



LEAGUE OF
**CALIFORNIA
CITIES**

CITY MANAGERS CONFERENCE

The Westin Rancho Mirage

February 5-7, 2025



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5

10:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Registration Open Celebrity Foyer
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Visit our Elite Sponsors Ambassador Foyer/Celebrity Foyer
1:30 - 3:15 p.m.	Opening General Session Celebrity Ballroom Opening Remarks: <i>Thaddeus McCormack, President, City Managers Department and City Manager, Lakewood</i> Executive Director Remarks <i>Carolyn Coleman, Executive Director and CEO, League of California Cities</i> City Managers Department Awards and Recognition Keynote: Courageous Leadership Dr. Jackie Freiberg specializes in helping leaders navigate the complexities of an uncertain world. Hear her delve into the future of leadership, highlighting courage as a transformative superpower that enhances performance, accountability, alignment, retention, and engagement while driving growth. Drawing on her expertise as a Certified Dare to Lead™ facilitator based on Brené Brown's research, Freiberg provides practical strategies for leading with courage. Attendees will leave with actionable insights to navigate uncertainty, engage teams, foster accountability, and inspire innovation, making a lasting impact on their organizations and communities. Keynote Speaker: <i>Dr. Jackie Freiberg, Leadership, Change & Service Innovation Strategist</i>
3:15 - 3:45 p.m.	Elite Sponsor Break Ambassador Foyer/Celebrity Foyer
3:15 - 3:45 p.m.	New City Manager Coffee Meet-up Celebrity Plaza East Are you new to the role of city manager? Grab a coffee and join city managers from across the state for a great conversation with the city manager department officers about leadership and growing within the role of city manager.
3:45 - 5:00 p.m. <i>Concurrent Session</i>	Hate Speech in the Council Chambers: The 1st Amendment vs. The Freedom of Civility Ambassador 1 Zoom bombings and in-person hate speech have disrupted council meetings throughout the state. Join council members, a city manager, and a city attorney who have experienced this and navigated their way through. What can be done, and what must be allowed under Freedom of Speech and the Brown Act? The session will discuss best practices, allowable approaches, and how to manage city business when hate speech threatens to disrupt council meetings. Moderator: <i>Tygarjas Bigstyk, Former Mayor, Pacifica</i> Speakers: <i>Bill Ayub, City Manager, Ventura</i> <i>Denise Bazzano, Partner, Burke, Williams & Sorensen, LLP</i> <i>Kevin Wilk, Mayor Pro Tem, Walnut Creek</i>
3:45 - 5:00 p.m. <i>Concurrent Session</i>	Managing Through Council Transition and Implementing a Robust Onboarding Program Ambassador 2 Combat change fatigue! Learn how to leverage council transitions into a force for positive organizational change. This session will focus on designing and implementing a comprehensive onboarding program that equips newly elected officials with a strong foundation for effective service delivery and collaborative policy-making. Moderator and Speaker: <i>Marie Weber, Deputy City Manager, Livermore</i> Speakers: <i>Eric Levitt, City Manager, Fullerton</i> <i>Paul Spence, Assistant City Manager, Livermore</i>



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5

3:45 - 5:00 p.m.
Concurrent Session

2024 Local Ballot Measures Debrief: Three Case Studies in Business License Tax Proposals

Ambassador 3

In November 2024, three cities with populations ranging from 30,000 to 80,000 sought changes to their business license tax structures through ballot measures, each with a different approach. Representatives from these cities will share their experiences, covering the planning, challenges, and strategic steps that led to the placement of their measures on the ballot—and the outcomes that followed. Covering the latest court decisions restricting local government activities related to ballot measures, this session will primarily focus on how Business License Tax Proposals are different from other measures like bonds, sales tax, property tax, or transient occupancy tax initiatives. Hear about the circumstances of each panelist's environment, the challenges they faced and the considerations they weighed as they developed their proposals.

Moderator: Michelle Flaherty, Assistant City Manager, Redwood City

Speakers: Patrick Heisinger, Assistant City Manager, Redwood City

Kathy Kleinbaum, Assistant City Manager, Belmont

Rich Lee, Assistant City Manager, South San Francisco

5:00 - 6:30 p.m.

Networking Reception

Masters Plaza Planned with



Make new friends and catch up with old ones while enjoying delicious appetizers and tasty beverages during the evening networking reception. It's the perfect opportunity to form support networks inside your profession.

Find session materials online at www.calcities.org/CMC

WiFi Network: Westin_CONFERENCE

Passcode: Citymanagers25

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Registration Open Celebrity Foyer
8:00 - 5:00 p.m.	Visit with Elite Sponsors Ambassador Foyer/Celebrity Foyer
8:00 - 9:00 a.m.	Networking Breakfast Celebrity Ballroom
9:00 - 10:15 a.m. <i>Concurrent Session</i>	Mass Casualty Events: What Nobody Taught You and You Didn't Want to Learn Ambassador 1 Every year, cities in California and throughout the U.S. tragically experience mass casualty incidents (MCIs), which overwhelm local governments and healthcare systems. This presentation will examine three recent active shooter incidents in California cities, offering "lessons learned" and recommendations for developing an effective response plan. It will cover essential actions to take during and after a MCI to support victims and aid community recovery. Moderator: Ron Bow, Retired City Manager/Executive Director, Transtech Speakers: Karl Berger, Partner, Burke, Williams & Sorensen, LLP Matthew Chidester, City Manager, Half Moon Bay Catherine Engberg, City Attorney, Half Moon Bay, Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger LLP
9:00 - 10:15 a.m. <i>Concurrent Session</i>	The "New" Economic Development is Green. . . and Comes with Money Ambassador 2 In the past decade, economic development in California has shifted from redevelopment to a focus on sustainability, emphasizing green infrastructure and resilience. The private sector is now investing heavily in green energy projects, and federal and state funding is available to support these efforts. This panel will introduce California's Climate Resilience District—a transformative new Tax Increment Financing district—as well as explore the Investment Tax Credits and grants available through the Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Learn about this new world of green funding, renewable energy, hydrogen, tax credit bonds, and how to create jobs and achieve a sustainable local economy. Moderator: Larry Kosmont, Chairman & CEO, Kosmont Companies Speakers: Trelynd Bradley, Deputy Director, Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development Christopher Jackson, Development Services Director, Inglewood
9:00 - 10:15 a.m. <i>Concurrent Session</i>	Late Breaking: Wildfire Crisis Discussion Ambassador 3 Join your fellow city managers and assistant/deputy city managers to discuss your experience dealing with wildfires. Discuss what worked and what didn't in preparation and responses, and connect with your peers about the difficulty of working through a crisis that affects you personally and professionally. Moderators: Reva Feldman, Retired City Manager, Malibu Thaddeus McCormack, President, City Managers Department and City Manager, Lakewood
10:15 - 10:45 a.m.	Elite Sponsor Break Ambassador Foyer/Celebrity Foyer

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6

10:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Concurrent Session

Practical Tools for Defining Performance Expectations for Department Heads Ambassador 1

A city manager works closely with their executive team and city council to establish annual or multi-year goals, create a budget, and engage staff to carry out those goals. But how can a city manager set expectations alongside department heads about what will actually be accomplished? In this session, three city managers will share tools they use to align expectations, foster leadership development, and establish a constructive framework for performance check-ins. Attendees will learn about annual written achievement plans, performance management agreements, and more. The panelists will also discuss how they make course corrections when things don't go as planned and how they communicate difficult news to the council.

Moderator: Jan Perkins, Former City Manager/Vice President, Raffetis

Speakers: Valerie Barone, City Manager, Concord

Harry Black, Seasoned City Manager

Maraskeshia Smith, City Manager, Santa Rosa

10:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Concurrent Session

Mental Health First: Insights from Retired City Managers Ambassador 2

City managers face a myriad of challenges throughout their careers, experiencing both high points and significant hurdles. This session dives into the unique perspectives of retired city managers, offering invaluable insights into managing the daily tasks and long-term responsibilities inherent to the role. Attendees will hear firsthand accounts of the positive mental health strategies that seasoned professionals exercised in their professional lives. The discussion will also highlight the importance of mental health and well-being, particularly in high-stress public service roles.

Moderator: Kelly McAdoo, President-Elect, City Managers Department and City Administrator, Santa Barbara

Speakers: Chris Catren, Director of Strategic Relationships, First Responder Wellness

John Donlevy, Retired City Manager, Winters

Mark Scott, Retired City Manager, Live Oak

2024 - 2025 City Managers Department Officers

President, Thaddeus McCormack, City Manager, Lakewood

President-Elect, Kelly McAdoo, City Administrator, Santa Barbara

Vice President, Chris Freeland, City Manager, Indian Wells

Department Director, Jim Lewis, City Manager, Atascadero

Immediate Past President, Karen Pinkos, City Manager, El Cerrito

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6

10:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Concurrent Session

Cities in Action: Conversations Around Addressing Homelessness Ambassador 3

Join an open discussion with experienced city managers as they share their successes and challenges in addressing homelessness. This panel will explore humane and effective approaches for helping individuals transition off the streets while ensuring public safety. Panelists will also reflect on strategies that fell short of expectations, offering valuable lessons learned to inform future efforts. Designed for city managers, this session aims to foster dialogue, share insights, and inspire innovative solutions for creating compassionate and sustainable outcomes in communities of all sizes.

Moderator: Thaddeus McCormack, President, City Managers Department and City Manager, Lakewood

Speakers: Mario Lara, Assistant City Manager, Public Safety Sacramento

Tom Modica, City Manager, Long Beach

Brian Saeki, City Manager, Whittier

12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

Networking Lunch Celebrity Ballroom

1:00 - 1:45 p.m.

City Managers Sales Tax Working Group Update Celebrity Ballroom

Hear the latest updates from the Cal Cities Sales Tax Working Group.

Moderator: Ben Triffo, Legislative Representative, League of California Cities

Speakers: Harry Black, Seasoned City Manager

John Gillison, City Manager, Rancho Cucamonga

Fran Mancia, Advisory Board Member, Avenu Insights and Analytics

Ken Nordhoff, Principal, HdL Companies

Andrew Powers, City Manager, Thousand Oaks

2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

General Session Celebrity Ballroom

Opening Remarks: Justin Hess, City Manager, Burbank



Keynote: Narratives, Reality and the Outlook for California's Economy: 2025 in Focus

Building off of his presentation several months ago at the Cal Cities Annual Conference, Chris Thornberg returns with the latest updates on the California economy. Geared specifically for city managers, attendees will revisit key economic indicators, such as commercial and residential real estate markets, employment trends, consumer spending, and federal tariffs, as well as the state budget deficit, housing, and insurance, with a new perspective and insight into 2025 and beyond. Join us for an engaging discussion on trends to follow for the coming year, and how to prepare your city and your team for it.

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Christopher Thornberg, Founding Partner, Beacon Economics

3:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Elite Sponsor Break Ambassador Foyer/Celebrity Foyer

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS!

Send us your feedback on the conference by scanning this QR code.



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6

3:30 - 4:45 p.m.

Speed Sessions Ambassador 1

Leading Successful Teams in Today's Work Environment (3:30 - 4:05 p.m.)

Today's workplace is very different from a few years ago: flexible schedules, working from home, and hybrid work environments are the new reality for our cities. Learn strategies to successfully navigate the challenges of today's workforce using various types of hybrid work models, including engaging employees, maintaining, and creating culture.

Moderator and Speaker: Alexandra Orologas, Assistant City Manager, El Cerrito

Speaker: Shannon Bassi, Human Resources Manager, El Cerrito

New City Manager's Checklist for Immediate Improvements (4:10 - 4:45 p.m.)

Identifying blind spots can be challenging, especially for new city managers stepping into a city without fully knowing its dynamics. A checklist of key management review areas can quickly highlight risks and strengths within a city. An efficient review can uncover lost revenue, outdated procedures, and unsafe processes. Join this speed session to learn how a simple checklist has helped city managers identify over \$2 million in budget savings, locate unused funds, and catch missing safety procedures.

Speaker: Kevin Northcraft, Retired City Manager, Tulare

3:30 - 4:45 p.m.

Concurrent Session

Transitioning Well; When to Leave and How to Leave a Legacy Doing It Ambassador 2

A crucial skill in city management is the ability to leave a legacy of effective leadership. Stepping away successfully requires self-reflection, feedback, and a clear understanding of one's impact within the organization. This session will focus on evaluating your tenure and creating a succession plan to prepare future administrators. Panelists will share insights on transitioning smoothly into new roles and communicating the strengths and fresh perspectives you bring as a new leader. Learn how to depart "at the top" and make a seamless entry into a new community.

Moderator and Speaker: Jim Lewis, Director, City Managers Department and City Manager, Atascadero

Speakers: Jorge Garcia, City Manager, Pismo Beach

Kelly McAdoo, President-Elect, City Managers Department and City Administrator, Santa Barbara

3:30 - 4:45 p.m.

Concurrent Session

Managing in the "Age of Grievance": Navigating the Evolving Role of City Managers Ambassador 3

The role of a city manager has fundamentally evolved in today's political landscape. This session examines the evolving challenges and responsibilities city managers face, focusing on how increasing polarization and a culture of grievance have affected local governance. It will highlight the need for city managers to adapt to new professional and personal dynamics in this shifting landscape.

Moderator: Anil Comelo, City Manager, St. Helena

Speakers: Mike Kasperzak, former Mayor/Council Member, Mountain View and Past President, League of California Cities

Peter Pirnejad, City Manager, Los Altos Hills

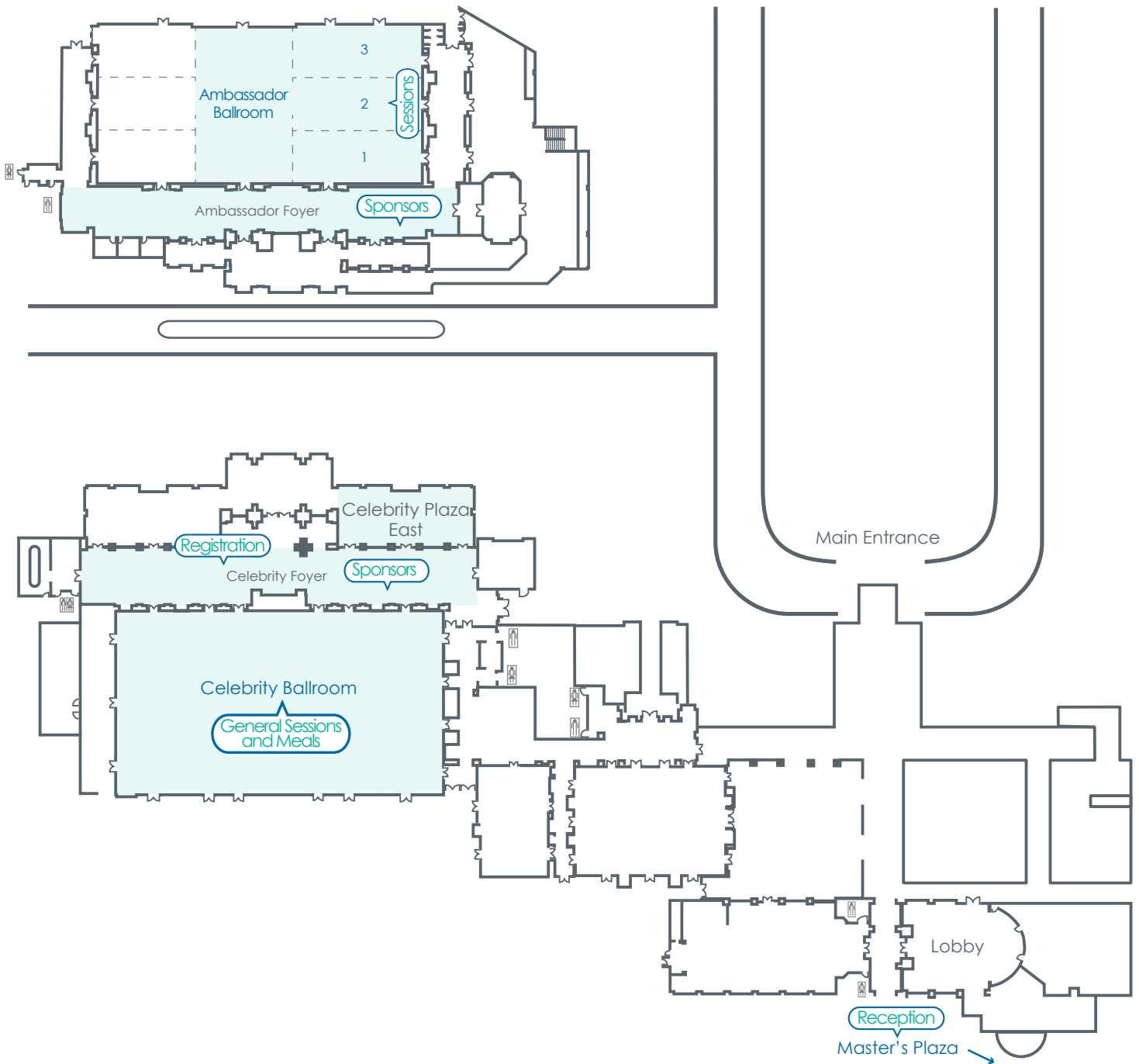
AJ Wilson, Senior Advisor, ICMA

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7

8:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Registration Open Celebrity Foyer
8:30 - 9:30 a.m.	Breakfast Celebrity Ballroom / Ambassador Foyer Enjoy a networking breakfast in the Celebrity Ballroom or grab breakfast in the Ambassador Foyer and join one of the below roundtables.
9:00 - 10:15 a.m.	Roundtables Women Leading Government Executive Roundtable Ambassador 1 This is an interactive session that will provide attendees a dialogue with experienced city managers in a small group setting. At each discussion table, a city manager will answer the hard questions, share their stories, and provide meaningful feedback on the real-world problems and obstacles that attendees are facing in their roles. This session is appropriate for any attendee looking to meet new colleagues or for those looking to become city managers in the future. This session is open to women and allies who wish to support women within their organization. Moderator: Lori Sassoon, Women Leading Government, Chief Talent Officer, Corona Town and Gown Roundtable Ambassador 2 City managers with state-funded universities in their communities face unique challenges and opportunities. This roundtable provides a forum to discuss effective collaboration strategies, navigating shared resources, balancing community needs, and addressing the economic and social impacts of university growth. Join your peers to share experiences, explore common challenges, and develop approaches to strengthen partnerships between municipalities and higher education institutions. Moderator: Kelly McAdoo, President-Elect, City Managers Department and City Administrator, Santa Barbara Assistant and Deputy City Manager Roundtable Ambassador 3 Join fellow assistant and deputy city managers for an engaging roundtable discussion on the latest challenges and opportunities in municipal leadership. This session offers a collaborative space to share insights, best practices, and strategies for addressing pressing issues. Build connections with peers, exchange ideas, and leave with actionable solutions to enhance city management and operations. Moderators: Elisa Cox, Assistant City Manager, Rancho Cucamonga Sean Kelleher, Assistant City Manager (Development Services), Moreno Valley
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	City of Bell — The Recovery Story: From Scandal to Success Celebrity Ballroom Regrettably, the story of the City of Bell is often overshadowed by its infamous association with corruption and scandal. What is less frequently told, however, is the story of redemption, revival, and rebirth that has unfolded over the past decade, driven by the resilience of its hardworking community and the dedication of its post-scandal elected officials and city management. This panel will shine a light on post-scandal Bell and the long, arduous pathway to success that involved the non-headline grabbing work of building up public trust, institutional checks and balances, service capacity, and an economic base in the wake of the misdeeds and betrayal that ravaged the community. Opening Remarks: Peter Pirnejad, City Manager, Los Altos Hills Moderator: Thaddeus McCormack, President, City Managers Department and City Manager, Lakewood Speakers: Michael La Vorne Antwine II, City Manager, Bell Ali Saleh, Mayor, Bell Ana Maria Quintana, Council Member, Bell Douglas Willmore, CEO, World Tree Closing Remarks: Kelly McAdoo, President-Elect, City Managers Department and City Administrator, Santa Barbara



FLOOR PLAN



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LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES

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