

The California Indian Cultural Center and Museum Task Force  
Workshop  
May 29-30, 2003  
*Summary of charts produced in the workshop*

*Note: The California Indian Cultural Center and Museum is referred to as the "CICCM" in this summary document*

**Reviewing the 1991 California Indian Cultural Center and Museum Study**

Task force comments:

The Museum Network

- The network should be a low priority at this point
- I would also like to discuss the envisioned primary or dual purpose of the central facility should it be geared for public access reasons or located for more cultural center considerations?
- Need a central hub with connections to regional museums
- I would like to talk more about the sensitivities associated with the word museum and what other terms would be immediately recognizable by the general public
- Who is the key expected audience/participant/community? School children, general public, California Indian community ... all or some?
- Is one centrally located facility realistic based on the diversity of California Indian tribes and cultures?
- Tribal co-op
- Do local centers want to be a part of a larger state network? Have they been asked?
- Network: "nameless place" as central facility, not everything for every one, network as the second phase others participate

Indoor and Outdoor Facilities

- A central location limits many Native Peoples from participation
- Indoor statewide. Outdoor regional as an ecological issue
- Indoor and outdoor facilities are important to the story of a cultural center
- Indoor and outdoors facilities definitely needed and enough space for villages. Needs to be near flowing water
- Is it a museum (objects, collection, history) or a cultural center?
- Appropriate connection to land

Collections

- As in the book
- Individual tribes decide on displays, no collections in the traditional sense
- What part would the tribal communities play in the collections and curation?

- Other entities (universities, general museums, individual collectors, etc) should be contacted to gain a sense of the scope of interest
- Repatriations? (Tribal, state conservancy) Some items do “die” and may need to be let go.

#### Interpretive Themes

- Individual tribes determine what they want to tell and how to do that
- California history from a Native perspective, “holocaust” approach ... “It did happen”
- Honoring the local people with “special recognition”
- Separation from the past and the present
- Important, critical ... past/present

#### Ongoing Operations

- Tribal co-op with management
- A governing board dominated by representatives of the California Indian tribes/communities
- A foundation structure should be set up as a priority (non-profit?) to begin to secure funds. Legislation?

#### Events and Programs

- Staffing by Native community
- Events and programs to be determined by tribes with assistance from staff
- Do not dress in period, do need to sponsor “Big Times”

#### The Next Step

- Must be in Sacramento
- Location, location, location

#### Additional Comments

- This could be overwhelming if we do not structure in phases

### **Visioning Session: Generating Ideas**

*“What will people be saying about the CICCM 10 years from now?”*

#### California Indians

- We are part of the museum ... our story is being told
- We can trust this relationship (over time, this generates more involvement)
- It is culturally sensitive and consistent with our values
- We have pride in what is presented
- Look what we did
- It is alive and dynamic, not relegated to the past
- We can take part in it and learn

- There is a healing quality ... elders too are proud to be involved

#### General Public

- Getting both the history and a contemporary view
- There is an understanding and appreciation for California Indian spiritual values
- Legislators and their families realize that “these are real people” and as a result ... there is greater statewide support for the needs and interests of California Indians
- Every generation of legislators is “trained”
- People in power are making decisions that make a difference in California Indians lives

#### Out of State and Foreign Visitors

- Out of state Indians are inspired to do this in their own communities
- International connections are strengthened ... especially when it comes to repatriation

#### Local Community

- It’s the best thing that has happened in this community
- It is bringing in jobs ... improving the economy
- The CICCM is known as a responsible entity in the community
- The local Native community feels honored, they approve, they are represented
  - The ceremonial grounds are reflective of the local Native community

#### Funders/Donors

- Why didn’t we do this sooner?
- Would the CICCM be viewed as a competitor to others?

*What characteristics of the site and buildings will be most important?*

#### The Site

- Could be one site downtown that functions as a showcase or gateway to the CICCM for the general public (and politicians) providing access and education
- Another remote site for the “meaningful” and curatorial functions of the center (research, training, ceremonies, healing) with an emphasis on tribal use and research
  - Staff with technical expertise
  - Top flight facility
- A spiritual place
- A presence in Sacramento
- It has to tell many stories
- Has connections to other Indian cultural centers and museums
- There is a central curation facility that tells the statewide story
  - Elders participate
  - It lends “know how”
  - Functions as an incubator

- Has power and influence
- A dynamic center set in varied natural terrain (with running water)
  - Representing the bioregions of California
- Other (not historically from California) Indian Tribes could be included by way of the history of Indian Peoples in California and the story of relocation.

#### The Buildings

- Research facility
  - Not intimidating (example: “Breath of Life” and Lonely Hearts Club)
- A prayer room ... for healing (and ceremony)
- A glimpse of the past ... no barriers between visitors and recreations of historically accurate/ traditional spaces
- Training facilities for teacher institutes and in-service training
  - Also internship opportunities

#### Overall Discussion Points:

- Elders are acknowledged for their contributions and recognized
- California Indians feel ownership of the CICCM ... it is a safe place to gather
- A place for healing from both the Indian and non Indian perspectives
- It is dynamic (it is about the past and the present) and important
- Tell the story of California Indians history to the present
  - How did we get here
  - Tell it to those who can impact our future ... help them understand the situation
  - Tell the story of California Indian diversity
- The CICCM is a clearinghouse of information that supports the existing network of related sites
- Collections
  - Have to be handled spiritually
  - At the cultural center it is Indian people who are telling these stories
- Addressing federally recognized and not federally recognized tribes
  - Represent California Indian tribes ethnographically, not politically
  - A “cultural basin” view that encompasses all Indians that presently or historically lived in each region
- The site
  - The center of the site/building tells the whole story
  - Surrounded by separate wings that tell a more detailed regional/local story ... providing a reference point but not trying to recreate everything

#### **Site Visit Debrief**

##### General Discussion

- Site selection should be based on our intent
- What is conducive to our needs?

- The urban site we visited is constrained by the limited acreage and we don't know how receptive the future residents of the development will feel about the activity the CICCM will bring
- On the plus side: it is free, the developers feel they could help us raise 60 million dollars to build it, and the presence of the CICCM could influence the look and feel of the entire property
- Outdoor elements are most important to the local Indians (yes and ... we all still have the same connection to nature wherever we are)
- Indoors everyone's culture can be represented
- Cultural Center implies an exchange of ideas
- Having both indoor and outdoor elements is essential
- Concerns about sustainability (operating budget and who can subsidize it)

#### Qualities and Characteristics of an Ideal Site

- Breeze
- The presence of the "first people" (birds, fish, snakes, hawks, jack rabbits, plants trees and so on)
- Wetlands

#### The Downside of the Natoma Site

- Pollution, boat racing, the summer heat, the view across the lake of urban buildings, it is public space making privacy an issue

### **Recapping the Workshop**

#### Should the CICCM be One Place?

- More drawn to having a place where it is all together
- Perhaps using the existing West Sacramento warehouse as a (satellite) research facility

#### What is the Cultural Centers Role with Regard to other Regional/Local Centers?

- The CICCM can bring it all together for everybody
- Can serve to help tribes that want to re-learn/re-connect with their cultural heritage
- A place for ceremonies
- A place for native languages
- Hosting summits and symposia
- A center for university relationships and internship opportunities

#### Should the Site be in the State Capital Region or Elsewhere?

- Note: some feel that it should be in the State Capital region ... it is centrally located in the state providing access from the North or the South, and being in/near the State Capital there is a greater chance of having an impact on statewide decision makers. There is also an argument to make for exploring other sites near bigger population areas (especially Southern California)

Who Could/Should be Potential Partners

- State school superintendents
- Universities
- State Libraries
- Developers

Re-naming the CICCM

- It was proposed that there should be some consideration of coming up with a more desirable name (museum has negative connotations) and three options were proposed
  - Cultural Center
  - Heritage Center
  - Cultural History Center