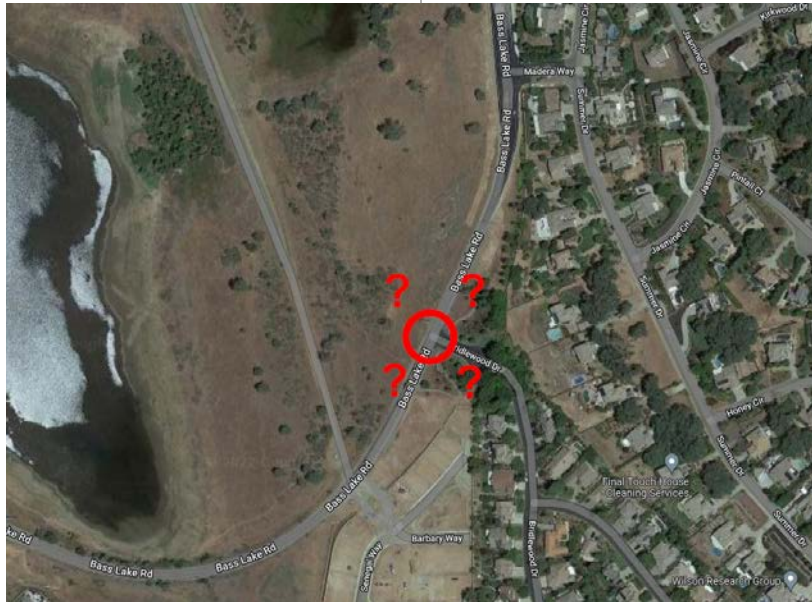


The **BASS LAKE BULLETIN**

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<http://basslakeaction.org>

ROUND, AND ROUND, AND ROUNDABOUT



By John Davey

The proposed roundabout at the Bass Lake Road – Bridlewood Drive intersection continues to evolve as a potential solution for the growing vehicle and pedestrian challenges in the Bass Lake Community. The County Transportation Department presented a status update to the Bridlewood HOA and their residents at a July 20th meeting. At that meeting, the second discussion in as many years for Bridlewood residents and the Transportation Department, staff updated residents on why a roundabout may be the only achievable solution for the troublesome intersection. Some Bass Lake Action Committee History: In August 2019, as the approved Serrano Village J7 project

(now called EdgeLake) was seeking changes from the 72 unit attached homes project, the Bass Lake Action Committee's Transportation and Safety Committee (TSC) submitted several letters to El Dorado County's Transportation Department, Planning Commission, Planning Department and Board Supervisors, concerned about the elimination of long promised transportation and circulation improvements to Bass Lake Road (<http://basslakeaction.net/aug-5-2019> , <http://basslakeaction.net/aug-15-2019> , and <http://basslakeaction.net/aug-19-2019>). The revised Serrano Village J7 project, located at the Bass Lake overflow, in front of Bridlewood

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2021-22 EL DORADO COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORTS SECOND OF TWO PARTS

By John Davey

The 2021-22 El Dorado County Grand Jury released the reports for their session on June 23, 2022. The reports cover several topics, and are typically directed to operations of County officers, departments, agencies, school districts, and local government special districts in El Dorado County.

The Civil Grand Jury (Jury) is composed of 19 members who serve for one year, from July 1 through June 30 of the following year. State law requires that applicants be a United States citizen, 18 years of age or older, of ordinary intelligence and good character, a resident of El Dorado County for at least 1 year with a working knowledge of the English language.

California state law requires that all 58 counties impanel a Jury to serve during each fiscal year. (Penal Code Section 905, California Constitution, Article I, Section 23.)

The Jury is an investigatory body created for the protection of society

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ROUNDABOUT *(con't)*

project, located at the Bass Lake overflow, in front of Bridlewood Canyon, was proposed to delay frontage improvements along Bass Lake Road at the development in favor of providing the County funds in lieu of building the improvements – items such as turn pockets for the development, sidewalks/walking paths, bicycle lanes, etc.

In 2015, the County Board of Supervisors approved eliminating three Bass Lake Road widening/improvement projects from the County's twenty year Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The conclusion of the Planning and Transportation Departments was that planned growth in the Bass Lake Area never developed to the full extent assumed in the 1980s and 1990s, so an improved Bass Lake Road was no longer required.

Multiple Environmental Impact Reports, as well as individual development projects (the 1988 El Dorado Hills Specific Plan, the 1991/92 Bass Lake Road Study Area/Bass Lake Hills Specific Plan, Sierra Crossing, the Bass Lake Villages [The Hills of El Dorado and Woodridge], and Silver Springs residential) all envisioned Bass Lake Road as an improved four lane roadway, with some projects in the 1980s referencing a potential six lane(!) roadway.

The four lane Bass Lake Road alignment using the existing County Right of Way would bring a realigned four lane Bass Lake Road to within a few feet of the Bridlewood Canyon Gatehouse.



Abandoned four lane Bass Lake Rd alignment at Serrano J7 & Bridlewood Canyon

So development projects from 1988 through 2015 were all approved with the belief that a four lane Bass Lake Road would happen – after all, the projects were included in the twenty year CIP - but a four lane alignment was never conditioned by any of the projects.

But the with the removal of the Bass Lake Road projects from the CIP in 2015-16, the County still had the required Right of Way along Bass Lake Road from Serrano Parkway all the way to the new Silver Springs Parkway intersection. By keeping the deeded right of way, the County kept open the possibility for a four lane alignment.

However, without the planned four lane alignment of Bass Lake Road in place, the County could not install the required Serrano Village J7 frontage improvements – basically, why spend the money to build the frontage improvements if they might have to be demolished within twenty years to build the four lane alignment?

Over those many years, the Transportation Department indicated that the conditions did not exist for a left turn pocket on southbound Bass Lake Road at Bridlewood Drive. If a traffic condition or warrant didn't

exist, the County cannot construct a turn pocket – the turn pocket, a stop sign, any traffic control device, must be justified, or the County risks exposure from traffic accidents, and puts at risk any sort of traffic citation – basically, if the traffic control cannot be justified, lawsuits against the County due to accidents could result, and traffic citations against motorists could be overturned if challenged in court.

However, a traffic study/analysis completed in September 2019 indicated that conditions DID exist for a left turn pocket, at Bridlewood Drive, and was warranted under current conditions, even before the Serrano Village J7 project would be built. The Transportation Department now couches that the intersection either “barely” meets traffic warrants, or more recently has publicly stated that it does NOT meet traffic warrants. A confusing yes/no standard.

At any rate – funding simply does not exist to construct Four million dollars of left turn pockets. The Bass Lake Road – Bridlewood Drive turn pocket could only be added to the CIP “Unfunded” list. If the twenty year CIP list I a long range plan, requiring constant funding contributions over twenty years, items on the CIP “Unfunded” list realistically have no real chance of ever being constructed.

With the Serrano Village J7 project adding yet another village driveway to Bass Lake Road, complicated by the poor sightlines and roadway design at the Bass Lake Overflow, and being only 400 feet from the already impacted Bridlewood Drive intersection, the TSC recognized

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ROUNABOUT *(con't)*

that some form of improvement would be better than none. The Bass Lake Action Committee's TSC in our August 2019 letter asked for *any* solution. Knowing that grant funding exists for items like bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and roundabouts, the TSC asked if any of these projects would be available for the Bass Lake Road – Bridlewood Drive intersection.

In January 2020, the Transportation Department suggested in a meeting with TSC members that a grant-funded roundabout might be a solution. They presented sample designs – the first for two left turn lanes on southbound Bass Lake Road at Bridlewood Drive and at Barbary Way (Serrano Village J7) that were initially estimated at close to \$ 4million, which had zero chance of finding funding. The second, a roundabout at Bridlewood Drive, that would also include pedestrian crosswalks for residents on the east side of Bass Lake Road to access the future Bass Lake Regional Park, with an initial cost estimation of over \$2 million, and was expected to be primarily funded with grants. However, one requirement was that Bridlewood Canyon property owners would need to contribute “seed funding” in order for the project to qualify for the potential grant funding.

The Serrano Village J7 project was approved in January 2020, with a condition of approval that Serrano Associates contribute \$200,000 in funding for a potential roundabout. If Bridlewood owners don't approve of contributing seed funding to the project, the \$200,000 would be returned to Serrano Associates.

With that history lesson complete, the most recent update for the proposed Bass Lake Road Bridlewood Drive roundabout can be found at the El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC).

The EDCTC is not an agency of El Dorado County government. The EDCTC was designated as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for El Dorado County on July 23, 1975. As the RTPA, the EDCTC serves as the planning and programming authority for transportation projects on the western slope of El Dorado County, excluding those areas within the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency boundaries.

The EDCTC is responsible for coordinating regional transportation planning for the western slope of El Dorado County. Being the State-mandated Regional Transportation Planning Agency, EDCTC prepares the Regional Transportation Plan and Improvement Program for the Western Slope. This Plan is updated every five years.

At the August 4, 2022 EDCTC meeting, the commission staff recommended adding the Bass Lake Road Bridlewood Drive roundabout project for amendment into the 2020-2040 Regional Transportation Plan and identifying the project for \$744,000 in State of California Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding.

In an August 18, 2022 Village Life article, Transportation Department Director Rafael Martinez suggested that CMQA is only one of many State and Federal grants that the Department plans to apply for.

Typically, grant funding for transportation projects no longer center on roads, but instead on alternative projects such as bicycle lanes, pedestrian paths/sidewalks, and air quality. Since the roundabout is suggested to not stop traffic, but to keep vehicle traffic moving, albeit in a slower fashion, roundabouts qualify as projects that reduce greenhouse gas production.

In our community, the roundabout project is seen through many different lenses. Many Bridlewood Owners reject out of hand that they should have to contribute yet more money (over the original traffic impact fees that the Bridlewood Canyon project provided to the County from the late 1980s through the early 2000s). And indeed – the position of the Bass Lake Action Committee TSC is that the conditions at the Bass Lake Road - Bridlewood Drive intersection have been the result of numerous other subsequent projects approved in the community well after Bridlewood Canyon was approved and constructed. The TSC considers the challenges at the intersection a community issue – not just a Bridlewood Canyon resident issue.

Others in our community see any improvement to circulation and safety as something the community desperately needs. The Bass Lake Action Committee TSC supports improvements, and have advocated for them in our community over several years.

And yet another group in our community sees a roundabout as an inappropriate solution. They generally believe that roundabouts result in confusion for both drivers

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ROUNDAABOUT (con't)

and pedestrians.

Whichever solution results, there will be numerous details to work out. The proposed EDH CSD Bass Lake Regional Park is suggesting an eastern parking lot across from Woodridge Village, and Bridlewood Canyon, which is proposed to provide space for 140 vehicles. An access point at the roundabout is considered as part of the roundabout project. How those vehicles enter and leave Bass Lake Road will be a significant – perhaps the most significant – element to consider and plan for. How pedestrians in our Bass Lake Community on the eastern side of the Lake access the future park site is another critical concern. Additionally, Bridlewood Canyon’s entrance functions as a School Bus Stop for both the Rescue Union School District (Green Valley Elementary, and Pleasant Valley Middle School), and the El Dorado Union High School District (Ponderosa High School) students. Changes to the intersection will need to accommodate school bus activity.

Looking at the future, it seems that based on El Dorado County long range planning, there are precious few opportunities for the Bass Lake community to realize improvements for traffic and pedestrian safety.

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and the enforcement of the law. It is an arm of the Court and a representative of the public. Although it is an arm of the Court, it operates

independently of direct Court supervision. It is a check against governmental authority. It is not a branch of the County, nor is it answerable to the District Attorney.

The reports contain a significant amount of analysis, data, and findings of the Grand Jury. While too large to repeat fully in the Bulletin, we’re offering a look at some of the reports, including the summary, the Grand Jury Findings, and the Grand Jury Recommendations. The Bulletin will include two Grand Jury Reports in July, and another two Grand Jury Reports in August. For full details about each report, follow the links to the individual Grand Jury reports, saved as PDF files.

HOTEL EMERGENCY HOUSING FOR HOMELESS WESTERN SLOPE Case #21-06 -- June 23, 2022

SUMMARY El Dorado County (County) houses homeless individuals and families in hotels located within the County. Programs receive funding from State and Federal governments to cover the costs of housing individuals experiencing homelessness. The County departments that use these funds to provide emergency housing services to the homeless include the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) and the Probation Department (Probation). Currently, the County primarily pays hotels by check instead of by the more expedient credit card payment. This has resulted in few local hotels willing to participate in supplying emergency housing due to the long wait times to receive payment from the County. The lack of hotels has led to homeless people primarily being housed at a single hotel in Cameron Park.

BACKGROUND Probation emergency housing is used by any Probation Officer who has a Justice Involved Individual (JII) experiencing housing instability. Emergency housing is commonly used for offenders who are under a formal grant of probation, who were released from custody, or who are under Post Release Community Supervision (offenders returning to the community from prison and trying to re-establish themselves back into County society). Emergency housing may be for a single night or for more than a month, depending on the client’s needs.

Under HHSA, emergency housing can be used by:

1. The California Work Opportunities and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) - Housing Support Program (HSP) to provide a hotel stay to families at the discretion of HHSA. HSP is a state-funded program which assists homeless CalWORKs families to quickly obtain permanent housing.
2. The Family Stabilization Program, a part of CalWORKs, provides temporary services to families who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless, or experiencing transportation or other emergencies impairing participation in Welfare-to-Work activities and employment.
3. Child Welfare or Child Protection Services can also provide emergency housing. Child Protection Services helps to identify, treat, and reduce child abuse and neglect. Emergency housing may be for a day, but not to exceed 16 days. However, stays can be extended in certain circumstances.

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4. Full-Service Partnership and Homeless Mentally Ill Outreach Treatment Behavior Health programs can use emergency housing. These programs work with mental health patients.

DISCUSSION The Grand Jury reviewed reports from Probation and HHSA for documenting hotel stays by their clients. From June 2019 through September 2021, HHSA utilized the Cameron Park Quality Inn (Quality Inn) for emergency/temporary housing of 28 families. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, Probation’s hotel stays for JII clients at the Quality Inn Hotel had 14 clients totaling 292 nights, and the Courtyard by Marriott in Folsom had 1 client for 10 nights. Probation reported that 67% (10) had a high-risk supervision level, 27% (4) medium risk level, and 6% (1) low risk level. A low-risk offender is one with a relatively low probability of reoffending (few risk factors), while a high-risk offender has a high probability (many risk factors). In contrast, lower-risk offenders receive lower levels of supervision, while the higher risk clients need more face-to-face contact with Probation.

Key components that contribute to the risk of probation violation include a history of chronic crime, low socioeconomic status and/or unemployment, varied stressors associated with legal supervision, and insufficient ability to deal with social pressures.

One JII client reoffended during this

time period while staying at the Quality Inn.

The Grand Jury learned from both HHSA and Probation that they utilized the Quality Inn for its homeless clients because the Quality Inn would agree to invoice and wait to be paid by check.

As a supervising agency, Probation supports housing in a location proximate to the Probation Office in Shingle Springs. Officers visit the location weekly or more often to monitor and provide support to clients while they are in residence. Further, services within walking distance of the hotel include stores, restaurants, public transportation, and possible employment opportunities.

County officials/employees at HHSA and Probation, based on prior institutional knowledge, were under the impression the Auditor-Controller's Office required them to only use hotel vendors who would accept the terms of payment by check through an invoice, rather than the more expedient and convenient use of a credit card. The Auditor-Controller's Office stated this was never the policy. This perception prevented and/or dissuaded HHSA and Probation from using County credit cards when purchasing hotel stay services for their clients. Interviews revealed that a hotel in El Dorado Hills was initially willing to take part in the emergency housing program for County clients, but due to the extended timeline for payment by check, ultimately declined to do so.

This extended timeline for payment by check limited the number of hotels that the County was able to use for emergency housing and resulted in an unequal distribution of clients being

housed at the Quality Inn. With greater purchasing flexibility, it would be likely the County could use hotel vendors outside of the Cameron Park area when it was most appropriate for the client's needs.

The Grand Jury was concerned by the lack of written procedures and communication between the Auditor-Controller's Office and both HHSA and Probation management to clear up this misconception, as well as the lack of cooperation to ensure a smooth and efficient payment process for local hotel vendors. Although there is some communication now between them about this issue, it is accusatory and reactionary instead of cooperative to fine tune the process. The County’s Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) should request more productive communications between the departments to increase the number of local hotel vendors and to ensure swift payment for services. After all, the hotel vendors are supplying a service to the County.

HHSA has procedural guidelines for processing hotel vendor invoices within 30 days of receipt that include internally approving invoices and sending them to the Auditor Controller's Office for payment. There were several instances in 2021 in which HHSA did not follow its guidelines, resulting in vendors not getting paid for several months from the receipt of invoice by HHSA.

There are no contracts between the County and the hotel vendors it utilizes. Both HHSA and Probation use an “established relationship” with the hotels. Probation does have an Authorization for Services document it provides to the hotel that indicates a maximum nightly rate and requires

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clients to sign an agreement that says it is the client's responsibility to pay for damages. HHSa has similar documentation. While there have been a few instances of damage, it has been minimal and has been paid for by the related department. The Auditor-Controller's Office has suggested that a contract be executed between the County and hotel vendors to include provisions for damages and unauthorized expenditures.

FINDINGS

F1. Probation and HHSa have a limited number of hotels available to them, resulting in both departments using the Quality Inn at a disproportionately higher rate than other hotels.

F2. HHSa, Probation, and the Auditor-Controller's Office do not have written procedures detailing the credit card payment process for emergency homeless hotel stays, including the process and procedures to be followed if there is hotel damage or unauthorized charges from the stay.

F3. The Grand Jury found examples that HHSa did not follow its written procedures for invoice approval.

F4. HHSa and Probation were under the impression they were unable to use credit cards for hotel stays. While no written procedures on this matter were found, the perception was strong enough for these departments not to use credit cards for hotel stays and instead, send approved invoices to the

Auditor-Controller's Office for payment by check to the hotel vendor.

F5. There are no formal contracts in place between the County and hotel vendors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The CAO should direct County departments to coordinate housing stays and work to use an expanded list of hotels, as appropriate, for emergency housing of their clients on the Western Slope. This directive should be given by September 30, 2022.

R2. The Auditor-Controller's Office should establish written procedures for processing credit card payments for emergency homeless hotel stays, including the process and procedures to be followed if there is hotel damage or unauthorized charges from the stay, and distribute throughout County departments. These written procedures should be distributed by September 30, 2022.

R3. Probation and HHSa management should send a monthly report to the CAO demonstrating they are consistently following their internal written procedures for processing hotel vendor invoices, from receipt through fiscal oversight, until it is sent to the Auditor-Controller's Office. This monthly reporting process should begin by September 30, 2022.

R4. The Auditor-Controller's Office should provide the CAO, HHSa, and Probation with a quarterly report of approved hotel vendors or whenever the list is changed. This quarterly reporting should begin by September 30, 2022.

R5. The CAO should direct County Counsel to determine whether contracts should be in place with hotels that are used by the County departments for emergency housing hotel stays. The County Counsel should respond to the CAO by November 30, 2022.

Full report:

<http://basslakeaction.net/case-21-06>

ORDINANCE 5101 – VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AND DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Case #21-09 – June 30, 2022

SUMMARY The El Dorado County (County) Grand Jury investigated the County's implementation of its Vegetation Management and Defensible Space Ordinance (Ordinance 5101). Ordinance 5101 was approved by the County Board of Supervisors (BOS) on April 30, 2019 and amended by the BOS on February 25, 2020.

The County created a Vegetation Management Office under the Chief Administrative Office to implement Ordinance 5101. Vegetation Management was authorized to fill two and three-tenths (2.3) positions to implement the Ordinance.

In September 2021, the BOS tasked the County Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to create a new Wildfire Resiliency and Vegetation Management Work Group (Work Group). This Work Group was chartered to review lessons learned from the Caldor Fire and to recommend fire-defense strategies.

The County does not operate any fire districts. However, within the County there are 13 independent fire districts, plus the United States Forest Service

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and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). When the County formed the Work Group, the County reached out to these fire organizations and asked for their participation.

This Work Group includes the County CAO; CAL FIRE; the United States Forest Service; and public, private, and non-profit organizations to collaborate on lessons learned, define funding streams, and recommend a robust, community-based resiliency and vegetation management program to accelerate current efforts.

This Work Group presented the concept of creating a Wildfire Resiliency Office, tasked with implementing a countywide wildfire protection strategy, to the BOS in March 2022.

The Wildfire Resiliency Office was approved by the BOS and included taking over the management of Ordinance 5101.

This report discusses the County's ongoing implementation of Ordinance 5101 and provides recommendations to the newly created Wildfire Resiliency Office based on the lessons learned from the County's difficulties to successfully implement Ordinance 5101.

BACKGROUND California State law regarding the establishment and maintenance of "defensible space" is found in Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 4291. CAL FIRE is responsible for enforcement of PRC Section 4291. CAL FIRE has also prepared practical guidelines for implementation of "defensible space" in various kinds of settings; these are summarized in an online brochure on

their website (<https://www.fire.ca.gov/dspace/>)

According to the CAL FIRE website, clearing vegetation 100 feet from homes and other structures dramatically increases the chance of surviving a wildfire. This 100 feet of defensible space also provides for firefighter safety when protecting structures during a wildland fire. The area from 0 to 30 feet is called the "Lean, Clean and Green Zone".

Clearing this area surrounding structures is critical and requires the greatest reduction in flammable vegetation. The area from 30 to 100 feet is called the "Reduced Fuel Zone."

State law requires that property owners must maintain a minimum of 100 feet of defensible space around all sides of their habitable structure. Defensible Space, in the context of fire control, is a natural and/or landscaped area around a structure that has been maintained and designed to reduce fire danger. In April 2019, the County BOS approved Ordinance 5101 to assist with enforcing State requirements for defensible space on unincorporated property.

Ordinance 5101 added Chapter 8.09 Vegetation Management and Defensible Space to Title 8: Public Health and Safety. This Ordinance became effective on May 30, 2019, with inspections and enforcement to begin on June 1, 2020. This Ordinance requires removal of hazardous vegetation and combustible materials situated in the unincorporated areas of the County to reduce the potential for fire and to promote the safety and welfare of the community. Vegetation management controls plant material to prevent wildfire spread and requires an ongoing commitment.

Good Neighbor and Neighborhood Protection Policy (part of Ordinance 5101) requires neighboring property owners to clear up to 100 feet of defensible space from structure(s). For example: If a structure is within 60 feet of its property line, the adjacent property owner shall assist their neighbor by completing vegetation management on another 40 feet to create a 100-foot strip of cleared land. It is recommended that neighbors reach out to neighboring property owners to coordinate defensible space efforts. Sellers of properties are required to give a disclosure of this Ordinance to buyers. The main difference between the County's Ordinance 5101 and CAL FIRE PRC Section 4291, is that CAL FIRE will not go onto neighboring properties to reach 100 feet of defensible space.

An amended version of Ordinance 5101 was passed and adopted by the BOS on February 25, 2020. The amended version changed or added definitions and clarified some terminology. Of specific interest, "a fire chief" was deleted from the definition of Enforcement Official, and the definitions of Investigative Official and Wildfire Risk Area were added.

DISCUSSION The County adopted Ordinance 5101 to establish an annual program for the abatement of the growth and/or accumulation of weeds, grasses, shrubs, dormant brush, tree limbs, hazardous vegetation, and combustible materials on all improved, and designated unimproved, parcels within the unincorporated areas of the County. This Ordinance also applied to the maintenance of those parcels to prevent vegetation from growing back.

To implement the Ordinance, the plan

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was to use the following resources, including but not limited to:

- County Vegetation Management Program staff to perform inspections in identified County Emphasis Areas (CEAs) annually;
- CAL FIRE to perform inspections in identified Target Hazard Areas within the County; and
- Local fire districts to perform inspections in identified Wildfire Risk Areas within the County.

In addition to these regularly planned inspections, County Vegetation Management responded to citizen defensible space complaints to protect the health and safety of residents. Complainants must be County residents, own property within the County, or own a business that is located or operated within the County. Inspections resulting from a complaint will likely result in inspection of neighboring properties.

The County created a Vegetation Management Office to implement Ordinance 5101 and placed it under Emergency Medical Services and Emergency Preparedness & Response Division. The Program Managers [approximately three-tenths of a Full Time Equivalent (FTE) position] tasked to implement this Ordinance lacked vegetation management and defensible space experience. Two FTE positions were authorized for the Vegetation Management Office: An Administrative Assistant and a Defensible Space Inspector (DSI). There was high turnover and a lack of continuity in the DSI position. Since the passage of Ordinance 5101, the Vegetation Management Office has had an FTE DSI for approximately

one-third of the time. The County did not assign any additional resources to the Vegetation Management Office since the end of 2021.

Residents could leave complaints on a recorded line by voicemail for the Administrative Assistant to address. Meetings were held regularly between the County and fire districts to triage and assign complaints to the appropriate agency. Complaints were addressed as resources were available. According to various interviews, the Grand Jury was told the complaint process became a way for neighbors to complain about other neighbors.

During the first year of the Ordinance, the Vegetation Management Office focused on program development to include the creation of a web page, community education, and voluntary compliance of the Ordinance by property owners. Property owners in two CAL FIRE-identified areas designated as CEAs received informational mailers in February 2020 notifying them that their property was in a designated CEA. They were also informed that inspections on their property would begin in 2020. A copy of the Defensible Space Inspection form was included in the mailer.

Implementation of this Ordinance was limited when the Vegetation Management Office lost its FTE DSI in December 2020. Fire Districts conducted limited inspections by referral from the Vegetation Management Office. These inspections were limited by available resources of these fire districts.

The enforcement component was never implemented because no decision was made on what County department would be responsible for the enforcement and when the penalties would be applied.

The program stalled even further when the Vegetation Management Office management staff were diverted to emergency priorities, such as responding to COVID19 and the Caldor Fire. During these times, little progress was made within program development and community outreach. By late 2021, the Vegetation Management Office consisted of one FTE Administrative Assistant.

With no DSIs to conduct defensible space inspections, the County contracted with EDHFD on May 25, 2021, to inspect the Rescue CEA from July 1 – December 31, 2021, for \$60,000. The County requested EDHFD to inspect 237 private parcels in the Rescue CEA to verify that each parcel complied with County Codes and Ordinance 5101. EDHFD was selected because it had defensible space expertise and resources to conduct these inspections.

EDHFD conducted a total of 428 inspections on 254 parcels within, or adjoining, the CEA. In addition to the 237 parcels identified in the contract, EDHFD inspected an additional 17 private parcels that are contiguous with the borders of the CEA. Of the 428 inspections completed, all 254 parcels received a first inspection. A second inspection was completed on 104 parcels. Three or more inspections were completed on 70 parcels. EDHFD found 77% of the inspected parcels were defensible space compliant. The EDHFD Final Report recommended the County develop a comprehensive strategy that reduces the number of property owners who refuse to allow access to government inspectors to verify that the property complies with the County Code.

The County received many complaints about the lack of compliance with the Ordinance for its

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own properties. The County failed to address the lack of compliance due to:

- internal conflicts about which County agency was responsible for maintenance of various County properties;
- lack of sufficient County personnel to perform the maintenance; and
- difficulty contracting with outside vendors due to issues in Memoranda of Understanding with the various labor organizations representing County staff.

The BOS did not promptly follow up on the implementation of the Ordinance. The first Annual Review and Update to the BOS was via a memo provided on February 5, 2021, almost two years after the adoption of Ordinance 5101.

Due to the ongoing lack of County DSIs, on March 9, 2022, the County BOS approved \$250,020 to renew the agreement with EDHFD to conduct defensible space inspections in the County's CEAs. The 2022-2023 defensible space inspections program began April 1, 2022 and ends March 31, 2023. This agreement includes inspections for CEAs Rescue and Diamond Springs identified by CAL FIRE. Specific emphasis areas in Diamond Springs include along Union Mine Road, Little Canyon Road, and Martina's Creek. EDHFD will also inspect Luneman and Lotus Road areas in Rescue.

The first priority of the Work Group created by the CAO was to find resources allowing the County to respond to various grant programs for defensible space funding. The Work

Group contracted with the El Dorado Resource Conservation District to hire, through a California Fire Safe Council Grant, a County Community Wildfire Protection Coordinator for 18 months. They submitted an additional grant proposal to the California Office of Emergency Services for a \$10.2 million FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant with a \$3.3 million County match.

The Work Group has created a core group with representation from County leadership, subject matter experts, public, and private entities. This Work Group has some traction, being led by an interim leader with subject matter expertise and the credibility needed to gain the respect of the many independent fire organizations. This has improved communication and coordination across the many fire organizations. This Work Group plans to conduct a countywide assessment that will identify areas most at risk, determine measures of success, track and report on progress, and establish a broad stakeholder-based organizational structure.

Based on the Grand Jury's own investigation, it agrees with the recent Work Group findings. This includes:

- The County lacks an organized and unified approach to addressing wildfire hazard and risk.
- There is no single process for establishing priorities, coordinating projects, and allocating resources, even though efforts are taking place.
- Public outreach and messaging were not coordinated among the various agencies.
- The Caldor Fire revealed the lack of defensible space in many areas, requiring fire fighters to complete clearing ahead of the approaching fire.

- The Caldor Fire demonstrated that cooperative and strategic vegetation management projects can be successful when there is coordination and engagement of stakeholders across jurisdictional boundaries.

- The County is responsible for implementing and maintaining the County Vegetation Management Ordinance, the County Hazard Mitigation Plan, the General Plan

Safety Element, and the Building Codes incorporating Wildland/Urban Interface Building Standards.

The Work Group presented the concept of creating a Wildfire Resiliency Office, tasked with implementing a countywide wildfire protection strategy, to the BOS in March 2022, which was approved. The Wildfire Resiliency Office will report to the CAO.

Other responsibilities of the Wildfire Resiliency Office include coordinating wildfire and vegetation management projects and related updates to the County Hazard Mitigation Plan and General Plan Safety Element, keeping updated with building code changes and Wildfire/Urban Interface Building Standards, facilitating program priorities for Ordinance 5101, managing Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds, and convening a broad countywide stakeholder group.

The CAO recommended that the BOS approve the establishment of the Office of Wildfire Resilience and designate \$3,375,000 of contingency funds as the local matching funds for a \$10.2 million federal Hazard Mitigation Grant. These funds will be used to conduct defensible space inspections, home hardening work, and hazardous fuels reduction for a community in the County.

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The community that was selected for the Hazard Mitigation Grant is the Weber Creek Drainage area between Sacramento Hill and Texas Hill. This community was recommended by County fire professionals.

The new Wildfire Resiliency Office has only three authorized FTE staff [seven-tenths (.7) more of a position than the Vegetation Management Office] to achieve the goal set by the BOS. The Vegetation Management Administrative Assistant has been transferred to the new office, but the other two positions have yet to be filled.

Other than the defensible space inspections completed, or to be completed, by the EDHFD, as of the date of this report, Ordinance 5101 still has not been fully implemented since its approval in 2019.

Access to affordable and protective homeowner fire insurance remains a significant issue in El Dorado County and is increasingly spreading to urban areas in the County.

Data collected by the California Department of Insurance shows homeowner insurance is becoming harder to find and retain for those in high wildfire areas due to recent wildfires. El Dorado County is ranked one of the top ten counties with the highest exposure to wildfires. It is important for the Wildfire Resiliency Office to consider this issue as one of its priorities.

The new Wildfire Resiliency Office's first priority is to take a leadership role, and work with the fire districts by coordinating strategies with organizations that have fire and defensible space expertise. The

establishment of this new Wildfire Resiliency Office is essential to reach compliance with Ordinance 5101. As of the date of this report, the Office is still in the process of being implemented.

FINDINGS

F1. The Vegetation Management Office, tasked with the implementation and management of County Ordinance 5101, lacked expertise and adequate resources to meet the objectives of the Ordinance.

F2. As of May 2022, the County's Vegetation Management Office has transitioned under the new Wildfire Resiliency Office.

F3. There has been no comprehensive County plan to implement Ordinance 5101, which includes defensible space inspections.

F4. The new Wildfire Resiliency Office has been given the responsibility to develop a comprehensive County plan.

F5. The enforcement component of Ordinance 5101 has not been implemented.

F6. There are County properties in violation of its own Ordinance 5101.

F7. Availability and affordability of fire insurance is an ongoing issue in the County.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The BOS should provide the new Wildfire Resiliency Office with appropriate staffing, resources, and funding, to meet its goals by December 31, 2022.

R2. The BOS should follow up with the newly formed Wildfire Resiliency Office and receive updates on a

quarterly basis from the CAO by December 31, 2022.

R3. The BOS should direct appropriate County departments to comply with Ordinance 5101 by clearing County properties that violate the Ordinance by June 30, 2023.

R4. The BOS should decide whether the enforcement component of Ordinance 5101 needs to be amended by December 31, 2022.

R5. The BOS should send a letter by December 31, 2022, to the State Insurance Commissioner advocating that insurance companies provide or continue to provide insurance for rural areas.

Full Report:

https://basllakeaction.net/case-21_08

NATIVE PLANT GARDENING IN EL DORADO COUNTY

Facebook Post from the Homegrown Habitat: Native Plant Gardening in El Dorado County

Order Online Sep 24 10am – Oct 1 5pm: shop.eldoradocnps.org

Save the dates for the Fall 2022 Native Plant Sale. Plants are generally available in 4" pots (4"x4"), tree pots (4"x14") and 1 gallon (6"x7").

Plant pickup October 8 2850 Fairlane Court Placerville CA. Time assigned at checkout.

HILLS OF EL DORADO VILLAGE GETS NEW ENTRANCE SIGN

By John Davey

August welcomed an updated entrance sign on Magnolia Hills Drive. Details regarding the new sign, how the update was accomplished through LLAD Funding, the costs, and expected sign life cycle, coming in next month's Bass Lake Bulletin.



(image credit: Meirve Davey)

EI DORADO COUNTY 2022 1st QUARTER SALES TAX REPORT

[El Dorado County Auditor Controller Office](#)

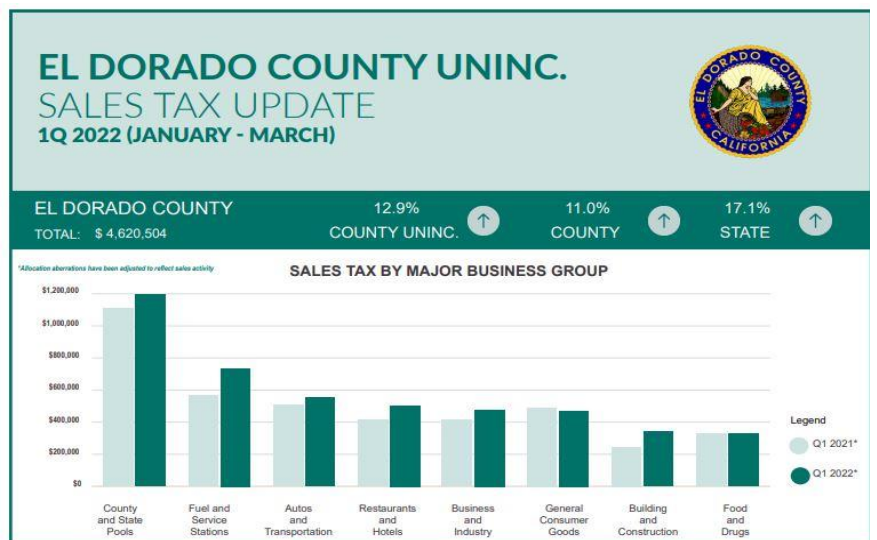
The unincorporated area's gross receipts from January through March were 19% above the first sales period in 2021. Adjustments for delayed payments, audit and other reporting modifications resulted in actual sales that were up 12.9%. Place of sale collections soared 15% compared to a year ago. The regional economy demonstrated strength during the first three months of the year. With the global cost of crude oil resulting in higher local gas prices, and more drivers on the road, revenue from service stations skyrocketed. Restaurants, especially casual dining, experienced another sensational sales period as patrons seemed unfazed by more expensive menus and enjoyed the experience of dining out. Building materials, plumbing/electrical supplies and contractor activity boosted building-construction receipts. The auto transportation group also benefited from increased

activity. Electrical equipment sales and business services helped boost the business-industry results. Conversely, general consumer goods dipped slightly, largely skewed by a comparison to a large onetime allocation received by a sporting goods/bike store business a year ago. A 7.6% increase in allocations from the countywide use tax pool contributed to the positive quarterly outcome. The pools remain a solid source of local revenue, boosted by taxes on ecommerce. Net of adjustments, taxable sales for all of El Dorado County grew 11.0% over the comparable time period; the Sacramento region was up 13.8%.



TOP 25 PRODUCERS

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 7 Eleven | Quik Stop |
| Arco AM PM | Safeway |
| Broadridge Output Solutions | Safeway Fuel |
| Cameron Park Shell | Shingle Springs Honda |
| Chevron | Shingle Springs Subaru |
| Crystal View Station | Target |
| CVS Pharmacy | True Value Hardware |
| Dawson Oil | Walmart |
| El Dorado Truss | |
| Express Fuel | |
| Green Valley Arco | |
| Heavenly Valley Cal | |
| Base Lodge | |
| Lees Feed & Western Store | |
| Meeks Building Center | |
| Mercedes Benz of El Dorado Hills | |
| Musco Sports Lighting | |
| My Goods Market | |





From The BLAC Board

President's Letter August 2022

The Dog Days of Summer

As we entered into another of our typical August week long prolonged hot spells, it made me think about the "Dog Days of Summer" phrase and wondering where the term came from. Not very many of us are aware of where the expression actually originated or what it even has to do with dogs.

I always thought of it as happening in August but there are actually official days for the "Dog Days" which currently are from July 3rd to August 11th each year. However, depending on your latitude, the astronomical Dog Days can come at different times.

It is a reference to the Dog Star, Sirius, which occupies the same region as the sun during the "Dog Days" and is the brightest star visible from any part of the Earth. Sirius is the nose of the Canis Major

(Greater Dog) constellation and Sirius rises and sets with the sun in the summer. The Greeks had several names for the star including Sirius or "Scorcher", Sothis and the Dog Star, because it follows the constellation Orion into the night sky.



(Canis Major constellation. image credit: astronomynv.org)

The ancient Romans believed it added to the Sun's warmth because it is so bright and called this period of time "dies caniculares" or as we call it "Dog Days" and it lasted from July 24th to August 24th. Greek and Roman astrology believed the rising of the star could bring "heat, drought, sudden thunderstorms, lethargy, fever, mad dogs and bad luck". It was also known as the beginning of the annual flooding of the Nile in Egypt and of the very hot period of the summer.

As we know, our very warm summer days are caused by the result of the Earth's tilt and

have nothing to do with the heat radiating from Sirius. With our longer days in the Northern Hemisphere, this causes the sun's rays to hit it at a more direct angle for a longer period of time. Since the Earth's rotation wobbles, Sirius does not appear in the sky at the same time as it did for the ancient civilizations.

Thousands of years from now it will rise with the sun during the "Dog Days of Winter".

A Continuation of La Nina into Fall?

It appears that we are not quite finished with our La Nina weather conditions in California according to the National Weather Service outlook which was released on August 11, 2022. There is an 80% probability there will be an impact on our fall weather with La Nina staying around from September to November. This is an increase from the 62% to 66% that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center earlier felt was the chance that La Nina would last through this fall and early winter. It appears to be leading to a rare phenomenon of a third La Nina winter which has only

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President's Letter July 2022 (con't)

happened twice since 1950 and will most likely have a major impact on California.

A typical La Nina pattern will bring a dry winter to the southern half of the country and a wet winter to the northern half, splitting the country in two. The dividing line was further north this year and parts of Washington and Oregon were out of the drought while 99.8% of California had a dry La Nina winter and spring.

The Climate Prediction Center data indicates in a typical winter the area north of the Bay Area will receive more rain than usual from September to November in a La Nina year while most areas to the south will usually have normal rain levels. Some desert communities could see less than the average rainfall and even worse drought conditions. This fall California is expected to have above normal temperatures and there is a 40% to 50% chance that it will be warmer than in an average season.

A third La Nina winter could lead to worsening drought conditions for the state.

As of Thursday, August 9, 2022, 99.77% of the state was in a

drought and 15% was in an exceptional drought which is the worst category.

Dryer than normal conditions will extend through most of the Central US from Nevada to the west and Ohio in the east including the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes in the north down to Texas in the south. A small part of the mid-Atlantic region is expected to have an especially wet fall.

While this is quite a way off and a less reliable prediction, it is anticipated that the possibility of a La Niña will begin to fall after November and by the start of 2023 there will be less than a 50% chance we are still in the La Nina pattern. If it does end this winter, we will probably move into an "ENSO neutral" pattern and we will not be in either a La Nina or El Nino.

References:

https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/ensoadvisory/ensodisc.shtml

Is the Real Estate Market in a Recession?

"In the midst of the peak home buying season, high home prices and rising interest rates depressed housing affordability to the lowest level in nearly 15 years, which in turn dampened

home sales," said CAR President Otto Catrina, a Bay Area real estate broker and REALTOR.

"However buying opportunities remain in the coming months for those who have been waiting on the sideline as more listings come available, competition continues to cool off and rates began to stabilize."

Using a broad range of economic factors which include the gross national product to determine recessions, the National Bureau of Economic Research, which is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan, privately funded group of economists, has reported on when a recession begins and ends for the last 102 years. Averaging about every 61/2 years, there have been 11 recessions since 1948. While the committee has not made a decision on the recession question thus far, there have been changes in the real estate market according to Ken Calhoun's column in the Mountain Democrat Home Source magazine of August 12, 2022.

Movado reported there are currently 33 new homes for sale in El Dorado Hills and 375 active home listings with 101 of the listings reducing their price. The median home selling price in

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July was \$1,006,950 and the average El Dorado Hills home sold after 48 days on the market as compared to 54 days last year. Their records show 303 homes sold in El Dorado Hills in July which was an increase from the 51 which were sold last year.

The median selling price in June for a home in El Dorado County was a record \$700,000 and the median prices have been steadily increasing which changed in July when the median selling price was 8% lower at \$640,000 but was still 2% higher than July of 2021. Last year 80% of the listings that sold in July in the first 30 days on the market had an average selling price that was 103% above the listed price. This year 66% sold at 99% of the listed price within the first 30 days.

Overall statewide home sales were down 13.6% year to date in July, primarily because of high home prices and the increase in the interest rate according to the California Association of Realtors (CAR). There were 295,460 single family homes sales in July, which on a seasonally adjusted annualized rate was down 14.4% from June

and 31.1% from July 2021. The median home sale price of a home was down 3.5% at \$833,910 from June and was an increase of 2.8% from July 2021.

This was the first time since May of 2020 that the annualized 300,000 benchmark level was not met.

Calhoun feels we are in a recession which he believes will be fairly mild as compared to the short 2020 Covid-19 recession with a 31% record economic contraction when 20.5 million jobs disappeared. Currently our job market is strong with household income on the increase but not enough to keep up with inflation which is why the federal government has been increasing interest rates.

The deputy chief economist for Redfin, Taylor Marr, stated that while the housing market "isn't crashing but it is experiencing a hangover as it comes down from an unsustainable high".

The median selling price of homes in the last 10 years in the US increased 117% and the median selling price in El Dorado County increased 120% from \$290,000 to \$640,000.

The days of multiple offers over listed price, buyers waving inspection, loan and appraisal

contingencies are over according to Calhoun. However, he believes that the lower home values are short term because over the last six recessions, with the exception of the 2007-2009 Great Recession, home prices in California have either held steady or increased.

The Federal Reserve has normally lowered interest rates in recessions to stimulate housing sales and job growth which is not our current situation. The current inventory of homes in the county is still 25% lower than normal summer averages even though it's up 15% over last year and the chronic housing shortage could help to prevent a decline in prices.

Recently with the release of the August information which showed a significant drop in builder confidence in the single family housing market, the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) stated the US is officially in a housing recession.

"We're witnessing a housing recession in terms of declining home sales and home building", chief NAR Economist Lawrence Yun said in an August 18th news release. "However, it's not a

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recession in home prices. Inventory remains tight and prices continue to rise nationally with nearly 40% of homes still commanding the full list price," Yun added.

The Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell will be making remarks this week during the Kansas City Federal Reserve's annual Jackson Hole symposium which will be closely followed by both the real estate and home building markets.

References:

<https://www.cnbc.com/2022/08/15/us-is-in-housing-recession-homebuilders-say.html>

<https://www.movoto.com/el-dorado-hills-ca/market-trends/>

<https://www.cnbc.com/2022/08/15/us-is-in-housing-recession-homebuilders-say.html>

<https://thehill.com/policy/finance/3579988-is-there-a-recession-only-the-national-bureau-of-economic-research-gets-to-decide/>

When I began writing the article about the current housing market, I had no idea that there could be daily changes and additions to what I was writing...it seems to be a very challenging time for the real estate and home building industry.

The weather has certainly proven to be a typical warm Sacramento August and it is hard to believe that it's almost Labor Day with fall not far behind. I have always enjoyed our falls and our Pistache tree leaves have already started to turn their beautiful colors of red and orange and the grape vine leaves are falling.

Thankfully I'm not the one who has to clean them all up!

Respectfully,

Kathy Prevost

President

Bass Lake Action Committee



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BASS LAKE ACTION COMMITTEE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The next Board meeting is scheduled for November 14, 2022 at 7PM. All Bass Lake Action Committee Members are invited to attend. Members will receive an email invitation that will include the meeting agenda, location, and a Zoom Link for virtual attendance.

For further information about BLAC meetings and membership, please leave a message with Vice-President John Davey at 530-676-2657, or via email basslakemembers@gmail.com. Residents can also visit our online membership form at <http://basslakeaction.net/members>

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