



# The VOICE

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### Did you know...

- There were **6** single family home permits issued in the City of Redding (a 16% decrease from the same period of 2018) and **12** Carr Fire single family rebuild permits issued in March 2019. So far in 2019, there have been **33** Carr Fire single family rebuild permits issued. There were **2** permits issued for commercial buildings in March 2019,
- The Bureau of Indian Affairs issued a public notice that it intends to file a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in connection with the Redding Rancheria's application requesting that the United States acquire 232 acres of land in trust in Shasta County. The Tribe is proposing to construct a **casino resort** with hotel, event center, outdoor amphitheater, retail center and related infrastructure. The DEIS is available for review at the BIA office (2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento) and the Redding Public Library. It is also available online at <http://www.reddingeis.com>. **A public hearing will be held on May 20, 2019 at 6:00 pm at the Redding Memorial Veterans Hall, 1605 Yuba**

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## Plan To Increase Building and Planning Fees Laid Out

On May 8th at 2:00 pm, the City of Redding will hold a final 10-year budget workshop (special City Council meeting). This discussion will center around a "modification" of the City's Development Service-related permits and fees that could add **\$625,000** in annual revenues to those departments, which could reduce the amount that the General Fund would pay those departments each year, and allow additional funds to be used towards maintaining three firefighter positions and four police officers that could otherwise be eliminated July 1, 2019.

A community and stakeholder meeting was held on **April 26th**, and the plan to increase building fees by \$500,000 annually and planning fees by \$125,000 annually was laid out by City staff looking for input and feedback. Not surprisingly, those in attendance were not pleased with this plan to increase building and planning fees, some substantially. Development Services Director Larry Vaupel and his staff, who were directed by City Council to find the \$625,000 in revenues, were looking for alternatives, and some were offered. But here is the City's plan:

### Building Fee Increases (all construction, repairs, remodels):

- 1) Utilize new **valuation tables** to increase revenues, "estimated" at \$250,000 per year for all residential and commercial buildings. That would increase permit fees for a typical new home in Redding by up to **13.7%**, for a 5,000 square foot commercial office building by **20.6%**, and for a 10,000 square foot commercial warehouse building by **50.2%**.
- 2) **Increase permit fees on small permits** for water heaters, demolition, service changes, HVAC change out etc., and add an energy fee to increase revenues, "estimated" at \$250,000 per year. For residential permits, the increase in demolition permits would be **95.6%**, for HVAC change out would be **186.8%**, for service change would be **114.4%**, and for water heater would be **209.2%**. For commercial permits, the increase in demolition permits would be **95.6%**, for HVAC change out would be **150.0%**, for service change would be **200.2%**, for a sign permit would be **210.4%**, and for a water heater would be **271.1%**.

### Planning Fee Increases:

Because it is difficult to estimate how many applications will be received in any given year for planning fees, City staff determined that increasing all permits by the same percentage would be the best way for the City to realize any increases in revenues. Therefore, the cost for planning permits and projects are proposed to be **increased by a flat 40%** across the board. Staff's best "guess" is that this could raise as much as \$125,000 per year. No planning fee statistics have been made available for year-to-year comparisons or potential gains.

Clearly, the City is not taking into account the **cumulative impact** of all the recent fee increases, and added state regulations: A 3% annual inflationary increase to impact fees, an additional \$800 per single family home for park fees, a new park fee for commercial buildings, school impact fees increasing by 2%, and state requirements for rooftop solar, sprinkler systems, and new energy efficiency standards (to name a few). **How much is too much to pass along to consumers?** Housing costs alone have gone from \$180 (per square foot) to \$225 just in the last few years. The proposed increases could certainly slow the building and development process, negating the potential revenue increases for the City. Historically, the City has made a conscious choice to keep fees lower, because not too long ago, building **did** come to a complete halt because of increasing costs and fees...and the successful remedy was, in fact, to lower (and/or not raise) the fees. It appears that the City no longer believes in that strategy.

Perhaps the most palatable suggestion from the April 26th stakeholders meeting was to charge a **temporary surcharge** on all permits, rather than raising all the building fees. That way, the surcharge could be eliminated easily if revenues from other sources (i.e. new sales taxes) were to materialize. Join the workshop discussion on May 8th...and stay tuned!

## ***Downtown Redding Internet Utility Pilot Project Moves Forward***

At the April 3rd Council meeting, Redding City Council voted to move forward with plans to ***build a new fiber-optic Internet utility service*** as a ***Pilot Project*** in a portion of Downtown Redding. Vice-Mayor Adam McElvain, who initiated this project in May, 2017, presented the findings from a Draft Master Broadband Plan Whitepaper completed by the Geographical Information Center, California State University Chico.

The Whitepaper states that the City of Redding is considering a proposal to research, develop, and potentially implement a new fiber Internet utility service. This initial service would be offered in the downtown area of Redding and serve as a pilot phase for both residential and commercial customers. The goal of the new utility is to spur economic development, help revitalize the downtown area, and make the city more competitive and marketable. This whitepaper highlights the unique advantage of Redding to provide this service by owning the existing infrastructure through the city-owned Redding Electric Utility (REU).

The Whitepaper also states that “the majority of Redding is without wireless service; however, there are a number of isolated areas within the city with wireless service. Most of the scattered wireless service in Redding has downstream speeds between 10 and 25 Mbps. Downtown Redding is currently without any wireless service. Depending on the location of towers, access points or base stations, and line-of-sight (no visible obstructions) to customer premises, fixed wireless service can cover wide areas, however, environmental factors such as trees, buildings and topography can affect availability of the fixed wireless service.”

The Whitepaper continues...”Based on the current broadband service coverage and maximum service speeds in the City of Redding, from 100 Mbps to less than 500 Mbps (Charter), this report supports that the ***next step for upgrading broadband service is deploying a fiber-optic network to provide gigabit services*** for residential, business, and industrial customers and community anchor institutions. This subsection presents a high-level technical design assessment for the proposed fiber service in the Downtown Redding pilot area.” For all the details, the entire report can be accessed on the City’s Transparency Portal.

The 64-page report details the costs of installing the Downtown network, and it adds up to between ***\$2.6 and \$3.5 million***. Operations and maintenance costs would be recouped as part of monthly service fees. There are two options for the type of network to be implemented: 1) ISP—the usual bandwidth offering, and 2) Open Access—anyone on the network can communicate with each other. McElvain explained that funding options can be any combination of private grants, public grants, public/private partnerships and financing.

The next steps in this process include stakeholder engagement (preferably face-to-face), identifying concrete funding sources, and performing a risk analysis. McElvain indicated that a final report will be produced and that it may be available by September 2019, and it would be more conclusive.

## ***CRT Team To Rebuild County Homes Lost in Carr and Delta Fires***

The Carr and Delta fires destroyed nearly 1,100 homes in the Shasta County area, and of those homes, over 300 homeowners in Shasta County were uninsured or underinsured, and have little prospect of being able to rebuild on their own without assistance.

The **NorCal Community Recovery Team (CRT)** is a group of non-profit organizations, businesses, individuals, and government agencies who have banded together to share information and resources to best help our community recover as quickly and completely as possible. Local contractor Don Ajamian (Don Ajamian Construction) was asked by the NorCal CRT to lead the construction subcommittee. His task is to take the lead and find a way to rebuild these homes for our Shasta County friends and neighbors that have limited means or coverage to do so on their own.

To help achieve this task, Nor-Cal CRT is partnering with a faith-based organization by the name of **VROC**, (Volunteers Rebuilding Our Community). VROC has a proven, developed program of rebuilding homes for the ***uninsured and under-insured*** in disaster areas. At the heart of his program is a nationwide system of ***volunteers*** recruited from churches all over the country who send teams to the reconstruction sites for one and two week stays to work on home construction.

VROC donates their time and management. There is no cost to us locally for their services, however, there are costs incurred to build these homes. In addition to the labor effort, VROC has national agreements with major manufacturers for items like appliances, HVAC units, etc. for substantially reduced costs on those items.

Based on estimates provided by FEMA, a goal was set at \$15M required for this rebuilding effort to be successful, which breaks down to only \$50,000 per house if all 300 homes were rebuilt. There are two standard basic home plans available to choose from for those who qualify to participate in this effort—single level 960 square feet (2 bedroom/2 bath), and single level 1,120 square feet (3 bedroom/2 bath). Those who have these homes rebuilt must commit to live there for a minimum of 5 years, with a lien on the property that sunsets at 5 years.

Initial efforts will be focused on rebuilding those structures impacted ***in the county*** as opposed to the city. Therefore, Don Ajamian reached out to the Shasta County Board of Supervisors back in February 2019 and asked them to eliminate all permit fees, eliminate the requirement for a garage/carport, and eliminate the requirement for fire sprinklers if the lost home didn’t have them at the time of destruction. So far, the Supervisors have not responded to this request. Stay tuned!

## *“The Life Center” Concept Moves Forward*

On February 26th, the Shasta County Board of Supervisors received a presentation from Donnell Ewert, Director of Health and Human Services (HHSA), regarding the creation of a “Homeless Navigation Center” to serve hard-to-reach unsheltered adults, with the recommendation to utilize **\$1,685,155** from the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) towards development costs of the Center, proposed to be 26,000 square feet. At that time, the Supervisors requested the item be brought back to them with further input from community members, but supported, in concept, the idea of such a center. They also suggested taking a look at a scaled down version of the proposal. On March 26th, the Supervisors established a temporary ad hoc committee, appointing Supervisors Chimenti and Rickert.

The **original** suggested occupancy for this Center, conceptually called **“The Place,”** was 92 individuals in three categories: (1) general shelter; (2) medical respite; (3) sobering center. Shelter staff would navigate individuals toward appropriate services during their flexible length of stay. The average length of recovery for individuals receiving medical respite services is about 6-8 weeks. Prior to discharge, shelter staff would coordinate case management services, similar to services provided to other individuals within the general shelter. The sobering center would be designed to provide exclusive space for non-violent individuals to recover from public intoxication.

On **April 23rd**, the County’s suggested development and occupancy for **The Place** was **modified to be implemented in phases**, with the **initial goal** being to establish a Center with behavioral health and housing resources, along with shelter beds. Director Ewert recommended a downsized new 13,000 square foot metal building to be located on Breslauer Way to house the shelter. While the HEAP funding would pay for a significant portion of such a facility, the HHSA will need to secure additional funds for the capital development and for operational expenses. A later phase would incorporate sobering services with medical respite. The total capital cost of the Center would be between \$6 million and \$9 million.

But a **different presentation** was given by Anderson Chief of Police Michael Johnson that **drew more support**.

The Chief’s proposal, called **“The Life Center,”** is “a collaborative process incorporating accountability into a multi-disciplinary model to serve the entire Shasta Community. The goal is to achieve long term solutions to our increasing populations of individuals experiencing homelessness, as well as individuals committing low level misdemeanor offenses and quality of life crimes. It is a model that involved city and County-wide participation from all relevant agencies with a core recognition that a penal consequence is not sufficient in itself; a social service component is also necessary to address mental health, medical, housing and other needs. This model attempts to **marry the two concepts of criminal justice and social service** by offering them in one venue as an alternative means to historical efforts used to combat these societal issues with the belief that long-term change is possible when accountability is part of the process.”

**“The Life Center”** would create **two centers** in close proximity to each other. One would be the homeless navigation center (The Place) with 60 beds (30 day max stay) and full social services available on site, and the other would be a **Transitional Rehabilitation Facility (TRF)**, a minimum security misdemeanor detention center which would be a 60 bed facility with a perimeter fence. He presented a conceptual model and explained how it would work. He envisions an innovative new model that he believes would actually **solve the problems associated with quality of life crimes in our community** in a business-like fashion, emphasizing that it would require accountability from all the social service and law enforcement partners in such centers. He proposed using the Sheriff’s old detention annex facility on Radio Lane for the TRF, and using the basement of the 22,000 square foot building nearby, which was the former County Mental Health Facility, for the homeless navigation center.

District Attorney Stephanie Bridgett expressed support for “The Life Center” concept, explaining that she could not support “The Place” proposal without a custodial center. Her office currently utilizes diversion programs, which keeps offenders in custody while changing the cycle of bad behavior and working towards a fresh start. It stops the “catch and release” of misdemeanor offenders and holds them accountable. She believes that “The Place” is only focused on **voluntary** change of behavior with no accountability. People have the opportunity to get volunteer services now, and they are not doing it—they see no reason to participate in those services if there is not that “hammer” of requirements and accountability held over their head. She said that there are other options for the \$1.6 million grant other than more shelter beds.

The Sheriff’s office also expressed support for “The Life Center,” asking the Supervisors not to reinvent the wheel with another shelter, similar to the one we already have at the Good News Rescue Mission. They preferred to still have more jail beds, with the possibility that arrestees could be transferred to a rehabilitation facility. “The Life Center” would establish that rehabilitation facility, and the County already owns both the old detention annex and the former Mental Health Facility, both of which are options for “The Life Center” concept. Utilizing these existing facilities will require some capital improvements, which could come from the \$1.6 million grant.

Director Ewert also supported filling the gap in the justice system with “The Life Center” proposal.

After **six hours** of listening to all the proposals, suggestions, impassioned pleas from the general public, and discussions between the Board of Supervisors, the Supervisors **voted unanimously to explore the costs** to retrofit the Sheriff’s annex facility on Radio Lane for a 60 bed misdemeanor detention center, and the costs to renovate the former County Mental Health Facility on Breslauer Way for a 60 bed adult homeless navigation center (i.e., “The Life Center” proposal). They also gave approval to Director Ewert to start raising the public and private funds needed to fully develop the navigation center, with the understanding that Ewert will work with county law enforcement officials on “The Life Center” proposal.

## *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.

***Planning Commission Recommends Approval of Les Schwab Tire Store***—On April 9th, the Redding Planning Commission recommended approval of a site development permit for the construction of a 9,249 square-foot Les Schwab Tire retail store on a 2.08 acre parcel, owned by California Gold Development, located at 4601 Churn Creek Road. If approved by City Council, Les Schwab will join Save Mart, Ross Dress-for-Less, and In-n-Out Burger (all three have pulled permits) as the next tenants of the Churn Creek MarketPlace Shopping Center. Site work for the main part of the shopping center will begin around June 1st.

***Council Approves Revenue Bonds For South Bonnyview Interchange Area*** — On April 16th, Redding City Council (acting as the Redding Joint Powers Financing Authority) approved the issuance of **\$10 million in Revenue Bonds** to finance the design, acquisition, construction, and improvement of the South Bonnyview Interchange, the Churn Creek Road and Victor Avenue intersection, and related site improvements.

The City of Redding has \$17,595,000 of outstanding lease revenue bonds that are eligible to be refunded for debt service savings: Series 2004A—issued in April 2004 with outstanding debt of \$2,690,000 related to the Solid Waste Transfer Station and Corporation Yard; Series 2004B—issued in December 2004 with outstanding debt of \$4,120,000 related to the Convention Center; and Series 2007A—issued in April 2007 with outstanding debt of \$10,785,000 related to Stillwater Business Park (\$8,255,000) and traffic improvements (\$2,530,000).

At its meeting of February 19, 2019, the Council authorized staff to proceed with the necessary work to consider refunding the debt the City has incurred through such past investments. Staff analyzed the current financing market, and determined that refunding this debt will result in significant annualized savings for the General Fund. The refunding of eligible debt will result in a saving of up to \$1.6 million during the life of the bonds (present value savings of about \$1.2 million).

The City's General Fund will incur **additional debt service** obligations related to these newly approved Series 2019A Bonds, which are **to be paid by future traffic impact fees** from development projects over the 20-30 year life of the program.

***Shasta VOICES Participates in Sign Ordinance Committee***—In the past few weeks, a letter from the City of Redding's Development Services Department was sent to businesses located in the City limits, reminding those not in compliance with the City' Municipal Code for signs and banners to remedy the situation immediately. Jake Mangas, President of the Redding Chamber of Commerce, said "This left some perplexed as to why the City is focusing on this issue at this time" after receiving calls from a number of his concerned members. Development Services Director Larry Vaupel agreed to take a look at improving this subsection of the code. He brought some proposed changes forward at the April 9th Planning Commission meeting for this subsection as part of **14 other text amendments** for consideration (which were all approved for recommendation to City Council), but there were still many issues and concerns that had not been addressed regarding temporary signs and banners. The Commissioners voted unanimously to form a **volunteer committee** (work group) to take more time to properly vet this particular subsection (18.42.030). That group will include Jake Mangas from the Chamber, two Planning Commissioners, Mary Machado, a commercial leasing agent (or two), and some affected business owners. The goal is to dive into the ordinance relating to the temporary use of signs and banners, and find an acceptable balance between upholding sign standards while not penalizing businesses for trying to attract customers. When that work has been completed, the committee will return to the Planning Commissioners with their proposal for consideration.

If you are reading this and want to participate in the discussion, please contact Mary Machado, (530) 222-5251, or [mary@shastavoices.com](mailto:mary@shastavoices.com).

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