



The VOICE

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Did you know...

- Anselmo Vineyards (under new ownership) has reopened their restaurant and wine-tasting venues as of Saturday, February 9th. The restaurant is closed Monday and Tuesdays, but serves lunch Thursday through Saturday from noon to 4 pm, and dinners Thursday through Saturday starting at 5 pm. Wine tasting is from noon to 4 pm on Wednesdays. Call 474-5546 for reservations or more information.
- Redding City Councilman Brent Weaver is in the process of reaching out to and seeking feedback from businesses and builders in the community whose members interact with Redding's development services. He plans to work with that department to improve communications, provide education, and address complaints about long waits and delays for permit approval and other issues that were continually mentioned during his election campaign.

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RFP for Public Safety Blueprint Consultant Issued

At the January 20th Redding City Council meeting, City Manager Kurt Starman responded to Council's December 2nd, 2014 request by developing a public safety strategic plan, and providing an outline, referred to as a "Blueprint" and cost estimate for their consideration. The Council voted **unanimously to approve** the outline for the Blueprint for Public Safety and directed staff to issue an RFP (Request for Proposal) for consulting services, **appropriating up to \$90,000 for the planning process.**

The **RFP** was issued on **February 17th**. Sealed proposals will be received by the City Clerk until 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 19, 2015. The cutoff for receipt of written questions about the RFP and its contents is 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 26, 2015. The proposals will be reviewed from March 23rd through March 26th. Any and all interviews will be held on one day, April 2nd. Upon final screening, the firm selected as the most qualified for this project will be recommended to the City Council, with **approval** currently scheduled for the **April 21, 2015** Council meeting.

A copy of the entire RFP document is available on the City's website and can be downloaded from the Purchasing Division (RFP schedule number 4713).

From the RFP, "**The duration of the project is anticipated to be approximately four months. The project should begin in May 2015 and conclude by August 2015.**"

According to City Manager Kurt Starman, some responding consultants have indicated that this time frame is "too ambitious" for such a broad scope of work, and have chosen not to pursue their bid. But there are others who will participate in the bid process. It doesn't appear that the project will conclude earlier than the RFP suggests.

According to the Blueprint document and included in the RFP document, "An important aspect of the Blueprint for Public Safety will be a realistic implementation plan with cost estimates and a ten-year planning horizon. This will include six scenarios. The first scenario assumes a **status quo**. The second scenario based on a **hypothetical unconstrained budget** that includes sufficient resources to implement all of the strategies that are identified during the planning process. The other four scenarios will be based on the hypothetical assumption that **additional revenue** will become available to enhance public safety due to the passage of a 0.25 percent transactions and use tax, a 0.05 percent transactions and use tax, a 0.75 percent transactions and use tax, or a 1 percent transactions and use tax."

The community, but in particular the business community, is simply fed up with crime in and around the City of Redding. The Merchants Crime Watch group has grown to 650 members who have successfully done "something" about the criminal behavior causing their businesses much distress, and chasing away their customers. They have a tremendous network of communication with each other and the Redding Police Department, and are doing more than their share in deterring and catching criminals.

The Redding Chamber of Commerce is pushing for a quicker completion of this Public Safety Blueprint before possible pursuit of a new **one cent sales tax measure** for the City of Redding. They had hoped to see a measure on the ballot yet this November (if necessary) that would allow the identified solutions to reducing crime to be implemented. At this point, however, it appears that the final Blueprint won't be ready until September.

Cash Incentives Available to Assist Developers

The Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA) recently received grant funds in the amount of \$122,085 to develop and administer a pilot program of *development incentives* that seek to spur higher density and mixed-use infill and redevelopment projects within city and rural community centers known as “Strategic Growth Areas.”

These cash incentives are now available to assist developers in readying infill and redevelopment projects for financing, permitting, and construction. Projects must be located in the above mentioned Strategic Growth Areas, which have been mapped for each area including Redding, Anderson, City of Shasta Lake, Cottonwood, Palo Cedro, Burney, and Fall River Mills. These specific maps are available for review as part of the program guidelines and request for proposals. Eligible activities include:

- Conceptual design rendering;
- Assessments of infrastructure needs and associated costs;
- Traffic impact, circulation, and parking assessments; and
- Other non-construction costs incurred prior to project approval.

Multiple projects may be awarded, with up to \$122,000 available for this initial pilot program. Additional funding for capital construction is available through state-administered grants.

These incentives, when combined with targeted transportation investments and reinforced by local policies, could result in transportation efficiencies, spur economic development, and help to revitalize community centers. If the pilot program is successful, it could become an ongoing program with additional future grant funding, and could result in a list of shovel-ready projects that would compete well for capital construction grants.

Proposals must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 27, 2015. These initial grant funds must be expended by November 2015. Program guidelines and application forms are located online at: [www.srta.ca.gov/Incentive Program](http://www.srta.ca.gov/IncentiveProgram). There will be a pre-application open house and Q&A on **Thursday, March 5, 2015, 2:00 pm—4:00 pm, Shasta Regional Transportation Agency (SRTA), 1255 East Street, Suite 202, Redding.** For more information, contact SRTA, 530-262-6190.

Update of Parks Master Plan Under Way

Throughout much of 2012 and 2013, the City of Redding updated its development impact fee program in conjunction with a rate study for their utilities. An advisory group of Redding citizens participated in the process. A new water rate structure was implemented which included a tiered system for the first time, and it took effect in October, 2013. The final impact fee program was adopted by City Council and became effective January 1, 2014.

During the process of updating the impact fee program, it became clear that the Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan was out of date, and needed to be updated. Kim Niermer, the City’s Community Services Director, had asked for park fees to be raised to \$6,773 per single family dwelling, an increase of \$2,776 per single family dwelling. The controversial recommendation for this large increase was *not* approved. Instead, Council voted in August of 2013 to have an update of the now *eleven year old* Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan before any parks fee adjustments are made. Council agreed with the advisory group suggestion that the standards and system of calculating parks impact fees for new single family homes needs further study. They felt that the request to increase this particular fee by as much as \$2,776 was just not affordable, particularly in the current local economic climate.

Because this update would take some time to complete, the Councilors chose to keep the then existing park impact fee at \$3,997 until such time as the update process is finished.

One of the stated goals of the impact fee program update was to *reduce* the amount of the fees, in no small part to reflect the grossly overstated growth projections from the early 2000’s. That growth simply did not occur, and the fees were based on building facilities that would have been needed to support it, and are now not needed, resulting in lower fees.

By revisiting and updating the Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan, there is an opportunity to consider adjustments to the current standards, which could bring down the single family dwelling impact fee for parks. Additionally, other sources of revenue for building and maintaining these facilities need to be identified if the community’s wish list of facilities is to be realized.

The update process is now expected to take most of this year to complete. One of the first steps in the process is a community survey, which has been done through the mail in the past. The Community Service Advisory Commission will then begin reviewing the plan chapter by chapter at its meetings each month in 2015.

City Council Sets New Priorities

A special Redding City Council was held on February 25th as a priority-setting workshop to determine which city projects should be at the top of the high-priority list for staff to consider when it comes to utilizing any *discretionary* resources for funding as the next two year budget process for fiscal years 2015-2016, and 2016-2017 begins.

The topics that were on the list as potential projects are listed below in the *priority ranking order* given by the five Council members. The highest (or best) score from each Council member was “1” and the lowest (or worst) score was “4”.

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Final Ranking</u>
Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Grant (Retain 4 police officer positions whose COPS grant funding has expired by using general fund dollars of <u>\$600,000 per year</u>).	1.0 (T1)
Public Safety—Short-Term Solutions (Use one time general fund reserves of <u>\$1.2 million</u> to hire four new police officers to form a new neighborhood policing unit for a two-year period).	1.0 (T1)
Code Enforcement– Full Time Positions (Extending 2 temporary police officer positions for 6 months, using <u>\$125,000</u> from the general fund reserves).	1.2 (T2)
SAFER Grant (Retain nine firefighter positions when the existing SAFER Grant that pays for them expires in August 2015, using <u>\$817,000</u> from the general fund).	1.2 (T2)
Storm Drain Utility Master Plan (Use storm drain impact fees to fund a comprehensive master plan the currently does not exist).	1.4 (3)
Street Maintenance (Update review of pavement program and implementation of higher priority solutions to using gas tax revenue for the purpose of maintaining city streets).	1.8 (4)
Retain School Resource Officer (Funding will expire for one police officer assigned to Oasis Community School—this option will keep that officer and reassign him/her, requiring the city to spend another <u>\$85,000</u> annually from the general fund budget).	2.0 (5)
Active Transportation Plan (Update of 2010 City of Redding Bikeway Action Plan—grant funding is available for this purpose).	2.2 (T6)
Social Media—Use of Volunteers (Utilize volunteers to augment the City’s limited social media efforts, no cost to City).	2.2 (T6)
Unfunded Pension Liability (Additional contributions) (Accrued liability as of June 30, 2013 was \$631.9 million—the City could make additional contributions to CalPERS and/or PARS beyond the increases already scheduled to be paid over the next 20 years).	2.4 (7)
Oasis Road Specific Plan Update (The amount of traffic in this area will be much less than originally anticipated in 2006, which would reduce the size and costs of planned infrastructure improvements significantly—cost to update is not yet determined, but may require funding from several sources).	2.4 (T7)
Renovation of Kids Kingdom (Replace kids play structure at a cost of \$250,000 from the general fund).	3.0 (8)
GASB 45 (Pre-funding retiree health care costs, currently unfunded at \$107.3 million)	3.2 (9)
Quarterly City Council Study Sessions Regarding REU	3.4 (10)

The total amount to be budgeted for the top priority projects is over **\$2.8 million**, with funding coming either from the general fund or general fund reserves. General fund *cash reserves* are projected to be **\$10.4 million**, or 15.8% of the general fund, for fiscal year ending June 30, 2015. City Manager Kurt Starman, when addressing the current budget, spoke proudly of a solid balance sheet, good cash flow and reserves. He cautioned, however, that “we are growing reserves” because of upward pressure on CalPERS contributions for the next five years, and a potential loss of REU “payment in-lieu of taxes (PILOT)” revenue of about \$6 million annually should the City fail in its appeal of that ruling (see page 4 of this issue for details).

Now that the City staff has its marching orders, they will begin the two year draft budget process and bring the final draft documents to the City Council at the end of June for consideration and adoption.

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.

Palo Cedro Rite Aid— A Rite Aid store proposed in the Palo Cedro area at the corner of Highway 44 and Deschutes Road requires a use permit and is subject to review and approval of the Shasta County Planning Commission. This project has generated much public interest, and here is the public hearing information for those who may be interested: The Planning Commission meeting and public hearing to consider the project will be held on **Thursday, March 12, 2015 beginning at 2:00 p.m.** at the Board of Supervisor's Chambers located at 1450 Court Street. Gabrielsen Family Limited Partnership has requested approval of a use permit for a new Rite Aid pharmacy consisting of the demolition of four existing buildings (7,480 square foot total) and the construction of a new 17,340 square-foot building in the Palo Cedro Village Shopping Complex. The public review period for the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration begins on February 6, 2015 and ends Monday March 9, 2015. Written comments regarding the project can be submitted to the Planning Division prior to the end of the comment period. Copies of the applications, environmental documents, all reference documents, and staff reports are available for review through the Department of Resource Management, Planning Division, 1855 Placer Street, Suite 103, Redding, CA, 96001; Telephone (530) 225-5532.

City of Redding Loses Appellate Court REU "PILOT" Lawsuit—The California 3rd District Court of Appeals conducted an appellate hearing on October 6th to determine whether transfers from Redding Electric Utility (REU) to the general fund in place of property taxes are allowed by law. Local attorney Walt McNeill challenged REU's payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) program, **successfully arguing** that this charge to customers is a **tax** under Proposition 26, the 2010 initiative that limits new taxes and fees. The court rejected the City's defense that it is a grandfathered program that's not imposed on ratepayers. The court's opinion leaves little room for argument by the City. The PILOT charges amount to about 6 percent of electric utility charges, or about \$6 million annually. The court concluded that the "**PILOT constitutes a tax** under Proposition 26 for which Redding must secure **two-thirds voter approval** unless it proves the amount collected is necessary to cover the reasonable costs to the city to provide electric service." The City of Redding plans to petition the California Supreme Court to review this ruling. But, according to City Attorney Rick Duvernay, they only take 10 percent of cases—1,000 petitions are filed each year and they only take 100 of them. He feels it will be difficult to get the Supreme Court to accept the case. The City is hopeful that they take the case because of potential implications for other municipal utilities that have a program similar to REU's PILOT.

New Redding Police Facility—Construction on the new Redding Police Facility is nearing completion, and will be finished on time and on budget. It is anticipated that the long awaited move-in will occur in May, 2015. Remodeling of the second floor and part of the first floor of City Hall for administrative police department personnel is now underway, and so far looks like it will also be ready in the same time frame.

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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**, or calling **(530) 222-5251**.

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