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Hearing on AB 113, the Redevelopment Dissolution Bill, Canceled at Last Minute

Just as city officials gathered for a Monday morning briefing at the League’s office, they received information that the [Senate Budget Committee](#) canceled its planned 11 a.m. hearing on [AB 113](#), the redevelopment dissolution bill sponsored by the Department of Finance (DOF) and opposed by many cities and the League for its harmful elements. This development reflected obvious concern by legislators with issues raised by cities throughout California and the League. *For more, see Page 2.*



DOF Releases FY 2015-16 List of Suspended State Mandates

The Department of Finance (DOF) on July 14 issued its [list of 56 state mandates](#) suspended in the FY 2015-16 Budget Act. California law requires the state to reimburse local agencies for costs derived from legislation mandating new government programs or higher levels of service. *For more, see Page 2.*



San Francisco Chronicle Article Details Planned Study on Health Effects of Crumb Rubber Artificial Turf

The San Francisco Chronicle on Sunday, July 12, reported that the state will study what is known as crumb rubber artificial turf. The \$2.9 million authorized will help examine the use of recycled tire, crumb rubber, to create artificial turf. The study will be conducted by the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment through a contract with CalRecycle. The article, “California to study health effects of ‘crumb rubber’ in artificial turf,” also reports that the state has spent \$2.2 million in 2015 on projects to replace wood bark with crumb rubber primarily on playgrounds. The study comes on the heels of the Legislature sidelining SB 45 (Hill), which would have commissioned a similar study and ended CalRecycle’s grant program that provided subsidies to local governments for the use of tire derived products on playfields and playgrounds. The full article can be read [online](#).

'AB 113' Continued from Page 1...

The major concern for many cities with AB 113 is its effort to reverse court decisions and existing incentives offered to cities in AB 1484 of 2012 as encouragement to expeditiously resolve issues and obtain a DOF "finding of completion." Now that many agencies have made the concessions necessary to obtain these findings, it is simply wrong to move the goalposts and change the rules.

The League's opposition, which is detailed in a [July 13 letter](#) sent to all senators, focuses on three main issues:

- Definition of loans;
- Carve outs; and
- Definition of interest rates.

Several city officials traveled to Sacramento to attend the hearing and testify, including representatives from the cities of Apple Valley, Dinuba, Folsom, Fresno, Glendale, Hercules, Oroville, San Dimas and Watsonville. Nearly 100 cities have sent in official opposition letters on various versions of the proposal.

Additional details on the League's opposition are contained in a [CA Cities Advocate](#) article published on July 10.

Next Steps

Both houses of the Legislature will be on recess from July 17-Aug. 17. During this period, it is important that city officials continue to communicate with their legislators about AB 113's harmful provisions. Although it is encouraging that the Senate Budget Committee decided to cancel Monday's hearing, cities should remain engaged on this issue because it may re-emerge during the final weeks of the 2015 legislative session. Members of the Senate Budget Committee are listed on the [committee website](#).

The Assembly Democrat Caucus also convened a small working group several weeks ago to examine the redevelopment proposal. Assembly Member Chris Holden (D-Pasadena) chairs this committee and is one of the members of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee #4 that raised issues on the proposal in June. With the Senate Budget Committee holding off its hearing on AB 113, it is hoped that Senators will also now have an opportunity to analyze all aspects of this proposal more broadly.

Cities that have previously sent their legislators a letter of opposition on the measure are advised to update the communication and submit again. Cities that have not yet opposed AB 113 are also encouraged to do so. The League requests that cities send their AB 113 opposition letters to the Senate Budget Committee as well as their legislators with a copy to the League.

The League has prepared a sample letter that city officials can use to oppose AB 113 that is available through the [League's website](#).

'Mandates' Continued from Page 1...

When a mandate is suspended, the state no longer reimburses or requires the affected local agencies to implement the mandate.

The League encourages cities to review this list to determine if potential cost savings can be realized given that local governments no longer are required to comply with these suspended mandates.

Read more about state mandates in the March 2014 issue of *Western City*: "[Understanding State Mandates and Suspended Mandates: Local Government Impacts.](#)"

The [State Controller's website](#) includes information on mandates.

California City Solutions: Alhambra's Police Department Increases Engagement with Chinese Community through Social Media Outreach

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](#). Alhambra's Enhancing Community Policing through Social Media plan was submitted in 2014 for the Public Safety award category.

The city of Alhambra, in Los Angeles County, is home to one of the largest group of Chinese immigrants in the nation. Fifty-three percent of Alhambra's 85,000 residents are of Asian descent, including 30,000 of Chinese decent.

One of the challenges of living in a diverse population with a limited English proficiency is implementing public safety services that will reach the entire community. Socio-cultural barriers can create a weakened state of community policing. These barriers can include language and an absence of community engagement, trust and understanding of municipal government and communication of police services.

The Alhambra City Council tasked the Alhambra Police Department with developing a social media outreach plan to engage and communicate with the Chinese community. The department contacted several Chinese community members and discovered that Facebook was the most used, understood and followed English-language social media platform. It still lacked the ability to communicate to those with limited English proficiency, however.

Having gained a better understanding of the community's demographics, the department set up an account on China's largest social media network, Weibo: China's hybrid Facebook and Twitter page that is entirely in Chinese. As China's biggest social media platform, Weibo has more than 500 million followers, about 1 million of them in the United States. Many immigrants, travelers and businesses are known to rely on Weibo to stay connected with clients, friends, and relatives while overseas in the U.S., and many Chinese immigrants living in the U.S. also maintain a Weibo account to stay connected to mainland China.

Prior to launching its Weibo account, the Alhambra Police Department recruited a community volunteer who is well versed in Chinese and social media, in particular with Weibo, to serve as its Community Engagement Coordinator. The coordinator's primary role was to build the police department's Weibo page — a free and readily available open source service — and share updates from the city's main Facebook page. The goal of this initiative was to reach out to Chinese residents, businesses and visitors to Alhambra in an attempt to increase communication, engagement and trust, while simultaneously building partnerships and enhancing community policing.

Within 24 hours of its December 2013 launch, Alhambra Police Department's Weibo page attracted more than 1,500 followers — almost as many as the department's Facebook page had at the time. Over 9,500 people followed the Weibo site by the end of March 2014.

The city expected that a majority of the initial following would be from mainland China. However, what cannot be quantified is the percentage of followers who are immigrants to the Alhambra area and have kept their registered Weibo account in China. Based upon posts, comments, messages and communications maintained with the followers, the city estimates that 30 to 40 percent of the followers live locally, with the balance residing overseas. This is equivalent to the 3,000 followers on the department's Facebook page. In addition to its 9,500 followers on Weibo, analytics show that the daily view count for the Alhambra Police Department Weibo site averages more than 30,000 views per day. A post providing information about driving with a foreign driver's license while in California has drawn more than 290,000 views.

More importantly, the police department has seen increased engagement with the community regarding local issues. Tips regarding crime issues, reports of local victimization, and photos submitted by followers pertaining to various local nuisances, such as graffiti and traffic problems, have been received through the site.

The site has also been a valuable resource for daily posting of public safety information about policies and procedures, city resources, disaster preparedness and inquiries from followers interested in volunteering for the department. In fact, as a direct result of the Weibo system, a team of Chinese speaking volunteers have recently joined the Alhambra Police Department.

Cities for Workforce Health Now Accepting Applications for 2016 Grants

Applications due Aug. 14

The League of California Cities[®] Partner program invites cities to apply for the 2016 Cities for Workforce Health program grants. Grant recipients will receive one-on-one consultation from workforce health consultants from Kaiser Permanente and Keenan as well as a \$5,000 credit use towards Kaiser Permanente HealthWorks programs and services. Interested cities should complete all application requirements and submit responses [online](#).

Details

- The application should take about 30 minutes to complete.
- Applications must be submitted electronically.
- Aug. 14 is the deadline to apply.
- The application document below is a reference to help cities complete the electronic application process and follow the sequential order of the questions.
- If an answer you select tells the applicant to skip ahead to a specified question, then the online survey application will skip ahead automatically.
- The application is built with survey logic so that questions appear most tailored to the applicant's city.

Resources

- [Application document](#);
- [November 2015-December 2016 timeline](#).

Further details about the grants, requirements for consideration, and the application process can be found on the [Cities for Workforce Health webpage](#). Also available online are copies of past wellness webinars and streaming versions of webinar presentations in our series.

Please contact [Mike Egan](#) with questions about Cities for Workforce Health.
