

Local Government Advocacy Handbook

Produced by
The Local Governmental Relations Committee
August, 2001

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2
Legislative Advocacy Programs	4
How to Structure an LGR Committee	6
How to Identify Important Issues	8
How to Involve Members of the Board.....	11
How to Educate Public Officials and their Staff	13
How to Involve Members of the Public	15
Participate in Special Programs and Projects.....	17
Use C.A.R. as a Resource	19

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the scope of local governments' responsibilities has become much broader. Local governments no longer simply provide basic services such as police and fire protection, parks and recreation, and building and planning. Their purview has expanded to such areas as child care, sheltering the homeless, disaster preparedness, recycling and water conservation -- all with diminishing state and federal assistance.

As outside assistance wanes and responsibilities grow, local governments are in the position of adopting more and more regulations and searching for new ways to generate revenue. The real estate industry is particularly affected by this trend, since it is impacted by many local policy areas including: local land use planning, taxation, public facilities financing and housing policy. The importance of REALTORS® monitoring the actions of local entities and establishing a solid rapport with local officials is, therefore, greater today than ever before.

With this background in mind, it is critical for Associations to establish advocacy programs that will influence local public policy decisions. For example, the Oakland Association of REALTORS® successfully fought a proposed transfer tax because its government affairs program included a monthly meeting between Association members and the City Finance Director. These meetings tipped-off the REALTORS® to the proposed tax well before it was formally announced, giving the Association plenty of time to mobilize effective forces against the tax. When the Monterey City Council proposed a downzoning opposed by the local REALTOR® Association, the local government affairs apparatus of the Monterey-Carmel Council of Real Estate Boards sprung into action and distributed pre-stamped post cards to local homeowners describing the potential negative impact from a zoning change. Due in large part to the post cards, homeowners turned out en masse at the public hearing on the land use change. These examples demonstrate why a quality government affairs program is necessary and how it can be effective.

The first step to effective local advocacy planning is determining what type of program is most appropriate for your Association. First, Associations should consider whether to hire a professional advocate or Government Affairs Director (GAD) to manage local issues. Many larger Associations hire a GAD to track real estate-related issues, mobilize the membership, and provide a voice for REALTORS® in the legislative and regulatory process. Those Associations that cannot afford a professional advocate typically assign these responsibilities to the Executive Officer or to individual REALTORS® on their LGR Committee.

Local government programs and activities should position the REALTOR® organization as:

- an information source and communication conduit that allows members to be informed and respond to local issues;
- an active participant in the local government arena--whether it is through members serving as an elected/appointed official or by establishing solid relationships with such officials;
- a resource to local governments/agencies and citizens on real estate related issues; and
- an advocate of private property rights and policies promoting housing opportunities.

At most Associations, the local Governmental Relations (LGR) Committee has primary responsibility for achieving the above objectives. While the objectives of the LGR program are fairly similar among Associations, the manner in which programs are implemented varies.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a centralized source of information for Association Executives, Government Affairs Directors and REALTOR® volunteers seeking ideas about creating, improving or carrying out their local government relations objectives. The information provided in this handbook is organized according to the following topics:

- local advocacy programs,
- the structure of the local governmental relations committee,
- issues management and monitoring,
- communicating with and mobilizing REALTORS® and the public on local issues,
- educating REALTORS® and the public about local government and promoting civic involvement,
- using C.A.R.'s Local Governmental Relations Division as a resource.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

A REALTOR® Association's local government affairs program typically consists of two components: 1) an LGR committee which sets (with Board approval) Association policy regarding local issue, and 2) an advocacy program to manage and implement those LGR policies. The type of advocacy program an Association chooses most often depends on its size and resources. However, other considerations are important when creating an advocacy program, including the type of area to be managed (urban or rural), the experience and commitment of the REALTORS® in the Association, whether regional cooperation among several Associations or industries is available, and the nature of the local government. Each Association should examine its resources and local environment to determine which program is best suited for its purposes. Here are several alternatives:

Hire a professional Government Affairs Director (GAD)

While REALTORS® can be called upon from time to time to assist with advocacy, most cannot dedicate the bulk of their time to monitoring local issues. When it comes to monitoring the activities of your local governments, it is always helpful to have a program or professional to handle the work. Your Association can:

- hire a full-time GAD -- 28 local Associations presently have one
- hire a part-time GAD -- this is an option for the majority of Associations that cannot afford a full-time staff person
- use a student intern(s) -- this is less expensive than even part-time staff

Have the board Association Executive assume the additional responsibilities of legislative advocate

Many local Associations do not have the financial resources to employ a GAD, either on a part- or full-time basis. Consolidating the responsibilities of a GAD into an existing AE position can eliminate the need to budget an additional salary. However, the AE will have to be proficient (or become proficient) in government affairs advocacy for this approach to be effective. This may require additional training time and resources, and it will add responsibilities to the AE position.

Hire an independent contractor who represents other clients besides the board to be the legislative advocate

In some instances, local Associations can share the services of a professional advocate who also represents other allied interests. This is less costly than a full-time GAD. It is especially effective if the professional is involved in REALTOR® issues for his/her other clients, too.

Join or create a County Council of Real Estate Boards that contract with a professional advocate.

Some county councils of real estate boards contract with a professional advocate who will monitor county and regional issues that single Associations cannot monitor effectively on their own. Other county councils do not employ the services of a legislative advocate, but they meet regularly to share ideas and concerns on countywide issues.

Hire a meeting monitor or "watchdog"

Send a monitor to the meetings of the local legislative bodies that you designate--county board of supervisors, city council, special district boards--and submit written reports to your Association's legislative committee. This individual will also alert your Association when a significant issue comes up, which requires an immediate response. Although the monitor is not authorized to speak on behalf of the Board, elected officials will "notice" the presence of the Association from the monitor's regular attendance at meetings.

Consult With Other Local Associations, Use C.A.R. Resources

Local Association GADs and Association Executives (AE's) are available to consult with Associations that want to organize an advocacy program. Get in touch with a GAD(s) and/or AE(s) from local Associations of comparable size and demographics to see what kind of advocacy program works for them.

C.A.R.'s State IMPAC has grants available for Associations starting up a program. The grants may be used to cover first-year, non-recurring start-up costs, such as furniture, business cards, stationery and travel expenses. Grants may not be used to cover salary costs. Contact IMPAC staff coordinator Eileen Reynolds at (916) 444-2045 or eileen_reynolds@car.org for more info.

For additional information on how to start up your advocacy program, call or e-mail Rick Laezman C.A.R.'s Senior Policy Analyst, at (213) 739-8273 or richard_laezman@car.org.

HOW TO STRUCTURE A LOCAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS (LGR) COMMITTEE

The most efficient way for an Association to address its needs is by assigning members to committees that specialize in specific policy areas. The name and structure of your committees will depend on several factors: the scope of responsibility of the committees, the size of the Association, the geographic area and number of jurisdictions in the Association's jurisdiction. Smaller Associations may not have the luxury of establishing numerous committees or subcommittees, for example. Each Association should be prepared to craft a committee structure that best suits its needs. Once a committee structure is in place, the Association should poll members to find out what their interests and specialties are. Committee members can also be recruited at new membership meetings. What follows are several alternative committee structures that will help your Association address its local policy and advocacy needs.

Legislative Committee Approach

Establish an "umbrella" committee, such as "Government Relations" or "Legislative", that handles governmental issues in general at the state, federal, and local level.

Standard LGR Committee Approach

Establish a committee that specifically tracks public policy at the local level. Committee members report to the Association impending local issues, recommend policy, and organize responses to issues.

Subcommittee Approach

Deal with specific local issues in separate subcommittees. Subcommittees have the advantage of involving members who have a specialized interest or expertise. They are also useful for addressing issues that only surface for a limited period of time, or otherwise do not require the assignment of a full committee. Your Association can: create an LGR Subcommittee which reports to the full Legislative Committee. The subcommittee should meet regularly or as needed, then report -- along with the chairs of the other subcommittees, such as Political Affairs, Federal Issues and Community Relations -- to the Legislative Committee. The Legislative Committee, then the Board of Directors should approve any subcommittee action item.

The subcommittees can meet on an as needed basis to cover issues such as zoning amendments, business license taxes, rent control, underground residential tanks and historic preservation. The subcommittee should report its findings to the full LGR Committee or Legislative Committee.

Your local Association can also use action-oriented subcommittees to address such public relations issues as coalition building, REALTOR® appointments, and member mobilization/rapid response.

Geography-Based Committee Approach

Divide the committee into geographic/market areas. If your Association covers a large geographic area or a number of cities, the LGR Committee could be split into smaller geographically oriented subcommittees. Your Association can approach this in a couple of different ways:

Divide the Association into 4 or 6 "councils" which are aligned by marketing areas. The Councils meet each week prior to the home tour. Each Council has a representative that sits on the Governmental Relations or LGR Committee and reports on issues in his/her particular area.

Divide the Association into separate areas, each including a major city in the area. Assign REALTOR® monitors to each area. The monitors obtain the agendas for the planning commission and city council meetings and attend the meetings as often as possible. At the monthly Association LGR Committee meeting, the monitors report on happenings in the jurisdictions they oversee.

Political Affairs/LGR Committee Approach

Some Associations find it advantageous to combine political affairs (voter registration, fundraising) and local public policy issues into one committee.

HOW TO IDENTIFY IMPORTANT ISSUES

The most important function of an LGR Committee is to monitor and influence local issues in accordance with the legislative objectives of the Association. To complete the first part of this equation, LGR committee members must take proactive steps to identify proposed government policies that could impact real estate and REALTORS®. There are a number of things you can do to stay informed of important issues in your community.

Attend/Monitor Meetings and Hearings

Regular attendance at local government meetings (county board of supervisors, city council, school districts, special districts) is important because it accomplishes two things: 1) It positions your Association as an organization interested in broader civic issues, as opposed to showing up only when the issue directly relates to the real estate community. 2) It also reinforces the presence of the Association as a player in the local government arena.

Short of attending every local government meeting, or even if you do, your Association can, and should, keep track of important local government agenda items in your community by doing one or more of the following:

- obtain agendas--through the mail or on the internet;
- attend meetings on a regular basis;
- screen agendas and attend meetings on an as-needed basis;
- watch meetings on your local cable access channel;
- hire a professional "note-taker" to attend meetings and report back to your association;
- check with the city clerk or city manager regarding important agenda items;
- review the minutes of meetings;*
- videotape televised hearings.

(*Caution: Minutes sometimes are not available for a couple weeks or more. This could hamper your response time on important issues.)

Use Speakers, Presentations and Forums

Conducting programs at the Association will help your membership stay abreast of the important events and issues in your community. They also have the added value of solidifying ties between REALTORS® and local officials. These include:

- invite policy experts to speak to your Association on important local policy issues, such as taxation, zoning, housing or transportation;
- sponsor regular forums, breakfasts and/or lunches with local elected officials and/or their staff;

- sponsor an annual all-day legislative seminar, with presentations by local government officials.

Monitor County and Regional Issues

Not all Boards have the resources to monitor issues at the county or regional level. However, these issues have the potential to impact REALTORS® just as much as those that are confined to one city or community. Local Associations can nonetheless stay informed of county or regional issues by doing one or more of the following:

- participate in a county council of real estate boards (see discussion of this topic in the previous section on Legislative Advocacy Programs);
- have LGR Committee representatives from various Associations within the county or region meet periodically to exchange information on issues in the area;
- have a REALTOR®, such as the LGR Committee Chair, sit as a liaison member on neighboring Associations' LGR Committees;
- create a joint subcommittee on regionalism that allows representatives from several neighboring Associations to discuss common issues, such as traffic and water;
- form a regional advocates group to monitor the ongoing development of regional issues;
- form a regional REALTORS® committee on a specific critical issue;
- hire a professional consultant, with assistance from State and local IMPAC, to fund the regional committee (REALTORS® Committee on Air Quality).

Subscribe to C.A.R.'s Local Government Monitoring Service

Local Associations can now subscribe to a local government monitoring service that will notify you when an important real estate-related issue appears on the agenda of the local government in your area. C.A.R. has contracted with a firm that monitors city, county and special district agendas throughout California. The firm checks these local government agendas for any one of a several policy issues that could impact private property rights and/or the real estate profession. For just \$100 per year, your Association will be included in this monitoring service and will be notified immediately when a real-estate related issue has surfaced in your community.

For more information, please notify Rick Laezman .

Keep Policy Positions and Information on Hand

Have existing policy articulated in a "Statement of Policy." A statement of policy will guide your Association's response to local issues. Developing policies in advance will quicken your response time when controversies arise. Statements of policy can address:

- all issues affecting the Association, such as MLS, ethics, and other issues;
- only issues pertaining to local government;

- specific issue(s), such as second units, condominium conversions or rental inspections, that are controversial in your community.

Maintain a healthy databank of ordinances, issue briefing papers, and other materials to help members stay informed and develop policies. Your databank can include one or more of the following:

- C.A.R. and N.A.R. issues briefing papers;
- newspaper clippings;
- reports, studies, and surveys;
- web "links" to relevant sites on the Internet.

HOW TO INVOLVE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

As with any trade organization or interest group, an Association's influence is directly proportionate to the commitment of its members. Consequently, an educated and mobilized Association membership is critical to an effective local government program. In addition to monitoring local issues and educating members about their implications for real estate, Associations need to establish a regular communication link that keeps its members apprised of happenings in the local government arena. Included below are several suggestions for getting your members involved and mobilizing them to action.

Use Newsletters and Bulletins

Prepare an LGR column in the Association's regular monthly, bi-weekly or weekly newsletter/ publication.

Prepare a government issues column that reviews federal, state and local issues.

Provide camera-ready copies of columns and updates to members so that they can personalize the publication and use it as a farming tool.

Use publications to announce local "red alerts" and "calls to action" (if timely).

Prepare a separate local government or government affairs newsletter published by the Association's hired professional advocate.

Develop a Red Alert System

Fax a "Red Alert" to Directors, Association Executive Officers, and Presidents notifying them of an important public hearing and ask REALTORS® to attend the meeting.

Fax a "Red Alert" to members urging them to contact their legislator about the issue. If your Association has a local legislative contact system, ensure that the participants contact the elected officials they know.

Use the MLS Network*

Use the MLS as a rapid response communication vehicle for red alerts as well as an ongoing communication vehicle.

Place a red alert or local call to action in a portion of the MLS program that automatically comes up on the screen before users can proceed further. However, the Board of Directors must approve information placed in this part of the MLS first.

Use weekly or monthly marketing/preview/home tour meetings to alert members to an issue that needs immediate attention.

*The compiled M.L.S. information is copyright protected. Therefore, the M.L.S. must grant authorization before anyone other than the M.L.S. may use the information to develop a mailing list.

Utilize Electronic Communication Tools

Develop a telephone tree system where one person calls two others, who call two others, and so forth.

Create a phone mail distribution system to link member offices.

Create a fax program that allows messages to be transmitted to various members or offices automatically.

Employ a fax-on-demand system that allows members to readily obtain sample letters and summary sheets for hot issues. Broadcast faxes can also be used to distribute Red Alerts or weekly/monthly updates, saving critical time.

Send broadcast e-mails to relay critical information and regular updates on issues in timely fashion.

Use e-mail to coordinate projects and communicate regularly among members, committees, or associations within the same region.

Develop a web page as a cost-effective way to inform and mobilize members. A web site has the added advantage of informing the public.

HOW TO EDUCATE PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND THEIR STAFF

Probably the best way to successfully manage local public policy issues is to establish good relationships and lines of communication with both the elected and appointed officials and their staff. To focus solely on elected decision-makers ignores a common fact that staff often is the driving force behind a particular issue. Ultimately, an Association wants to be in a position where public officials ask for its input on issues that may affect the real estate industry before the policy is considered publicly.

Associations handle this objective in various ways: some have formalized functions once or twice a year which provide recognition to elected officials and staff; others meet more frequently and informally with staff/officials; and still others place great emphasis on getting members into elected/appointed positions to better relationships between the Board and public officials.

Establish a local Legislative Contact System

At the beginning of each year, find out which members of the Association know their local elected officials and which members are willing serve as a contact to them. When a critical issue surfaces (e.g. transfer tax, business license tax, no-growth measure, etc.) enlist the key contact people and possibly others versed on the issue to meet with public officials in private.

Establish good relationships with local officials and their staff (e.g., city manager, planning director, finance director), since these individuals may alert the Association to upcoming real estate-related issues.

Host formal "get acquainted" functions for elected officials and staff.

Host semi-annual civic leader luncheons. At one invite planning commissioners, city department heads; while city councilpersons and city managers are invited to the other. Ask each public official to address one topic at the luncheon.

Invite department heads and elected officials to "Government Officials Day." Have each public official escorted by a member who is briefed on key issues from an issues briefing paper prepared by the Association.

Host annual legislative breakfasts or lunches that are co-sponsored by various allied industries, such as the local apartment association, building industry association, chamber of commerce, taxpayers association and farm bureau. Invite elected officials to sit as a panel during the course of the meal while a moderator asks them to respond to questions developed by the sponsors.

Hold a "Local Development Update" two or three times per year, each time in a different city within the Association's jurisdiction. Invite city and county officials to speak on current issues in their areas.

Hold regular informal meetings

After the monthly Local Government and/or Political Relations Committee meetings, have the committee members adjourn to city hall to meet with the city manager and his staff for an hour to discuss pertinent issues.

Hold a monthly President's Forum Luncheon at which the Association president, executive officer, advocate and the chairs of the Association's politically oriented committees host elected officials. No specific agenda is necessary. Instead, have the luncheon serve to solidify lines of communication between the Association and invitees. Allocate local IMPAC monies to cover expenses incurred for REALTORS® to take elected officials out for a meal or coffee. Also, invite elected officials to attend LGR or Political Affairs Committee meetings.

Foster Relationships through REALTOR® Appointed/Elected Officials

Identify REALTORS® who would be suitable candidates for elected and appointed office and work for their appointment/election.

Publicize vacancies on local boards and commissions in the Association newsletters. Create a subcommittee of the Government Affairs or LGR Committee that is solely dedicated to getting REALTORS® elected or appointed to various local boards, commissions and advisory groups.

Use elected/appointed REALTORS® as a source of information to monitor local issues. Utilize C.A.R.'s statewide list of elected and appointed REALTORS® that can be obtained from the Political Affairs Division at (213) 739-8312. REALTORS® are encouraged to contact C.A.R. if they have recently been elected or appointed to an office or advisory group, so that the list can be as accurate and up-to-date as possible. Get involved in local elections. If you give time and/or money to help a public official get elected, there is a good probability that he/she will listen to your point of view on an issue.

Association can participate in local elections through BORPAC contributions and/or endorsement of candidates. Individual REALTORS® can contribute time and/or money.

HOW TO INVOLVE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

On occasion, an issue that concerns the Association will warrant the active involvement of homeowners and/or residents. Obviously, having public opinion in your favor makes it easier to convince public officials to act in the best interest of real estate. Issues on which Associations have actively mobilized the community include: transfer tax increases, downzonings, pre-sale inspection programs and residential building code/design restrictions. Some of the techniques that can be employed to alert the public and mobilize them to action are described below.

Use Media Outlets to Reach Large Numbers

Develop a press release and get it out to all forms of the local media as soon as possible. Make sure you have spokespersons listed on the release who can intelligently discuss the issue when the media inquires about it.

Run display ads in the local paper to alert the public and seek their opposition. Take out advertisements alerting the public to an issue, giving them the date and time of the hearing, but not asking for a support or oppose position per se.

Buy display advertisements in non-real estate sections of the newspaper. In addition to simply listing the names, addresses, e-mail addresses, fax, and phone numbers of the elected officials in the display ad, a coupon could be included which would allow the reader to go on record on the issue. The coupons could be addressed to the Association or to the council members directly.

Consider taking out an ad applauding the city council or county supervisors who vote for or against an issue important to the Association.

If there is a broad based identifiable coalition working for/against a local issue, consideration might be given to including in the ad the names of the various coalition members, as well as the Association of REALTORS®, even if these other groups are not paying for the ad.

Submit an op-ed piece to the local newspaper(s).

Place an "advertorial." In conjunction with, or as an alternative to a display ad, the Association or a large firm, can pay to have an article printed in the local paper regarding the issue.

Send direct mail to residents. The mailing does not have to be "glitzy" to be effective. It should simply get the readers attention and give a clear message as to any action you want him/her to take in response to the mailing.

Appeal to the emotions of your audience. Use a concise and catchy heading and keep your paragraphs short. Give them a phone number to call for more information on the issue.

Hire a firm specializing in direct mail. Through these firms, names and addresses of residents can be obtained and bulk mail can be sorted and sent.

Lists of homeowners can be purchased from the county assessor. Elected officials favoring your cause might provide their mailing lists, as might clubs/organizations. For smaller local campaigns, use the services of local title companies to obtain the names and addresses of all affected property owner and do a postcard mailing to residents in a particular area.

Send self-addressed petitions to homeowners asking them to sign their names and return them to the City Council.

Circulate petitions via mail or by members in their farm areas and to clients.
Network with Allied Industries and other Local Business/Community Interests
Identify other organizations with which your board shares a common interest.

- Chamber of Commerce
- Apartment Association
- Taxpayer Association
- Economic Development Council
- Building Industry Association

Share information with like-minded associations on common issues.

Sharing information and resources makes an Association better informed and can give it more credibility and lobbying strength.

Form a "Presidents Council" which includes the presidents of several local/state organizations and sponsor presentations and meetings on local issues. Invite elected officials and staff.

Form a task force regarding a specific pending issue, such as a proposed increase in the local transfer tax or developer fees. (see CAR background paper "REALTOR® Coalitions and Alliances: Foundations for Success.")

Forge relationships with homeowner groups and associations by identifying REALTORS® in the various homeowner associations, chambers, and other civic groups. These associations can be a powerful political force in a community.

PARTICIPATE IN SPECIAL LGR PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

An Association's ability to positively impact public policy and public opinion are substantially improved if REALTORS® are recognized as important and responsible members of the business community and the larger community as a whole.

Demonstrating civic leadership or running public service projects may place your Association in the enviable role of local influence broker. Below are several special projects relating to civic and local governmental affairs in which Associations participate or sponsor to improve REALTOR® standing in the community.

Join Civic Leadership Programs

20-25 participants are trained on topics which affect the local community such as: criminal justice, transportation, education, state and local government, economic development, politics, health care, human services, cultural diversity and the environment. Participants also receive training in personal communication skills. Participants learn about the art of negotiation, consensus building, committee decision-making and working with the media.

Establish Community Forums

Educate public on topics of community-wide interest. Conduct a panel discussion, followed by a question and answer session on a topic. Publicizes the events through press releases and advertisements. Funding can come from local IMPAC.

Sponsor a debate on a hot local topic. Open it to all voters in the affected area. Contact the local paper and chamber of commerce to co-sponsor. Feature a panel of experts or government officials with supporters and opponents of the measure.

Create Legislative Guides/Directories

Develop and distribute guides that include the names and addresses of: local, state and federal elected officials; special districts such as schools, utility and transit districts; and city offices such as the planning department, city manager, city clerk and city attorney. Publish information on the dates, times and locations of city meetings and include tips for writing letters. Use IMPAC funds to pay for printing.

Print government information in various existing communication vehicles. Put an annual Government Affairs Directory in the Association newsletter.

Include a government directory in the MLS. Develop an on-line database in the MLS that includes the names, addresses and phone numbers of the local, state and federal elected officials which cover that area. Also included in this directory are the phone numbers for local schools, fire and police departments, libraries and utility companies.

Become Involved in the Local Government Budget Process

Monitor local budget process year round with special emphasis in late winter- early spring. (that is when most localities begin considering their budget for the upcoming year)

Develop a coalition of business groups that meets regularly with the city manager and deputy city manager to discuss the next year's budget.

Meet with the city finance director on a monthly basis to discuss the budget and ways in which the city can streamline its operations and enhance cost efficiency. This will establish the Board as part of the budget process and that REALTORS® will always be consulted on budget issues.

Read CAR publication **READING BETWEEN THE LINES** which explains many of the issues local governments face in their efforts to balance their budgets and the mechanics of the budget process.

Publish a List of Local Regulations Affecting Real Estate

Work with the city to publish a list of the ordinances and resolutions that can directly affect real estate transactions and property ownership. The list could include a description of the city's policies on business license and transfer taxes; landscaping and lighting assessment districts; garbage collection procedures; view ordinances; and regulations on earthquake safety.

NOTE: The critical element to a list of ordinances is that it is prepared by the city and the city takes responsibility for its accuracy. Because of questions pertaining to disclosure and standard of care, C.A.R. does not feel it is prudent for Boards to publish a list of local ordinances on their own. For further information on this issue, Boards can refer to a C.A.R. legal memoranda on the subject of local issues disclosure.

USE C.A.R AS A RESOURCE

Although local public policy is best managed at the local level by those individuals who live and work in the affected area, the State Association is here to help local Associations effectively manage their local government relations programs. In addition to this Handbook, local Associations can utilize other CAR resources including a vast archive of manuals and files. CAR staff is available to answer questions and provide advice regarding past and present local issues statewide. Below are important CAR resources and associated contacts:

The Staff

C.A.R. LGR staff can provide REALTORS® and Boards with assistance on many issues that commonly arise such as business license tax policies, real estate signs regulations and local tax policies. If the staff cannot itself address a particular issue, a referral can often be made to another contact who can satisfactorily address the issue. Contact: Rick Laezman at (213) 739-8273 or richard_laezman@car.org.

Outreach Programs

The LGR staff and/or C.A.R. LGR Committee leadership is available to conduct outreaches to Associations. Such outreaches can cover a general overview of local government trends or they can be oriented to assisting a Board with a specific issue and strategy for addressing an issue. Contact: Rick Laezman at (213) 739-8273 or richard_laezman@car.org.

Member Mobilization recruits, trains and mobilizes the grassroots component of C.A.R.'s legislative advocacy program. Volunteers maintain personal relationships with their elected officials and help communicate the REALTOR® position on important issues. Contact us now if you would like to take part in C.A.R.'s Member Mobilization Program by becoming a Key Contact, Federal District or Senate Coordinator, or a Legislative Liaison. Contact: David Howard at (916) 444-2045 or david_howard@car.org.

Resource Materials

Use CAR.org. The legislative portion of C.A.R.'s website, CAR.org, has all of the latest information on policy, political and legislative issues affecting real estate and housing in California and the nation. Just log onto <http://www.car.org/legislation/index.html> to get started.

Use CAR background papers and manuals. (See the background paper and manual index on car.org at <http://www.car.org/legislation/program/lgrindx.html> .) Both the LGR Division and the C.A.R. Information Center, which is one of the state's largest

collections of current real estate information, maintain a library of background papers and manuals on issues related to local government and local housing policies.

- Background Papers
- Transfer Tax Manual
- "Reading Between the Lines: A REALTOR® Guide to Local Government Budgeting
- Steps to the American Dream

These may be requested free of charge by any REALTOR® or Board. The Information Center may be reached by calling (213) 739-8397.

CAR's Political Affairs Division has resources regarding fundraising, political news, and PAC administration. Contact: Pete Mitchell at peter_mitchell@car.org or (213) 739-8396.

Use the CAR Issues Files. The LGR Division maintains an issues file which is a collection of materials on specific subjects. Unlike formal background papers or manuals, this information includes a more informal collection of articles, newsletters, court opinions and other materials relating to a particular subject. This information is often used to supplement or update Division background papers. C.A.R.'s Information Center also has extensive files that include articles and publications on many local government issues. For more information about LGR Division resources, contact Rick Laezman at (213) 739-8273 or richard_laezman@car.org.