

## **City Manager's Weekly Report**

This is the weekly report for the week ending January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

### 1. **Meeting Notes**

The next regular City Council meeting is the swearing-in ceremony for re-elected and newly-elected Councilmembers Bates, Butt and Ritterman, with recognition for outgoing Vice-Mayor/Councilmembers Marquez and Sandhu. The ceremony begins at 6:30 PM in the City Council Chambers, to be followed by a reception at the Ford Assembly Building Craneway. During the remainder of the month of January, the Council is scheduled to meet on January 20<sup>th</sup> and January 27<sup>th</sup>.

Please note that there is a special meeting of the City Council, convening as the Housing Authority Board at 5:00 PM on Tuesday, January 13<sup>th</sup> to consider approval of the security contract.

### 2. **Richmond Community Event for the Inaugural**

The City of Richmond and the Neighborhood House of North Richmond are co-sponsoring a Richmond community live-event viewing of the Inaugural Ceremony in Washington, D.C. The event is Tuesday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, at the Richmond Memorial Auditorium at 403 Civic Center Plaza. The event begins with a buffet breakfast at 6:00 AM, with the live inaugural ceremony viewing at 7:00 AM.

There is no charge for this event, but there is limited seating for 2,000 attendees on a first come/first serve basis.

### 3. **Richmond Receives Visit by Member of Federal Reserve Board of Governors**

On Monday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, Randall S. Kroszner, Ph.D., Member Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, visited the City of Richmond and toured many of its neighborhoods. The visit and tour were related to the City's Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), a partnership between the Richmond Community Redevelopment Agency and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

As you will recall, the Richmond NSP is based upon an integrated program delivery system addressing physical development (housing) challenges that, once implemented, will create economic stabilization opportunities.

In conjunction with Dr. Kroszner's visit, the City's Redevelopment/ Housing section coordinated a tour of targeted neighborhoods and provided an overview of the NSP program for federal officials, and representatives from a number of non-profit housing agencies and foundations.

4. **Environmental Initiatives on the City Website**

As part of a greater effort to improve community education on environmental issues and services in the City of Richmond, City environmental staff members have developed Environmental Initiatives webpages that have been published on the City's website and can be viewed at:

<http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/index.asp?NID=1610> .

The web pages include a comprehensive section on Solid Waste and Recycling that details garbage and recycling collection services, special waste disposal options, and other waste reduction resources. The Solid Waste and Recycling webpage can be viewed at:

<http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/index.asp?NID=1709> .

Other topics include the Urban Environmental Accords, climate change, stormwater, and City environmental teams. The Environmental Initiatives section of the City website will be expanded over the next few months to include additional environmental topics and services.

5. **Business License Mailers Begin the Implementation of Measure T**

In the coming weeks the Business License Division will mail out approximately 4,100 letters to all Richmond based businesses advising them of the changes that will impact them because of the passage of Measure T.

There are two major changes to the business license as a result of this measure passed by the voters in November 2008. First, all business licenses will now have a common expiration date of December 31<sup>st</sup>, instead of one year from the date the license was originally issued. This means that, beginning January 1, 2009, a new license must be obtained and the license fee paid by March 15th of each year. Every business with a current license will receive a credit for the months already paid for in 2009. For example, if a business's license expires on June 30, 2009, that business will receive six months credit and will owe six months for the new license which will have an expiration date of December 31, 2009.

Second, under Measure T, any business engaged in manufacturing is subject to a new, alternate fee requirement and will need to submit data to the City of Richmond indicating the value of raw materials used in production during 2008. The license fee for manufacturing businesses will now be the larger of one quarter of one percent (0.25%) of the fair market value of the raw materials used in the manufacturing process in the previous year, or the amount as calculated based on the number of employees, as in years past.

As part of the Measure T implementation notice, businesses will receive a Frequently Asked Questions sheet and an outline of the changed sections of the Business License Ordinance.

## 6. **Revised Schedule for I-80 Hilltop Drive Bridge Replacement Project**

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, 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.

As you may recall, the bridge closure associated with this project was scheduled to occur during the height of the holiday shopping season, and Caltrans was very cooperative in adjusting their construction schedule so as not to adversely affect Hilltop merchants.

The updated construction activities for eastbound and westbound traffic at Interstate 80 and Hilltop Drive have now been rescheduled to the week of January 12<sup>th</sup>. Specific activities moving ahead are as follows:

- Temporary lane closures for westbound I-80, from the Richmond Parkway overcrossing to the I-80 Hilltop Drive onramp, are tentatively scheduled for Monday evening, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 PM to 5:00 AM. Crews will be re-striping lane lines and shifting traffic to the right. California Highway Patrol officers will be present during construction and temporary lane closures.
- There will be a one-lane closure of westbound Hilltop Drive on Tuesday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 AM. One lane will be closed while the westbound bridge is re-striped for two-way traffic.
- Following the re-striping of westbound Hilltop Drive, two-way traffic will begin on the bridge. The eastbound bridge and the associated eastbound loop on-ramp to I-80 will be closed and will remain closed until construction is complete in 2010.
- Interstate 80 at Hilltop Drive will be closed in both directions from 9:00 PM, Saturday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, to 11:00 AM, Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, for bridge demolition. Eastbound and westbound traffic will be detoured to the onramps and offramps. During the demolition, the Hilltop Drive overcrossing will be closed at I-80 and traffic will be detoured to El Portal Road, Richmond Parkway, and Appian Way via city streets. Motorists will be advised to expect delays and take alternate routes.

More information about the project and planned detours can be found at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/80hilltop>.

## 7. News from the League of California Cities

Buried in the economic bad news and State budget soap opera described in our regular reports from the League of California Cities, there is some potential good news for cities. In particular:

- The proposed Obama-Biden emergency plan would make \$25 billion immediately available in a Jobs and Growth Fund to help ensure that in-progress and fast-tracked infrastructure projects are not sidelined, and to ensure that schools can meet their energy costs and undertake key repairs starting this fall.
- Senator Dianne Feinstein has introduced S. 116, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to allocate \$10 billion of Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) funds to local governments that have suffered significant losses due to highly-rated investments in failed financial institutions. It is unsure how this legislation might affect the City of Richmond.

The League also reports that a “State budget solution (is) nowhere in sight.”

## 8. Job Training in the Wastewater Field

The City of Richmond, through RichmondWORKS, has begun the STAR job training program which seeks to train individuals for careers in the wastewater field. STAR represents a great opportunity for a young person to obtain a well-paid career in a recession-resistant, professional field, as well as a way for Veolia Water to develop potential employees for its operation of Richmond’s wastewater treatment plant.

The principles of STAR, which align with the values of the City and with basic principles for success in life, are:

- **Safety** – safety of self and concern for the safety of others.
- **Training** – quality education and training to learn to produce quality results with maximum efficiency.
- **Accountability** - accountability to oneself, one’s vocation, the community, and the environment.
- **Reliability** - reliability that promotes work as a team toward the greater good of the project.

This is a 3-year training program that includes 6 months working in 4 general areas (laboratory, plant operations, plant maintenance, and collections system maintenance) followed by a year of specific area training which could possibly occur at other Veolia-operated facilities. On-the-job training will also be combined with educational requirements provided by a community college and/or correspondence courses.

Veolia is funding the first two trainees for the three year period at an hourly rate of \$14 or \$15 per hour. The program received 50 applications and the two selected initially will begin the program in February.

9. **Meetings of Note During the Past Week**

I attended several meetings of note during the past week, which may be of interest to you:

- Mayor McLaughlin and I, together with the Mayor's staff member Nicole Valentino, met with Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates and three of his staff members in a productive discussion regarding ways in which to identify and implement some joint projects through the East Bay Green Corridor partnership.
- I met with Philip Ashcroft, who is currently President of Veolia Water North America, West LLC and who is relocating from Massachusetts to the San Francisco Bay area to, in part, oversee the Richmond contract with Veolia. This was a very productive "get acquainted" meeting.

10. **Arts & Culture Highlights**

- The Arts & Culture Commission had its annual retreat on Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup> to work on their vision for the Commission, and to begin work on a 3-year Strategic Plan.
- There are two openings on the 11-member Arts & Culture Commission which meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM in the Recreation Complex. Anyone interested is invited to attend, with the next meeting being January 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Staff is working with the Richmond Art Center to design the 2009 Neighborhood Public Art program. Each year, the program's participants and projects change, reflecting the community in new ways. This year's focus will include public art and performance. The City and the Art Center are also working with teaching staff at Oakland's California College of the Arts.

11. **Library Highlights**

- On December 11<sup>th</sup>, about 72 participants watched the Nick Barone Puppets program "Holiday Treats." It was a fun family activity that entertained all ages.
- 2009 is the Year of the Library Card at the Richmond Public Library! This is an opportunity for everyone to discover the many services, programs, and materials that the library has available – and a **FREE** library card is the best way to take advantage of them. Adults and teens can register for a library card via the Internet: <http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/index.asp?nid=810>.

12. **City Receives Budget Excellence Award**

The City of Richmond has been selected to receive the Excellence Award from the California Society of Municipal Finance Officers (CSMFO) as part of their Budget Awards Program. The awards program is designed to recognize those agencies that have prepared a budget document or a communication tool that meets certain standards.

This year, the City submitted their Budget-in-Brief to the Public Communications category of the program. This document highlights and summarizes the City's accomplishments in reflecting management policies and community priorities through the operating and capital improvement plan budgets. It is intended for use by the general public and the citizens of the City of Richmond and is available on the City's website at <http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/index.asp?NID=1000> .

13. **Public Works Highlights**

Public Works has completed the resurfacing of Bayview Avenue from 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue to San Pablo Avenue. Next week, Public Works will resurface Columbia Avenue from San Joaquin Street to Huntington Avenue.

14. **Recreation Highlights**

The following are highlights from the Recreation Department for the past several weeks:

- **Candy Cane Classic Basketball Tournament:** The Recreation Department held the annual tournament on December 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Youth, consisting of 14 teams, participated in the 14 and under, 12, and under and 10 and under age categories. Qualifying games were held at the Richmond Recreation Complex and the final games were held at the Richmond Pal Gym and the newly remodeled Richmond Auditorium. Photos can be viewed at: [www.eteamz.active.com/richmondyouthsports](http://www.eteamz.active.com/richmondyouthsports)
- **Polar Bear Swim:** The Recreation Department Swim Center held its first Senior Polar Bear Swim which provided a lovely morning open swim for seniors. A complimentary aqua-aerobics class, juice, coffee and pastries were offered.
- **New Aquatics Classes:** The Recreation Department Swim Center, in collaboration with the Albany Adult School, has begun offering new classes, including arthritic and back therapy sessions.
- **Increased Participation:** The Recreation Department Swim Center has been experiencing an increase in swim participants due to the closure and reconstruction of Albany Pool.

15. **E-Mail Subscription to the City Manager's Weekly Report**

This weekly report is provided directly to City Councilmembers, and is posted on the City's website. It is also frequently forwarded as e-mail to other interest community members.

If any of you are reading this and would like to receive the weekly report e-mailed to you directly, please sign up at the city's website, [www.ci.richmond.ca.us](http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us) under E-services, City Manager's weekly report.