



# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT REPORT

**Prepared for:**



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## INTRODUCTION

### PURPOSE

On October 5, 2021, the County of Los Angeles (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) unanimously passed a motion authored by Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, and co-authored by Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, that directed the Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS); Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC), and the Department of Arts and Culture (Arts and Culture) to hire a consultant to facilitate the development of Land Acknowledgment and Land Access policies, protocols, and toolkits (project) for the County, and to gather input to inform ways in which the County has harmed local Native American nations. Cogstone Resource Management, Inc. (Cogstone), in partnership with Kearns & West and Avid Core, was selected as the consultant and has prepared the following report, summarizing input from local Native American Tribes that will shape the County's Land Acknowledgment policy, protocol, and toolkit.

### BACKGROUND

On June 23, 2020, the Board of Supervisors adopted the [Countywide Cultural Policy \(Cultural Policy\)](#) which provides direction and guidelines for how the County and its departments will ensure that every County resident has meaningful access to arts and culture. The Cultural Policy calls for the County to "identify ways to acknowledge Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of this land at County public events and ceremonial functions and celebrate the contributions of culture bearers and traditional arts practices of diverse communities."

The following report will be used to guide the development of the County's Land Acknowledgment policy, protocols, and toolkit, which will be brought before the Board of Supervisors for adoption in fall 2022. After adoption by the Board, it will be adopted by all County departments and agencies and shared with all 88 municipalities within the County and with County-owned cultural institutions. Arts and Culture also intends to make it available as a resource to the more than 450 arts and culture organizations the department funds through their grant program.

### APPROACH

Cogstone facilitated meetings and gathered feedback from a group of Native American collaborators from Tribes whose traditional lands intersect with Los Angeles County's boundaries. Identified as the Collaborator Planning Group (Planning Group), the group was asked to share lived experiences and oral histories; to provide information to update the County of Los Angeles' understanding of the history of the region and tribal communities; to give input

to advance truth, healing, and transformation on the ways the County has harmed local tribal nations; and to provide input and feedback that would shape the development of the Land Acknowledgment policy, protocol, and toolkit.

To ensure that the Planning Group worked toward a shared understanding, a “Collaborator Planning Group: Protocols and Operating Principles” document (Appendix A) was shared with group members at the first meeting. The protocols document established the charge and role of the Planning Group in the project, a commitment to collaborative principles, meeting logistical information, and additional considerations for productive meetings where all Planning Group members can participate equally and effectively.

The California Native American Heritage Commission provided their AB 52 list of 22 Native American Tribes with ties to Los Angeles County to LANAIC on December 20, 2021. All 22 Tribes were invited to participate in the Planning Group. As of the date of this report, the following Tribes have participated in at least one Planning Group session:

- Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians
- Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council
- Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians
- Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians
- San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
- San Fernando Band of Mission Indians

One Tribe – the Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians - Kizh Nation (Kizh) – contacted the LANAIC and requested the development of a separate but parallel process. The LANAIC and Arts and Culture are currently in negotiations with the Kizh on this process.

Three Planning Group sessions were held in March and April 2022. The sessions ranged in length from 1.5 to 2.5 hours and the information gathered during these sessions were used in the development of a draft Land Acknowledgment Report. Meeting summaries for Sessions One, Two, and Three can be found in Appendices B, C, and D, respectively.

Session Four was held on June 9, 2022 and provided an opportunity for the Planning Group to review the draft report and to provide clarifications and additional feedback. The meeting summary for Session Four can be found in Appendix E. This final report reflects the clarifications and recommendations made during Session Four.

The County and the Planning Group shared additional resources that were included as part of our background research for this report. The full list of sources is included in Appendix F.

## **HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT**

The following points provide additional context for this summary document.

First, this report is a synthesis of views shared during Planning Group sessions; it does not necessarily reflect the views of, or specific recommendations by, the Cogstone team. The report does not assign value or priority ranking to statements.

Second, confidential tribal information is not included in this report. For closed session sensitive discussions, Planning Group collaborators determined as a group what was able to be shared and included in meeting summaries and this report.

Lastly, while this report is primarily focused on the development of a Land Acknowledgment, it is not possible to discuss this topic without also mentioning and addressing land access and harms, both past and present, perpetrated against Indigenous Peoples by the County, federal, state, and local governments and others. As such, these topics are included in this report, but will be explored further in subsequent reports as part of this larger work.

## **MAJOR THEMES**

This section details the major themes from the Planning Group feedback and background materials shared by Planning Group collaborators. The findings are listed in no particular order.

### **HONOR AND RESPECT**

Land must be honored and respected. Collaborators shared that land means medicine, life, and sustenance; it gives tools for survival. Land is where ancestors live.

To honor and respect the land with a Land Acknowledgment, it is important to identify the accurate ancestral land base. Collaborators noted that incorrect information about the original stewards of the land causes additional harm. Recognition is a form of reclamation.

A Land Acknowledgment that honors Indigenous Peoples should recognize the connection and symbiosis of original stewards with their lands and include information about the ongoing work to preserve and protect the land. Collaborators also noted that not everyone places importance on land or sacred sites, but a Land Acknowledgment could be a start to reach those who are indifferent.

Honoring and respecting the land and its people is not just in the language of a Land Acknowledgment. The way the acknowledgment is delivered matters. It should not be a

formulaic recitation or an afterthought. It should be centered, not just a small part of what is going on. Collaborators said it should be prepared for and crafted through a reflective and intentional process by the person delivering it.

### **“WE ARE STILL HERE.”**

A Land Acknowledgment should keep Indigenous Peoples in the County of Los Angeles at the heart, highlighting their strength and resilience. Indigenous Peoples are not just part of the past, but part of the greater Los Angeles County community in the present. It needs to be clear that Indigenous Peoples are still here, and they have not left their ancestral lands.

Collaborators liked the use of terms like “continuing” and present tense verbiage in Land Acknowledgments. A Land Acknowledgment should be in memory of the ancestors and for the generations to come. It is important to remember who survived this land, who tended this land, and who belongs to this land. The Land Acknowledgment should identify the continuation of that work.

It should also bear witness to cultural survival. As such, harms cannot be discussed only as part of history. Multigenerational trauma from land seizure, disease, subjugation, relocation, broken promises, and genocide continues to impact Indigenous Peoples and ongoing harms must be addressed.

### **NAMING CONVENTIONS AND TRIBAL LANGUAGE**

Colonization has significantly impacted knowledge of Tribal names and Native language. The loss of language is one of the most persistent and ongoing harms perpetuated against Indigenous Peoples. A Land Acknowledgment can honor the First Peoples by using traditional language terms, the names Tribes and villages had before colonization, and language that represents the relationship with the land. Collaborators noted that language is powerful and speaking traditional language breathes life back into the land.

The County faces a couple of challenges when it comes to using traditional language in a Land Acknowledgment. With many Tribes and languages that will need to be included, collaborators said there would need to be equity in how each language was represented. Mispronunciation of traditional language can also cause harm. Collaborators said the use of prerecorded audio clips of Indigenous Peoples speaking the language and training may be necessary to demonstrate how words are pronounced as part of the preparation for oral delivery of a Land Acknowledgment. The County must use whatever naming convention a Tribe wants to use for its name, even if there is not consistency with naming format across all tribal names.

## USE CASES

A Land Acknowledgment can be incorporated both orally and in writing across a variety of County events, meetings, and materials. The group discussed several general ideas for incorporation. The following is a non-exhaustive list of ways the County could consider including a Land Acknowledgment:

- Read out loud at the start of a Board of Supervisors meeting
- Read out loud at a ribbon cutting for a new County facility
- Read out loud at County-planned events
- On a plaque at County hospitals
- On signage at County parks
- On County websites
- On the opening pages of County plans
- In email signatures of County employees

Collaborators also shared ideas for more specific use cases, which primarily fell into three major categories – for entities that work directly with land and waterways, for education, and for processes dealing with decision-making.

Collaborators noted that for departments and County entities that work directly with land and waterways, it will be crucial to center the Land Acknowledgment and connect it to commitments that the County is making or has made. These include the Fire Department and Forestry Division, Department of Beaches and Harbors, and Parks and Recreation, among others.

Collaborators pointed out several opportunities for education where the County could go beyond just the Land Acknowledgment statement and offer detailed histories and resources. Some examples provided included a dedicated County website, working with the LA County Office of Education to add it to curriculums and resources, and teaching at camps for at-risk youth run by the Fire Department.

For the decision-making category, collaborators noted that having the Land Acknowledgment highly visible could positively impact outcomes and keep Indigenous Peoples at the top of the mind during major decisions. These opportunities included having the text of the Land Acknowledgment on letterhead and other hard copy materials, on election ballots, and on signage at the County Courts. The Land Acknowledgment could be orally delivered at the start of County department leadership meetings and Board of Supervisors meetings. Collaborators stated the Land Acknowledgment at Board of Supervisors meetings should be delivered by the

Board Chair. The text of the statement should additionally be displayed on the screens in the Board room for in-person, hybrid, and virtual meetings. The text statement that accompanies the oral acknowledgment could also be shown in multiple Native languages.

## **STRUCTURE**

Collaborators discussed several components that make up a good Land Acknowledgment. The first was the clear naming of the First Peoples of the land you are acknowledging. If you are going to name one, you must name them all, even if the list is long. Collaborators said this list could get very long and may increase the likelihood that names would be misspelled or read out loud incorrectly. Acknowledging cultural groups instead of specific Tribal names was offered as a possible alternative, but it was noted that this should be confirmed with Tribes during the development process for the Land Acknowledgment.

Collaborators noted that there should be a focus on specific villages if possible. In the development of a countywide Land Acknowledgment, it was noted that special care would need to be given to ensure there is no inaccurate information when capturing this; no agreed upon map currently exists. The collaborators noted that the preferred way for identifying villages and the naming of Tribes would be based on reaching out to each Tribe and working with them directly to determine how they would like to be identified in a Land Acknowledgment.

Specific terminology discussed included using “stolen” or “unceded” to note that the land had been forcibly taken. The word “respect” should also be included. Present tense language should be used when referring to Tribes.

The Land Acknowledgment should be followed by a call to action that shares how the acknowledging party is uplifting the Tribes named. The call to action should be specific to the history and harms included in the statement and not only compel the person/entity delivering the acknowledgment to make a commitment, but also for the people hearing and reading it.

Collaborators also noted that ideally the Land Acknowledgment should vary depending on the location and delivery method. For instance, at an in-person Board of Supervisors meeting, a general countywide Lan Acknowledgment could be given, followed by a second part that is specific to the physical location of the meeting. The general one alone could be used during virtual meetings, but when meeting in person, the Board would need to acknowledge the tribal communities and the land where the meeting is taking place. Some Land Acknowledgments will also need to encompass more history or detailing of harms than others based on the specific history of the place.

If the Land Acknowledgment is to be place-based, the County should provide a framework and guide for the person delivering the statement to follow and work within rather than having a



standard Land Acknowledgment statement that is always used. Resources on the tribal communities and village names, as well as history and harms where appropriate, should be provided to County employees for place-based Land Acknowledgments. Finally, collaborators recommended that the person delivering the Land Acknowledgment should participate in the drafting of it to make it more meaningful.

## **STRIKING A BALANCE**

Understanding historical trauma helps explain the current situation facing the County’s Indigenous Peoples and the harms that are ongoing today. However, there is a fine balance in a Land Acknowledgment between sharing harms and history and centering the narrative of hope, strength, and resilience. Collaborators noted that a Land Acknowledgment should bear witness to cultural survival and try to encompass the full experience of survival and resistance.

The Land Acknowledgment should address how we got to a point where a Land Acknowledgment was needed. However, different places throughout the County have different histories for the treatment of Indigenous Peoples and those should be specific and shared. Collaborators shared the example of the slavery auctions in downtown Los Angeles and its history as a sundown town for Indigenous Peoples.

These topics can often bring up animosity toward Indigenous Peoples. This animosity comes not only from white people but also from people from other ethnic backgrounds. In a resource shared by the Planning Group, author and lecturer Dina Gilio-Whitaker defines this as “settler fragility.”

“Like white fragility, settler fragility is the inability to talk about unearned privilege—in this case, the privilege of living on lands that were taken in the name of democracy through profound violence and injustice.”

Collaborators said their hope would be that the Land Acknowledgment could foster understanding rather than prompt animosity.

Collaborators noted that an oral Land Acknowledgment statement may not be the most appropriate place for some emotionally disturbing content, but it should direct people to additional education and resources.

## **EDUCATION**

The County’s Land Acknowledgment should be educational and rolled out with other educational opportunities. The acknowledgment of Indigenous lands ultimately provides exposure and a learning opportunity for individuals who may have never heard the names of the Tribes that live and learn from the land they are standing on.

Collaborators noted that successful Land Acknowledgments give opportunities for people to do their own research and follow up. It should allow people to take something from the statement that teaches them how to be a better visitor on the land.

## **A STARTING POINT**

A Land Acknowledgment cannot stand alone. It must be followed up with action. While the County's intent with the Land Acknowledgment is to show respect and undo the unintentional erasure of Indigenous Peoples, collaborators shared that it should be followed up with policy change, rather than rhetoric change alone. Without transformative actions, the Land Acknowledgment is meaningless.

Land Acknowledgments are frequently performative if shared without the development of a meaningful relationship with the Tribes. Collaborators said there is a difference between a Land Acknowledgment that simply states the fact that you are on stolen land and one that prompts and commits to action from that statement.

The County is a major player in a system that perpetuates and works within colonial structures. The Land Acknowledgment needs to be the first step in decolonizing land relations.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section outlines proposed recommendations for the development of the County's Land Acknowledgment policy, protocols, and toolkit. These recommendations encompass both immediate steps that can be implemented by the County and future-forward recommendations that can be implemented with additional budget and resources in the coming years. Recommendations are listed in no particular order.

## **STRUCTURE OF COUNTYWIDE LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The Land Acknowledgment should begin with a clear naming of the First Peoples of the land currently known as the County of Los Angeles. For a countywide Land Acknowledgment, the Planning Group preferred the use of current Tribal names as it was noted that using current names would be empowering and help County departments and the public make the connection between the past and present. Cultural group names (e.g., Tongva, Serrano, Chumash, Tataviam, Luiseno, Kizh, etc.) should only be used in the Land Acknowledgment if current Tribal names are also listed.

When naming Tribes in the countywide Land Acknowledgment, Planning Group collaborators said the list of Tribes should only include the original inhabitants of the land currently known as

the County of Los Angeles, rather than the full California Native American Heritage Commission list, which includes Tribes that have cultural ties to the region but may not have been its original inhabitants. Members of the Planning Group recommended reaching out to each Tribe on the list to ask if they wanted to be named and if it was appropriate to be named in a countywide Land Acknowledgment.

The Tribal names used should be followed up by the history, which should address why a Land Acknowledgment is needed. In the countywide Land Acknowledgment, County-perpetrated harms should be stated clearly and highlight details on the ways land was stolen from Tribes, such as by using terms like “confiscated” and “seized through unratified treaties.” Words in Native languages should be used if it is possible to do so equitably for all Tribes and cultural groups named. Present tense should be used as the harms stemming from the past continue to have impacts today and because Indigenous Peoples are still here.

The Countywide Land Acknowledgment should include information about the ongoing work to preserve and protect the land. The acknowledgment should end with a call to action and a commitment by the County that supports partnership with the Tribes named and the local Indigenous community. This call to action can be specific, such as by inviting the public to an open event or directing them to a Tribal entity for volunteer opportunities. The Countywide Land Acknowledgment’s call to action should at a minimum direct people to a website with resources and specific information from and about the Tribes named in the Land Acknowledgment.

## **HOW IT IS USED**

If an oral Land Acknowledgment is shared, it should be centered within the event and be meaningful, not a brief mention. This can be done by listing it as a prominent agenda item or on an event program. It should be delivered by County staff or elected official rather than by a tribal representative. Tribes should then be given space to speak and share their own histories. This would elevate and educate, showcasing how Tribal communities interact with the specific topic at hand, and would reinforce the message of “we are still here.”

Whenever a Land Acknowledgment is to be delivered, the Tribes should be invited to participate. Let the Tribes decide for themselves when it is appropriate to participate and at what level to participate.

Collaborators suggested using the Land Acknowledgment at any event that includes a performance of the National Anthem, flag salute, or recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. If orally delivered and feasible given the location, the text of the statement should additionally be shown on a screen.

The use of a Land Acknowledgment should be prioritized especially for departments and work

that deals specifically with land and water and for the County's decision-making bodies. For County-sponsored and/or County-hosted events planned by outside entities, the County should encourage and request that a Land Acknowledgment is delivered and/or featured on signage.

## **EDUCATION**

The County should provide additional educational resources to accompany the Land Acknowledgment that directly centers knowledge, information, and resources from the local Indigenous population rather than from the perspectives of the colonizers. Resources should be housed on a dedicated County webpage. To increase accessibility of materials, print copies and copies in multiple languages should be made available.

Resources could include a glossary of terms, audio pronunciation guides, videos featuring first-person narratives, and information about using Indigenous methods to care for the land. The County should provide additional context and histories to explain the variations in spellings and tribal names.

To avoid perpetuating harms caused by colonial boundary setting, the County should not create or include a map dictating tribal and ancestral boundaries as part of the provided resources to the public. If creating a place-based acknowledgment, the County should work with the local Tribes directly to identify the correct Tribes at a specific location and to determine which Tribes or villages should be named.

## **NEXT STEPS AND MEASURABLE RESULTS**

The Land Acknowledgment policy, protocols, and toolkit should not be adopted until the steps the County is taking to honor the land and Indigenous Peoples beyond the Land Acknowledgment are outlined. These steps should focus on building meaningful partnerships with the Indigenous communities and local Tribes. A reporting dashboard should be set up to measure the impact and regular checkpoints with the Tribes should be established so adjustments can be made as needed. What to measure, how, and frequency should be discussed and developed with the Planning Group.

Collaborators provided a few examples of next steps the County could take to support this work:

- Rematriate land or take steps to help people stay on their ancestral land by offering affordable housing options and assistance
- Include Indigenous Peoples in County data sets
- Include accurate history taught from an Indigenous perspective in County educational programs

- Increase efforts to protect cultural resources
- Fund curriculum development for employee training about the history, experience, struggle, resilience, and current community of the County’s Indigenous Peoples

## **BUILDING COUNTY BUY-IN**

Internal County support for the Land Acknowledgment policy, protocols, and toolkit will be key to its success. Trainings should be held for each department and their leadership. The training should focus on the reason for the policy, note ongoing harms, and give concrete examples for how the Land Acknowledgment and accompanying resources can be used in their work. Educating department heads will help them to internalize the goals of this effort, so they consider these priorities when making decisions and lead their staff to do the same. County employees should have a mechanism in place to provide feedback and offer suggestions on additional ways the Land Acknowledgment and accompanying resources can be used in their work.

## **INTERNAL COUNTY COORDINATION**

To help mitigate and prevent ongoing harms and to support the work beyond the Land Acknowledgment, the County should fund and staff a Tribal Relations Office that maintains government-to-government relationships with all local Tribes, facilitates support for Indigenous Peoples, and provides internal County coordination for robust tribal outreach. One of the first major undertakings of the newly established office should be to develop a full inventory of tribal outreach conducted across the County, which can be used as a guide for identifying gaps, removing redundancy, and improving coordination. Additionally, the Tribal Relations Office could help ensure consistency for honorariums between departments and offer guidance on implementation of the Land Acknowledgment policy.

The Planning Group noted that an orally delivered countywide Land Acknowledgment is appropriate for virtual County meetings and a written countywide Land Acknowledgment is appropriate for the website, letterhead, email signatures, and other materials meant to encompass the entire County. All other Land Acknowledgments should be tailored based on the location where the event/meeting is held. Although highly recommended by the Planning Group, current County resources do not allow for the development of place-based Land Acknowledgments to accompany the countywide Land Acknowledgment.

These place-based Land Acknowledgments would require outreach processes for each one and there is a high possibility for harm if not done intentionally and thoughtfully. Once established, the Tribal Relations Office could play a key role in expanding the County’s Land Acknowledgment policy and protocols to cover place-based Land Acknowledgments and to better account for specific harms perpetrated against Indigenous Peoples in the County.

## **APPENDIX A. PLANNING GROUP PROTOCOLS**

**Collaborator Planning Group  
Protocols and Operating Principles  
Convened by the County of Los Angeles**

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## 1. Introduction

This document establishes the protocols and principles for the Planning Group, convened by LANAIC and Arts and Culture. The Planning Group will help guide the development of a formal land acknowledgment, inform land access policy, and correct the historical record to be used by the County of Los Angeles and shared with the City of Los Angeles.

Importantly, the document establishes the charge and role of the Planning Group in the project, a commitment to collaborative principles, meeting logistical information, and additional considerations for productive meetings where all Planning Group members can participate equally and effectively. The protocols and principles were established in March 2022 at the beginning of the County's engagement with the planning group.

## 2. Background

In recent years, Los Angeles County has been active in both uplifting the true histories of what is now known as Los Angeles County and prioritizing equity for communities countywide. The inequitable access to County-owned lands for the region's American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) population negatively impacts their physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, and cultural health. Tribal engagement on these issues at the local level is critical to the development and maintenance of equitable and culturally just local land use policies and procedures that improve access to parks, beaches, recreational waters, public lands, and public spaces for AIAN people to observe cultural, traditional, and religious practices.

On October 5, 2021, the Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a motion by Supervisors Hilda L. Solis, and co-authored by Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, that directed WDACS, LANAIC, and Arts and Culture to hire a consultant to facilitate the development of Land Acknowledgment and Land Access policies, protocols, and toolkits for Los Angeles County, and to gather input to inform ways in which the County has harmed local tribal nations.

The project team has been tasked with facilitating meetings with LA County's local tribal nations and the American Indian and Alaska Native community to accomplish this work.

## 3. Participation and Collaboration Principles

The Planning Group meeting process is a collaborative one whereby members choose to cooperate to achieve shared and/or overlapping objectives in support of the process. By agreeing to serve on the Planning Group, members commit together to the following principles:

- Commit to a good faith effort, be open to the process.
- Interact respectfully with all other members, valuing all perspectives.
- Share perspectives and values.
- Planning Group members wear many hats but, in this space, you are representing your Tribe.
- Participate in an active and focused manner – commit to the success of the process.
- Be prepared for meetings.
- Help involve all members. Seek solutions for all – help to integrate each other's interests into creative solutions that address individual and community needs.
- Share relevant information.
- Meetings build on one another. Planning Group members commit to attend all meetings and start on time.
- Participate effectively, using open communications within the Planning Group meetings.
- When sharing reports of Planning Group discussions, take learnings and refrain from sharing individual's comments, stories and experiences.

Meetings will be conducted using a neutral facilitator, who will:

- Maintain a neutral position during Planning Group discussions.
- Work to ensure that all Planning Group members can participate equally. This includes:
  - Facilitate activities that allow for multiple methods of participation (i.e., virtual, hands-on, or phone-only).
  - Ensuring that no sidebar conversations take place between the facilitators or project team relating to the process without equal opportunity for other planning group members to have input.
- Guide meeting discussions per the agenda and manage time.
- Provide dialogue activities as needed for productive outcomes.
- Enforce the Planning Group collaboration principles stated above.
- Track actions, next steps, and deadlines.
- Participate in agenda preparation as part of meeting the previously listed.
  - Responsibilities include integrating Planning Group input into draft and final deliverables for the process.

Planning Group members acknowledge that records in the possession of the County are subject to the California Public Records Act (CPRA). The County shall not, in any way, be liable or responsible for any disclosure that is required under the CPRA or otherwise by law. Records related to archaeological site information, Native American graves cemeteries, sacred places, and objects maintained by a local agency, and records obtained through consultation between a California Native American Tribe and a local agency are exempt from the CPRA (Gov. Code §§ 6254 (r), 6254.10).

Should Planning Group members wish to keep specific information shared during sessions confidential, they must label those contributions as "confidential" in accordance with the CPRA. In the event any third-party seeks disclosure of any records or information marked as confidential in a subpoena, court order, legal action, or CPRA request, the County shall provide the Tribe reasonable written notice of the request prior to releasing information marked as confidential.

## 4. Planning Group Composition

The Planning Group is composed of members of the contact list from the California Native American Heritage Commission list of tribes in LA County who expressed interest in joining the group.

An initial email was sent on November 15, 2021, to the 22 tribes on the Native American Heritage Commission contact list for LA County. The email included a letter and a link to a survey that asked tribes to respond and identify if and how they would like to participate. After the initial email, two follow-up emails were sent as reminders. A fourth email was sent on March 2, 2022, introducing the Cogstone team and sharing a final call for participation.

The tribes that responded to the survey and confirmed interest in participation are:

- Gabrieleno Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council
- San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
- San Fernando Band of Mission Indians
- Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians
- Gabrieleno San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians
- Gabrieleno/Tongva Nation
- Gabrieleno-Tongva Tribe
- Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians

Other tribes can be added to the Planning Group as requested throughout the process.

The County will accommodate tribes' interests in participation including the facilitation of a parallel process. The Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians/Kizh Nation has requested to consult with LA County individually as is their right as a sovereign nation. Input received during Planning Group meetings will be considered alongside that of the Kizh Nation.

#### **a. Honorariums**

The LA City/County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC) is collaborating with the Department of Arts and Culture (Arts Department) on this work. The Arts Department will be administering honorariums for tribal representatives who participate.

There is a set amount of funding for honorariums. Only those individuals who have been invited to participate and are designated by their tribe will be paid an honorarium. The County asks that each tribe designate one person per tribe to serve on this working group. Instructions for payment will be provided by Arts Department.

#### **b. Alternates**

Planning Group meetings will build on each other, discussions in one meeting will shape and inform the discussions at the next. Continuity between each meeting is enhanced by consistency in attendance and participation by the representatives. If a planning group member is unable to attend, a predetermined alternate who has been thoroughly briefed should participate.

## **5. Planning Group Responsibilities**

The Planning Group's charge is to share lived experiences and oral histories, and to provide information to update the County of Los Angeles' understanding of the history of the region and tribal communities, to give input to advance truth, healing, and transformation on the ways the County has harmed local tribal nations, and to provide input and feedback on the Land Acknowledgment and Land Access policies, protocols, and toolkits for the County. The collaborative process will work toward a shared understanding.

The Planning Group's charge is to guide development of a formal land acknowledgment and correction of the historical record to be used by the County of Los Angeles and the City of Los Angeles. The planning group will also provide input and feedback on for Land Access policies, protocols, and toolkits for Los Angeles County and provide input on the ways in which the County has harmed local tribes more accurately. Planning group members will provide input, ideas, comments, and feedback that incorporate members' expertise, knowledge, resources, and understanding of the experience of Indigenous communities.

Los Angeles County will consider Planning Group input, along with the input from additional collaborators. LA County's intent is that the Planning Group will significantly contribute to shaping the Land Acknowledgment that will go to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) for adoption in the fall of 2022. In this role, the Planning Group operates with guidance capacity and does not have decision-making authority; its role, however, will shape the land acknowledgment and land access policies and protocols, and harms report.

As part of accomplishing the charge, the Planning Group members commit to the following roles:

- Contribute input based on knowledge, lived experiences, and expertise in community and tribal matters, while also considering knowledge and information from other planning group members and collaborators, seeking opportunities for a shared understanding, balanced with recognition of the diversity of lived experiences in tribal and Indigenous communities with connections to present Los Angeles County.
- Participate in all meetings, which will be conducted virtually until such time that COVID-19 social distancing protocols are lifted and Planning Group members feel safe meeting in-person.

## 6. Meeting Facilitation: What is Neutral Facilitation?

Meetings will be conducted using a neutral facilitator. Neutral facilitation ensures the facilitator holds an impartial stance. The goal is to hold participants to the agreed-on guidelines, but there is not a specific expected outcome.

Facilitation will be led by neutral facilitators from Kearns & West. Kearns & West facilitators help groups of people with diverse interests work collaboratively to make decisions that solve problems, attain goals, and resolve differences.

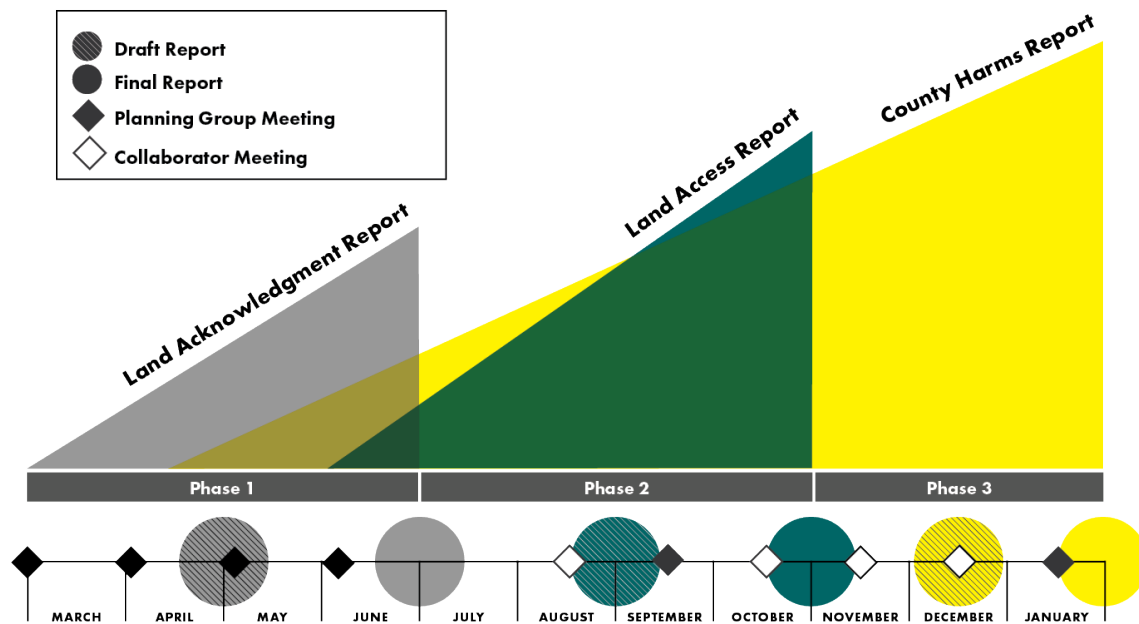
We believe collaboration work is most successful when facilitators remain impartial on the subject matter, the participants, and their interests and positions and focus exclusively on information quality, exchange, and the decision-making process.

## 7. Meeting Logistics and Communications

Logistics for meetings and communications with the Planning Group are established as follows. Adjustments are possible to address opportunities for process improvements and/or study needs.

### a. Meeting Schedule

The meeting schedule will be determined in consultation with Planning Group members. The group will meet regularly beginning March 30, 2022 through June 2022. The draft land acknowledgement recommendation will be submitted in July 2022. The Planning Group will meet again in September 2022 while the County develops the Land Access Report and again in January 2023 to review the County Harms Report.



### b. Meeting Location

Meetings will be conducted virtually until such time that COVID-19 social distancing protocols are lifted, and Planning Group members feel safe meeting in-person.

### **c. Agendas and Meeting Materials**

Agendas will be distributed at least one week before the meetings, via email and available on Google Drive ([linked here](#)). Materials will be distributed at the meetings, and provided by email to participants.

### **d. Input on Meeting Materials**

The primary opportunity for providing input will be the meetings. However, Planning Group members may have comments after the meetings, and/or may want to solicit input from their constituents and other community members. Therefore, Planning Group members are strongly encouraged to send additional input following the meetings, preferably within two weeks of each meeting.

### **e. Meeting Summaries**

The Cogstone team will prepare meeting summaries and will distribute to all Planning Group members following the meeting.

## **8. Member-To-Member Communications**

### **a. Document Sharing**

Planning Group members may want to share information and documents with other members during the process. To ensure that all members have the same information available to them, all documents are to be distributed through the established Planning Group points of contact, who are listed at the end of this document. All documents and materials will be available in a Google Drive folder ([linked here](#)). Members can use the Google Drive to add and review documents and materials.

### **b. Email Communication**

The Planning Group is intended to be a collaborative experience, in which members work through ideas, issues and solutions in person to gain mutual understanding. As such, Planning Group members agree to avoid engaging in email “dialogue” with other members outside the meeting process, and instead commit to using the Planning Group meetings for dialogue and discussion purposes.

## **9. Project Points of Contact**

The established points of contact for Planning Group members’ questions, suggestions and input are:

Ashley Dobson  
Deputy Project Manager  
Cogstone Team  
[adobson@avid-core.com](mailto:adobson@avid-core.com)  
C. 713-822-0032

Alexandra Ferguson Valdez  
Executive Director  
Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission  
[aferguson@lanaic.lacounty.gov](mailto:aferguson@lanaic.lacounty.gov)  
O. 213-738-3241  
C. 213-595-4827

**APPENDIX B. PLANNING GROUP SESSION 1 – MEETING SUMMARY**



# Meeting Summary

Planning Group

March 30, 2022, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

## Meeting 1 – Overview and Context Setting

### Action Items:

- Planning Group – If you have not already, please register as a County vendor and submit and [a \\$400 invoice](#), as well as [a quote](#) for the remaining sessions in this fiscal year (through June 30, 2022). Contact Kim Glann ([kglann@arts.lacounty.gov](mailto:kglann@arts.lacounty.gov)) if you have questions.
- Planning Group - Share examples of land acknowledgments (the good and bad) ahead of the next planning group meeting. Examples can be emailed to Ashley Dobson ([adobson@avid-core.com](mailto:adobson@avid-core.com)) or added to the [Planning Group Google Drive](#).
- County – Explore options for an addendum policy on the Land Access and County Harms reports that would allow for flexible feedback loops.

### Meeting Objectives:

1. Share lived experiences and histories to serve as the foundation for implementation of recommendations gathered.
2. Introduce process to help guide the development of a formal land acknowledgment and correction of the historical record to be used by the County of Los Angeles and shared with the City of Los Angeles.
3. Develop shared protocols and shared understanding of pathways forward.

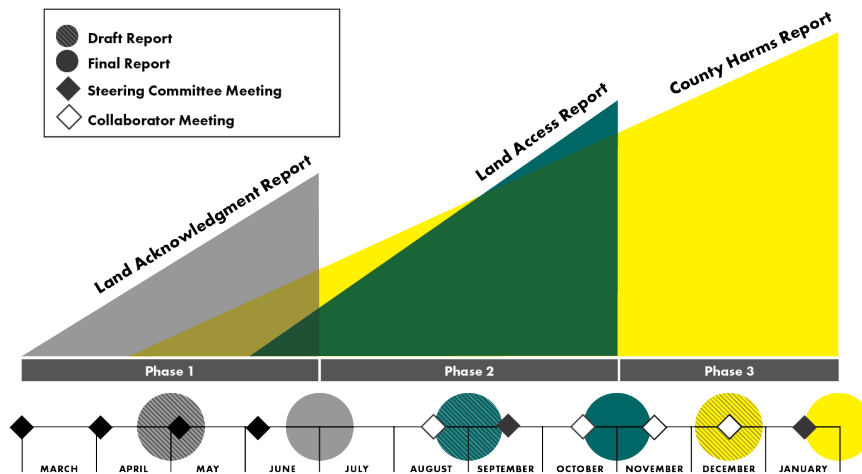
### Notes and Key Takeaways:

#### *Overview of the Process*

- This work covers a set of proposals for a formal land acknowledgement policy, land access policy, and a correction of the historical record to be used by the County of Los Angeles, and to be shared with the City of Los Angeles. The County recognizes that it cannot create a land acknowledgment without also understanding the harms it has caused and the ways

dispossession of land has impacted land access. The County is committed to being a good partner in this work.

- This work is the result of several Board motions, including the [Countywide Cultural Policy](#). The Cultural Policy calls for the County to "identify ways to acknowledge Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of this land at County public events and ceremonial functions and celebrate the contributions of culture bearers and traditional arts practices of diverse communities." Relevant Board motions and background information are housed on the [Planning Group Google Drive](#).
- These Board motions also drive the timeline for this work, specifically based on when the three reports are due. Recommendations from the Land Acknowledgment report will inform a Land Acknowledgment policy and protocol, which is expected by the Board this fall, so there is less flexibility in this piece of the work. However, the County is committed to exploring options for an addendum policy on the Land Access and County Harms reports that would allow for flexible feedback loops.



### Collaborative Principles

- Planning Group sessions are designed around the idea of reaching a shared understanding, rather than agreement. This allows all group members to enter the process with their hopes, dreams, and ideas for their community and see themselves reflected in final reports and recommendations.
- There were no changes made to the Collaborative Principles and all collaborators agreed to abide by them throughout the process. The list of principles can be found in [the Planning Group Protocols document](#).
- Collaborators defined what “meaningful engagement” would look like through this process:
  - Ensuring actions are transformational instead of transactional
  - Centering the descendants of villages in Los Angeles County
  - Measurable results
  - Policy change, rather than rhetoric change alone



### *Connected Work*

- The County wants to respect and understand other processes and places where Planning Group members are showing up and providing knowledge on similar and connected topics. In addition to the [list captured by the County](#), collaborators added the following:
  - “We Are Still Here” messaging – Art installations throughout the County that highlight that Indigenous Peoples are not just part of the past, but part of the community in the present
  - Land Under the Plinth - Monument Lab Re:Generation and the Land Under the Plinth team will recover the spaces on which monuments to colonial figures once stood
  - The Indian Children Welfare Act (ICWA) Stakeholders Roundtable convened by Superior Courts
  - Grand Park Discoveries Path
  - High Desert Corridor

### *Land Acknowledgement*

- Initial Planning Group feedback highlighted that land acknowledgments should be all-inclusive and identify the village closest to the land and capture that village’s full lineage, which often includes multiple tribes or bands. The acknowledgment should be followed by a call to action that shares how the acknowledging party is uplifting the tribe. The call to action should be specific to the tribe’s history.
- Resources shared included the [Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians Land Acknowledgment Resource](#) and the [Dr. Cutcha Risling Baldy - Video on Land Acknowledgement Structure](#). Collaborators were asked to share additional resources and examples ahead of the next planning group meeting.

### Collaborators

**Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California:** Christina Conley

**San Manuel Band of Mission Indians:** Eric Ustation

**Fernandeno Tatavaim Band of Mission Indians:** Chairman Rudy Ortega, Pamela Villaseñor, Kimia Fatehi

**San Fernando Band of Mission Indians:** Chairwoman Donna Yocum

**Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians:** Kimberly Johnson

**Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians:** Councilwoman Laurie Gonzalez, Robert Clark

**County of Los Angeles:** Kristin Sakoda, Kim Glann, Alexandra Ferguson

**Facilitation Team:** Jenna Tourjé-Maldonado, Ashley Dobson

**APPENDIX C. PLANNING GROUP SESSION 2 – MEETING SUMMARY**



## Meeting Summary

Planning Group

April 15, 2022, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

### Session 2 – Land Acknowledgement Framework and Language

#### Action Items:

- Planning Group – Continue to add comments and ideas to [the Jamboard](#).
- County – Session 3 will continue the conversation, shifting the focus from language to context setting and addressing harms in a land acknowledgement. Extend Session 3 to 2.5 hours to accommodate closed session discussion.
- County – Circulate new dates for Session 4.

#### Meeting Objectives:

1. Share lived experiences and histories to serve as the foundation for implementation of recommendations gathered.
2. Use creative dialogue and design to build connection between Planning Group members and the process.
3. Build a land acknowledgement framework.

#### Notes and Key Takeaways:

A series of activities, questions, and prompts guided the discussion during Session 2 and the following captures the themes and ideas shared in response. Planning Group Collaborators were encouraged to specifically focus on the language aspect of the land acknowledgement framework during Session 2.

#### *Place-It Activity – Childhood memories*

- Common threads between the memories shared included connections to land, food, and family.

*Place-It Activity – What does land mean to you?*

- Land means life and sustenance.
- Land is medicine.
- Land gives tools for survival.
- Land is where ancestors live and it must be honored and respected.
- A collaborator recommended “California Through Native Eyes” by William Bauer as a resource for this work. The book tells California history strictly through Native perspectives.

*How do we honor and recognize the land in a land acknowledgment?*

- It is key to identify the accurate ancestral land base. Recognition and honor flow from that initial research.
- Honor the First Peoples by using traditional language terms and language that represents the relationship with the land. Language is powerful and speaking traditional language breathes life back into the land.
- Recognize the connection and symbiosis of original stewards with their lands.
- Include information about the ongoing work to preserve and protect the land. Make it clear why this protection is important and necessary.
- The word “respect” should be included. Make it clear there is a respect for the land that we are on.

*How can a land acknowledgment honor your tribal community?*

- It should be in memory of the ancestors and for the generations to come. It is important to remember who survived this land, who tended this land, and who belongs to this land. The land acknowledgment should identify the continuation of that work.
- It needs to be clear that Indigenous Peoples are still here and they have not left their ancestral lands.
- Sometimes discussing a land acknowledgment brings up animosity toward Indigenous Peoples. A land acknowledgment should instead foster understanding.
- It must be conveyed that a land acknowledgment is a significant matter and not an afterthought. Not everyone finds importance in sacred sites. Land acknowledgment should be a start to reach those who are indifferent.
- Recognition is a form of reclamation. Tribes have been removed from these spaces and reclamation can help with healing.
- It should allow people to take something from the statement that teaches them how to be a better visitor on the land.

*How do we honor the many tribes and the naming of tribes as part of this process?*

- Colonization has significantly impacted this knowledge. The County must use whatever naming convention a tribe wants to use, even if there is not consistency with naming format across all tribal names.
- It was determined that this question would also be discussed during the closed session for Session 3.

*What makes a good land acknowledgment?*

- A good land acknowledgement centers the strength of Native peoples and honors the tribes. It focuses on survivorship.
- It should connect the tribes to the land.

- It should be a starting point for partnership for the tribes and be recognized by all relevant parties.
- It should be educational and rolled out with other educational opportunities.
- A land acknowledgment is a first step. It should be backed up by action and not just be an opportunity for a photo op or a statement of empty words.

At the first Planning Group session, we asked collaborators to share examples, both good and bad, of land acknowledgments. During Session 2, the group looked at four examples provided by collaborators and shared their thoughts on the examples and what they felt could be used or adapted by the County.

*Land Acknowledgment Example: Humboldt State University*

- The collaborators liked the use of traditional language in the land acknowledgement. There was a recommendation to add audio clips to demonstrate how words are pronounced.
- It was noted that this example was easier than a land acknowledgment for the County would be as it only references one affiliated cultural group. The County has to account for multiple groups and languages.
- The collaborators also liked that the land acknowledgment mentioned “continuing” because it recognizes that Native peoples are still here.

*Land Acknowledgment Example: Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians Template*

- The group liked the last sentence because it not only acknowledged the tribal communities, but also the commitment by the agency delivering the land acknowledgment.
- It recognizes that Native peoples are still here and used the term “unceded territory,” which were both seen as positive inclusions.
- Collaborators noted that there needs to be a focus on specific villages. In the development of a countywide land acknowledgment, it was noted that special care would need to be given to ensure there is no inaccurate information when capturing this.
- The discussion prompted a question about the land acknowledgment policy and toolkit that the County will be developing and how it will be used across the County. The County confirmed that it will be adopted by all County departments and agencies and will be shared with all 88 municipalities in the County and with County-owned cultural institutions. However, it should be noted that the County cannot mandate its use by the 88 municipalities. The Arts and Culture Department also intends to make it available as a resource to the more than 450 arts and culture organizations the department funds through their grant program.

*Land Acknowledgment Example: UCLA*

- The term “granted land” was highlighted. The group had more support for the term “unceded land” or “stolen land.”
- Collaborators noted that a good land acknowledgment needs to include accurate history.
- The group liked that it talked about respect and clearly denoted the past, present, and future generations.
- In this example, traditional language was used for words that spoke to the Tribe’s values. If the County wanted to incorporate something similar, there would need to be equity in how each language was represented.

*Land Acknowledgment Example: City of West Hollywood*

- It was noted that this was not an example the group of collaborators liked because it included geography beyond the city's scope and included history it didn't verify with the tribes. There were also concerns about historical accuracy, the identity given to one group, and the lack of perceived follow through to back up the commitments made in the acknowledgment.

Collaborators used a Jamboard to share their input, as well as had the option to share orally or via the chat box on Zoom. A PDF of the Jamboard is included as an appendix to this meeting summary.

### Collaborators

**Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California:** Christina Conley

**San Manuel Band of Mission Indians:** Jessica Mauck

**Fernandeno Tatavaim Band of Mission Indians:** Chairman Rudy Ortega

**San Fernando Band of Mission Indians:** Chairwoman Donna Yocum

**Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians:** Chairman Anthony Morales, Kimberly Morales Johnson

**County of Los Angeles:** Kim Glann, Alexandra Ferguson

**Facilitation Team:** Jenna Tourjé-Maldonado, Ashley Dobson, Christian Mendez



# Land Acknowledgement Framework

April 15, 2022

# Place-It Review



# Key Words/ Ideas from Placelt

Sitting with  
grandma sharing  
memories and  
stories (Bavarian  
background)

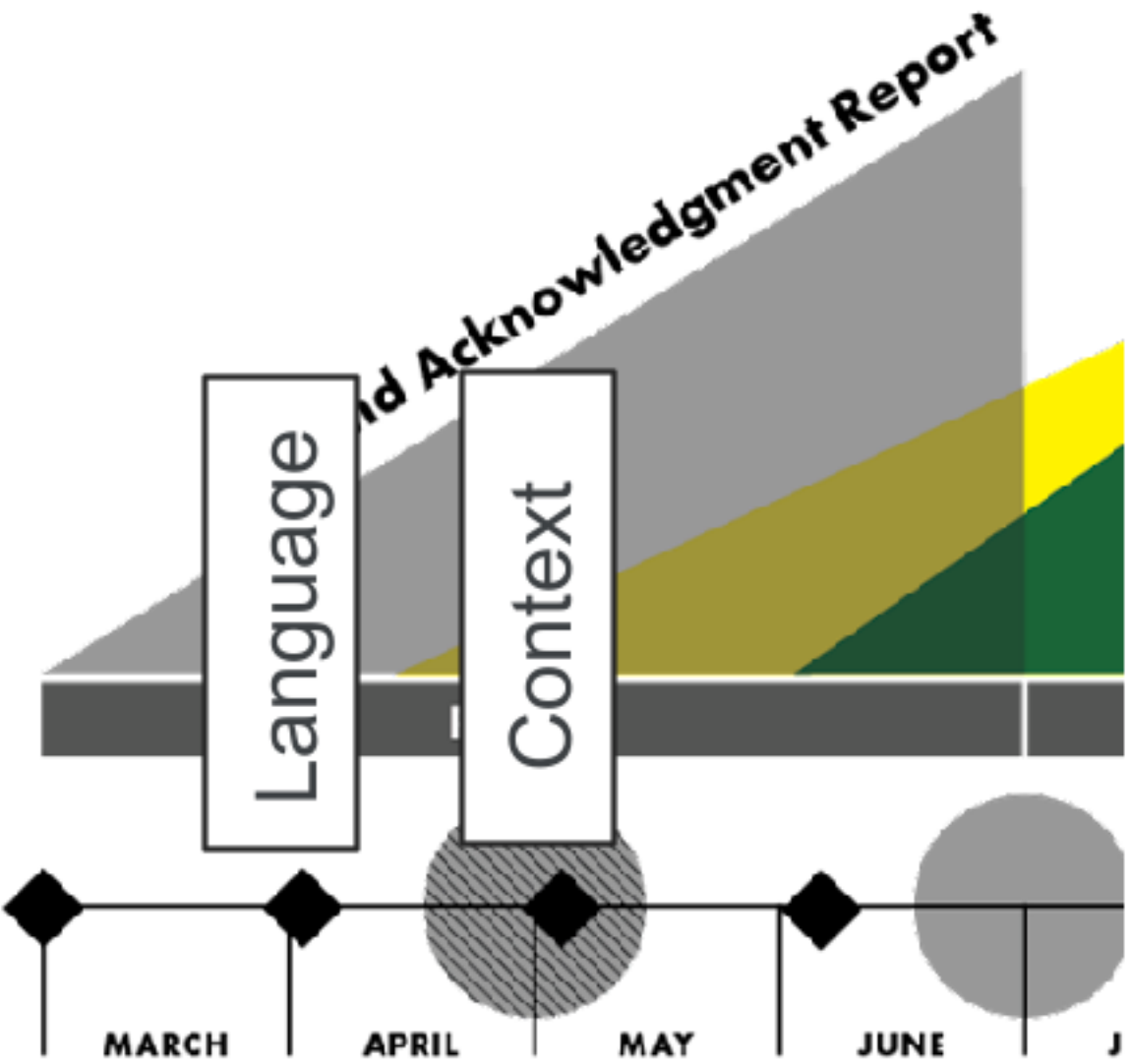
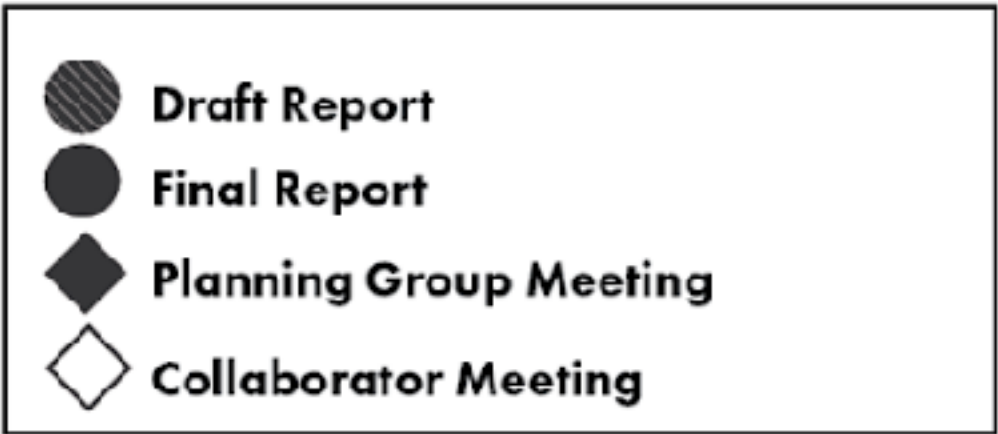
Memory of going to  
dodger games,  
swimming, and  
home-cooked meals  
from mom

Grew up in  
Chatsworth, playing  
barbies in the  
foothills. Grew up  
with sonic booms  
and missile  
launches. Mountain  
views.

Land means life and  
sustenance. Land  
gives back to us so  
we can survive

Land is medicine.  
Spirituality, we all  
start with creation  
stories. California  
through native eyes  
was a first book  
made for and by the  
people.

We have to honor  
land, its where our  
ancestors lived.  
Respect for  
ancestors  
relationship with  
land.



# How to use this space

**START  
HERE!**

Click on the  
arrow icon to  
select a note  
or to move  
notes around  
the board



Click the  
sticky note  
icon to add a  
note with text



You will only need  
to use two icons on  
the left taskbar to  
participate - do not  
click on the other  
icons

Do not click on the  
text box in the  
middle - please only  
add text to the  
notes

You can also  
double-click  
on any open  
note on the  
board to add  
text

**Idea  
1**

**Idea  
2**

**What Makes a Good Land  
Acknowledgement?**

Honor the first people who were here. Language is powerful speaking our traditional language breathes life back into the land.

First and most important is identifying our ancestral land base

Recognize the original stewards - recognize connection and symbiosis of original stewards with their lands

Through language that represents the relationship that Native peoples have with the land.

Using our traditional language terms.

## How do we honor and recognize the land in a land acknowledgement?

Act of stewardship was granted by the creator.

Ongoing task that native people are doing to persevere and protect land. Explain why it is important to protect ancestors.

Need to add the word respect. Respect the land that we are on

to protect the land

# How can a land acknowledgement honor your tribal community?

What words, phrases, or descriptions would you use?

**We are still here. We have not left our ancestral land**

Important that there is an understanding rather than animosity towards indigenous people. There is animosity in some communities when land acknowledgment is referenced.

Importance to understand how to convey that land acknowledgment is a significant matter for indigenous communities.

In memory of our ancestors and for the generations to come. We need to remember who survived this land, who tended this land and who belongs to this land. We need to continue their work

Recognition is a form of reclamation - Tribes have been removed from these spaces - reclamation can help with healing

## How do we honor the many tribes and naming of tribes as part of this process?

**Use whatever naming convention a Tribe wants to use, even if there is not consistency with naming format across all Tribal names - we have had publishers push back on this before, so just wanted folks to be aware**

**This is difficult. Colonization has changed our traditional views and ways of knowing. I can't tell someone how to spell their names, I can only honor what I know...**

# What makes a good land acknowledgement?

**one that centers the strength of Native peoples**

**Make it educational for the public - Make it honor the Tribes - Make it something that connects the Tribe to the land - most importantly, make it a starting point for better and stronger partnership to Tribes -**

**Don't make a land acknowledgement all that you do.**

**An acknowledgment that the city adheres to, not just a "photo op"**

**Good land acknowledgment needs to be recognized by all parties**

**Follow through by the city/county too!**

**Survivorship, native people have to understand and carry the past that was taught by ancestors. Need to know the past to continue the present. Children are the future, children must know the three steps of life.**

**Children need to move into the future to prevent extinction. Children will carry ancestral culture.**



# Examples

# Humboldt State University

“We begin by acknowledging that HSU sits on the land of the Wiyot peoples which include the Wiyot Tribe, Bear River Rancheria, and Blue Lake Rancheria.

Arcata is known as Goudi’ni meaning ‘over in the woods’ or ‘among the redwoods.’ Wiyot people continue to remain in relationships to these lands through ceremony, culture, and stewardship.

They are important parts of not only the history of this area but also in continuing knowledges of this place.”

Adding audio to land acknowledgments, to provide examples how words are pronounced

I like that they used the traditional language - even if it is difficult

This example is a bit easier because you have one affiliated cultural group - LA County is very big and does have multiple cultural groups, like Tongva and Serrano

It talks about continuing - which is what we are doing. We are all continuing.

# Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians

[YOUR ENTITY] recognizes and acknowledges the first people of this ancestral and unceded territory of [Contact Tribe for Name of Village ] that is now occupied by our [institution]; honors their elders, past and present, and the descendants who are citizens of the Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians. We recognize that the Tribe is still here and we are committed to lifting up their stories, culture, and community.”

Like last sentence because it not only acknowledges the communities, but it also notes the commitment by the agency

**Recognizes that they are still here**

It shows the relationship with the institution agency

Want to make sure that there is coordination of land acknowledgements to prevent inaccurate information

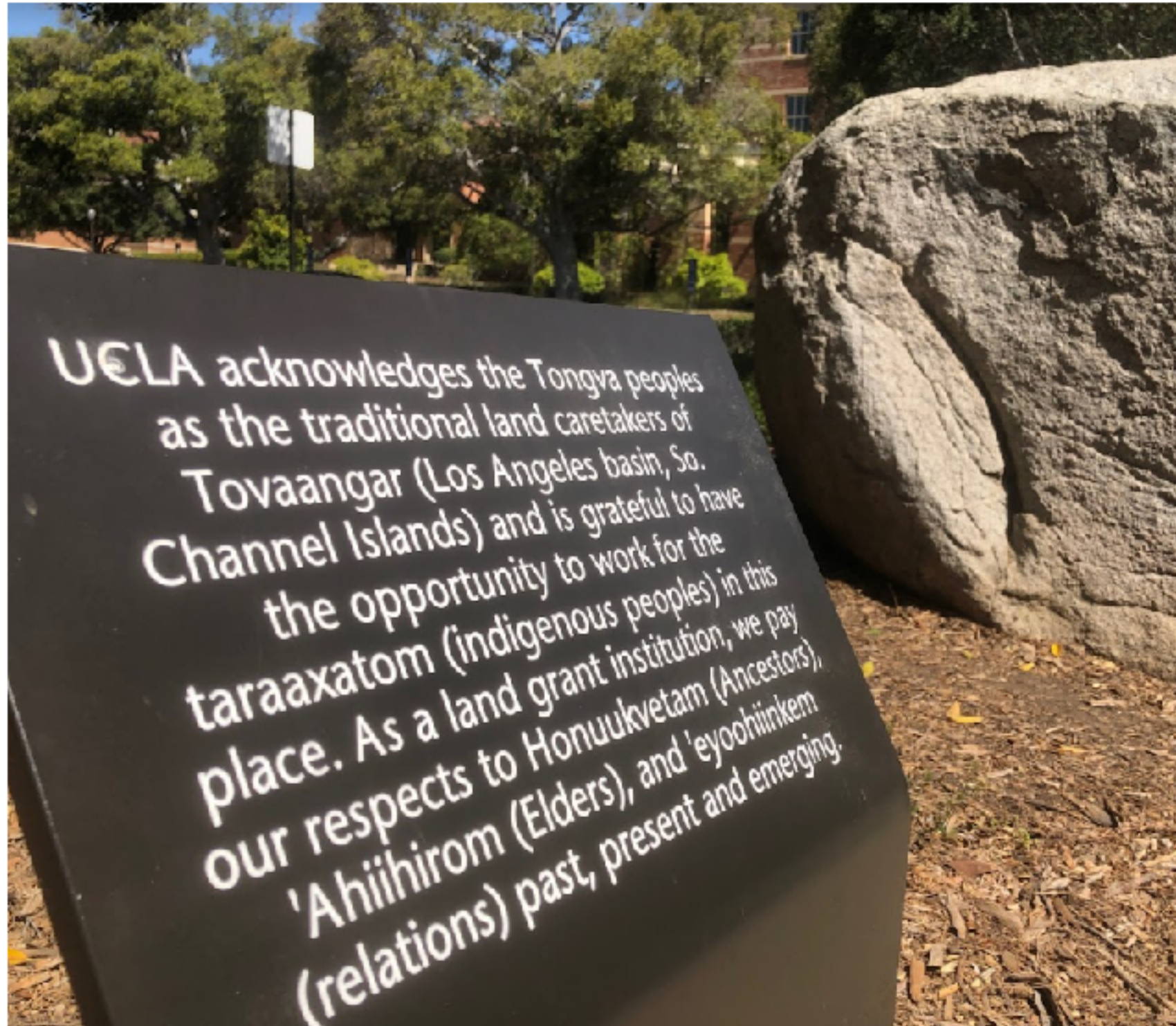
**Unceded territory**

Question: Is the framework meant to guide the specific agencies?

**Focus on specific villages versus county wide**

Response: Once the county adopts, departments can then adopt

# UCLA



There is value in the language and land

Like the note on "granted land". Granted land still sits in the ancestral land

Its ok, talks about respect - and past, present and future generations

Many public institutions sit on granted land (indigenous land). Likes the acknowledgement of granted land

Language use, if working with multiple groups, there needs to be equity across all groups

Land Acknowledgment needs to include history, what are the historical facts of land acknowledgement.

Can we just say "stolen"

shows preeminence to a Tribe's language, highlights important words in their language that emulate a Tribe's values, such as the word for "relations"

# City of West Hollywood

The land that is currently known as the City of West Hollywood is on the ancestral, and unceded homelands of the Gabrieleño Tongva and Gabrieleño Kizh (pronounced “Keesh”) peoples. The Tongva and Kizh are the original peoples of Tovaangar, which includes Los Angeles County, Riverside County, West San Bernardino County, parts of Orange County and the four Southern Channel Islands.

Concerns with photo ops and the city not following and implementing their land acknowledgment

Need to be mindful of the identity given to a group or family. Identity is given and they are not part of the broader tribal entity.

Kizh refers to the people in Whittier Narrows only. Its not historically accurate.

Someone should call SPI and let them know. They had several “listening sessions” with them.

Land Acknowledgement need to be focused in a geography. City did not do outreach to the broader community.

**APPENDIX D. PLANNING GROUP SESSION 3 – MEETING SUMMARY**



## Meeting Summary

Planning Group

April 26, 2022, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

### Session 3 – Land Acknowledgment Framework – Context, Setting, and Harms

#### Action Items:

- Planning Group - Continue to add additional ideas and feedback to [the Jamboard](#).
- County – Explore options to include County department heads in Planning Group meetings focused on harms.
- County – Send out invitation for Session 4 on June 9, 2022 from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

#### Meeting Objectives:

1. Share lived experiences and histories to serve as the foundation for implementation of recommendations gathered.
2. Use dialogue to discuss past and current harms and how trauma is experienced between and by individuals, tribes, communities, governments, and the land.
3. Continue to build a land acknowledgment framework focused on context and setting.

#### Notes and Key Takeaways:

During the closed session, Planning Group collaborators determined as a group what would be shared and two updates were provided during the regular session:

- The Planning Group decided to save the conversation specifically on harms for a future session.
- When it comes to the different spellings and naming conventions, the County should focus on making additional context and histories available to explain the different spellings.

A series of prompts were shared to guide discussion about what makes a good land acknowledgment for the County of Los Angeles, and the context in which the land acknowledgment could honor tribal communities. Collaborators used a Jamboard to share their input, as well as had the option to share orally or via the chat box on Zoom. A PDF of the Jamboard is included as an appendix to this meeting summary.

*Where would you like to see the land acknowledgment?*

- The County shared a list of ways they could use a land acknowledgment, both verbal and written. The Planning Group was asked for other ways and places they would like to see it. Collaborators shared the following ideas:
  - Letterheads and other hard copy materials from the County
  - Election ballots
  - Fire Department and Forestry Departments, departments that work specifically with land
    - Camps for at-risk youth run by these departments would be good opportunities for education
  - County website
  - LA County Office of Education
  - County Courts
  - County libraries
  - County beaches and harbors
  - County department leadership meetings
    - These meetings would be a good place to build buy-in. Department heads could be good messengers for their staff.

#### *Example 1 – Board of Supervisors Meeting*

One of the ways a County land acknowledgment might be used would be at Board of Supervisors meetings. The Planning Group was asked what considerations should be made when delivering a verbal land acknowledgment at these meetings. Their recommendations included:

- Meetings should start with the Board Chair delivering the verbal land acknowledgment. A rotation system between the supervisors, but it was determined that the Chair is the most appropriate person to deliver the land acknowledgment. The text of the statement should additionally be on the screens in the meeting room or shown on screens for virtual and hybrid meetings.
- For a quick verbal statement, cultural group names and general locations of the tribes should be used rather than specific tribal names. This would help prevent harm and dishonoring the tribes by pronouncing names and wrong tribal affiliations and locations.
- A general countywide acknowledgment could be given, followed by a second part that is specific to the physical location. The general one alone could be used during virtual meetings, but when meeting in person, the Board would need to acknowledge the tribal communities and the land where the meeting is taking place.
- The land acknowledgment should recognize Native peoples' resilience and strength.
- Present tense language should be used when referring to tribes.

#### *Example 2 – Placed-Based Setting*

Another way a land acknowledgment might be delivered is at an event at a County-run facility. The example of a ribbon cutting at a park was given. The Planning Group was asked what considerations should be made when delivering a land acknowledgment at a specific location and how it differs from the Board of Supervisors land acknowledgment. Their recommendations included:



- Any land acknowledgment for places near water or the ocean, such as Pimu (Catalina), should be different.
- Place-based event land acknowledgments should name the village where the event site resides. The County asked if there was a map or if a map could be created to help County event planners and departments know the correct village name. Collaborators shared that while there are maps and a current map in development with UCLA, it would be hard to find consistency or one every tribe agreed with. Additionally, villages can have many different names. A collaborator shared that one option might be to call it “our world” in the tribal language.
- Different places throughout the County have different histories and those should be specific and shared. Examples of the slavery auctions in downtown LA and LA’s history as a sundown town for Native peoples were given.
- Tribes should be talked about in the present, but the past should be acknowledged. The land acknowledgment should address how we got to a point where a land acknowledgment was needed.
- Collaborators noted that a verbal land acknowledgment statement may not be the most appropriate place for some heavy content, but there should be access to additional education and resources. The County must also make a commitment that goes beyond simple reflection of history.
- Collaborators asked if it would be possible for the County to provide a guide and resources for entities seeking a land acknowledgment, but for those entities to write their own for each event/circumstance. They noted that it would allow for more education and make it more meaningful.

#### *County Coordination and Commitments*

The land acknowledgment discussion prompted conversation about current harms, particularly those from the County. Planning Group collaborators shared that the County feels disjointed, bringing up the disparity between this work and decisions made in other parts of the County, such as the recent news about Bruce’s Beach.

- Harms cannot be discussed only as part of history. Multigenerational trauma - land seizure, disease, subjugation, relocation, broken promises, genocide – continues to impact Native peoples.
- The County’s land acknowledgment needs to be more than just a statement. If it doesn’t have teeth, it will do more harm than good.
- The County is large and each department has a lot of autonomy. LANAIC only has one staff member and there is no formal tribal relations office to track all of the outreach to tribes or to ensure it includes robust consultation. One collaborator noted that an office with paid staff for tribal relations seems like a more important first step than a land acknowledgment.
- The Board adoption of the land acknowledgment is an opportunity to discuss the value of the County’s word, restorative justice, and future tribal partnerships and commitments.

#### *Additional Questions*

During the session, several questions requiring additional thought and discussion came up. These questions included:

- In a verbal land acknowledgment, how can the County direct people to additional resources and education?

- How do you balance harms and history with a narrative of hope, strength, and resilience in a land acknowledgment?
- When/how often should the County re-examine their land acknowledgment? Should it be considered a living document?
- What are meaningful commitments the County can make along with the land acknowledgment?
- When and how do tribes want to be engaged for land acknowledgments?

In addition to the meeting notes above, one collaborator emailed a statement to be included in the record of this meeting. It is included as an appendix to this meeting summary.

### Collaborators

**Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California:** Christina Conley

**San Manuel Band of Mission Indians:** Jessica Mauck

**Fernandeno Tatavaim Band of Mission Indians:** Chairman Rudy Ortega

**San Fernando Band of Mission Indians:** Chairwoman Donna Yocum (Participated via submitted comments)

**Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians:** Kimberly Morales Johnson

**County of Los Angeles:** Kristin Sakoda, Kim Glann, Alexandra Ferguson

**Facilitation Team:** Jenna Tourjé-Maldonado, Ashley Dobson, Christian Mendez, Tremayne Nez



# Land Acknowledgement Framework

April 26, 2022

# How to use this space

**START  
HERE!**

Click on the  
arrow icon to  
select a note  
or to move  
notes around  
the board



Click the  
sticky note  
icon to add a  
note with text



You will only need  
to use two icons on  
the left taskbar to  
participate - do not  
click on the other  
icons

Do not click on the  
text box in the  
middle - please only  
add text to the  
notes

You can also  
double-click  
on any open  
note on the  
board to add  
text

**Idea  
1**

**Idea  
2**

**What Makes a Good Land  
Acknowledgement?**

# From last session....

What makes a good land acknowledgement?

Make it educational for the public - Make it honor the Tribes - Make it something that connects the Tribe to the land - most importantly, make it a starting point for better and stronger partnership to Tribes -

one that centers the strength of Native peoples

Survivorship, native people have to understand and carry the past that was taught by ancestors. Need to know the past to continue the present. Children are the future, children must know the three steps of life.

Good land acknowledgment needs to be recognized by all parties

Children need to move into the future to prevent extinction. Children will carry ancestral culture.

An acknowledgment that the city adheres to, not just a "photo op"

Follow through by the city/county too!

Don't make a land acknowledgement all that you do.

# Context for Land Acknowledgement

Read out loud at the start of a Board of Supervisors meeting

Read out loud, perhaps paired with a performance, at a ribbon cutting for a new County facility

On a plaque at a County hospital

On signage at a County park

On County websites

In the opening pages of a County plan, such as the Sustainability Plan or LA River Master Plan

At other County events

In email signatures of County employees

## Other instances?



# Example 1- Board of Supervisors Meeting

Who should deliver the land acknowledgment?

Would it be different if virtual or in person?

**Note**

Additional information is always helpful, we get requests for land acknowledgment help ALL THE TIME

Quick Verbal acknowledgment, identify cultural groups rather than read a full list. (Cultural group in north, Cultural group in east, etc.)

Make sense, county is wide, there is a diversity of cultural identities, the chair should be the one who makes the statement. If virtual the statement should be shared visually.

Presenters: Chair and then rotate by supervisor.

Are the meetings always held in the same place?

There might need to be a general acknowledgment and then an acknowledgment of the land (location); name affiliation of that space

Meeting are held in the Hall of Admin next grand park

There are screens that project the agenda, there is also a transcript. Due to the pandemic, there is no public in the hall. Slides can also be shared virtually.

Language should be in the present tense

Like this comment

Resilience and Strength, because we are still here

Agree

I Agree, the chair



# Example 2 - Place-Based Setting

What are the recommendations to transform the relationship with the County?

It was a sucker punch to hear about Bruce beach- we are working on a land acknowledgment, is it even going to be acknowledged

The County needs a shared understanding of what efforts are taking place, need more robust tribal relations

So maybe before a land acknowledgment, the county needs a policy and office with paid working staff for Tribal relations?

There is a opportunity when the motion or announcement for the county to note the history of harm around words being broken

Recommendations on what are the commitments the County can make along with the land acknowledgement and land access report

A structure that provides a general land acknowledgment that can be expanded on

The Ocean - anyplace near water. Pimu (Catalina) should be different.

Where it resides within a village site - name the village

Our World, in language, not sure if this is applicable for all

Villages can have up to 10 different ways of naming one village, not sure if this is practical

Need to identify slave auction in downtown; pain with alcoholism and slave labor. Federal Court House Downtown

Families continue to be impacted by this history, it continues to be an issue for many in the community

Is there a resource that the County can reference for villages?

Where a village can't be identified would it be appropriate to share the county-wide land acknowledgment?

I wonder if it would be respectful, as a possibility, to identify the village and include both or multiple names if that is the case?

LA used to be a sundown town for native people

What does it look like for people to react to the acknowledgment of current harms

What should the county do to address concerns with Bruce beach? The county did more harm than good, it set a tone-space and land for affordable housing. Get people back to their ancestral land.

Talking about us in the present, but acknowledging the past

Expand the land acknowledgment beyond and provide expectations. Provide education space.

We are working on the map...v folks at UC are different there are not accurate Areas were differently different people. It is an ongoing process.

There are some specifics that will be clarified, some specifics can be noted where evidence shows

Harms: land seizure, disease, subjugation, relocation, broken promises, genocide - resultant multigenerational trauma

Need to balance between uplifting strength and resilience of people and acknowledging harms (how did we get here to the point where land acknowledgment needed)

Acknowledge commitment that goes beyond simple reflection of history

Need for interpretative content that builds beyond simple land acknowledgments that are surface-level efforts

Make list of terms that help provide education, development of land acknowledgment that is more meaningful

There is a shift in who is providing acknowledgment (who provides the statement?)

Not only acknowledge past but also continual harms, identify current results of these harms

There are continual harms (Bruce beach), there are harms that continue to happen. UC giving free tuition to federally recognized tribes leaving others out

Actively need to remind people that we are still here.

L A County Land Acknowledgement

Session 3

April 26, 2022

## HARMS

One of the most difficult harms was the loss of our language. Having to learn from non-Native Linguists that occasionally recorded words from the last speakers of our language.

The continued denial of our identity or significance in the eyes of the Federal Governments and local governments has been most challenging and extremely costly i.e.: Federal Acknowledgement Process.

Although there are a few laws in place to protect our Cultural Resources, there are still accounts of destruction and theft of our artifacts and our Sacred places. More must be done to hold those accountable that steal from our sacred grounds. This is our lifeline from our Ancestors to us and we are the only ones who will preserve and protect them.

Donna Yocum, Chairwoman

San Fernando Band of Mission Indians

**APPENDIX E: PLANNING GROUP SESSION 4 – MEETING SUMMARY**



## Meeting Summary

Planning Group

June 9, 2022, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

### Session 4 – Draft Land Acknowledgment Report

#### Action Items:

- County – Send out Session 5 meeting invite for July 14 at 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
- County – Send updated instructions for honorarium invoices for the new fiscal year, which begins in July.

#### Meeting Objectives:

1. Review land acknowledgement report.
2. Identify next steps for land access and harms.
3. Share lived experiences and histories to serve as the foundation for implementation of recommendations gathered.

#### Notes and Key Takeaways:

##### *Draft Land Acknowledgment Report*

The Planning Group reviewed the draft Land Acknowledgment Report and offered the following clarifications and edits:

- On page 8, under the structure heading, there is an example of a call to action that references Kuruvugna Springs. It was noted that the current framing is still focused on the colonized viewpoint. It needs to be stated that this is unceded land.
- The County noted that the Planning Group had previously said Village names should be included in a land acknowledgment, but that there was not an agreed upon map. The County asked for clarification as there is concern that using Village names could cause additional harm. Some members of the Planning Group said they did have academic resources with the Villages names, such as the Merriam papers, but others noted that the concern goes beyond just inconsistencies and disagreements. There are also concerns that Tribes would not want areas with archaeological sites to be named publicly. The preferred way would be to reach

out directly to the Tribes and work with them, but it was acknowledged by all that the County may not currently have the support and resources needed to do it in the right way.

The Land Acknowledgment Report will be used to guide the development of a countywide land acknowledgment and an accompanying toolkit that offers additional education and guidance on the acknowledgment and when/how it should be used. The clarifications on the draft report prompted additional discussion on the following details that could be included in the toolkit, such as:

- How Tribes participate/engage in the delivery of the land acknowledgment: The County should deliver the land acknowledgment but the Planning Group noted that Tribes should then be given space to speak and share their own histories. This would elevate and educate, showcasing how Tribal communities interact with the specific topic at hand and would reinforce the message of “we are still here.”
- Balancing the time/resources of the Tribes with active participation and inclusion: The Planning Group stressed that they should be able to decide when it is appropriate to participate and at what level to participate. The County should always extend the invitation.
- Additional notes on participation: The first time the Countywide land acknowledgment developed from this process is read, all Tribes, particularly the Planning Group members, should be invited. Any groundbreaking, milestone connections with land, parks, waterways, and large Countywide events should include Tribes.
- Land acknowledgments at County-sponsored or County-hosted events: A member of the Planning Group shared their experience at the City of Los Angeles-hosted Summit of the Americas and noted that it brought up about County-sponsored or County-hosted events. They asked if there were ways the County could ensure land acknowledgments were included in events where the County is the host of the event, even if the County was not the planner of the specific event. The County will look into the exact language they can use, but noted that they can encourage or request that a land acknowledgment be delivered. The Office of Protocol was mentioned as a resource and office that should be involved in this discussion.
- Need for cultural education: Even among the well-intentioned, there is a lack of knowledge around different terms, such the difference between a land acknowledgment and a blessing. It was noted that the toolkit and resources provided should clearly define terms and uses. The Planning Group noted that [the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) might also be a resource to point to in the toolkit.

#### *Draft Countywide Land Acknowledgment*

While the County recognized that specific place-based land acknowledgments would be ideal, the Board charged them with crafting a Countywide land acknowledgment for adoption. The Planning Group reviewed the draft Countywide land acknowledgment and offered the following edits and suggested changes:

- Naming of Tribes: The Planning Group preferred the use of current Tribal names instead of the cultural groups. It was noted that using current names would be empowering and help County departments and the public make the connection between the past and present. It would also lead to easier education for future involvement. The County currently uses the

California Native American Heritage Commission list for Los Angeles County, which includes 22 Tribes that have a cultural or traditional affiliation with the region. The Planning Group said that not all 22 Tribes should be listed because they were not the original inhabitants of this land, instead the list expanded after colonization and displacement. Members of the Planning Group recommended reaching out to each Tribe on the list to ask if they wanted to be named/if it was appropriate to be named in the land acknowledgment. It was also noted that the LA County Department of Regional Planning already uses a list of five Tribes for AB52 consultations and [that might be the appropriate starting list](#) for the land acknowledgment.

- **Order of Tribal Names:** Members of the Planning Group did not want Tribal names to be presented alphabetically. Instead one member of the group recommended that it be reordered by the size of the Tribal land that was/is occupied.
- **Harms Language:** The Planning Group asked for more details to be added to the list of harms, particularly the use of “land seizure.” They noted that it would be more appropriate to detail terms like “confiscated” and “seized through unratified treaties” to highlight the specific history.
- **We Are Still Here:** The Planning Group asked if there was a way in the opening paragraph to make the message of “we are still here” stronger. One recommended way to accomplish this was to update the first sentence to say, “The County of Los Angeles recognizes that we occupy land originally inhabited and still inhabited by...”
- **Website and Additional Resources:** A website with resources and specific information from and about the Tribes named in the land acknowledgment is crucial. At the very least, the website the land acknowledgment directs to should include links to Tribal websites. Ideally, this resource would grow over time and include ways for Tribes to share their stories and relevant histories with the public.

#### *Request for Meetings with County Department Heads*

During the Session 3 closed session, the Planning Group requested a meeting with County department heads and the County had a few questions about the goals of the meeting so they could ensure the right people attended and were briefed ahead of time. The Planning Group clarified that these meetings would ideally be one-on-one to establish the connection and relationship building that will be necessary as the County moves beyond the land acknowledgment. The hope is to start discussions about what Tribal consultation looks like beyond cultural resources and start true government-to-government processes.

The County noted that there could be a formal kickoff, a facilitated meeting with the Tribes and the department heads, and then they could make connections for each individual meeting.

#### *Next Steps*

Session 4 marked the final meeting in Phase One. Phase Two will focus on the Land Access Report and will build on the recommendations developed through the Indigenous People’s Day report process.

The Planning Group agreed to the July 15 date for Session 5.

Planning Group collaborators used a Jamboard to share their input, as well as had the option to share orally or via the chat box on Zoom. A PDF of the Jamboard is included as an appendix to this meeting summary.

### Collaborators

**Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California:** Christina Conley

**San Manuel Band of Mission Indians:** Jessica Mauck

**Fernandeno Tatavaim Band of Mission Indians:** Chairman Rudy Ortega

**Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians:** Kimberly Morales Johnson

**County of Los Angeles:** Kim Glann, Alexandra Ferguson, Kristin Sakoda

**Facilitation Team:** Jenna Tourjé-Maldonado, Ashley Dobson, Christian Mendez, Tremayne Nez



# Land Acknowledgement Framework

June 9, 2022



# How to use this space

**START  
HERE!**

Click on the  
arrow icon to  
select a note  
or to move  
notes around  
the board



Click the  
sticky note  
icon to add a  
note with text



You will only need  
to use two icons on  
the left taskbar to  
participate - do not  
click on the other  
icons

Do not click on the  
text box in the  
middle - please only  
add text to the  
notes

You can also  
double-click  
on any open  
note on the  
board to add  
text

**Idea  
1**

**Idea  
2**

# Thoughts on Draft Land Acknowledgement Report

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/s/srgia/154553.htm>

Having a formal document can help establish and provide back up

"Land Return", there is a need to acknowledge the leased land - not happy that LAUSD owns land and tribal community members are guest of LAUSD

What are the differences in inviting tribal community members? They can participate in multiple ways, not just giving land acknowledgment.

Village Name: there are Merriam papers would be a good source for information from the scholar's perspective

Concerns: need to speak community to get their input and perspective. Community can confirm and make sure information is accurate.

There is a need for a common understanding with communities. There is a need to have staff confirm information with communities.

I agree, it is a lot of extra work and it could bring harm - because our true history is so oppressed or place names that we might not want to share...

What happens when someone uses county property?

who has the power to speak for tribal communities

Office of Protocol; there are policies that could be extended to make sure that a land acknowledgement is shared

There is a history of tribal community members speaking for the broader community which many times led to land being stolen.

Need to be careful about who speaks for the community.

Higher level, special groundbreaking, locations of importance, sites adjacent to tribal historic sites.

Are there times that tribes would like to be involved? At what point does the county involve tribes? Still need to balance time and request being made to tribes.

To identify villages, there are some tribes that have shared villages. Need to confirm information with tribes.

County needs to have a shared understanding and process when referencing the information: including working with communities to collaborate information.

Acknowledging information takes working with communities

Consider how other offices in the county interact with a land acknowledgement

County set their own procedures for those that utilize county property

The first time it is read, we all need to be invited

Tribal members don't always need to provide the land acknowledgement, why are tribal members having to acknowledge their own land.

What is a high level decision that requires tribal involvement?

Open Space/space for a park

Need to allow for self determination of when tribal communities want to be involved

any milestone ... connections with land - parks, waterways, large county wide events

Will there be specific pages on the county page?

occupy land originally and currently inhabited by ...

use terms that capture all the lands

Can we say something ... We acknowledge that settler colonization resulted in land confiscated through seizures or treaties that were never ratified, etc.

There are difference between the land acknowledgement and tribes listed

there is a need for resources to be put on the website materials, have the ability to share tribal histories

Is there input on where the people should be directed to learn more?

who are the tribes that are involved in the process?

It should go by size of occupation...

[https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=23548](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=23548)

Linking to existing websites and information

The County of Los Angeles recognizes that we occupy land originally inhabited and cared for by the Chumash, Kizh, Serrano, Tataviam, and Tongva Peoples. We honor and pay respects 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, 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 and are dedicated to growing and sustaining relationships with local tribes.

To learn more about the First Peoples of Los Angeles County, please visit [lanaic.lacounty.gov](http://lanaic.lacounty.gov).

...cared for by the Tongva, Tataviam, Chumash, Serrano and K..

First people of the land and then list the tribes

22 tribal tribes - original inhabitants - who chooses what tribes are identified

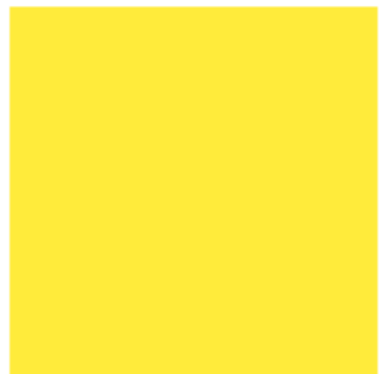
AB52: tribes have to reach out if they want to participate

Land Acknowledgement: does not note that tribal community members are still inhabiting and still here

# Land Acknowledgement

Can we say something ...We acknowledge that settler colonization resulted in land confiscated through seizures or treaties that were never ratified, etc.

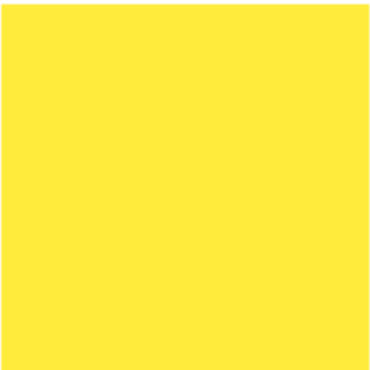
...cared for by the Tongva, Tataviam, Chumash, Serrano and K..



# Discussion with Heads of County Departments

Establish connection and relationships, need to understand the different levels of tribal consultation

Understand tribal role in projects: consideration for project kick-off



# Questions?

**Tribal Names -  
cultural group  
or political  
entity?**

**Village  
Names?**

**Question  
4**

**Question  
5**

## **APPENDIX F: BACKGROUND RESEARCH**

## APPENDIX F. Background Research

### Connected Work

The County wants to respect and understand other processes and places where Planning Group members are showing up and providing knowledge on similar and connected topics. The following list includes connected processes with documents and resources we were able to review to inform this report and the interconnected discussions on harms and land access:

- Los Angeles Mayor’s Office Civic Memory Working Group – [Indigenous Land Acknowledgment and the Work of Decolonization](#)
- [Countywide Cultural Policy](#)
- [LA River Master Plan](#)
- [Countywide Racial Equity Strategic Plan](#)
- [Shape LA County’s workforce system](#)
- [LA County Homeless Initiative](#)
- [DPR Reinternment at Tameobit](#)

### Land Acknowledgment Examples

- [Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians Land Acknowledgment Resource](#)
- [Dr. Cutcha Risling Baldy - Video on Land Acknowledgment Structure](#)
- [CICSC/AIS Land Acknowledgment Toolkit](#)
- [UCLA – Acknowledging Native Peoples at UCLA Events](#)
- [City of West Hollywood Land Acknowledgment and Guide](#)

### Additional Resources Shared by the Planning Group

- “We Are Still Here” messaging – [Art installations](#) throughout the County that highlight that Indigenous Peoples are not just part of the past, but part of the community in the present
- [Land Under the Plinth](#) - Monument Lab Re:Generation and the Land Under the Plinth team will recover the spaces on which monuments to colonial figures once stood
- [“California Through Native Eyes” by William Bauer](#)
- [Honor Native Land Resource Pack](#)
- [‘I regret it’: Hayden King on writing Ryerson University's territorial acknowledgment](#)
- [Settler Fragility: Why Settler Privilege Is So Hard to Talk About](#)