



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

2015 Local Government Excellence Awards Program Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

(All programs nominated must have been fully operational for a minimum of 12 months, prior to January 31, 2015)

Deadline for Nominations: March 3, 2015

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (*select only one*):

- Community Health and Safety
- Community Partnership
- Community Sustainability
- Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: Opportunities Study Area

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: City of Lake Forest

Jurisdiction population(s): 79,139

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented for at least 12 months prior to January 31, 2015, to be eligible. The start date [on or before January 31, 2014] should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: _____ Year: _____

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, September 2015. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: Robert C. Dunek

Title: City Manager Jurisdiction: City of Lake Forest

Name: David Belmer

Title: Assistant City Manager Jurisdiction: City of Lake Forest

Name: Debra Rose

Title:	<u>Deputy City Manager</u>	Jurisdiction:	<u>City of Lake Forest</u>
Name:	<u>Keith Neves</u>		
Title:	<u>Director of Finance</u>	Jurisdiction:	<u>City of Lake Forest</u>
Name:	<u>Thomas Wheeler</u>		
Title:	<u>Director of Public Works</u>	Jurisdiction:	<u>City of Lake Forest</u>
Name:	<u>Gayle Ackerman</u>		
Title:	<u>Director of Development Services</u>	Jurisdiction:	<u>City of Lake Forest</u>
Name:	<u>Gary Magill</u>		
Title:	<u>Former Community Services Director</u>	Jurisdiction:	<u>City of Lake Forest</u>
Name:	<u>Scott Voigts</u>		
Title:	<u>Mayor</u>	Jurisdiction:	<u>City of Lake Forest</u>
Name:	<u>Andrew Hamilton</u>		
Title:	<u>Mayor Pro Tem</u>	Jurisdiction:	<u>City of Lake Forest</u>
Name:	<u>Dwight Robinson</u>		
Title:	<u>Council Member</u>	Jurisdiction:	<u>City of Lake Forest</u>
Name:	<u>Dr. James Gardner</u>		
Title:	<u>Council Member</u>	Jurisdiction:	<u>City of Lake Forest</u>
Name:	<u>Adam Nick</u>		
Title:	<u>Council Member</u>	Jurisdiction:	<u>City of Lake Forest</u>
Name:	<u>Kathryn McCullough</u>		
Title:	<u>Former Mayor and Council Member</u>	Jurisdiction:	<u>City of Lake Forest</u>
Name:	<u>David A. Bass</u>		
Title:	<u>Former Council Member</u>	Jurisdiction:	<u>City of Lake Forest</u>
Name:	<u>Peter Herzog</u>		
Title:	<u>Former Mayor and Council</u>	Jurisdiction:	<u>City of Lake Forest</u>

Member

Name: Mark Tettemer
Title: Former Mayor and Council Member Jurisdiction: City of Lake Forest

Name: Marcia Rudolph
Title: Former Mayor and Council Member Jurisdiction: City of Lake Forest

SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of contact: Carlo Tomaino
Title: Senior Management Analyst Jurisdiction: City of Lake Forest
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California ICMA Application – Community Partnership Award (2015)

CITY OF LAKE FOREST, CALIFORNIA

The City of Lake Forest was adjacent to the former El Toro Marine Corps Air Station, the largest air station on the west coast until it was decommissioned in 1999. With the decommissioning of the military base, 800 acres of land previously located under the flight path of the base, and once restricted to industrial development, became available for development as other types of land uses. The City now had an opportunity to integrate that section of town into the balance of the community. No longer confined to the previously narrow development entitlements dictated by a flight path, landowners approached the City to discuss new ideas; including housing. In response, the City Council commissioned a comprehensive study, known as “The Opportunities Study,” to consider potential community impacts as well as benefits of changing land use designations for the area. This project would become the most extensive and fruitful public-private partnership in the City’s history, resulting in over \$200 million dollars in public benefit to the community.

Recognizing this as a defining period in the City’s life-cycle, the City Council and staff worked to ensure that the advanced planning required to accomplish this task would be well articulated and incorporate a shared vision for the community from the perspective of its residents and the landowners of the Opportunities Study Area. To that end, the City worked extensively to engage the community and held numerous meetings with landowners to cultivate an atmosphere conducive to cooperation. After years of comprehensive study and public engagement, the community identified a new Sports

Park/Community Center and a Civic Center as the top public projects. Based on the City's estimates at the time, the cost to design and build these projects would likely exceed \$100 million. Given the cost of acquiring land, designing, and ultimately constructing such large projects, the City Council recognized the importance of developing a strong public-private relationship to enhance both the community and opportunities for the landowners. The City and its development partners began working earnestly toward a goal that would enable development of the land into brand-new master planned residential neighbors and provide the City with funding to build the community's vision for the future of Lake Forest.

Clearly, a collaborative partnership with the Opportunities Study Area landowners, one in which mutual benefit would culminate in the transformation of Lake Forest, was a key prerequisite to success. The City identified the following objectives as the guiding principles of the Opportunities Study Area Project: (1) ensure that new development would not have a greater impact to existing infrastructure; (2) reduce traffic impacts to previously approved land uses; (3) maintain fiscal balance; (4) deliver quality master planned communities; (5) expand trails and open space linkages; (6) provide a diverse mix of housing; (7) mitigate impact to schools, and (8) deliver a sports park and community center to serve the current and future residents of Lake Forest.

Through the use of sophisticated financial modeling, development projections, and close collaboration, the City and the Opportunities Study Area landowners developed a clear and consistent vision for the future of the community. The process resulted in the

creation of multiple Development Agreements in which the landowners provided revenue to the City in exchange for new land use entitlements. The model developed by the City of Lake Forest became the foundation upon which partnerships with landowners were built. To date, the City also has held over twenty-six community workshops, meetings, and public hearings to engage the public in the Opportunities Study Area planning process and keep people informed of its progress

The outcome of these Development Agreements reflect a clear connection and commitment from the Opportunities Study Area landowners to the future of Lake Forest. These agreements provide direct public benefit dollars to the City based on both the total number and size of units being developed. In that fashion, each landowner is paying a share of the cost to build neighborhood parks, provide affordable housing, fund the development of new major roads, improve existing infrastructure, improve schools, and fund the design and development of the new community facilities desired by the residents of Lake Forest. The agreements and cooperative partnership that enabled them are the fundamental basis for the success of this program.

The Opportunities Study Area landowners shared in the City's desire to utilize the available land to bring a variety of housing opportunities for all types of buyers to the community and to ensure that new residential development would be sustainable. From 2008 to 2012, the City realigned the vision for Lake Forest with the approval of seven new residential communities building upon community aesthetics, delivering distinctive

homes and parks, and enhancing the City's natural connection to the surrounding environment through the expansion and preservation of trails and open space.

Through the contributions of the landowners, the City secured funding for the construction of the Lake Forest Sports Park and Recreation Center, as well as a future Civic Center. In addition, the landowners funded important roadway improvements such as the extension of Alton Parkway and Rancho Parkway as major arterial roadways that are currently improving traffic circulation throughout Lake Forest and the surrounding region. In November of 2014, the City opened the brand-new Lake Forest Sports Park and Recreation Center. This 86-acre facility, built without debt for approximately \$80 million, contains four baseball fields, one softball field, three multi-use fields, two synthetic fields, a large area known as "The Commons" for special events, a 27,000 square foot community center, various picnic shelters and gazebos, and trail connections to the nearby Aliso Creek Trail. The Lake Forest Sports Park is one of the premier recreation facilities in Orange County and was made possible by the public-private partnership approach developed through the Opportunities Study Area process.

The Opportunities Study Area is the most successful public-private partnership in the history of Lake Forest. The outcome created through this process struck a balance between private property rights and public benefit by enabling residential and commercial development while providing dollars to finance public improvements. The scale of this project will ultimately result in over 4,000 new homes, various

neighborhood parks, millions of dollars for capital projects to build new roads or enhance existing intersections; the Lake Forest Sports Park and Recreation Center; and the Lake Forest Civic Center to be comprised of a community center, senior center, police center, community theatre, and administrative offices. Importantly, these projects are provided without the need to assess special taxes on the residents of the community.

The process developed by the City and the collaboration created through the Opportunities Study Area process have transformed the community and its positive benefits will continue for generations to come. The success of the Opportunities Study Area continues to bear fruit today as the City is advancing the design and development of its new Civic Center. Given the enormous scale of this process, the number of individuals required to bring it to fruition, and the community benefits resulting from this public-private partnership, the City believes that the Opportunities Study Area is worthy of consideration for this prestigious award. The City of Lake Forest submits the Opportunities Study Area for the International City/County Management Association Community Partnership Award.