



URGENT ITEM AGENDA MATERIAL

Government Code Section 54954.2(b)
Rules of Procedure Chapter III.C.5

THIS ITEM IS NOT YET AGENDIZED AND MAY OR MAY NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR THE AGENDA AS A LATE ITEM, SUBJECT TO THE CITY COUNCIL'S DISCRETION ACCORDING TO BROWN ACT RULES

Meeting Date: March 24, 2026

Item Description: Referral to the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission to officially Rename Cesar Chavez Park for Dolores Huerta, Co-Founder of the United Farm Workers (UFW) and Feminist Advocate

This item is submitted pursuant to the provision checked below:

- Emergency Situation (54954.2(b)(1) - majority vote required)
Determination by a majority vote of the legislative body that an emergency situation exists, as defined in Section 54956.5.
- Immediate Action Required (54954.2(b)(2) - two-thirds vote required)
There is a need to take immediate action and the need for action came to the attention of the local agency subsequent to the agenda for this meeting being posted.

Once the item is added to the agenda (Consent or Action) it must be passed by the standard required vote threshold (majority, two-thirds, or 7/9).

Facts supporting the addition of the item to the agenda under Section 54954.2(b) and Chapter III.C.5 of the Rules of Procedure:

The deadline for Councilmembers to submit items for the March 24 City Council meeting was March 2, 2026. This item, however, is based on a *New York Times* investigation published on March 18, 2026 regarding sexual abuse accusations that have been substantiated against Cesar Chavez. There is a need to take urgent action to remove signage bearing the name Cesar Chavez from the waterfront park and to initiate the renaming process.



Rashi Kesarwani
Councilmember, District 1

CONSENT CALENDAR
March 24, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Councilmember Rashi Kesarwani (Author)

SUBJECT: Referral to the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission to officially Rename Cesar Chavez Park for Dolores Huerta, Co-Founder of the United Farm Workers (UFW) and Feminist Advocate

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission to officially rename Cesar Chavez Park for Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the United Farm Workers (UFW) and advocate for women in honor of her outstanding service to communities throughout California and nationwide.

And further, direct the City Manager to remove all signage bearing the name Cesar Chavez from park property as soon as practicable.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

On March 18, 2026, *The New York Times* published an investigation finding extensive evidence that United Farm Workers (UFW) co-founder Cesar Chavez, now deceased, sexually abused young girls and women who worked within The Farmworkers Movement.¹ Two women, now in their sixties, described to the *Times* how the civil rights icon and leader abused them for years. The investigation, based on interviews with more than 60 people—including top aides, relatives, and members of the UFW—found extensive evidence to support their accusations and those raised by several other women, including Dolores Huerta, working within The Movement.

That same day, Dolores Huerta issued a statement publicly acknowledging the abuse she had kept secret for the last six decades in the interest of protecting The Farmworkers Movement.² Huerta identified herself as a survivor “of violence, of sexual abuse, of domineering men who saw me, and other women, as property, or things to control....” Huerta also commented that she carried this secret for years “because

¹ New York Times, March 18, 2026: “Cesar Chavez, a Civil Rights Icon, Is Accused of Abusing Girls for Years” <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/18/us/cesar-chavez-sexual-abuse-allegations-ufw.html>

² Medium, March 18, 2026: “A Statement from Dolores Huerta” https://medium.com/@dolores_huerta/march-18-2026-e74c20430555

building the movement and securing farmworker rights was my life's work...I channeled everything I had into advocating on behalf of millions of farmworkers and others who were suffering and deserved equal rights."³

That inner strength and dedication to human rights sustained Dolores Huerta throughout her entire career. In addition to co-leading the UFW, she worked with the Feminist Majority Foundation to help Latina women become more active within politics, founded the Dolores Huerta Foundation⁴ that advocates for social justice issues and marginalized communities through grassroots organizing and civic engagement, and has been active in politics by supporting causes such as immigration reform and LGBTQ rights.

Born on April 10, 1930 in New Mexico, Dolores Huerta grew up mostly in California, moving to the state during her early elementary school years after her mother divorced her father. Throughout her life, she has remained active in California-based human rights issues, starting with her deep involvement supporting farmworkers throughout the state, continuing on with the Bakersfield-based Dolores Huerta Foundation, as well as her campaigning for statewide propositions and supporting local politicians. In addition to her many awards honoring her human rights work, the California State Senate awarded Ms. Huerta "Outstanding Labor Leader" in 1984. In 2018, then-Governor Jerry Brown signed into law Assembly Bill 2644, first introduced by Assemblywoman Eloise Gomez Reyes, designating April 10th Dolores Huerta Day.⁵

BACKGROUND

Cesar Chavez Park was officially renamed after the labor leader on July 26, 1994 when the Berkeley City Council passed resolution No. 57,627 N.S. (attached). Before that it had been called North Waterfront Park. The name change was in recognition of the labor leader's influence on the Berkeley community and the rest of the world, and to commemorate his life's work for future generations. When news of the sexual abuse accusations against him surfaced on March 18th, many residents reached out to City Council inquiring about changing the name of this park, reflecting community members' current pain and anger that a leader of such significance would use his status to dominate, silence, and abuse women who worked beside him.

Since the news broke, cities, school districts, and leaders throughout the state and country have been grappling with the information and the many public facilities and events that have honored Cesar Chavez. As a once-revered labor hero, many parks, pathways, streets, murals, schools, and community buildings bear his name as a way to honor his work and advocacy on behalf of workers. Currently, many city, school board and state leaders are considering changing the names of the facilities that honor him, as *Berkeleyside* and *The San Francisco Chronicle* have covered.⁶ State legislators have

³ Medium, March 18, 2026: "A Statement from Dolores Huerta"
https://medium.com/@dolores_huerta/march-18-2026-e74c20430555

⁴ Dolores Huerta Foundation: <https://doloreshuerta.org/>

⁵ Dolores Huerta Wikipedia page: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dolores_Huerta

⁶ *Berkeleyside*, March 18 article by Natalie Orenstein, Alec N. Gecan, Vanessa Arredondo, Felicia Mello and Zac Farber: "Berkeley lionized Cesar Chavez. Now it's reevaluating"
<https://www.berkeleyside.org/2026/03/18/cesar-chavez-berkeley-reevaluates> and San Francisco Chronicle March 19 article by Roland Li: Cesar Chavez's name is all over the Bay Area. Will streets,

agreed to legislation to rename the upcoming holiday on March 31, 2026 Farmworker Day.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Like others, community leaders in Berkeley are struggling to integrate the painful news of the accusations against Cesar Chavez while also wanting to elevate and honor Dolores Huerta who shines as a pillar of strength even moreso now that we know she hid her own pain in an effort to focus on support for laborers. Dolores Huerta has accomplishments as a labor organizer equal to Cesar Chavez, as well as a significant background advocating for human rights issues. It would be a fitting tribute to her life and accomplishments to name the park after her to honor both her work and her survivorship. This naming would send a powerful signal to survivors in Berkeley that they are seen and valued while also maintaining the original intent to honor farmworkers and laborers in the state and beyond.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There is no significant environmental impact of this referral. Renaming the park in honor of Dolores Huerta could be a way of promoting a sense of healing within the community and thus be a way of advancing a more positive social environment.

FISCAL IMPACT

This referral has no fiscal impact save staff time for the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission secretary. It is expected that this commission would also investigate costs for replacement signage to accommodate the renaming.

CONTACT PERSON

Rashi Kesarwani, Councilmember District 1

(510) 981-7110

Attachments:

- 1) Resolution NO. 57,627-N.S. RE-NAMING NORTH WATERFRONT PARK THE "CESAR E. CHAVEZ PARK"

schools and parks get renamed?" <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/cesar-chavez-name-streets-parks-rename-22083714.php>

RESOLUTION NO. 57,627-N.S.

RE-NAMING NORTH WATERFRONT PARK THE "CESAR E. CHAVEZ PARK"

WHEREAS, the Citizens Committee to Honor Cesar Chavez, the Waterfront Commission, and the Parks and Recreation Commission have unanimously voted to recommend to the City Council the renaming of North Waterfront Park to Cesar E. Chavez Park in recognition of the tremendous positive influence that Cesar E. Chavez had on the community of Berkeley and the rest of the world, and because of the need to commit his life work to memory for future generations of Berkeley citizens; and

WHEREAS, this recommendation reflects a strong and broadly-based consensus in the community;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that North Waterfront Park is hereby re-named "CESAR E. CHAVEZ PARK".

Copies sent 8/1/94

To: Councilmember Dean
Parks and Recreation Commission
Waterfront Commission

RESOLUTION

No. 57,627 N.S.

Dated July 26, 1994

Adopted by the Council of the City of Berkeley by the following vote:

Ayes: Councilmembers Collignon, Dean, Maio, Olds, Shirek, Spring, Wainwright, Woodworth, and President Leiter.

Noes: None.

Abstaining: None.

Absent: None.

JEFFREY S. LEITER
Mayor and President of the Council

Attest: SHERRY M. KELLY
City Clerk and Clerk of the
Council