

2019 RECAP

CHANGES TO REAL ESTATE IN THE BAY AREA

Below are some important changes affecting the East Bay Real Estate Industry in 2019.

CITY TRANSFER TAX.....

January

The measure to increase the city's transfer tax on real property was approved on November 6, 2018 for the cities of *Berkeley, Hayward* and *Oakland* in Alameda County as well as *El Cerrito* and *Richmond* in Contra Costa County. New transfer tax went in effect beginning of 2019. [Click here for details.](#)

VACANT PROPERTY TAX.....

July

Oakland voters in November of 2018 approved the City of Oakland **Measure W, the Oakland Vacant Property Tax Act** that applies to any privately owned property in the city – including residential, commercial and empty lots – that is not “in use” for more than 50 days in a calendar year starting in 2019. The annual tax is \$6,000 per parcel for most properties, regardless of size or value. The tax for condo or duplex units or ground-floor commercial space is \$3,000 per year. There are 10 possible exemptions. The tax will be imposed on vacant property beginning July 1, 2020 for property deemed vacant in 2019 and will continue for 20 years. [Click here for details.](#)

CONFORMING LOAN LIMITS HAVE BEEN INCREASED IN CALIFORNIA.....

January

Since the beginning of 2019, most counties within California have a 2019 conforming loan limit of \$484,350, for a single-family home. Higher-priced areas, like those in the San Francisco Bay Area, have conventional limits of up to \$726,525 due to higher home values. Other counties fall somewhere in between these “floor” and “ceiling” amounts. See the table below for 2019 conforming loan limits in all California counties. [Click here for full details of the 2019 conforming loan limits for all 58 counties in California.](#) [Click here for details.](#)

CASTRO VALLEY PRIVATE SEWER LATERAL ORDINANCE.....

July

Effective July 1, 2019, all properties that closes escrow or properties have a newly recorded deed transferring title will be required to be cleaned or pass a CCTV inspection. This is similar to the PSL program in cities like Oakland and Berkeley. [Click here for details.](#)

OAKLAND SIDEWALK ORDINANCE.....

July

Effective July 9, 2019, an Oakland property seller or buyer is required to complete necessary repairs and upgrades to bring a sidewalk to compliance before a title transfer is completed. (Oakland Municipal Code Chapter 12 Section 12.04.380). [Click here for details.](#)