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End of Session Signature/Veto Webinar Scheduled for Sept. 7

The League will be hosting a 90 minute webinar to brief members on the legislative session and review the top priority bills for which cities will need to advocate to Gov. Jerry Brown as he reviews legislation. After the Legislature completes its work on Aug. 31, the Governor has until Sept. 30 to sign or veto legislation on his desk. *For more, see Page 2.*



California City Solutions: Lafayette Brings Beauty to the Boulevard with Street Pole Banner Program

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](#). Lafayette Street Pole Banner Program was submitted in 2015 for the Economic Development through the Arts award category. For more, see Page 2.



League-Sponsored Bond Agency Issues \$32 Million in Tax-Exempt Bonds for Affordable Housing Apartments in Mountain View

Some of the most significant benefits of League membership for cities since 1988 have flowed from the League's co-sponsorship of the [California Statewide Communities Development Authority](#) (CSCDA). *For more, see Page 3.*

Registration

The webinar is scheduled for Sept. 7 from 1:30 – 3 p.m. There is no cost to register for League members and League partners. Non-member cities will be charged \$100.

Please register by Friday, Sept. 2 at www.cacities.org/events.

For most League webinars, only one connection is allowed per city. However, to provide easier access to League members, each city can register for two connections.

Webinar log-in information will be sent by end of business on Sept. 6.

'CCS: Lafayette' Continued from Page 1...

Located in Northern California's East Bay, the city of Lafayette's downtown main thoroughfare was plagued by decades of neglect and deterioration that was finally reinvigorated through art. The [Lafayette Street Pole Banner program](#) was developed in 2002 to feature the city's economic development through art and design and bring a cohesive look to the city's downtown grid.

The community developed haphazardly along a three-mile stretch of Mt. Diablo Boulevard, an old county road that served as the main thoroughfare from Oakland to Walnut Creek until the freeway was built. The long strip of road and a century of neglect by county planners had left the then unincorporated community without an urban grid, central core, or focal point. By the mid-1960s, the city's main street, Mt. Diablo Boulevard, was an undistinguished and heavily traveled strip decorated with gaudy signs, existing shops paying high rent, vacant and boarded up storefronts and a place where pedestrians did not feel comfortable walking. As a result, many restaurants and stores, along with their sales taxes, headed east and west to the nearest city with a mall or vibrant downtown.

Local residents in 1968 finally voted to incorporate the city of Lafayette after two previous attempts failed. In 1995, the city council formed the Lafayette Redevelopment Agency. Both agencies focused on the same goal to transform the downtown into a place of character where residents could shop, dine, participate in public and cultural affairs, and altogether feel good about their town.

The city and the redevelopment agency spent millions of dollars on all varieties of capital improvements including rebuilding a historic plaza; stimulating a transit-oriented mixed use development around the BART station; adding median islands and undergrounding utilities; developing off-street parking facilities; promoting and subsidizing projects that delivered the highest and best uses for their parcels; enacting and enforcing a new sign ordinance. Many blocks that were once blighted now feature new retail developments that keep sales tax revenues local.

Although these improvements helped change the face of Lafayette, they could not alter the fact that it was still cursed by its historic development pattern — the three-mile strip lacking the charm of a small town urban grid.

Redevelopment of downtown Lafayette as an urban grid was never a feasible option because the city was built-out. The challenge became how to embrace and use its linearity to the Lafayette's advantage. The city's rolling terrain provides several opportunities for downtown visitors to take long looks down the boulevard. The city realized from the visual arts that people respond to repetition, rhythm, and pattern.

In the 1980s, when drawing up a master street improvement plan for the downtown, Landscape Architect Russ Beatty called for scores of tall ornamental Battery-Park style street lamps to be installed in the median islands along the entire length of the three-mile strip and requested that the lamps be equipped with arms for hanging banners. The poles were mostly in place to hang decorative banners by 2002.

Lafayette chose to use the rhythmic and repetitive layout of the poles to mount a year-round graphic art statement. The Lafayette City Council adopted a street pole banner policy that requires that at least 20 identical banner sets be manufactured and hung at any given time, assuring repetition and rhythm. The city council then appointed an all-volunteer Banner Advisory Committee made up of citizens with backgrounds in the arts and economic development to work with a designer to develop and approve distinctive banner themes and designs.

City leaders next engaged Jennifer Morla, a renowned graphic designer, to draw banner designs that, in the spirit of Christo's *Gates* or *Umbrellas*, would use color and repetition to remake the boulevard as a captivating art statement. The Banner Advisory Committee began thinking about how the banners could be used to amplify the city's growing redevelopment and economic development efforts. The committee selected themes that emphasized Lafayette's strengths — the excellent schools; the local reservoir with its distinctive tower; the burgeoning restaurant scene; and the community's interest in jazz, chamber music, and theater.

The project presented several design challenges. Banner space is limited to two narrow vertical strips, each 30" wide and 95" long. Because of the bleed through, shadowing, and concerns about color fade, there are only 10 Sunbrella fabric colors available to the designer. Designs can only use three ink colors due to cost and complexity. Morla moved toward simple and bold text-heavy designs with themes reflecting the community's local activities, and color schemes that played off the seasonal state of the deciduous boulevard street trees. She has now served as the city's key designer for the project for more than a decade and has developed 13 separate banner designs for Mt. Diablo Boulevard.

Lafayette's street pole banner program was instantly embraced by the community. Seeing how the repetitive parade of banners along the boulevard added color and life to the strip, the city council ordered that enough banner sets be designed and manufactured to be displayed all year round. The annual cost for design and maintenance of the program is \$25,000 — less than two-tenths of 1 percent of the city's General Fund budget. The result is a year-round miles-long public art installation that changes monthly and which has become one of downtown Lafayette's key distinguishing features. The city now receives multiple requests each year for information about the program from other communities.

The Lafayette Street Pole Banner program uses art and design to give downtown Lafayette a distinctive identity, promote commerce, and decorate the town with beautiful detail and ornamentation.

'CSCDA' Continued from Page 1...

This program provides a variety of public agencies and developers access to low-cost, tax-exempt financing and economic development tools. CSCDA recently issued \$32,000,000 in tax-exempt multi-family affordable housing bonds for Evelyn Family Apartments in Mountain View.

About Evelyn Family Apartments

Evelyn Family Apartments is the new construction of 116 affordable housing units by ROEM Development Corporation. The benefits of the project for the city of Mountain View and Santa Clara County include 100 percent of the affordable rental housing units will be rent restricted for low-income tenants; the project will bring new economic vibrancy to the area; and the project consists of 11 studios, 45 one-bedroom units, 44 two-bedroom units, and 15 three-bedroom units to house local low-income residents.

CSCDA and ROEM partnered with Citibank to provide \$32,000,000 in tax-exempt multi-family affordable housing bonds for the project. The financing for the project requires the affordability of units for low-income tenants to be maintained for 55 years.

Background

CSCDA is a joint powers authority created in 1988 and is sponsored by the League of California Cities® and the California State Association of Counties. It was created by cities and counties for cities and counties. More than 500 cities, counties and special districts are program participants in CSCDA, which serves as their conduit issuer and provides access to efficiently finance locally-approved projects. CSCDA has issued more than \$50 billion in tax exempt bonds for projects that provide a public benefit by creating jobs, affordable housing, healthcare, infrastructure, schools and other fundamental services. Visit [CSCDA's website](#) for additional information on the ways in which CSCDA can help your city.
