

**City Manager's Weekly Report**  
**For the week ending June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

**1. Meeting Notes**

The next City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 1<sup>st</sup>, beginning with a Closed Session at 5:30 PM, followed by Housing Authority and Redevelopment meetings prior to the regular City Council meeting at 7:00 PM.

Note that the meeting schedule for July is as follows:

- July 1<sup>st</sup> - Regular City Council meeting
- July 15<sup>th</sup> - Regular City Council meeting, which will include hearing of the appeals on the Chevron Hydrogen Renewal Project, and will take place at Kennedy High School in order to accommodate the expected number of people in attendance. Note that we would like to keep other business items to an absolute minimum (business necessity only) at this meeting.
- July 22<sup>nd</sup> - Regular City Council meeting. Normally, the fourth Tuesday is used for Study Sessions; however, because of the limited agenda on July 15<sup>th</sup>, we will plan to have a regular business agenda.
- July 29<sup>th</sup> - Regular City Council meeting.

**2. Update on Train Traffic and United States Surface Transportation Board Actions**

As you will recall, the City Council received information regarding a recent action of the U.S. Surface Transportation Board (STB) that may result in a substantial increase in long train traffic through south Richmond. The STB action relates to an agreement giving Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) trackage rights over the Union Pacific's (UP's) facilities, which agreement effectively limits the number of long intermodal trains otherwise moving through the middle of Richmond. In short, the STB ruled that BNSF has no explicit authority from the STB to run trains on the Union Pacific track at this time.

This past week, Scott Dickey and I met with Juan Acosta and several other representatives from BNSF concerning this issue. These individuals were in Richmond, in part, to make a site visit to areas where a "crossover" from the UP tracks to the BNSF tracks might be constructed that would help in allowing BNSF to continue to use UP tracks through central Richmond, thereby limiting the number of long BNSF trains running along the south shoreline. As you recall, we previously had conversations with Union Pacific representatives who indicated that this was their preferred "solution" to this problem. The BNSF representatives also indicated that they were expecting to receive additional information from UP regarding the STB decision as early as next week, and would then let the City know how they

would suggest we approach this issue to protect the interests of the Richmond community.

We will continue to work on this issue, and will continue to keep you informed.

### 3. **Update on Toluene Spill at Reaction Products, 841 Morton Avenue**

As you recall, on Monday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, a hazardous chemical spill was discovered at Reaction Products, 840 Morton Avenue in Richmond. A storage tank that was vandalized during the prior weekend caused a significant spill of Toluene, approximately 3,300 to 3,600 gallons. The product flowed into a nearby drainage ditch and seeped under the railroad tracks into the Parchester Marsh, which opens into San Pablo Bay, with a resulting impact on fish and wildlife in the area.

Fire Chief Michael Banks has reported that, as of June 18<sup>th</sup>, the above referenced facility is 100% compliant on the fire related violations identified during the first joint inspection of May 20, 2008 and a subsequent inspection of June 4, 2008. The other participating agencies during this joint enforcement were Bay Area Air Quality Management District, Storm Water, and Contra Costa County Hazardous Materials. We are uncertain whether the business owner has complied with all other violations from these various agencies.

The following list describes all of the Fire related corrections that took place during the course of the Fire Department inspections and follow-up.

- 1) Hydrofluoric Acid was removed from the site;
- 2) Toluene tanks (source of release) were removed from the site;
- 3) New inventory sheets were generated for non reported chemicals (Resins A & B, Lube oil, nitrogen);
- 4) Site diagram was updated;
- 5) Excessive paper clutter was removed from the main office;
- 6) Lab shelving was anchored at the base and secured at the top to an overhead beam;
- 7) Lab chemicals were secured in shelving units with horizontal wire (across the mid-section of jars and flasks);
- 8) A 10-foot break was cut around the perimeter of all structures where dry grass existed;
- 9) Empty drum area was designated on the site diagram;
- 10) Deteriorated wood framing for secondary containment was removed;
- 11) All storage drums/barrels were identified with approved labels;
- 12) NFPA 704 Diamond labeling was properly and conspicuously displayed on all buildings;
- 13) Extension cords were removed along with illegally spliced wiring;
- 14) Compressed gas cylinder at the facility's main entrance was removed; other compressed gas cylinders on site were properly secured;
- 15) All flammable containers storing product were placed in approved storage cabinets.

4. **Nystrom Revitalization Effort (NURVE) Update**

As you will recall, the City of Richmond is engaged with the West Contra Costa County Unified School District (WCCUSD), along with the East Bay Community Foundation, LISC, the Richmond Children’s Foundation, the National Park Service, and Contra Costa County, on a joint planning effort that involves renovation of Nystrom School, MLK Park and Community Center, Nystrom Village, the Maritime Child Care Center, and the surrounding area. This planning effort is difficult in that it has a number of “moving parts” related to facilities and funding.

As you may also recall, the School District recently halted their work on the Maritime Child Care Center, which was to be part of the Richmond College Prep campus, because the cost estimates were very high relative to the current funding (\$4 million committed [including \$500,000 from the City] against a possible \$8 million construction cost).

At a meeting this past week, a new facilities option was discussed to help bring the Maritime Child Care Center back into active development. Under this new preferred option, the Maritime Center would be renovated to provide support services for the new Nystrom Village that is being planned by the Housing Authority. The School District would plan to locate the Richmond College Prep elsewhere on the Nystrom campus. This option will help get the Maritime Center project moving again, with the next step being to develop a conceptual building program for Housing Authority use of the Maritime Center, using part of the \$500,000 City funding commitment.

We will keep you informed as this process moves forward.

5. **Richmond Code Enforcement – “One Block at a Time” Program: A Review by a Parchester Community Member**

As you recall, the Richmond Code Enforcement team completed a pilot, comprehensive code enforcement clean up on a block in the Parchester neighborhood which launched on Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup>. Participants in this code enforcement clean up included the Police Department Code Enforcement staff, the Public Works Department, Engineering Department, City Attorney’s office, Fire Department, the RichmondWorks “Helping Hands” program, and other community groups and volunteers.

I don’t often forward to you compliments that City staff members receive from community members (yes, we do get them); I believe that good service should be an expectation and not an exception, and that it should be its own reward. However, many City staff members were involved in this pilot effort in Parchester, and I wanted to share excerpts from an e-mail that Michelle Milam, Police Department Crime Prevention Coordinator, received from an area resident last week:

Hello Michelle:

All I can say is "WOW". It was a big job and the City of Richmond made a nice difference here at Parchester Village. We will look at our City's departments in a new light, a more positive one. Richmond came and gave us a helping hand and we needed it. The fear of code enforcement has changed now; we understand the need for us to maintain our homes and yards. Instead of just passing out citations they reached out extending a helping hand and understanding plus a nice dose of patience. I know there were some rough areas but for the most part it went well. Many residents were surprised by how the City came forward and helped us. When I spoke to my neighbors the response was so very positive. The Fire Department's concern for our safety was so very helpful and made us feel that we are in good hands in case of emergency. The Police Department and crime prevention came and it was good to have them here showing the concern for us all, plus they did a lot of working and talking to many residents. The City Attorney's office, Public Works, the Recreation Division, Parks Division, and the Manager's office; all these City departments came and they worked hard – I mean really worked, it was a sign of unity and that was impressive. Many of the youth from the Youth Academy walked, worked, and helped, it was so positive. CCISCO and Sims Metal came extending a strong helping hand. Let's not forget the volunteers who put so much effort to helping. It was a job well done. We want to say thank you so very much. Parchester residents needed a boost of good energy and a helping hand to help us turn the tide toward a more positive outlook and this was what was needed. We thank God for the special people who put so much effort into extending a helping hand. Please come again; we still have a lot of seniors that need a helping hand, and many blocks that need cleaning. Working together we can make Parchester shine.

I appreciate this person taking the time to write this e-mail, and I appreciate the efforts of all those involved in this initial "one block at a time" effort. The next scheduled project is being planned for the Iron Triangle, on Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup>.

## **6. Richmond Sends Strike Team to Butte County**

This afternoon at 4:00 PM, the crew of Engine 67 was sent out on Strike Team 2025A to the Butte (BTU) Lightning Complex Fire in Butte County. This crew is accompanied by local Fire Engines from El Cerrito and Crockett. Earlier in the week, the City sent Battalion Chief Merlin Turner to the same fire as an Assistant Strike Team Leader, and Engineer Sal Bonilla went with his State Overhead team as a Communications Unit Leader to the Lime Complex Fire in Trinity County. The smoke plume that we are witnessing in Richmond and throughout the Bay Area is caused by the 30 major wildfires currently burning in the state. Twenty four of those

fires are located in Northern California. Unfortunately, the weather forecast is calling for further dry thunderstorms this weekend in higher elevations. The Fire Chief will keep you updated as information is received.

**7. Recent Bond Insurer Downgrade Effects City Bonds**

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, the monoline bond insurer MBIA received a downgrade to its credit ratings to AA by Standard & Poor's Rating Agency and Moody's Investor Services. MBIA insures the City's RDA 2003 and 2007 bonds. As a result of this downgrade, the Redevelopment Agency must take action to replace the MBIA-backed surety bond, purchase a letter of credit, or provide a cash reserve from cash. Finance Staff are working with Redevelopment Staff to contact AAA-rated bond insurers and banks to develop options. We will keep you informed.

**8. Caltrans' Hilltop Drive Bridge Replacement Project**

Caltrans presented an overview of its Hilltop Drive Bridge replacement project at a special West County Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC) meeting held this week. The cities of Richmond, San Pablo, and Pinole, along with AC Transit and WestCAT, were in attendance.

The Richmond exit at Hilltop Drive off of I-80 has two overcrossings. One overcrossing handles the westbound traffic on Hilltop Drive over I-80 (this is the newer bridge) and the other handles the eastbound traffic. Caltrans is preparing to remove the eastbound Hilltop Drive bridge and replace it with a new one. This work will correct the seismic issues that they have with the piers and abutments, and will also raise the vertical clearance of this bridge to match the westbound bridge. During the bridge demolition, the freeway will be fully closed in both directions for about 14 hours. The traffic will be detoured around the bridge area via the interchange off/on ramps. This closure will be done at night between a Saturday and a Sunday.

During the construction of the new bridge, and improvements to the interchange landscaping, a permanent detour will be set up using Blume Drive as the connector to the freeway between Hilltop Drive and the Richmond Parkway. The project is scheduled to start in September/October of 2008 and should take about 8 months to complete. As this project gets closer to construction, a link will be made available from the City's webpage to Caltrans for project updates.

**9. Environmental Work for Richmond Ferry Terminal to Commence**

Redevelopment Director Alan Wolken attended the Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) Board meeting last Thursday, June 19<sup>th</sup>. At the meeting, the Board approved the award of a contract with PBS+J for the Richmond Ferry Terminal Environmental Assessment. Within the next few weeks, City, WETA and PBS+J staffs will meet to scope this work effort in order to ensure compliance with NEPA and CEQA requirements. Following the preparation of a

detailed project scope and work schedule, a Notice to Proceed is planned to be issued in September. Proposition 1B funding has been secured to fund this work.

**10. Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS) – Weekly Highlights**

- ONS met with the Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department to begin a partnership and develop a plan that will expand Early Childhood (Pre-Kindergarten) mental health services to Richmond children and families, and educational support services for Richmond high school students who are in or transitioning from the foster care system. We are currently developing a concept paper and proposal to present to public system stakeholders in the coming weeks.
- ONS, as part of the Richmond Community Wellness Collaborative, which was formed as part of Richmond’s successful CalGrip funding effort, developed and submitted two federal grant proposals on behalf of the Richmond Community Wellness Initiative to increase street outreach coordination, expand school and street outreach services, and to build and increase the City of Richmond’s youth mentoring capacity. Combined, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention program grants, if awarded, would provide up to \$700,000 over two years to the City.
- ONS met with regional leadership of the “Brady Campaign to Stop Gun Violence” to explore ways that the City and the Campaign might work together with other jurisdictions to expand the regional voice and reach on issues and impacts of gun violence.

**11. Neighborhood Change Agent (NCA) Report (Street Outreach)**

As part of the City’s Outreach and Community Resource Teams, ONS Neighborhood Change Agents (NCA’s) provide daily/ongoing school and street based outreach to identified at-risk youth and young adults who are disconnected from human service delivery opportunities. This week, the activities of the outreach team included:

- Networking with community and family members on the scene of recent shootings, including relevant (connected) street violence/shootings in other jurisdictions;
- Attended Parole and Corrections Team (PACT) meeting;
- Attended workshops in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD);
- Attended Silence the Violence Vigils throughout the City;
- Attended and participated in Juneteenth Event and activities.

**12. Youth Sports Camp**

On Saturday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, the Recreation Department, in collaboration with the Office of Neighborhood Safety, conducted a Youth Sports Camp at Martin Luther King

Community Center Park. The event hosted more than 100 kids to mini sports camps in Basketball, Soccer, Football, and Cheerleading. Special guest, Children's Author and Pilot Andre Lewis, appeared to read his book "I Want to Fly". Mr. Lewis signed and provided 100 books for the children in attendance. A free lunch was also provided to each child in attendance. The Mayor, the Public Works Department, Police Department, and Fire Department all provided support and participation in creating a successful event.

**13. Music on the Main**

The first of four "Music on the Main" concerts, sponsored by Richmond Main Street, took place on June 25<sup>th</sup> at Marina Way and 14<sup>th</sup> Street. The next three concerts are planned for July 23<sup>rd</sup>, August 20<sup>th</sup> and September 24<sup>th</sup>.

**14. Redevelopment Housing Projects Receive Low-Income Tax Credits**

Both the Arbors and Carquinez rehabilitation projects were awarded low-income tax credits by the state, which will ensure that these Redevelopment Agency Housing Division projects to move forward with construction.

**15. Recreation Department Highlights**

The following are current and future activities of the Richmond Recreation Department:

- The Recreation Department has employed 4 new lifeguards to help with summer programs. All are graduates of our in-house lifeguard training course. These certified staff will begin offering CPR and First Aid courses as fee-based classes available to the general public. In addition, the staff will also conduct internal staff training.
- The Recreation Department received a \$1,000 donation from the Department of Boating Waterways for the purchase of life jackets to be used at the swim center.
- The Recreation Department and WCCUSD have begun a series of meetings to consolidate the language of a Joint Facility Use Agreement that will allow WCCUSD and the Recreation Department to expand programs and facility uses for the community.
- The Recreation Department met with Laura Johnson, Board President of Girls, Inc., on Monday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, to discuss opportunities of support and collaborations. On behalf of Girls, Inc., Ms. Johnson accepted the Recreation Department's offer of support, and the City of Richmond looks forward to this future relationship.

17. **Herbert Pike, Deputy Finance Director, Becomes Finance Director of ABAG**

Herbert Pike, the City's Deputy Finance Director for the last three years, has accepted the position as Director of Finance for the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) located in Oakland. As you know, ABAG is a regional organization that counts every city and county in the greater San Francisco Bay Area among its members, so Herb will, at least indirectly, still be serving the Richmond community. Herb has done a great job here in Richmond during the past three years as part of the Finance Department team, and he will be missed.