

PRIORITY

FOCUS

Analysis, Commentary and Updates on Legislative and Policy Issues that Affect California Cities

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INFRASTRUCTURE DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE WHILE DEADLINE FOR JUNE BALLOT NEARS

While there was a lot of activity around the State Capitol this week on the subject of infrastructure bonds, there are growing concerns about whether the administration and legislative leaders can develop a consensus package in time to place one or more bond measures on the June 2006 ballot. *For more, see Page 2.*

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LEAGUE REQUESTS CITY TRAFFIC EXPERTS TO ATTEND SHSP SUMMITS

The League of California Cities, on behalf of the California Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) Stakeholders committee, is asking city officials with technical expertise in city traffic to represent cities at one of two SHSP Summits, to be held March 7 in Sacramento, and March 9 in Ontario. *For more, see Page 4.*

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DEADLINE APPROACHES FOR HELEN PUTNAM AWARDS

Does your city have a wonderful new program? Want to let others know about it? SING Your City's Praises by entering the League's prestigious 2006 Helen Putnam Award for Excellence Program. The April 13 deadline is fast-approaching! *For more, see Page 4.*

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

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Infrastructure Discussions Continued from Page 1...

The deadline for reaching agreement is considered to be March 10. Virtually all parties agree that that a major investment is needed in California's infrastructure; the debate is over where and how those investments should be made.

The governor has put forth a plan that invests in transportation, education, public safety facilities and other infrastructure needs such as levees and water systems. Republicans are committed to the idea that bond money should be spent on "brick and mortar" projects to keep up with widespread growth.

Assembly Republicans also support a "pay-as-you-go" approach, by dedicating a percentage of the general fund each year to infrastructure needs, rather than relying primarily on general obligation bonds. And Democrats appear determined that any bond package must include housing, infill development, transit and education, in addition to consideration for environmental issues.

Activities This Week: Hearings and Press Conferences

The Senate Transportation and Housing Committee held a hearing on Tuesday, February 21, to ascertain what the committee's priorities are for funding within an infrastructure bond. Discussions were primarily focused on:

- 1) Spending bond funds solely on state facilities vs. regional transit and local streets and roads;
- 2) Expansion of funding priorities in addition to congestion reduction to fund safety enhancements (e.g. grade separation, bridge seismic retrofit, port security, transit security);
- 3) Funding for high-speed rail;
- 4) Affordable housing; and,
- 5) Resources for infill development and creating linkages between transportation and housing.

League Legislative Director Daniel Carrigg testified at the hearing and offered comment on the necessity of funding and incentives for local governments to provide affordable housing.

The Conference Committee on Infrastructure Bonds held an informational hearing on Thursday, February 23, during which State Treasurer Phil Angelides presented his suggestions for a bond package. Treasurer Angelides talked about the nature of investments that need to be made and commented that the state has an obligation and policy responsibility to direct funding to projects that will accommodate growth in the state's future.

Arguing that the way California grows will determine its economic competitiveness, Treasurer Angelides urged the committee to consider five principles when directing infrastructure bond funds:

- 1) Funds need to support smart growth for California.
- 2) Transportation resources should focus on mass transit and transit-oriented development.
- 3) Absent from the governor's plan, California needs the ability to fund environmental resource protections such as urban parks, coastal lands and open space acquisition.
- 4) Conservation and efficiency, in addition to new projects, must be included.
- 5) Port expansion and air quality must be considered symbiotically.

Angelides also joined in a press conference with representatives from environmental groups on February 23, which the *Sacramento Bee* described as “blasting” the governor’s Strategic Growth Plan for over-spending on highway construction and under-spending on public transportation.

A day earlier, speaking at a monthly luncheon of the Sacramento Press Club, the non-partisan legislative analyst, Elizabeth Hill, presented her analysis of the budget proposal. She concluded that the budget proposal misses an opportunity to reduce the state’s ongoing budget deficit, and spends too much of one-time revenue increases. (To see the LAO report, visit www.lao.ca.gov.)

League Task Force Continues Discussions

The League’s Infrastructure Task Force is meeting to continue discussions on various aspects of the proposals. One idea recently put forth is to give preference in allocation of bond funds to local governments that are supporting the implementation of “Regional Blueprints” around the state that place a priority on infill, transit-oriented, and more compact development.

Working for a June Ballot Package

It is still uncertain what the timeframe will be to reach consensus on an infrastructure package. However, the governor has stated he would like to see something go before voters on the June ballot. For this to happen, lawmakers must reach consensus by March 10, just three weeks away.

Senate President pro tem Don Perata and Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez have said that they are working together to make this happen, but have sent the message that it has to be done right.” They agree that a consensus should be reached by June, before budget debates are in full swing.

According to a recent article in the *Sacramento Bee*, Senator Perata and Assembly Speaker Núñez have said that if the June deadline is missed, legislators should keep on working on a public works package, although Perata said he was doubtful anything would be accomplished this year.

“In any and all circumstances, if this doesn’t get done before the primaries and before we start our budget, we will never get it done,” Perata was quoted as saying.

The Importance of the March 10 Deadline: What You Can Do

The League is committed to working with all parties to ensure that timely action is taken on negotiating a bond package in time for the June ballot. **The League urges cities to contact the governor and their legislators** - asking them to work together to pass a consensus infrastructure package by the March 10 deadline for getting a measure on the June ballot.

There is a real risk that if infrastructure bonds are not on the June ballot, election year politics will make it even more difficult to get a package for the November ballot. California cannot afford to wait. We all know that our state infrastructure is badly in need of significant investment – and working for this investment is a key League goal. Voters want action, and they want their representatives to work together to achieve it.

SHSP Summits Continued from Page 1...

The goals of the summits are to:

- Increase awareness of the California SHSP
- Disperse information regarding California safety statistics
- Encourage, assist and receive input from all attendees working together to promote and improve traffic safety in California with the ultimate goal of reducing fatalities and injuries on all roads in California.

The summits will be held at both a northern and southern California location:

- **Sacramento, March 7**, at the Sacramento Hilton, located at 2200 Harvard Street in Sacramento.
- **Ontario, March 9**, at the DoubleTree Hotel, located at 222 N. Vineyard Avenue, Ontario.

Seminar attendance will be limited; therefore registration will be on a “first-come, first-serve” basis. **The deadline for registration is March 1.** Registration is \$30. For more information, and to register, please call Sacramento State University at (916) 278-4433, or visit www.cce.csus.edu/conferences.

To view a draft agenda for the summits, visit the SHSP website at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/survey/SHSP/>. Further questions can be directed to League Legislative Analyst Leticia Farris at lfarris@cacities.org.

More About the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP)

SAFETEA-LU established a new core Highway Safety Improvement Program that is structured and funded to make significant progress in reducing highway fatalities. The program will identify safety projects and strategies that address the key safety needs of the state.

A SHSP provides a comprehensive framework for data-driven decision-making, utilizing the four E's – engineering, education, enforcement, and emergency medical services. The SHSP establishes statewide goals, objectives, and key emphasis areas in consultation with federal, state, local, and private sector safety stakeholders. In addition, the SHSP identifies high-risk rural roads, and is required to list the top five percent of locations with the greatest safety needs.

As required under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), the California Department of Transportation will lead the effort to develop the statewide Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP).

Helen Putnam Awards Continued from Page 1...

This program recognizes outstanding cities that deliver the highest quality and level of service in the most effective manner possible. Particular credit and attention is given to applications specifically advancing the League's strategic priorities.

Visit <http://www.cacities.org/helenputnam> for details on the program and how to enter!

POWAY OUTLINES STANDARD FOR TELECOM AGREEMENTS

The city of Poway is not waiting for one of the new telecommunications companies – the former telephone companies who now offer video and other cable-like services - to come knocking at its door.

On February 15, Poway Mayor Mickey Cafagna wrote to AT&T to express his city's interest in obtaining "advanced telecommunications services." He emphasized that "Our community supports and welcomes competition for telecommunications and video services."

He welcomed AT&T to come talk to the city about offering those services. But he also made clear that Poway is only interested in talking about "a franchise or similar agreement" consistent with the federal and state laws under which current franchise agreements for video service are drafted.

Other cities who may have been approached by AT&T or Verizon, offering a contract but not a franchise agreement, may find Poway's approach an interesting one. Visit the League website at www.cacities.org/telecom to view a copy of Mayor Cafagna's letter.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS DEPT. SEEKS NOMINATIONS FOR EXCELLENCE AWARD

Do you know a city employee working in personnel, human resources or labor relations, who has demonstrated exceptional service, leadership, expertise and innovation?

Now you have an opportunity to say "thank you" in a very special way, by nominating that employee for the League's Personnel and Employee Relations Department annual award program.

Each year the department recognizes one or more members of the personnel/human resources/labor relations profession for their achievements, whether specific or significant as an individual effort, or for a career of commendable service to one or more municipal agencies.

The League shares those achievements with his/her peers when the award is presented at the annual Employee Relations Seminar (ERS).

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2006 award. The Award Committee will review all nominations received by the deadline (Friday, March 31) and notify the nominator. If your nominee is selected for an award, we ask that you arrange for their attendance during an ERS (North or South) for the luncheon ceremony. The 2006 ERS *South* will take place on Thursday, April 20, at the Civic and Cultural Center in the City of Brea. ERS *North* will take place on Tuesday, April 25, at the Foster City Recreation Center.

A copy of the nomination form is available on the League's website. Click [here](#) to view and print the nomination form. Please fax or email completed nomination forms no later than **Friday, March 31**. Nomination forms may be faxed to Tony Cárdenas at (916) 658-8240, or sent via e-mail to tcardenas@cacities.org.

'FOCUS ON HOUSING': WHAT'S IN YOUR INBOX?

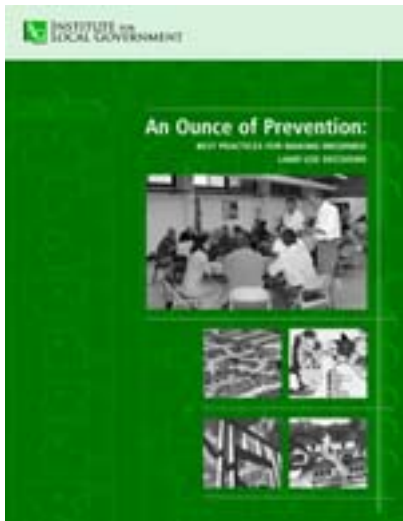
Is housing an issue in your city? Do you know someone who is interested in housing issues?

You may want to add your name to the growing list of subscribers receiving the League's free, electronic *Focus on Housing* newsletter.

Delivered each month to your e-mail inbox, *Focus on Housing* features interviews with policy makers, advocates, environmentalists, builders, and others working on some aspect of California's housing needs. You'll also find feature articles, updates on affordable housing projects, information about upcoming housing seminars and forums and more.

The March edition of *Focus on Housing* publishes next week. To subscribe and view both the current issue and back issue archive, visit www.imakenews.com/focusonhousing.

NEW ILG GUIDE HIGHLIGHTS BEST PRACTICES FOR LAND USE DECISION-MAKING



People relate to land use decisions and are often passionate about them, because of the impact these decisions have on their physical surroundings. Adherence to standard procedures assures that constitutionally and statutorily created due process rights are met even in the most heated of debates.

To help local agencies design procedures that enhance community confidence in government decision-making, the Institute for Local Government (ILG), the League of California Cities' nonprofit research arm, has published *An Ounce of Prevention: Best Practices for Making Informed Land Use Decisions*.

Ounce of Prevention highlights best practices that enable local officials, planning commissioners, planners and agency counsel to navigate decision-making processes. The publication focuses on the typical decision-making process—from design and drafting ordinances to issuing a final decision and hearing appeals—and identifies practical strategies to reduce the risk of litigation.

The publication can be accessed through ILG's website at www.ca-ilg.org/ounce. To order a copy, visit the ILG publications page at www.ca-ilg.org/ilgpubs (price \$20). Complimentary copies will be sent to each city and county community development or planning director.

ILG is grateful for the financial support of the [Public Entity Risk Institute](http://www.ca-ilg.org/public-entity-risk-institute) and the [Meyers Nave](http://www.meyersnave.com) law firm, which have underwrote the costs of production and are making it possible to provide copies to local agencies throughout the state. (The Public Entity Risk Institute is a nonprofit corporation based in Virginia that supports the development and delivery of education and training on all aspects of risk management for public, nonprofit and small business entities.)

For more information, contact ILG Land Use and Housing Program Director Bill Higgins at higginsb@cacities.org.

FIND A BILL, LEGISLATORS, LEG COMMITTEE – OR ASK LEG STAFF

Visit (and bookmark!) the League's [Legislative Resources](http://www.cacities.org/legresources) page (www.cacities.org/legresources). You'll find a roster and contact information for the League's legislative staff; the online Bill Search program, background materials on lobbying your legislators, and more.
