



Community Visioning Update: Fact Check 1

Sometimes we get questions from residents who have heard rumors regarding County government practices. When a question or concern is particularly serious, or raised by multiple community members, we investigate and do our best to provide the public a clear answer.

“Community Visioning Update: Fact Check” offers insight into some **Frequently Asked Questions.**

Question: [Is the County failing to act on millions of dollars of tax defaulted properties?](#)

Answer: The Treasurer-Tax Collector had a tax lien sale in Fiscal Year 2016-17, has one scheduled for 2017-18, and plans are underway for 2018-19. Sale of these properties puts them back onto the tax roll, and conducting annual sales is a high priority.

Q: [What happened with Holiday Harbor and the Lucerne Castle?](#)

A: Holiday Harbor and the Lucerne Castle were pre-recession Redevelopment investments in the Northshore, primarily funded by a state program to improve blighted areas. Unfortunately, the State eliminated the program, and Holiday Harbor and the Lucerne Castle failed to realize their full potential. Holiday Harbor recently sold, and the Castle is out for bid.

Q: [Does the County spend \\$500,000 per year to promote local tourism?](#)

A: The County dedicated approximately \$400,000 to efforts related to tourism, marketing and economic development in Fiscal Year 2017-18. Promoting tourism is important to our local economy. A recent study estimates that more than \$166 million travel-related dollars were spent in Lake County in Fiscal Year 2015-16.

Q: [Does the County collect Transient Occupancy Tax \(TOT\) from short-term rentals \(e.g. airbnb\)?](#)

A: Yes, in some cases. To address the significant number who are not paying, County staff will soon recommend the Board of Supervisors hire a contractor to identify properties used as short-term rentals and help collect TOT.

Q: [What about County employee salaries and pensions?](#)

A: County employee wages are 76% of the average for California counties. For the first time since 2008, 87% of employees received a 3% Cost of Living Adjustment in 2015. The Cost of Living has gone up nearly 16% since 2008.

Lake County's retiree pensions are among the most modest in the state. The average (non-law enforcement) County retiree receives just over \$12,000 per year.

Q: [Is County money spent to clear weeds out of the lake for the benefit of private businesses?](#)

A: No. Weeds are removed from Clear Lake to make sure boats can navigate. Sites are selected based on where weeds interfere with navigation and where vegetation is most likely to grow. This typically means shallows and areas where prevailing winds blow algae growth ashore. Clear Lake is our County's defining feature, and maintaining a lake that is usable is important for our local economy.