

VIGIL, XAVIER I.

From: GARCIA, MICHAEL J.
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 4:40 PM
To: CARDENAS, GERALYN F.
Subject: Fw: Public Comment: Soldier's Monument

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Can this please be included in public comment for tomorrow's special governing body meeting.

Thanks,
Mike

Michael J. Garcia
Mayor

From: Valerie Martinez [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 4:10:06 PM
To: Mayors Office <mayor@santafenm.gov>; CASTRO, ALMA G. <agcastro@santafenm.gov>; FEGHALI, PATRICIA C. <pcfeghali@santafenm.gov>; BARRETT, ELIZABETH A. <ebarrett@santafenm.gov>; BUSTAMANTE, PAUL C. <pcbustamante@santafenm.gov>; FAULKNER, PILAR FH. <pfhfaulkner@santafenm.gov>; GARCIA, LEE A. <lagarcia@santafenm.gov>; CASSUTT, JAMIE A. <jcassutt@santafenm.gov>; CHAVEZ, AMANDA C. <acchavez@santafenm.gov>
Cc: Jenice Gharib <jenice.gharib@gmail.com>
Subject: Public Comment: Soldier's Monument

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Dear Mayor Garcia and Santa Fe City Councilors:

In advance of the City Council meeting tomorrow, regarding Soldier's Monument, I want to make sure that the voices of hundreds of Santa Feans who participated in the [CHART project](#) (2021-2022) and made their views about the Obelisk known, continue to be heard.

The city made a significant investment in the CHART project in the wake of the toppling of the Obelisk. The project fulfilled each and every project deliverable and produced a comprehensive and historical [final report](#) which addresses Soldier's Monument and a wide range of related issues, including truth and reconciliation.

You can read/re-read the full report, including specific results regarding Soldier's Monument ("Art" section, page 76), here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Jgw6q0qWJr_6FWzBK6YZo5RqxNkvOQDs/view?usp=sharing

At the heart of the CHART process was sustained community engagement and Artful Life (which administered the project) dedicated itself to a broad and inclusive process. One of the challenges of a municipal engagement process is reaching as many residents as possible—many of whom do not or cannot attend city council meetings or town halls, engage with their elected officials, or receive notice about public meetings.

For this reason, CHART reached out to Santa Feans in a wide variety of ways—facilitated by a large and diverse local project team—in order to gather as many stories, feelings, beliefs, perspectives and opinions as possible. These included both online and in-person activities. We hosted Zoom and in-person dialogues with emphasis on small group interaction. We met with dozens of organizations for listening sessions and discussion. We conducted one-on-one interviews. We visited schools to engage with K-12 students. We presented talks with experts in the field. We conducted two public surveys, available online and in-person (paper). We presented short films followed by dialogue. We created social media campaigns and launched a Culture Blog. We made art with children, youth, and adults. We reached out in English, Spanish, ASL, and the universal language of games, poetry, fingerpaint, and song.

Below is a summary of the section addressing Soldier’s Monument and the [report](#) contains so much about the larger context surrounding the issues that are raised.

For those of you who are new city councilors, we consider the [CHART report](#) essential reading to learn about the concerns, hopes, and dreams of Santa Feans.

CHART FINAL REPORT (July 2022) RECOMMENDATIONS: SOLDIERS MONUMENT/”OBELISK”

“The Community Solutions Table of the CHART project identified Soldier’s Monument as a major issue and recommends the following:

1. The City of Santa Fe should leave in place the/a place-holder box around what remains of Soldier’s Monument/”Obelisk”;
2. The City of Santa Fe should add signage on the plaza or on the place-holder box about the process to-date and process to-come for deciding the future of the monument;
3. **The City of Santa Fe should immediately begin the process of allocating resources (staff, funds) and implementing a process to:**
 - **Reach a resolution of the two most favored options revealed by the second project survey:**
 - “Replace what’s left of the monument with something else;” and
 - “Restore the monument with its original signage and add language that encourages it to be fully understood and assessed”;
 - **Promote reconciliation as a significant part of the deliberation and decision-making process.**
4. **The process should engage the diverse citizenry** of the city and county of Santa Fe

and the four Pueblo nations located in Santa Fe County as well as the Navajo and Mescalero Apache tribes, and other Indigenous communities.

5 ...The City of Santa Fe should be absolutely transparent with the general public about any local, state or federal laws and limitations, or any funding limitations, that affect the disposition of Soldier's Monument/"Obelisk."

Finally, the process and disposition of Soldier's Monument should be informed by all the sections and recommendations in the CHART report. For example, the controversy around Soldier's Monument is inextricably bound to issues of racism/discrimination and whether residents feel a sense of belonging in the Santa Fe community (see "Truth" section)."

The above information is critical to any discussion of Soldier's Monument and should be considered in addition to public comment that is aired at tomorrow's meeting.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Valerie Martínez, Founding Director, Artful Life
Co-Director, CHART Project (2021-2022)

