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October 17, 2023

The Honorable Karen Bass
Mayor, City of Los Angeles
Room 303, City Hall

Honorable Members of the City Council
c/o City Clerk
Room 395, City Hall

RE: THE FRAMEWORK TO ESTABLISH A LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT FOR THE LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL.

SUMMARY

In response to Council File 22-1142, this report provides a framework proposal for the City of Los Angeles Land Acknowledgment Policy.¹ On September 30, 2022, City Council instructed the Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department (LA Civil Rights), in collaboration with the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC) and representatives from the Tongva, Tataviam, and Chumash tribes, and with the assistance of the Chief Legislative Analyst and City Attorney, to provide recommendations for a citywide Land Acknowledgment Policy.

This report reflects the research, engagement, and insights from former Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti's Civic Memory Working Group (CMWG) Report,² and a 2022 LANAIC report,³ and includes an overview of our methodology and an analysis of land acknowledgment statements implemented throughout California. Lastly, the report provides recommended language for the proposed land acknowledgment policy, its citywide adoption, and opportunities for the City to broaden this policy to include strategic actions to strengthen inclusivity efforts and recognize Indigenous communities' culture, customs, and practices while addressing historical harm and responding to their unique interests and needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. APPROVE the proposed land acknowledgment language;

¹ Los Angeles City Council, *Council File 22-1142*, 2022. [Web](#).

² Mayor's Office Civic Memory Working Group, *PAST DUE: Report and Recommendations of the Los Angeles Mayor's Office Civic Memory Working Group*, 2021. [Web](#).

³ Kristin Sakoda & Alexandra Valdes, *Report: Development of a Land Acknowledgment*, Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture & Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC), 2022. [Web](#).

2. INSTRUCT relevant City Departments to identify city infrastructure which can be renamed to honor Indigenous people as the original caretakers of this land; and,
3. EXPLORE ways to go beyond land acknowledgment, which should include introducing motions aligned with the community-centered recommendations below:
 - a. Instruct LANAIC to remove any barriers to participation in the representation of regional tribal communities in civic engagement commissions, proceedings, or other initiatives.
 - a. Instruct the Planning, Land Use, and Management Committee to research land access, land back methods (including cultural easements and co-stewardship agreements), and economic opportunities related to land stewardship for Indigenous communities in the City of Los Angeles.
 - b. Instruct LA Civil Rights with the support of the CAO and CLA, to research establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission that provides funding opportunities to facilitate community-led responses to regional grievances experienced by tribal communities through decentralized programs, policies, practices, and services. Ensure that this research includes a cost analysis with a proposed timeline for implementation.
 - c. Instruct LA Civil Rights with the help Office of International Affairs to conduct research and knowledge sharing with countries, such as New Zealand, that have conducted reports, programs, services and diplomacy to address land acknowledgments and other matters related to the Aboriginal populations.

BACKGROUND

The City of Los Angeles sits on native land; the first peoples of the region are the Tongva, the Tataviam,⁴ and the Chumash.⁵ In 2021, the City of Los Angeles adopted a formal apology in the form of a Resolution (CF: 21-0002-S178) to all Native Tribal Nations which have been injured by historic City actions, including the City's pursuit of water in the Owens Valley.⁶ On August 30, 2017, the City replaced Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day, celebrating the inaugural event on August 9th, 2018 with the removal of the statue of Christopher Columbus that had been located in Grand Park.

Land acknowledgments have historically been conducted by Native Tribal Nations, or hemispheric Indigenous communities, such as those Indigenous to Los Angeles - the Tongva, the Chumash, or the Tataviam, and other national and international tribal communities. Organizations such as the World Indigenous Research Alliance (WIRA) are working collaboratively with First Nation communities in Aotearoa, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the United States (Hawai'i) to center Indigenous community-led research to develop service design and implement policy and

⁴ Fernandefio Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, "Fernandefio Tataviam Band of Mission Indians Historical Tribal Ancestral Territory," Accessed October 2023. [Web](#).

⁵ City of Los Angeles, "The History of Los Angeles," Accessed October 2023. [Web](#).

⁶ Los Angeles City Council, "The Indigenous Land Initiative," *Council File 21-0002-S17*, 2021. [Web](#).

programs with Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders, governments, and service providers globally.⁷

Los Angeles is diverse. It boasts countless visitors and 4 million residents, including tribal Indigenous leaders. To show respect to the original inhabitants and caretakers of the land on which Los Angeles is built, it is appropriate to follow the direction of the City Council to recommend how the City of Los Angeles might acknowledge Indigenous communities and Tribal Nations.

Municipal land acknowledgments are often informed by local and international Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities, starting first with the Tribal Nations of the region. Since 2021, Los Angeles County has facilitated conversations with Tribal Nations from the region, focusing on the factual elements needed for a land acknowledgement statement and policy. The LA Civil Rights Department worked with the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC) and local Tribal Nations to ensure an accurate policy.

METHODOLOGY

In order to produce recommendations centering the particular needs and aspirations of Indigenous peoples, LA Civil Rights:

- Examined existing literature including academic research, data indices, and community-generated public reports;
- Conducted oral interviews with subject-matter experts from University of California, Los Angeles, LANAIC, and members of CMWG, during 2022 to understand the regional landscape;
- Analyzed the land acknowledgement statements of seven California cities to measure the strengths and weakness of such initiatives;
- Reviewed the CMWG initiative, past City Council motions, and City/County LANAIC's community-focused research; and,
- Consulted the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment and the Human Relations Commission.

These research strategies led to a robust understanding of the historical context and political importance of land acknowledgement statements. In collaboration with the Chief Legislative Analyst and the City Attorney, LA Civil Rights has developed language for a City of Los Angeles land acknowledgement aligned with the city charter. This language as well as recommended initiatives detailed at the end of this report support the City to go beyond a land acknowledgement and address economic disparities specific to Indigenous communities, diplomacy, land use, and land management in future policy iterations.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

⁷ Paul Whitnui et al., "The World Indigenous Research Alliance (WIRA): Mediating and Mobilizing Indigenous Peoples' Educational Knowledge and Aspirations". *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 23 (December 2015):120. [Web](#).

Historical Context and Framework

In order to address regional land acknowledgements, it is important to identify the differences in how native communities express and understand their relationship to the land, in comparison to settler cultural practices developed and lead to non-native people's contemporary understanding of land.

Unlike 19th Century settlers — who made stationary settlements in highly forested wildfire-prone areas and enacted no burning policies — Indigenous populations, such as the Tongva, Tataviam, and Chumash, built simple settlements and developed migration patterns to support survival and sustainability during different times of the year.⁸ Such migration patterns and cultural practices, such as prescribed burning, aligned with the natural ecosystem of the region. These patterns reflect a complex and nuanced understanding of the flood- and fire prone areas of Los Angeles and Southern California.

As the Los Angeles area became more populated by settlers moving west and the City of Los Angeles established policies, the Indigenous peoples' environment and ways of life were radically altered. Modern structural inequities including negative health outcomes, economic instability, and disrupted cultural and community context, are directly informed by this historical context. Displacement continues to impact residency, sovereignty, and diplomacy with tribal groups.

Additionally, it should be noted that several Indigenous communities migrated to Los Angeles from other regions of the United States. As a result of displacement and migration, Indigenous communities faced forced assimilation and institutional barriers prohibiting Indigenous cultural and religious practices.⁹ Forced assimilation, migration, and adjustment has resulted in high rates of suicides and alcoholism among indigenous communities.¹⁰

Land acknowledgments are a first step to promoting cultural celebrations that maintain Indigenous culture and strengthen ties to traditional customs that may have been erased with migration. Subsequent steps may include developing specific, culturally relevant engagement as well as tailored programs and services. Together, these actions may prove catalytic, impacting long-term outcomes, including diplomacy and political engagement. In all, land acknowledgements serve as a vehicle for honoring the lived experiences of local tribes and communities, and may create opportunities to address specific social and economic issues that Indigenous communities face.¹¹

Acknowledgement of Existence and Land

⁸ Teresa J. Feo et al., "The Costs of Wildfire in California," California Council on Science & Technology, pp. 11. [Web](#).

⁹ John Price, "The Migration and Adaptation of American Indians to Los Angeles," JSTOR Vol. 27, No. 2 (Summer 1968), pp. 168-175

¹⁰ Price, "The Migration and Adaptation of American Indians to Los Angeles", pp. 172.

¹¹ Mishuana Goeman, "The Land Introduction: Beyond the Grammar of Settler Landscapes and Apologies," *Western Humanities Review* (2020): 31-61. [Web](#).

As previously underscored, there is profound significance in acknowledging the Indigenous People who have inhabited the Los Angeles area and have cared for this land for centuries. Such recognition provides the City of Los Angeles an opportunity to take steps towards rectifying past injustices, foster inclusivity, shape a more equitable future and honor the diversity of regional Indigenous cultures as well as their enduring connection to the land.

In shaping an acknowledgement unique to the City of Los Angeles, inspiration and context can be informed by the work of Native American delegations throughout American history. When visiting the White House and the Kennedy Administration in March 1963, delegates from the National Congress of American Indians raised numerous issues, including a lack of widespread federal recognition and protection, jurisdictional challenges, threats to land dispossession, and the termination of tribal sovereignty.¹² The challenges that the delegation discussed during their visit mirror the systemic challenges that Indigenous communities in the Los Angeles region continue to face today. This report acknowledges these struggles in an effort to confront the legacy of discrimination and inequity that many Indigenous peoples still encounter both in the City of Los Angeles and across the country.

In the City of Los Angeles, Indigenous communities are diverse and heterogeneous. Due to histories of migration and displacement, many indigenous communities and families in the City of Los Angeles hold Indigenous and tribal affiliation with roots in areas not within the City of Los Angeles. In addition to recognizing and honoring their experiences, this report acknowledges the Tataviam, Chumash, and Tongva, as three of many tribes who live, work, and reside within the City of Los Angeles.¹³

Key Findings and Analysis of Land Acknowledgments of Seven California Cities

Across the state of California, there are a growing number of cities establishing land acknowledgement statements. LA Civil Rights researched seven California cities who have instituted land acknowledgments including:

1. The City of Albany
2. The City of Berkeley
3. The City of Cudahy
4. The Town of Los Gatos
5. The City of San Gabriel
6. The City of Pacifica
7. The City of Sacramento

In comparing and analyzing the aforementioned land acknowledgments, this report concludes that effective and respectful statements are:

¹² Jessica Bordt, "Native American Delegations, Diplomacy, and Protests at the White House", The White House Historical Association. [Web](#).

¹³ "Largest Population of American Indians in the U.S.," Los Angeles Almanac, Retrieved September 2023, [Web](#).

- Crafted with input from members and civic leaders in Indigenous communities;
- Emphasize the past, present, and future relationship with the land;
- Recognize the historic atrocities and harms suffered by Indigenous people, including displacement and disruption;
- Appreciate and honor Indigenous cultural practices, legacies and knowledge;
- Acknowledge the impact of colonial violence; and,
- Use respectful language to meet the needs of Indigenous peoples with diverse perspectives and experiences.

A full analysis of the cities' key features can be found in Appendix C.

SWOT Analysis: Potential City of Los Angeles Land Acknowledgement Statement

The practicality of a future City of Los Angeles Land Acknowledgement Statement may be forecasted by examining its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of existing acknowledgements in other cities across the state. Using the “SWOT” analysis structure can serve as a guide to develop prospective legislation which can increase the likelihood of adoption and success.

The analysis of the value of a City of Los Angeles Land Acknowledgement Statement below is based on the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) methodology. LA Civil Rights has reframed the terminology and offers the benefits, potential challenge areas, opportunities and areas to necessary points of harm reduction.

A land acknowledgement statement would provide benefits by:

- Affirming Los Angeles' stance as an anti-racist City;
- Joining Los Angeles with a growing number of city efforts recognizing and supporting Indigenous People as a first of right historic harm;
- Combatting the erasure of Indigenous history and the first peoples' existing and historical presence on unceded Indigenous territory; and,
- Providing a consistent reminder of the histories and atrocities of the land which the City is settled upon.

A land acknowledgement statement would raise potential challenge areas such as:

- The identification of language to formulate the land acknowledgment due to tribal considerations and bureaucratic challenges;
- Lacking Federal recognition for certain tribes;
- Lacking maps of regional native lands or migration patterns;
- Creating competing interests between government entities and local tribes due to differences in scope. Some government entities have a broader scope of interest than the local tribes which may create competing interests. For example, many Indigenous folks are from different regions and sometimes countries; and
- Causing inadvertent racial systemic harms like land seizure and naming lands after Europeans.

A land acknowledgement statement would bring opportunities by:

- Recognizing regional and non-regional native populations with shared struggles to clarify scale and scope of impact;
- Creating partnerships with Indigenous organizations, departments, tribal leaders, and national/international municipalities addressing similar populations' demands;
- Lowering barriers to participation in regional tribes' engagements on commissions that address the unique needs of Indigenous populations;
- Educating residents on Indigenous history, genocide, and the City's settler colonization;
- Acknowledging the contemporary impacts that social determinants of health still have on Indigenous residents in Los Angeles; and
- Sharing knowledge across cities, regions, and countries to gain insight from different perspectives experiencing similar challenges.

A land acknowledgement statement should work to reduce harm by working to not:

- Create conflict among and between Indigenous populations if not done correctly;
- Fail to understand the communal dynamic to avoid inadvertently causing irreparable harm; and
- Build political will among elected officials without insurance of sufficient fulfillment on community engagement and response.

Establishing a Land Acknowledgement Statement

By establishing a land acknowledgement statement, Los Angeles would join a growing number of cities across the United States who are drafting and adopting acknowledgment statements, such as Denver, Oregon, and Phoenix.¹⁴ As highlighted above, these statements signify a recognition of the violence Indigenous peoples experience, both historically and in the contemporary era. This recognition can combat erasure of the Indigenous peoples and advance conversations about access to representation, sovereignty, and participation in the democratic process.

Successful and effective land acknowledgements create the opportunity for "government to government" ties, recognizing the sovereignty of Indigenous nations, open a pathway for the installation of Indigenous and tribal representatives on governmental commissions, boards, and governing bodies, and allow for increased attention to the continuing impacts of genocide, and settler-colonialism.

The specific text of a proposed land acknowledgment will have to respectfully reflect histories of various Indigenous groups. Policymakers will also need to determine which tribes are included in the acknowledgement. Determining factors may include proximity to Los Angeles and duration of the tribe's presence in the region.

A land acknowledgement in the City of Los Angeles should recognize that no tribe or band is monolithic in its opinions, experiences, and or cultural practices. Furthermore, Indigenous

¹⁴ Caitlin Dewey, "Growing Number of Cities Weigh Tribal 'Land Acknowledgements,'" *Stateline*, March 2021. [Web](#).

communities may have differing perspectives on the ideal text comprising land acknowledgement statements. Proposed statements for frequent use in City meetings and public events will need to be authored judiciously with care, so as to not offend or cause further harm to a historically aggrieved population. Policymakers must work to propose and develop initiatives in collaboration with Indigenous communities and multicultural coalitions, which can provide a renewed sense of hope in community-governmental relationships and expand City's support and commitment to its Indigenous residents.

In all, the analysis conducted for this report highlights the importance of recognizing Indigenous peoples' rights and histories. Such acknowledgements have led to programs that promote inclusivity and build meaningful partnerships between local governmental structures and Indigenous communities. Overall, the implementation of these land acknowledgments contributes to healing, justice, and reconciliation by addressing past mistakes, structural acts of violence, and uplifting the truth found in historical and cultural context.

LOCAL LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT EFFORTS

The Civic Memory Working Group

In addition to reviewing the land acknowledgement statements of California cities, LA Civil Rights examined the work of the former Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti's Civic Memory Working Group (CMWG). The CMWG was tasked with producing a series of recommendations to help Los Angeles engage more productively and honestly with its past, specifically highlighting periods where that past is fraught, or histories were obscured and retold, centering and prioritizing whiteness. In April 2021, the group released its report featuring 18 critical recommendations, interviews, photo essays, and takeaways from roundtable discussions.¹⁵

In all, the CMWG provided seven recommendations regarding land acknowledgement which are summarized below:

- Land acknowledgment statements must be made in collaboration with LANAIC. The statement must address native erasure, current native existence, the need for apology, and path to a decolonized future; For this purpose, a committee whose members represent LA's Indigenous peoples must be formed, and their activity should also be facilitated by LANAIC;
- Statements must be delivered at all public, City events, and be posted in writing wherever the CMWG Writing Committee deems appropriate;
- The City of Los Angeles should consult with LA County and LANAIC as to where and how to deliver the statement;
- The City of Los Angeles should provide cultural/decolonization training;
- Future committee work should include research on land return methods;
- The CMWG should work with LA Civil Rights' Office of Race and Equity (formerly the Office of Racial Equity) to learn how City policy has negatively affected Indigenous peoples and research ways to make amends; and,

¹⁵ Mayor's Office Civic Memory Working Group, *PAST DUE: Report and Recommendations*, 71. [Web](#).

- The City should also research ways to promote Indigenous culture more widely.¹⁶

Within the text of the CMWG Report, the Group writes:

“We urge the City to adopt a Land Acknowledgment Policy. The process of developing such a policy should begin by convening a committee made up of representatives of the Indigenous Peoples of Los Angeles ... This committee should be coordinated by or formed in close consultation with the NAIC.

Furthermore, we recommend that this work of this [CMWG] committee should:

- Acknowledge the history of erasure/genocide of the Indigenous People of Los Angeles;
- Recognize the contemporary vitality and struggles of the Indigenous People of Los Angeles, rather than treating the community as a historical artifact or vanished people;
- Include an apology, or statement of reconciliation, to the Indigenous People of Los Angeles, with clear steps and policies to ameliorate and/or decolonize practices of erasure and exclusion; and,
- Outline practices, identified by representatives of the Indigenous People of Los Angeles, about how to build lasting, mutually respectful, culturally sensitive, and beneficial relationships with this community.”¹⁷

LANAIC Committee Overview & Land Acknowledgment Development Process

To further inform considerations for a City of Los Angeles Land Acknowledgement Statement, we engaged the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC).

LANAIC is a joint City/County commission created through a collaborative effort of the local Indigenous community members, the City of Los Angeles, and Los Angeles County. Efforts to create pathways for reconciliation, sovereignty, and recognition in the City of Los Angeles have been ongoing for almost 50 years; the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors established its Native American Commission in June 1976, then formalized the Commission via Ordinance No. 11409 which went into effect in October 1976.^{18 19}

In October 2021, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors established Indigenous Peoples Day and allocated \$150,000 to facilitate the development of land acknowledgment and land access policies, protocols, and toolkits for Los Angeles County, as well as to gather input to inform ways in which the County has harmed local Indigenous communities, persons, and nations.²⁰

As a result of this funding, the LANAIC, Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, and the hired consultant developed a plan to engage with local tribal leaders and members of the LANAIC community over ten sessions. These sessions aimed to:

¹⁶ Subcommittee 8, “Indigenous Land Acknowledgment and the Work of Decolonization,” Mayor’s Office Civic Memory Working Group, 2021. [Web](#).

¹⁷ Mayor’s Office Civic Memory Working Group, *PAST DUE: Report and Recommendations*, 136-137.

¹⁸ Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC), “History of the Commission,” [Web](#).

¹⁹ LANAIC, “History of the Commission,” [Web](#).

²⁰ Supervisor Hilda Solis, “Proclaiming Native American Heritage Month and Adopting the Countywide Land Acknowledgment,” Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, November 2021. [Web](#).

- Gather information to inform updates to Los Angeles County's official record on the region's history, to reflect and honor the history and contributions of local Tribal Nations, and gather input on how the County has harmed local tribes; and,
- Develop a proposal for Land Access policies, protocols, and toolkits for Los Angeles County.²¹

The LANAIC and Department of Arts and Culture made the following recommendations to the Board:

- “Adopt the Countywide Land Acknowledgment for use by the County and its agencies and work with the Chief Executive Office (CEO) to identify one-time funding of \$150,000 for Arts and Culture to enter into agreements with one or more consultants to develop, in collaboration with the LANAIC, toolkits and training resources to establish standards and protocols for County agencies, and others, on its use.
- Commit to honoring the region’s Native Peoples beyond the land acknowledgment and to building and sustaining meaningful partnerships with Los Angeles County’s local tribes and American Indian and Alaska Native communities and work with the CEO to identify potential one-time funding of \$300,000 for the LANAIC to enter into agreements with one or more consultants to develop a Countywide Tribal Consultation Policy to ensure respectful and consistent interactions between County staff and local tribes, and to serve as a step toward future consideration of a formal Tribal Relations Office.”²²

On November 1, 2022, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to adopt the recommended Land Acknowledgment. The success of this land acknowledgement and findings of LANAIC's final report illustrate that multi-stakeholder engagement centering local native communities is a key. Furthermore, LANAIC's research includes ways to increase investment in the development and implementation of Indigenous-centered programs, address the unique needs experienced by the Indigenous residents and establish measurable outcomes.²³

The Land Acknowledgment from the Los Angeles County is as follows:

“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 acknowledgment 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

²¹ Sakoda & Valdes, “Development of Land Acknowledgment,” ii.

²² Sakoda & Valdes, “Development of Land Acknowledgment,” iv.

²³ Sakoda & Valdes, “Development of Land Acknowledgment,” 10.

*Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council
Gabrieleno/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*

To learn more about the First Peoples of Los Angeles County, please visit the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission website at lanaic.lacounty.gov.”

PROPOSED LANGUAGE FOR CITY OF LOS ANGELES LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT POLICY

With consideration of City Council’s direction, the vision of external and internal partners, key community informed reports, takeaways from California city examples of land acknowledgments, and best practices and lessons learned, LA Civil Rights’ Office of Race and Equity proposes the language below to be adopted by the City of Los Angeles and establish a land acknowledgment statement to be recited by all departments, commissions, and related entities:

“The City 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 acknowledgment demonstrates our responsibility and commitment to truth, healing, and reconciliation and to elevating the stories, culture, and community of the original inhabitants of the City of Los Angeles. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work on these ancestral lands.”

BEYOND LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT: LOCAL CONSIDERATIONS TOWARDS TRUTH & RECONCILIATION

The conducted research of this report encompassed various regions, government levels, and jurisdictions. While informative, it’s essential to recognize the unique local considerations crucial for making a meaningful impact on our local Indigenous communities. The work of both the LANAIC and the Civic Memory facilitated engagement with the local tribal communities for their insight and vision regarding land acknowledgement language.

In addition to adopting the proposed language, the City of Los Angeles should also address economic disparity, land access and stewardship, truth and reconciliation, and the removal of barriers to participation, all of which are integral to creating equitable opportunities and supporting the well-being of Indigenous Peoples well beyond the adoption of the proposed Land Acknowledgment Policy.

To further the impact of the land acknowledgment, the City of Los Angeles should also identify locations and initiate the renaming of those locations to names approved by LANAIC and other relevant stakeholders. Renaming Tribal Lands to reflect regional native heritage and history is also a land acknowledgment practice. Currently too many tribal land locations have streets, parks, and communities named after colonizers and conquistadores.

Economic Considerations

For Indigenous Peoples, individual well-being and the environment are often intertwined. Western standard practices take a capitalistic extractive approach to the individual and the environment, resulting in natural resource exploitation and depletion. Therefore, if we are to truly understand aspects of Indigenous Peoples' earnings, inequality, and well-being, we will need expanded measures for these topics to include considerations for the individuals and the environment.²⁴

The City of Los Angeles should proactively explore avenues to ensure funding eligibility and robust support for its Indigenous communities, irrespective of state or federal recognition status. By engaging in meaningful dialogue with local tribal leaders, advocating for policy changes at various levels of government, and establishing dedicated funds for tribal initiatives, the City can help address the pressing needs of these communities, particularly in areas such as affordable housing and economic development. It is crucial that the City of Los Angeles takes deliberate steps to foster collaboration, offer technical assistance, and raise public awareness about the unique challenges faced by its Native Tribal Communities thereby demonstrating a strong commitment to equity and inclusivity.

Land Access & Land Back

Supplementing the economic considerations detailed above, this report recommends that the City align with LANAIIC's efforts to include programs that consider returning land access, granting land back, and building economic opportunities for land stewardship. This report recognizes that these efforts will likely need to be conducted in phases which analyze both short term and long term impacts.

Two forms of "land back" policy, which improve access to sacred sites are cultural easements and co-stewardship agreements. In this context, a cultural easement refers to property owners allowing Indigenous groups to freely access their land for the specific purpose of performing cultural functions, such as religious ceremonies and visitations to sacred sites. Implementing such a covenant would allow for vast improvements in the preservation of Indigenous life-ways compared to the current status quo, without undue detriment to private landowners. Furthermore, when applied to public land, an easement may be augmented with agreements, which ensure that Indigenous groups are afforded appropriate privacy for the duration of their functions.

A second type of land back policy would be for the City to initiate a co-stewardship agreement with an Indigenous tribe or group. Seemingly the more ambitious option, but perhaps the most respectful and effective, the land-owning party (frequently the local, state, or federal government) would grant the Indigenous peoples an ongoing right to manage the ecosystem in that area and cultivate natural products for their own use. Tribal representatives could perform this work voluntarily, or be hired to do so by the municipality. This method constitutes a diplomatic

²⁴ Randall Akee, "Indigenous Peoples' Earnings, Inequality, and Well-Being: Known and Unknown Components," *The Oxford Handbook of Indigenous Sociology* (January 2022): 1-37, Oxford University Press.

“government-to-government” approach to working with Indigenous peoples, successfully and respectfully acknowledging their presence, agency, and historical connection to the land.

Truth & Reconciliation

Finally, we recommend that the City of Los Angeles establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to provide funding opportunities to facilitate community-led responses to regional grievances experienced by Indigenous communities. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission framework allows residents to understand how policy and urban design impacts their lived experiences, and facilitates collaboration with City leaders to improve equity outcomes and allow decision-makers to see impacted stakeholder experience as valuable knowledge and expertise.

Lastly, LA Civil Rights recommends that the City of Los Angeles remove any barriers to participation in the representation of regional indigenous communities in civic engagement, commission meetings, proceedings, and other initiatives. Governmental policy, economic structures, and systemic discrimination have resulted in the mass displacement of regional Indigenous communities which hinders their active participation in the democratic process and governmental bodies. Some are not eligible to serve on commissions, receive relevant services, or participate in certain initiatives.²⁵ In all areas of policy, the City must work to ensure alignment with regional Indigenous cultural practices, especially when implementing legislation that impacts their communities exclusively. LA Civil Rights suggests referencing LANAIC recommendations of including a tribal representative in City departments, such as active participation in the Mayor’s Office.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact with the submission of this report.



CAPRI MADDOX, ESQ.
General Manager

CM:RH:MJ:MA:BH:dj:nb
October 17, 2023

²⁵ American Legal Publishing “ Los Angeles City Charter & Municipal Code” City Ethics Commission, [Web](#)

APPENDIX A

Land Acknowledgments from Seven California Cities

City	Land Acknowledgment
City of Sacramento	<p>The history of the Sacramento area, and the people, is rich in heritage, culture and tradition. This area was, and still is, the Tribal land of the Nisenan people. Sacramento was a gathering place for many local Tribes who have lived throughout the central valley and the foothills for generations and were the original stewards of this land. We would like to acknowledge the Southern Maidu people to the North, the Valley and Plains Miwok/ Me-Wuk Peoples to the south of the American River, and the Patwin Wintun Peoples to the west of the Sacramento River. We would also like to honor the Wilton Rancheria, the only federally recognized tribe in Sacramento County. We acknowledge that we are standing on the tribal lands of Sacramento's Indigenous People.</p>
City of Albany	<p>The City of Albany recognizes that we occupy the land originally protected by the Confederated Villages of Lisjan. We acknowledge the genocide that took place on these lands and must make strides to repay the moral debt that is owed to this Indigenous people, specifically the Ohlone Tribe. We thank them for their contributions which have transformed our community, and will continue to bring forth growth and unity. The City of Albany commits to sustaining ongoing relationships with the Tribe and together build a better future for all that now make this their home.</p>
City of San Gabriel	<p>The City of San Gabriel resides on the lands of the unceded village of Sibangna and acknowledges that the ancestors of this village and many others were collectivized at the San Gabriel Mission. The City respectfully recognizes its responsibility to the original and current caretakers of this land, who remain an important and vibrant community. The City strives to respect and honor the ancestral peoples' legacy and educate residents of this history.</p>
City of Cudahy	<p>We would like to acknowledge that the land we inhabit today was once known as Tovangaar, the home of the Gabrieleño-Tongva people. We show our respects to the Gabrieleño-Tongva people, as well as all Indigenous People, past, present, and future, and honor their labor as original caretakers of this land. We commit to uplifting the Gabrieleño-Tongva people, invite you to acknowledge the history, and join us in caring for this land."</p>

<p>City of Berkeley</p>	<p>The City of Berkeley recognizes that the community we live in was built on the territory of xučyun (Huchiun (Hooch-yoon)), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo (Cho-chen-yo)-speaking Ohlone (Oh-low-nee) people, the ancestors and descendants of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to all of the Ohlone Tribes and descendants of the Verona Band. As we begin our meeting tonight, we acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of Berkeley, the documented 5,000-year history of a vibrant community at the West Berkeley Shellmound, and the Ohlone people who continue to reside in the East Bay. We recognize that Berkeley’s residents have and continue to benefit from the use and occupation of this unceded stolen land since the City of Berkeley’s incorporation in 1878. As stewards of the laws regulating the City of Berkeley, it is not only vital that we recognize the history of this land, but also recognize that the Ohlone people are present members of Berkeley and other East Bay communities today.</p>
<p>City of Pacifica</p>	<p>The city of Pacifica acknowledges that we occupy the ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples, who are the original inhabitants of the San Francisco Peninsula. We honor the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples for their enduring commitment to Mother Earth. As the Indigenous protectors of this land and in accordance with their traditions, the Ramaytush Ohlone have never ceded, lost nor forgotten their responsibilities as caretakers of this place, as well as for all peoples who reside in their traditional territory. We affirm their sovereign rights as First Peoples and wish to pay our respects to the ancestors, elders and relatives of the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples.</p>

APPENDIX B

Land Acknowledgment Key Features

City	Land Acknowledgment Features
City of Sacramento ²⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacramento City Council adopted land acknowledgment in partnership with Sacramento Native American Health Center (SNAHC) and Chairman of the Wilton Rancheria Tribe, Jesus Tarango. • A formal statement of public recognition that recognizes the ancestral/historical relationship of land, displacement and disposition, the colonial harm, gratitude and appreciation, and active efforts of the various Indigenous tribes in Sacramento
City of Albany ²⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Albany recognizes genocide, colonial past, and debt to Confederated Village of Lisjan and Ohlone Tribe • Recognition of Ohlone tribes contributions to land, ancestral protection and continued positive efforts • Highlights future relationship/collaboration between tribe and City towards better collective future with Confederated Village of Lisjan/Ohlone • Land acknowledgment was one part of many resolutions to make amends with Ohlone Tribe, including flag raising, learning of history, land-back initiatives, and permitted celebrations on public land²⁸
City of San Gabriel ²⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In process of proposing land acknowledgment with contributions from tribal leaders to respect past, current, and future contributions from Native peoples to the region • Honors legacy, recognizes need to retain history and education of the village of Sibangna • Process includes reviewing purpose statement and question responses,³⁰ and input on how to frame land acknowledgment from tribal leaders³¹

²⁶ City of Sacramento, *City Council Report: Adopt an Official City of Sacramento Land Acknowledgment*. File ID: 2021-01420, City of Sacramento, 2021. [Web](#).

²⁷ "Honoring the Confederated Villages of Lisjan," City of Albany, accessed August 2023. [Web](#).

²⁸ Jessica Flores, "East Bay city moves to recognize Ohlone land, 'make things right,'" *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 2021. [Web](#).

²⁹ "Land Acknowledgment Statement," City of San Gabriel, accessed August 2023. [Web](#).

³⁰ Land Acknowledgment Statement Advisory Committee, "Land Acknowledgment Statement Advisory Committee Special Meeting Agenda," City of San Gabriel, January 11, 2022, p. 9. [Web](#).

³¹ Land Acknowledgment Statement Advisory Committee, "Land Acknowledgment Statement Advisory Committee Special Meeting Agenda," City of San Gabriel, May 9, 2022, p. 7. [Web](#).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtains historical insight, their intention of land acknowledgment, and their input on how it should be crafted/conveyed
City of Cudahy ³²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledgement of Gabrieleno-Tongva home and land, honoring contributions of Indigenous people from past, present and future, and statement to unite and collaborate on collective care of land ABC7 reports Native American Studies student Morales Johnson, PhD helping craft land acknowledgment language, formal statement of honor, and other uplifting Indigenous messaging/policy³³
Town of Los Gatos ³⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempt to implement land acknowledgment faced with internal disagreements and challenges over who should be recognized, and degree in which Indigenous participation/collaboration should be compensated Solutions included to be general as possible in recognition due to lack of clarity
City of Berkeley ³⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The land acknowledgment brings attention to the Ohlone people's history and resistance to colonial violence The land acknowledgment serves as a starting point for restorative and reparative actions that the City and community must support and engage in The motion considers further actions in addition to the land acknowledgment, including the creation of easements, land transfers, voluntary land taxes, and land sovereignty
City of Pacifica ³⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remembering ancestry, traditions, contributions, sovereignty, and respect of Ramaytush Ohlone people Reception is mixed with article saying land acknowledgment is only a first step, and public comment applauding how land acknowledgment will build relationships for future unity

³² "Adoption of Proposed Resolution No. 21-53 Acknowledging the Gabrieleño/Tongva Peoples' ties to the Los Angeles Basin Region and Instating a Land Acknowledgment Statement to be Included on all City Council Meeting Agendas and to be Read at all City Council Meetings," Item Number 15A, City of Cudahy, December 2021, [Web](#).

³³ Anabel Munoz, "Cudahy passes motion for 'land acknowledgment' meant to honor Indigenous People and Native land," ABC7, January 30, 2022. [Web](#).

³⁴ Drew Penner, "Town's efforts to acknowledge earliest residents fraught with challenges," *Los Gatos*, 2022. [Web](#).

³⁵ Councilmember Sophie Hahn, "Land Acknowledgment Recognizing Berkeley as the Ancestral, Unceded Home of the Ohlone People," City of Berkeley, 2022. [Web](#).

³⁶ Clay Lambert, "Land acknowledgment must be but a first step," *Pacifica Tribune*, October 26, 2021, [Web](#).

APPENDIX C

Measuring Land Acknowledgment Impact

Policy Action	Impact Indicator
Implementing Land Acknowledgment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Land Acknowledgment is used citywide preceding public-facing city events ● Streets, parks, and monuments that are ideal for renaming and land acknowledgments that reflect the interest of the first people in the LA Region have been identified ● Representatives from the Native Tribe acknowledge and participate in the City's land acknowledgment efforts
Policy Analysis and Research Beyond Land Acknowledgment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cross-departmental collaborative initiatives and projects address native issues identified in LANAIC and Civic Memory Work ● The City leverages insight from regional county, state, and federal policy precedents and best practices related to land back, such as co-stewardship agreements and cultural easements, and other economic opportunities ● The City continues to develop community vision and legislative alignment ● Policies are identified and motions are passed, led, or processed to address the needs of Native Tongva, Tataviam, Chumash ● Research on native displacement as a result of wage theft, gentrification, or violence is conducted ● The history of Native American Boarding Schools in the City of Los Angeles is acknowledged ● Gaps in service delivery that impact the outcomes related to the social determinants of health are identified
Truth & Racial Justice Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Native tribes have representative in the Lived experience narratives connected to impacted data collection and reporting related to truth and reconciliation ● Impacted residents are engaged ● Engagement of equity indicators in geographically impacted areas are increased ● Language accessibility and learning opportunity to reconnect regional tribe community to their native tongue are available

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Digital inclusion for impacted native community households is improved
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