

City Manager's Weekly Report

This is the weekly report for the week ending December 11th, 2009.

1. **Meeting Notes**

The next regular City Council meeting is scheduled for this Tuesday, December 15th beginning with a Closed Session at 5:00 PM to be followed by the regular agenda at 6:30 PM.

2. **Moody's Investor Services Affirms City's Credit Rating**

Moody's Investor Services ("Moody's") has affirmed the City's General credit rating at A2, signifying above-average creditworthiness. This affirmation follows a recent meeting with Moody's analysts that included the City Manager, Finance Director, Executive Director of the Richmond Community Redevelopment Agency, Executive Director of the Richmond Housing Authority, and members of the City's Bond Financing Team. During this meeting, the City provided an update on the current financial condition and future projections of the General Fund, Richmond Community Redevelopment Agency, and the Westridge at Hilltop Apartments. Information provided to Moody's included the prior year's financial results for the various funds compared to FY2009-10 forecasts, details regarding FY2009-10 budgets, including recent budget reductions, and discussion about future plans. Results of the credit review for the Redevelopment Agency are expected within the next week. Moody's maintains ratings on the City's 1999A Pension Obligation Bonds, the 2000A and B Tax Allocation Bonds, and the 2007 Westridge at Hilltop Bonds.

3. **Bids Received on BART Parking Garage Project**

One of the Richmond Redevelopment Agency's key projects in rebuilding the downtown area is building a new BART parking garage that will allow for a new phase of transit village development near the BART station. Despite the recent financial struggles of the Redevelopment Agency, this project is fully funded through a combination of local funds and federal grants. Last Friday, bids were opened for the project, and Overaa is the apparent low bidder at \$20,739,000. This is an excellent bid for a project with an engineer's estimate of \$23,789,000. Agency and legal staff are currently in the process of evaluating the bid for completeness.

4. **Planning Commission Hears Comments on 2nd Draft of General Plan**

The second draft of Richmond's updated General Plan was released for public review on Tuesday, December 1st. The Planning Commission heard comments on this draft at a special study session held this past Wednesday, December 9th.

In addition to Commission input, 30 speakers shared their observations about the revised version of the Plan.

Based upon Commission and public comments received during earlier hearings, staff modified wording in the plan to address issues raised by representatives of the Council of Industries, Virtual Development, and Citizens for East Shore Parks (CESP). As you may know, CESP had previously expressed concerns about perceived threats to the Pt. Isabel Dog Park that would result from conversion of this area from light industrial to commercial. The revised draft retains the existing land use designation.

During Thursday night's study session, some community members expressed their appreciation for modifications that have been included in the revised draft, while others expressed concerns about the elimination of language that committed the City to develop numerous supplemental plans and programs that were included in the earlier draft.

Staff explained that many of the programs that were initially proposed are managed by regional or state agencies, or require consideration and approval outside of a General Plan. Staff intends to retain this information as a "menu of optional plans, policies and programs" and it will be made available as a supplement to the plan for reference and consideration by the City Council, Boards, and Commissions.

This 2nd draft of the General Plan will be transmitted to the City Council during Tuesday's meeting.

5. **Geographic Information System (GIS) Assistance in Tracking Foreclosure Activity**

The Information Technology Department's GIS staff recently developed and produced a map, in collaboration with Housing & Community Development staff, to help track foreclosure activity in the City. The map features parcel level detail, as well as block level address ranges, with zip code boundaries serving as a backdrop. It will be employed in a "push-pin" mode to enable daily updating and rapid visualization of foreclosure locations. This real-time picture of the housing market will help identify buying opportunities for the Housing Division, especially where available properties are located in proximity to schools or parks, as the neighborhood stabilization program continues to roll forward.

6. **Meeting with Senator Boxer's Staff Regarding CyberTran**

You undoubtedly recall the interesting presentation that the City Council received from CyberTran, which is the passenger programmable, ultra-light rail system company that is interested in pursuing a project in Richmond and is partnering with the City on a federal transportation stimulus grant. This past week, City staff members, Councilmember Ritterman, and representatives of CyberTran met with

Hilary Pearson, Special Projects Director for Senator Barbara Boxer, to provide information on the project and the grant proposal. Staff continues to work to gain local legislative support for funding this project and we will keep you informed as this effort moves forward.

7. **County Supervisors' 2010 Reorganization to be Held in City Council Chambers on January 5th**

It is customary for the reorganization meeting of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors to be held in the district that is the home of the future Chair. On January 5, 2010, the County Board of Supervisors will have their reorganization meeting in the Richmond City Council Chambers. KCRT is working with Contra Costa Television (the County's Government Access station) and Comcast to coordinate recording this meeting, which will be carried live and recorded so that both KCRT and the County will have broadcast and streaming versions of the program.

8. **Snow Ball Returns to Richmond Memorial Auditorium**

The Recreation Department is hosting the 57th Annual High School Snow Ball on Saturday, December 12th from 7:00 PM to midnight at the Richmond Memorial Auditorium. The gala themed "A Night at the Orient" will include 1,500 high school students from areas throughout the West Contra Costa Unified School District.

9. **Update on Public Works Projects**

- The construction of the Hilltop Richmond Police Department substation continues its excellent progress. Wall painting and tile work were completed this week. Installation of ceiling grid, windows and doors are scheduled for next week. The project now stands at 70% completion.
- The lead and asbestos abatement at the Martin Luther King Community Center also continues to progress very well at approximately 80% of completion. A follow up contract will be needed to rehabilitate all the abated areas in the building.
- The replacement of existing roofs at Fire Stations 62 and 64, and park lighting improvements at the Atchison Village, Kern and Nicholl Parks are scheduled to start next week, weather permitting.