

City of Albany City Council

Land Acknowledgement Statement

The City of Albany recognizes that we occupy the land originally protected by the Confederated Villages of Lisjan's. It is important that we acknowledge the genocide that took place on these lands and make strides to repay the debt that is owed to this indigenous people, specifically the Ohlone Tribe. We thank them for their many 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.

ALBANY CALIFORNIA



CITY OF ALBANY
1000 SAN PABLO AVENUE
ALBANY, CA 94706
www.AlbanyCA.org

DATE: September 13, 2021

MEMORANDUM

To: City Council

From: Mayor Gary

Re: Rematriation in Albany

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council adopt Resolution No. 2021-95 to:

1. Recognize the Confederated Villages of Lisjan (Ohlone) as one of the original peoples of this land.
2. Direct the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Commission to work with the Sogorea Te' Land Trust to analyze parcels within City boundaries and develop a joint plan to rematriate appropriate public lands and open spaces back to the Confederated Villages of Lisjan in perpetuity through the Sogorea Te' Land Trust.
3. Urge the Albany School District and the Albany Library to create a committee to undertake a thorough evaluation of their curriculum, programs and events to ensure that they are accurate and inclusive of the history and resiliency of the Lisjan people.
4. Direct the creation of signage on Solano Avenue and other City signs that acknowledge that Albany is on Ohlone land.
5. Direct City staff to draft, in consultation with the Confederated Villages of Lisjan, a land acknowledgment to be formally adopted and read at the beginning of City Council meetings and all other City board and commission meetings.
6. Establish a two member subcommittee, in consultation with the Sogorea Te' Land Trust, to prepare a budget proposal for the City to formally incorporate annual payment of the Shuumi Land Tax.

BACKGROUND

For thousands of years, the Ohlone people have tended to and cared for the land that is now known as Albany, building a network of villages and Shellmounds, fishing in the Bay and freshwater creeks, cultivating, gathering and growing foods and medicines, hunting, holding ceremony, seasonal festivals and Big Times, and in many other ways treating this land with respect and reciprocity. Albany lies within the traditional Ohlone territory of Huchiun, where the Ohlone language Chochenyo has been spoken for hundreds of generations and where sacred sites and burial sites remain. Direct descendants of these Ohlone include members of the Confederated Villages of Lisjan and are visibly represented in Albany in the Sogorea Te' Land Trust.

The Ohlone people's way of life was violently disrupted by the Spanish occupation of this land. Ohlone people living in Huchiun were kidnapped and forced to live and work as slaves at Mission Dolores and Mission San Jose. During the Mexican era, this land was part of the Peralta Land Grant and the enslavement of Ohlone people continued at the ranchos. The Gold Rush brought the arrival of hundreds of thousands of settlers and the federal policies of termination during the United States conquest.

Despite over two hundred years of colonial occupation, displacement and invisibilization, the Ohlone tribe of the Confederated Villages of Lisjan continue to live here, revitalize their cultural practices and uphold their responsibilities to protect and care for their ancestral homeland. The Sogorea Te' Land Trust, the first urban Indigenous women-led land trust in the country, through many programs and initiatives works for repatriation, cultural revitalization, and land restoration in Ohlone territory.

The Confederated Villages of Lisjan, along with every other Ohlone Tribe, are not federally recognized by the United States government. Federal recognition is a legal status that affirms a tribe's entitlement to land and other legal and economic benefits. Hundreds of thousands of Indigenous people across the United States belong to non-federally recognized tribes. The process to become "recognized" in the United States is the Federal Acknowledgement Process, an arduous and expensive undertaking that lasts decades, as a tribe must prove its 'authenticity' under criteria designed to severely limit the possibility of success. The Confederated Villages of Lisjan are recognized by the State of California and the California Native American Heritage Commission.

Sogorea Te' Land Trust, the first urban Indigenous women-led land trust in the country, facilitates the return of Indigenous land to Indigenous people. Through the practices of repatriation, cultural revitalization, and land restoration, Sogorea Te' calls on native and non-native peoples to heal and transform the legacies of colonization, genocide, and patriarchy and to do the work our ancestors and future generations are calling us to do. Sogorea Te's programs and initiatives are building a Bay Area in which Ohlone language and ceremony are an active, thriving part of the cultural landscape, where Ohlone place names and history is known and recognized and where intertribal Indigenous communities have affordable housing, social services, cultural centers and land to live, work and pray on. Repatriation is Indigenous women

led work to restore relationships between Indigenous people and their ancestral land while honoring matrilineal societies' and lineages' ways of tending to the land.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) states in Article 25 that Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.

DISCUSSION

The many wrongs of history can be identified and corrected only if there is determination to seek value-added contributions that propel us towards a more forward thinking and united society. Native Americans have been identified as people of the first nations to call this land as "Home". Recognizing that Indigenous populations were displaced and decimated after Christopher Columbus and European explorers reached the continent is a beginning. Native American populations have endured past and ongoing atrocities that surely have a huge impact in forming a United Society.

Additionally, recent statistics currently show that COVID-19 Pandemic is disproportionately affecting Native Americans; yet these individuals are simultaneously being overlooked by data and failing to receive proper care. The solution to this problem will require more than one day of "action" and more than rhetoric acknowledgement, but we must begin to ADVOCATE. HOW? Indigenous People's Day is a great time to start! Celebrating the heritage and contributions of Natives in America is supreme.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

As Indigenous people, the Lisjan Ohlone have been living on this land in balance and reciprocity for hundreds of generations and hold a deep knowledge of sustainable ways to tend the land. The City of Albany would benefit from their perspectives when considering the impact of economic decisions on the environment. Returning land to Indigenous stewardship is one way to not only address historic and ongoing injustices but also to move towards a more sustainable future. For example, sustainable fire management is a traditional sustainable practice used by Indigenous communities specifically in rural areas in California.

SOCIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY CONSIDERATIONS

These Rematriation initiatives would help bring attention to and center Indigenous people's history on the land that is now known as Albany and will be one lever for increasing residents' awareness and engagement.

CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES

This supports City Council initiatives on representing and promoting Albany's diverse population.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Parks, Recreation & Open Space Commission will include potential financial considerations in the Remediation plan.

The City will incur some costs related to the design, production and installation of new signage.

The financial impact of participating in the Shuumi Land Tax is unknown but will be thoroughly considered by the Council subcommittee and reflected in their proposal.

Attachments:

1. Proposed Resolution No. 2021-95



Sogorea Te' Land Trust

sogoreate-landtrust.org

info@rematriatetheand.org

2501 Harrison St. Oakland CA 94612

November 8, 2021

City of Albany
c/o Mayor Ge'nell Gary
1000 San Pablo Ave
Albany, CA 94706

Shuumi Land Tax Invoice

In recognition that the City of Albany lies within the traditional territory of the Confederated Villages of Lisjan and that the civic infrastructure, economic system, public and private development, and consumption of natural resources in our society are all connected to and in different ways built upon the colonial occupation of this land and the violent displacement of the Lisjan, the Sogorea Te' Land Trust invites the City of Albany to pay the Shuumi Land Tax. The Shuumi Land Tax is a powerful way to acknowledge this history and contribute to its healing, to support the Sogorea Te' Land Trust's work of Rematriation to create a vibrant future for Indigenous people and everyone in Albany. Shuumi means "gift" in Chochenyo, the Lisjan Ohlone language that has been spoken on this land for thousands of years.

The City of Albany was incorporated in 1908 and as of this year, there are 250 acres of City-owned land. Please remit payment of \$28,250 for the City of Albany's Shuumi Land Tax for the year 2021, one dollar per acre for each year the city has existed. Acknowledging that this is a new initiative that is still emerging and taking shape, we are making this initial invitation to Albany this year and look forward to working together to develop an ongoing and sustainable commitment to the Shuumi Land Tax from the City in the years to come.

There is no "right" number. No amount of money will undo the damage of generations of colonization. But paying the Shuumi Land Tax is a step in a long-term process of healing, an important way that the City and the people of Albany can participate in the work our ancestors and future generations are calling us all to do.

Thank you.