



**Tuolumne County Association of Realtors®**

**“The Voice of Real Estate for Tuolumne County”**

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## **Government Affairs Update: September / October 2017**

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### **Tuolumne County Issues**

Tuolumne County Budget - The Board of Supervisors approved the County General Fund budget for fiscal year 2017/18. The Budget is slightly over \$74-million and the total operational budget is just over \$204-million. Funding requests added to the final budget included:

Money for keeping the bookmobile on its regular schedule at the library and reducing cuts to relief salaries,

Keeping some recreation programs on the chopping block in place and hiring an activity coordinator or recreation director

Extending a contract with water consultant John Mills,

Funding the Tuolumne County Arts Alliance its yearly allocation,

Providing money to the Southwest Interface Team for fire prevention projects,

Allocating money to the Highway 108 Fire Safe Council,

Raises for the Supervisors

Tuolumne County Tightening Marijuana Regulations - Responding to complaints about large marijuana grows popping up in neighborhoods, the Board of Supervisors voted 4-1 earlier this month to direct staff to draft an ordinance to reduce the amount of medical or recreational marijuana a resident can grow and ban all outdoor growing.

Tuolumne County's existing medical marijuana regulations allow for a patient or primary caregiver to grow up to 12 marijuana plants outdoors or 24 plants indoors. When two or more patients or caregivers reside on a parcel, the cap increases to 24 outdoor plants.

The proposed ordinance banning outdoor growing would allow residents to grow a maximum of six plants indoors, regardless of whether it is for medical or recreational use and any renters would be required to have landlord consent.

District Three Supervisor Evan Royce was the lone vote in opposition to the change proposing that outdoor grows be registered, and subject to a permit fee. Royce noted that this would enable the county to know where legal grows are located, and create a funding mechanism for enforcement of larger illegal commercial operations. Other Supervisors felt the outdoor grows had too many adverse impacts on neighbors and needed to be restricted.

The City of Sonora is also planning to create a working group to review marijuana rules and regulations.



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County Medical Marijuana Working Group - This five member group serves as an advisory group to the Board of Supervisors for matters related to marijuana, in accordance with direction provided by the Board of Supervisors. Initial meetings have discussed possible direction on the personal cultivation and medical marijuana regulations in Tuolumne County Ordinance Code Chapter 17.67 with the non-medical marijuana personal cultivation authorized by California's Adult Use of Marijuana Act (AUMA). There are many local, State and Federal issues to work out and reconcile and the many marijuana related problems in Calaveras have shown that this should be very carefully thought out.

County Road Conditions - CRA Director David Gonzalves has noted that substandard and declining road conditions are a major issue in Tuolumne County and are not going to be resolved quickly. Existing poor road conditions were further exacerbated by our wet winter as well as equipment dealing with tree mortality. The increased State gas tax will provide some additional County funding however, it is phased and not sufficient to solve the majority of our road issues. David has indicated his staff is limited by the large scope of work and what they can realistically accomplish. He is asking our County residents to help keep brush and debris cleared from roadside ditches so that roads are not further degraded by flooding.

PACE Update - The Sept Housing Policy Committee (HPC) was provided a PACE update by County Council regarding PACE lawsuits in California which have been dismissed with prejudice and Counties that have opted out of PACE which Included Kern County. The consensus of the group was there was no urgency to adopt PACE and to revisit the issue in six months. C.A.R. has never opposed PACE as a program, but as an advocate for the interests of homeowners and consumers, C.A.R. continues to be concerned with the lack of oversight to protect them from excessive fees, predatory interest rates, hard sales tactics, confusing disclosures, and zero accountability. Based on discussions at the HPC there does not appear to be committee or Supervisor support to have the County adopt this program and take on the responsibility to administer on the tax roles.

County General Plan Update - CRA director David Gonzalves has stated that his staff is working on a very aggressive schedule to have the document out for public review sometime in the first qtr of 2018 and adopted by the end of the year.

Columbia Airport Master Plan - The County has been working with Coffman and Assoc. on a 20 year master plan for Columbia Airport. The latest version was presented to the Tuolumne County Airport Advisory Committee on September 6th and showed upgrades and proposed extensions of the runways, new taxiways, new hangars and tie down locations, and expanded Cal Fire area. The improvements in today's dollars were estimated to be in the 65 million dollar range with the largest cost item being the extension of the main runway. The majority of funds would be from FAA and other airport related funding sources.



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## **TUD Water Issues**

TUD Ditch Maintenance - The TUD Board has adopted the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for TUD Ditch Maintenance Activities. This will be the document that sets the format when staff and the Board formulate and approve future maintenance activities on the ditch. The document can be reviewed on the TUD website.

Phoenix Lake Preservation and Restoration Project - Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD) is moving forward with design and permitting for the Phoenix Lake Preservation and Restoration Project to improve the water quality and storage capacity of the lake and will be collecting sediment samples at the end of Sept. The samples are needed for the project to be adequately designed for excavation, dredging, and fill placement operations. TUD projects the actual dredging phase of the project to begin in spring of 2018.

## **California Legislative Update**

Friday, September 15th marked the last day of the 2017 legislative year and the Governor has until October 15th to sign or veto any bills that were sent to his desk at the conclusion of session. The Legislature will reconvene next year on January 3rd of 2018 to continue to pursue bills introduced but not passed this year as well as to introduce new pieces of legislation. Legislators passed 15 bills aimed at alleviating the state housing crisis. Three emerged as the central elements that Governor Brown has indicated he intends to sign. These are:

- SB 2, by Sen. Toni Atkins would impose a \$75 fee on many real estate transactions and direct that revenue toward state-sponsored affordable housing. The fee, which would not apply to home sales, could raise upwards of \$200 million annually.
- SB 3, by Sen. Jim Beall of San Jose, which put a \$4 billion affordable-housing bond before voters in 2018. The borrowing would support construction and subsidize home loans for veterans.
- SB 35, by Sen. Scott Wiener, would ease regulatory hurdles for new housing developments in cities that are not meeting their state-mandated housing goals.

New this year was Lawmakers had three days to figure out how to vote because a new law voters imposed last year forbids them to act on a bill until it's been available to the public for 72 hours.

Although a diverse coalition of affordable housing advocates, developers and other housing stakeholders support the central elements of the housing package, Californians shouldn't expect to feel the impact of the legislation on their rising rents or mortgage payments anytime soon. According to state and third-party estimates of the legislation, the state will remain billions of dollars short annually of the money needed to finance new homes for the neediest Californians, According to the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office, helping just the 1.7 million poorest Californians afford homes would cost \$15 to \$30 billion a year (all projects utilizing the funding



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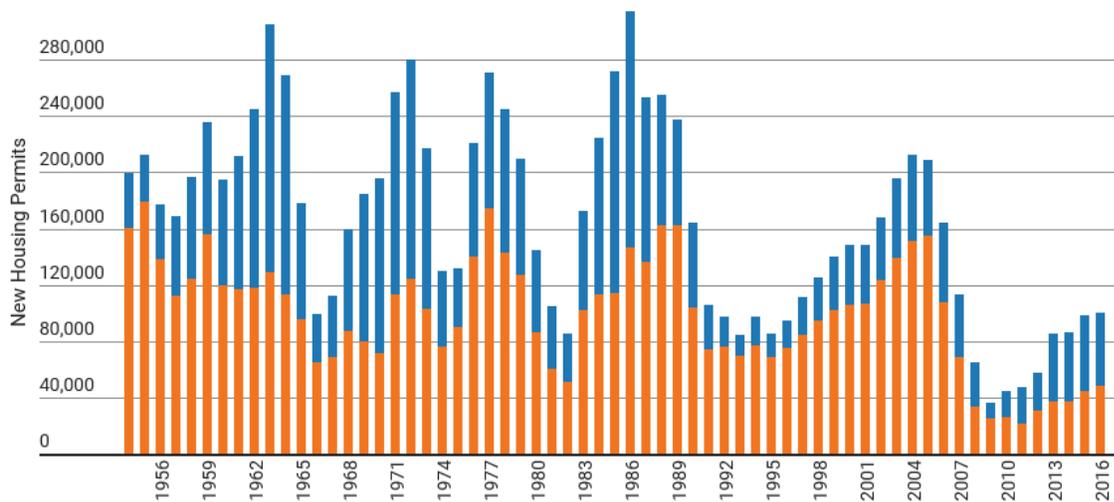
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will be required to pay prevailing wage). The Los Angeles Times estimated that the three marquee bills considered by lawmakers this month would provide less than 25 percent of that total. The new affordable housing dollars are estimated to produce about 14,000 homes a year—well below the 100,000 home gap between what the state typically produces and what it needs to keep prices stable (see chart below)

### California doesn't build like it used to



New Housing Permits  
Single Family - orange  
Multifamily - Blue

Source: California Department of Housing and Community Development