

## Fresno takes first step toward medical pot regulation

By George  
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A bill making its way through the Fresno City Council offers limited immunity for the indoor cultivation of up to four medical marijuana plants per residence.

KEVIN JOHNSON — MCT

Fresno City Hall may be rushing into the buggy-whip business just as Henry Ford charges into the picture.

The City Council on Thursday took the first of two steps to allow medical marijuana users to grow up to four marijuana plants.

The council on a 5-2 vote approved the introduction of such a bill. The council will vote at a later date on adopting the bill that amends city code.

Council Members Sal Quintero and Steve Brandau voted no. Quintero stayed quiet. Brandau said Fresno should lay low until City Hall and Fresno County come up with the same regulations.

It makes no sense for the city to go it alone when there are so many county islands within its boundaries, Brandau said.

Council Member Clint Olivier said the regulatory bill is a worthy effort, but most likely will be made irrelevant by the crush of events. Olivier said he's convinced California voters in 2016 will legalize the recreational use of marijuana,

just as the adults of Colorado have done.

“We will be run over by the legalization train in 24 months,” Olivier said.

Perhaps the city’s biggest challenge at that point will be figuring out how to spend all the tax revenue generated by the voters’ decision, Olivier said.

The bill offers limited immunity for the indoor cultivation of up to four medical marijuana plants per residence.

Olivier and Council President Oliver Baines are members of a council subcommittee on medical marijuana. Blong Xiong, who was termed out in January, was the third member from the council.

Council Member Esmeralda Soria will replace Xiong.

In other action the council:

- Accepted with considerable joy the Fiscal Year 2013-2014 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. [Controller Michael Lima said the city’s once precarious finances have improved](#) so much that Fresno is no longer in danger of becoming insolvent. Gone from this CAFR is the dreaded “going concern” statement that forced its way into the last two CAFRs, Lima said.
- Approved a three-year, \$450,000 contract with a Bay Area firm for a service that uses strategically-placed microphones to locate the source of gunshots in high-crime neighborhoods. [ShotSpotter should be up and running this summer in a three-square-mile area](#). Police officials are reluctant to identify the area for fear vandals will destroy the microphones.
- Conducted a workshop on the planning department’s [new development code](#). The current code hasn’t been thoroughly modernized for decades. City officials hope to have a proposed code to the council by July. The code is pivotal to implementing the 2035 general plan.
- Gave a cheer of appreciation for Ron Orozco, who is retiring after 41 years of stellar journalistic service with The Bee. Mayor Ashley Swearengin proclaimed Thursday to be “Ron Orozco Day.”

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