

# Inside City Hall

Beyond the headlines

**VOLUME 11**

**MARCH 2, 2010**

## **COUNCIL SUPPORTS CONTINUING NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN COUNCIL OF CITIES, COUNTY ON ITS GENERAL PLAN UPDATE:**

With the release of the Tulare County General Plan Update one to two weeks away, Visalia City Council members supported continuing negotiations between the Council of Cities and the County on a Memorandum of Understanding for the Tulare County General Plan Update. The concerns of the Council of Cities deal with several significant policy changes:

- Moving away from a “City-centered” growth strategy which directs population growth primarily to incorporated cities which have a full range of urban infrastructure and services to accommodate growth.
- Weakening the long-standing “annexation referral policy” contained in the current County General Plan which requires referral of proposals for development project within the City Urban Development Boundaries to affected cities for annexation and development.
- Bypassing an existing policy to allow development to occur on County lands within City Urban Development Boundaries and Urban Area Boundaries without referral to cities for annexation. The new County policy would allow Tulare County to approve large commercial, industrial, or other development projects within designated City urban development areas.
- Invoking a new County policy allowing the establishment of Urban Corridor Plans and Regional Growth Corridor Plans along Highways 99 and 65 and Mooney Boulevard, which would encourage the development of regional commercial developments, industrial developments, office parks and highway commercial developments inside City Urban Development and Urban Area Boundaries.

The County has offered to remove policies enabling development on unincorporated lands around cities if Cities, in turn, agree to significant financial concessions which would benefit the County, including an increased share of sales taxes, transient occupancy taxes and imposing County Development Impact Fees on development in the City. In return for these financial concessions, the Council of Cities requests the County must agree to:

- Establish land use policies within city planning areas that establish a City-centered growth strategy;
- Establish the Urban Development Boundary as a 20-year City Planning area and the Urban Area Boundary as a 50-year City Planning area,;
- Prohibit “regionally significant” and “regional growth corridor” development potential and rezonings and conditional use permits for urban uses inside City Urban Development Boundaries and consider them only through application of the Rural Valley Lands Plan, and;
- Eliminate the loopholes in County agricultural zoning around cities that allow rural residential development over time.

## **MEASURE R SALES TAX REVENUES BOOST SALES TAX BY \$600,000:**

With the full brunt of the recession still to be felt, \$3.4 million in first-time sales tax revenues from Measure R brought about a 24.6% increase overall in sales tax in Fiscal Year 2008-09, according to an

update given to Council by Administrative Services Director Eric Frost. Property tax collections totaled \$35.2 million, up from \$33 million in 2007-08. Without the half-cent sales tax voters assessed themselves, sales tax was down \$2.8 million for FY 08-09. The City's business/activity fund was up \$13.2 million, due in large part to Transit's success in obtaining grant funding.

**ALERT TC FUNDING APPROVED:** The City Council approved an agreement with the County that continues Alert TC for three years at a cost of \$28,000 per year beginning in Fiscal Year 2010/11. The Alert TC system, also known as Reverse 911, is a system that allows for emergency notification to residents in the event of a disaster or other emergency where public notification is needed. The system allows for the use of phones, email, pagers and text messaging to pass along critical public safety information in a very timely manner. The system can also be used for public service announcements, and the City has used the system for this purpose 18 times over the last year. The announcements have included information from several City departments regarding the Santa Fe bridge work, Dump-On-Us days and Fire Prevention Week notifications. The City of Visalia, as well as most of the other incorporated cities, has a current agreement with the County of Tulare for the use of the Alert TC system with the existing vendor, Blackboard Connect Cty. The County of Tulare received one time grant funding and utilized County money to pay for two years of service with Blackboard, with a total cost of over \$700,000 for the two years. The County has identified Twenty First Century Communications (TFCC) as an available vendor for the Alert TC system at about one-third the cost of Blackboard. The new funding model for this shared system would be based on population and locked in for a three year period. Locking in for a three year period would allow the use of the 2000 Census data for population allocation for the funding model, saving approximately 30%. In addition, after the first year, the County and participating cities could ask for Homeland Security Grant funding to pay for a part or all of the costs associated with this service.

**CITY PUSHES FOR CAL RIPKEN TOURNAMENT:** With the near completion of Phase Two of the Riverway Sports Park, which includes four lighted youth baseball playing fields, the Visalia Cal Ripken organization has expressed interest to the corporate organization about hosting a World Series event in Visalia. The Cal Ripken League, a division of the Babe Ruth League, notified the local organization late last year that there was a host opportunity available for the 2011 12-year old World Series. The local organizing committee should soon receive additional information about requirements, both technical and financial, for hosting the event. Initial estimates are that the committee will need to raise at least \$70,000 to cover the expenses associated with the event. However, the event is expected to also be an economic boom to the community. A total of 10 teams are invited to the event from across the country. Most of the teams are in the host town for 8-10 days, and the players and their families are often looking to take full advantage of the recreational opportunities in the area during their down time. The local organizing committee will be deciding in the next few weeks whether to pursue the tournament. Council members approved a letter of support be provided to the committee to communicate the City's willingness to provide technical support to the group should it choose to commit to bringing the World Series to Visalia.

**NEW DAY FOR VICE MAYOR'S OFFICE HOURS IN MARCH:** Vice Mayor Amy Shuklian will hold her March office hours on Wednesday, March 10 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the large conference room at City Hall, at 707 W. Acequia Ave. The first hour, from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. will be a time for drop-in visits, and appointments can be scheduled in advance for the second hour, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. To schedule an appointment, contact Office Assistant Gladys Ramirez at 713-4314. You also can receive information and updates from Vice Mayor Shuklian through Facebook, by email at [ashuklian@ci.visalia.ca.us](mailto:ashuklian@ci.visalia.ca.us), or by calling 713-4400, then entering 8313.

**COUNCIL APPROVES DOWNTOWN ONE-WAY CONVERSIONS:** At its March 1 meeting, the City Council authorized the implementation of three downtown one-way conversions. The conversions near the intersection of Main Street and Santa Fe Avenue will change how traffic flows in this area. The conversions will improve traffic flow, extend the aesthetics of Main Street from Garden Street to Santa Fe and provide additional angled parking spaces to this area of downtown. The project is anticipated to add about 30 to 40 parking spaces to the downtown with the conversion of parallel spaces to angled parking. The one-way conversions: Main Street between Garden and Santa Fe; Garden Street between Center and Main streets; and Center Street between Bridge and Santa Fe. The conversion of Garden Street to one-way southbound traffic has been encouraged by downtown merchants and property owners for some time to clean up the small, cramped intersection at Garden and Main and provide better traffic flow. Design work is expected to take three months to complete, with construction beginning by October.

**BUILDING PERMITS DOWN 15% FOR YEAR TO DATE:** The total number of permits issued in 2010 are down 15% from this time last year. New single family dwellings showed the only increase of 25%, up from 63 in the first two months of 2009 to 79 this year. Total valuation was down 37%, from \$32,060,310 in 2009 to \$20,153,288 in 2010.

**CITY TO HOLD PASSPORT FAIR:** The City of Visalia is hosting a Passport Fair on Saturday, March 27, from 10 am until 3 pm at City Hall West, 707 W. Acequia Ave., to provide passport information to U.S. citizens and to accept passport applications. U.S. citizens must present a valid passport book when entering or re-entering the United States by air. U.S. citizens entering the United States from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda at land borders and sea ports of entry must present a passport book, passport card, or other travel documents approved by the U.S. government. Information on the cost and how to apply for a U.S. passport is available at [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov). U.S. citizens may also obtain passport information by phone, in English and Spanish, by calling the National Passport Information Center toll-free at 1-877-487-2778.

**REPORT CRIME ONLINE:** The Visalia Police Department has several options for reporting crimes. The most traditional method is to call our dispatch center either through 911 for emergency calls or calling 734-8116 for non emergency calls. Based on the call type it is prioritized and an officer is dispatched. There also is the option of responding to Visalia Police Headquarters to file a report with a duty officer. An option most people are not aware of is making a crime report on line. You can visit the Visalia Police Department website at [http://www.ci.visalia.ca.us/depts/police\\_department](http://www.ci.visalia.ca.us/depts/police_department) and then select "report crime". The website has an easy to use interface that allows you to fill out a crime report. The online crime report is a convenient way to report a crime such as vandalism or a petty theft where there is no suspect information. By using online reporting you can fill out the report from the convenience of your computer. The report is then assigned a case number and processed like any other report prepared by the Visalia Police Department. This report would then be available for insurance reporting purposes. Certain reports take special processing like traffic accidents or lost or stolen license plates. These reports have to be taken by a police officer or by our duty officer at police headquarters. By using the online reporting you free up an officer for other higher priority calls and save time by completing the report from your residence.

**CITY SEEKS APPLICATIONS FOR COMMITTEES, COMMISSION VACANCIES:** The City of Visalia is accepting applications from interested citizens for its City committees. The following committees currently have vacancies:

- **Citizen's Advisory Committee** – Acts as a liaison between the general public and the City Council

concerning community issues. The Committee has openings for three alternate members.

- **Disability Advocacy Committee** – advises the City on the needs of disabled people. The committee promotes physical, social, communication and attitudinal access for every citizen of Visalia. The Committee currently has three regular member vacancies and two alternate member vacancies.
- **Environmental Committee** – heightens environmental awareness and conservation in Visalia. Issues addressed include air quality, hazardous waste, recycling, water conservation and all other natural resources. The Committee currently has one alternate member vacancy.
- **North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee** – serves as a liaison between the City and the North Visalia community. The Committee has openings for two regular members.
- **Parks & Recreation Commission** – advises the City Council and City staff in matters pertaining to parks, playgrounds and recreation centers. The Commission currently has one alternate vacancy.
- **Transit Advisory Committee** – researches and analyzes the community’s continuing transit needs, reviews operations, markets the transit program and makes recommendations about the business affairs of the transit system. The Committee currently has two vacancies for regular members and two vacancies as alternate members.

**Waterways and Trails Committee** – Advises on matters related to the Bikeway Master Plan and the Waterway and Trail Master Plan. Advocate for policies, programs, and projects that enhance bicycle and pedestrian opportunities, reviews projects, and advocates to secure additional resources. The Committee currently has four regular member vacancies.

Applications are accepted on a continuous basis and kept for a period of two years. If you have further questions you may visit our website [www.ci.visalia.ca.us](http://www.ci.visalia.ca.us) “Committees/Commissions” to view the informational handbook and application or you may contact the City Clerk’s Office (559) 713-4512.

## **PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT UPDATES**

**CENTER AVENUE:** The work consists of installing new landscape curbs along the south side of Center Avenue, between Bridge and Conyer Streets. There will also be irrigation mains installed along this area, to serve the planter islands. Generally, work will commence on the east end of the project, at Bridge street, and proceed west in 2 block construction segments. The south travel lane (westbound) and adjacent parking will be impacted with this project. The City of Visalia project manager is Rebecca Keenan.

### **Timeline for the next two weeks:**

**Week of March 1 – March 6:** Due to rain occurring last week, there was little progress on the work in two block construction segments between Bridge and Court Streets. Work will continue in this segment, and the installation of new irrigation will begin. There may be some concrete trucks in the area related to this work.

**Week of March 7 - March 13:** Work will continue west along Center Ave. The areas to be impacted by work this week will be between Bridge and Conyer Streets, in two block increments.

**HOUSTON ROUNDABOUT AND WIDENING:** Crawford Construction is the General Contractor hired by the City of Visalia to do the work on the Houston Avenue project. The resident engineer is Adam Ennis with the City of Visalia. The project manager for the City of Visalia is Michael Carr.

### **Timeline for the next two weeks:**

**Week of March 1 – March 4:** The connections to the roundabout from NE 3<sup>rd</sup> and Santa Fe Street are to remain closed. Work to fill in the Ben Maddox median island between Sweet Avenue and Buena Vista could occur with northbound traffic shifted to the outside lane. The old traffic signals on the northwest and southwest corners at Ben Maddox are scheduled to come down and the new ones activated.

**Week of March 8 – March 12:** The connections to the roundabout from NE 3<sup>rd</sup> and Santa Fe Street will remain closed. Demolition and paving the west side of the intersection of Houston Avenue and Ben

Maddox is scheduled early in the week, requiring the southbound lane to be closed. Paving the final lift of asphalt on Houston and Santa Fe could happen by the end of the week. Southern California Edison (SCE) should be installing street lights. New traffic signs are to be installed in the area of the round-about.

**SANTA FE OVERCROSSING:** Agee Construction is the General Contractor hired by the City of Visalia to do the work on the Santa Fe Overcrossing. The resident engineer is David Vallejos with Mendoza and Associates. The project manager for the City of Visalia is Fred Lampe.

**Timeline for the next two weeks:**

**Week of March 1-March 5:** Construction of decorative concrete features, fencing and architectural trim are scheduled for this week. Paving is scheduled on Mineral King and Noble Avenues. Paving will be within the project boundaries and will not affect through traffic. Some street parking will be limited. All work will be done in the daylight hours. Highway 198 ramp closures are scheduled from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday, for the eastbound Court Street onramp and the westbound Court Street offramp. All work will be done during daylight hours.

**Week of March 8-March 12:** Work on decorative concrete features, fencing and architectural trim will continue. All work will be done in the daylight hours. Highway 198 ramp closures are scheduled from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday, for the eastbound Court Street onramp and the westbound Court Street offramp. All work will be done during daylight hours.

*The City's newsletter, Inside City Hall, is published after all regular City Council meetings. To self-subscribe, go to [http://www.ci.visalia.ca.us/about/inside\\_city\\_hall\\_newsletter.asp](http://www.ci.visalia.ca.us/about/inside_city_hall_newsletter.asp). For more information, contact Community Relations Manager Nancy Loliva at [nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us](mailto:nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us).*





# City of Visalia SPRING EVENTS



FREE

FREE

FREE

FREE



## SPRING DROP OFF

Monday, March 29 **THROUGH** Saturday, April 24th

We invite all **City of Visalia residents and Commercial Gardeners** to recycle yard trimmings, grass clippings, leaves, branches, wood, unpainted and unstained lumber scraps; and participate in our Annual Spring Recycling program by dropping off yard waste at Tulare County Biomass or WC Wood Industries. Commercial gardeners are limited to a maximum of a 1-ton vehicle and 12-foot trailer. Residents receive 1-yard of compost for each load of material.

### RECYCLABLE

- Branches, Grass Clippings, Leaves, Lumber, Prunings, Yard Trimmings, Wood

### NOT RECYCLABLE

- Bamboo, Palm Fronds, Yucca Trees: Place these items in the Garbage side of your Split Can



## Visalia Earth Day 2010 St. John's River Clean Up Event

Presented by Visalia Transit



Saturday, April 17, 2010  
8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Registration Booth at parkinglot in front of Ross & Vallarta's near corner of Hwy 63 & Riggins Ave

Help to clean St. Johns River from Hwy 63 to McAuliff St.

### ITEMS ACCEPTED

Green Waste  
E-Waste  
General Garbage  
Tires - without rims  
Hazardous Waste

For a complete list of  
accepted and non  
accepted items please  
visit

[www.dumponus.org](http://www.dumponus.org)

## City of Visalia Dump-On-Us

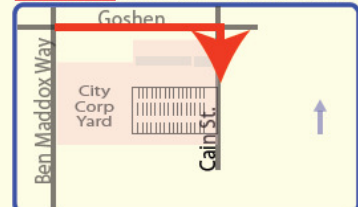
Visalia Corporation Yard

335 N. Cain  
Saturday  
April 24, 2010  
7:00a.m. - 11:00a.m.



Shred up to 6 standard  
bankers boxes for FREE

**DIRECTIONS:** From eastbound Goshen Ave. on Cain St.



For more information please call the Natural Resource Conservation Division at 713-4531 or visit:

[www.GoGreenVisalia.com](http://www.GoGreenVisalia.com)

# Together – We Count!

Census Day is April 1, 2010

## IT'S IN OUR HANDS

**Safe.** The Census Bureau protects information that identifies respondents or their households.

**Easy.** 10 simple questions take just 10 minutes to answer and return by mail.

**Why it matters:** It brings money into our communities to improve our neighborhoods, our transportation, our schools, and helps provide services people of all ages need.

**Coming soon.** Census questionnaires will be mailed in March 2010.

To Learn More:

Visit [www.ci.visalia.ca.us](http://www.ci.visalia.ca.us)

or [2010census.gov](http://2010census.gov).

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**Census  
2010**

