

TO: City Council

FROM: Bob Engler and Mikey Taylor, Councilmembers

DATE: October 10, 2023

SUBJECT: Update on League of California Cities Annual Conference,
September 20-22, 2023

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Receive report.
2. Find that this action is not a project as defined under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

No Additional Funding Requested. Cost for City Council attendance and administrative tasks are included in the Adopted FY 2023-24 General Fund Budget.

BACKGROUND:

The League of California Cities (Cal Cities) is an association of California city officials who work together to enhance their knowledge and skills, exchange information, and combine resources so they may influence policy decisions that affect cities.

Founded in 1898 on the principles of local control and interagency cooperation, Cal Cities has grown from a handful of public officials to include the voluntary membership of 476 California cities. Today, Cal Cities and its member cities are working hard to strengthen the effectiveness of their advocacy efforts. Cal Cities mission statement reflects this commitment to “expand and protect local control for cities through education and advocacy to enhance the quality of life for all Californians.”

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

The 2023 Cal Cities annual conference was held at the SAFE Credit Union Convention Center in Sacramento, CA. The conference took place on September 20-22, 2023. The annual conference provided training opportunities, workshops, and networking for local elected officials and staff. Of special note, the conference celebrated Cal Cities' 125th Anniversary. Councilmembers Bob Engler, Mikey Taylor, and select staff members attended the conference.

1. General Session Presentations:

A. Opening General Session

Cal Cities President Ali Sajjad Taj – Councilmember City of Artesia, welcomed conference delegates, introduced the 2023 Board of Directors, and provided an overview of conference events and the celebration of Cal Cities' 125th Anniversary.

City of Sacramento Vice Mayor Eric Guerra welcomed delegates. He shared changes to Sacramento since the pandemic. New features of the City include expanded outdoor entertainment and more mixed-use multi-income housing in the downtown core.

Cal Cities CEO and Executive Director Carolyn Coleman presented the State of Cal Cities Annual Report: Cal Cities is celebrating its 125-year anniversary. The completion of the transcontinental railroad led to a population boom in California. Cities began to develop including the state university system, public infrastructure, and highways. Only one hundred cities existed at that time. Coleman reviewed accomplishments for the last year to address economic challenges, homelessness, housing crisis, and climate change. Cal Cities advocated for over 1,700 bills, pursued board priorities, and published editorials. This year, they also reviewed ballot measures and offered training and education.

National League of Cities (NLC) President Victoria Woodards, Mayor of the City of Tacoma, Washington addressed the delegation. She congratulated Cal Cities on its 125th Anniversary and shared that the NLC is celebrating its 100th anniversary. She announced that the incoming 2024 President of NLC will be from California. David Sander, Councilmember of the City of Rancho Cordova will be inaugurated at the annual conference. She stressed the importance of partnerships with cities nationwide and reminded delegates that such partnerships led to the passage of the American Rescue Plan and Inflation Reduction Act. She reminded cities that NLC is accepting applications for their grant-writing hub for local infrastructure funding and of the upcoming annual City Summit Conference in Atlanta in November 2023.

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Randi Johl, Chair of the Nominating Committee and City Clerk of the City of Temecula announced the slate of officers for 2024 for election at the General Assembly:

President: Daniel Parra - City of Fowler

1st Vice President: Lynne Kennedy - City of Rancho Cucamonga (Kennedy replaces Lisa Middleton, Councilmember, City of Palm Springs, who is stepping down to run for State Senate in 2024.)

2nd Vice President: Gabe Quinto - City of El Cerrito

Immediate Past President: Ali Sajjad Taj - City of Artesia

Lifetime Achievement Award presented to Betsy Strauss - Cal Cities Special Counsel. Strauss was instrumental in the passage of Proposition 1A and the development of the Assembly Constitutional Amendment (ACA 1), which will be on the November 2024 ballot.

B. Second General Session

Cal Cities First Vice President Daniel Parra, Councilmember City of Fowler welcomed delegates to the second day of the conference. He acknowledged and thanked the 2023 Chairs of the seven policy committees. He presented the outgoing President Ali Sajjad Taj with thank-you gifts for his service, and a video montage was presented of his activities for the year.

C. Closing Session

Election of New Cal Cities Officers: 2024 Cal Cities officers were installed. 2023 President Ali Sajjad Taj provided both outgoing comments, and newly elected 2024 President Daniel Parra provided inaugural comments.

Beacon Awards for efforts in supporting greenhouse gas reduction and sustainability were presented to the cities of Carlsbad, Piedmont, West Hollywood, Irvine, Santa Rosa, Oxnard, and Needles.

The 2023 Leadership and Innovation recipient is the City of Redwood City.

Cities for Workforce Health Awards and \$5,000 grants were bestowed upon the cities of Glendora, Indian Wells, Petaluma, and Rocklin.

Helen Putnam Awards were presented for achievements in specific initiatives:

- City of Riverside, Economic Development Through the Arts
- City of Azusa, Community Services and Economic Development
- City of Moreno Valley, Ruth Vreeland Award for Engaging Youth in City Government
- City of Modesto, Public Safety

- City of Corona, Enhancing Public Trust, Ethics, and Community Involvement
- City of Agoura Hills, Internal Administration
- City of Pleasanton, Health and Wellness Programs
- City of Corona, Planning and Environmental Quality
- City of Santa Monica, Public Works, Infrastructure, Transportation
- City of West Sacramento, League Partners Award for Excellence in City-Business Relations
- City of Modesto, Housing Programs and Innovations
- City of Shafter, Intergovernmental Collaboration

2. Keynote Speakers:

A. Matt Lehrman - Managing Director of Social Prosperity Partners: The speaker discussed the concept of collaborative leadership. He discussed strategies for how to shift disagreements from conflict to conversation. Using audience participation via electronic phone surveys, the speaker demonstrated the need for elected officials to determine (1) their leadership imperative; (2) how to find common ground; (3) what the community wants; and (4) overcome divisiveness through courageous conversations.

B. Brandon Fleming - Former Harvard University Debate Coach: The speaker shared his personal life as an at-risk teen, his struggles with a failed college athletic career, and his experience working with at-risk youth in Atlanta to become national debate champions. His primary message to delegates is that stories are the gateway to empathy. He encouraged elected officials to lead with compassion to help address local issues and build success. Connecting with residents will help build bridges and create stronger communities.

C. Valerie Vigoda - Former U.S. Army Lieutenant turned award-winning singer and electric violinist: The speaker revealed how disappointments from her personal life, experience touring with well-known Grammy artists, and creation of off-Broadway theater production gave her the ability to gain confidence through creativity. The speaker interspersed performances featuring songs and played her electric violin throughout her presentation.

3. Conference Breakout Sessions Attended:

- Homelessness to Housed: How Cities Create and Leverage Strong Partnerships
- Minority Leaders Reshaping Local Government (Assistant City Manager Ingrid Hardy was a featured panelist)
- California Cannabis – Seven Years after Legalization
- Navigating the New State Housing Laws
- Addressing the Fentanyl Crisis
- Building in Economically Challenging Times

- Assets and Opportunities – Surplus Land Act
- After the Storms: Lessons Learned from the California Storms
- Adapting Main Street for a Changing Retail Landscape
- A Local Agency's Guide to HCD's Housing Accountability Unit
- Reducing Wildfire Risk to Wildland – Urban Interface Communities
- California Economic Forecast – A Look Ahead
- Pay to Play No More? Levine Act (SB 1239)

4. Channel Counties Division Meeting

The Channel Counties Division hosted a reception of its member cities representing Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo Counties. Division Chair Erica Stewart, Mayor of San Luis Obispo announced that the next division meeting will take place in the City of Buellton on Friday, October 27, 2023. Reservation and lodging information will be sent after the conference. Applications to serve on a 2024 policy committee are now online and due on October 13, 2023. A brief tribute was made to former division chair and Mayor of Paso Robles, Steve Martin, who passed away in August 2023.

5. General Assembly – Cancelled. No Conference Resolutions

No resolutions were received by the Cal Cities Resolutions Committee by the July 22, 2023, deadline. No resolutions "by petition" were received by the deadline of June 21, 2023, 8:30 a.m. As a result, the General Assembly/Annual Business Meeting did not have any bylaw amendments or resolutions to review or that required action. Councilmember Engler was the City's appointed voting delegate in the event that a resolution was introduced.

6. The 2024 Annual Conference

Long Beach Convention Center- October 16-18, 2024.

COUNCIL GOAL COMPLIANCE:

Meets the following City Council goal:

B. Provide municipal government leadership which is open and responsive to residents, and is characterized by ethical behavior, stability, promoting public trust, transparency, confidence in the future, and cooperative interaction among civic leaders, residents, business representatives, and staff, while recognizing and respecting legitimate differences of opinion on critical issues facing the City.

PREPARED BY: Mina Layba, Legislative Affairs Manager