



## COUNCIL REFERRAL MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** March 24, 2026

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Mayor Mark Salinas  
Council Member Bonilla Jr.  
Council Member Zermeño

**SUBJECT:** Consider an Item for Discussion Regarding Cesar Chavez and Review of City Recognition

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council discuss and determine whether the following item should be placed on the City Council agenda for discussion. Direct City Manager Ott, in coordination with City Attorney Lawson and City Clerk Lens to: prepare and publish a public statement acknowledging the allegations and formally condemning the reported conduct; review all City facilities and related artifacts connected to Cesar Chavez and take appropriate action, including removal where warranted; and evaluate the City holiday currently observed in his name and return to the City Council with alternative options for consideration.

### POLICY ISSUE

Whether it is appropriate for the City to continue honoring Cesar Chavez through facilities, plaques, and a holiday in light of newly reported allegation of sexual abuse, which are described as being in direct conflict with the City's values.

### DESIRED OUTCOME

To have the City Council formally take action to address and remove City recognition of Cesar Chavez in a way that aligns with the City's values.

### TIMELINE

The timeline is immediate – initiate staff work following Council's action.

### DESIRED COUNCIL ACTION

The referral is seeking for the City Council to consider the recommendation and provide direction to staff.

## **KEY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS**

City staff will contact key stakeholder groups including community members, City leadership, and partner organizations who are impacted by or invested in how the City responds.

## **DISCUSSION**

On March 18, 2026, United Farm Workers co-founder Dolores Huerta issued a public statement revealing that she had been a victim of sexual assault and rape. In the statement, she identified the perpetrator as fellow United Farm Workers co-founder Cesar Chavez. Her disclosure came the same day as a The New York Times investigative report titled “Cesar Chavez, a Civil Rights Icon, Is Accused of Abusing Girls for Years,” published on March 18, 2026. Both Huerta’s statement and the investigative report allege that Chavez abused and raped multiple women and underage girls over a period of years.

Regardless of the position and stature Cesar Chavez held within the Chicano/a and Latino/a community, the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement, and the Labor Movement, the allegations reported on March 18, 2026, stand in direct opposition to the values of the Hayward City Council, the City of Hayward as a public institution, and the Hayward community at large. Such conduct is not only unacceptable—*it is criminal*. The City of Hayward must take these allegations seriously and respond in a manner that reflects our commitment to justice, accountability, and the safety and dignity of all people.

Council Member Bonilla Jr., Council Member Zermeño, and I respectfully direct the City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk of the City of Hayward to take the following actions:

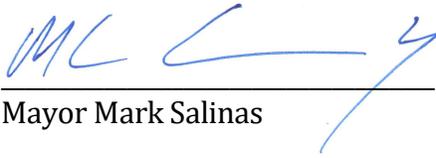
1. Prepare and publish a public statement acknowledging these allegations and formally condemning the reported conduct and behavior. I will co-author public statement.
2. Work with the Executive Team to review all City facilities, plaques, and related artifacts connected to Cesar Chavez and remove them immediately.
3. Conduct a review of the City holiday currently observed in his name and return to the Council with options for alternative holiday observances.

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide an opportunity for Council to discuss whether staff time and City resources should be devoted to actions described above, and to determine whether the item should be placed on a future agenda.

## **STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

This referral aligns with core City strategic priorities, particularly those related to values, governance and community trust.

*Prepared and Submitted by:*



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Mayor Mark Salinas

*Ray Bonilla Jr.*

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Council Member Ray Bonilla Jr.



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Council Member Francisco Zermeño