

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Councilmember Robert Huitt

Meeting Date: October 21, 2015

Subject: Report of attendance at League of California Cities Meeting
September 30-October 2, 2015
San Jose, California

I attended the LOCC Annual Conference in San Jose, along with Mayor Kampe and City Manager Frutchey. We rode up together in the Mayor's car, arriving early afternoon on Wednesday and leaving early afternoon on Friday. My registration and two nights of lodging were paid by the City. Following is a summary of the sessions I attended.

Wednesday

1:30. Mayors and Council Members Department Meeting: Cities and Regional Entities Can Work Together to Accomplish Greater Goals.

General theme: regional collaboration through COGs and RTPAs is preferable to either top-down impositions by the state or fragmented local control. Panelists gave examples, including regional revenue sharing to offset effects of fiscalization of land use, collaboration on purchasing, fleet maintenance, and public safety, and the HERO program which started as a regional collaboration in Riverside County. One problem is relatively few local officials have the long tenures needed to learn the complexities of regional organizations. It was noted that transportation sales taxes sponsored by RTPAs are supported because voters trust regional officials to spend the money properly.

Panel: Bill Higgins, Executive Director, CALCOG; Carl Morehouse, Ventura Councilmember; David Sander, Rancho Cardova and SACOG.

3:00. General Session; Keynote, Annual Report.

One of the Helen Putnam Awards for Excellence, in the category of Community Services and Economic Development, went to Salinas for their Steinbeck Innovation Cluster, focusing on smart farming and precision agriculture. Former Salinas Mayor Anna Caballero, a founder of the League's Hispanic Caucus, received the Past Presidents' Lifetime Achievement Award.

The keynote address was given by State Librarian Greg Lucas, who spoke of the new and expanded roles of libraries in the internet age. The internet has made libraries and librarians more important than ever; there are more books published than ever before; and libraries are becoming key centers for diversity and activity. Favorite line from the speech: "The best investment in the future is to teach someone to read."

5:00. Exhibits.

One of the booths I visited was the City of La Mesa's Intergenerational Safe Routes to School Program, another Putnam Award winner. The program is a collaboration between the City and the local school district which enlists senior citizen

volunteers in safety enhancements for students walking to and from school. It seems like something we might want to explore with PGUSD.

Thursday

8:00. Driving Ahead for Funding: What Will We Do About Our Crumbling Transportation System?

A detailed exposition of the perfect storm of trends and conditions that are resulting in continuing deterioration of the system, including both local streets and state highways. Passenger miles traveled continue to increase, while revenues, largely from gas tax, continue to decline with greater fuel efficiency and more hybrids and electric vehicles. Federal funding is further jeopardized by political partisanship on an issue that used to be non-partisan.

On a more positive note, the rapid growth of autonomous driving technology combined with increased vehicle-sharing could reduce the burden on existing infrastructure, including parking garages and lots as well as roadways, which will be able to accommodate more vehicles in a given amount of space.

In the meantime, under SB1077, passed in 2014, the California Transportation Commission is developing a pilot program to assess the feasibility of a mileage-based road usage charge. A 15-member technical advisory committee and 25-member working group have been established to design a pilot program which is scheduled to start in mid-2016 and be completed a year later.

Panel: Jennifer Whiting, LOCC Assistant Legislative Director; Jim Madaffer, President, Madaffer Enterprises and CTC member; Joshua Shaw, Executive Director, California Transit Association.

9:45. General Session; Keynote

An update on National League of Cities activities was presented by LOC President Ralph Becker, Mayor of Salt Lake City, who emphasized the inherently non-partisan nature of most issues at the local government level, where citizens want problems to be solved.

Kevin de Leon, LOCC President Pro Tem, spoke about California's leadership on climate change and sustainability issues, and presented the Beacon Awards for mobilizing action at the local level. Recipients were Redwood City for green building standards, Hayward for green fleet program, Southgate for sustainability as catalyst for economic development, and Brisbane for low water use and emissions reductions.

Cam Marston's keynote speech expounded on the sociological and cultural differences between generations and implications for workplace relations.

Noon. Division Lunch Meeting.

Informal get-together with other attendees from cities in the Monterey Bay Division.

1:00. Cap and Trade: What Cities Need to Know

Projects eligible for cap and trade funding include transit-oriented affordable housing and sustainable community developments. Projects are required to reduce

greenhouse gas emissions, support sustainable community strategies, be consistent with state planning priorities, and be ready for implementation.

Cal Fire is administering an urban forestry grant program, Green Trees for the Golden State, in collaboration with the nonprofit California ReLeaf, to fund projects including inventories of publicly owned trees, tree planting and care, biomass utilization, and green innovations such as vegetated swales, green walls and green roofs.

Panel: Allison Joe, Deputy Director, California Strategic Growth Council; Darla Mills, Cal Fire; Chuck Mills, Director of Public Policy and Grants, California ReLeaf.

2:45. City Talks

1. Wildlife Watch: A Leadership Response to Urban Wildlife Conflict. Kent Smirl, Lieutenant, California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Lt. Smirl reported on the growing problem of conflicts between wildlife and humans in urban communities, with a focus on coyotes in Southern California. The department has developed a Wildlife Watch program patterned after the neighborhood watch model. The purpose is to help preserve and maintain wildlife in urban areas while maintaining public safety. It involves developing public safety wildlife guidelines and policies under the authority of the Fish and Game Code, and working with residents to educate them and engage them in appropriate responses. One of the key challenges is overcoming people's inclination toward anthropomorphism.

2. Why Your Community Doesn't Know What You're Doing. Sean Rossall, Cerrell Associates.

The presentation covered the use of modern communication tools to establish a two-way dialogue with citizens. The city website should be the top priority, and it should be interactive, aesthetically pleasing, and easy to navigate. Other suggestions were e-newsletters (like our Weekly Summary), internet forums—a digital extension of the traditional town hall meeting, text alerts (used sparingly), virtual records available on line, and social media like Facebook. The presentation and the Q and A afterwards left me thinking PG is doing a comparatively good job on this front, especially with the improved website.

3. The Changing Face of the Skatepark User. Aaron Spohn, Founder, Spohn Ranch Skateparks.

Many kids are taking up serious skateboarding at a younger age, including increasing numbers of girls. Also, skateparks are being made available to other sports—BMX bikes, inline skates and scooters. The most amazing and inspirational part of the presentation was video showing people in wheelchairs doing incredible tricks at skateparks, including one very young girl with spina bifida.

4:15. Emerging Issues in Policing: Implications for California Cities

Salinas Chief Kelly McMillan talked about public perception of the 1033 program, whereby surplus military equipment is transferred to civilian law enforcement agencies, illustrated by Salinas' acquisition of an MRAP to replace a broken-down old Brinks armored car that had literally been repaired with duct tape. It was the first time a

California police department had used the program to acquire an MRAP, which has a sticker price of \$600,000. The cost to Salinas was about \$4,000 for repainting and some retrofits. The department has made it clear from the outset that the vehicle would never be used in the case of demonstrations, only to preserve life.

Chief Jeri Williams from Oxnard discussed policies governing body-worn cameras, including when not to record (e.g., when interviewing victims of domestic violence or rape) and policies regarding the release of recordings to the public and media and prior review of the recording by the officer. She said that California chiefs are in favor of body-worn cameras and clear policies.

Richmond Chief Chris Magnus explained the application of procedural justice principles to policing: how people are treated can matter to them as much as the outcome. Officers need to understand the importance of how they speak to people, humanizing the experience, treating everyone with dignity and respect, maintaining neutrality and transparency, and trustworthiness.

Chief Sylvia Moir, El Cerrito, moderated the panel.

Friday

9:00. Advancing Community Support for Affordable Housing by Promoting Housing Diversity

(Mayor Kampe also attended this session. I've read his excellent summary, which covers everything in my own notes.)

10:30. Summer at City Hall: Winning Formula for Students and Staff

Sacramento initiated a program five years ago to get high school students engaged in local government. It started with 30 students, juniors and seniors, and has expanded to a hundred. The participants are a diverse group, ranging from at-risk to high-performance kids. The program lasts for 7 weeks during the summer and consists of a morning class taught by a credentialed teacher, followed by lunch and afternoon internships that consist of real work under the supervision of city employees. Participants also take on an advocacy project in their own neighborhood. The objectives include getting young people to understand how government works, to engage them actively in the process, to build relationships between generations (city employees have become enthusiastic advocates of the program), and to experience multiple professional environments.

Program coordinator Bina Lefkovitz has been working with other cities who are interested, including those who can't manage such a large "Cadillac version" program. Elk Grove, for example has developed a "Prius version" that lasts two weeks, includes two days of job shadowing, and features a mock City Council meeting. I have been in touch with Ms. Lefkovitz since the conference to explore some additional ideas that might be workable in Pacific Grove.

Panel: Jose Banda, Superintendent, Sacramento City Unified School District; Jay Schenirer, Council Member, Sacramento; Ruby Simonsen, staff to Council Member Schenirer.

Noon. Closing Session; General Assembly.

(See Mayor Kampe's summary.)