



The VOICE

Your independent news source

Greater Shasta County, CA

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Did you know...

- The following major transportation public improvement projects are currently underway (all at the same time) in our community:
- **Hilltop Drive-Hwy. 44 overcrossing.** Widening Hilltop Drive by 26 feet/provide turn-lane access to future Dana-to-Downtown link.
- **Dana to Downtown.** Replace Hwy. 44 bridges and Auditorium Drive overcrossing, widen Hwy. 44 to 6 lanes from Auditorium Dr. to I-5, connect westbound Dana Dr. to 44.
- **Cypress Ave. Bridge Replacement.** Widen to 6 lanes, add turn lanes onto Athens Ave. and Hartnell Ave.
- **Churn Creek Road.** Widen to 4 lanes, realign from S. Bonneyview to Arizona St.
- **South Bonneyview.** Widen to 4 lanes from the Sacramento River to Hwy. 273, add turn lanes onto the highway.
- **Hilltop Drive Streetscape.** Bury overhead lines from Cypress Ave. to Hwy. 44, install medians w/landscaping.

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Joint Shasta County/City Of Redding Facilities Impact Fees Presentation Scheduled for June 17th City Council Meeting

On June 17, 2008, at the regularly scheduled Redding City Council Meeting, a representative from Muni-Financial Consulting will conduct a presentation regarding the potential implementation of the unusual joint Shasta County/City of Redding "Facilities Impact Fees" in the City of Redding.

The purpose of these fees is supposed to be to ensure that new development pays the capital costs associated with growth. Though it would have been prudent for the County and the City to act concurrently *before* forging ahead, on April 22, 2008, the Shasta County Supervisors voted to implement the fees being presented to the City Council in the *unincorporated* areas of Shasta County. This is the first time that Shasta County has ever implemented development impact fees, and some of the fees are considered normal, standard, legitimate fees for such things as traffic, sheriff's patrol and investigation, and fire safety, and are supportable. Other proposed fees are anything but normal, and include fees for such things as library books, general government, public health, and public protection. The County has no jurisdiction to implement these or any fees in the incorporated cities, including Redding, but created a fee structure that included the City of Redding's participation. The City of Redding is just now taking a look at these fees.

But, the City of Redding already has a development impact fee structure in place. For a 2400 square foot single family dwelling, the existing fees total \$34,246, or \$38,304 in the North Redding Traffic Benefit District (NRTBD). The County is asking the City of Redding to **add another \$4171 per single family dwelling to its existing fees** to help the County maintain its "facilities standards." That would bring the total fees for a 2400 square foot house in Redding to \$38,417, or \$42,475 in the NRTBD. The City Council will either say yes or no, if they even choose to move forward after hearing the presentation.

Shasta VOICES has been tracking this issue for over ten months, and hired an expert attorney on the subject of fees, Walt McNeill, to help us understand how such unusual fees could be legally justified. He concluded that, beyond the normal, standard, legitimate fees, they really couldn't be legally justified. But the County Supervisors voted them in anyway, having their own outside expert available to bolster their own point of view. A second opinion subsequently obtained by Shasta VOICES from the Pacific Legal Foundation (PLF) concurred with Walt McNeill's findings.

So, at this point, we encourage everyone to put this information on your calendars, and attend the City Council meeting on June 17, 2008. They need to hear from the general public before "forging ahead."

When: June 17, 2008 7:00 p.m.

Where: Redding City Council Chambers, 777 Cypress Avenue

Water Quality Impacts from City Wells Affect 8,000 Homes In Southeast Redding

Redding's City water supply system includes 16 groundwater wells, which provide up to 21 million gallons per day of supply to help augment surface water supplies from Whiskeytown Lake and the Sacramento River. Most of these wells are located in the southeast area of the City, which overlies a regional groundwater aquifer. The wells are an important source of supply for the peak season demands, and for drought supply in the event that surface water supplies are reduced. Several of these wells have naturally occurring minerals (Iron and Manganese) which can cause color and taste problems for customers. These minerals come out of solution and build up in the water mains, where under certain conditions they are "stirred up" and become suspended in the supply coming into the customers' service lines.

The City is using two primary means to reduce the impact to customers from these minerals; the annual water main flushing program and use of sequestering treatment at the well head. In addition, the City is currently conducting an engineering feasibility study for added well head treatment to remove the minerals at the source. Depending on the findings of the study, it will be several years or more before well head treatment can be implemented, due to the significant costs for construction and operation of the facilities. A review of the City's current Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the water utility doesn't include these much needed improvements, despite the efforts of Greg Norby, the City's Water Utility manager, who proposed putting such water quality improvements into the current CIP to the City Council on September 4, 2007, without success.

In the interim, some customers have had good success with the use of whole-house water filters. A filter can be retrofitted into the existing water service line on the customer's side of the meter, to remove the Manganese and Iron. A qualified plumbing contractor can install the filter assembly, using materials available at most major home improvement stores or plumbing supply retailers. The filter should be installed past the main irrigation line if feasible. Replacement filters cost about \$20. Filter units last from 1 to 3 months, and need to be changed more frequently during peak water use months. The picture you see to the right show two very "black" filters after only 2 weeks of use, and speak volumes to why this issue should be moved to the top of the priority list for capital improvements. The City is responsible to provide improvements to aging water mains, and providing well head treatment and filtration systems would provide much needed water quality improvements to the homeowners in Southeast Redding, who deserve better water quality than they are currently experiencing.



City Manager Creates Construction Incentives Stimulus Package

At the City of Redding Council meeting on May 6th, City Manager Kurt Starman proposed, and the City Council approved, a potential temporary incentive program to increase residential construction activity. At the June 3rd Council meeting, the required ordinances and resolutions to implement the proposed changes were brought forward and approved.

It's no secret that there has been a significant decrease in development activity, in particular, residential construction, in the City of Redding due to the weak economy. This has resulted in the loss of hundreds of construction and other jobs in the local community. The City Manager has created a construction incentive plan to stimulate residential construction activity in the community. The plan includes these changes to the existing building fee structure:

1. **Fee Reduction.** Reduce the cost of certain building fees by 50 percent for a four-month period of

time. These fees include building permit fees, electric permit fees, plumbing permit fees, mechanical permit fees, and plan check fees. The fee reduction would apply to new residential construction, as well as rehabilitation and remodeling projects.

2. **Delay Impact Fees.** Delay collecting all City development impact fees on new residential construction until the final inspection is complete (as opposed to collecting these fees at the building permit stage).

3. **Increase Rebate Program.** Enhance the Redding Electric Utility's (REU) Rebate Program for residential air conditioners and residential insulation by increasing the rebates up to 50 percent.

4. **Decrease Interest Rates.** Decrease the interest rate associ-

ated with the City of Redding's Homeowners Rehabilitation Loan Program from 5 percent to 0 percent.

5. **Delay Fee Increases.** The City is scheduled to adjust its traffic development impact fees in July, 2008 by the Construction Cost Index (CCI). This increase would be delayed until

January, 2009. The adjustment in January, 2009 would reflect the change in the CCI over an 18-month period, as opposed to the typical 12-month period.

These changes would take effect on July 1, 2008 and remain in effect until October 31, 2008, perhaps longer if effective.

We applaud the efforts of our City Manager, Kurt Starman, to partner with the private sector to at least try to do something in a positive direction for the ailing construction industry in our community.

The fee reduction would apply to new residential construction as well as rehabilitation and remodeling projects.

Shasta VOICES Speaks Up at “Shasta Forward” Outreach Session

On May 15, 2008, a diverse group of 25 of our concerned citizens attended an “outreach session” initiated by “Shasta Forward”, the Shasta County Regional Transportation Planning Agency’s (SCRTPA) regional growth strategy program that is designed to affect local land use decisions. In particular, State and Federal governments are encouraging “blueprints” as their transportation funds are becoming “scarcer”, which examine planned growth over 20-30 years from a regional perspective. We were “invited” to participate in the public outreach part of this process, and took advantage of the opportunity to voice our concerns and opinions, which are supposed to become part of the official public feedback record. Perhaps this writing will provide that assurance.

The Shasta Forward process is designed to assist local jurisdictions in “making sound investment decisions consistent with community priorities.” It is supposed to develop a “broadly and publicly supported vision for the future growth and development of the Shasta County region.” The plan is to develop three detailed alternative growth scenarios in response to public feedback, and to conduct an “informal” public vote to decide the “Preferred Regional Growth Vision.”

But, *the process is flawed*. The money devoted to this program, \$756,000 in taxpayer grants, should have been funneled back to democratically elected bodies, or better yet, to a disinterested third party entrepreneur who would not try to manipulate the results of such a study for their own benefit. Here, we have a regional transportation agency trying to lead the “public” to certain conclusions, and curtail the ability of local jurisdictions to make future land use decisions.

A large part of these “outreach” sessions is dedicated to taking surveys of the people in attendance. Similar surveys can also be taken online. But, rather than simply asking what the participants think first and listening to their input, the already predetermined survey questions are put up for discussion by Dan Wayne, the facilitator of these sessions who happens to work for the SCRTPA. We had a spirited discussion about this on May 15th, and brought forward some major concerns.

The Shasta Forward predetermined surveys lead people down a path of concern over traffic congestion, public safety, global warming, environmentally sensitive lands, vehicle emissions, energy affordability, and a community identity. To their credit, concerns about *local economic prosperity* and *affordable housing* were included in the surveys, and consistently rank at the top of the public concerns thus far.

Noticeably *absent* from these predetermined surveys regarding future growth concerns, and items that we believe should be included in these surveys are:

- The importance of quality job creation in our community.
- Growing government debt.
- Declining school enrollment.
- The need for a higher level of educational resources.
- Less government regulation.
- Simply less government.
- Our youthful participants expressed a desire to attract more “things” (new businesses) for their age group to do in this community.

So, it appears that the “real” general public agrees that the top future growth concerns are centered around having a prosperous local economy that will enable people who live and work here to have a quality job and an affordable community. The “Preferred Regional Growth Vision”, if it is to truly reflect the public response, must include plans for growth that will bring *improved economic opportunity* to our community.

Our group concurred that future growth would make our lives *better*. If that should be the final outcome of all these outreach sessions and surveys, then the non-elected regional authority (SCRTPA), which is not accountable to the voters, should reach the conclusion that the general public does not support the predetermined plans. They call these plans “alternative growth scenarios” and desire to implement such plans to control land use decisions at the local level. Their recommendation to the elected officials in our jurisdictions, who *are* accountable to the voters, should be to include plans for improved economic opportunity in our community.

We encourage you all to go to www.shastaforward.com and take the “survey.” You may or may not find your issues of concern included in the predetermined choices you will be asked to make. But your input is important if the surveys are to have any validity.



Daniel R. Walters
Keynote Speaker

Dan Walters has been a journalist for more than forty years, spending all but a few of those years working for California newspapers. He joined *The Sacramento Union's* Capitol Bureau in 1975, and later became the *Union's* Capitol chief. In 1981, he began writing the state's only daily newspaper column devoted to California political, economic, and social events. In 1984, Mr. Walters and the column moved to *The Sacramento Bee*. His column now appears in more than 50 California newspapers. He has also written for *The Wall Street Journal* and *the Christian Science Monitor*.

In 1986, his book, *The New California: Facing the 21st Century*, was published in its first edition. The book has become a widely used college textbook about socioeconomic and political trends in the state. He is also the co-author of *The Third House: Lobbyists, Power and Money in Sacramento*.

Dan Walter's hard-hitting and thoughtful commentary make him a popular speaker for those of us who have an interest in understanding the California economy and how upcoming legislative decisions will affect us.



Please Join Us!

First Annual Meeting and Event

*Celebrate Our Success
Look Towards our Future*

*Thursday, July 17, 2008
3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.*

*SBE Training Center
2985 Innsbruck Drive, Redding*

*(Turn left at the former 84 Lumber Bldg. at Old Forty-four Drive,
then right on Innsbruck Drive)*

Keynote Speaker

Mr. Dan Walters

*Syndicated Columnist – CA Politics
Sacramento Bee and 50 Other Newspapers*

Light Refreshments

R.S.V.P. Required by *July 3rd*

Individual Tickets \$25 or 2 for \$40

Bring another future member!

Please Contact Mary Machado: (530) 222-5251

or mary@shastavoices.com

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Mary B. Machado, Executive Director