

City Manager's Weekly Report

This is the weekly report for the week ending November 12th, 2010.

1. **Meeting Notes**

The next meeting of the City Council is this coming Tuesday, November 16th, beginning with a Closed Session at 5:00 PM and the regular agenda commencing at 6:30 PM.

2. **An Early Win for Health and Wellness Element Implementation in the Iron Triangle**

On November 8, the City, in partnership with Pogo Park, a local nonprofit organization, learned that it has received a state grant of \$1,944,700 to expand and revitalize the Elm Playlot. The money is part of \$184 million in Proposition 84 funds awarded by California State Parks in the first round of a fiercely competitive process that funded just 62 winners statewide from more than 475 applicants. MIG, the Berkeley-based planning and design firm, wrote the grant proposal for the city.

Toody Maher has been the inspirational catalyst behind the Pogo Park project to transform the Elm Playlot. The Elm Playlot is a badly underutilized half-acre park in the heart of the Iron Triangle that has seen few children in recent years, as trash, graffiti, and drug use associated with nearby abandoned houses kept kids and families away. Yet more than 3,400 children ages 0 to 11 live in the neighborhood, and the park area has great potential, with five magnificent old sycamore trees that provide shade and habitat for wild birds, and precious open space in an area of densely packed houses.

The new Elm Playlot is planned to include child-size play houses in a "global village," a rock cave, a picnic area, a tot lot with water and sand, a tricycle path that winds around the park, an arts and crafts area, benches and tables for board games, an office, a restroom, and a taco stand to serve affordable, healthy snacks. The plan for the park was created over a period of two years with the active participation of nearly 500 local residents at public meetings. A core group of residents designed the layout for the park and then built a scale model by hand at Scientific Art Studio, a local business that donated space and expertise. Planning grants for the project came from the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, Schroeder Family Fund, Chevron, East Bay Community Foundation, Stewardship Council, Capital Group, Trio Foundation, SunPower, Phalarope Foundation, and S. H. Cowell Foundation.

The project is designed to act as a catalyst for continued healthy change in a neighborhood. The total cost of the renovation project will be more than \$2.1 million. The \$1.94 million in Proposition 84 funds will be supplemented by \$127,000 from the City of Richmond, \$45,000 from The California Endowment, and \$10,000 from First 5 Contra Costa.

For more information about the project, see www.pogopark.org.

3. **Weekly Report Error Correction: Giving Credit Where Credit is Due**

In my October 29th Weekly Report, I discussed the 2010 Richmond Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) which served 652 youth this past year. I also reported on the generous sponsors that helped raise the funds, but neglected to identify California Oils Corporation as part of that group. I apologize to California Oils Corporation for my oversight and I thank them for their generous support of this program.

4. **Wastewater Treatment Plant Odor Update**

The City continues to work to address the odor issues occurring around the wastewater treatment plant. City staff is providing updates to residents who are participating in the "PtRichmondAir" google group. The City will be utilizing the HazMat division of the Fire Department to respond to and investigate odor complaints. The City is also utilizing the services of an industrial hygienist to perform ongoing hydrogen sulfide monitoring within Point Richmond and they will assist the Fire Department as necessary. Wastewater Program Manager Chad Davisson is researching the implementation of permanent air quality monitoring stations, and is actively monitoring the development of a remedial action plan to eliminate odors at the plant.

5. **City of Richmond, National Parks Service, and Ford Point, LLC Reach Agreement on Construction of Rosie the Riveter Visitor Center**

After more than a year of negotiations, the National Parks Service, Ford Point LLC., and the City of Richmond have executed a Letter of Intent (LOI) for the renovation of the Historic Oilhouse building. This 12,500 square foot structure is adjacent to the Historic Ford Assembly Building and, upon completion of the renovation, will serve as the Rosie the Riveter Visitor Education Center. The LOI outlines the major deal points and establishes the terms of the renovation work. This milestone represents a major step towards finalizing the Project Development Agreement and Lease agreements that need to be approved by the City Council before construction can begin.

6. **Lawrence Berkeley National Lab Community Advisory Group Meeting**

This past Monday, Vice-Mayor Jeff Ritterman, Community and Economic Development Director Steve Duran, Economic Development Manager Thomas Mills, Senior Development Project Manager Shasa Curl, and I attended a meeting of the Community Advisory Group (CAG) that is related to the future growth and development of the Lawrence Berkeley National Lab (LBNL). This was the second such meeting at which City staff has been in attendance. As you may know, LBNL is considering the possibility of a second campus, with the short-term interest of consolidating two satellite labs that it currently has in

Emeryville and Walnut Creek, respectively. We are continuing the process of staying actively informed as LBNL reviews its options.

7. **Carlson Boulevard Project Update**

Originally delayed by significant PG&E and EBMUD utility relocation work, the first phase of excavation finally began this past Thursday for the reconstruction of Carlson Boulevard. Depending on weather, we anticipate that the two outside lanes of Carlson will be paved by the end of the month, followed by the completion of the center lanes over the winter months, as weather allows. Once the median work is complete and final utility relocations are completed by PG&E, we anticipate that the final top lift of asphalt will be completed by the end of March or early April. This is a complete rebuild of Carlson where the crown of the road will be lowered by 12" to 15" and a new 6' wide median will be installed.

8. **Via Verdi Temporary Channel Improvements**

The Via Verdi temporary channel improvements were completed last week and San Pablo Creek is once again flowing uninterrupted. In anticipation of the upcoming rainy season, and in accordance with applicable construction site regulations, erosion control measures have been installed and are being finalized this week. The emergency bypass road will remain open to traffic, as usual, serving the residents of the Sobrante Glen neighborhood.

9. **Engineering Services Capital Improvement Program Updates**

- ***Park Plaza Series Streetlight Conversion Project:*** The poles and fixtures are being manufactured and the contractor is locating underground utilities. Field construction has started.
- ***Richmond Ohlone Greenway Gap Closure (Design):*** A public meeting is scheduled for November 18th at 6:00 PM at the multi-purpose room in the basement of the 440 Civic Center Plaza building to review the 95% design.
- ***Pavement Rehabilitation Project:*** Due to the early rain and temperature dropping to below 60F, the slurry seal contractor is hesitant to proceed. Since a two-week window is required to complete the slurry seal work, it is likely that slurry seal will be postponed until spring 2011. Slurry sealing is a cost effective pavement treatment consisting of a very thin layer of asphaltic sealant.
- ***Winehaven Historical District Emergency Stabilization Project:*** A Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued on November 3rd for a design/build contract to stabilize the most immediate hazards in the thirty five existing buildings on site. The proposal will separate costs per building so that the City can choose which buildings to stabilize based on budget and level of severity. Proposals are expected to be received December 3rd.

- **Roosevelt & McLaughlin Sewer Pipe Rehabilitation Project:** Roosevelt Avenue from San Pablo Avenue to McLaughlin Street and McLaughlin Street from Roosevelt Avenue to Key Street will be closed from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM on weekdays until November 19th. The existing sanitary sewer (SS) main pipes will be rehabilitated with pipe bursting technology, sanitary sewer maintenance holes will be removed and replaced, and SS laterals will be restored. Unfortunately, due to the existing alignment of the SS main on the streets, there is not enough width to maintain through traffic. Local traffic for the residents and emergency vehicles will be allowed to pass through the streets; however, other vehicles will be detoured.

10. **Changes to Richmond Floodplain Map**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is in the process of revising the Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM) Panels because the Wildcat and San Pablo Creek levees are not in full compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) regulations. Therefore, the delineation of the floodplain boundary of the “100-year flood” for certain locations in the City of Richmond has been revised.

This floodplain map is important for property owners in affected areas as it changes flood insurance requirements. The affected areas include Wildcat Creek, from approximately 1,900 feet downstream of Richmond Parkway to approximately 600 feet downstream of 3rd Street and San Pablo Creek, from approximately 1,400 feet downstream of the North Richmond Bypass Bridge to just downstream of 3rd Street in the Unincorporated Areas of Contra Costa County.

The Preliminary DFIRM Panels are available for inspection at the City of Richmond, Engineering Services Department and Contra Costa County. During the 90-day comment period, which ends on January 25, 2011, any person in the community may comment on the proposed floodplain delineations. These comments must be submitted to FEMA by the end of the 90 days and all comments must be received by the City of Richmond by January 18, 2011. All comments will be considered before FEMA makes its final determination at the end of the comment period.

11. **Energy Efficiency Presentation at RNCC**

Environmental Initiatives staff from the City Manager’s Office organized an energy efficiency presentation at the November 8th Richmond Neighborhood Coordinating Council (RNCC) meeting to inform residents about several low and moderate income energy efficiency programs. All low and moderate income residents were encouraged to contact these programs to see if they qualify for these programs. The four programs that presented at the RNCC meeting include:

- 1) PG&E’s Energy Partners (<http://www.pge.com/energypartners/> - 510.981.7764) – PG&E provides free energy efficiency measures, appliances,

discounted energy bills and energy education to qualifying low income households.

- 2) Contra Costa County Weatherization Program (<http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/index.aspx?nid=282> – 925.335.2100 – CCC Weatherization Program provides free energy efficiency measures and appliances to qualifying low income residents.
- 3) City of Richmond's Green Energy Training Services (GETS) Program (www.richmondenvironment.org – 510.620.5537) – The GETS program provides free energy efficiency audits and home performance measures to qualifying moderate income households. The work is performed by graduates of the City's green collar job training program RichmondBUILD.
- 4) Richmond Community Redevelopment Agency's Home Repair Program (www.ebenergy.org – 510.981.7764). The Home Repair program provides free home repairs to income qualifying residents. Home repairs may include electrical, plumbing and carpentry.

12. **Commercial Recycling Technical Assistance**

On November 9, Environmental Initiatives staff launched the Commercial Recycling Technical Assistance Program and visited businesses along 23rd Street and Macdonald Avenue. Nelson's Liquor was the first business to sign up for increased recycling service through our program, and they certainly won't be the last. This week, staff spoke with 11 businesses about recycling, disseminating posters and guides throughout the city.

13. **Public Works Department Updates**

- Public Works paving crews resurfaced Gaynor Avenue this week from 23rd Street to 29th Street. Next week, as part of the Health and Wellness program in the Belding Woods area, Public Works paving crews will resurface 17th Street between Lincoln Avenue and Visalia Avenue and 15th Street between Visalia Avenue and Coalinga Avenue.
- Public Works Building Services painters continue painting the entire interior of the auditorium. This work is expected to take approximately another week.
- Parks crews will also continue repairing the existing irrigation system along the new Carlson Boulevard fence from Broadway to Cutting Boulevard in anticipation of planting new vines along the fence.