

RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA, August 5, 2020

The Richmond City Council Special Evening Open Session was called to order at 4:31 p.m. by Mayor Thomas K. Butt via teleconference.

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Contra Costa County and Governor Gavin Newsom have issued multiple orders requiring sheltering in place, social distancing, and reduction of person-to-person contact. Accordingly, Governor Gavin Newsom has issued executive orders that allow cities to hold public meetings via teleconferencing. Both <https://www.coronavirus.cchealth.org/> and <http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/3914/Richmond-Coronavirus-Info> provide updated coronavirus information.

DUE TO THE SHELTER IN PLACE ORDERS, attendance at the City of Richmond City Council meeting will be limited to Council members, essential City of Richmond staff, and members of the news media. Public comment will be confined to items appearing on the agenda and will be limited to the methods provided below. Consistent with Executive Order N-29-20, this meeting will utilize teleconferencing only. The following provides information on how the public can participate in this meeting.

The public was able to view the meeting from home on KCRT – Comcast Channel 28 or AT&T Uverse Channel 99, or live-streamed online at <http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/3178/KCRT-Live>.

Written public comments were received via email and eComment. Comments received by 3:00 p.m. on August 5, 2020, were put into the record and considered before Council action and were submitted by email to cityclerkdept@ci.richmond.ca.us. Comments received via email during the meeting and up until the public comment period on the relevant agenda item closed, were read into the record. Comments were also received via telephone during the public comment period.

Attached herewith all written public comments received.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilmembers Ben Choi, Demnlus Johnson III, Eduardo Martinez, Melvin Willis, Vice Mayor Nathaniel Bates, and Mayor Thomas K. Butt. **Absent:** Councilmember Jael Myrick.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The city clerk announced that the purpose of the Open Session was for the City Council to hear public comments on the following items to be discussed in Closed Session:

CITY COUNCIL

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE APPOINTMENT (Government Code Section 54957.6):

Title: City Attorney

CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATORS
(Government Code Section 54957.6):

Agency Representatives: Jack Hughes, LaShonda White,
and Allison Picard

Employee organizations:

1. SEIU Local 1021 Full Time Unit
2. SEIU Local 1021 Part Time Unit
3. IFPTE Local 21 Mid-Level Management Unit
4. IFPTE Local 21 Executive Management Unit
5. Richmond Police Officers Association RPOA
6. Richmond Police Management Association RPMA
7. IAFF Local 188
8. Richmond Fire Management Association RFMA

The Open Session adjourned to Closed Session at 4:33 p.m.
Closed Session adjourned at 5:18 p.m.

The Special Meeting of the Richmond City Council was
called to order at 5:33 p.m. by Mayor Butt via teleconference.

ROLL CALL

Present: Councilmembers Johnson III, Martinez, Myrick,
Willis, and Mayor Butt. **Absent:** Councilmember Choi and Vice
Mayor Bates arrived after roll was called.

STATEMENT OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

AGENDA REVIEW

Items G-2 and G-3 were moved to be heard before approval
of the Consent Calendar and before G-1.

**REPORT FROM THE CITY ATTORNEY ON FINAL
DECISIONS MADE DURING CLOSED SESSION**

Attorney Carlos Privat stated there was nothing to report.

REPORT FROM THE CITY MANAGER

City Manager Laura Snideman reported that current library
employee, Jane Pratt, has accepted the Interim Library Director
position.

CITY COUNCIL CONSENT CALENDAR

On motion of Councilmember Myrick, seconded by
Councilmember Willis, the items marked with an (*) were
approved by the following vote: **Ayes:** Councilmembers Choi,
Johnson III, Martinez, Myrick, Willis, and Mayor Butt. **Noes:**
Councilmember Bates voted no on Item F-2. **Absent:** None.
Abstain: None.

***F-1.** Adopted **Ordinance No. 18-20 N.S.**, amending
Richmond Municipal Code Chapter 6.02 (Richmond Building
Code) to incorporate Emergency Building Standards Appendices X
and O, as adopted by the State of California for Emergency
Housing Buildings and Facilities, with local amendments to
address minimum fire and life safety measures.

***F-2.** Adopted **Ordinance No.'s 19-20 N.S., 20-20 N.S., and 21-20 N.S.**, to establish the wages, salaries, and compensation for the classification specifications of: Police Chief (salary range 5.7 \$13,572-\$20,833/month), Assistant Police Chief (salary range 5.5 \$12,338-\$19,640/month), Deputy City Clerk (salary range 052H \$6,238-\$7,555), Information Technology Manager (salary range 071D \$10,020-\$12,183), Network and Systems Security Officer (salary range 070E \$9,674-\$11,761), Cable Television Manager (salary range 055 \$6,638-\$8,069), and Police Records and Property Manager (salary range 064 \$7,684-\$9,322).

COUNCIL AS A WHOLE

G-1. The matter to review the draft measure for the November 3, 2020, ballot which would amend the City's business tax rate structure to authorize the City to tax businesses based on a range of .06% to 5.00% of gross receipts rather than rates based on the number of employees and either: (1) adopt a resolution placing the measure on the November 3, 2020, ballot; or (2) provide direction to staff on further revisions to the draft measure and continue engagement with the business community with the intent to place the measure on the ballot at a future election was presented by Interim Deputy City Manager, LaShonda White, Attorney, James Atencio, and Revenue Manager, Antonio Banuelos, who presented a PowerPoint, which highlighted the following: current business license model; proposed gross receipt tax overview; rate structure options; business community outreach and input; gross receipts model, calculations, and exemptions; current City of Berkeley model; residential rental properties and fees; proposed Oakland rates; options comparisons; Discussion ensued. The following individuals gave comments via telephone or e-mail: Elsa Stevens, Claudia Jimenez, Katrinka Ruk, Mike Vasilas, Leisa Johnson, Guy Corrie, Torm Normpraseurt, Mike Parker, Sean Staulbaum, Ilona Clark, Yen Do, Rich Doellstedt, Rosemarie Levy, Stan Niedzwiedz, Paul Benton, Andrea Mullarkey, Michael Gliksohn, Craig Murray, Sandy Saeturn, Jill Perry, Denny Khamphanthong, Christina Redse, Susan Pricco, Sadie Egan, Gayle McLaughlin, Tengfang Xu, and Jennifer Liang. A motion was made by Councilmember Willis, seconded by Councilmember Martinez to adopt Option 1 with the following amendments: to use the city of Berkeley's rental tax rate model; small landlords with of four units or less received credits for payments made to the rent board; franchisee exemption language; and the addition of employee definition. The City Council requested the addition of the category of warehouses and wholesale distributors with the same rate schedule as for business and personal services. Mayor Butt made a friendly amendment to establish a working group to explore potential revisions to the measure. The motion passed by the following vote: **Ayes:** Councilmembers Choi, Martinez, Myrick, and Willis. **Noes:** Mayor Butt and Vice Mayor Bates. **Absent:** None. **Abstain:** Councilmember Johnson III.

G-2. The matter to authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute an agreement and all ancillary required documents with Contra Costa County Health Services to enable a COVID-19 testing site at a City of Richmond Civic Center parking lot, currently proposed at 24th and Barrett Avenue was presented by Supervisor John Gioia, and Contra Costa County Health Officer, Dr. Chris Farnitano. The testing site was initially planned to operate Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Deputy Director of Economic Development, Shasa Curl, presented a

PowerPoint, which highlighted the following: testing site details, proposed testing site location, and potential supplemental services. Lavonna Martin, Housing and Homeless Health Director, stated that weekend hours would be added at a later time. A motion by Councilmember Willis, seconded by Councilmember Johnson III, approved the item, by the unanimous vote of the City Council.

G-3. The matter to receive an update on Contra Costa County's recent actions related to potential purchase of the Hilltop Courtyard by Marriott in Richmond (3150 Garrity Way) to provide supportive housing and support services for persons experiencing homelessness; and direct the City Manager to draft a letter to the County Administrator requesting the development of a comprehensive community engagement plan for Richmond residents, businesses, and property owners regarding the proposed acquisition was no longer considered a viable location and was withdrawn from the agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8 12: p.m., to meet again on Tuesday, September 15, 2020, at 6:30 p.m.

Clerk of the City of Richmond

(SEAL)

Approved:

Mayor

From: [Cordell Hindler](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT BEFORE CLOSED SESSION
Date: Tuesday, August 04, 2020 10:11:23 PM

hello Sabrina, i have some comments to go into the record

1. for the next city attorney, the incumbent has to have the following qualifications,

has the experience in representing the city in court hearings

provide advice on legal matters

also to have a good sense of Class and elegance

p.s i would like the record to reflect that i was the one that had offer Koff And Associates to work with the city attorney's office

sincerely
Cordell

From: [Brian Fisher](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENTS - Agenda item G1 City's Business Tax Rate Restructure
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 2:41:46 PM

To City Clerk: Please read this concern below at tonight's Council Meeting - Thank you

Subject: PUBLIC COMMENTS - G1 Business tax rate restructure

Council members I have owned a seven plex unit in Richmond for over 40 years. We small apartment owners are struggling with so many costs, rent control, increased sewer costs, Utility increase, property tax increase and Richmond City license, fire and inspection increases. This new tax rate increase will squeeze us even more. We request that if you are committed to add another punitive cost for us to bear please use the lowest rate possible.

I have a real concern that if you add this burden to small business owners unlike small apartment owners, they can relocate their business to another city in Contra Costa. Which will be to the detriment to the City of Richmond and to the people who live in Richmond. We are all challenged by the Corona Virus and unfortunately it is not going away, we need the City to help us through these difficult times.

Thank you,
Brian

From: [Don Doodokyan/Pacific/Brenntag](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Cc: [Katrinka Ruk](#)
Subject: "Public comments – agenda item #_G-1 NOVEMBER BALLOT MEASURE BUISNESS TAX RATE STRUCTURE."
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 2:56:41 PM

I am writing to oppose the proposed Ballot measure Business Tax rate structure, as a business with an operating facility in Richmond, CA we calculate that our business tax liability will increase from over \$2,000 annually to over \$105,000 annually. A tax increase of this magnitude is unfair and will be devastating to our operating costs. While it is easy to estimate that gross receipts are in linear relationship with gross profit, this is simply not true. How would you feel if as an individual, you received an increase for a fixed monthly or annual expense that suddenly increases 5,000 per cent? Just for kicks, let's assume it is your home water bill or trash bill, for example you pay \$25/month at present, it suddenly increases to \$12,500/month, what would you do? What do you expect us to do?

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From: [ELAINE OWYANG](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: CITY COUNCIL MTG 8/5/20 PUBLIC COMMENT-AGENDA ITEM G-1 BUSINESS GROSS TAX
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 2:59:39 PM

Richmond City Council and others concerned:

We're against the Business License Change Methodology because:

- (1) your rushing this Business License change. Your communication on business license change was sudden email received Fri., 7/31/20 with turnaround response by Mon, 8/1/20 and Council Meeting on Wed., 8/5/20 . Only 27 people responded on Zoom teleconference meeting out of what how many businesses in Richmond 1,000+? I don't know the exact number of business, but it must be alot.
- (2) our costing \$10,000+ taxpayer's money for Nov 3 ballot in a time of the corona virus pandemic.
- (3) special meeting was not publically televised. It was a closed session. It's not public knowledge of what goes on in closed doors meetings.
- (4) charging Gross Business License Gross Amount is unfair. It's the take home minus the expense. You should not look at the Gross. I see even the Federal 1040 & State 540 tax is looked at the end of the day take home amount.
- (5) your business rent tax is still too high compared to San Francisco.
- (6) The million of dollars you want from this proposed Business tax that goes toward the General Fund has no accountability. You can spend our tax money on anything. This is unfair using our tax payer's money.
- (7) We already pay many taxes, license, & fees, i.e., property tax, business license, rental fees. Your measurement on your suggested Business License numbers is too high compared to San Francisco. Where is the proof on how much money you need, and where is the accountability on where it is spent?
- (8) Rental Inspections are still going on in the City of Richmond during this COVID19 deadly pandemic with no vaccine or cure. The City of Richmond is risking landlords, tenants and inspectors health of getting COVID-19. The City of Richmond should suspend inspections for now. Rental Inspections now are a health risk. And, they should not charge for rental inspections coming out and charging people and risking people with a deadly disease during a pandemic. If this is not the right place to put this comment, please pass along to correct department.

Frank & Elaine Jaymot
Landlords of one residential single family home in Richmond

From: [Graham Leggett](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: Public Comments Agenda Item G-1
Date: Tuesday, August 04, 2020 9:02:58 PM

I urge the Richmond city council to REJECT the proposed Lift Up Richmond Plan.

I support increasing business taxes but NOT in the way that the ill-conceived Lift Up proposal.

I urge you to adopt plans to increase business taxes more like the plan that Oakland uses.

Graham Leggett
Tel: 415-786-8450

From: [Greg Bonn](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: Public Comments - Agenda Item G1
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 2:57:14 PM

August 5, 2020

City Clerk
450 Civic Center Plaza, 3rd Floor
Office of the Clerk
Richmond, CA 94804
TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL TO [cityclerkdept@ci.richmond .ca.us](mailto:cityclerkdept@ci.richmond.ca.us)

Subject: Public Comments – Agenda Item G1

City Clerk:

This letter is in reply to the proposed Richmond Business Tax Ordinance, Item G1 on tonight's agenda.

Richmond Wholesale Meat Co. has been in business in Richmond for over 61 years and operates as a warehouse and wholesale distributor of frozen food, primarily meat products.

INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATION SECTION 7.04.130

In previous drafts of the ordinance, Wholesale Sales businesses were included with Retail Sales and Grocers under Class A Industries. We note, however, that the current version of the ordinance under section 7.04.130 now has separate classes for Retail Sales and Grocers but there is no Class that specifically includes Wholesale Sales in its description. While this may have been an oversight in the redrafting of the ordinance, we strongly believe that Wholesale Sales should be included in a class with grocers. Like grocers we have high dollar volumes, low margins, and time-sensitive inventory. As the ordinance now stands it is unclear where a Wholesale Food Distributor would be classified.

WE URGE THE COUNCIL TO CORRECT THIS INEQUITY BEFORE PASSAGE OF THE ORDINANCE.

EFFECTIVE DATE AND TRANSITION SECTION 7.04.680

Under the terms of the current draft of the ordinance our City business tax would increase by somewhere between 4,700% and 7,600%. Such an increase from one year to the next would be onerous to all businesses in Richmond, including ours. We understand that there has been some discussion by staff to cap the amount of increase on the first year of the ordinance and we strongly support this concept. Further, we propose that the new tax be phased in over a multi-year period to enable businesses in Richmond to adjust to the new tax in a manageable way. **WE URGE THE**

COUNCIL TO CAP THE YEARLY PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN BUSINESS TAX AND PHASE IN THE NEW TAX RATES OVER A MULTI-YEAR PERIOD.

Very truly yours,

Greg Bonn
Controller
Richmond Wholesale
2920 Regatta Blvd.
Richmond, CA 94804
Direct (510) 837-3719
Cell (925) 285-5861
Website: www.RichmondWholesale.com

Valued Food Solutions Delivered Globally

From: [Guy Corrie](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: Public Comments-agenda item # G-1 Gross receipts tax
Date: Tuesday, August 04, 2020 10:38:17 PM
Attachments: [Comments to Council Bus Tax Increase.docx](#)

Please include our comments.

Thank you.

Guy Corrie
Rest LLC

Dear Mayor Butt and Members of the City Council

My name is Guy Corrie. My wife and I have an industrial property in Richmond, and our tenants are a mix of industrial, service, and arts related business.

Our small businesses are struggling. Most are attempting to recover from the shutdown even while another may be pending. They have borrowed heavily, both privately and from the SBA just to stay afloat and will struggle to repay these obligations. We, as landlords, have deferred rents and utilities to assist, but at some point, we will have to set up plans for them to be repaid and further adding to their debt service. Many will fail. There will be jobs lost and more commercial vacancies, none of which increase City revenues.

I listened in to the residential meeting on Thursday and one of the comments made was regarding common tenant costs such as utilities. As an industrial landlord we have some tenants who are heavy power consumers. We submeter and all pay their share. We collect utilities, pay PG&E and make no money on these transactions. This shows up as 20% of our gross receipts and while not being income would be taxed. Both the Fed and State allow legitimate deductions. The City should do the same and make this exempt.

As mentioned in Staff's meeting with residential rental owners on Thursday, not all Richmond landlords are corporate conglomerates with deep pockets. Many are mom and pop businesses who bet our futures on this community. Please don't let us down.

We are more than willing to pay our fair share. As a property owner, we currently pay \$15000 in special assessments to the City, and we still agree that the business licensing structure needs an update and should be increased. The rates proposed, however, are overstated and unrealistic. They need to be lowered. They are more liable to alienate current businesses and discourage future business from locating here. These increases would be a tough sell during boom times, but to suggest this in the middle of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression...

There has been no time to involve Business and Property owners, or to research the impacts of the pandemic, business failure, and job loss. I'm assuming that projected revenue was based on previous years receipts, which have very little to do with what business is facing on the ground now, and with a future that's difficult to project. Rushing this to the polls is a mistake. This tax could have

the opposite effect of its intended purposes with negative consequences for years to come.

I understand that Oakland is the progressive rate model chosen for this ordinance and rate chart. I would suggest also following Oakland's lead by postponing this and forming an inclusive study group to form a plan that works for all. If timing is the only criteria rushing this to the polls, have a special election. It would be money well spent to get this right on the front end.

Let's not add more stress to companies, and a community trying to survive during these turbulent times.

I urge the Council to reject this ordinance in its present form, and to work with stakeholders and staff to create a fair and equitable Tax Structure that works for all.

Thank you for your time.

Guy Corrie

Rest LLC

From: [jan.diamond](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Cc: [Graham Leggett](#)
Subject: Public Comments Agenda Item G-1
Date: Tuesday, August 04, 2020 7:35:47 PM

My name is Jan Diamond and I urge the Richmond city council to REJECT the proposed Lift Up Richmond Plan. It is ill conceived. I support increasing business taxes but NOT in the way that the Lift Up plan does. I urge you to adopt plans to increase business taxes more like the plan that Oakland uses.

Thank you

Jan Diamond

From: [Janis Hashe](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: Public Comments – Agenda Item G-1
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 10:10:35 AM

My name is Janis Hashe, and I am a resident of Richmond in Atchison Village.

I am in favor of placing the gross receipts tax on the November ballot. This proposal will encourage businesses to grow and be part of the Richmond community. Our current tax structure is outdated and unduly favors big businesses, who are not paying their fair share. In addition, the proposed tax plan ensures more fair taxation for small property owners, while supporting the many small businesses in the city. This plan is modeled on similar ones created by several Bay Area cities. Please support allowing the voters of Richmond to voice their opinion on this plan.

Thank you.

Sabrina Lundy

From: Katrinka Ruk <kpruk@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 1:53 PM
To: City Clerk Dept
Subject: Public Comments - Agenda Item #G-1 November Ballot Measure Business Tax Rate Structure
Attachments: 08.05.20 COI ltr to Council.docx

COUNCIL OF INDUSTRIES

P.O. BOX 70088, PT. RICHMOND, CA 94807

(510)215-9325

501(C)(6) FED ID# 94-0672760

/email/

August 5, 2020

To: City Council, City Manager

To: LaShonda White, Antonio Banuelos

Re: Item #G-1 November Ballot Measure – Business License Tax

The Council of Business & Industries (COI) cannot support a November ballot measure to increase the current business tax rate structure. We continue to ask that the City defer changing the business tax structure, create a Blue-Ribbon committee to examine the economic impact this change will have, and, allow the entire business community and landlords adequate time to review the impact and participate in this process.

This tax is ill-timed during the current pandemic where many Richmond businesses are still reeling from layoffs, business downturns, an increased focus on obtaining financial support to continue operating and can ill-afford an increase in taxes- some potentially facing increased taxes of 4x to 1000x more than the current business license tax under this proposal. Businesses already pay federal, state, and local taxes (user utility tax, property), plus there are property tax and bond measures being placed on the November ballot that could result in additional increases (Prop 15, WCCUSD bond measure).

In its current form this proposal does not contain enough information about rates and apportionment for most businesses to even determine its impacts. During the period of 07/21 to 08/03, the city staff has presented *three different rate charts*, each higher than the previous. In fact, during the 08/03 meeting, city staff presented three options but were unsure if they would present all three options at the 08/05 city council meeting, or just one proposal. ***Businesses will have exactly 24 hours or less to review the information before the city council's special meeting.***

During these challenging and uncertain times, the proposal to restructure the business license tax is causing confusion and anxiety. While a progressive business tax structure in which small businesses pay a lower rate than larger ones is sound public policy, the details are complex and require significantly more analysis and engagement than can be done in this timeframe.

Regarding the ballot measure proposal, the language provides that the business tax rate structure will “use a range from 0.075% to 1.34%”, however, the rate charts have not been finalized. It also states that the measure will provide “approximately \$7.9 million annually” which is not an accurate statement. Any projected increase in revenue is based on 2019 numbers for a pre-COVID economy that no longer exists. Third, it states that this measure will provide “essential City services, including 911 emergency response, pothole/street repair, homeless and youth services and other general services”. A general tax cannot earmark specific services.

Rushing this complex proposal is a missed opportunity to incentivize the types of businesses Richmond wants to attract and to enact policies that will help get banks and grocery stores into underserved neighborhoods. Continued financial stress on businesses already impacted during this crisis will trickle down to support of smaller businesses, those in the service industries, and, to our much-needed nonprofit organizations. Richmond can achieve better outcomes for small businesses, equity, and the broader economic ecosystem with a robust community engagement process and analysis.

To ensure transparency, the City Council should follow Oakland and San Francisco's lead to create a Blue Ribbon committee to thoroughly review and study these issues and bring it back in 2021 - prior to committing to an expensive ballot measure during this pandemic crisis with state, county, and city emergency orders still in place and Richmond businesses far from an economic recovery.

Katrinka Ruk

Executive Director

Cc: COI Board, Richmond Chamber of Commerce

Katrinka Ruk
Executive Director

Council of Business & Industries

510)260-4820 cell

www.councilofindustries.org

From: laurenvanham@gmail.com
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: Public comments - Agenda Item G-1
Date: Tuesday, August 04, 2020 9:26:50 PM

To the Richmond City Council:

I urge you to support the *Lift Up Richmond* Plan. Richmond is a city of small businesses and local thriving industries. We cannot allow corporate interests and large landlords to strike down this crucial legislation. Big businesses need to pay their fair share to continue having thriving businesses and communities in Richmond.

Lift Up Richmond creates a progressive rate structure for property owners so that small property owners (usually more connected to the community) are no longer burdened by the big landlords paying the same rate.

Now is the time to re-imagine and implement healthier economic models. We must provide a business tax structure that will allow us to invest in our community, in our kids, and our small businesses so that it is fair to everyone.

Thank you for your careful consideration and courage to create social change and healthy transformation in our city,

Lauren Van Ham
94805

Sabrina Lundy

From: Louis Buty <loubuty@americantex.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 11:02 AM
To: City Clerk Dept
Subject: Agenda #G-1

Dear City Council,

The proposed business tax increase will cause my business tax to increase by 10 times (1000%)! This is extreme. I do support an increase to help our city, but please consider something less severe.

I would also ask that for owner occupied business dwellings, where one person owns the building and the company, that there be no tax. An owner occupied building is not in the real estate business and as such is not doing business as a landlord, and therefore should not be taxed again as if in another business.

The pandemic has heightened business vulnerability and severely increased business taxes imposes further financial burdens that should be avoided at this time. As stated, a reasonable increase seems fair and realistic, otherwise businesses may be forced to close or leave to more business favorable locales. If this happens it will also affect business property values. Small steps, small bites are in order, not huge jumps and large gulps!

Yours Truly,

Lou Buty
American Textile & Supply, Inc.
Environmental Grime Solutions™
(510) 236-7424
3439 Regatta Boulevard
Richmond, CA 94804
www.americantex.com

We were on the **"World's Greatest!" Episode 286**, 22 min mark [click here!](#)

Connect with the **GRIME TEAM:**   

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□ □ □
CA. LIC. 678051

□ □ □

Construction Property management Development

MSH Group

201 W. Richmond Avenue, Suite C
Pt. Richmond CA 94801
510 215 5134 office
510 215 5163 fax

August 5, 2020

Richmond City Council

Via Email: cityclerkdept@ci.richmond.ca.us

RE: Public Comment, Richmond Proposed Business License Tax, **Agenda item G-1**

Dear City Council:

We operate two businesses in Richmond: MSH Group and an industrial rental property 401 1st Street. Business license fees for year ended 12-31-20 are \$663. Our business license fees under the proposed business license will be \$10,025 at **1,500%** increase.

Gross income from these two entities, this year, due to the Covid crisis, is down 50%.

We did apply and receive a PPP loan which was used to maintain our payroll for two months. We have not laid anyone off during the crisis and hope this remains the case for the future.

We request that **you vote to not place the tax on the ballot tonight**. The business community was not consulted beforehand; it is sloppily written, and the exorbitant rates will **force us to lay off at least one employee**.

Sincerely,

Mark Howe

Mark Howe

From: [Michelle Chan](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: public comment - item G-1
Date: Tuesday, August 04, 2020 5:57:39 PM

Dear City Councilmembers,

My name is Michelle Chan and I am a Richmond resident. I strongly support the proposed Lift Up Richmond Plan. We must address the long-term structural problems in our city budget and avoid the tragic cycle of layoffs, furloughs and reduced services.

A fair and equitable way to do this is to switch to a business tax model that gets big businesses to pay their fair share. Other cities in the Bay Area do this, and for too long, big businesses have gotten a free ride in Richmond. That means that residents and homeowners like myself are paying more than our fair share by comparison.

By taxing gross receipts rather than employees, this encourages businesses to hire in the city and contribute to the city. And by creating a progressive rate structure for property owners, it protects small landlords while making sure big corporate landlords contribute to the city.

We had to had to face difficult choices in the last few months, as we looked at a \$30m budget gap -- and the economy is going to take a while to recover. It's time to act now before we face another cycle of painful cuts.

Please don't let corporate interests derail this important move -- please put this to a vote in November.

Sincerely,
Michelle Chan
North and East

From: [Ron Holthuysen](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: "Public comments – agenda item #_G-1 NOVEMBER BALLOT MEASURE BUISNESS TAX RATE STRUCTURE.
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 2:58:04 PM

“Public comments – agenda item # G-1 NOVEMBER BALLOT MEASURE BUISNESS TAX RATE STRUCTURE.

Comments from :

Ron Holthuysen
CEO/Creative Director Scientific art Studio

-The world has changed. There is a new reality.

-What was maybe a good idea in 2019 has to be reviewed in a fresh way in 2020

-During the last City Council meeting the Major and Council members were in agreement that the process to develop the Ballot Measure was flawed, rushed and incomplete in its inclusiveness.

Therefor the impact of tax on gross receipts for businesses should be researched and projected into the future.

And the Measure should **not be put** on the Ballot for November

-Richmond has become/has been attractive for small and medium sized businesses and artists.

Crane Way, Marway Building etc.

-Those businesses are all hanging on by their fingernails to stay alive because of the Covid Pandemic.

They are digging into reserves, trying to keep going and to make it through this crisis.

Imposing a substantial additional burden in the form of a Gross Receipts Tax likely will push those businesses over the edge.

-Local small and medium sized businesses are very important in providing employment and training opportunities for local communities.

A close community-relationship between local business owners and local communities is essential in the process of lifting up the most vulnerable in our City.

-At this very moment, in this very City, we are on the brink of a breakthrough in community driven economic progress.

From the inside out.

Key part of this community driven process is the start up of small businesses by members of the community.

In the new Tax concept there need to be given consideration to exemptions and opportunities to support community driven small and medium sized businesses.

This new tax, if not thought through properly and deeply can form an obstacle to community development.

Others are working hard to remove or lower obstacles. It would be wise for the City to consider if they want to add a new one.

Do not push to get the Measure on the Ballot without due process and inclusion of all stakeholders in the City of Richmond.

Ron Holthuysen
CEO/Creative Director Scientific Art Studio
Secretary of the Iron Triangle Neighborhood Council
Consultant and Community partner POGO PARK



Ron Holthuysen
Scientific Art Studio
(510) 232-9629
500 B Street

Richmond, CA 94801
scientificartstudio.com



From: [Sean Hallinan](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#); [Tom Butt - external](#); [City Clerk Dept](#); [Tom Butt - external](#); [Ben Choi](#); [Nat Bates](#); [Eduardo Martinez](#); [Demnlus Johnson](#); [Jael Myrick](#); [Melvin Willis](#)
Subject: Public comments Agenda item #G-1 BALLOT MEASURE BUSINESS TAX -GROSS RECEIPTS
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 2:37:30 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Dear City Council of Richmond;

I am writing to protest the rush to put this measure on the ballot before conducting adequate outreach and polling of the business community, the stakeholders in your proposed measure. While we realize that some reasonable increases may be needed, the measure as it was presented on 7/28/20 will kill our ability to remain in Richmond as it results in a tax increase of over 10X what we pay now for a business license (\$375 in 2019 to \$27,800 under the proposed measure!!) and such a cost would require us to move. While we sometimes have healthy gross revenue, our margins are slim, typically 1% of gross income due to our extremely high operating costs due to our being signatory to the Carpenters and DC 16 collective bargaining agreements which require high wages and high benefit contributions resulting in very slim profit margins. I realize times are hard for the City, but times are hard for businesses too. We had to get a Paycheck Protection loan just to stay afloat and hire back employees that were let go in March. That money is gone now and we are starting to lay off again. This tax would only serve to accelerate this process and would ensure fewer re-hires.

I am especially disturbed by the way the city is trying to rush the measure in by 8/7/20 without time for adequate comment, except from the SEIU special interest PAC Lift Up Richmond who are obviously well prepared and had adequate time to organize for this measure. Most businesses only found out about this measure on 7/21/20 if at all. No one in the business community, the population directly impacted by the proposed tax revision, was polled by the public employee union special interest PAC Lift Up Richmond as to the popularity or feasibility of such a tax revision. Furthermore there is no information on what other measures were looked at such as reducing salaries, pension contributions or staff. As well as being a confused message regarding what the tax structure will look like making impact forecasting impossible, there is no information on what the proposed revenue increase would be used for; to pay for pension costs? Salaries? Health care? Crime reduction? Improved infrastructure? Does the increased revenue do anything for the business community? Crime prevention? Street maintenance? Infrastructure improvements? Or does all the money just benefit city employees?

Furthermore, I request that any City Council member that is a current or former city employee or a member/represented by of any of the unions represented by Lift Up Richmond recuse themselves from any votes on this issue as it presents a clear conflict of interest to vote on a measure that a Council member will directly benefit from monetarily.

Finally, I request that to prevent the exodus of business from Richmond please PROVIDE DIRECTION to staff on further revisions to the draft measure and direct staff to schedule a special meeting for Council to consider placing the measure on the **November 3, 2021 ballot**. Please do not attempt additional taxation when the economy is in crisis. Postponement will give everyone the needed

time to participate, organize and contribute to an EQUITABLE calculation, if a revision is really needed at all, not one that only benefits the city employees. It will also give the economy time to recover. In the alternative I would ask that the measure not be considered at all and other avenues of revenue streams be looked for. We are in the midst of a PANDEMIC, and our business is barely staying afloat as it is. The timing seems extremely poor and sends the message that Richmond does not appreciate its business community, and looks at the business community as a bank account to be raided when fiscal management fails. Please listen to ALL of your constituents, not just Lift Up Richmond, as we all have a stake in being in Richmond. Fairness. Equality. Justice. For all. Thank you and I trust that as my representatives in Richmond, you will have ALL your constituents best interest in mind as well. Please support your local business community!

Regards,

Sean Hallinan
Sunshine Commercial Construction, Inc.
833 South 19th Street Unit C
Richmond, CA 94804
p 510-620-0595 f 510-620-0593
www.sunshineconst.com



From: [Sophie Van Ronselé](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: Public comments - Agenda Item G-1
Date: Tuesday, August 04, 2020 7:59:55 PM

My name is Sophie Van Ronselé, and I am a member of this community. I am urging the Richmond city council to support the proposed Lift Up Richmond Plan.

The proposed Richmond model will help address Richmond's on-going structural budget deficit and move the City toward a more sustainable future based on the unique attributes that the business community holds in Richmond.

We can all agree we need to reform the business tax in Richmond. The current structure is giving big businesses a free ride for far too long and it is time they pay their fair share.

The proposed progressive Richmond Business business tax encourages businesses to grow and be part of the communities in Richmond while ensuring this is a fair tax.

Now is the time to act as we recover from the financial crisis. Currently, homeowners are subsidizing big businesses in Richmond as the tax structure is outdated and unfair. The big businesses, such as Chevron need to pay their fair share to continue having thriving businesses and communities in Richmond.

If we do not act now we will face another cycle of drastic budget cuts.

The Lift Up Richmond plan creates a progressive rate structure for property owners. **This means small property owners are no longer burdened by the big landlords paying the same rate.** A progressive model would protect small landlords that are usually more connected to the community while making sure large landlords contribute to the City. Richmond is a city of small businesses and local thriving industries. We cannot allow corporate interests and large landlords to strike down this crucial legislation.

This Lift Up Richmond plan legislation is being modeled after several Bay Area cities to rebuild Richmond to the thriving city it once was. We must provide a business tax structure that will allow us to invest in our community, in our kids, and our small businesses so that it is fair to everyone.

Thank you for your time.

Best,
Sophie

Sophie Van Ronselé
All Pronouns
*Community Social Worker &
Empowering Disabled Humans*
+1 415-216-3376

From: [A.M](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: Public comments - agenda item G-1
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 10:11:24 AM

Honorable City Council,

I strongly oppose provisions in the draft Richmond Business Tax measure proposed for the November ballot that trap small housing providers already under rent control.

I am a small housing provider owning rent-controlled 4-plex in Richmond. The rent is about two-thirds of the market rate. Small housing providers like me have very thin margins. I cannot lower costs that include mortgage, property tax, insurance, repairs, maintenance, and city fees. I cannot increase rent above inflation, when these costs can and do increase above inflation. Tax based on gross rent receipts when the housing provider cannot increase rent to offset is unfair. This is because, when the rent and the costs are about break even, a 1% or 0.5% tax on gross receipt will deny a housing provider any return on investment.

Thus, the language in the proposed Richmond Business Tax measure specifically target small property owners like me. Driving small housing providers away from Richmond will create more housing shortage.

Xin Ma

Sabrina Lundy

From: Yen Do <Yen.Do@seiu1021.org>
Sent: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 3:00 PM
To: City Clerk Dept
Subject: 8.5.20 Public Comment, Agenda Item G1 (for the record)

For the 8.5.20 City of Richmond Council Agenda - Item G1 Public Comments

My name is Yen Do, and I am urging the Richmond city council to support the proposed **Lift Up Richmond Plan**.

The proposed Richmond model will help address Richmond's on-going structural budget deficit and move the City toward a more sustainable future based on the unique attributes that the business community holds in Richmond.

We can all agree we need to reform the business tax in Richmond. The current structure is giving big businesses a free ride for far too long and it is time they pay their fair share.

The proposed progressive Richmond Business tax encourages businesses to grow and be part of the communities in Richmond while ensuring this is a fair tax.

Now is the time to act as we recover from the financial crisis. Currently homeowners are subsidizing big businesses in Richmond as the tax structure is outdated and unfair. The big businesses need to pay their fair share to continue having thriving businesses and communities in Richmond.

If we do not act now we will face another cycle of drastic budget cuts.

The Lift Up Richmond plan creates a progressive rate structure for property owners. This means small property owners are no longer burdened by the big landlords paying the same rate.

A progressive model would protect small landlords that are usually more connected to the community while making sure large landlords contribute to the City.

Richmond is a city of small businesses and local thriving industries. We cannot allow corporate interest and large landlords to strike down this crucial legislation.

This Lift Up Richmond plan legislation is being modeled after several Bay Area cities to rebuild Richmond to the thriving city it once was.

We must provide a business tax structure that will allow us to invest in our community, in our kids, and our small businesses so that it is fair to everyone.

**Together, we will build a better Richmond!
STRONGER TOGETHER!!!!**

Yen L. Do, MPP

SEIU 1021
Field Representative

From: [Edith Pastrano](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: Public Comments Item # G1
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 4:30:59 PM

The following are public comments from ACCE members:

1) My name is Eulalia Galvan, I am an ACCE member of Richmond and I am urging the Richmond city council to support the proposed Lift Up Richmond Plan. The Lift Up Richmond plan creates a progressive rate structure for property owners. This means small property owners are no longer burdened by the big landlords paying the same rate. We can all agree we need to reform the business tax in Richmond. The current structure is giving big businesses a free ride for far too long and it is time they pay their fair share. AAK Oils, a consumable food oil production company in Richmond has \$3 Billion in annual income, but they pay as little as \$3,012 in taxes to our city! We must provide a business tax structure that will allow us to invest in our community, in our kids, and our small businesses so that it is fair to everyone. I urge you to support the Lift Up Richmond model to support all communities in Richmond.

2) Asuncion Carmona, member of ACCE and Richmond resident. I urge the city council to support the proposed Lift Up Richmond Plan. Richmond is a city of small businesses and local thriving industries. We cannot allow corporate interest and large landlords to strike down this crucial legislation. We can all agree we need to reform the business tax in Richmond. The current structure is giving big businesses a free ride for far too long and it is time they pay their fair share. North Richmond Properties, a large property management company in Richmond has \$1.2 million in annual income, but they pay as little as \$655 in taxes to our city! We must provide a business tax structure that will allow us to invest in our community, in our kids, and our small businesses so that it is fair to everyone. I urge you to support the Lift Up Richmond model to support all communities in Richmond.

3) My name is Zenaida Avalos and I am urging the Richmond city council to support the proposed Lift Up Richmond Plan. The proposed progressive Richmond Business business tax encourages businesses to grow and be part of the communities in Richmond while ensuring this is a fair tax. We can all agree we need to reform the business tax in Richmond. The current structure is giving big businesses a free ride for far too long and it is time they pay their fair share. Sims Metal Management, in Richmond pays as little as \$4,411 in taxes. We must provide a business tax structure that will allow us to invest in our community, in our kids, and our small businesses so that it is fair to everyone. I urge you to support the Lift Up Richmond model to support all communities in Richmond.

4) My name is Irene Gonzalez, member of ACCE. I am urging the Richmond city council to support the proposed Lift Up Richmond Plan. The proposed Lift Up Richmond model will help address Richmond's on-going structural budget deficit and move the City toward a more sustainable future based on the unique attributes that the business community holds in Richmond. We can all agree we need to reform the business tax in Richmond. The current structure is giving big businesses a free ride for far too long and it is time they pay their fair share. Blue Apron, a food service

group with a location in Richmond, pays an annual revenue of \$904 million and pays \$40,500 in taxes in Richmond! We must provide a business tax structure that will allow us to invest in our community, in our kids, and our small businesses so that it is fair to everyone. I urge you to support the Lift Up Richmond model thank you.

5) My name is Fernando Avalos and I am urging the Richmond city council to support the proposed Lift Up Richmond Plan. Now is the time to act as we recover from the financial crisis. Currently homeowners are subsidizing big businesses in Richmond as the tax structure is outdated and unfair. We can all agree we need to reform the business tax in Richmond. The current structure is giving big businesses a free ride for far too long and it is time they pay their fair share. Oliver & Co, a construction management group in Richmond, has an annual revenue of \$45.79 million and pays as little as \$2,406.60 in taxes in Richmond! We must provide a business tax structure that will allow us to invest in our community, in our kids, and our small businesses so that it is fair to everyone. I urge you to support the Lift Up Richmond model to support all communities in Richmond.

6) My name is Isela Zepeda, and I am urging the Richmond city council to support the proposed Lift Up Richmond Plan. Now is the time to act as we recover from the financial crisis. Currently homeowners are subsidizing big businesses in Richmond as the tax structure is outdated and unfair. We can all agree we need to reform the business tax in Richmond. The current structure is giving big businesses a free ride for far too long and it is time they pay their fair share. Broadspectrum Americas, an oil refinery in Richmond pays as little as \$20,451.60 in taxes to our city! We must provide a business tax structure that will allow us to invest in our community, in our kids, and our small businesses so that it is fair to everyone. I urge you to support the Lift Up Richmond model to support all communities in Richmond.

Thank you to ALL City Staff and have a wonderful evening!

Richmond ACCE

From: [Colleen Christie-Putnam](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: public comments-agenda item #G-1
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 4:27:42 PM

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

I am in favor of the Homekey Prrogram Hotel Acquisition in Richmond Project. I have known a few unhoused persons whose lives would be greatly stabilized by this program.

Thank you, Colleen Christie-Putnam

Sabrina Lundy

From: El Agave Azul <hello@agaveazulca.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 3:14 PM
To: City Clerk Dept
Subject: 1) public comments – agenda item ##G-1

Dear Mayor and City Council,

The Richmond Chamber of Commerce has brought to our attention that the City is considering a ballot measure to increase business taxes. Please let it be known that we are opposed to this measure and especially at this time.

Prior to El Agave Azul opening just under a year and a half ago, the former Gonzalez restaurant sat blighted for more than 10 years. We invested a significant amount of our own money to renovate the property. Our customers love that they can walk or ride their bikes to our restaurant and bar. We are grateful that the community has welcomed us and express that we have filled a much needed void.

We'd like to inform you of what has happened and why we are opposed to this measure.

1. We opened our doors in March of 2019. We had to close for Covid in March of 2020, just one week prior to our one year anniversary.
2. We applied to all three of the financial assistance programs.
3. We began with 34 employees. We are down to 6.
4. Our monthly cash deposits for a month are equivalent to one day's deposit prior to Covid.
5. Depending on how long we remain closed for indoor dining, we may have to shut down permanently

Please reconsider.

Respectfully submitted,
Joaquin Rodriguez
Owner
El Agave Azul Mexican Restaurant
510-307-5749

From: [Kevin Tisdell](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: City of Richmond Council Agenda - Item G1 -Public Comment
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 3:50:02 PM

Mayor and Council Members,
My name is Kevin Tisdell, and I am urging the Richmond city council to support the proposed, **Lift Up Richmond Plan**.

The proposed Richmond model will help address Richmond's on-going structural budget deficit and move the City toward a more sustainable future based on the unique attributes that the business community holds in Richmond.

We can all agree we need to reform the business tax in Richmond. The current structure is giving big businesses a free ride for far too long and it is time they pay their fair share.

The proposed progressive Richmond Business business tax encourages businesses to grow and be part of the communities in Richmond while ensuring this is a fair tax. Now is the time to act as we recover from the financial crisis. Currently homeowners are subsidizing big businesses in Richmond as the tax structure is outdated and unfair. The big businesses need to pay their fair share to continue having thriving businesses and communities in Richmond.

If we do not act now we will face another cycle of drastic budget cuts.

The Lift Up Richmond plan creates a progressive rate structure for property owners. This means small property owners are no longer burdened by the big landlords paying the same rate.

A progressive model would protect small landlords that are usually more connected to the community while making sure large landlords contribute to the City.

Richmond is a city of small businesses and local thriving industries. We cannot allow corporate interest and large landlords to strike down this crucial legislation.

This Lift Up Richmond plan legislation is being modeled after several Bay Area cities to rebuild Richmond to the thriving city it once was.

We must provide a business tax structure that will allow us to invest in our community, in our kids, and our small businesses so that it is fair to everyone.

Thank you for your time!

K. Tisdell

K. Tisdell

From: [Stan Niedzwiedz](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: Public comments -agenda item #G-1.
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 5:28:03 PM

My name is Alina Niedzwiedz and I and my husband are small housing providers in Richmond.

Staff has highlighted in their report the financial duress small housing providers have been experiencing both before and throughout this COVID-19 crisis.

We own a fourplex, duplex and a single family dwelling, representing investment of a lifetime savings and sole source of retirement income for us, as a first generation immigrant family.

Our business license tax would go up from \$720 to over \$4,500, more than sixfold under the Berkeley 2.88% tax model. This is on top of the highest property taxes in the county, recently increased sewer rates, ever increasing rent board fees, fire department fees, rental inspection fees, mortgage, maintenance, repair expenses and capped rents. Just recently we spent over \$35,000 on seismic retrofit and over \$5,000 on sewer lateral, but are not passing this expense on our tenants.

This tax model is being sold to the unsuspecting public as affecting mostly big billion dollar businesses (multiple text messages to that effect were sent earlier today to Richmond residents).

We are not billionaires, but hard working family who have been responsible, lived frugally, and saved up for their retirement. Who knows what other forms of savings will be taken away from us next. Not to mention that any home owner may have to become a landlord because of a change in circumstances.

I'm thankful that the city staff has worked hard to hear and respond to small housing providers' concerns during this rushed and chaotic process.

If the Council is determined to move forward with a process that lacks adequate research and stakeholder input, we urge you to adopt a table with the least financial impact for each industry, especially for small housing providers.

Alina Niedzwiedz

From: [Andrea Mullarkey](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: Public comments - Agenda Item G-1
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 5:30:14 PM

- *Good afternoon,*
-
- *My name is Andrea Mullarkey. I am a Richmond resident and a member of SEIU 1021 and I am urging the Richmond city council to support the proposed Lift Up Richmond Plan.*
-
- This will help address Richmond's on-going budget deficit and move us toward a more sustainable future. Big businesses haven't paid their fair share in far too long and it's clear the business tax in Richmond needs reform. This proposal is a progressive business tax which is fair and which encourages businesses to be part of the communities they are in. Right now homeowners subsidize big business under the outdated, unfair tax structure and if there ever was a time when we needed to flip that balance, it is now. Multiple rounds of budget cuts have meant cuts to staff budgets and services to the community and it's time for us to start recovering from financial crises instead of going into another cycle. The way to do that is to hold big businesses accountable to pay their fair share and allow our communities to thrive. That's why the Lift Up Richmond plan is ideal - it's a progressive rate structure for property owners meaning larger property owners like big landlords will pay more than small, community-based landlords and the same for businesses.
-
- Don't cave in to the demands of big corporate interests who seek to defeat this crucial legislation. Let Richmond join other Bay Area cities in rebuilding through the progressive Lift Up Richmond plan and bring in the resources that will allow us to invest in our community and in our kids in a way that it is fair to everyone.
-
- Thank you.

Sabrina Lundy

From: Christina <credse@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 5:34 PM
To: City Clerk Dept
Subject: public comments - agenda item G-1

Dear Mayor and Councilmen,

I am a long-time Richmond resident and I am writing about the proposed gross receipts business tax ordinance, item G-1.

I am deeply concerned that such a huge shift in Richmond's tax structure would be put before the voters in such a hurried and unstudied way. It is certainly reasonable to explore alternative business tax structures. But it is unreasonable and irresponsible to push something like this forward without a deliberate and thoughtful assessment of the impact on city revenues, existing businesses, future business potential, and Richmond residents.

Additionally, moving this along in a rushed fashion without adequately engaging the existing business stakeholders no doubt sends a chill throughout our business community. How prudent is it for businesses to continue to operate in a city with so little regard for what they're currently experiencing? We are in the midst of an unprecedented global pandemic that is having far-reaching and still unknown effects on all of us including our business community.

I am grateful to city staff members who have made notable efforts to gather input under an unrealistic timeline. They have worked hard to hear and respond to concerns. If given enough time, they no doubt will engage stakeholders for meaningful input and adequately study the potential impact on our city. But in the short time since this was introduced, that has not been possible. There has been inadequate stakeholder input, inadequate research, inadequate risk assessment about possible decline in businesses, jobs, and tax revenue.

If the council members are determined to move forward, in spite of such a haphazard process and potential risk to our city, then I implore you to adopt a combined table with the least potential harm possible for each industry.

But better yet, please afford our capable city staff the opportunity to do this job right on behalf of all of us. Do not pursue a ballot measure at this time.

Sincerely,
Christina Redse

From: [Craig Murray](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: Public Comments - Agenda Item G-1
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 5:31:09 PM
Attachments: [Council Gross Bus Tax 8 5 20.docx](#)

Craig K. Murray
Local 21
SUPPORT for G-1 Gross Receipts Business Tax

Mayor, Members of City Council:

I encourage you to Adopt the Resolution placing a Gross Receipts Model Business Tax on the November 3, 2020 ballot. Updating Richmond's Business Tax to this model will provide a balanced charge to the level of business performed in Richmond. Small businesses with \$250,000 or less in gross revenue can balance their budgets with a nominal \$200. Charge. Other businesses with this new formula can project and plan on an annual basis with this new formula based on the category they are in and what their Business License Tax will be. Voting tonight to add this Gross Receipts Model Business Tax will allow the electorate in Richmond to determine if Richmond can model a program similar to Berkeley, Oakland and San Francisco and help Richmond meet its budget obligations and help provide necessary local government service levels.

: Council Gross Bus Tax 8 5 20

Craig K. Murray, SR/WA
Development Project Manager II
City Manager's Office
Chief, Property Asset Management Division
Pt Molate Community Advisory Committee Staff Liaison
450 Civic Center Plaza, 2nd Floor, Richmond, CA 94804-1630
510-620-6512 Main Line
510-307-8188 Direct
510-621-1734 Fax

From: [Denny Khamphanthong](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: public comments – agenda item #_G-1_
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 5:34:30 PM



Dear Mayor Butt and City Council Members,

My name is Denny Khamphanthong, and I'm writing on behalf of the Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN) and our Richmond Members.

APEN is urging the Richmond City Council to modernize the Richmond Business Tax, moving it to a tiered gross receipts tax. We believe a tier tax structure for businesses and rental property is a fair and equitable solution for all.

A revenue measure is needed to help with the city's deficit budget. By providing a tiered business tax structure, it'll allow us to continue investing in our kids, our families and our community, without adding too much burden to our small businesses and landlords.

Sincerely,

*Denny Khamphanthong- Richmond Community Organizer
The Asian Pacific Environmental Network and APEN's Richmond members (names and zip codes listed below)*

- 1. Lipo Chanthanasak (94806)**
- 2. Saeng Chanthanasak (94806)**
- 3. Boon Manivong (94805)**
- 4. Saeng Douangdara (94805)**
- 5. Inn Vilayngeun (94804)**
- 6. Kham Vivideth (94804)**
- 7. Siengther Lakthanasouk (94801)**
- 8. Boun Rattana (94801)**
- 9. Tom Chanthanasak (94804)**
- 9. La Can Sengnang (94804)**
- 10. Kro Boonkert (94804)**
- 11. Seuy Karnsouvong (94804)**
- 12. Tia Phongvongsa (94804)**
- 13. Chomkeo Maneevorn (94806)**

14. Seng Syvanthong (94804)
15. Kam Setoui (94805)
16. Chris Karnsouvong (94806)
17. Asya Saechao (94806)
18. Arwa Asif (94804)
19. Megan Chao (94804)
20. Nathan Phousanouraj (94806)
21. Brandy Khansouvong (94804)
22. Puja Dahal (94520)
23. Chanhday Phanhdara (94806)
24. Hom Anlavan (94547)
25. Bhagirath Dahal (94806)
26. Fey Saeteurn (94806)
27. Sarah Lee (94806)
28. Nai Saeteurn (94804)
29. Vicky Saechao (94804)
30. Muey Saeteurn (94803)
31. Linda Saelio (94806)

--

Denny Khamphanthong

Pronoun: He, Him

Richmond Community Organizer, Asian Pacific Environmental Network



p: 510-236-4616 X 336 a: 12818 San Pablo, Richmond, CA 94805

426 17th Street, #500 Oakland, CA 94612

s: apen4ej.org e: denny@apen4ej.org

From: [Rosmarie Levy](#)
To: [Tom Butt - external](#); [City Clerk Dept](#); [Nat Bates](#); [Ben Choi](#); [Demnlus Johnson](#); [Eduardo Martinez](#); joel_myrick@ci.richmond.ca.us
Subject: business tax ordinance item G-1
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 5:27:27 PM

Dear Mayor,
Dear Council Members and City Clerk,

Our names are Ephraim and Rosmarie Levy. We are senior citizens and small housing providers in Richmond and are writing in regards to the proposed gross receipts business tax ordinance, item G-1.

Staff has highlighted in their report the financial duress small housing providers have been experiencing both before and throughout this OVID 19 crises.

Due to Covid 19, one third of our tenants are unable to pay rent and live in their apartments for free, while we provide a roof over their head as well as water and garbage.. ALL of our apartments have rents that are way below market rents, some only pay 1/3 of market rent and most pay less than 1/2 of market rents. Our rents are indefinitely blocked by rent control, while our building is going to need substantial upgrades in the future, such as a new roof, which is going to be \$60,000, new plumbing and electrical, not to mention new kitchens and bathrooms. How do you expect us to pay for all of these expenses, when the small profits are going to be eaten up by ever increasing Property Taxes and City Fees?

We are thankful that city staff has worked hard to hear and respond to small housing providers concerns during what has been a rushed and chaotic process. We are an integral part of Richmond, however just one piece of the greater business community that is struggling each day to survive.

If the Council is determined to move forward with a process that lacks adequate research and stakeholder input as well as a proper risk assessment based on the foreseeable impact on our city as a whole and possible decline in businesses, jobs and tax revenue, we urge you to adopt a combined table with the least financial impact possible for each industry.

Sincerely,

Ephraim and Rosmarie Levy

From: [Gayle McLaughlin](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: Public Comments - Item G-1
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 5:44:01 PM

PLEASE READ MY COMMENTS BELOW FOR THIS ITEM. THANKS, GAYLE

Good evening, Mayor and City Councilmembers,

My name is Gayle McLaughlin. I am urging the City Council to support the Gross Receipts business tax structure recommended by city staff using Berkeley's rates as a floor. I also urge an amendment that includes tiers for the tax on rental property, just as the business tax has tiers. The city council has already voted in favor of this structure.

This is fair and it means small property owners will pay a lower rate and larger big landlords will pay their fair share. The proposed model will help address Richmond's on-going structural budget deficit and move the City toward a more sustainable future based on the unique attributes that the business community holds in Richmond.

We can all agree it is crucial that the city council supports this and puts this measure on the November Ballot. Currently the city is facing massive budget deficits.

Richmond is a city of small businesses and local thriving industries. This measure allows everyone to do their part without creating hardship. We must provide a business tax structure that will allow us to invest in our community, our kids, and our small businesses so that it is fair to everyone.

Thank you for listening.

From: liang.jenniferj@gmail.com
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: Public comments - agenda item #G-1
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 5:49:26 PM

My name is Jennifer Liang, and I'm a small housing provider in Richmond.

I'm writing concerning the proposed gross receipts business tax ordinance, item # G-1.

Staff has highlighted in their report the financial duress that small housing providers have been experiencing both before and throughout this COVID-19 crisis. My Existing rent board fees, License fee, sewer taxes, lost rents with no way to recoup, inspection fees, etc. already add up as the barriers to maintaining positive cash flow of my business as a housing provider in Richmond. As proposed, we'd be the Only business owner whose gross receipts (let alone net incomes) is regulated and taxed by the city. State and federal governments only tax us net incomes!

I'm appreciate that city staff worked hard to hear and respond to small housing providers' concerns during what has been a rushed and chaotic and rogue process. We're an integral part of Richmond, however, just one piece of the greater business community that is struggling each day to survive.

If the Council is determined to move forward with a process that lacks adequate research and stakeholders' input as well as a proper risk assessment based on the foreseeable impact on our city as a whole and possible decline in businesses, jobs, and tax revenue, I urge you to adopt a combined table with the least financial impact possible for the small housing providers.

Respectful,

Jennifer Liang

From: [Jill Perry](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: public comments - agenda item #G-1
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 5:32:03 PM

Good evening. My name is Jill Perry and I am both a long-time Richmond resident and a city employee. I am urging the Council to support option one or option two for the tax measure on the November ballot. Not only does the current Richmond business license tax generate insufficient revenue, but it is also very inequitable, especially when it comes to rental properties. A progressive approach is needed to insure that the burden is divided equally between the small and the big landlords and the small and big businesses, and that they all pay their fair share. Currently a landlord with one rental unit pays exactly the same as a landlord with hundreds of rental units. It's no surprise that these big corporate interests are now opposing this tax measure.

This is a progressive tax and smaller businesses, those with gross receipts under \$250,000 will actually pay less than they do now, while the lion's share will be paid by the 400 largest corporations. This tax measure would get Richmond on par with neighboring cities. Richmond has been revenue-deficient year after year. It seems that there has been a perpetual budget crisis. Services to the public have suffered. The council must choose an option that will bring in significant new revenue. This absolutely must be on the November ballot. There is no time to waste.

Remember that this **must be** approved by the voters. This doesn't take effect for another year, and it doesn't need to be perfect, because the council has the ability to adjust it downward if they decide they need to. There really is no downside to this.

From: [Leisa Johnson](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Cc: [Tom Butt - external](#); [Nat Bates](#); [Eduardo Martinez](#); [Demnlus Johnson](#); [Jael Myrick](#); [Melvin Willis](#); [Ben Choi](#); [Leisa Johnson](#)
Subject: Public Comments - Agenda Item G-1, Gross Receipts Business Tax (8/5/2020)
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 5:27:18 PM

Dear City Clerk,

I would like to provide oral comment on Item G-1. My phone number is 415-420-5840.

I would also like the below comments to be included in the formal written record.

Thank you,
Leisa

Dear Mayor, Vice Mayor, and City Councilmen -

Good evening.

I am urging the Council to not rush and place this measure on the November ballot.

During this COVID-19 pandemic, many residents and small business owners are in survival mode. If they have not already closed their doors, many are just hanging on by a thread. The addition of yet another financial burden will be too much for many to handle. And when they close their doors or move, that means more employees will or are likely to lose their jobs as well.

While businesses understand the City is facing a structural deficit and the need to raise revenue as well as a general willingness to pay more, the process must be reasonable, transparent, recognize each sector's unique attributes, and thoughtfully researched as well as executed.

Increasing the tax burden on small businesses at this time will only encourage businesses to leave, or force them to close their doors for good. The end result will be an even greater structural deficit for Richmond, and the decay of our essential small business community.

I very much appreciate and want to thank City Staff's time and effort to hear and respond to feedback from the community to help try and make this proposed ballot measure be Richmond-specific, business-specific, balanced and effective. But two (2) weeks is completely realistic, and no City Staff or business community could pull off such a pipe dream.

It was very clear from those that participated in that process over the past 14 days, that all businesses want the city council to delay this rushed ballot measure. They are respectfully requesting sufficient time for a proper blue ribbon committee to be formed and all businesses are allowed to provide critical, sector-specific input in order to draft a tax policy that is fair, balanced and effective.

You have heard from the Council of Industries, Chamber of Commerce, 23rd St Merchants, AURHP, other groups, and numerous other businesses that may not be represented by those entities. Sadly, many businesses are still unaware that this is even being discussed. The most recent changes were published a mere 24 hours ago, preventing some businesses from even being able to calculate their financial impact.

Over the past two weeks, City Staff has intimated that if a majority council wanted to proceed with putting this on the November ballot, that they could always “correct” (i.e., reduce) tax rates after the fact, if voters approved it.

This is highly irresponsible. And with three (3) city council seats up for election this November, it is also smoke & mirrors as the council will be comprised of new members who may not believe in “correcting” tax rates after the fact. Moreover, we’ve all been here with Measure L, where certain council members repeatedly made false promises to correct widely known flaws, and four years later they have never even been discussed let alone come to fruition.

While a progressive business tax structure may sound good in theory, effective, balanced policy and legislation can only occur when all key stakeholders are engaged and have a seat at the table, and when this process is not rushed but thoughtfully and collaboratively administered. This current policy is not progressive; rather, it is punitive and harmful.

As I proposed to City Staff last Friday and which they included in tonight’s Staff Report, I am requesting that this Council delay this ballot measure until March or June 2021. The \$75K to \$150K that it would cost is money well spent to ensure that this process is done correctly and provides a better chance at generating a net revenue gain as opposed to loss due to businesses either closing their doors or leaving Richmond.

Please remember that Richmond is Richmond. We are not San Francisco, Oakland or Berkeley. Richmond has unique challenges and opportunities, and unlike these other cities, our economic recovery following the financial crisis was still “in progress” pre-Covid. Richmond has now lost that momentum, and this will be the final nail in the coffin for many businesses if you don’t listen to them & heed their informed, cautionary words — after all, they are the ones who actually own and operate the business.

In closing, please stop letting certain groups & outside interests try and control Richmond’s fate as they are merely looking out for themselves, not this City, its residents or its businesses.

Respectfully,

Leisa Johnson
20 year Richmond Resident

From: [Sandy Saeteurn](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: Public Comments- Item #G-1
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 5:31:45 PM

Hi Mayor Tom Butt and City Council Members,

My name is Lio Sandy Saeteurn, a proud long time Richmond resident.

I'm urging you to support the Gross Receipts business tax structure that's recommended by your staff, using Berkeley's rates as a floor. I would like to recommend the city use a tier tax system and not a flat tax for rental properties. This will allow the smaller landlords with less property to pay an equitable rate, and charge the bigger landlords their fair share in taxes.

Currently the city is facing massive budget deficits, and I think we can all agree that it's crucial the city puts a tax revenue measure on the November Ballot. Please support Richmond families, local jobs, and small businesses by voting YES to placing an equitable tax measure on the November 2020 Ballot.

Thank you,
Lio Sandy Saeteurn

Sabrina Lundy

From: Michael Gliksohn <mglksohn@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 5:31 PM
To: City Clerk Dept
Subject: Public comments - Agenda Item G-1

Dear Mayor Butt and Council Members,

My name is Michael Gliksohn and I am a Richmond resident. I am urging the Richmond city council to support the proposed Lift Up Richmond Plan for revising our City's business license fee structure.

The Lift Up Richmond plan will help address Richmond's on-going structural budget deficit and move the City toward a more sustainable future based on the unique attributes that the business community holds in Richmond.

Now is the time to act as we recover from the current financial crisis. Currently homeowners are subsidizing big businesses in Richmond as the tax structure is outdated and unfair.

This Lift Up Richmond plan legislation is being modeled after several Bay Area cities to rebuild Richmond to the thriving city it once was. It will provide us with a business tax structure that will allow us to invest in our community, in our kids, and our small businesses so that it is fair to everyone.

Thank you for your consideration.

Michael Gliksohn

From: [Paul Benton](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Cc: [James Lee](#)
Subject: agenda item ##G-1 - (A BUSINESS OWNER AGAINST)
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 5:28:17 PM

Mr. Mayor & City Council Members:

Speaking as a business owner:

1. Please **table this issue until Governors' shelter in place order is fully lifted & business operations can resume normally.** Now is not the time to discuss a tax increase: businesses are struggling to survive and a hike can trigger unanticipated consequences (below) that make things even worse.

2. Timing and the present economy aside, this idea is bad because it creates an incentive to leave Richmond: Work From Home is here to stay. Many people who commute into Richmond have concluded that offices are no longer necessary at all in a Zoom world. A gross receipt tax may push more than a trivial number to relocate their offices closer to home or eliminate them permanently. Certainly, **a gross receipts Tax that is not uniform across the state will be a reason to not open an office in Richmond in the first place.**

Respectfully,

Paul Benton
Managing Director
Baybridge Communications, LLC

From: [Sadie Egan](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: Public Comment: G-1 Gross Receipts Tax
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 5:37:17 PM

I am writing to urge you to vote yes on moving from a payroll tax to a gross receipts tax on the ballot this November. It is clear that sitting on this will delay funding our city desperately needs for years, which is unacceptable.

Lack of funding consistently impacts our most vulnerable community members and support services which is not equitable and not a reflection of our city's values. So, while paying higher tax rates may be difficult for some businesses that are accustomed to paying less, the alternative would be to continue to put the funding burden on individuals and families that need the most support. Please move to get this measure on the ballot so the people can vote to prioritize people over profit.

Thank you,
Sadie Egan

From: [Susan Pricco](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Subject: Public Comments - Agenda Item G-1, Gross Receipts Business Tax (8/5/2020)
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 5:35:56 PM

Per your instructions on the posted agenda, I wish my comments presented to the City Council and as part of the record.

I strongly oppose the proposed Gross Receipts Tax being considered for the November 2020 ballot. Businesses and patrons alike are feeling the pinch and challenges presented by COVID-19. The City will probably not even have a good idea of the actual amount of the impact for at least another fiscal year. Businesses need support from their city, not more struggles. I worry about the impact on small business, many of them minority-owned, and how large business could pass on the tax in the form of higher prices to already financially strapped patrons.

The Gross Receipts Tax proposal exacerbates a time of struggle for Richmond businesses. I encourage a NO vote and consider this at another time.

Susan L. Pricco
Contra Costa Taxpayers Association

From: [Home JT](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept](#)
Cc: [JT Home](#)
Subject: Public comments - agenda item #G-1
Date: Wednesday, August 05, 2020 5:45:59 PM

My name is Tengfang Xu, and I'm a small housing provider in Richmond.

I'm writing concerning the proposed gross receipts business tax ordinance, item # G-1.

Staff has highlighted in their report the financial duress that small housing providers have been experiencing both before and throughout this COVID-19 crisis. My Existing rent board fees, License fee, sewer taxes, lost rents with no way to recoup, inspection fees, etc. already add up as the barriers to maintaining positive cash flow of my business as a housing provider in Richmond. As proposed, we'd be the Only business owner whose gross receipts (let alone net incomes) is regulated and taxed by the city. State and federal governments only tax us net incomes!

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If the Council is determined to move forward with a process that lacks adequate research and stakeholders' input as well as a proper risk assessment based on the foreseeable impact on our city as a whole and possible decline in businesses, jobs, and tax revenue, I urge you to adopt a combined table with the least financial impact possible for the small housing providers.

Respectful,

Tengfang Xu