



City of Pomona

# CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

ADMINISTRATION | OFFICE OF ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS

May 20, 2026

**TO:** Cultural Arts Commission

**FROM:** Ata Khan, Deputy Director of OEBA  
Jocelyn Ayala, AIPP Program Manager

**SUBJECT:** Discussion on *The Cesar Chavez Suite Murals*

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Approve the proposed alterations by the Artist Paul Botello that feature removal of Cesar Chavez's depiction from *The Cesar Chavez Suite Murals*.

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## DISCLAIMER

The information that will be outlined in this staff report and discussed at the Cultural Arts Commission meeting on Monday, April 27, 2026, at 5:30PM PST contains information that may be upsetting for trauma survivors.

## FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of alterations is \$6,500, as determined by the Artist Paul Botello.

## BACKGROUND

On March 18, 2026, the New York Times published the article "*Cesar Chavez, a Civil Rights Icon, Is Accused of Abusing Girls for Years—An investigation by The New York Times found extensive evidence that the United Farm Workers co-founder groomed and sexually abused girls who worked in the movement.*" This article has prompted many institutions, whether private or public, to discuss how to navigate the dedication of a wide range of infrastructure that many California cities and counties have established in Chavez's name and legacy. The most notable infrastructure that highlights Chavez is Public Art, thus a thorough review of art collections that contain Chavez's depiction are being called under examination.

## PREVIOUS ACTION

On April 27, 2026, the Cultural Arts Commission discussed and approved Staff's next steps of (1) working with the Artists whose works feature Cesar Chavez for determining changes to their artwork and retaining the intention of their original celebration and (2) hosting community listening sessions intended for local artists and community partners / stakeholders to discuss ways in which the Art in Public Places program navigates in response to potential cases of requiring artwork alterations/deaccession.

On April 4, 2026, the City Council discussed and approved of the Cultural Arts Commission's recommendation.

## ARTWORK BACKGROUND

### 1. *The Cesar Chavez Suite* (2003) by Paul Botello

Commissioned by	Description
Cesar Chavez Character Champions group. Special thanks to: George Hunter, Council Member, Doug Bridges, Human Services and Frank Garcia, Pomona Chambers of Commerce	Five acrylic paintings depicting places and events in the life of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers Union

In April 2025, the Artist connected with City Staff to review damage to the murals and what next steps looked like for funding the maintenance. These murals predate the Art in Public Places program, thus there was no agreement in place about their ownership and maintenance. On May 15th, 2025, the Cultural Arts Commission recommended to City Council the approval of preservation of artwork through recognition of Public Art Registry criteria. On August 4th, 2025, the City Council approved a resolution (No. 2025-92) of criteria for the City's Public Art Registry. These two approvals from city bodies would allow for the funding of the Artist's murals. The Art in Public Places fund was used to pay \$10,600 to the Artist for restoration of the murals.

## ARTWORK PROPOSED ALTERATIONS

Please see attachment for images.

Mural 1 Cesar Chavez as a child.	Alteration would consist of the removal of the depiction of Cesar Chavez as the central figure and replace him a Chicano youth dressed in Zoot suit attire.
Mural 2 Cesar Chavez serving in the Navy.	Alteration would consist of the removal of the depiction of Cesar Chavez on the right-hand side both in the foreground and background and replace him with two unknown people representative of Chicano / Latino people who served in the military.
Mural 3 Cesar Chavez leading a march.	Alteration would consist of the removal of the depiction of Cesar Chavez as the left side figure and replace him with the depiction of Professor Jose Z. Calderon and a student from a march.
Mural 4 Cesar Chavez as an adult.	Alteration would consist of the removal of the depiction of Cesar Chavez as the central figure and replace him with a rendering of an unknown farmworker.
Mural 5 Cesar Chavez's legacy.	Alteration would consist of the removal of the depiction of Cesar Chavez on the right side of the mural and replace his likeness with that of Dolores Huerta.

### Attachments:

1. Preservation Request
2. Slide Presentation