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Issue #16

## **League of California Cities® Board Votes to Support, In Concept Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de León's Bipartisan Proposal to Provide Additional Funding to Help California's Chronically Homeless**

The League of California Cities® board of directors on Thursday, Feb. 18, supported in concept Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de León's bipartisan proposal to combat homelessness and assist low-income Californians. While the details of the proposal remain under development, the League views the Senate leader's proposal as a positive outline for a much needed funding solution to help mentally ill homeless men, women and children into shelters and housing while connecting them with mental health services, addiction treatment, job training and other needed services. *For more, see Page 2.*



## **Senate Committee Examines Declining Transportation Revenues** *Legislators Continue to Look for Path Forward on Funding Package*

On Tuesday, the Senate Transportation and Housing Committee met to discuss the recent [actions by the California Transportation Commission](#) that will result in a \$754 million cut in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The committee also heard testimony from Jennifer Whiting, the League's assistant legislative director, and the California State Association of Counties on how cities and counties are responding to similar reductions in their allocations of the gas tax. *For more, see Page 2.*



## **California City Solutions: Folsom's Community Service Day Increases Volunteerism, Completes Many Projects**

*This story is part of an ongoing series featuring Helen Putnam Award entries. The 2015 entries are available on the League's website as a resource for cities in a searchable database called [California City Solutions](#). City of Folsom's 2014 Community Service Day was submitted in 2015 for the Community Services and Economic Development award category.*

The city of Folsom is located in the foothills approximately 15 miles outside of Sacramento and is home to more than 73,000 residents. It is known for natural amenities, high quality of life and abundant municipal services. Like many jurisdictions, the city faced serious fiscal challenges during the unprecedented economic crisis. While residents did not experience an interruption of essential services, the city struggled to maintain some of the non-essential services it provided. At the same time, there appeared to be a noticeable movement of neighbors helping neighbors, an increase in community pride and a growing demand for volunteer opportunities. In response, the city and numerous businesses, companies and nonprofits organized [Community Service Day](#) to complete many projects throughout the city. *For more, see Page 2.*

**'Homelessness' Continued from Page 1...**

There are about 116,000 homeless people in California, accounting for 21 percent of the nation's homeless population, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The state saw the second-largest increase in homelessness between 2014 and 2015. California's cities and counties are on the front lines of a crisis worsened by cuts in federal and state funding for affordable housing, the loss of local redevelopment agencies and other key programs. Cities are struggling to identify resources and need flexible funding to build on proven best practices and innovative solutions that meet the needs of the homeless people in their communities.

Sen. de León's proposal would provide much-needed assistance, League President and Rancho Cucamonga Mayor L. Dennis Michael said.

"We really like the concepts Sen. de León has put forward, so we want to indicate our support for his efforts," said Michael. "California cities are at ground zero of the state's homelessness crisis and need concrete solutions and financial support from the state such as the No Place Like Home Initiative. It proposes to combine significant state funding with local innovation to help the homeless with emergency and permanent supportive housing. This issue can only be solved when cities have the flexibility to work collaboratively with their regional local government partners, nonprofits and faith-based institutions. This proposal is a giant step in the right direction."

The No Place Like Home Initiative takes a constructive approach by proposing to help the homeless through supportive services and providing at-risk low-income Californians with assistance. It would create an estimated 10,000-plus housing units throughout the state, according to Sen. de León. Funding for the \$2 billion proposal would come from Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act.

The League's board of directors this week also endorsed policies supporting funding for homelessness prevention programs and first responder training, promoting regional cooperation, and making housing placement a priority of programs that discharge people from care or incarceration.

The League's board of directors took action on Sen. de León's proposal during its regularly scheduled meeting in Ontario.

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**'Transportation' Continued from Page 1...**

Hearing participants appeared cautiously optimistic about the results of the informational hearing. Committee members showed bipartisan support for finding a path forward. Sen. Patricia Bates (R-Laguna Niguel) asked the California Transportation Commission Executive Director Will Kempton about the [commission's recommendations for reforms](#), and expressed that reforms must be part of a final package. Sen. Mike McGuire (D-Healdsburg) responded to panel testimony from local governments with impassioned comments on the need for swift and meaningful action by the Legislature.

As the Legislature continues its negotiations on a transportation funding package, it is important that cities continue to stress the need for immediate action to not only address the cuts to STIP, but more importantly to approve a long-range transportation funding plan. Friday, Feb. 19 is the deadline for the introduction of bills, and it will be far too easy for the Legislature to lose focus on this issue. As Ms. Whiting testified during the hearing, "If our roads were already in good condition, this is a storm we might be able to weather. Unfortunately, that isn't the case." The time for action is now.

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**'CCS: Folsom' Continued from Page 1...**

Folsom's mayor and then public information officer developed a plan in the fall 2013 to organize a single day community service event to engage community members of all ages and interests, motivate volunteerism, increase civic pride and create a lasting impact. They believed that the community itself had a keen understanding of the projects that needed to get done in

neighborhoods throughout the city. An effort was launched between the city, the business community and local service groups to organize what would ultimately become Folsom's Community Service Day, centered on the philosophy that many hands make light work.

They wanted to accomplish many tasks on a single October day that would normally take months or even years to complete by mobilizing hundreds of volunteers to help with about 20 projects citywide.

City staff knew that mobilizing hundreds of volunteers and engaging with dozens of nonprofit organizations would require a strong, supportive team of business, nonprofit and government leaders from the community. The mayor formed a 15-member steering committee of community leaders, including a highly-regarded hospital CEO, prominent pastor and nonprofit directors. The engaged committee was tasked with collaborating with the community to identify 20 service projects, and identifying and recruiting sponsors.

Approximately 20 service club and organization leaders attended a March meeting at Folsom's Community Center to brainstorm the community's needs. Steering committee members served as small group facilitators to help participants generate a list of 100 plus potential projects.

During a follow-up meeting, the steering committee reviewed the suggestions and identified 20 potential projects that would appeal to diverse ages, abilities and interests. The goal was to focus on projects that seemed to be achievable in a half-day and that could be completed for a reasonable cost. In the following months, service clubs and organizations were recruited to assume leadership for specific projects.

Once the projects were identified, sponsorship outreach began. The mayor reached out to more than 35 local businesses/organizations in the months leading up to the event. Meanwhile, the steering committee members were securing significant monetary and in-kind donations from their respective employers.

Once the projects were identified, and the website and an interactive volunteer registration site were active, citywide outreach and promotion began. The communication strategy included notices in city newsletters; publicity on the city website and social media pages; articles in local newspapers; posters, flyers and banners on heavily travelled roads; and an ad on a highway electronic billboard.

A 10-month timeframe allowed the city and steering committee to conduct organized and strategic planning, sponsorship outreach, publicity and volunteer recruitment.

The city of Folsom's inaugural Community Service Day was held on Oct. 25, 2014. More than 1,100 volunteers gathered in the morning at a kick off breakfast hosted at a large local church. Volunteers registered, received bright yellow Community Service Day t-shirts, and participated in welcoming remarks before dispersing to work sites all over Folsom.

Teams of volunteers completed the following:

- Collected more than 82,000 pounds of food for Twin Lakes Food Bank families during a city-wide food drive;
- Solicited donations and packed care packages for 500 soldiers serving overseas children created thank you cards and photos that were inserted in the care packages;
- Painted the wrought-iron fence surrounding the Aquatic Center;
- Planted shrubs, pulled weeds and added bark to Butterfly Garden in City Lions Park;
- Weeded and cleaned-up the cemetery;
- Installed shelving, painted and cleaned CAVE teen centers at Folsom and Sutter middle schools;
- Built raised beds, installed irrigation and painted a mural at the garden behind the Community Center which will be used by the preschool and Zoo Sanctuary;
- Stained the large wooden play structure in Kids Play Park;
- Completed painting, staining and clean-up projects at Pioneer Village in Historic Folsom;
- Installed landscaping at the Powerhouse Ministries Transitional Care Center;
- Installed fencing around the Powerhouse Ministries kid's play area;

- Sanitized toys and cleaned preschools at the Community Center, Sports Complex and Hinkle Creek Nature Center;
- Sorted clothes and donations at Snowline Hospice;
- Re-built a bicycle/pedestrian bridge on the Humbug-Willow Creek Trail;
- Painted trail rules on several sections of recreational trails;
- Built steps in the deer area; painted fencing and cleaned-up sections of the Zoo Sanctuary; and
- In addition, total sponsorship donations received included \$36,615.14 cash and \$14,210 in-kind, for a total of \$50,825.14.

Community Service Day was extremely well-received and had expanded for its second year in September of 2015. The city has received extremely positive feedback from residents and community organizations about the significant impact Community Service Day made in Folsom.

Overall, Folsom's first Community Service Day made noticeable improvements in the city, improved the quality of life in the community, fostered a sense of community pride, and sparked even a greater interest in volunteerism and service in Folsom.

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