

2026 88 CITIES SUMMIT

ONE REGION. 88 CITIES. ONE FUTURE.

A REGIONAL ECONOMY TAKES ALL OF US.

Archer | Hawthorne, California | October 14, 2026



LA COUNTY'S NEXT ECONOMY IS ALREADY HERE.

You could see it from the moment you walked into the hangar.

LAEDC's 2026 **88 Cities Summit** took place inside **Archer**, one of the companies advancing a new era of electric aviation. But what was happening outside the hangar was just as important as what was happening inside it.

Across **Los Angeles County**, bioscience companies are growing and manufacturing. **Aerospace** firms are designing, testing and building. **Healthcare** institutions are investing in communities and employing thousands of Angelenos. **Artificial intelligence** is changing how employers think about skills and talent. Cities are finding new ways to use public infrastructure to expand digital access.

These developments are happening in different places, but they are part of the same **regional economy**.

The **88 Cities Summit** brought together the people responsible for making that economy work: city leaders, employers, educators, workforce partners and institutions from across **Los Angeles County**.

Not to speculate about what might come next.

To understand what is already happening and what it requires from **all of us**.



It is about relationships. The future of Los Angeles County depends on how our businesses, our cities, institutions, and regional partners work together."

Mayor Alex Vargas, City of Hawthorne

88 CITIES. ONE REGIONAL ECONOMY.

WHERE SOMETHING HAPPENS IS LOCAL. ITS ECONOMIC IMPACT RARELY IS.



A new employer may choose one city, but its workforce comes from across the region.

A hospital may sit within one set of municipal boundaries, but its purchasing, employment and community impact extend far beyond them.

A bioscience company needs more than laboratory space. It needs talent, suppliers, manufacturing capacity, infrastructure and an environment where it can grow.

The same is true for aerospace, advanced mobility and the other industries shaping Los Angeles County.

This is why LAEDC works regionally.

Los Angeles County's 88 cities have different assets, different economic bases and different opportunities. The goal is not to make them the same. It is to understand how those strengths fit together and how more communities can participate in the growth happening across the region.

That is the premise of 88 Cities.

Bring local leadership closer to the industries and institutions driving regional growth. Bring industry closer to the cities where investment, expansion and hiring happen. Give both a clearer view of the economic landscape they are navigating together.

THE NEXT MOBILITY SYSTEM WILL LAND SOMEWHERE.

Electric aviation made the conversation at Archer tangible.

New mobility technologies do not enter a region in the abstract. They need places to operate. They require infrastructure, charging capacity, transportation connections, permitting, land use decisions and public confidence.

That puts cities directly in the path of innovation.

The Future Ready Cities plenary brought together public planning and private industry to talk about what cities can do before every answer is known.

For Los Angeles City Planning Director Vince Bertoni, part of the answer is flexibility.

“Part of it is really being able to set up your planning to be nimble to a future that may not be really predictable,” said Vince Bertoni of Los Angeles City Planning.

Archer’s Eric Lentell brought the industry perspective to the same challenge:

“We want it to be a positive impact, not a negative impact.”



The implications extend beyond mobility. Cities that understand what emerging industries need are better positioned to make informed decisions about infrastructure, development and community benefit before opportunity passes them by.

BIOSCIENCE

A \$60 BILLION INDUSTRY DOES NOT GROW ON LAB SPACE ALONE.

Los Angeles County has the science.

The larger economic development question is what surrounds it.

Bioscience depends on research institutions and laboratories, but also on manufacturing, logistics, specialized facilities, permitting, capital and workers with a wide range of skills.

That means more cities have a role in the industry than may be immediately obvious.

The Summit's bioscience conversation examined what it takes to turn scientific strength into a functioning regional ecosystem and how cities can identify the part of that ecosystem that fits their own assets.

That matters for economic mobility as much as industry growth. The discussion highlighted that approximately 65 percent of jobs within the sector do not require a four year degree.

Stephanie Hsieh captured the regional opportunity:

“When we connect them up together and bring all our communities together with intention, we really believe that there is so much more to the whole than the sum of the parts,” she said.



For cities, the opportunity may be research. It may be manufacturing. It may be workforce. It may be real estate, suppliers or business services.

Regional cluster development starts with understanding where your assets fit.

WHAT IF THE INTERVIEW STARTED WITH THE WORK?

Glendale is testing that idea.

Its hackathon model brings students, workers, employers, entrepreneurs and educators together around actual problems. Instead of asking participants only to describe what they know, the model gives them a chance to show what they can do.

Three hackathons generated 28 career opportunities, including 17 in Glendale.

That is especially relevant as artificial intelligence changes both jobs and the way employers evaluate talent.

Degrees and résumés will continue to matter. But employers are also looking for problem solving, technical ability, adaptability and evidence that someone can apply what they know.

Justin Brezhnev of Hacker Fund described the difference this way:

“You are not defined by what you look like. It’s the portfolio that speaks louder than anything, and the hackathon is the fastest way to showcase your portfolio to either an employer or a funder.”



For cities and education partners, the lesson is practical. Workforce development becomes more valuable when the distance between learning and employment gets shorter.

EL SEGUNDO HAS A CLUSTER. THE REGION HAS AN OPPORTUNITY.

Aerospace is deeply embedded in Southern California's economic identity, but the industry now developing around space is creating new points of entry.

El Segundo offers a useful example of what density can produce. Companies, engineers, suppliers, investors and specialized expertise operate in close proximity, creating an environment where firms can start, grow and work with one another.

The Summit used that example to open a broader regional conversation.

Southern California's aerospace economy depends on engineering, but it also depends on manufacturing, testing, suppliers and skilled technical workers. Those capabilities do not sit within a single jurisdiction.

For other cities, the question is therefore not how to become the next El Segundo.

It is what part of the aerospace value chain already exists, or could grow, in their community.

That may be a supplier. Industrial space. A workforce program. Manufacturing capacity. A technical specialty. Or a connection that has not yet been made.

This is where regional cluster development becomes useful. It gives cities a way to see economic assets not only for what they are locally, but for what they contribute to a much larger industry.



REGIONAL TAKEAWAY

Southern California's aerospace advantage is regional. More cities can participate when they understand where their assets connect to the larger value chain.

HEALTHCARE

SOME OF THE REGION'S LARGEST ECONOMIC ANCHORS HAVE EXAM ROOMS.

Healthcare is usually discussed through the lens of access and health outcomes.

At 88 Cities, the conversation widened.

Hospitals and healthcare systems are also major employers, purchasers, developers, training partners and investors in the communities around them.

Adventist Health White Memorial shared an estimated \$1.2 billion in total economic impact from a \$650 million annual budget. AltaMed reported \$15.1 billion in economic impact over five years, with 68 percent of its employees living within five miles of an AltaMed facility.

Those numbers change the economic development conversation.



A healthcare investment can mean construction and procurement. It can mean jobs at different skill levels. It can create demand for transportation and housing. And when employees live near the facilities where they work, wages circulate through surrounding communities.

For city leaders, healthcare belongs alongside other economic anchors when thinking about workforce, infrastructure, business activity and community development.

SOMETIMES THE INFRASTRUCTURE IS ALREADY UNDER OUR FEET.

Los Angeles has approximately 250,000 streetlights and thousands of miles of conduit.

Those assets were built for one public purpose. Today, they can help support another.

The Summit's digital conversation looked at how cities can use infrastructure they already control to expand connectivity. Along Destination Crenshaw, public infrastructure helped support a free WiFi pilot that allows residents to connect and small businesses at the local farmers market to conduct ecommerce.

That is economic infrastructure in a very practical form.

But a network alone does not close the digital divide.

Residents need devices. Service has to be affordable. People need the skills to use technology. Workers need pathways into the jobs created by digital investment.

UNITE LA / LA DEAL's Liliana Aide Monge offered a useful reminder for cities that may see the scale of the problem and wonder where to begin:

"It doesn't have to all be done at one time. There are innovative steps that you can take to lay down that foundation."

The point is not for every city to build the same solution.

It is to understand the assets already available and what partnership could make possible.



SIX CONVERSATIONS. ONE REGIONAL ECONOMY.

Mobility needs land use, infrastructure, workforce and public trust.

Bioscience needs research, manufacturing, space, talent and responsive cities.

Aerospace needs engineers, technicians, suppliers, industrial capacity and connections across a regional value chain.

Employers need workers who can demonstrate the skills a changing economy requires.

Healthcare connects jobs, procurement, transportation, community wellbeing and investment.

Digital infrastructure only creates economic opportunity when people and businesses can actually use it.



These were different conversations, but they were not separate conversations.

They were a picture of how the Los Angeles County economy actually works.

That is why regional economic development cannot happen industry by industry, city by city or institution by institution.

Someone has to see the connections.

Someone has to know where the research meets the business need, where the employer meets the workforce partner, where the industry opportunity meets the city, and where a local asset fits into a regional strategy.

A COALITION OF ONE

CONNECTING A REGION TO ADVANCE AN ECONOMY FOR ALL.

A research report can tell us where an industry is growing.

A business can tell us what is keeping it from expanding.

A city can tell us what it is trying to attract.

A workforce partner can tell us where people are struggling to access opportunity.

An investor can tell us what makes a market competitive.

Each perspective matters.

LAEDC's value is being able to connect them.

Our **Institute for Applied Economics** gives the region a clearer view of what is happening in the economy.

Our **business** work puts us directly alongside companies navigating growth, investment and competitiveness.

Our **workforce** work connects industry demand to education and career pathways.

Our **industry cluster** work helps identify where regional strengths can become more intentional economic strategies.

World Trade Center Los Angeles connects those strengths to global investment and trade.

And our **strategic engagement** work creates the relationships that allow those pieces to move together.

The **88 Cities Summit** was not separate from that work.

It was that work, in one place.

Research connected to industry.

Industry connected to cities.

Cities connected to one another.

Employers connected to talent.

Regional opportunity connected to local action.

LAEDC's role is not simply to bring Los Angeles County into the same room. It is to help the region see itself as one economy and give its leaders more ways to act like one.

THE SUMMIT ENDED. THE CONNECTIONS SHOULD NOT.

The value of 88 Cities will not be measured only by who attended on October 14.

It will be measured by what happens because they did.

A city follows up with an employer.

An educational institution builds a new industry relationship.

A company discovers a community it had not considered.

A local program becomes a regional model.

A conversation about infrastructure becomes a partnership.

A piece of LAEDC research helps a leader make a better decision.

These are small moments individually.

Across 88 cities and a regional economy of more than 10 million people, they add up.

LAEDC will continue doing the work that sits between those moments, connecting economic intelligence, business needs, industry opportunity and local leadership so that more of Los Angeles County can participate in the growth ahead.

That is where convening becomes economic development.



SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CONVERSATIONS HAPPEN AFTER THE PROGRAM ENDS.

The first 88 Cities Mayors' Reception was created for exactly that reason.

Following a full day of industry conversations, municipal, business and regional leaders stayed together to continue them.

Not in another panel.

Person to person.

Those relationships matter in a county this large. Economic development often begins with knowing who to call, who can make an introduction, who understands the problem and who has a reason to solve it with you.

The organizations that helped make the reception possible reinforced that same idea.

“Innovation doesn’t happen in isolation, and neither does economic growth,” offered Kassidy Johnson of Amgen.



The reception was not an add on to the Summit. It was another part of how regional work gets done.

ONE REGION. 88 CITIES. ONE FUTURE.

THIS IS WHAT A REGIONAL ECONOMY LOOKS LIKE WHEN IT COMES TOGETHER.



It looks like a city planner sitting beside an advanced aviation company.

A bioscience executive talking with a mayor.

An educator and an employer rethinking how talent gets discovered.

Healthcare leaders putting economic numbers behind community wellbeing.

A city showing other cities how infrastructure already in the ground can connect more people to opportunity.

And leaders from across Los Angeles County leaving with people to call, ideas to pursue and a better understanding of where their communities fit in the regional economy.

That is 88 Cities.

And it is also a window into the work LAEDC does every day.

Know the economy.

Know the industries.

Know the communities.

Connect the people who can move them forward.

Los Angeles County does not need 88 cities pursuing 88 separate economic futures.

It needs 88 cities able to see where their strengths fit into one.

That is a **Coalition of One**.

And that is how we advance an **Economy for All**.

SPECIAL THANKS

PARTNERSHIP MADE THE 88 CITIES POSSIBLE

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY



Powerful Conversations. Meaningful Connections. Actionable Solutions.



ONE REGION. 88 CITIES. ONE FUTURE.

MAYORS' RECEPTION CO-HOSTS



Powerful Conversations. Meaningful Connections. Actionable Solutions.



FROM 88 CITIES TO THE EDDYS

31ST ANNUAL EDDY AWARDS

The 88 Cities Summit brought our region together to share ideas, strengthen relationships and explore how cities can position themselves for the opportunities shaping Los Angeles County's economy.

At the 31st Annual EDDY Awards, we will celebrate cities already putting that work into action.

Fourteen cities have been named finalists for LAEDC's 2026 Most Business Friendly City Award, recognizing their leadership in creating the conditions for businesses to start, stay, grow and invest. From faster permitting and business concierge services to workforce pipelines, small business support and strategies to attract new investment, each is demonstrating what responsive local economic development can look like.

2026 MOST BUSINESS FRIENDLY CITY FINALISTS

Small Cities

Calabasas • Commerce • Culver City • Signal Hill • South El Monte • South Pasadena • West Hollywood

Large Cities

Burbank • Carson • El Monte • Palmdale • Santa Clarita • Santa Monica • Torrance

CELEBRATING ALL 14 CITIES LEADING THE WAY

On November 4 at the Rose Bowl, all 14 finalists will be recognized at LAEDC's 31st Annual EDDY Awards, where the 2026 Most Business Friendly City honorees will be revealed.

The EDDYs celebrate the businesses, organizations, cities and leaders whose work is strengthening Los Angeles County's economy and expanding opportunity across the region. It is where the people doing this work across sectors come together, and where the regional relationships at the heart of 88 Cities continue.

CELEBRATE THE CITIES, BUSINESSES AND LEADERS MOVING LOS ANGELES COUNTY FORWARD.



NOVEMBER 4, 2026 | ROSE BOWL STADIUM