

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** David Newman, Mayor Pro Tem  
Bob Engler, Councilmember  
Kevin McNamee, Councilmember

**DATE:** December 3, 2024

**SUBJECT: 2024 National League of Cities City Summit Conference**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Receive report.
2. Find that this action is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines.

**LEVINE ACT ITEM: No**

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

**No Additional Funding Requested.** Direct and indirect costs for attendance at the conference and preparation of this report are included in the Adopted FY 2024-25 General Fund Budget.

**BACKGROUND:**

The National League of Cities (NLC) is the oldest and largest national organization representing municipal governments throughout the United States. The NLC's mission is to strengthen and promote cities as centers of opportunity, leadership, and governance. Working in partnership with the 49 State municipal leagues, the NLC serves as a resource to, and an advocate for, the more than 18,000 cities, villages, and towns it represents.

**DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:**

The NLC Annual City Summit Conference was held November 12-16, 2024, at the Tampa Convention Center in Tampa, FL. City officials gather annually for policy committee meetings and workshops to learn about current practices and programs for America's cities and towns. At the Annual Business Meeting, policy committees present resolutions for adoption by member cities which serve as the NLC program

platform and elect new officers. This year NLC is celebrating its centennial anniversary with the theme “1924-2024 A Century of Strengthening Cities.” Mayor Pro Tem Newman, Councilmember Engler, Councilmember McNamee, and Legislative Affairs Manager Layba attended this year’s conference.

#### A. Pre-Conference Meetings

##### 1. Public Safety Crime Prevention Federal Advocacy Committee (PSCP)

Councilmember Engler serves on the NLC PSCP and the committee held their meeting on November 12, 2024, during a pre-conference day. The meeting convened as follows:

Tampa Police Chief Lee Bercaw - Chief Bercaw has been with the Tampa Police Department (TPD) since 1997. He shared some of his strategies for crime reduction based on TPD’s “real time crime center.” The center allows TPD and other state and federal agencies to monitor an undisclosed number of cameras, positioned all over the city. Cameras are used to:

- deploy officers to pinpoint locations during a 911 call, in the event of emergencies and disasters;
- monitor community events such as parades and festivals;
- in criminal apprehensions, investigations, and even finding missing or lost senior adults or children.

The interactive map helps solve crimes faster by sharing exact street, date, and time.

Tampa Fire Chief Barbara Tripp - Chief Tripp is a native of Tampa and served on the Tampa Fire Department (TFD) for the last 27 years. She shared operations and priorities of TFD. TFD is dedicated to providing vital services encompassing fire prevention, fire protection, fire suppression, and emergency medical services for the seriously ill and injured. TFD consists of operations, rescue, communications, prevention, and administrative divisions, and operates 23 fire stations and two rescue stations across the city and MacDill Air Force Base. Firefighters are at the forefront of emergency response, providing crucial fire suppression and advanced life support (ALS) services. They are supported by rescue transport personnel who operate ALS transport vehicles delivering essential medical care and transportation. TFD also coordinates hazardous materials response, building codes and the emergency 911 call center.

The next PSCP meeting will be held at the NLC Congressional Cities Conference in Washington D.C. March 9-13, 2025.

2. Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Federal Policy Committee

Mayor Pro Tem Newman serves on the NLC Energy, Environment and Natural Resources (EENR) Federal Policy Committee.

EENR held their meeting on November 12, 2024, during a pre-conference day. The meeting convened as follows:

Federal Advocacy Update: Carolyn Berndt - Legislative Director for Sustainability, Federal Advocacy. NLC held fly-in meetings to meet with members of Congress throughout the year. Before the Presidential election, NLC worked with both candidates to advocate for local interests through a transition team and laid the groundwork to continue working with the new White House team. NLC will also work with newly elected congressional members and their staff to share local priorities. NLC urges cities to send a letter for the reauthorization of the Emergency Supplemental Disaster Relief. The priorities for the remainder of the Lame Duck session and 2025 were reviewed including the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) reauthorization. NLC is also working on a bill to help streamline local grants in 2025

NLC President David Sander - thanked the EENR Committee for their work during the 2024 year. He reminded committee members to reapply to serve for the 2025 term.

Michelle Marcello - Senior Advisor for State and Local Governments, Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - encouraged cities to meet with representatives while at the City Summit to learn more about their programs.

Susan Moulton - Corporate Director Public Sector Solutions for Waste Management (WM) - shared information on the Recycle Right Campaign. WM and NLC partnered to develop a campaign and online toolbox to encourage cities to take a pledge to support local recycling efforts.

Catherine Werner - the new Director of Sustainability and Innovation for NLC's Center for Municipal Practice - introduced her team working on sustainability and climate issues. The team is focused on renewable energy, nature-based solutions for resilience, community and environmental health, and biophilic urbanism. These areas align with federal grants and technical assistance. The team also publishes various sustainability solutions through fact sheets and studies that are featured on their website. NLC will send out a survey to determine how the Sustainability and Innovation team can best provide new resources to address climate change.

The next EENR meeting will be held at the NLC Congressional Cities Conference in Washington D.C. March 9-13, 2025

3. Joint Federal Advocacy Committee Meeting- Accelerating Community Recovery After Disasters

PSCP, EENR, and Community and Economic Development (CED) Federal Advocacy Committees met to discuss how federal, state and local governments can collaborate to help communities recover swiftly following a disaster. Representatives from the Office of Disaster Recovery and Resilience, U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Region 4 provided insight on how their agencies can better align with local officials in responding to disasters.

SBA created regional local coordinators to connect with cities before a disaster. FEMA developed a program to familiarize cities with its role and what type of response they provide during a natural disaster. They hold monthly meetings with State Directors who share threat assessments with regional directors. FEMA is working with regional directors to share this information with local governments. They are developing technical assistance training for mitigation, grants management, and preparedness assistance programs.

SBA encourages cities to support businesses to become more resilient before a storm arrives. They encourage cities to invite SBA and FEMA to participate in emergency response exercises. Cities should share their designated disaster recovery centers, so SBA knows where to respond.

FEMA's focus is mitigation on the front end. They suggest cities identify gaps or challenges in response so that FEMA can aid in addressing them before a storm. Cities should examine critical infrastructure, vulnerabilities such as electricity and water, and access in and out of hospitals. Having this level of information will help FEMA.

Lastly, the one important role for cities is to inform the public. Intercommunication between agencies is crucial. Cities should set up a communication structure among policymakers, stakeholders, and the public. Both FEMA and SBA encourage cities to coordinate with their office by using their publications to communicate with the public.

B. Conference Program

1. Welcome: NLC President David Sander, Mayor of Rancho Cordova, CA and Mayor Jane Castor, City of Tampa, FL welcomed delegates and provided a rundown of the conference schedule. Mayor Castor shared Tampa's recovery after Hurricanes Helene and Milton.
2. Mistress of Ceremonies: During each general session, Soledad O'Brien, host of the Sunday morning syndicated political show, *Matter of Fact with Soledad O'Brien*, and anchor at NBC served as the mistress of ceremonies. At the top of each general session, she set the tone in celebration of NLC's Centennial Anniversary focusing on the past, present, and future of the organization and introduced speakers.
3. Keynote Speakers

Jennie Taylor, the wife of former Mayor of North Ogden City and Gold Star Widow of Utah Army National Guard Major Brent Taylor, shared her story of endurance. After her husband's passing while deployed in Afghanistan, she started a program called "Our Mutual Pledge." During a time of political incivility, this is a pledge for public officials to create a common bond with their communities. With the current political polarization in this country, she believes that local leaders can bridge the gap. As part of the mutual pledge, local leaders should be willing to have a: (1) conversation and be willing to listen, (2) have a heart and be empathetic, and (3) have the backbone and courage to make the right decisions.

Lindsey Vonn, Olympic gold and bronze medal-winning alpine ski racer and best-selling author, discussed how she got started in skiing. At the tender age of nine, she shared her dream with her parents to become an Olympian and worked with them to set a 10-year plan. She idolized Olympian Picabo Street. Through hard work and injuries, she met her goals. She attributes her resilience and positive outlook to her mom, who is a cancer survivor. She also discovered that her fellow U.S. competitors are not only her allies, but also her greatest supporters. This helped to strengthen the U.S. Ski Team. In her retirement, she runs a foundation to help young girls build their self-confidence, provides scholarships, and is working on an empowerment curriculum to distribute to schools and libraries.

Crystal Washington, futurist and author discussed the power of artificial intelligence (AI). The speaker shared that the rate of change increases stress. Through a series of audience participation exercises, she stressed the need for data-driven decision-making. She encouraged city leaders to look at data, ask open-ended questions, and get info from knowledgeable people. All

decisions should be made based on data. As new modes of technology develop, city leaders should have empathy for change. The speaker notes, that we will never be caught up with the fast-paced nature of change and technology, instead, she urges curiosity to drive change.

#### **4. Corporate Partners' Presentations**

Wells Fargo: April Blanco, Director of Southeast Government Relations, discussed Wells Fargo's partnership with small businesses during the recent hurricanes in Tampa, Florida. Wells Fargo provided counseling and assistance so businesses can resume operations after the hurricanes.

Enterprise Mobility: Chrissy Taylor, CEO, shared their company's philosophy in serving communities through volunteerism. She also discussed local initiatives for environmental sustainability. Enterprise Mobility partners with businesses to develop vanpool pool programs to reduce cars on the road. They are partnering with police departments to provide electric vehicle fleet.

Google: Mistique Cano, Director of Public Affairs, announced the AI toolkit developed in cooperation with the NLC to assist cities in early adoption and use. She shared helpful uses of AI that cities can use such as predictive weather, traffic flow, and road repair modeling.

#### **5. Distinguished Awards:**

The Corporate Stewardship Award was presented to Mission Square Retirement for its community engagement with youth.

Milestone Awards were given to 23 cities, including Beverly Hills, CA with 50 years of membership with NLC.

The 2024 National Civic League's All-America City Winners were presented to 10 cities, including Monrovia, CA.

The Public Leadership in the Arts Award was presented to Councilmember Kevin Connell, City of Cleveland, OH.

#### **6. Workshops attended by City Representatives include:**

- Cybersecurity Ready
- Crafting a Priority Based Budget
- The Future of Work: Preparing Your Community
- Fostering AI (Artificial Intelligence) Adoption: Creating a Supportive Policy Environment for Local Business

- Student Loans and Public Sector Employment: Promoting Financial Wellbeing, Acquisition and Retention
- Securing Capital for Housing Development: Strategies and Partnerships for Success
- Get Current with New Drinking Water Regulations
- Housing Strategies to End Homelessness
- Vision Zero: Making Tampa's Roads Safer Mobile Tour
- Tampa's Historic Streetcar Mobile Tour
- Tampa Historic District- Ybor City Mobile Tour
- Tampa Cigar City – Mobile Tour
- Protecting Drinking Water Quality and Removing Forever Chemicals- Mobile Tour

**7. President's Address:**

President David Sander, Mayor of Rancho Cordova, recapped his term in office. NLC kicked-off the centennial celebration with a Mobile Road Show. NLC leaders visited over 130 cities to learn about their communities and meet their residents. (A video montage of the Road Show was shown). He had the opportunity to build partnerships with local corporate sponsors and address several state leagues. NLC continued to provide the Infrastructure Hub grant training program to cities. (A video of interviews featuring elected officials from cities awarded grants featured a clip of Mayor Pro Tem Newman and Councilmember Engler). He convened an AI advisory committee to help cities use this new technology in partnership with Google. He convened the NLC's Presidential Task Force to work with both candidates and now with the Trump administration to ensure they are familiar with the needs and priorities of cities.

**8. CEO Address:**

NLC Executive Director Clarence Anthony shared his annual CEO Address. This year City Summit had 4,000 delegates, the largest attendance thus far. He reflected on the history of the organization. 100 years ago, 10 cities developed the American Municipal Association at the University of Kansas, in Lawrence Kansas. The founding members recognized the need for a coalition of local governments. NLC is now 2,800 cities strong and is a highly revered organization.

Even as the country has faced political polarization, cities are recognized as the most trustworthy levels of government. NLC has already developed a 100-day transition plan to work with the new administration. As many new congressional members are elected to serve for their first time in office, NLC will meet with each member and their staff to discuss the importance of local governments. He asks local leaders for help in bridging those relationships.

He shared his experience in participating in the NLC Mobile Roadshow. He was thrilled to meet officials from 130 cities across the country, see their towns, and learn about their communities.

#### 9. Incoming President's Address

Incoming 2025 President, Sharon Weston Broome, Mayor- City of Baton Rouge, LA provided her background as a former state legislator, reporter, and communications professor. She is excited to lead NLC in 2025. During her term with the slogan, "Pathways to a Brighter Future" she would like to continue the Infrastructure Hub and find ways to bring additional grant resources to cities, especially those with underserved communities. She would like the NLC to research developing a Stormwater Master Plan to address issues related to extreme heat and flooding. With the political polarization affecting cities, she would like to improve civil discourse between elected officials and residents through a prevention academy.

#### 10. Annual Business Meeting:

State of the Organization: NLC Executive Director Clarence Anthony reported that the organization's finances are strong with \$24.1 million in assets. NLC has 2,800 members and is still growing. In 2024 NLC continued to host a free Infrastructure Hub with the sponsorship of Bloomberg Philanthropy. Over 1,000 cities have participated in the grant training. This year NLC celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. To commemorate this milestone NLC received sponsorship from corporate partners including Google, Waste Management, Wells Fargo, Enterprise Mobility, and Amazon. No membership funds were used for events and programs to celebrate the centennial. One highlight of the celebration was the Mobile Road Show, where NLC leaders traveled by RV to visit 130 cities.

Recognizing the need for housing, NLC created the Housing Supply Accelerator Initiative which provides a toolkit to help cities develop more housing opportunities.

They also created a Good Jobs Academy to help cities support employment and technical education in their communities. NLC also dedicated May as "National Cities Month."

NLC developed a Presidential Task Force to begin discussions with both presidential candidates. As a new White House Administration takes office in January, NLC is prepared to work with President Trump and his staff to bring cities' needs and priorities to their attention.



The 2025 Officers and Board of Directors were elected and sworn in. The 2025 Officers are:

- President: Sharon Westin Broome, Mayor, Baton Rouge, LA
- First Vice Chair: Steve Patterson, Mayor, Athens, OH
- Second Vice Chair: Kevin Kramer, Councilmember, Louisville, KY
- Immediate Past President: David Sander, Mayor, Rancho Cordova, CA

Adoption of 2024 Resolutions: Mayor Pro Tem Newman served as the City's voting delegate and Councilmember Bob Engler served as the alternate voting delegate. New policy resolutions were reviewed and adopted by the voting delegates for inclusion as National Municipal Policy. The National Municipal Policy is a living document that codifies all policy positions that the organization advocates for on Capitol Hill.

Forty-seven existing resolutions were amended or renewed. The delegation unanimously approved six new resolutions:

- Urging Congress to Ensure Accurate Counts for All Municipalities in the 2030 Census
- Support of Legislation to Streamline the Federal Grant Processes
- Support and Advance Cities Impacted by Federal Facilities and Infrastructure through Community Benefit Programs
- Urging Federal Support for Local Governments Assisting Immigrants and Asylum Seekers
- Urging Congress to Pass Legislation Providing Increased Support to Local Governments for Wildfire Prevention, Response, And Recovery Efforts
- Urging Congress to Pass Legislation to Reform the Community Development Block Grant -Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

#### 11. NLC Congressional Cities Conference:

The next NLC convening will take place in Washington, D.C. March 8-12, 2025.

### **COUNCIL GOAL COMPLIANCE:**

Meets the following City Council goal:

C. Operate City government in a fiscally and managerially responsible and prudent manner to ensure that the City of Thousand Oaks remains one of California's most desirable places to live, work, visit, recreate, and raise a family.

**PREPARED BY:** Mina Layba, Legislative Affairs Manager