



# The VOICE

Your independent news source

Greater Shasta County, CA

Volume II, Issue X

www.shastavoices.com

March 2009

### Did you know...

- For each dollar of sales tax collected in the City of Redding, 69 cents goes to the State of California, 15.1 cents goes to Shasta County, and 15.9 cents goes to the City of Redding.

- Workshops to explain changes to the "Fix 5" proposal, now called **SCRIP**, are scheduled :

**Tuesday, March 17, 2009**  
**City of Redding**

**Council Chambers**

**7:00 p.m.**

**777 Cypress Ave., Redding**

**Tuesday, March 17, 2009**

**Shasta County Supervisors  
 Chambers**

**9:00 a.m.**

**1450 Court St., Redding**

*No action will be taken at this time. These are informational only.*

### Inside this issue:

The Latest on "Fix 5" Now Called "SCRIP"	1
City Priorities Set By Council	2
City Council Deadlocks	2
Shasta VOICES Leads Movement to Address High Impact Fees	3
Silent Auction For Chamber Scholarships	4
Regional Transportation Funding Forum Scheduled	4
Join Shasta VOICES	4

## The Latest on "Fix 5," Now Called "SCRIP"

Whatever they choose to call it, the newly named "Fix 5" proposal, now referred to as the **Shasta County Regional Improvement Program (SCRIP)** is yet another attempt to add more traffic impact fees to the already existing huge fees we have today.

This "remake" of the first proposal, which Shasta VOICES accurately pointed out didn't pass legal scrutiny, is an attempt to salvage something from the more than \$700,000 in taxpayer funded grants that have been expended on the proposal so far. Those grants have now run out, and this is the latest effort to make the program feasible. Changes have been made to the initial "Fix 5" program to address the problems we identified, but, though creative, even the changes seem questionable.

Of course, there isn't any legitimate reason for our local elected officials to increase impact fees, or in this case, **add** new impact fees, during the worst economic recession/depression in our history. In fact, the opposite should be the case. Other communities in California are, in fact, **reducing** their fees to help generate building activity, some by as much as 80%.

But if the poor economy isn't a good enough reason for our elected officials to just say no to these proposed fees at this time, Shasta VOICES is again preparing a series of questions to be posed to the presenters of the upcoming workshops in Redding and Shasta County on the subject March 17th. If the workshops already held in Anderson and Shasta Lake are any indication, the councilors aren't asking any questions. If we don't ask, then who will?

Some of the questions we would like answered include:

- Why is it legitimate to charge the same fee that was calculated for mainline I-5 capacity improvements, then take that money and apply it to local improvements instead? This only creates a new local traffic impact fee with no fee study to justify it. There are laws in place, such as the Mitigation Fee Act (MFA) that prevent this from happening.
- The existing I-5 mainline study was done in 2006. Why not re-evaluate the entire study to account for the conditions that exist today? Too many changes have occurred, and assumptions have, in fact, been proven to be erroneous. One important change is the "sudden" availability of \$100 million in RTIP (government) funds for I-5 that had once been dedicated to the now fully funded Dana to Downtown project. Others include incorrect growth projections which could eliminate future demand and push the date of "congestion" much further out; public works project costs have been reduced by 30%; and vehicle miles traveled have been greatly reduced.
- Many of the local projects that have been selected for improvement through the SCRIP, such as the Oasis Road Interchange improvements, already have fee programs in place to pay for the improvements. The presenters have acknowledged that duplicate fees aren't allowed. Why then, is this fee necessary? The presenters need to fully explain why they should be allowed to charge the fee, only to have it credited against those already paid, minus a 10% "donation" to the SCRIP funds.

You can attend the workshops being presented by the Regional Transportation Agency to learn more, ask questions, and to express your concerns. Details on time and place are listed above, in our "Did you Know" section in the left hand corner of this page.

## City Priorities Set By Council

On February 29, 2009, the Redding City Council held a special Priority Setting Workshop to determine where the City's priorities should be in light of the global recession that we are now experiencing. The last workshop for this purpose was held in February of 2007. Much has changed since then.

One of the goals of the workshop was to review the City's Budget Reduction Guidelines adopted in November, 2008. The Council agreed to *reaffirm* these guidelines. \$3 million has already been cut, and City staff will be bringing additional recommendations for budget reductions for fiscal year 2009/2010, based on the continuing decline in projected revenues, in the very near future. Since the City is in the process of developing the biennial budget now, it was appropriate for the Council to identify the key priorities for inclusion in this process.

The existing list of priorities was reduced and/or changed from 18 items down to 8 for discussion and ranking in order of importance to the Council. Of the 8 discussed, 5 were given priority. Here is the final list, in order of importance:

1. Oasis Road Interchange Improvements, Project Study Report to obtain Cal Trans and Federal Highway Administration approval and funding options (approximately \$250,000).
2. Integration of the California Global Warming Solutions Act (AB32), requiring implementation of standards regarding future land use and land development practices (no additional costs identified at this time).
3. Stillwater Business Park, south bridge and secondary road access for fire safety (\$6,940,000, with 50% coming from an EDA grant, and the remainder coming from the proceeds of the General Fund bond that are still available due to the construction bid savings of about \$4.5 million).
4. On-line Program Registration System for the Recreation Division (\$85,000 plus \$15,000 per year maintenance).
5. Possible Acquisition of the River Bend Golf Course for neighborhood park purposes (\$15,000 for appraisal; between \$1.4 and \$2 million for acquisition, which will not be budgeted now).

The other three items that were not given priority for now are the Hawley Road/Churn Creek Road extension to Oasis Road, a Citizens on Patrol program for parks and trails, and the South Street under/overpass at the railroad tracks.

## City Council Deadlocks

### Items Continued to March 17th Meeting (maybe)

The March 3rd Redding City Council meeting can be described as just plain *ugly*. Mayor Rick Bosetti was absent, with the remaining four Council members in attendance. The evening began with technical difficulties—the microphone system wasn't working and the meeting took place without a sound system. To say it was difficult to hear is an understatement, even with the raised voices.

The meeting began with the "Oral Communications" part of the agenda. This is the public comment period for non-agendized matters, and the Council cannot take action on any item under this section. City employee Cindy Clarke read a very carefully scripted letter at this time, pleading with the Council to intervene on behalf of REU and other City department employees who feel the customer service system is badly broken, and management has proven that they cannot govern effectively. She outlined in detail the "incredible difficulty in their interactions with the Customer Service Management team."

Consent items are next on the agenda, and are usually considered routine, approved all at once, and the meeting continues. Council member Patrick Jones pulled a consent item for discussion which was to declare City-owned property as surplus. One of the properties had been

designated as a future public gun firing range in 1985, but that piece is no longer suitable for that use. He suggested using any proceeds from its sale to be dedicated to an already existing future firing range fund. The vote was 2-2 after much ugly discussion. They will discuss this again on March 17th, hopefully with a full Council.

A couple of agenda items later, the staff proposal for an amendment to the consultant services agreement with Nichols, Melburg & Rosetto (NMR) for the potential police facility retrofit proposals drew even more ugly discussion by the Council members. They could not agree on how the evaluation team for retrofit proposals should be set up. Absent Mayor Rick Bosetti, they deadlocked 2-2 with all motions, and determined that it was best to wait until they had the full Council before moving forward with any of the proposed recommendations for this amendment with NMR (again on March 17th).

Perhaps the one un-ugly moment of the night was the approval of a licensing agreement between the City and the Exchange Club of Redding for Air Show 2009. The City will spend about \$31,000 to provide police and safety services during the show.

Bring plenty of coffee to the March 17th meeting!

## *Shasta VOICES Leads Movement to Address High Impact Fees*

There are just some issues that never seem to go away. One of them in the City of Redding is the seemingly high level of development impact fees and conditions imposed on anyone building or remodeling a commercial structure of any size. Shasta VOICES has been so inundated with requests for some relief on this subject matter that we have launched a major project to propose changes that will address the growing problem, particularly during the current economic recession/depression. Perhaps we can do something to change the perceived attitude that Redding is not business friendly.

In order to do a thorough and accurate job of presenting the facts to those authorized to make policy changes, ***we need your help***. We need to not only hear about your experience, but to collect actual data about your particular project. Here is a sample listing of the types of information we are seeking from you:

- Location of project.
- Size/square footage of project.
- Proposed Business use.
- Valuation.
- Permit Number.
- Use Permit Fee Charged (and HE factor applied)
- Building Permit Fees Charged.
- Impact Fees Charged (Fire, Water, Sewer, Storm Drain, Traffic, School, Parks, Other fees).
- Special Conditions (including special inspections, and fees/costs associated).

We understand that some are reluctant to identify their specific project for a variety of reasons. You can still provide us with ***whatever information you feel comfortable releasing***. One of our goals is not to identify particular projects, but to demonstrate just how much revenue (and new jobs) the City has lost by those who have either walked away from the project because of the excessive fees and conditions, reduced the scope of the project, changed their plans altogether, or postponed the project indefinitely.

We want to try and find a way for people to move their projects forward and bring much needed current and future revenues to the City, particularly during this unprecedented period in which financial institutions are reluctant to increase lending amounts when costs turn out to be much higher than originally anticipated.

Some of our suggestions will be very simple and require a logical policy change, with no negative financial impact on the City. An example is to make it standard procedure “behind the desk” at the City to provide an applicant ***in advance*** with a list of the building and impact fees needed in order for them to bring their project forward. Unbelievably, this is not currently provided unless the applicant knows to ask for it first. Many tenant improvement projects would never expect to owe any impact fees and, therefore, don’t ask for a breakdown. They usually are shocked to find out that they do owe fees, and always after they have already committed to their project.

Other suggestions will also be simple, would work very effectively, but would require thinking outside the box. Though challenging to implement, we believe these suggestions would work for all concerned including the City, and will do our best to bring them forward.

We always look forward to receiving your input, participation and suggestions. You can help us make some major improvements to the economic opportunity of those living and working in our community through this project. You all have some very good ideas out there, and we want to hear about them! Please contact Mary if you are able to help:

**Mary Machado**

**Phone: (530) 222-5251**

**Email: [mary@shastavoices.com](mailto:mary@shastavoices.com)**

## ***Silent Auction Under Way for Redding Chamber Scholarship Program***

Each year, the Redding Chamber of Commerce offers \$500 scholarships to graduating high school seniors, as well as those already attending a college or university, who are children or grandchildren of Chamber member business owners and their employees. The money is to be used for the upcoming school year.

This program began three years ago, and the Chamber has awarded \$10,000 in scholarships so far. Applicant interviews are usually held in May and June, then awards are dispersed at the annual Chamber Industrial Bar-be-que in August. Those who have won the scholarships are notified before the actual awarding of the money.

A fund raising program is currently under way, and will continue until Tuesday, March 31, 2009. This is a ***silent auction***, and you can participate in a number of ways.

You can visit the Chamber office at 747 Auditorium Drive to view the items and place your bid. Or, you can go online to the Chamber's website and see the entire silent auction item list available for bid. To place a bid, call **530-225-4433**. The website address is:

**[www.reddingchamber.com](http://www.reddingchamber.com)**

There are 26 items available for bid (as of this writing) including dinners for two, musical tickets, framed art, gift baskets, a weekend in San Francisco, one day fishing trip, car tires, sporting event tickets and paraphernalia, a wine tasting event, and a variety of gift certificates. You can even bid on having lunch with the Chamber CEO, Frank Strazzarino.

Call or visit the Chamber today, either in person or online, to participate in this worthy cause.

## **Regional Transportation Funding Forum Scheduled for April 9th**

A Regional Transportation Funding Forum has been scheduled in Shasta County to be held on April 9th. The goal of this forum is to discuss insufficient transportation funding and ways to respond to the challenge.

The speakers will include Will Kempton, Director of Cal Trans; Jim Earp, California Transportation Commission; and Susanne Smith representing Sonoma County.

Here are some of the major items to be discussed:

- National, State and Local need for more transportation funds, insufficient and unstable revenue sources, and lack of funding for maintenance and capital projects.
- Addressing congestion before level of service fails.
- Leveraging existing and future funding sources.
- How goods movement benefits I-5 communities.
- Why I-5 communities should financially contribute to I-5 expansion.
- Regional partnerships.

The people of our community have an opportunity to participate in these discussions, and offer solutions that are fair and reasonable for all involved. If we don't participate, then the same government staffers who created "Fix 5" will eventually determine their own unfairly applied solution to obtain the money they are seeking. Please attend, learn, ask questions, and participate:

**Thursday, April 9, 2009  
3:30 p.m.—5:30 p.m.  
City of Redding Council Chambers  
777 Cypress Avenue, Redding**

***Join Shasta VOICES today.***

**We depend on membership and other contributions.**

If you are viewing this issue of "***THE VOICE***" on our website, click on the ***membership tab*** for information and to download a membership application or contributor form. Or, you can obtain more information by going to our website, **[www.shastavoices.com](http://www.shastavoices.com)**, or calling **(530) 222-5251**.

Mary B. Machado, Executive Director