

REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

DATE: JANUARY 24, 2024

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: NATHAN HAMBURGER, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

This item is being presented at the request of Mayor Buckley Weber as an initial review of our programs and policies to ensure that they are inclusive and honor the history of our region. One proposed idea was the consideration of a land acknowledgement. A land acknowledgement is a statement recognizing the history and presence of Indigenous Peoples and their enduring relationship to their traditional homelands. Land acknowledgements are intended to be an expression of gratitude and appreciation to those upon whose territory our facilities and operations reside.

In multiple other countries and among tribal nations within the United States, it is commonplace, even policy, to open gatherings and events by acknowledging the traditional Indigenous inhabitants of the land. Often, this is done at the opening of ceremonies, lectures, or other public events. Acknowledgement is a simple and meaningful way of showing recognition and respect, creating broader public awareness of the history of the land, and taking a step toward correcting the stories and practices that have impacted the history and culture of the Indigenous People. Currently, the University of California and California State Universities, as well as a multitude of cities throughout the state have adopted some form of a policy to acknowledge that the land they are on was historically the homeland of Indigenous Peoples who were dispossessed of their land.

The acknowledgement can be communicated in a variety of formats, including verbally or via print in an event program or via an organization's website. Though land acknowledgement is only one means to recognize the history of the land, it is a meaningful step beginning to change the way the land is viewed and discussed. It is intended to honor the original occupants and serve as a symbol of reconciliation.

Staff has begun to reach out to the various tribes that the City has worked with through the Assembly Bill 52 cultural resource consultations in order to inform them about what the City may move forward with and to continue a working relationship where we gather accurate historical information that is also culturally appropriate to be used within the proposed land acknowledgement. Should the City Council be supportive of continuing with this policy, staff will continue to engage local indigenous leaders for any additional input.

The City Council is being asked to consider adopting an initial land acknowledgement as provided below so that the City can initiate the acknowledgment and the process of honoring those who inhabited the lands before us while leaving open the ability to revisit the wording with our local native representatives moving forward. All of the proposed actions are as follows:

- 1) Utilize the following land acknowledgement as the City's initial statement: *We honor, respect, and gratefully acknowledge the Indigenous People on whose ancestral homelands we gather, as well as the diverse and vibrant native communities who make their home here today.*
- 2) Continue to work collaboratively with local indigenous and native groups to make any necessary adjustments that would be presented to the City Council.
- 3) Modify the City Council and other public agenda formats to include the Land Acknowledgement on each agenda.
- 4) Create a dedicated Land Acknowledgement page on the City's website with any relevant information and historical data.

FISCAL IMPACT

This action has no fiscal impact on the adopted 2023-24 Fiscal Year Budget outside of the soft cost of staff time.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff respectfully recommends the City Council discuss the item and provide staff feedback and direction on whether to move forward with the proposed actions regarding the utilization of a Land Acknowledgement.