STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT:
The City Council will consider directing staff to partner with local Indigenous leaders to develop a land acknowledgement policy, which is a statement recognizing the history and presence of Indigenous peoples and their enduring relationship to their traditional homelands. The policy will include language to be posted on the City’s website, printed on City Council, Commission, and Advisory Board agendas, and may be read aloud at official City events.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
1. Direct staff to work with local Indigenous leaders to develop a land acknowledgement policy to recognize the history and presence of Indigenous peoples and their enduring relationship to their traditional homelands.
2. Include in the policy when and how the language will be used, including to be posted on the City’s website, printed on City Council, Commission, and Advisory Board agendas, and may be read aloud at official City events.
3. Direct the Communications Department to utilize all appropriate communications tools to promote the new policy, such as the City’s website and social media tools, and a press release.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:
This item was originally included on the March 16, 2020 City Council agenda and was tabled for further discussion to a future meeting. In the weeks following the March 16 Council meeting, the emerging threat of COVID-19 required the City Council to focus meetings on items strictly related to the COVID-19 emergency. This item is now bringing back for further discussion.

A land acknowledgement is a statement recognizing the history and presence of Indigenous peoples and their enduring relationship to their traditional homelands. Land acknowledgements help create awareness of the cultural erasure of Indigenous peoples and the processes of colonization and subjugation that have contributed to that erasure.
In countries such as New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and among tribal nations in the United States, it is commonplace, even policy, to open events and gatherings by acknowledging the traditional Indigenous inhabitants of that land. This is often done at the beginning of ceremonies, lectures, or any public event. Acknowledgment is a simple, powerful way of showing recognition and respect, creating a broader public awareness of the history, and taking a step toward correcting the stories and practices that erase Indigenous people’s history and culture and toward inviting and honoring the truth.

While some individuals and cultural and educational institutions in the United States have adopted this custom, the vast majority have not. In 2019, UCLA was one of many schools in the UC and Cal State system to adopt a policy to acknowledge that the campus resides on what was historically the homeland of indigenous peoples who were dispossessed of their land. UCLA’s policy encouraged all UCLA schools, departments, institutes, units and other campus entities to include a land acknowledgement at any significant public event that is hosted on campus property. The acknowledgement can be communicated in a variety of ways, including printed in an event program or spoken verbally during the welcome remarks. UCLA worked with the Tongva cultural leaders to establish the following options for acknowledgements:

- As a land grant institution, the _____ at UCLA acknowledges the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (Los Angeles basin, So. Channel Islands).
- The ____ at UCLA acknowledges our presence on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples.
- The ____ at UCLA acknowledges the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (the Los Angeles basin and So. Channel Islands). As a land grant institution, we pay our respects to the Honuukvetam (Ancestors), ‘Ahiihirom (Elders) and ‘Eyoohiinkem (our relatives/relations) past, present and emerging.

Other institutions in the United States, especially universities, museums, and cultural institutions, have begun to adopt similar policies.

Though a land acknowledgement is only one way to recognize the history of this land, it is a meaningful step in beginning to change the way the land is viewed and discussed. It is a way to honor the original occupants of this place and is intended to serve as a symbol of reconciliation.

This item directs staff to develop a land acknowledgement policy for the City of West Hollywood. The policy will include a protocol for when and where the land acknowledgement is posted, printed, or read aloud at official City events. In developing the policy, staff should work with local Indigenous leaders to ensure the language is historically accurate and culturally appropriate. As part of the City’s Climate Action Plan
update currently underway, the City is working collaboratively with Pueblo Planning and the Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples to organize a listening session and climate survey with local Indigenous community members. This may be another resource for the City to use in drafting and implementing its own land acknowledgment policy.

CONFORMANCE WITH VISION 2020 AND THE GOALS OF THE WEST HOLLYWOOD GENERAL PLAN:
This item is consistent with the Primary Strategic Goal(s) (PSG) and/or Ongoing Strategic Program(s) (OSP) of:

- OSP-2: Institutional Integrity.
- OSP-11: Community Education.

In addition, this item is compliant with the following goal(s) of the West Hollywood General Plan:

- HS-3: Promote a community with strong social networks and cross-cultural interaction.

EVALUATION PROCESSES:
N/A

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH:
N/A

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:
Staff will engage with local Indigenous leaders to ensure the City’s land acknowledgement policy is historically accurate and culturally appropriate.

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY:
CITY MANAGER’S DEPARTMENT / COMMUNITY & LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS DIVISION

FISCAL IMPACT:
None at this time.