



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 06/07/2022

ITEM NO: 25

DATE: May 23, 2022
TO: Mayor and Town Council
FROM: Laurel Prevetti, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Provide Direction Regarding a Potential Land Acknowledgement Regarding Aboriginal Homeland

RECOMMENDATION:

Provide direction regarding a potential Land Acknowledgement regarding aboriginal homeland.

BACKGROUND:

On April 27, 2022, Town staff received a request from the Los Gatos Anti-Racism Coalition to read a Land Acknowledgement prior to each Town Council meeting as a way to honor and respect the Indigenous People, past and present, of Los Gatos land, and specifically, the Tamien Nation.

A Land Acknowledgement is a formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of the land and the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories. To recognize the land is an expression of gratitude and appreciation to those whose territory we reside on, and a way of honoring the Indigenous people who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial. Land Acknowledgments exist in a present tense, as opposed to a past or historical context.

DISCUSSION:

The Tamien Nation is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the land of Los Gatos and identifies as the tribe most directly indigenous to Santa Clara County. The Tamien people are one of eight linguistic divisions of the Indigenous people of this area. Enrolled tribal citizens are of several Tamien-speaking Santa Clara Valley villages collectively known as Tamien Nation.

PREPARED BY: Holly Zappala
Management Analyst

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Finance Director

DISCUSSION (continued):

It should be noted that Tamien-speaking peoples are not Ohlone. There are two theories for the origin of the term "Ohlone." The first is that it was named for a single village, Oljon, in the San Francisco Bay. The second theory is that it derived from the Bay Miwok word, Volvon. In either case, these names were not used for Tamien-speaking peoples.

The following Land Acknowledgement language is an example provided on the Tamien Nation website (Tamien.org) and was proposed for the Town to use by the Los Gatos Anti-Racism Coalition.

We acknowledge that Los Gatos is the aboriginal homeland of Tamien Nation since time immemorial and recognizes the continued persistence and resilience of culture and community despite the adverse impacts of settler colonialism. The Tamien Nation continue to have a relationship with the land; one of deep respect, agreement and reciprocity collaborating to help maintain balance. The Town of Los Gatos acknowledges and supports Tamien Nation in solidarity and commitment to partnership advocating for a more equitable and inclusive future.

Town staff reached out to Quirina Luna Geary, Tamien Nation Tribal Chairwoman, and Johnathan Costillas, Tribal Cultural Resource Officer, for their direct input on the proposed language and if any additional items might be considered to make it more meaningful. Staff heard back from Tribal Chairwoman Geary thanking the Town for asking and confirming that no changes to the proposed language are necessary.

Many educational institutions across the Bay Area have incorporated Land Acknowledgements in some form to recognize the Indigenous past, present, and future of the land, including Santa Clara University, Stanford University, San Jose State University, and UC Berkeley. Work on Land Acknowledgements is also underway in other local governments throughout the Bay Area (see Attachment 1). Of particular note:

- In November 2021, the City of Albany adopted a Land Acknowledgement to be read at the beginning of City Council meetings and Advisory Body meetings.
- Also in November 2021, the Palo Alto Library began reading either a long or short form Land Acknowledgement (depending on time constraints) at the start of Palo Alto Library programs and events, and it is often added to the chat box of virtual programs.
- Earlier this year, the City of San Jose Charter Review Commission recommended that a Land Rights Acknowledgment be formally included in the City of San Jose Charter and the Council directed the Land Acknowledgment to be developed. The City hired a Tribal mediator and work is currently underway with a goal of the proposed language being complete by this summer.

DISCUSSION (continued):

- The City of South San Francisco recently considered a Land Acknowledgement and its discussion will continue at a later date following Tribal engagement.

ALTERNATIVES:

There are different combinations of ways the Town could move forward with a Land Acknowledgment. Some options for consideration are as follows:

1. Modify the Town Council Agenda Format and Rules Policy to include a Land Acknowledgement Statement to be read aloud prior to each Town Council meeting and/or Board, Commission, and Committee meetings.
2. Modify Council and/or Board, Commission, and Committee agendas to include a Land Acknowledgment Statement without it being read at every meeting.
3. Create a Council Land Acknowledgment Proclamation. The Proclamation could be presented at a Town Council meeting on a recurring annual basis. For example, this could be done every November as part of celebrating National Native American Heritage Month.
4. Post a Land Acknowledgement Statement to the Town website including links for more information.
5. Deliver a Land Acknowledgement Statement at Town events such as Spring into Green, Fourth of July Symphony in the Park, Screen on the Green, Tree Lighting, etc.
6. Begin Library programs by reading a Land Acknowledgement Statement.

CONCLUSION:

Staff looks to direction from the Council regarding potentially moving forward with a Land Acknowledgement for the Indigenous People of the Tamien Nation.

COORDINATION:

This report was coordinated with the Community Development Department, Library, Town Attorney's Office, and Town Manager's Office.

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SUBJECT: Land Acknowledgement

DATE: May 23, 2022

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no associated fiscal impact.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

This is not a project defined under CEQA, and no further action is required.

Attachment:

1. Land Acknowledgement Examples

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT EXAMPLES

City of Albany, CA

The City of Albany recognizes that we occupy the land originally protected by the Confederated Villages of Lisjan. We acknowledge the genocide that took place on these lands and must make strides to repay the moral debt that is owed to this indigenous people, specifically the Ohlone Tribe. We thank them for their contributions which have transformed our community, and will continue to bring forth growth and unity. The City of Albany commits to sustaining ongoing relationships with the Tribe and together build a better future for all that now make this their home.

Palo Alto, CA

(full version): I want to acknowledge that this [event] takes place on the traditional indigenous territories of the Ramaytush, Muwekma Ohlone, and Tamien Nation. Many American families, going from now until our great-great-great-grandparents, came to America from other countries and did not live here first. It is important for us to remember that the land we live on is the traditional land of Native American, or indigenous, nations. If you would like to learn more about whose land you live on from wherever in the world you are joining us, you can go to <https://usdac.us/nativeland>.

(short version): I want to acknowledge that this [event] takes place on the traditional indigenous territories of the Ramaytush, Muwekma Ohlone, and Tamien Nation.

Cal State University East Bay, Hayward, CA

(short version): Horše túuxi! (Hor-shehtroo-hee)

Cal State University East Bay recognizes that it is located on the ethnohistoric territory of the Jalquin (hal-keen) / Yrgin (eer-gen), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo Ohlone-speaking People, the successors of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe and other familial descendants of the Verona Band. We recognize that every member of the Hayward community has, and continues to benefit from, the use and occupation of this land, since the institution's founding in 1957. Consistent with our values of community, inclusion, and diversity, we have a responsibility to acknowledge and make visible the university's relationship to Native peoples. As members of the Hayward community, it is vitally important that we not only recognize the history of the land on which we stand, but also, we recognize that the Muwekma Ohlone people are alive and flourishing members of the Hayward and broader Bay Area communities today.

This acknowledgement was created by the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe with the support of the CSUEB Indigenous Acknowledgment Collective and is a living document.

Chabot College, Hayward, CA

The Ohlone are located on the Northern California Coast. Ohlone was an umbrella term given to the collective of various tribes, bands, and territories. Chabot College sits on land recognized as Ohlone Muwekma, the Chochenyo speaking People. This land was and continues to be of great importance to the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe and other familial descendants of the Verona Band.

Holy Names University, Oakland, CA

We acknowledge that HNU sits on the traditional lands of the Muwekma Ohlone People, and pay respect to elders both past and present.

We would like to formally acknowledge the people and land of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe. A Land Acknowledgment is a formal statement that recognizes the history and legacy of colonialism that impacted Indigenous Peoples, their traditional territories, and practices.

Acknowledgment is a simple, powerful way of showing respect and a step toward correcting the stories and practices that erase Indigenous people's history and culture and toward inviting and honoring the truth.

The ability to gather, learn, and establish our presence as an institution of higher education came at a great expense of the original inhabitants of this land, the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe (mah-wek-mah ah-lone-ee).

We would like to acknowledge that Holy Names University sits on the traditional lands of the Muwekma Ohlone people, and pay respect to elders both past and present.

The mission of HNU is to empower a diverse student body for leadership and service, guided by the core values of the Sisters. These Core values include Dedication to Justice, Service to People Who are Poor or Marginalized, and Commitment to Liberating Action. It is important to reflect on these commitments in relation to the very location of HNU: Our location in Oakland, CA, with all of its rich diversity and stark disparities, and our campus itself being located on the land first inhabited by the Ohlone people.

Long before Holy Names University was here on this hill, and even before the Sisters came to California, this area was home to the Ohlone. The Ohlone still have a presence today, in Oakland and throughout the Bay Area.

The present-day Muwekma Ohlone Tribe is comprised of all of the known surviving American Indian lineages aboriginal to the San Francisco Bay region who trace their ancestry through the Missions Dolores, Santa Clara, and San Jose; and who were also members of the historic Federally Recognized Verona Band of Alameda County. The aboriginal homeland of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe includes the counties of San Francisco, San Mateo, most of Santa Clara, Alameda, Contra Costa, and portions of Napa, Santa Cruz, Solano, and San Joaquin.

Let us acknowledge with respect and reverence for the Muwekma Ohlone People, who have stewarded this land throughout the generations, while not forgetting the colonization of this land.

Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA

Stanford sits on the ancestral land of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe. This land was and continues to be of great importance to the Ohlone people. Consistent with our values of community and inclusion, we have a responsibility to acknowledge, honor, and make visible the University's relationship to Native peoples.

Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA

We pause to acknowledge that Santa Clara University sits on the land of the Ohlone and the Muwekma Ohlone people, who trace their ancestry through the Missions Dolores, Santa Clara, and San Jose. We remember their connection to this region and give thanks for the opportunity to live, work, learn and

pray on their traditional homeland. Let us take a moment of silence to pay respect to their Elders and to all Ohlone people past and present.

San Jose State University, San Jose, CA

The San José State University community recognizes that the present-day Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, with an enrolled Bureau of Indian Affairs documented membership of over 550, is comprised of all of the known surviving American Indian lineages aboriginal to the San Francisco Bay region who trace their ancestry through the Missions Santa Clara, San José, and Dolores, during the advent of the Hispano-European empire into Alta California; and who are the successors and living members of the sovereign, historic, previously Federally Recognized Verona Band of Alameda County.

Furthermore, the San José State University community recognizes that the university is established within the Tha'mien Ohlone-speaking tribal ethnohistoric territory, which based upon the unratified federal treaties of 1851-1852, includes the unceded ancestral lands of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area. Some of the enrolled Muwekma lineages are descended from direct ancestors from the Tha'mien Ohlone tribal territory whose ancestors had affiliation with Mission Santa Clara. The San José State University community also recognizes the importance of this land to the indigenous Muwekma Ohlone people of this region, and consistent with our principles of community and diversity strives to be good stewards on behalf of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe whose land we occupy.

UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA

Native American Student Development recognizes that UC Berkeley sits on the territory of xucyun (Huichin), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo speaking Ohlone people, the successors of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe and other familial descendants of the Verona Band.

We recognize that every member of the Berkeley community has, and continues to benefit from, the use and occupation of this land, since the institution's founding in 1868. Consistent with our values of community, inclusion and diversity, we have a responsibility to acknowledge and make visible the university's relationship to Native peoples. As members of the Berkeley community, it is vitally important that we not only recognize the history of the land on which we stand, but also, we recognize that the Muwekma Ohlone people are alive and flourishing members of the Berkeley and broader Bay Area communities today.

This acknowledgement was co-created with the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe and Native American Student Development and is a living document.

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