



Supervisor Keith Carson

District 5 News and Updates

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The Fifth District includes the cities of Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Piedmont, and West Oakland, North Oakland, Rockridge, Grand Lake, and portions of the Fruitvale, Manzanita and Dimond District neighborhoods.

What Happened to the Separation of Powers?

The tone of the State budget stalemate seems appropriate for the coldest summer on record in over 20 years. While we have unfortunately become accustomed to budgets passing in September or October instead of at the beginning of the fiscal year, this year one disastrous proposal surfaced that flies in the face of the separation of powers. In short, counties would be incentivized to keep those convicted of certain crimes in local custody. The problem is the incentive is not driven by what is in the best interest of the community or justice. It's all about the money.

Certain crimes are called "wobblers," meaning they can be charged as a felony or a misdemeanor. If convicted of the felony, the person goes to state prison; if the person is convicted of the misdemeanor, they stay in the county. The proposal is that counties are

given a chunk of money called a block grant. If the person is charged and convicted of the felony, the county sends \$23,000 of their block grant money to the state to cover the cost of incarceration. If the person is charged and convicted of a misdemeanor, we keep the money to cover the cost of incarceration or programming. It is important to note that the cost of keeping someone in North County or Santa Rita is about \$28,000. So Alameda County gets ripped off there as well, similar to the way we have been shortchanged on barbeque weather this summer.

While it all stinks, the State Legislature is using the California budget catastrophe to influence the judicial process. This is an abomination of the democratic process. If the founding fathers could see this, they would blind themselves like Oedipus Rex. Not to mention the ego of the Legislature, assuming that judges will play ball.

Most of the judges that I have come across don't like to be told how to make judicial decisions.

For those of us who watched this unfold, I can't say we are completely surprised. In the first proposal, the money "followed" the person. So if they were convicted of the misdemeanor, the state would send the money to counties; convicted of a felony, the money went to the state. In a revised proposal unveiled at a meeting with Senate President Pro-Tem Steinberg's staff and prominent members of law enforcement and others, the phrase "you pay" was dropped in a number of times; and finally the most recent proposal

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Alameda County's Declining Property Values Affect Local Government

Homeowners concerned about the value of their property have a lot to think about this summer. The news about the U.S. economy and the state of the housing market continues to be mixed. According to the National Association of Realtors, existing home sales dropped in July but home prices rose on average across the nation. In Alameda County, the picture is not quite as rosy. In July, County Assessor Ron Thomsen reported a local assessment roll before legal exemptions for 2010-11 totaling \$199.7 billion, a \$2.9 billion decrease from last year. The numbers reflect a 1.43% drop in the assessment roll since 2009-10. Falling home prices means a decline in property tax revenue for the county, cities and local school districts. Cash-strapped local governments that have already slashed budgets will have even less money next year to deliver services to the residents of the County.

The reduced assessments are largely due to the continuing decline in the market values of single-family homes. The Assessor and his staff have been proactive about reassessing homes that may have recently declined in value, even if they are not on the market to be sold.

For most properties in Alameda County that have not been sold recently, the Assessor usually adds on a small amount of value each year, between 1 and 2 percent depending upon the location. Due to the economic downturn, officials cannot rely upon business-as-usual practices. Appraisers have instead focused on properties that were sold and received reassessments during the real estate bubble that started early in 2001.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Dinner with Albany
Saturday, September 25, 2010
5:30-9:30 pm
Solano Avenue between San Pablo and Masonic
[Learn more!](#)

Ready to Learn Fun Fair
5th Annual
October 2010, Date TBA
Rosa Parks Elementary School, Berkeley
FREE FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY
FREE BOOKS, RESOURCES & GAMES
10AM-1PM
For more information call (510) 272-6695 or supervisor.carson@acgov.org

Property value...continued from page 1

In July, 110,032 owners of property in Alameda County were sent notices that their property had been reassessed by appraisers at the Assessor's office. This represents about a quarter of the more than 443,000 parcels of taxable real estate in the county. Although some assessments resulted in higher property values, the net result for the entire county was a decrease in value to the local assessment roll.

To put these declines in perspective, consider the historical trends in property value in Alameda County. Since 1958, the assessment roll for the entire county has seen positive growth, with increases in value as high as 15% in one year (1972). In 2009-10, for the first time since 1958, the assessment roll experienced a loss of 2.2%. The 2010-11 loss of 1.43 % in value continues that downward trend.

[View a bar graph of assessment roll changes](#) (Scroll down to page 6)

Even within Alameda County, these trends differ by city. The chart below shows the net assessment role for each city in District 5, before legal exemptions have been applied:

Although Oakland is the city with the highest net property value in the county, the rolls lost more than \$1.3 billion in value, or more than 3% since last year. Berkeley and Emeryville sustained smaller net losses in value, decreasing 0.189% and 0.642% respectively. But the news is not all doom and gloom. Two cities in District 5 saw increases in net property value: Piedmont's total assessed value rose 0.081% and Albany rose 1.31%.

City	2009/10 Roll	2010/11 Roll	Percent change
Albany	\$1,898,702,784	\$1,923,568,649	1.310%
Berkeley	\$13,529,127,338	\$13,503,553,510	-0.189%
Emeryville	\$4,217,857,169	\$4,190,790,315	-0.642%
Oakland	\$42,547,801,651	\$41,234,044,680	-3.088%
Piedmont	\$3,024,823,020	\$3,027,278,586	0.081%

What does a change in property value mean for cities, school districts and special districts that depend upon property tax revenue? In short, it is too early to say for sure. Residents still have the option to appeal the assessment. And taxes have not been collected yet so we don't know exactly how much revenue will be coming into city coffers. According to officials in

the Assessor's office, the change in revenue will probably mirror the change in property value. So if Emeryville has seen a 0.642% decrease in home values, expect to see a similar percentage decline in property tax revenue for the city.

If you would like more information about your assessment, call the Assessor's Office at (510) 272-3787 (real estate assessments) or (510) 272-3836 (business property assessments).

Where do your property taxes go? For every dollar:	
Schools	41 cents
Cities	18 cents
Redevelopment	13 cents
Special districts	13 cents
County	15 cents

[Find out more about the Meals on Wheels Ride!](#)



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where counties get the block grant. Currently the proposal is stalled because it needs to be included in the overall budget and it looks like the Legislature will not pass a budget until after the November Election. In addition, the Governor has suggested he will leave the issues of dealing with California's fiscal crisis to the next administration. I would not be surprised if some version of this proposal makes it into this year's final budget package. The overall problem is that without the increased revenue, the legislature will find a way to impose further cuts that will turn up the heat on local government. And I am not talking about the temperature.

Save the Date!
East Bay Economic Development Alliance
 20th Anniversary Celebration
 Friday December 3, 2010, 5:30-8 pm
 Location in Jack London Square TBA



[View and Download the Making Connections Resource Directory of Community Based Organizations!](#)



Learn about local government!

The sessions are held from 9 am - noon on the following Saturday mornings: October 2, October 30 and November 13, 2010 and January 8 and January 29, 2011

[Apply now for the Academy!](#)