



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

### Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Richmond Room, 450 Civic Center Plaza, Richmond, California

#### 1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Call to Order: 11:40 AM by Vice Chair Thompson

#### 2. Roll Call & Check In

A quorum was presented with the following commission members:

**Present:** D. Thompson, M. Gliksohn, G Sewell-Murphy, D. Wear, O. Willis

**Absent:** Chair Kenney, C. Jackson, K. Lynch

#### 3. Approval of Minutes

December 11, 2024, Minutes of Meeting – Motion to approve 1<sup>st</sup> Commissioner Sewell-Murphy and 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Willis

January 8, 2025, Minutes of Meeting - - Motion to approve 1<sup>st</sup> Commissioner Sewell-Murphy and 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner Willis

#### 4. Chair's Report

Vice Chair Don Thompson moderated the meeting in the absence of Chair Kenney, who had informed him she would not be attending the Economic Development Commission (EDC) meeting on February 12, 2025. Vice Chair Thompson began the session by announcing that City Councilmember Doria Robinson has been appointed as the new City Council EDC liaison. The EDC looks forward to collaborating with Councilmember Robinson to further Richmond's economic prosperity.

Vice Chair Thompson also highlighted two key presentations scheduled for the meeting: the first from the Richmond Rising Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) Program, and the second from the Richmond Green Blue New Deal. Additionally, he mentioned that the Commission would hear Sub-committee reports from members and receive updates from Cordell Hindler, who would provide relevant news and updates pertinent to the Commission's activities.

In closing, Vice Chair Thompson reminded the Commission of Chair Kenney's request from the previous meeting for each member to establish actionable goals for the upcoming year, following the SMART criteria—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely. This initiative builds on prior efforts to set clear EDC objectives, enhance accountability, and strengthen capability measures, ensuring the Commission's work has a tangible impact on Richmond's economic development. Vice Chair Thompson kindly requested that any Commission members who have not yet submitted their goals do so by March 26, 2025, at the latest, and send them directly to Chair Kenney.

#### 5. Old and/or New Business

5.a Richmond Rising / Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) Presentation

Beatriz Guerrero, the TCC Coordinator under the City of Richmond Community Development Department, and Matias Eusterbrock, the TCC Project Analyst in the same department, shared a presentation on the TCC Richmond Rising.

Beatriz started the presentation by introducing what the TCC initiative is and what it is all about. She then talked about program updates.

Beatriz began the presentation by explaining the purpose of the Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) initiative and provided updates on its progress. She highlighted that in 2022, the City of Richmond, alongside six local organizations (collectively known as Richmond Rising), was awarded \$35 million from the California Strategic Growth Council's TCC Program. This funding is aimed at delivering health, economic, and environmental benefits to the Iron Triangle, Santa Fe, and Coronado neighborhoods over the next five years. The grant execution began in 2023, and all projects must be completed by 2028.

Richmond Rising's focus includes improving transit access and mobility, installing solar energy systems, enhancing water efficiency, promoting urban greening, and supporting community health and well-being through parks and access to healthy food. Beatriz outlined the ten key projects within the Richmond Rising program:

1. Neighborhood Complete Streets
  - Creating new bike lanes, pedestrian pathways, and strategies to slow traffic.
2. Richmond Wellness Trail Phase 2
  - Developing a route connecting the BART/Amtrak station to the new ferry terminal.
3. E-Bike Lending Library
  - Offering training and a road-to-ownership program for electric bikes.
4. Resilient Homes
  - Installing solar panels on homes to reduce energy costs and improve health outcomes.
5. Basin of Relations
  - Installing greywater systems and providing green career training.
6. Bosque del Barrio
  - Planting 1,000 new trees in streets and homes in the project area.
7. ADA Accessible Garden
  - Improve access to healthy food for seniors and individuals with mobility challenges.
8. Orchard for All
  - Planting fruit trees to create jobs and provide free, healthy food.
9. Veggie RX
  - Fresh produce as preventative and restorative medicine, with classes and workshops.
10. E-Bike Share
  - Expanding e-bike program with 70 new bikes and offering free memberships.

Commissioner Wear inquired about coordination with another commission or committee working on a plan to plant 10,000 trees in the City. Beatriz confirmed that Groundwork Richmond, working with the Urban Forestry Advisory Committee, is collaborating with

TCC to determine the best locations for tree planting. This effort aligns with a UC Berkeley evaluation of the City's green space needs.

Commissioner Willis asked about the execution of the grant funds, how much has been spent, when the grant will sunset, and whether there are plans for sustainability. Beatriz explained that the grant agreement was executed in August 2023, meaning expenses could only be charged from that point forward. Regarding sustainability, she noted that TCC aims to kickstart projects and then secure additional funding through project managers seeking further support. Currently, the focus is on executing contracts with nonprofits, ensuring that necessary documentation and insurance are in place. After that, TCC will begin exploring long-term funding needs. Commissioner Willis emphasized the importance of EDC being aware of funding issues, especially as the Commission works on priorities for the Green Blue New Deal, and expressed interest in identifying areas of overlap where the EDC could support TCC. Beatriz expressed gratitude for the EDC's willingness to assist, noting that once future operations are planned, they will have a clearer understanding of funding requirements, particularly with regard to labor and construction costs.

Beatriz and Matias also discussed the Strategic Growth Council's requirement for cities receiving grants to choose four plans from a list that the council provided. For Richmond, these plans are:

1. Community Engagement Plan – Facilitating monthly stakeholder meetings and training youth fellows to conduct engagement.
2. Displacement Avoidance Plan – Exploring policies and initiatives to help residents and business owners stay in Richmond.
3. Workforce Development and Economic Opportunity Plan – Supporting training for careers in the emerging green sector, such as renewable energy.
4. Indicator Tracking Plan – Monitoring the processes and outcomes of the Richmond Rising programs.

Matias provided further details on the Youth Fellow Program, emphasizing the importance of engaging youth in the community. Commissioner Sewell-Murphy asked whether the youth fellows could potentially transition into jobs related to the City's Green Blue New Deal. Matias explained that while there is no formal guarantee of employment, the program intentionally connects youth to training and opportunities that make them strong candidates for green-sector jobs. Commissioner Sewell-Murphy noted that one of the Green Blue New Deal priorities is to create jobs and inquired about collaboration between the Green Blue New Deal and TCC. Beatriz affirmed that some youth fellows have already applied for jobs, benefiting from the skills they acquired, and that job listings are shared on the Richmond Rising resources page.

Vice Chair Thompson thanked Beatriz and Matias for their presentation and opened the floor for additional questions. Commissioner Gliksohn sought clarification about the additional \$10 million allocated to the original \$35 million grant. The TCC team confirmed that the extra funds would be used for two infrastructure projects: the Richmond Wellness Trail and the Neighborhood Complete Streets project. Commissioner Gliksohn then asked

about the partnership between the City and the six organizations involved in Richmond Rising, specifically which department handles the program. Beatriz and Matias clarified that the City is the grantee, with the six organizations serving as partners, and that the Community Development Department is leading the program, though other departments also contribute to its implementation. The discussion continued to the fruit tree planting, with the TCC team explaining how the program supports this initiative.

Finally, Commissioner Sewell-Murphy expressed enthusiasm about the Youth Fellow Program, and the TCC team shared information about available opportunities for youth aged 16-24, including a flyer with program details.

#### 5b. Green Blue New Deal (GBND) Discussion

Yahna Williamson, a Management Analyst in the Environmental and Health Initiative Division under the Economic Development Department, along with Valerie Li from the same office, led the presentation on the Green Blue New Deal (GBND) Opportunity Report.

As background, the GBND Opportunity Report was presented to the City Council on October 1, 2024. In response to the feedback received, City staff are currently conducting further research on the projects listed in the report to focus on the economic impacts and resource needs. The goal is to narrow down the list and form the basis of the GBND implementation strategy and a five-year plan, which will concentrate on career pathways, business support, and project development. Yahna and the Economic Development team emphasized their commitment to gathering and capturing the EDC's feedback. Noting the valuable insights shared during the June meeting, they aim to ensure that the Commission reviews the 24 proposed projects and identifies seven priorities for the City.

For the discussion of the GBND, the goals were outlined as follows:

1. Co-develop the Richmond GBND Implementation Strategy.
2. Focus on completing projects within the next five years.
3. Prioritize and evaluate the economic development impacts of projects.

To achieve these goals, four steps were developed for ranking and prioritizing projects:

1. Review the 24 projects and their descriptions.
2. Complete the survey form to gather feedback on which projects should be prioritized, with a submission deadline of February 19.
3. Use the evaluation tool to assess the economic impact, community benefit, and feasibility of prioritized projects.
4. Finalize the top projects to focus on over the next five years.

The Economic Development Evaluation Toolkit consists of five sections:

1. Relevance and Strategic Fit
2. Economic Impact
3. Feasibility and Sustainability
4. Performance Measures
5. Risk Assessment

During the discussion, Commissioner Gliksohn sought clarification on whether the survey was only for the EDC members or if it was also open to the general community. Yahna stated that the survey was specifically for the EDC members for the City staff to gather the EDC's input on the strategic implementation of the GBND.

Commissioner Wear inquired if this survey was different from one previously distributed. Yahna confirmed that it was a new survey and added that if the February 19 deadline was not sufficient, commissioners could contact her by email or phone to be able to assist with the submission.

Vice Chair Thompson thanked Yahna for the presentation and reiterated the question about the survey or other similar surveys being sent to other stakeholders. Yahna responded that she did not have that information at the moment but would follow up with an answer after the meeting. The Vice Chair also asked about the Economic Development Evaluators Toolkit. Yahna explained that the toolkit is used to measure the impact of the projects.

Commissioner Gliksohn asked who was responsible for creating the list of 24 projects. Nanette Beacham, Economic Development Department Director, clarified that a consultant developed the report, which was presented to the City Council in October. The list was compiled based on stakeholder meetings and discussions with the Workforce Development Board.

Commissioner Wear raised concerns about the financial feasibility of some projects, specifically large-scale initiatives such as birthing vessels or boat building. She asked whether projects with high costs had been removed from the list, particularly those that may not align with their goal under the Green Blue New Deal of focusing on realistic, achievable projects. Yahna explained that the original list was framed around projects that could be realistically implemented over the next five years, but she acknowledged Commissioner Wear's feedback.

Commissioner Willis emphasized the need to avoid being overly ambitious and suggested focusing on projects that could realistically be completed within the next five years.

Vice Chair Thompson asked if any of the 24 projects had been deemed unfeasible. Nanette responded that the City had not made final decisions yet, as the process of identifying priorities is ongoing. The aim is to own the five-year period while also considering long-term goals and maintaining flexibility in case circumstances change.

Nanette also mentioned that the presentation given to the City Council in October would be a helpful resource for EDC members when completing the survey.

Vice Chair Thompson encouraged the EDC to answer the survey during the meeting if possible, or to submit their responses via email before the February 19 deadline.

## **6. Subcommittee Reports**

#### 6.a Sustainability – Lead, Sewell-Murphy

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy inquired with Lizeht Zepeda, Senior Business Assistance Officer, about whether the email regarding the Economic Development Sustainability Expo had been sent to all EDC commissioners. Lizeht clarified that the email had been sent only to the Chair and Commissioner Sewell-Murphy. The Commissioner then referenced their previous discussion about securing a fiscal sponsor for the proposed expo and mentioned that the email was a follow-up to that conversation. The Chair indicated she would also reach out to the individual who coordinated the *Taste of Richmond* event.

Commissioner Sewell-Murphy shared that she would be working on the proposed expo, exploring the possibility of using the auditorium, which may have availability by September. She also mentioned her outreach to Contra Costa County to involve them in sustainability efforts and expressed interest in partnering with organizations such as Common Ground and Chevron. Additionally, she brought up the importance of considering fire-retardant materials in the expo, especially in light of recent events in Southern California, and expressed hope that the expo could address sustainable fire-retardant materials.

The Commissioner also asked Lizeht to confirm whether projects under \$10,000 would need to go before the City Council. Lizeht responded that the procurement process for such contracts requires three bids to move forward, though in most cases, projects still need to be approved by the City Council.

Commissioner Willis requested to be included in future emails regarding the expo, expressing his interest in sustainability initiatives as well.

#### 6.b Cannabis

As Commissioner Lynch was joining remotely via Zoom, she was advised to send her comments and input directly to Lizeht, who would then share them with the rest of the EDC.

Kyle Lam, Management Analyst for the Economic Development Department, provided an update on the cannabis-related initiatives, specifically regarding the \$600,000 grant. He mentioned that the City would be proceeding with the Cannabis Equity Grant Program, moving forward with plans to implement the program in the near future.

#### 6.c Other

Commissioner Willis shared that he met with Vice Chair Thompson and Commissioner Wear on Friday, February 7, and they plan to continue meeting regularly. During their discussion, they were able to highlight project priorities, some of which align with the Richmond Rising initiatives.

On a separate note, Commissioner Willis mentioned having a conversation with Stephen Baiter of the East Bay Economic Development Alliance, who expressed interest in re-engaging with the City of Richmond regarding the GBND.

Commissioner Wear provided an update that the Mayor's Office has chosen Economic Development as a key focus for the upcoming year, which will include priorities such as the port, small business development, Richmond Main Street, and housing. The Commissioner emphasized the importance of showing support for the EDC during City Council meetings and suggested creating a report card for EDC's deliverables. This report card would serve as a proactive and positive way to demonstrate that economic development efforts are on track and accountable.

**7. Council Liaison Robinson news or report - None**

**8. Public Comments / Announcements**

Cordell Hindler provided an update on vacancies, sharing that he had spoken with the City Council about increasing youth participation in the commission. He also invited everyone to attend the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce event on February 27 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Additionally, Cordell mentioned that he is bringing several projects related to Economic Development to the Personnel Board for consideration. He expressed his intention to bring a presentation from Raftellis on workforce analysis to a future agenda, believing it may align with Economic Development initiatives. Lizeht reminded Cordell that for agenda requests, he should email her directly so that the request can be routed to the Commission Chair.

Kyle also shared an update regarding a new employee in the Economic Development Department: Junne Garcia, who will be joining the Business Development Division as a Management Analyst. Kyle also mentioned that he will be transitioning to the Port Division.

**9. Closing Comments**

As Councilmember Robinson is the new City Council Liaison for the EDC, Commissioner Wear volunteered to reach out to her and establish a connection on how the EDC can work effectively together, particularly regarding the timing of EDC meetings.

Vice Chair Thompson expressed his gratitude to the City Staff for organizing the meeting and extended his thanks to the presenters for their contributions. He also reminded the commissioners about the survey for the Green Blue New Deal (GBND) and reiterated that the goals should be submitted to the EDC Chair by March 26.

Commissioner Gliksohn informed the group that he would be unable to attend the next EDC meeting.

**10. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:58pm.

Next Meeting: **Wednesday, March 12, 2025**