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# CITY OF POMONA COUNCIL REPORT

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May 4, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Anita D. Scott, City Manager

Submitted By: Ata Khan, Deputy Director of Economic and Business Affairs

**SUBJECT: DISCUSSION ON CITY FACILITIES AND PUBLIC ART  
ASSOCIATED WITH CESAR CHAVEZ**

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## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council take the following actions:

1. Conduct a public discussion on the topic and provide Staff with feedback on recommended next steps, and;
2. Authorize the City Manager or designee to engage with applicable bargaining units regarding whether to retain or modify the holiday designation within existing Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs).

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

On March 18, 2026, the New York Times published an article entitled, "*Cesar Chavez, a Civil Rights Icon, Accused of Abusing Girls for Years.*" After the release of the article, communities across the country, including Pomona, have engaged in conversations on how to reconcile this news with the historic and ongoing celebration of Cesar Chavez as an icon who has been depicted in public art and has been named on city roads, buildings, and plazas. City staff have prepared an inventory of assets associated with Cesar Chavez by name or depiction, along with other notable associations with Cesar Chavez in Pomona, and a discussion framing next steps.

## **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item. However, potential changes to park naming may require additional budget for physical changes to monuments and other signage, and alterations to public artwork may require additional budget from the City's Public Art Fund.

## DISCUSSION:

### *City of Pomona Assets Related to Cesar Chavez*

#### 1. Public Facilities

Cesar Chavez Park is located at 2720 Barjud Avenue. It is the only public facility formally associated with the name of Cesar Chavez.

#### 2. City Holidays

The City annually recognizes March 31<sup>st</sup> as “Cesar Chavez Day.”

#### 3. Public Art

There are multiple pieces of public art depicting Cesar Chavez at Cesar Chavez Park, as well as a mosaic tile piece under construction to be located at Civic Center Plaza.

They are as follows:

- a. **“The Cesar Chavez Suite”** – Paul Botello at Cesar Chavez Park; 2003 commissioned by Cesar Chavez Character Champions group. As this piece predates the Art in Public Places Program, it is not under City ownership, but in 2025, was approved to include into the City’s Public Art Registry to make it eligible for preservation funding.



- b. **“Cesar Chavez Tiles”** – Pomona Unified School District (PUSD) Students at Cesar Chavez Park; 2003 commissioned by Cesar Chavez Character Champions Group. As this piece predates the Art in Public Places Program, it is not under City ownership, but in 2025, was approved to include into the City’s Public Art Registry to make it eligible for preservation funding.



- c. **“Freedom Is Not So Free, Neither Is Peace!”** Gary Lett at Civic Center Plaza (in progress; tiles completed, installation in progress); 2022. Formally commissioned by the City of Pomona Cultural Arts Commission.



**Other Notable Associations with Cesar Chavez in Pomona**

The Cesar Chavez Foundation (CCF) is a non-profit affordable housing developer that works in the greater Los Angeles area. The Chris Hartmire Plaza, a 100-percent affordable housing project at 1321 East Holt Avenue, was completed last year by CCF. The City of Pomona financially contributed to this project as part of the financial capital stacking of the development. As such, it has monitored CCF's response to the recent news. CCF released an official statement that *expressed shock over recent abuse allegations, affirmed support for survivors, and committed to healing and prevention efforts. It emphasized that its mission and the broader movement extend beyond any one individual and reaffirmed its ongoing commitment to social justice while engaging in internal reflection with community input.*

### ***Discussion on City Approach to Assets and Future Public Art Associated with Cesar Chavez***

#### **1. City Recognized Holiday Schedule**

The City has recognized every March 31 as “Cesar Chavez Day.” The City has moved forward with re-naming the holiday to “Farmworkers Day”, consistent with action taken by the California State Legislature to rename the State holiday. Additionally, the list of holidays in various labor agreements and memoranda of understanding (MOUs) will need to be updated, which requires City Council authorization to proceed with reviewing and revising applicable policies, labor agreements, and MOUs, as necessary. This approach will ensure consistency, transparency, and compliance.

#### **2. Park Naming**

The City's Parks and Recreation Commission has formally requested City staff to bring forward a discussion on renaming Cesar Chavez Park. Moreover, the Latino and Latina Roundtable of the San Gabriel and Pomona Valley (LRT), a non-profit organization, has initiated discussions with the community on the renaming of Cesar Chavez Park. LRT has separately renamed its annual Cesar Chavez breakfast to the Latino and Latina Roundtable Legacy Breakfast. City staff will work directly with the Park and Recreation Commission, LRT and other stakeholders on facilitating any proposed renaming requests through City processes. Any proposed name change must be brought forward for consideration to the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Commission's recommendation would then be considered for a decision by the City Council as a discussion item at one of its regular meetings.

#### **3. Public Art**

The City's Art in Public Places Program (AIPP) has been in place since 2012 and serves as the City's investment and programmatic vehicle to support local and regional artists in the creation of public art projects and programming. To this end, AIPP Staff can play a facilitator role in reconciling the treatment of existing public art pieces as well as developing a shared plan with the community on how to depict the historical subject matter associated with Cesar Chavez and its history, current status, and future through future public art initiatives.

AIPP Staff recommends the following actions, which have also been brought forward to the Cultural Arts Commission for consideration at its regular meeting on April 27, 2026:

- a. AIPP will work with Paul Botello, the artist of multiple works depicting Cesar Chavez in the City of Pomona, on a conservation and re-imagining. Mr. Botello has already initiated conversations and developed ideas on how to go about re-imagining these works.
- b. AIPP will work with Paul Botello, LRT, CCF, the local artist community, and other stakeholders on a series of listening sessions on any potential interest for AIPP to support future public art projects and programming that can still constructively depict, celebrate, and educate the general public on the movements and subject matter centered around Cesar Chavez, as well as strategies on how AIPP can navigate potential cases of artwork alterations.
- c. AIPP will work with Pomona Unified School District on determining the treatment of artistic tile works that are currently at Cesar Chavez Park.
- d. AIPP will work with artist Gary Lett on his mosaic civil rights piece that is under construction, that involves a depiction of Cesar Chavez, to produce an alternate image. Mr. Lett has expressed an interest in depicting a public figure representing the Filipino/a farmworker movement.

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