



# The VOICE

Your independent news source

Greater Shasta County, CA

Volume I, Issue VII

www.shastavoices.com

January 2008

### Did you know...

- Unemployment in Shasta County spiked to a nine-year high of 7.4 percent in November, 2007.
- 15 single family building permits were issued by the City of Redding in November, 2007.
- Minimum wage in California increased to \$8.00 an hour on January 1, 2008.
- The Shasta Builders Exchange will open its **Agree Park** demonstration of affordable, green, and energy efficient homes on Saturday, January 12, 2008. The three homes and the adjacent Earth Advantage Green Resource Center will showcase "green" construction and energy-efficient technologies and products. The homes and resource center will be open for self-tours Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and weekends from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. **Agree Park** sits on Innsbruck Drive off Old Forty-four Drive near Highway 44 and Old Oregon Trail interchange. For more information, call 221-5556.

### Inside this issue:

Fees Increase Again	1
Impact Fees Challenge Update	1
General Plan Amendment Approved	2
Oasis Road Financing Plan Falls Short	2
"Shop Redding" Update for Bridge Detours	3
Shasta Forward Excludes the Public	3
The Matrix..."Reloaded"	4

## FEES INCREASE AGAIN

### Where is the outrage?

The estimated building fees for a typical single family dwelling in Redding will increase \$1163 per dwelling effective January 15, 2008. And, if you happen to locate in the North Redding Traffic Benefit District (NRTBD) in the Oasis Road area, it will cost you an additional \$4058.

Why are the fees going up, you may ask? This is an annual cost of living increase, or more accurately, the annual cost-index increase which is built into the fee structure to keep up with the increasing costs of infrastructure improvements.

This increase makes the range of fees \$28,907 for a 1,200 square foot home, to \$36,637 for a 3,300 square foot home. If you happen to be located in the NRTBD, that range is now \$32,965 to \$40,695. Add your land costs to that, and you will need upwards of \$120,000 before you can build anything, of any size.

And, the City of Redding is still considering **adding** to these fees. If they were to get their way, they would add **unusual** cross-agency facilities impact fees together with Shasta County. These proposed fees would add another \$4,171 to each single family dwelling unit. If the **unprecedented** and unusual proposed "Fix I-5" fees are approved, that would add yet another \$1,697 per single family dwelling just for "Phase I", and much more if "Phase II" of these fees is implemented. Add these together and your range of fees becomes \$34,755 to \$42,505. If you happen to be located in the NRTBD, your range of fees becomes \$38,833 to \$46,563. There has also been talk of changing the "cost-index" used for annual increases in traffic impact fees, another **unprecedented** and unusual move, which, if implemented, could add another 10% or more to those impact fees.

The citizens of Redding should be outraged. While we understand that impact fees are necessary as growth occurs, we do not understand being overtaxed in unprecedented and unusual ways. Government staffers are betting that we won't challenge them on these newly created and unusual fees, and **they are wrong**. Shasta VOICES has mounted such a challenge, and we believe it's time to bring accountability back to our local governments.

If you feel the outrage, join us in our quest to challenge unprecedented and unusual fees. We have made some progress just by speaking up, and voicing our concerns. We will further that progress with legal help. The more voices that speak, the more we force our government officials to listen. For more information, call (530) 222-5251, or go to [www.shastavoices.com](http://www.shastavoices.com).

## Impact Fees Challenge Update

**No public hearings regarding the proposed "Fix Five" Impact Fees will occur in January.** The required 14 day advance notice required for the January 15, 2008 meeting was not posted. The next regularly scheduled City Council meetings will be on February 5, 2008. It remains to be seen if any hearing will be scheduled on that day, or if any special meetings will be called in between.

Whenever the hearings are held, Shasta VOICES and their challenge coalition, together with attorney Walt McNeill, will be prepared. We continue to monitor the situation, along with the cross-agency Shasta County/City of Redding proposed Facilities Impact Fees, and will alert our members and the coalition with information as it becomes available. If you have questions, please contact Mary Machado, (530) 222-5251, or [mary@shastavoices.com](mailto:mary@shastavoices.com).

## GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT APPROVED BY REDDING CITY COUNCIL

### *Building Height and Retail Commercial Sites Affected*

The City of Redding Planning Commission accepted recommendations by a citizens committee, who reviewed several policy areas that affect growth and development in the community, and brought forward two General Plan Amendment applications to the City Council for consideration at their meeting on December 18, 2007.

The first amendment was establishing appropriate locations for high-rise and mid-rise buildings. The committee recommended:

- Encouraging **high-rise** buildings in the Downtown core, eliminating the existing 8-story height limit for these buildings, and eliminating the residential density limitations in the Downtown core.
- Allowing **mid-rise** buildings (up to six stories) around the Downtown core, generally in the Hilltop Drive/Churn Creek Road area, and on the east side of North Market Street.
- Maintaining the current prohibition for mid or high-rise buildings along the Sacramento River bluff.

The second amendment was establishing policies affecting the location of future regional commercial areas in the City. The committee concluded that **there is currently insufficient vacant land for regional-commercial uses**, given infrastructure limitations in the Oasis Road area. In its opinion, the City should be prepared to accommodate retailers at other sites in the community until the Oasis Road interchange is reconstructed. The sites include 1) South Bonneyview interchange, 2) Airport Road interchange (northwest quadrant), 3) East side of Airport Road south of the "proposed" auto mall, and 4) Redevelopment of the Kmart/Ross site.

The direction of the City Council by City Planner Kent Manuel was this: they were not necessarily approving that these sites are where commercial development should go. The existing General Plan directs **all** commercial development to the Hilltop Drive/Canby area, or Oasis Road. This approval would serve to **amend** the General Plan. The Council voted unanimously to adopt the amendments.

## OASIS ROAD FINANCING PLAN FALLS \$20.5 MILLION SHORT

After more than nine years of planning, discussing, negotiating, and procedural delays, a majority of the proposed Oasis Road area development projects are no closer today to becoming a reality than they were 9 years ago.

With a new price tag of \$52 million needed to fund the "backbone" infrastructure alone for just the first phase of the Plan, the City of Redding, at their December 18th Council meeting, has concluded that this is "a large nut to crack." Their consultant on the subject, MuniFinancial, identified funding sources for about \$31 million of the cost, primarily new development's fair share of the cost paid to the City in the form of traffic and other fees, leaving \$20.5 million more to come from "other sources." MuniFinancial, as well as several members of City Council and a representative from Levenson Development Company, acknowledged **there is no obvious or easy solution to this financing shortfall**. Asking developers to pay an "unfair share" of the public infrastructure burden is not realistic.

The only project with real prospects of moving forward very soon (one of those "other sources") and assisting in the construction and financing of its fair share of the required backbone infrastructure, and providing a possible financing vehicle in the form of sales and

property tax increment, is the Oasis Towne Center, which would be developed by Levenson Development Company. The first phase of Levenson's project, up to 310,000 square feet of retail development including Costco, fast food, and office space, has an approved Environmental Impact Report and Use Permit from the City of Redding. Councilman Dickerson asked if Levenson, should it choose to do so, could just pay its fees and build the first phase of their project, and let the City worry about how to finance and construct the first phase of public infrastructure. The answer from the staff was "yes". The City could do little or nothing to stop them from moving forward.

All of the City Council members seemed concerned that development in the Oasis Road area is not moving forward, and directed staff, as they previously directed in late 2006, to seek and negotiate "creative" solutions with Levenson. Though the Council accepted the "report" as presented at the December 18th meeting, they acknowledged that it didn't accomplish anything.

Council members Bosetti and Murray expressed their desire to become directly involved in further negotiations with Levenson Development Company,

and staff. Mr. Dickerson wasn't in favor of putting the entire burden (unfair share) on this *one* developer, and suggested **not trying to do all the improvements at once**. As he put it, "you eat an elephant one bite at a time." He felt that if everything could not be done at once, taking it step-by-step ought to be part of the discussions. All of the council members, except Mary Stegall, expressed a willingness to at least consider the use of a portion of sales tax increment generated by the project's retail sales as an additional source of financing for the required public infrastructure. Stegall commented that she had visited and was impressed by the planning and extent of public infrastructure in and around new commercial projects in Roseville, and asked the MuniFinancial consultant if he was familiar with those projects. He indicated that MuniFinancial represented the City of Roseville in that effort, and in addition to the typical impact fees, the city used sales tax increment as an additional financing source.

This all leads anyone paying attention to wonder what incentives any commercial developer or retailer has to come to, or expand in, Redding. There are many other interchanges/jurisdictions along I-5 that don't require the level of improvements required at Oasis Road, or that don't have the impact fees or requests to pay an "unfair share" to fill a financing gap, that the City of Redding has in place.

## Update: "Shop Redding" Campaign Moves Forward Assisting Business Affected by Bridge "Detours"

The City of Redding and contractors working on the Cypress Avenue bridge are working on a **revised plan** for closures of the North/South turn lanes at Parkview Avenue, Athens Avenue, Hartnell Avenue, and Hemsted Drive.

This plan should be made available to the public sometime in the middle of January. It will outline the **timing** of these impending closures, so that businesses that rely on these routes for customers can be prepared with plans of their own. And, it will let "customers" know the best route to take to visit these businesses. The City will add this and other information to their website ([www.ci.redding.ca.us](http://www.ci.redding.ca.us)) regarding the bridge construction schedule.

In December, the City identified and sent letters to 276 businesses located in the affected area, informing and explaining exactly what would occur due to the Bridge construction. This was a great first step in becoming **proactive** in their approach to working with these businesses.

In the meantime, the Redding Chamber's "Shop Redding" committee, headed by Wally St. Clair, is busy making

plans to assist affected businesses and customers. By the end of January, 4' x 4' banners sporting the "Shop Redding" logo will be posted on light poles on Cypress Avenue and/or street lights in front of City Hall. There will also be banners at the Mt. Shasta Mall on light poles. These will help raise awareness to the value of shopping locally.

The "Shop Redding" committee is also coordinating a **promotional program**, and working on marketing strategies for this campaign to assist businesses affected by the impending lane closures along the Cypress bridge. They will host a meeting for these businesses as soon as the City's revised plan is available, and the actual timing of turn lane closures has been established. The committee is working on a number of different marketing ideas, and welcomes your input. If you have suggestions, please feel free to contact Wally St. Clair at 225-4433, X106.



## "Shasta Forward" Project Continues to Exclude the Public

For a project touted as a means of gathering public input on their desires regarding the future growth of this community, "Shasta Forward" has done everything to the contrary.

Their website states, "Every effort will be made to craft a transparent process and to document/report **all** public input." That isn't happening.

We already have a general plan process in place, and it **does** include public input on a regular basis. So, why is this "Shasta Forward" effort even necessary?

So far, the list of invitees to every single one of the supposed "public" meetings is limited primarily to government staffers and their paid contractors, with very few exceptions. The "Shasta Forward" architects, who work for the Shasta County Regional Transportation Planning Agency, continue to apply for and receive taxpayer grant funding based on data showing that the "community" is supporting this effort. Some of those "community" supporters listed, however, seem quite surprised to learn that they have done so. Documenting **all** public input should also include data showing public input that does **not** support the

project. Such data is noticeably absent from the most current grant application, and all other reports thus far.

There is another meeting on the subject scheduled for January 11, 2008 at the McConnell Foundation, 800 Shasta View Drive, from 9 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. It is supposed to be a public meeting, though "invitations" were sent to a select group (again) to solicit their attendance, and no public meeting notice was posted. Removed from the "invitation list" are those who have openly questioned the need and validity of the project.

**Anyone** who wishes to attend this meeting to learn more about this project should certainly be encouraged to do so.

Just to review, this is a State and local government transportation project, which is being paid for by taxpayer funded grants totaling \$756,000. It is designed to create "Blueprints" from a regional perspective as their funds are becoming "scarcer." It's supposed to examine and coordinate future growth,

but is not a replacement for existing planning processes. The local Shasta Regional Transportation Planning Agency says, "At the State level, recently proposed legislation has targeted compliance with Blueprint plans as an appropriate prerequisite to participate in certain funding programs." The moti-

vation behind the whole "Shasta Forward" project, taken directly from their website, is specifically to "look for ways to maximize the benefit of existing transportation investments," even though the project is supposed to have a much broader

scope than transportation. In other words, they want more transportation tax dollars, and are looking for "ways" to maximize those dollars that do not require the approval of a majority of voters.

As reported in prior issues of **"The VOICE"**, trying to control the decision making process in not always a good thing. And, using taxpayer dollars to do it just shouldn't be allowed.

The motivation behind the "Shasta Forward" project...is specifically to "look for ways to maximize the benefit of existing transportation investments."

## *The Matrix... “Reloaded”*

In 2007, Shasta VOICES created a document called *“The Matrix”* to demonstrate the cumulative effect of impact fees, existing and proposed, on the local community. In particular, much discussion is under way to increase *traffic impact fees (TIF)*, and we, therefore, have broken them down separately. The full document was presented to the Redding City Council, and other interested groups in Redding, last October. We have updated *“The Matrix”* to reflect increases in impact fees that become effective January 15, 2008. The entire document is too lengthy to include in this article, so we thought this reduced version and sampling might help people gain an understanding of just how this affects them.

### Cumulative Effect of Impact Fees Imposed on Local Community

#### *Increase in Homeowners and Renters Monthly Payments—Redding\**

Fee Description	2400 SF Single Family	4-Plex
Existing Traffic Impact Fees	\$ 5,160	\$ 14,036
Oasis Road area TIF's	\$ 4,058	\$ 11,036
<i>Proposed</i> additional TIF's	\$ 2,746	\$ 8,012
<b>TOTAL TRAFFIC FEES</b>	<b>\$ 11,964</b>	<b>\$ 33,084</b>
<b>Traffic Only Fees Broken Down as Monthly Payment</b>	<b>\$ 74 per month</b>	<b>\$ 204 per month</b>
<b>TOTAL ALL FEES</b>	<b>\$ 42,949</b>	<b>\$ 106,596</b>
<b>All Fees Broken Down</b>	<b>\$ 265 per month</b>	<b>\$ 657 per month</b>
<b>Additional Earnings Needed to Qualify for Payment</b>	<b>\$ 800 per month</b> <b>(\$4.62 per hour)</b>	<b>\$ 600 per month</b> <b>(\$4.13 per hour)</b>

*\*Based on a typical 30 year fixed mortgage loan rate of 6.25%.*

The entire *“Matrix”* document, which includes commercial and office dwellings, and covers the Cities of Redding, Anderson and Shasta Lake, is available for a fee. Contact Mary Machado, (530) 222-5251 or mary@shastavoices.com if you are interested in obtaining the full document. As the fees continue to change and increase, the *“Matrix”* will continue to change and reflect those increases.

### **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.

If you are reading from a printed copy, you can obtain more information by going to our website, or calling:

**www.shastavoices.com**

**(530) 222-5251**

Mary B. Machado, Executive Director