

October 3, 2018

Statement by the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, and the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission regarding the Christopher Columbus statue in Grand Park.

On October 3, 2017, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors passed a motion authored by Supervisor Hilda L. Solis directing County Counsel to “create an ordinance to remove all references to Columbus Day as an official County holiday and recognize Indigenous Peoples Day instead.” On May 1, 2018, the Board of Supervisors formally passed the ordinance.

Following the Board motion in October 2017, the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission began working collaboratively to identify options for addressing the statue of Christopher Columbus (statue) in Grand Park which is a part of the Los Angeles County Civic Art Collection.

The Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission recognizes and acknowledges the Yaavitam, the first people of this ancestral and unceded territory of Yaanga that we now know as downtown Los Angeles; honors their elders, past and present, and the Yaavitam descendants who are part of the Gabrieleño Tongva and the Fernandeño Tataviam Nations.

The Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission are committed to the removal of the statue from Grand Park as well as to supporting arts and educational programming to promote truth, reconciliation, healing and recognition of the original peoples of Los Angeles, Indigenous peoples that now call Los Angeles home, and voices historically marginalized or underrepresented.

In addition, since April 2018 the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission have been working with the City of Los Angeles and the Office of Councilmember Mitch O’ Farrell by offering assistance in the planning and preparation for the first ever Indigenous Peoples Day celebration in Los Angeles on October 8, 2018. The event is a direct result of Councilmember O’Farrell’s successful effort to change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day in the City of Los Angeles in 2017.

To date, the following actions have been taken or are in process:

- The Los Angeles County Arts Commission has acknowledged the request by the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission and the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission for the deaccessioning of the statue;
- A temporary barrier will be erected around the statue and the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission will lead the coordination of an on-site activation during the Indigenous Peoples Day celebration on October 8, 2018 along with the third in a series of three panels on *Decolonizing and Indigenizing Public Space*;
- The Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission will lead the coordination, working closely with the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, to develop a temporary art installation for Native American Indian Heritage Month in November 2018;
- Community conversations have occurred on August 30, 2018 and September 19, 2018 hosted by the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission throughout LA County;
- The Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations are reviewing all options for the removal of the statue from Grand Park in compliance with the LA County Civic Art policy and procedures.

Alexandra Valdes
Executive Director
Los Angeles City/County Native
American Indian Commission

Kristin Sakoda
Executive Director
Los Angeles County
Arts Commission

Robin S. Toma, Esq.
Executive Director
Los Angeles County Human Relations
Commission



For inquiries, contact the Los Angeles County Arts Commission at 213-202-5858.