis.” Broadway was one of the first streets to be made broader on the West side to reflect the major street it was planned to become.

- ◆ In November 1925, the switch was thrown to turn on an unprecedented lighting system on SW Broadway. It was called “the brightest street in the world” by local and regional papers and “one of the brightest streets in America” by at least one national source.
 - ◆ From 1906-1930, the northwest section of Broadway was the city’s first African American neighborhood. It played host to a thriving African American business and social district. The OPB documentary “Local Color” points out clearly in images, that Broadway was lined with black businesses and includes many references to this street as a center. A local historian is working to earn National Historic Register recognition for the property and the district on Broadway.
 - ◆ There is a long history of strong civic passions from neighborhood, business, and civic organizations in defense of the name of Broadway. In 1912, the decision was made to rename Seventh to Broadway and link it to the Broadway Bridge and the long-named Broadway in what had been the separate town of East Portland. The City Commission passed an ordinance to rename Broadway east of the river “East Broadway.” An organization was formed called the North East Side Improvement Association and joined forces with the Broadway Improvement Association to soundly defeat the ordinance. They secured the promise that even if at some point in the future a reconfiguration was required, the name of Broadway would not ever be changed in such a reconfiguration.
 - ◆ Broadway’s theater district was important for our city, state and region. For a number of years, it hosted the highest concentration of theaters on the West Coast. Broadway was named not only to link its eponymous street and bridge to downtown, but even more importantly, to encourage and amplify the already considerable theater district on Seventh.
 - ◆ Transportation policy was driven by the city’s commitment to Broadway as the city center and it influenced the development of communities far across the river to the east. By the mid-1920s, a majority of Portlanders lived on the Eastside and public transportation was key to their ability to work and navigate the city. Without the Broadway Streetcar, it is unlikely that Irvington, Sullivan’s Gulch, Elliot, Hollywood, and Grant Park would have developed as they did.
 - ◆ Many business names are synonymous with the name of Broadway and there is pride in the integral heritage and cachè of Broadway.
 - ◆ For people of a certain age, cruising on Broadway was an iconic activity.
 - ◆ I relocated my business last year because I wanted to be part of a business district that is recognized throughout the Portland metro area. Broadway has the commercial cachet I want for my business.
 - ◆ Broadway is the center of our city. Every city has a Broadway. Like the Cole Porter song says, “Don’t Monkey with Broadway.”
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The existing street name is not historically significant

- ◆ It is time to build a new history. Change is something we do well in Portland. Renaming Broadway will not be erased from our minds if it becomes César Chávez Boulevard.

Historical Significance of the name, 39th Avenue

The existing street name is historically significant

- ◆ 39th was a part of the street grid system developed by Portland city founders Asa Lovejoy and Francis Pettygrove.
- ◆ The street grid was based on the Philadelphia system of having numbered streets run North/South and named streets run East/West.
- ◆ As early as 1870, 39th was shown on maps as neighborhoods developed to the east of Portland.
- ◆ 39th was a part of the public transportation system as early as 1888 and starting in 1924, the first gasoline bus system ran on 39th.
- ◆ 39th has important navigational benefits that would be lost in renaming.
- ◆ 39th has vibrant neighborhoods and small businesses that drive the economic engine of the area. Eight business associations have branded themselves with respect to their location on or near 39th.
- ◆ Laurelhurst is a potential historic district with significant historic importance. It is a neighborhood of vintage homes and curving streets surrounding a park of the same name, straddling the NE and SE sections of Portland. This neighborhood is bisected by NE 39th. Stone markers flank the entrances to the area.
- ◆ In 1909, 39th was the entrance to the newly acquired Laurelhurst park. Then, in February 2001, Laurelhurst Park was named to the National Register of Historic Places, the first city park ever listed on the national register.
- ◆ At the rotary intersection of 39th and Glisan stands the famous 1874 statue of Joan of Arc by Parisian sculptor Emmanuel Fremiet. It was a gift in honor of the American "doughboys" of World War I. It is one of only eight copies in the world.
- ◆ Laurelhurst, Laurelhurst Park, Coe Circle, and the Joan of Arc Statue are of historic significance. Of no less importance is the effect that renaming 39th would have on any future historic designation for the Laurelhurst development.
- ◆ 39th is important to my personal family history having lived and worked on it since the 1920's.

The existing street name is not historically significant

- ◆ People speak of living in neighborhoods such as Belmont, Hawthorne, Hollywood, Woodstock, and Laurelhurst. No one talks about living on 39th Avenue. It does not define a neighborhood or community.
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- ◆ Thaxter Avenue was the previous name of 39th Avenue before the city adopted the numbered system for some of its streets.

Other comments received, but beyond the scope of Historian Panel review

- ◆ Other, more appropriate, naming opportunities should be explored, particularly the new pedestrian bridge and the new light rail bridge. A bridge is a more fitting tribute to the spirit of César Chávez.
 - ◆ It will be a financial hardship and undue burden on small businesses to make the changes associated with a new street name, especially in a difficult economic time. They will have to change stationery, business cards, signage, brochures, and other marketing materials if the street is renamed. Customers, contracts, vendors, financial institutions, and manufacturers will be affected by an address change for years to come.
 - ◆ In regard to the expense to reprint business cards and brochures and to change signage, these are normal costs of business and should be reflected in annual budget line items for advertising and marketing.
 - ◆ Renaming a street at this time is mismanagement of city funds and a waste of taxpayer's money.
 - ◆ Renaming a street on the east side of the river would reinforce old prejudices – the east side is where the brown, black, working class, and poor live, while the wealthy and powerful have historically done business and lived on the west side.
 - ◆ Renaming Grand Avenue for César Chávez is an honor, not a hindrance for businesses.
 - ◆ I recommend a change in the street renaming criteria of the city code. No street should be renamed if there is an existing business district association working hard to brand and market a district.
 - ◆ The CECBC has worked for two years to rename a street after César Chávez. We have worked hard to get a street renamed: not a park, school, or bridge. People are asking the committee to start from scratch with a new process. Street renaming can be a challenge, but well worth the effort.
 - ◆ There are many city and state assets (parks, schools, bridges, etc.) that can be named for someone. The process for accomplishing this goal involves many levels of petitioning, approval and exceptions.
 - ◆ We're being asked to lay down a little bit of our privilege, not our lives, to rename a street after César Chávez. Let's make history and have our city be a welcoming place for believers in justice.
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ATTACHMENT B: HISTORIAN PANEL COMMENTS ON STREET RENAMING PROCESS AND CODE

The Historian Panel appreciates the importance of our role in processing public input and evaluating the current street renaming application in an unprecedented use of a long existing though never before applied process in City Code Chapter 17.93. We offer the following comments in the spirit of continued use of this process, and in anticipation of future successful renaming efforts in our city.

Comment 1: We acknowledge that a significant number of thoughtful comments received both during the 2007 failed street renaming process and the current 2009 process proposed to rename a different public space, such as a park, building, or farmers market. Such recommendations are not without merit. We wish to see the language of the existing code expanded to include other public spaces such as parks, buildings, farmers markets, and other open spaces to the extent they are within the jurisdiction of the city.

Comment 2: As a three-member public body, we found it unnecessarily constricting to be bound by public meeting law because it required us to notice a public meeting whenever we wished to communicate among ourselves on even the most minor points. We wish to see future Historian Panels expanded from three to at least five members, and to include at least two actual historians.

Comment 3: In determining “historical significance” we looked to the current name of the street proposed for renaming and determined whether the name enjoys historical significance. However, current code language also indicates that a street may be significant in its own right, apart from its name. We find the “significance in its own right” criterion to be immaterial and unrelated to the question of naming. It also implies that currently important streets cannot be renamed, which we believe is inconsistent with the intent behind the ordinance. We wish to see the code amended to delete the “significance in its own right” language from the criteria.
