



# Airport Connector Update

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## Blessing of the Ground

Today's Blessing of the Ground is a welcome and blessing performed by Chiefs of the [Chickahominy](#), [Eastern Chickahominy](#) and [Upper Mattaponi](#) Indian tribes. The ritual involves the sprinkling of native tobacco and a ceremonial dance by chiefs and other tribal members wearing traditional regalia. The intricate beadwork and construction needed to create a full set of regalia can take years to complete, and some elements, such as feathers, are often more than 100 years old and can be fragile. The ritual and dance involves the **drum**, a term that refers to the instrument as well as to the person who plays it. The drummer sings along in the traditional Algonquin language. The drum sets the pace for the dancers and is often referred to as "the heartbeat of the people" in honor of past generations.

During the ceremony, onlookers are asked to observe the following etiquette:

- Please take photographs only when the master of ceremonies indicates photos may be taken. While some native ceremonies and dances cannot be photographed, the Blessing of the Ground being performed for the Airport Connector groundbreaking includes a dance that can be photographed and recorded.
- Please stand during songs. A blessed area is considered sacred ground, so please treat the area with appropriate respect.
- Please do not touch or handle any part of a dancer's regalia.
- Please do not smoke during a ceremony.