

City Manager's Weekly Report

This is the weekly report for the week ending May 29th, 2009.

1. **Meeting Notes**

The next City Council meeting is this Tuesday, June 2nd, beginning with a Closed Session at **6:00 PM** (note the later than usual start time), prior to the regular City Council agenda at 7:00 PM.

2. **Update on Current State Budget Proposals**

The Governor's office released an additional list of \$5.6 billion in proposed budget cuts this past Tuesday. Most important to cities is the proposal to take \$750 million from the local share of Highway Users Tax Account (HUTA) (gas tax) to pay for bond debt, reducing next year's statewide local share from \$1.05 billion to \$300 million. This would not be a loan, so cities would not be repaid in the future.

The above proposal represents an approximate \$1.35 million cut to the City of Richmond. A portion of the City's gas tax is pledged to the repayment of the Joint Powers Financing Authority 1995A Bonds. Fiscal year 2009-10 debt service for these bonds is \$423,541. With the current proposed reduction of \$1.35 million, the City would receive only an estimated \$450,000.

It is important to note that, in recent years, the City has made it a point to use its local share of gas tax revenues to fund our ongoing pavement management programs. As a result, there is a direct cause and effect relationship between this budget proposal and the condition of our streets.

We will keep you informed as the State budget process rolls on.

3. **Revision to Allocation of Castro Cove Settlement Funds**

I was recently contacted by Al Donner, Assistant Field Supervisor for External Affairs of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, updating me on the allocation of Castro Cove settlement funds. As you may recall, Chevron reached a settlement with the Natural Resource Trustees (a group of state and federal natural resource agencies) regarding a financial assessment that Chevron would pay for environmental damage that they caused to Castro Cove. The Trustees had preliminarily reached a conclusion to allocate a vast majority of these damage assessment funds to a project in Solano County.

The update is that the Trustees have changed the allocation of settlement funds so that a significantly larger amount (\$1 million) will go towards the restoration of Breuner Marsh. In particular, the Trustees have worked with the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), reaching an agreement that \$1 million will be allocated from the Castro Cove settlement for planning, design, and implementation of a project that will provide at least 30 and up to 45 acres of tidal wetland restoration at Breuner Marsh. EBRPD will, in turn, match this funding, and believes that it can

secure an additional \$1 million or more in grant funding. The result is that, with the Trustees' and EBRPD's funding commitments, there should be a minimum of \$3 million towards the Breuner Marsh restoration project.

This is clearly a far better outcome than we anticipated following the Trustees' initial proposal, and is, perhaps, the result of efforts by, among others, the City of Richmond/EBRPD liaison committee, Richmond community members, and our State legislators (Hancock and Skinner).

4. **Community Budget Meeting**

The fourth community budget meeting was held on Wednesday, May 27th at the Point Richmond Community Center. Vice-Mayor Ludmyrna Lopez and a number of City staff members were in attendance at this meeting. The Five-Year Strategic Business Plan and the operating and capital improvement plan budgets were discussed. Citizens expressed concerns and asked questions of staff about street paving plans; what percentage of the budget is allocated to employee retirement benefits; how are areas defined as "sensitive" in the Five-Year Strategic Business Plan identified; who should citizens call to abate blackberries in public right-of-ways; and how much stimulus funding has the City applied for, received, and what projects are planned. The final community budget meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 10th, at 7:30 p.m. at the Harbor Masters Office, located at 1340 Marina Way South.

5. **Fire Department Receives New 800 MHz Radios**

This afternoon the Fire Department received a long awaited order of new 800 MHz portable radios. Wendell Norwood, the Area Director for Dailey-Wells Communication, personally delivered the radios to Fire Station 63 where they were presented to Council Member Nat Bates, Chief Banks, and other Fire Department personnel. These eighty-five (85) radios are P25 programmable with the latest interoperable technology. They will be compatible with the new East Bay Regional Communication System currently being developed in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties.

6. **Recreation Highlight: River Rafting Excursion**

The Recreation Department Youth Activities staff is taking 13 youth between the ages of 12 and 18 on a whitewater rafting excursion Sunday, May 31st to "The Gorge" on the South Fork of the American River near Coloma.

7. **Public Works**

Public Works will be resurfacing 24th Street from Macdonald Avenue to Barrett Avenue next week.