



**AGENCY:** City Council  
**MEETING DATE:** November 14, 2022  
**DEPARTMENT:** Administration  
**PRESENTED BY:** P.Ducey/C. Munoz  
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## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

**TITLE:**

**Receive Report and Approve Strategy to Implement the Recommendations of the Citizens Commission**

**ISSUE:**

On June 22, 2020, the City Council discussed a potential ballot measure for voters to decide whether a name change for the City of Fort Bragg is supported by our residents. City Council directed that more comprehensive conversations were needed and appointed Vice Mayor Norvell and Councilmember Morsell-Haye to an ad hoc committee whose purpose was to create a Citizens Commission, which would provide the best path forward to explore a name change and to address the deeper systemic issue of racism.

On August 10, 2020, at a regular City Council meeting, the ad hoc committee reported back on their scope of work and strategy of identifying residents that represented a comprehensive range of community perspectives to join the Citizens Commission. The Commission met for over 18 months, completing over 60 hours of meetings. In addition, they solicited community feedback in a bilingual questionnaire that received 1,649 responses.

The Commission's final report was reviewed by City Council on January 24, 2022. The Citizens Commission presented their recommendations out of the unifying ideas they had, and unanimously supported six recommendations. City Council supported all Commission recommendations at that meeting. To realize these goals, staff has been tasked with providing a strategy to implement the following recommendations.

### **Citizens Commission Recommendations**

1. Create a City policy to prioritize Land Back to local coastal tribes
2. Formalize an official agreement to work with local coastal tribes similar to the agreement made in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in recognition of the tribe's sovereignty and continued stewardship of this land
3. Support the creation of a cultural center
4. Appoint a local history working group
5. Appoint a City Council Ad Hoc Committee to facilitate discussion with the school district and local tribes to support the schools in presenting a more complete and inclusive history of the local area
6. Support an outdoor event, a North Coast Community Day to encourage the local arts, sciences, and culture/economy and to showcase our diverse community and encourage a robust economy

The Citizens Commission worked very diligently to bring forth these recommendations that will now require strategic planning efforts and funding to complete.

**ANALYSIS:**

Staff recommends that the City implement the recommendations via two parallel strategic paths. The first step would be to initiate government-to-government consultations with the Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians and other local coastal tribes. The City will also invite other organizations, including the Fort Bragg Unified School District, to be a party to all discussions and negotiations as well as any formal agreement that is executed. This path to identify and seek input from the appropriate governing entities will ensure that the City is taking meaningful and appropriate steps that will align with the intentions of the Citizens Commission.

Acknowledging the City needs the local coastal tribes to be a part of efforts from the beginning is establishing genuine good faith determinations and recognizing that all these efforts need to be culturally appropriate. The acts of attempted genocide done to the local coastal tribes at the inception of the City's history cannot be forgotten. Recognizing tribal sovereignty with a formal agreement will solidify the progress and intention to be an inclusive community. Aligning with these efforts, the City will also prioritize a Land Back policy and will work with the local coastal tribes to create it. This understanding will be an example of tribal advocacy and lead to more engagement and collaboration from the coastal tribes, which will lead to working together and supporting the Citizens Commission recommendations.

A written agreement which includes the School District will facilitate deeper discussions with tribal representatives and focus priorities to develop accurate local tribal history education in our school district. Governor Newsom recently signed into law AB 1703, the California Indian Education Act, which will enable tribal groups to establish their own California American Indian Education Centers. These centers will assist and encourage school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools to form a California Indian Education Task Force with local tribes in the region to discuss issues of mutual concern and develop model curricula related to Native American studies. It is important to solidify a committee that will curate and prioritize educating the youth of Fort Bragg regarding the indigenous communities that are still here today and also to acknowledge the legacy that colonialism has had on Fort Bragg.

Through this strategy, the City will fulfill three recommendations from the Citizen's Committee:

- Create a City policy to prioritize Land Back to local coastal tribes
- Formalize an official agreement to work with local coastal tribes similar to the agreement made in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in recognition of the tribe's sovereignty and continued stewardship of this land
- Appoint a City Council Ad Hoc Committee to facilitate discussion with the school district and local tribes to support the schools in presenting a more complete and inclusive history of the local area

A parallel strategy to fulfill another Commission recommendation is to establish a local working history group. The structure of the working history group can be a companion to the existing Historical Society and be housed at the Guest House Museum. City staff will research grant opportunities to facilitate funding the group's activities. These discussions can lead to the healing of the loss of identity in the community after the close of the Mill Site. The working group can coordinate multicultural events that are inclusive of the community. The group can also organize with the Visit Fort Bragg committee to sponsor an outdoor event during the late summer.

The Citizens Commission recommended a North Coast Community Day. This would be a way to showcase the diverse community and encourage the robust economy of Fort Bragg. The Visit Fort Bragg committee would be an excellent partnership for this event, which could also fundraise for the potential cultural center that would highlight, honor, and educate those who existed pre-contact and honor the many cultures that exist in Fort Bragg and around the world today. The funding of this space would require a significant dollar amount and require long-term planning.

This strategic path will fulfill the remaining Commission recommendations:

- Appoint a local history working group
- Support an outdoor event, a North Coast Community Day, to encourage the local arts, sciences, and culture/economy and to showcase our diverse community and encourage a robust economy
- Support the creation of a cultural center

A proactive step that the City has already done is the passing of Resolution 4305-2020, which changed the second Monday in October to Indigenous Peoples' Day. This decision to change the name of the former Columbus Day represents an active approach and demonstrates the integrity of the City Council. This action is just the beginning of how the City Council can take on the recommendations from the Citizens Commission and implement them.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Approve strategic path to implement the six Commission recommendations:

Path 1:

- Create a City policy to prioritize Land Back to local coastal tribes
- Formalize an official agreement to work with local coastal tribes similar to the agreement made in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in recognition of the tribe's sovereignty and continued stewardship of this land
- Appoint a City Council Ad Hoc Committee to facilitate discussion with the school district and local tribes to support the schools in presenting a more complete and inclusive history of the local area

Path 2:

- Appoint a local history working group
- Support an outdoor event, a North Coast Community Day, to encourage the local arts, sciences, and culture/economy and to showcase our diverse community and encourage a robust economy

- Support the creation of a cultural center

**ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):**

City Council may provide alternative actions.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

City staff will research local grants to identify funding for these activities, including the cost of signage, commemorative plaques, and leading community forums on diversity. The Visit Fort Bragg Committee can help pay for the costs of organizing and hosting the North Coast Community Day.

**GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACT:**

None.

**CONSISTENCY:**

None.

**IMPLEMENTATION/TIMEFRAMES:**

None.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

None.

**NOTIFICATION:**

The Citizens Commission Members