

From the GAD's Desk **May 2006**

by David Stark
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The 2006 political season is heating up. As this issue of the Guide goes to press, we're about a month away from Spring elections and Bay East is actively involved. In late April, the Local Government Relations (LGR) Council interviewed candidates for two Alameda County Supervisory districts and candidates for Mayor and City Council for Hayward and San Leandro. More electoral action will happen this fall.

What can you do to get involved? Register to vote! Have you moved recently? You'll need to change your voter registration. You should also remind your clients to register to vote. The California Secretary of State has a simple, and quick on-line voter registration system. For more information visit: <http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections>.

State Issues

C.A.R. is sponsoring several bills that are making their way through the legislature. As of early April, here's the status of a broker's license bill and land use and housing bills:

AB 1963 (Leslie) Real Estate Brokers License for "Degree Brokers," was scheduled to be heard in the Assembly Appropriations Committee in early April. State law allows graduates from a four-year college or university to be granted a brokers license. This bill will require "degree brokers" to meet the same two-year experience requirement as applied to other applicants for a broker license.

AB 2511 (Jones) Land Use/Housing SB 1177 (Hollingsworth) Density Bonus are two C.A.R. sponsored bills that may have a direct impact on the creation of new affordable housing. AB 2511 will seek to streamline the permit process and require cities to publish clear and consistent development standards. Local governments would also have to report annually on their progress meeting community housing needs. Among other provisions, it would repeal the "Granny Flat Law" and replace it with a "second" unit law.

The "Density Bonus" law will help developers use the incentives provided by state law when they include affordable units in their projects. Specifically, the law would prevent local governments from reviewing the financial details related to developments seeking the density bonus – especially if there will be no investment of public funds in the development.

C.A.R. is opposing AB 1898 (Jones) Flood Insurance. According to C.A.R., this bill would require the State Department of Water Resources to develop or approve maps that identify all properties located within a levee protection zone. All properties located within a 200 year flood zone would need to be insured for the term of any loan secured by the property, in an amount equal to the outstanding principle balance of the loan, or

the maximum coverage available for that type of property, whichever is less by July 1, 2007, unless the levee system protecting the property has been certified to provide 200 years of flood protection. C.A.R. opposes AB 1898 because not only is it awkward to force a federal program to conform to one state's requirements, the federal program is currently insolvent. Finally, forcing property owners to maintain flood insurance will not control actual flooding or losses due to flooding.

C.A.R. is supporting several bills including:

AJR 47 (Ridley-Thomas) California Housing Affordability. This bill seeks to have federal government to designate California as a "high-cost area," and to raise the FHA and conforming loan limits.

SB 1509 (Soto) Zoning Regulations. This bill would require the Office of Planning and Research to prepare and circulate model zoning ordinance(s) for voluntary use by cities and counties that would encourage mixed use and compact developments. The bill would also reduce barriers to infill development, and reduce government review and processing time with a clearly defined development approval process.

Local Issues

As mentioned earlier, by the time this issue of the Guide hits the streets, the LGR Council will have completed its first round of candidate interviews. Later this summer, the LGR will interview candidates running for office in Dublin, Fremont, Pleasanton and Union City. If you are interested in learning more about these races, if you know any of the candidates, or if you are active in either of these communities, please considering joining the Local Government Relations Council. The Council can use your expertise and knowledge in selecting candidates to support.

From the GAD

The strength of the Bay East Government Affairs Program is based on member involvement. The best way to get involved is to become aware of issues facing the real estate industry at the federal, state and local level. The NAR website, (<http://www.realtor.org>) and the C.A.R. website (<http://www.car.org>) both have links to their respective government affairs programs. At the local level, if there's an issue that's important to you or your colleagues, I'm happy to make presentations at marketing and office meetings. Please call me at (925)730-4068 or send me an email (DavidS@bayeast.org) to schedule a presentation.