

City Manager's Weekly Report

This is the weekly report for the week ending December 3rd, 2010.

1. **Meeting Notes**

The next City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 7th, beginning with a Closed Session at 5:00 PM, and the regular agenda beginning at 6:30 PM. At this point, there is no meeting planned for Tuesday, December 21st, so that the December 7th meeting will be the last one for the month and for the year.

2. **Via Verdi Sinkhole Update – Some Good News**

As you will recall, this past April when the Via Verde sinkhole first appeared, the City requested state financial assistance for emergency remedial measures and eventual repair subsequent to the City Manager's proclamation of a local emergency. The California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA) rejected the request, however, ascribing the incident to an apparent lack of culvert maintenance on the part of the City. Now that the culvert has been removed and inspected, however, initial forensic analysis indicates that maintenance was not a factor in the ultimate culvert collapse.

As a result, on Monday, November 22nd, the City Manager and Engineering staff, together with consultants from Nichols Consulting Engineers, met with Contra Costa Transportation Authority Executive Director Randy Iwasaki and representatives from the California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA) to, once again, discuss state assistance for the Via Verdi restoration costs based on this additional data. Following discussions at this meeting, City staff prepared and submitted to Cal EMA a new request for emergency funding.

This past Wednesday, staff received a verbal approval of the funding request, which opens the door for the City to receive reimbursement in the amount of 75% of repair costs (including both expenditures to date and future expenditures for repairs), with the City needing to cover the remaining 25% of the cost.

Credit for this bit of positive financial news can be shared among several people. First, Randy Iwasaki, CCTA Executive Director, was a strong advocate for the City with Cal EMA and helped City staff navigate through the appeal process. Councilmember Maria Viramontes, as CCTA Board representative, was in communication with Mr. Iwasaki regarding this important financial issue for the City. Next, Ryan Schaefer, of Nichols Engineering, developed and presented strong analytical data, working with City staff, to show that lack of maintenance could be ruled out as a cause of the sinkhole. City Engineer Edric Kwan and his staff have been persistent in applying their expertise to attack this problem.

Engineering analysis and design for the complete repair continues to move forward.

3. **Redevelopment Agency Receives “Urban Greening” Grant for Miraflores**

The Richmond Community Redevelopment Agency has received an “urban greening” project grant from the Strategic Growth Council in the amount of \$1.664 million for the “Miraflores Sustainable Community Greenbelt Project”. The funds will be used to assist with greening of Baxter Creek in the Miraflores development. This grant award was extremely competitive; only 23 applicants were selected statewide out of 140 applicants. \$16.6 million was awarded out of \$115 million requested, and the Miraflores Housing Development received the highest statewide grant award.

4. **City Receives Grant to Prepare Form-Based Codes**

In August of this year, the City submitted a grant application to the Strategic Growth Council for their planning grants to prepare a form-based code for Richmond commercial corridors (specifically Macdonald Avenue, San Pablo Avenue, and 23rd Street). In a nutshell, a form-based code is a means of regulating development to achieve a specific form. It helps to promote a predictable built environment by controlling physical form primarily, with a lesser focus on land use, which has been the traditional zoning model. Form-based codes can generally be successful in promoting well-designed, pedestrian-friendly downtowns.

The City’s application was ranked 7th out of 100 received, and is fully funded at \$895,210. The City partnered with the Local Government Commission, Contra Costa Health Services, and Opticos Design to prepare the grant.

5. **City of Richmond Supports Single-use Bag Ordinance at the State Capitol on November 29th**

The City of Richmond was represented by Councilmember Tom Butt in a press conference with Governor Schwarzenegger and Assemblymember Julia Brownley on Monday, November 29th, in Sacramento as part of a coalition to support local and statewide efforts to reduce the use of plastic and paper bags. The event was co-hosted by Green Cities California and the Clean Seas Coalition to highlight fast-moving efforts to restrict the use of single-use bags since a proposed California law, which would have provided uniform statewide restriction of single-use bags (AB 1998), failed to pass through the legislature in August. The press event was intended to promote local action and to urge the legislature to continue to work toward green job growth and a safer environment by adopting statewide policy that promotes reusable bags.

Attendees included elected officials from Culver City, Fremont, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Marin County, Richmond, Sacramento County, San Francisco, San Jose, San Rafael, Santa Cruz, and Ventura and representatives from CalCoast, California Coastkeeper, COARE, Earth Resource, Environment California, Girl Scouts of Central California South, Green Cities California, Green Sangha, Heal the Bay, Plastic Bag Laws, Save Our Shores, Sea Turtle Restoration Project,

Seventh Generation Advisors, Surfrider Foundation, and United Food and Commercial Workers.

6. **Wastewater Treatment Plant Digesters Updates**

The hauling of biosolids off of the wastewater treatment plant is continuing as repair of the plant digesters continues. The City is meeting with representatives from Veolia and our third-party engineering expert, El Dorado Engineering, on Monday, December 6th, to discuss the next steps in the resolution of the digester cover failures and rehabilitation of digester no. 1. A community outreach meeting is scheduled at the Wastewater Treatment Plant on Wednesday, December 8th at 9:00 AM to answer questions on the status of the plant and odor control efforts.

7. **Second Quarter Sales Tax Results**

Finance staff met this past week with MuniServices, our sales tax consulting analysts, to review sales tax figures for the 2nd quarter of 2010. The City of Richmond saw a 3.2% decrease in revenue for the 2nd quarter of 2010 compared to the 2nd quarter of 2009. Most indicators show that sales tax declines have now leveled off. Our economic categories remain well diversified, led by General Retail which made up 31.2% of the sales tax revenue, due in large part to Costco, Wal-Mart and Target. Of significance, the category of New Auto Sales increased during this quarter.

8. **Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) Transportation Fund for Clean Air (TFCA)**

On November 17th, the City received notice from the BAAQMD that it was successful in obtaining a grant totaling \$675,200 for a shuttle / feeder vanpool service. The new shuttle service will commence early next year and will serve major employment centers throughout the City of Richmond with connections to BART and AC Transit.

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

- **Pavement Rehabilitation Program:** The current paving contractor will perform striping and loop detector repairs at several locations in the coming weeks. Staff is coordinating with PG&E and EBMUD to lower certain service utilities on 18th Street and Costa Avenue, with reconstruction scheduled in the spring of 2011, after the rainy season. Because of weather conditions, slurry seal operations will be conducted in the spring as well.
- **Park Plaza Series Streetlight Conversion:** Drilling for streetlight pole foundations will start Monday, December 6th.
- **Martin Luther King Jr. Park Improvements:** Lime treatment of the field and track areas has been completed this week thus paving the way for a winterized site and allowing the work to continue at a regular pace. The underground work is nearly complete, including electrical, irrigation and

drainage. In addition, the prefabricated restroom has been ordered and is scheduled to be delivered in January. The project has experienced a few delays in materials, with the longest lead time being the 80-foot field lights. Since special equipment is required to set those lights, certain improvements will be delayed until the lights are in place to avoid damaging any new improvements. Depending on the weather, the project should be complete in early March.

- Roosevelt & McLaughlin Sewer Pipe Rehabilitation Project: Sewer pipe upsizing and street repaving are 100% complete on Roosevelt Avenue, and 50% complete on McLaughlin Street. Engineering Services staff met with Ghilotti Brothers on Thursday, December 2nd to review the traffic plan.
- Sunset Point Generator Installation Project: This project will provide back-up emergency power to prevent sewer service interruption within Marina Bay in the event of power outages. Initial potholing and mobilization is complete.

10. **Public Works Updates**

- Paving crews resurfaced 1st Street from Macdonald Avenue to the southern end at the Richmond Greenway. Next week, crews will resurface 39th Street from Bissell Avenue to Roosevelt Avenue.
- The Facilities Maintenance Division continues painting the auditorium's second-level balcony and completed work on the installation of the Art Center's Anniversary Banner, which can be viewed prominently from Barrett Avenue.
- Parks crews, in addition to general maintenance, will work on vegetation control on the eastern Macdonald Avenue area, the 23rd Street grade separation and finishing the Nicholl Park Putting Green. As part of Richmond Arbor Day on December 11th, crews will also be preparing the landscape area of Carlson Boulevard at Bayview Avenue for this tree planting community event.
- A sign contractor completed major maintenance work on the Hilltop pylon sign, including the installation of new sign panels and colors to improve the appearance of the sign to promote the City of Richmond's holiday shopping season.

11. **Christmas Around the World Winter Ball**

On Wednesday, December 1st, the West Contra Costa YMCA Child Development Department, along with the Recreation Department, presented the Christmas Around the World Winter Ball for children of ages 4 to 11. Children sang Christmas carols and performed dances while coverage of the event was done by Channel 14 and local newspapers. Over 500 community members, parents, teachers and students enjoyed the festivities.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments about these or any other items of interest to you.

Have a great week!

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