

**City Manager's Weekly Report**  
**For the week ending October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

1. **Meeting Notes**

The next regular City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, beginning with a Closed Session at 5:00 PM, followed by Redevelopment items at 6:00 PM, and the regular City Council agenda at 7:00 PM.

As a reminder, there is no City Council meeting on the first Tuesday in November (November 4<sup>th</sup> [Election Day]).

2. **City Celebrates Arts and Humanities Month**

The Richmond Arts & Culture Commission held its tenth October celebration of Arts & Humanities month last Saturday at the Richmond High School Theater. The purpose of the event is to bring attention to the value of arts and culture in the community, and October is designated nationally to this focus. The event featured performances by recipients of mini-grants provided by an annual donation from the Raymond Family Foundation and several others:

- The Art of Ballet School of Dance
- Bay Area Steppers
- Ethnic Arts Institute
- Gadung Kasturi Balinese Dance and Music
- Palomino Productions
- RYSE Center
- SF Seahawks Jazz Team
- SEAYL (Southeast Asian Youth Leadership)
- Youth Together, and
- Special Guest, Tia Carroll -- local blues artist

Other activities included a mask-making workshop by the Richmond Art Center, and amazing face painting by Brandy Esparza of Painted Wonderland.

The Richmond High School Theater is a first-class facility that lent itself well to the many dance performances and videos of arts and culture programs in Richmond, including a movie called "Long Odds – Finding an Apple in Richmond" created by local youth and ArtsChange, a local art non-profit and former recipient of a Raymond Family Foundation mini-grant.

The Arts & Culture Commission was proud to have the opportunity to feature youth performers and local arts and culture oriented groups. It is also forming a Youth Committee that will be meeting at the new RYSE Youth Center just opened by the County on 41<sup>st</sup> Street in Richmond.

3. **Wastewater Revenue Refunding Bonds**

On Wednesday, the Finance Department completed the sale of \$33 million of Wastewater Revenue and Refunding Bonds, Series 2008, refunding the prior bonds issued in 2006 which were insured by recently credit downgraded Ambac. The new bonds are backed by a Letter of Credit from Union Bank of California and carry an initial interest rate of 2.4%, representing a significant savings in interest costs. In the past six months, the Wastewater Enterprise's credit rating, as assigned by Standard & Poor's Rating Service, has received two separate upgrades, equal to a full five notches to the current "AA-". The improved rating reflects the system's strong debt service coverage, approved rate schedule and system capacity.

4. **Audit of Measure C Funds**

The City of Richmond was randomly selected by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) for an audit of its use of Measure C funds this past fiscal year. The results of the audit reported no findings or questioned costs and gave the City a clean opinion. The City of Richmond receives a little over \$1 million each year in Measure C "return-to-source" revenue, which is a critical element of funding for pavement maintenance programs, in addition to project specific revenue. The existing Measure C is a half-percent transportation sales tax that was approved by Contra Costa County voters in 1988, and will be officially replaced by voter-approved Measure J in 2009, providing the same tax rate and similar project specific and return-to-source funding for the City of Richmond.

5. **Hilltop Drive Overpass Replacement**

As you know, 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. As I previously reported to you (June 27<sup>th</sup>), Caltrans has a project to remove the eastbound Hilltop Drive bridge and replace it with a new one. This work is to 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.

Unfortunately, the bridge closure associated with this project was scheduled to occur during the height of the holiday shopping season, and the manager of Hilltop Mall contacted the City of Richmond to indicate his concerns regarding financial impacts on mall retailers. As a result, Public Works Director Yader Bermudez

contacted representatives of Caltrans, and we are working with them to delay this closure until after the first of the calendar year. Thus far, Caltrans has been very cooperative in working with the City to adjust their construction schedule.

We will keep you informed as our conversations continue.

6. **Public Works Project Update**

This past week, the Public Works Department completed the resurfacing of Santa Rita Road from El Sobrante to May Road. Next week, the Department will be resurfacing West Bissell within the Atchison Village neighborhood.

Next week, the Public Works Department will also be finishing the “face lift” improvements at the Museum on Nevin. This face lift is being timed with the reopening of Nevin Park, which is scheduled for Saturday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>.