

June 26, 2015
Issue #63

Bills in Committee: June 29-July 2

Policy committees are in full swing with just a few more weeks before the Legislature adjourns on July 17. Both houses return on Aug. 17 for the final weeks of the 2015 legislative session that ends on Sept. 11. The League will be engaged on more than a dozen bills, many of them Hot, during the week of June 29-July 2. Cities are encouraged to weigh in on these bills.
For more, see Page 2.



California City Solutions: Hermosa Beach Decision-Making Tool and Community Dialogues Enhance Trust

*This story is part of an ongoing series featuring Helen Putnam Award entries. The 2014 entries are available on the League's website as a resource for cities in a searchable database called [California City Solutions](#). Hermosa Beach: A Community Moving Forward was submitted in 2014 for the Enhancing Public Trust, Ethics, and Community Involvement award category.
*For more, see Page 3.**

To access any bill on this list, the League's position letter and sample letters, please go to www.cacities.org/billsearch and plug in the bill number into the search box.

The League's full [2015 Hot and Priority Bill list](#) is available online.

[A full listing](#) of Senate and Assembly hearings is available online. Hearing times are subject to change. Bill language and any available position letters on legislation can be found through the bill search function on the [League's website](#).

Monday, June 29

Senate Appropriations, 10 a.m., State Capitol, Room 4203

- **HOT AB 448 (Brown) Local government finance: property tax revenue allocations: vehicle license fee adjustments.** *League position: Support.*
- **AB 1262 (Wood) Telecommunications: universal service: California Advanced Services fund.** *League position: Support.*

Tuesday, June 30

Senate Elections and Constitutional Amendments, 1:30 p.m., State Capitol, Room 3191

- **AB 254 (Hernandez) Election dates.** *League position: Oppose Unless Amended.*

Senate Judiciary, 1:30 p.m., State Capitol, Room 112

- **AB 1347 (Chiu) Public contracts: claims.** *League position: Oppose.*

Senate Public Safety, 9:30 a.m., State Capitol, Room 4203

- **AB 1056 (Atkins) Second Chance program.** *League position: Support.*

Senate Transportation and Housing, 1:30 p.m., State Capitol, Room 4203

- **AB 90 (Chau) Second Chance program.** *League position: Support.*
- **HOT AB 744 (Chau) Planning and zoning: density bonus.** *League position: Oppose.*
- **AB 870 (Cooley) Homelessness: rapid rehousing.** *League position: Support.*

Wednesday, July 1

Assembly Elections and Redistricting, 9 a.m., State Capitol, Room 444

- **HOT SB 493 (Cannella) Elections in cities: by or from districts.** *League position: Support.*

Assembly Local Government, 1:30 p.m., State Capitol, Room 447

- **SB 485 (Hernandez) County of Los Angeles: sanitation districts.** *League position: Support.*
- **SB 533 (Pan) Cities and counties: sales and use tax agreements.** *League position: Support.*

Senate Governance and Finance, 9:30 a.m., State Capitol, Room 112

- **HOT AB 35 (Chiu) Income taxes: credits: low-income housing: allocation increases.** *League position: Support.*
 - **HOT AB 36 (Campos) Local Government: federal surplus property.** *League position: Oppose.*
 - **AB 88 (Gomez) Sales and use taxes: exemption: energy or water efficient homes.** *League position: Oppose Unless Amended.*
 - **AB 428 (Nazarian) Income tax credits: seismic retrofits.** *League position: Support.*
 - **HOT AB 718 (Chu) Local government: powers.** *League position: Oppose.*
 - **AB 1403 (Maienschein) Housing: joint powers agreement.** *League position: Support.*
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The city of Hermosa Beach and its approximately 20,000 residents faced significant civic issues earlier this decade while going through a turnover of the majority of its city council. To meet these challenges, the city created proactive community dialogue series called Hermosa Beach: A Community Moving Forward. This is an effort to engage all Hermosans in a transparent and equitable decision-making process to improve the quality of life for residents and support the city's core values.

Launching in 2013, the community dialogues bring together local residents and business owners to identify priorities and city values through a series of public forums and discussions. Participants are presented with major issues and challenges that will impact the community and may have the potential to significantly alter the character and tone for residents. Issues include: an highly contentious oil production project proposed in the heart of the urbanized 1.4 square mile city, which was ultimately decided on by the voters in November 2014; several high profile, large-scale private development projects; a series of downtown/civic center revitalization efforts; and the continued desire to lead in sustainability and carbon neutrality while accomplishing the council's new Strategic Plan, all while doing the first revision of the city's General/Coastal Land Use Plans since the 1980s.

These major issues coupled with a majority of newly elected city officials had the potential to break down the community and slow the city's ability to move forward in an efficient manner. The Hermosa Beach City Council, the new city manager and several engaged residents embarked on a first-time and intensive year-long experiment in civic-engagement. The plan included a series of citywide community dialogue meetings to bring together all community members in shaping the future of the community, civic engagement and decision-making.

Because of the long history surrounding oil-related development in Hermosa Beach, city leaders understood that this would be a divisive issue. The community dialogue allowed for participants to communicate guiding values and a future vision for the community. Discussions lead to developing tools for evaluating how these projects relate to important values, essentially weighing trade-offs associated with complex civic decisions.

The city reached out to the community through a variety of media methods in an effort to involve as many community members as possible. Through a series of public forums and town hall meetings, small group roundtables and workshops, online surveys, photography exercises, a community fair and countless hours of independent break-out sessions among community-organized working groups formed through the community dialogue, the central questions shaping the visioning process were: where does the community see itself in the future and what qualities are valuable to the community?

Hermosa Beach identified these objectives for the campaign:

- Provide a forum for civic dialogue where members of the community can openly share diverse views in a respectful environment;
- Assist the public in articulating current perceptions of the community, community values and long-term goals for Hermosa Beach;
- Assist the public in building a framework and process for decision making relative to a variety of community projects and activities, based on expressed values and goals;
- Create a culture of innovation so that our challenges become our opportunities, and our opportunities enhance our community brand;
- Ensure all the appropriate perspectives, facts, implications and alternatives are available to make the informed decisions; and
- Increase the transparency of decision making via the use of a locally relevant, consistent and structured process or tool.

In relation to the proposed oil production project, defined objectives included:

- Assist the community in tackling and distilling the complex project, the project's Environmental Impact Report and other studies, in ways that make the information useful in its decision making;

- Facilitate dialogue that examines trade-offs of the proposed project and how they compare to the community's core values;
- Create tools that provide structure and focus attention on facts and common values to reduce contention during public dialogue without compromising the diversity of viewpoints;
- Enable the community to discover that, despite a diversity of views, it can engage in a civil and productive dialogue that enriches and strengthens the fabric of the community and
- Avoid disruption or 'hijacking' of community engagement and civil public dialogue by any persons or organizations.

As the city neared the controversial proposed oil project vote, there was a hint of uncertainty and nervous anticipation of how the results would affect the usually laid-back "best little beach city." The community dialogue process however, provided a grounding and stable force.

The year-long community dialogue process provided the following results:

- Defined through a community led process the essential core quality of life values of the community that should be protected and enhanced, and the status of the city's financial resources to provide support.
- Created a [Decision Making Tool](#) that has been accepted by the city council as a means of weighing decisions and tradeoffs between community values and various projects and decisions. The tool provides a framework for decision-making and increases transparency in government.
- Produced a core group of residents that continue to be committed to involvement in the application and as necessary refinement of the decision tool so that it becomes part of the DNA of the community.
- Demonstrated the ability for persons with diverse background and viewpoints to coalesce around a common goal and through perseverance and innovation produce quality, tangible results.
- The process and [Decision Making Tool](#) helped update the city's General Plan, using the quality of life values statement and gathered information to form the structure and vision of the plan.
- The [Decision Making Tool](#) can be applied to many different types of decisions, not only by the city but by organizations and individuals.

The city of Hermosa Beach is proud of the commitment and innovation by the residents who worked hard to create this powerful tool for the benefit of the city, helping decision-making for future issues.
