



City of Culver City

Staff Report

File #: 24-725, **Version:** 1

Item #: A-2

(1) Review Proposed Land Acknowledgement Statement; (2) Discuss and Provide Feedback and/or Recommendations, as deemed appropriate; (3) Determine Next Steps; and (4) Authorize Staff to Transmit Feedback and/or Recommendations to City Council, If So Desired.

Meeting Date: February 27, 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 (02/21/2024); (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas- Equity & Human Relations Advisory Committee (02/21/2024); (E-Mail) All City Staff (02/21/2024)

Department Approval: Dana Anderson, Human Resources Director (02/21/2024)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Equity and Human Relations Advisory Committee (EHRAC) (1) review proposed Land Acknowledgement Statement; (2) discuss and provide feedback and/or recommendations, as deemed appropriate; (3) determine next steps; and (4) authorize staff to transmit feedback and/or recommendations to City Council, if so desired.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

The Gabrieleño Tongva, a Native American people, have a long history in and around the area that is now Los Angeles. They were the original inhabitants of the Los Angeles Basin and the islands of Santa Catalina, San Nicholas, San Clemente, and Santa Barbara. They are also known as the San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians because they were forced to join Mission San Gabriel when it was founded in 1771 by Spanish colonizers following the 1769 order of King Carlos III of Spain to settle California. The Tongva language, which belongs to the Uto-Aztec family, was once spoken by the Gabrieleño Tongva, but it has become extinct.

Land Acknowledgement

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 agendaize consideration of making a formal land acknowledgement to the original Gabrieleño Tongva Indians at the beginning of each City Council meeting.

The County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors and various cities have adopted Land Acknowledgement Statements as follows:

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, any of which can be used:

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

Culver City Proposed Land Acknowledgement Statement

The City Council can discuss a Statement of Land Acknowledgement, and if desired, adopt a Gabrieleño Tongva Statement of Land Acknowledgement, such as one of the aforementioned examples. Alternatively, the City Council may consider a land acknowledgement statement such as:

"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."

At the City Council meeting on December 11, 2023, Item A-3 CC - (1) Discussion and, if Desired, Adoption of a Statement of Land Acknowledgement; and (2) Direction to the City Manager as Deemed Appropriate was heard. Discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding appreciation for the work done by staff, as well as the feeling that additional meaningful community engagement and outreach to the native and indigenous peoples is needed (including but not limited to outreach to tribal organizations) for feedback and examination of proposed verbiage to ensure that the original inhabitants are being properly honored.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

There are no costs associated with discussion of this item.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Staff Report 24-460 - Land Acknowledgement Statement - 12.11.23
2. Approved CCCC Meeting Minutes 12.11.23

MOTION

That the Equity and Human Relations Advisory Committee:

- (1) Review proposed Land Acknowledgement Statement;
- (2) Discuss and provide feedback and/or recommendations, as deemed appropriate;
- (3) Determine next steps; and
- (4) If so desired; Authorize staff to transmit feedback and/or recommendations to City Council.