



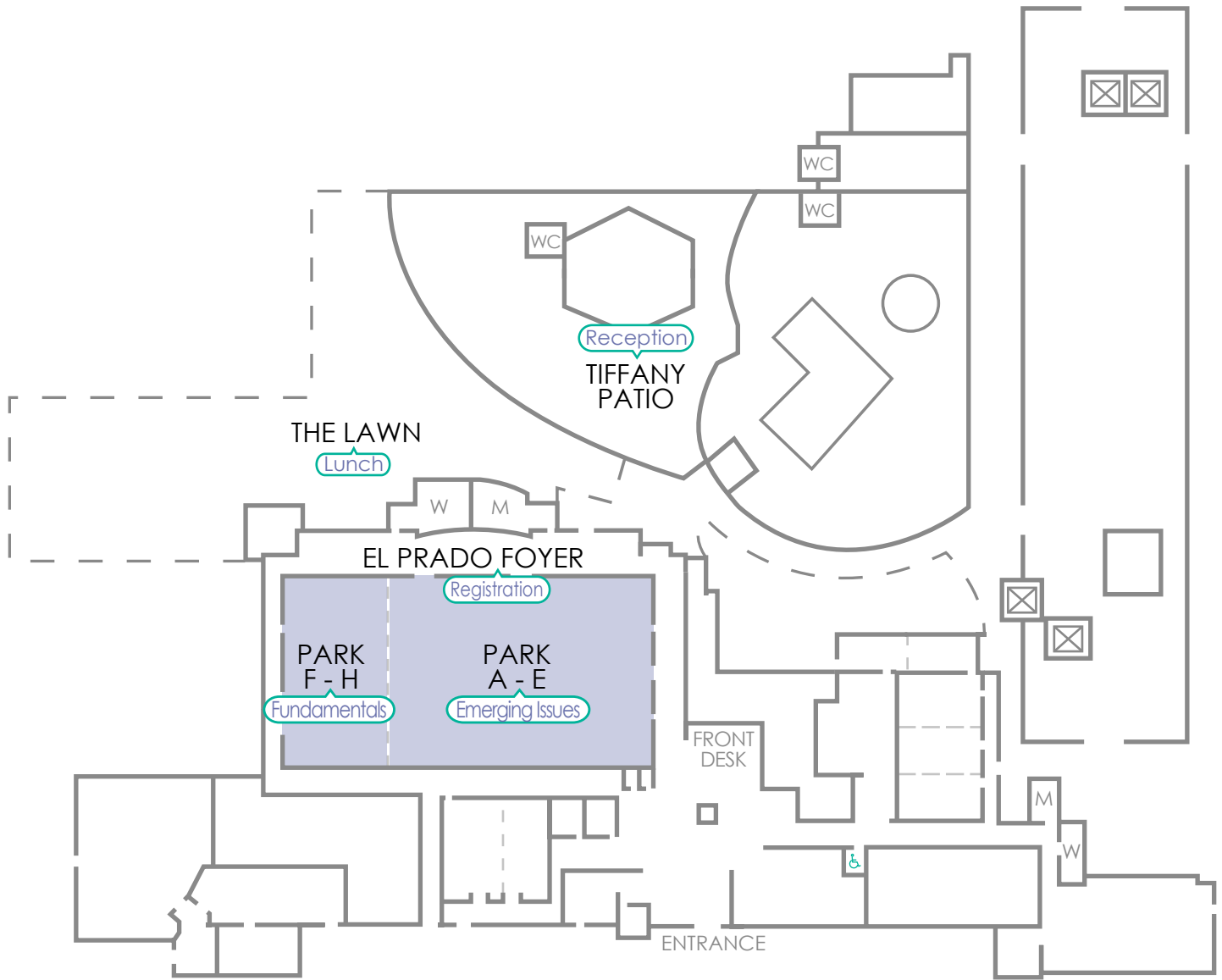
LEAGUE OF
CALIFORNIA
CITIES

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS ACADEMY

March 11-13, 2026
Sheraton Park Hotel Anaheim

Navigating change, powering progress.

FLOOR PLAN



CONFERENCE INFORMATION

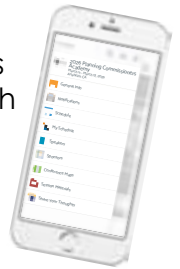


NETWORK
Sheraton_CONF

PASSWORD
Pca2026

DOWNLOAD THE APP!

The Cal Cities mobile app provides a personalized conference experience with access to the full program, key updates, a customized schedule, and more. Download through your device's app store by searching "League of California Cities" or "Cal Cities." Once downloaded, select "Find Guides" and search for 2026 Planning Commissioners Academy. Don't forget to allow push notifications to receive up-to-date conference information and opt in for additional networking opportunities.



PRESENTATIONS AND MATERIALS

Looking for presentation slides and session materials? All materials submitted are posted as they are received and can be found online at www.calcities.org/PCAmaterials or within the app.

WEAR YOUR BADGE!

Please remember to wear your attendee badge at all times as only registered attendees are allowed admission to all sessions, meals, and receptions. If you lose or damage yours, please visit the registration desk for a new one.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS!

Scan the QR code to send us your feedback on the academy by March 27.



SAVE THE DATES:

2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXPO
SEPTEMBER 23-25 | ANAHEIM CONVENTION CENTER

2027 PLANNING COMMISSIONERS ACADEMY
MARCH 10-12 | MONTEREY MARRIOTT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

9:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Registration Open
El Prado Foyer

Pre-Conference Training

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

*Sign-in begins at
9:30 a.m.*

*Sign-out ends at
12:15 p.m.*

Understanding Public Service Ethics Laws and Principles (AB 1234)

Park A-E

Sign-in will begin 30 minutes prior to the session and you must be present for the full two hours to receive the certification of attendance. Entry will be prohibited once the session begins.

State law requires elected and appointed officials to receive two hours of training in specified ethics laws and principles every two years. Newly elected and appointed officials must receive this training within one year of becoming a public servant. Join a panel of experts as they help navigate the ethics laws and principles.

The Institute for Local Government is a State Bar of California minimum continuing legal education (MCLE) approved provider and certifies this activity meets the standards for MCLE credit by the State Bar of California in the total amount of 2 hours (general credits). Provider #13881

Speakers: Mauricio Grande, Associate, Renne Public Law Group

Andrew Shen, Partner, Renne Public Law Group

12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

Lunch on Your Own

1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

Opening General Session
Park A-E



What's the Role of Planning Commissioners in an Age of Zoning Reform?

What's next for zoning reform in California? For a decade now, legislators in Sacramento have been streamlining and overriding local land use authority in hopes of increasing housing production, most recently with the passage of SB 79. These dictates from Sacramento are changing the role of the planning commissioner. What role should planning commissioners play in the future — and how will that be different from the past?

Opening Remarks: Rob Eastwood, President, Planning and Community Development Department and Community Development Director, Campbell

Keynote Speaker: William Fulton, FAICP, Editor and Publisher, California Planning & Development Report, Professor of Practice, UC San Diego

Looking for introductory courses or need a refresher?
Look for sessions labeled "**Fundamentals**".

Have some experience and ready to dive deeper?
Look for sessions labeled "**Emerging Issues**".

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

Fundamentals

2:45 - 4:00 p.m.

Planning Commission 101: The Nuts and Bolts of Planning Park F-H

Commissioners will learn the basics about planning laws, typical planning documents, and how they fit together. Speakers who have worked as planning staff, planning commissioners and consultants will introduce the nuts and bolts of General Plans, Housing Elements, Specific Plans, zoning codes, subdivision ordinances, design review and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and will walk commissioners through typical project review and decision-making processes. Participants will also learn how plans, codes and regulations can be written to ensure that principles of sustainability, equity and community-building are incorporated in new development.

Moderator: Colin Drukker, Principal, PlaceWorks

Speakers: Eric A. Nelson, Department Director, Planning and Community Development Department and Planning Commission Chair, Dana Point

Marc Roberts, Consultant, Renne Public Management Group

Emerging Issues

2:45 - 4:00 p.m.

Speed Sessions

Park A-E

Moderator: Chris Matthews, Second Vice President, Planning and Community Development Department and AVP of Government Affairs/Real Estate, NorthBay Health

Cut Through the Complexity: Resources That Make Planning Easier (2:45 - 3:05 p.m.)

The planning commissioner role can feel daunting: dense laws, technical reports, and big community expectations. The Institute for Local Government (ILG) is here to help simplify the work. This session provides a quick tour of ILG's Planning Commissioner Handbook and other easy-to-use tools designed to help you navigate your responsibilities with clarity. Learn where to find guidance, templates, and best practices you can immediately put to use to strengthen your decision-making.

Speaker: Melissa Kuehne, Director of Enterprise Programs and Special Projects, Institute for Local Government

Planning After Wildfires (3:10 - 3:30 p.m.)

As California faces increasing wildfire threats, development in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) requires thoughtful planning, risk assessment, and regulatory compliance. This session, led by a seasoned fire planning expert, provides a high-level overview of the critical factors in planning for fire-prone areas. Drawing on decades of experience, the speaker will guide planning commissioners through the intersecting considerations of public safety, community design, defensible space, infrastructure requirements, and evolving state and local regulations. This presentation will equip decision-makers with a better understanding of how to evaluate development proposals in high-risk fire zones and ensure resilient, safe communities.

Speaker: Gene Begnell, Fire Protection Analyst, Firesafe Planning Solutions

The Future of Parking in an Autonomous Driving World (3:35 - 3:55 p.m.)

This session explores the future of parking in an autonomous-driving world and the challenges it presents for today's environment. As vehicles become increasingly automated and electrified, parking structures will need to support new demands related to power, charging, and structural capacity. The discussion will also examine how evolving mobility patterns transform curb management and building access. Attendees will gain insights into how to plan adaptable, multi-use parking facilities for the decades ahead.

Speaker: Kellie Dugdale, Senior Transportation Planner, Fehr & Peers

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

Fundamentals

4:15 - 5:30 p.m.

Introduction to CEQA

Park F-H

Whether you're a veteran or a new commissioner, learning about the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) never stops. Between new laws and the courts, CEQA is always changing. This session will explain what you need to know about CEQA, how it will appear in your staff reports, and the key things to look for in the documents you receive. This session will not teach you how to write a CEQA document, but rather how to review one, and what to do if you have questions.

Speakers: Shannon George, Vice President/Principal, David J Powers & Associates, Inc.
Mark Teague, Principal, PlaceWorks

Emerging Issues

4:15 - 5:30 p.m.

California Housing Law Updates: Practical Guidance for Planning Commissioners

Park A-E

This session will give planning commissioners a clear, practical understanding of the 2025 legislative updates to California housing laws — what changed, why it matters for local authority, and how to apply the changes in real-world decision-making. We'll cover key statutory updates affecting housing approvals, CEQA connections, and streamlined/ministerial processes, including significant modifications to the Housing Accountability Act and its enforcement mechanisms. The panel will highlight legal risk areas — such as HAA/Builder's Remedy exposure, density bonus concessions, and objective design standards — and will touch on the tribal consultation process. Throughout, we'll focus on what commissioners need to know to reduce legal risk, respond effectively to public concerns, and make defensible decisions under California's evolving housing framework.

Moderator: Rob Eastwood, President, Planning and Community Development Department and Community Development Director, Campbell

Speakers: Patricia Curtin, Land Use Attorney, Fennemore LLP
Barbara Kautz, Partner, Goldfarb & Lipman LLP
Amara Morrison, Partner, Redwood Public Law, LLP

5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Networking Reception

Tiffany Patio

Catch up with colleagues while enjoying appetizers and no-host beverages during the evening networking reception. It's the perfect opportunity to form support networks inside your profession.

THURSDAY, MARCH 12

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Registration Open El Prado Foyer
8:00 - 9:00 a.m.	Networking Breakfast Park A-E
	<i>General Session</i>
9:00 - 10:15 a.m.	Beyond the Hearing: Understanding the Development Review Process Park A-E Planning commissioners often encounter projects only when they appear at public hearings, without always seeing the extensive work that occurs before and after. This session takes a comprehensive look at the development review process in California, from pre-application meetings and staff analysis to post-approval conditions, inspections, and appeals. Attendees will learn how their role fits within this larger framework, what questions to ask staff and applicants, and how decisions at the dais affect implementation long after the hearing. By examining real-world case studies, this session will highlight both challenges and best practices, offering commissioners practical tools to strengthen transparency, accountability, and effectiveness in their decision-making. Moderator: Rob Eastwood, President, Planning and Community Development Department and Community Development Director, Campbell Speakers: Jennifer Carman, Development Services Director, Morgan Hill Jason Killebrew, Immediate Past President, Planning and Community Development Department and Community Development Director and Assistant City Manager, Brea
	<i>Fundamentals</i>
10:30 - 11:45 a.m.	California Housing Law Basics Park F-H California Housing Law encompasses regulations and policies aimed at addressing the state's housing needs and promoting equitable development. This session will explore the foundational aspects of California's housing laws, including key statutes such as the California Housing Accountability Act and the Housing Element Law. We will discuss how these laws guide local governments in planning and approving housing projects, ensuring compliance with state housing goals, and addressing issues of affordability and accessibility. Additionally, we will review recent legislative updates and initiatives designed to tackle housing shortages, streamline development processes, and promote sustainable growth. By being well-versed in California housing laws, planning commissioners are better equipped to make informed, legally compliant decisions that address local housing needs, promote equitable development, and contribute to the overall well-being of their communities. This session is geared toward those who are new to the role of planning commissioner. Moderator: Rob Eastwood, President, Planning and Community Development Department and Community Development Director, Campbell Speakers: Pedro Gomez, Principal Planner, Santa Ana Gabrielle Janssens, Partner, Goldfarb & Lipman LLP
	<i>Emerging Issues</i>
10:30 - 11:45 a.m.	Advanced CEQA Park A-E This session takes a deep dive into the nuances of CEQA compliance and your important role as a commissioner. Speakers will explain the importance of reviewing information, how to assess whether reports are adequate, what to do about late and lengthy submittals at the public hearing, and how to add information to the administrative record in support of your action. Speakers: Shannon George, Vice President/Principal, David J Powers & Associates, Inc. Mark Teague, Principal, PlaceWorks

THURSDAY, MARCH 12

11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Networking Lunch The Lawn
	<i>General Session</i>
1:15 - 2:30 p.m.	Planning Commissioner Jeopardy! Park A-E The session will run in a game show format similar to Jeopardy! Attendees will be presented with an answer and will then be given an opportunity to respond in question format. The Jeopardy! hosts will work through five different categories with difficulty ranging from 100 points to 500 points. Categories will include: Brown Act, Findings, Quasi-Judicial proceedings, Constitutional Issues, and a special emphasis on Housing Laws. Winning participants will be eligible for prizes! Moderator: Doran Barnes, First Vice President, Planning and Community Development Department and Planning Commissioner, San Dimas Facilitators: Henry Castillo, Associate, Best Best & Krieger LLP Albert Maldonado, Partner, Best Best & Krieger LLP
	<i>Fundamentals</i>
2:45 - 4:00 p.m.	Relationship Between Planning Commission, City Council, Planning Staff and Cal Cities Park F-H As a city official, there will be various competing values and priorities that drive you and your colleagues within your city. Your success on the planning commission requires an effective relationship with your planning staff and city council, where everyone's values are respected and represented. Learn how to work together while cultivating each of your diverse roles. Moderator: Meghan McKelvey, Senior Member Services Manager, League of California Cities Speakers: Brady Guertin, Legislative Advocate, League of California Cities Cynthia Moran, Council Member, Chino Hills Eric A. Nelson, Department Director, Planning and Community Development Department and Planning Commission Chair, Dana Point Ali Pezeshkpour, Executive Director of Planning and Building, Santa Ana

2025 – 2026 Planning and Community Development Department Officers

President, Rob Eastwood
Community Development Director, Campbell

First Vice President, Doran Barnes
Planning Commissioner, San Dimas

Second Vice President, Chris Matthews
Planning Commissioner, Fairfield

Department Director, Eric A. Nelson
Planning Commission Chair, Dana Point

Immediate Past President, Jason Killebrew
Assistant City Manager/Community Development Director, Brea

THURSDAY, MARCH 12

Emerging Issues

2:45 - 4:00 p.m.

Speed Sessions

Park A-E

Moderator: Rob Eastwood, President, Planning and Community Development Department and Community Development Director, Campbell

Resiliency in Action: What Every Planning Commissioner Should Ask (2:45 - 3:05 p.m.)

From flooding to fires, consideration of resiliency has become a necessary part of the planning process. Drawing on first-hand experience with Mayor Bloomberg's NYC Resiliency Initiative (following Superstorm Sandy) and the Resilient City Ordinance in Santa Rosa (in response to the 2017 Tubbs Fire), this session will highlight practical ways planning commissioners can bring resiliency thinking into every project they review. Participants will learn the three key questions every commissioner should ask when evaluating development proposals, CEQA documents, or local policies through a resiliency lens. Real-world examples will show how even small cities can weave resilience into decision-making, ensuring that projects today can withstand the challenges of tomorrow.

Speaker: Patrick Streeter, Community Development Director, Windsor

AI in Land-Use Planning: Practical Tools to Meet Today's Mandates with Tomorrow's Technology (3:10 - 3:30 p.m.)

This fast-paced, solution-focused session explores how artificial intelligence is reshaping land-use planning at a moment when local governments face unprecedented pressure. With new state mandates accelerating housing production, environmental compliance tightening, and public expectations growing — all while revenue growth stalls and staff capacity thins — cities need tools that augment and extend the capabilities of their planning teams.

Speaker: Dr. Peter Pirnejad, ICMA-CM, Executive Director, Davenport Institute for Public Engagement and Civic Leadership, Pepperdine School of Public Policy

Building a New City (3:35 - 3:55 p.m.)

California Forever's proposal to create a new city in Solano County presents a rare chance to rethink economic development and urban growth. This session examines how shipbuilding could play a central role, generating significant employment and anchoring critical infrastructure investments. The speaker will discuss the project's scope, its potential benefits to the region, and the complexities of developing an entirely new community from the ground up. Participants will leave with a clearer understanding of the opportunities and implications of this far-reaching vision.

Speaker: Gabriel Metcalf, Head of Planning, California Forever

General Session

4:15 - 5:30 p.m.

The Planning Commissioner's Role in Housing Production

Park A-E

This informative and engaging session will allow attendees to interact, in small and large group round-table format, to discuss two to three land-use/development/permitting scenarios. The scenarios will provide useful information and questions that will help new commissioners understand the complexity of the development permitting processes, their role and limits of authority. Additionally, planning commissioners will provide insight from the unique perspectives of planning, land use and housing development in multiple urban, rural and suburban contexts.

Facilitators: Amber Gregg, CEO | Founder, Community Catalyst
Jacquelyn McCray, Director, Baker Tilly US

FRIDAY, MARCH 13

7:45 - 10:30 a.m.	Registration Open El Prado Foyer
7:45 - 8:45 a.m.	Networking Breakfast Park A-E
8:45 - 10:00 a.m.	Closing General Session: Legislative Update Park A-E Learn about recent bills that have passed, as well as top issues that are trending in the legislature, and their significance for planning commissioners. Closing Remarks: <i>Doran Barnes, First Vice President, Planning and Community Development Department and Planning Commissioner, San Dimas</i> Speaker: <i>Brady Guertin, Legislative Advocate, League of California Cities</i>
10:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. <i>Sign-in begins at 9:45 a.m.</i> <i>Sign-out ends at 12:30 p.m.</i>	<i>Post-Conference Training</i> Harassment Prevention Training for Supervisors and Officials (AB 1661) Park A-E <i>Sign-in will begin 30 minutes prior to the session and you must be present for the full two hours to receive the certification of attendance. Entry will be prohibited once the session begins.</i> This informational and interactive workplace harassment prevention training will focus on current and emerging issues and teach officials and supervisors how to identify, prevent, and properly respond to workplace harassment, discrimination, retaliation, and abusive conduct in order to avoid personal and agency liability in compliance with AB 1825, AB 2053, AB 1661 and SB 396. <i>The Institute for Local Government is a State Bar of California minimum continuing legal education (MCLE) approved provider and certifies this activity meets the standards for MCLE credit by the State Bar of California in the total amount of 2 hours (general credits). Provider #13881.</i> Speaker: <i>Pamela Graham, Senior Counsel, Colantuono Highsmith & Whatley</i>

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