

City Manager's Weekly Report
For the week ending August 1st, 2008

1. Meeting Notes

The next regular City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 2nd. Please enjoy a restful month of August.

2. Renovation of the Richmond Plunge Begins

The demolition phase for the renovation of the Richmond Plunge project started this past Tuesday, with the initial prep work being done on the inside of the building. The bulk of the demolition work will begin on Monday, August 4th. Engineering staff is working with the adjacent property owners to keep the parking problems to a minimum during construction, including marking the parking in front of Mechanics Bank for "2 hours only" throughout the renovation.

A small celebration will be held in front of the Plunge on Monday at 10:00 AM to commemorate the start of this long awaited project. Ellie Strauss, of the Save the Plunge Trust, will say a few words to mark this new beginning.

3. Fire at Kern Play Lot

Early Friday morning, the Richmond Fire Department was dispatched to the Kern play lot (920 Kern Street) where the play structure had been intentionally set on fire. The damage, which was confined to the play structure, was significant, estimated to be valued at approximately \$50,000. The improvements at the Kern play lot were less than two years old, having been installed using \$87,868 of State Parks Bond Act funds.

4. National Night Out

As a reminder, National Night Out is Tuesday, August 5th, with 20 block parties currently registered. The kick off ceremony will begin at 5:00 PM at the new Target store on Macdonald Avenue, with departure of the caravans at 5:45 PM.

5. Lennar Sells Marina Bay Condominium Conversion Project to Kennedy Wilson

Lennar Urban sold its interest in the 488-unit Marina Shores and the 224-unit Marina Cove, residential developments located in the Marina Bay area of Richmond to Kennedy Wilson. In 2005, Lennar spent about \$60 million converting the former apartment complexes to condos after they had bought the property for \$98.5 million. About 515, or almost three-fourths, of the units in the two projects

remained unsold as of a few weeks ago. Terms of Lennar's sale to Kennedy Wilson weren't disclosed.

Kennedy Wilson's strategy is reported to be to auction some of the homes. The Bay Area News Group reports that the company plans to auction 40 of the condos in August for \$140,000 to \$255,000. The homes had previously been offered for \$275,000 to \$455,000. On the positive side, Kennedy Wilson considers Marina Bay in Richmond to be a great location and more home ownership opportunities at reasonably affordable prices may get more first-time home buyers into the market.

6. **Two More Companies Will Be Calling Richmond “Home”**

EcoTimber, formerly based in San Rafael, is now operating in a 20,000 square-foot commercial space at 5215 Central Avenue in Richmond's Southern Gateway area. The company specializes in the sale and distribution of bamboo and hardwood flooring made from “sustainably-harvested and reclaimed wood products.” According to their website, EcoTimber... [is] committed to providing our customers with high-quality, beautiful, and healthy products that are free from toxic materials.” EcoTimber's customers include Nike, Disney, Pottery Barn and Patagonia.

Hero Arts, now based in Emeryville, will soon occupy 20,000+/- square feet in the refurbished Cannery Building at 1200 Harbour Way South in Richmond's Marina Bay area. Founded in the mid-70's, Hero Arts is an industry leader and innovator in the growing, international rubber stamp market; designing and manufacturing eye-catching images on “sustainable hardwood blocks” used for cardmaking, scrapbooking and stamp crafting. Hero Arts will have approximately 70 employees working in Richmond.

7. **Briefing Session Concerning California Air Resources Board AB 32 Scoping Plan**

I attended a briefing this past Tuesday, hosted by Assemblymember Loni Hancock, concerning the Draft Scoping Plan, prepared by the California Air Resources Board, for implementation of AB 32, the greenhouse gas reduction legislation. Also in attendance from the City of Richmond were Jenny Oorbeck, the Environmental Manager, Jennifer Ly, a student intern working in the City Manager's office on environmental programs, and Norman Chan, from the Port of Richmond.

The briefing was excellent in terms of outlining the contents of the Draft Scoping Report, the magnitude of the challenge in meeting AB 32 goals, and the specific reduction measures and targets for the various economic sectors. As you may recall, the broad goals of AB 32 are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions statewide to 1990 levels by the year 2020 (estimated to be 169 million metric tons from what would otherwise have been the greenhouse gas levels at that time), and to achieve an 80% reduction from these 1990 levels, or an additional 341 million metric tons reduced, by the year 2050. It is very clear that the City of Richmond is working at

an opportune time to develop its Energy and Climate Change element for its General Plan, as many measures identified in the Scoping Plan can be incorporated as specific policies within that element.

The proposed final Scoping Plan is targeted for official 45 day review by early October, with the legislation requiring approval of the Plan by January 1, 2009.

8. Nystrom Revitalization (NURVE) Project Update

Several meetings took place within the last two weeks concerning the NURVE project. Last Friday was a Policy Committee meeting, which was attended by representatives from the City, the School District, the County, the Richmond Children's Foundation, and the Coronado Neighborhood Council. This meeting was a general update concerning the following project components:

- Nystrom Village Housing – Tim Jones reported that a Request for Qualifications for redevelopment of Nystrom Village has been issued and is eliciting strong interest from the development community.
- Nystrom Elementary School – The School District gave an update on the status of the elementary school renovation.
- Maritime Center – The Committee received an update concerning this project, including a significant change in the conceptual plan that would have, as the preferred option, the Maritime Center being renovated for community use and support services, funded through the Nystrom Village housing redevelopment project. The County representative reported that the County would be willing to transfer ownership of the Maritime Center to another entity, provided that the building would continue to be used for a public benefit. The architect will now begin design development for the Maritime Center with this community usage in mind.
- MLK Community Center and Park – The MLK Community Center is now being conceptually planned as a joint use development with the School District's new multi-use room for Nystrom School combined with a new gymnasium and fitness center, to make a significant gathering point within the NURVE project. The concept would include a joint use agreement between the City and the School District to maximize program activity at this new community center. (This was also the subject of a subsequent meeting this past week, at which additional details were discussed by project architects concerning the design of such a joint use facility.)

In my view, this project continues to hold the promise of being truly transformational in its beneficial impact on the Richmond community. The key success factor will be for all of the participating agencies, and especially the City and the School District, to continue to work together effectively.

9. **Raising a Regional Village Summit**

The Office of Neighborhood Safety, together with the Cities of Oakland and San Francisco, began planning for **Raising a Regional Village II**, the second in a series of regional summits that collectively recognize and support the dedicated frontline violence prevention staff of these three cities. The Summit's design and purpose are to:

- a. Build communication and operational systems across these three cities;
- b. Deliver professional development through planning strategies and concrete implementation tools;
- c. Create peer-to-peer technical assistance networks among the committed front line staff who proudly serve their peace-seeking cities; and
- d. Gradually expand the regional village to include other Bay Area cities.

Sessions included and addressed are:

- a. Gang Awareness and Issues,
- b. Surviving the Frontline Work,
- c. Partnering with the Faith Based Community, and
- d. Effectively addressing the needs of Sexually Exploited Minors.

It is the collective interest of the cities of Richmond, Oakland and San Francisco that these summits provide a significant step to restoring and maintaining peace throughout their communities.

10. **“Alive and Free” Campaign**

The Office of Neighborhood Safety is also working with regional partners to develop a full-scale, multi-media and public education campaign promoting a strong anti-violence message through 5 targeted outreach strategies. The “Alive and Free” campaign will be unveiled in the coming months and will disseminate the anti-violence message through:

- a. Multi-media including billboards, advertisements on BART, AC Transit buses and bus shelters, posters in schools, community centers, libraries, and other public places; online with an official campaign website; and through public service announcements on the radio.
- b. Training and Capacity Building targeted to outreach workers, service providers, youth and other appropriate stakeholders, delivering the evidence based Alive and Free curriculum developed by Dr. Joseph Marshall and currently offered at seminars and conferences nationwide and around the world.
- c. Community Events targeting youth, young adults and their families that promote a positive, anti-violence message.

- d. School-based Strategies including school assemblies/rallies and year-round programming in elementary, middle and high schools targeted to at risk and special education youth throughout the Bay Area.
- e. Reentry Strategies such as continued development and participation in public/private partnerships, as well as targeted training for appropriate law enforcement stakeholders throughout the Bay Area.

These activities will create a wide-reaching violence prevention education campaign that: 1) communicates and promotes a strong anti-violence message; 2) transforms community norms in high crime neighborhoods where residents have become desensitized to violence and have come to regard it as commonplace; 3) inspires individual behavior change; promotes peace and healthy living which reduces the risky behaviors that often contribute to homicide and/or violent crimes; and 4) educates youth and young adults, their families and entire communities about supporting youth and young adults to stay alive and free.

11. Recreation Highlights

The Recreation Department reports the following significant recent activities:

- a. The Recreation Department, in collaboration with Project Pride of North Richmond, sponsored seven youth to attend Camp Bolt in Mendocino County. The 10 day session began Saturday, July 19th.
- b. The Department teamed with the Watershed Project, and on July 18th and 25th led twelve youth on a scavenger hunt at Wildcat Creek and Point Pinole Regional Park. At the conclusion of each session, the youth were taught how to read animal tracks through the use of binoculars.
- c. The young adult indoor soccer league season began with four teams playing on Wednesday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 PM at the Richmond Recreation Complex.
- d. The Aquatic Center will be hosting, a “Dive-In Movie” on September 13th from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Friends and family will be able to have an evening of swimming and splashing while enjoying the movie “The Golden Compass.”