



# City of Culver City

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## Staff Report

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**File #:** 24-866, **Version:** 1

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**EHRAC - ACTION ITEM:** (1) Receive and Review Feedback From Indigenous Tribal Members Native to The Los Angeles County Area; (2) Discuss, Revise and/or Update EHRAC's Draft Land Acknowledgement Statement as Deemed Appropriate; and (3) If So Desired, Authorize Staff to Transmit The Updated Draft Land Acknowledgement Statement to City Council For Consideration.

**Meeting Date:** April 23, 2024

**Contact Person/Dept:** Michelle Hamilton/Human Resources Department

**Phone Number:** 310-253-5640

**Fiscal Impact:** Yes ☐ No ☒

**General Fund:** Yes ☐ No ☒

**Public Hearing:** ☐

**Action Item:** ☒

**Attachments:** ☒

**Public Notification:** (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas- City Council (04/17/2024); (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas- Equity & Human Relations Advisory Committee (04/17/2024); (E-Mail) All City Staff (04/17/2024)

**Department Approval:** Dana Anderson, Human Resources Director (04/17/2024)

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Equity and Human Relations Advisory Committee (EHRAC): (1) receive feedback from Indigenous Tribal Members native to the Los Angeles County Area; (2) discuss, revise and/or update EHRAC's Draft Land Acknowledgement statement as deemed appropriate; and (3) if so desired, authorize Staff to transmit the updated Draft Land Acknowledgement Statement to City Council for consideration.

### **BACKGROUND**

According to the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian, "a land acknowledgement is a traditional custom that dates back centuries in many Native nations and communities. Today, land acknowledgements are used by Native Peoples and non-Natives to recognize Indigenous Peoples who are the original stewards of the lands on which we now live."

At the March 27, 2023, City Council Meeting, Vice Mayor McMorris received City Council consensus

from Council Members O'Brien and Puza to agendize consideration of making a formal land acknowledgement to the original Gabrieleño Tongva Indians at the beginning of each City Council meeting.

At the December 11, 2023, City Council meeting on December 11, 2023, staff presented Land Acknowledgement statements from the County of Los Angeles, the City of Sacramento, and the City of West Hollywood for consideration as well as a proposed City of Culver City Land Acknowledgement statement: (see below) (Attachment 1)

*"We acknowledge that Culver City is included in the region of the ancestral and traditional lands of the Gabrieleño Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, who historically inhabited present day Culver City and the region. We honor their connection to this region and give thanks for the opportunity to live, work and learn on their traditional homeland."*

The City Council expressed appreciation for the work done by staff; the feeling that additional community engagement is needed; work with the Equity Subcommittee; outreach to tribal organizations for feedback; examination of verbiage; and ensuring that the original inhabitants are being properly honored.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding allowing time for feedback from the Equity and Human Relations Advisory Committee as well as outreach to, and meaningful engagement with, the Native and Indigenous peoples. The City Council unanimously adopted a motion to bring the item back for consideration after discussion with interested parties. (Attachment 2)

At the February 27, 2024, EHRAC Meeting, EHRAC discussed the proposed Land Acknowledgement Statement that was prepared and presented to Council on December 11, 2023. EHRAC Member Rebecca Rona-Tuttle submitted a report (Attachment 3) for EHRAC's consideration.

EHRAC recommended the following Statement of Land Acknowledgement, which recognizes the role the Tongva People have played in this region, after a review of the report provided by Member Rona, which included her findings as a result of speaking with an individual who is part Native American and had served as a Board Member of the Gabrielino/Tongva Springs Foundation, a nonprofit organization with the mission of preserving the ancient village of Kuruvungna, including its renowned springs (see below):

*"We acknowledge that we are standing and living on ancestral Tongva land, which the Tongva People have inhabited for thousands of years.*

*The Tongva People are the traditional stewards of present-day Culver City, the Los Angeles Basin in general and the Southern Channel Islands.*

*The Tongva People did not cede, sell, or sign treaties against their land.*

*We thank the Tongva People for their stewardship of the land and for the opportunity to live, work and learn on their ancestral homeland."*

## **Research: The History of Indigenous People in Culver City**

City staff conducted additional research on the history of Indigenous People in Culver City. According to the Culver City Historical Society, in 1769, King Carlos III of Spain mandated colonization of California. Further, in 1771, Mission San Gabriel was established; and at this time, local Native Americans are known as the Tongva, Gabrielinos, due to their proximity to the mission, or more recently the Kizh.

Additionally, on August 26, 1994, the Governor signed Assembly Joint Resolution (AJR) 96 (Attachment 4). As written, "this measure would recognize the Gabrielinos as the aboriginal Tribe of the Los Angeles Basin and would memorialize the President and Congress to give similar recognition to the Gabrielinos."

On December 19, 2023, Congresswoman Sydney Kamlager-Dove (CA-37) introduced House Resolution (H.R). 6859, the Gabrielino/Tongva Nation Recognition Act, to federally recognize the Gabrielino/Tongva Nation whose villages were located in the Los Angeles Basin for thousands of years. (Attachment 5)

### **Research: Land Acknowledgement Statements from other Municipalities**

Research on Land Acknowledgment Statements by staff also includes compiled examples of Land Acknowledgement Statements as listed below from surrounding cities:

#### The County of Los Angeles

"The County of Los Angeles recognizes that we occupy land originally and still inhabited and cared for by the Tongva, Tataviam, Serrano, Kizh, and Chumash Peoples. We honor and pay respect to their elders and descendants - past, present, and emerging - as they continue their stewardship of these lands and waters. We acknowledge that settler colonization resulted in land seizure, disease, subjugation, slavery, relocation, broken promises, genocide, and multigenerational trauma. This acknowledgement demonstrates our responsibility and commitment to truth, healing, and reconciliation and to elevating the stories, culture, and community of the original inhabitants of Los Angeles County. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work on these ancestral lands. We are dedicated to growing and sustaining relationships with Native peoples and local tribal governments, including (in no particular order) the:

Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians  
Gabrieleño Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council  
Gabrieleño/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians  
Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians - Kizh Nation  
San Manuel Band of Mission Indians  
San Fernando Band of Mission Indians"

#### City of Sacramento

"Please rise for the opening acknowledgements in honor of Sacramento's Indigenous People and Tribal Lands. To the original people of this land. The Nisenan people, The Southern Maidu, Valley and Plains Miwok, Patwin Wintun peoples, and the people of the Wilton Rancheria, Sacramento's

only Federally recognized Tribe. May we acknowledge and honor the Native people who came before us and still walk beside us today on these ancestral lands by choosing to gather together today in the active practice of acknowledgement and appreciation for Sacramento's Indigenous People's history, contributions, and lives. Thank you."

### City of West Hollywood

The West Hollywood City Council adopted three land acknowledgement statements, as follows:

1. "I would like to start this meeting by acknowledging that this meeting is taking place on the ancestral, and unceded territory of the Gabrieleño Tongva and Gabrieleño Kizh peoples. The Tongva and Kizh peoples are the traditional caretakers of Tovaangar, which includes Los Angeles County, Riverside County, West San Bernardino County, parts of Orange County, and the four Southern Channel Islands."
2. "I want to respectfully acknowledge the Gabrieleño Tongva and Gabrieleño Kizh peoples who have stewarded this land that is currently known as the City of West Hollywood throughout the generations, and we pay respect to their elders, past and present."
3. "We would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather and that is currently known as the City of West Hollywood is the occupied, unceded, seized territory of the Gabrieleño Tongva and Gabrieleño Kizh peoples."

All the aforementioned statements are read at the beginning of their respective City Council and Board of Supervisors meetings."

### **Outreach**

To gather feedback and conduct outreach, staff emailed EHRAC's draft of the Statement of Land Acknowledgment (shown above), as approved by EHRAC at its February 27, 2024, Meeting, to the following list of Tribes that are listed on the Los Angeles County Native American Heritage Commission Native American Contact List:

- Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians - Kizh Nation
- Gabrieleno / Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians
- Gabrielino / Tongva Nation
- Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council
- Gabrielino Tongva Tribe

Staff received a response from the chairperson of the Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians - Kizh Nation, who expressed that the Kizh Nation should be included in the Statement of Land Acknowledgment.

In addition to the information found on the Kizh Nation website (Attachment 6), this tribal representative provided additional historical information (Attachment 7).

In an effort to generate more feedback and expand outreach efforts on March 26, 2024, staff sent

invitations to the Tribal Representatives listed on the Los Angeles County Native American Heritage Commission Native American Contact List, to participate in public comment/e-comment on this item at the EHRAC, April 23, 2024, regular meeting. In response to the invitation, staff received feedback from the Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians (Attachments 8 and 9).

## **DISCUSSION**

At the April 23, 2024, Regular Meeting, EHRAC members will receive, discuss, review, and incorporate, as deemed appropriate, feedback from attachments 1-9 and public comment and e-comments from tribal representatives of Los Angeles County Indigenous Tribes regarding the Draft Land Acknowledgement Statement, including the referenced tribal designation.

## **FISCAL ANALYSIS**

There are no costs associated with discussion of this item.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. 2024-04-23\_ATT\_CC Staff Report Land Acknowledgement\_2023-12-11
2. 2024-04-23\_ATT\_Approved CC Meeting Minutes\_2023-12-11
3. 2024-04-23\_ATT\_EHRAC Member Rona-Tuttle Report\_02192024
4. 2024-04-23\_ATT\_AJR 96 (1996) The Gabrielinos-Chaptered
5. 2024-04-23\_ATT\_H.R.6859\_Kamlager-Dove,118th Congress (2023-2024)
6. 2024-05-28\_ATT\_Information from Kizh Nation Website
7. 2024-05-13\_ATT\_Historical Information
8. 2024-04-23\_ATT\_Email Response Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians-Kizh Nation\_Part 1\_2024-04-05
9. 2024-04-23\_ATT\_Email Response Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians-Kizh Nation\_Part 2\_2024-04-05

## **MOTION**

That the Equity and Human Relations Advisory Committee:

- (1) Receive and file feedback from Indigenous Tribal Members native to the Los Angeles County Area;
- (2) Discuss, revise and/or update EHRAC's Draft Land Acknowledgement Statement, as deemed appropriate; and
- (3) If so desired, authorize Staff to transmit the updated Draft Land Acknowledgement Statement to City Council for consideration.