



The VOICE

Your independent news source

Greater Shasta County, CA

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Did you know...

- There were **16 new** single family home permits issued in the City of Redding in June 2021, for a total of **86** in 2021. There were **2 Carr Fire** single family rebuild permit issued in June 2021, for a total of **18** in 2021. That is **21** fewer single family home permits issued than the same period last year. There were **4** permits issued for new commercial buildings in June 2021, for a total of **9** in 2021. That is **10** fewer than for the same period in 2020.
- There were **354** residential homes sold in June, 2021 in Shasta County, for a total of **1,765** in 2021 so far. The 2021 year-to-date average sales price of residential homes sold in the City of Redding was **\$384,808**, with statistics showing that houses in Redding have sold for just **1%** over list price on average. Nationally, there are now more realtors than listings, and inventory is down **37%** year-over-year to a record low. For low tax states, **4** people are moving in for every one person that leaves on average. For Texas, the ratio is **5:1**; for Florida, the ratio is **7:1**.

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There's a New Sheriff in Town

On July 27th, the Shasta County Board of Supervisors officially appointed the City of Anderson's Police Chief, **Michael Johnson**, to fill the position of Sheriff-Coroner, after a heated discussion regarding the process of filling the open position took place at the July 20th Board of Supervisors meeting between the Supervisors. Supervisor Patrick Jones was the only "no" vote.

Some background information may be helpful: Tom Bosenko, the elected Sheriff-Coroner, retired from office mid-term in December, 2019. Following his retirement, an open recruitment was held, and the Board of Supervisors appointed Eric Magrini as his replacement. Magrini has now **resigned** the Sheriff-Coroner position to take another position as the Assistant CEO with Shasta County, which he felt was a "better fit," and his last day as Sheriff-Coroner was June 19, 2021.

Magrini's unexpired term as Sheriff-Coroner will be about 18 months following his resignation, lasting until the first Monday after January 1, 2023. The next election for Sheriff is not until June 2022, and the newly appointed Sheriff-Coroner Michael Johnson said that he would run for election of the position in June 2022. State law does not authorize the Board of Supervisors to call a special election for this position.

With the resignation of Magrini, current undersheriff Jason Barnhardt temporarily assumed the duties of Sheriff-Coroner on June 20th, until such time as a Sheriff-Coroner was appointed by the Board of Supervisors. Undersheriff Barnhardt determined that he was not interested in being appointed to the position, but would continue to perform the duties until a proper replacement was appointed.

The Supervisors then had the option of performing a recruiting process, with open session interviews before a qualified candidate was chosen (which was how Magrini was appointed), or appointing a qualified person to fill the open position without the necessity for a recruitment and interviews.

On July 20th, a majority of the Supervisors, who had heard from a highly qualified candidate (who met all the stated requirements) interested in taking the position, voted to agenda an item for the July 27th meeting to officially appoint that candidate, Anderson Police Chief Michael Johnson, to fill the position of Sheriff-Coroner beginning on August 15, 2021 and lasting until the first Monday after January 1, 2023.

Additionally, a salary resolution was narrowly approved by a vote of 3-2, with Supervisors Moty and Jones dissenting, to raise the salary of the Sheriff-Coroner from \$135,468 to **\$205,000 annually**, which is above the average of similar counties and local jurisdictions. Apparently the salaries for all Shasta County **elected** officials have not been raised since 2015, thus the seemingly large increase.

New Sheriff-Coroner Michael Johnson has a stellar reputation and highly successful history as the Chief of Police in the City of Anderson. His own Anderson police staff sent a letter supporting and recommending him for this position for the betterment of the community at large, even though they are sad to see him leave Anderson. Joe Chimenti, the Chair of the Board of Supervisors, said that the Sheriff's Department is in need of a culture change, better facilities, and an overall better environment for the employees. He believes it's all about leadership to do what needs to be done, and a majority of the Supervisors agreed that Michael Johnson was the best person for the job.

First Responder Fee Approved for Redding Fire Department

On July 20th, Redding City Council approved an Ordinance to create an **“Emergency Medical Service First Responder Fee”** that will be billed to a patient who is medically assessed or treated by the Redding Fire Department first responders. This includes emergency medical calls, auto accidents and other traumatic injuries.

The fee will be **\$326**, and will likely become effective in October or November 2021. It is expected to generate over \$391,000 in general revenue per year. First responder fees can be fully or partially covered by commercial medical and auto insurance carriers. Patients determined to be in financial hardship may have the fee waived by submitting a “hardship waiver” to the Fire Chief. Based on the number of patients transported over the past three years, which was 7,500, the fee could generate \$2,445,000 in billable revenue. However, the City is using a collection rate of only 20%, based on the average local ambulance collection rate, as well as the cost of using a third-party billing entity.

The fee will have **no effect on the emergency medical first responder services being provided**. These services will continue to be provided without regard to whether a person is insured, has the ability to pay the fee, or has or has not paid the emergency medical service first responder fee in the past.

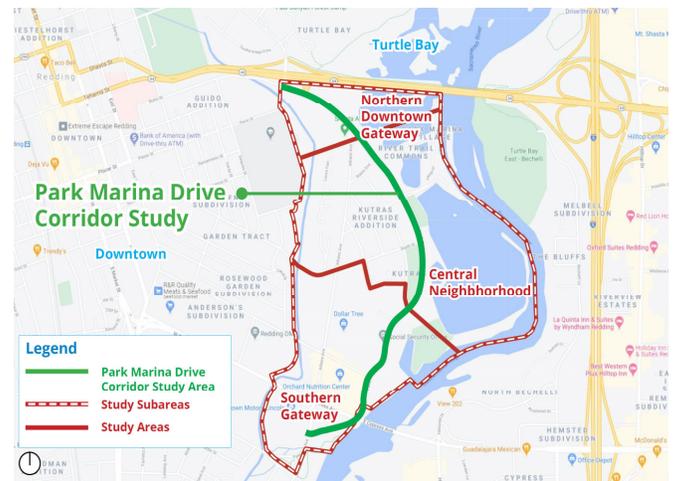
The Redding Fire Department responds to about 15,000 service calls annually. Of these service calls, 65% are emergency medical expenses. The cost to provide this emergency medical care is about \$13,650,000, 65% of the Fire Department’s budget, which includes ongoing training and certification.

During the discussion of this proposal, City staff cited 20 other fire agencies in California that charge a first responder fee ranging from \$225 to \$600, including the Anderson Fire Protection District, which charges a \$250 fee. The actual collections have been minimal.

2nd Public Workshop To Be Held for Park Marina Drive Corridor Plan Project

The City of Redding is preparing to transform Park Marina Drive into an active and accessible multi-modal corridor to support long-term development in the area that will create a riverfront destination residents would like to see. This includes improving accessibility, multi-modal connections to surrounding areas, and creating a safe and active environment for residents to enjoy.

The first public workshop to gather input from the general public about this project was held on November 18, 2020. The City is now ready to show the **draft alternative layouts** for the Park Marina Drive corridor based on feedback and input received so far. Those alternatives are intended to improve Park Marina Drive to be a “comfortable and safe corridor for bikers and walkers alongside cars and other vehicles.” The City is looking for **public input and feedback** on the proposed alternative layouts.



The second open house will be held twice, first in person and second online via Zoom . The same materials will be presented in both meetings:

1. **An in-person Open House: Monday, August 9, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.**—Community Room at City Hall, 777 Cypress Avenue.
2. **Virtual Open House over Zoom: Wednesday, August 11, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.**—Register for the event through Eventbrite: <https://bit.ly/368A65Q> (or contact Shelby Nadin: snadin@cityofredding.org.)

If you have an interest in the future development of the Park Marina Corridor, this is your opportunity to learn more about those future plans, as well as provide any comments, concerns, or suggestions about the already drawn-up draft layouts for this area.

Site Development Permit Application Approved for Panorama Park and Fieldhouse

On October 6, 2020, Redding City Council approved the submittal of an application to the Statewide Park Development Program for a **grant** that would allow for the construction of a new park on a 10.53 acre parcel located at 950 Lake Boulevard. The grant application requested up to **\$8.5 million** for the construction of a new large neighborhood park and recreation facility known as **Panorama Park and Field House** (gymnasium).

The property was acquired by the City in 2006 for park purposes. In 2008, new park planning stalled during the recession. In 2019, the 9.4 acres westerly portion of the site was rezoned to “PF” Public Facilities in anticipation of a park. The easterly 1.1 acres was not included in that rezone because the plan was to sell that portion at a future date. However, in order to accommodate for additional amenities, the additional acreage is now included in the project.

The project will include park amenities such as trails, landscaping, playground, and parking. The Field House is planned to be about 20,000 square feet of gym space (enough to accommodate two basketball courts) and 5,000 square feet of classroom, restroom, storage, and reception space. This gymnasium would be Redding’s **first public gymnasium** and community center. It would also address the service area gap in the northwest quadrant of the City, providing recreational opportunities for the residents of the Lake Boulevard area.

The grant application for the Panorama Park project is currently under review. City staff recently completed a site visit with State of California officials on July 9, 2021, and anticipate having a decision by fall 2021.

If awarded the grant, the new park and facility will require new funding for operations and maintenance. Staff estimates the early years will cost close to \$200,000 annually and grow to \$300,000 over time as the facilities wear and require more repairs and maintenance. If approved, the ongoing operations and maintenance funding will need to be budgeted beginning in fiscal year 2023-24. This cost would be a general fund expense with some offset from facility and rental income. No additional funding sources have been identified to pay for these expenses.

On July 20, 2021, Redding City Council **approved** the site development permit application for the park, along with the accompanying General Plan Amendment, Rezoning application, and the mitigated negative declaration.

The project is anticipated to be built in 2024, and may take up to two construction seasons.

County Supervisors Address Illegal Cannabis Cultivation

On July 22nd, the Shasta County Supervisors held a special meeting for the purpose of discussing runaway illegal cannabis cultivation in the unincorporated areas of Shasta County.

State law provides that no local jurisdiction may prohibit adults from engaging in **personal** cultivation of up to six cannabis plants inside a private residence, or inside an accessory structure to a private residence located upon the grounds of a private residence that is fully enclosed and secure. In accordance with state law, local jurisdictions may enact and enforce reasonable regulations regarding the personal cultivation of cannabis.

The personal cultivation of cannabis for medical and recreational use within the unincorporated area of Shasta County is regulated by Shasta County Code section 17.88.320, which requires the approval of a zoning permit for **indoor** cultivation and **prohibits outdoor** cultivation. **All commercial cannabis activities are prohibited** within the unincorporated area of Shasta County by Shasta County Code section 17.88.325.

The Supervisors listened for 3 hours to citizens living mostly in the unincorporated areas concerned about their own safety, negative impacts on the environment, structure fires, explosions, water theft, unpermitted structures (and no permits for anything), huge numbers of illegal greenhouses, firearms used by those guarding illegal cannabis gardens, extensive trash piles, vandalism, and many other issues that they are experiencing in their own backyards.

But the biggest concern of all of those who addressed the Supervisors at this meeting is the total **lack of any and all law enforcement** in Shasta County for illegal cannabis activities. There was even an offer by a local militia (40 people strong) that offered to provide enforcement, as they have actually done in other Counties, including providing boots on the ground with the Siskiyou County Sheriff.

The Supervisors unanimously voted to **move full speed ahead** with a significant **draft plan** that would immediately reinstate a now defunct marijuana eradication team, and address all the issues discussed at this meeting. That draft plan is to be brought back to the Supervisors as quickly as possible for approval and implementation. Stay tuned!

Updated News and Notes

Shasta VOICES is continuing to monitor and follow many issues of interest to our supporters and the community. As part of our efforts to keep you updated and informed, here is a brief update of some of these issues.

Opponents of Costco's New Location File Another Lawsuit—On June 10, 2021, the Bonnyview Bechelli Coalition, a group who is opposing Costco's plan to build a larger facility with 152,000 square feet and up to 30 fueling stations on the northwest corner of the I-5 and Bonnyview overpass, filed a petition for writ of mandate and an injunction with the Shasta County Superior Court. The opponents allege that the approved Bechelli Bonnyview Specific Plan Initiative adopted by Redding City Council on May 24, 2021 "makes an end run around the normal legislative process that was previously undertaken by the City to approve a commercial development proposed by Costco Wholesale Corporation, the parcel's owner." The opponents want the court to declare the initiative unconstitutional, invalid and unenforceable, and want to have the adoption of the Specific Plan set aside. In September, 2020, the Bonnyview Bechelli Coalition sued the City over its May 19, 2020 approval of the project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The initiative that was adopted on May 24, 2021 would not be subject to CEQA, and therefore, would make the CEQA lawsuit moot. The new lawsuit will determine whether the CEQA lawsuit moves forward.

Soccer Park Lease Agreement Amended Again—On March 17, 2020, Redding City Council declared a local public health emergency due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the California Youth Soccer League cancelled all play by order of the California Public Health Department. This caused the Redding Youth Soccer League to cancel all play through the fall season. The high schools and middle schools cancelled fall sports as well. These cancellations resulted in a significant financial impact to the Redding Soccer Park facility, and to the Shasta Regional Soccer Association (SRSA) who has a lease agreement with the City of Redding. City Council approved an amendment to the lease agreement on August 20, 2020, deferring lease payments until March 2021. By April 2021, restrictions for spectator attendance to sports events had not completely lifted, which continued the reduction in Park revenue. Planning for local and regional tournaments was postponed again for the 2021 season. Without these tournaments, the Park will suffer another fall season with lost revenue from tournament fees, spectatorship, and concessions. Therefore, the SRSA requested another amendment to their lease which was approved by City Council on July 20, 2021. This second amendment ***defers lease payments for thirty months, from March 21, 2020 through September 2023, and \$180,000 in lease payments will be deferred.***

City of Redding Helps Neighboring Jurisdictions Needing Water—The City of Redding has implemented voluntary water conservation efforts to address the drought that the state is currently experiencing after two extremely dry winters. The Bureau of Reclamation has reduced water allocations for all water contractors, and the State Water Resources Control Board issued early warning notices to plan for water shortages. The Governor declared a drought emergency in 41 counties, including Shasta County, on May 10, 2021. Water suppliers are working on water transfers to meet water needs.

The City of Redding, so far, has not put any mandatory water conservation programs in place. Redding gets its water from three sources—the Sacramento River, Whiskeytown Lake, and 17 municipal ground water wells. This year, the State came out with a 75% reduction in surface water for one of the contracts, but the City is able to supplement that reduction with groundwater. The City continues to suggest voluntary conservation, including cutting back lawn watering to 3 days per week and adjusting sprinklers so that they are not wetting the sidewalks.

Many other water districts do not have the ability to withstand drastic water cutbacks. The City of Redding was contacted by Bella Vista Water District, Shasta Community Services District, and Clear Creek Community Services District to help meet their water needs. On July 20th, Redding City Council approved water transfer agreements to these three districts. Water will be sold at the City's cost, plus an administrative cost of \$30 per acre foot. The three agreements total 2,200 acre feet of water, which will increase the City's Water Utility revenue up to \$66,000.

At the July 20th Council meeting, the Council voted unanimously to continue with voluntary water conservation efforts for the City of Redding. These efforts have worked—the water usage is less now than 12 years ago.

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Mary B. Machado, Executive Director