

## **City Manager's Weekly Report**

This is the weekly report for the two weeks ending October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

At the outset, I apologize for missing distribution of last week's report due to other time commitments, making this a relatively lengthy report (21 interesting items). This apology, however, will also allow me to acknowledge the work by Lisa Carter, Executive Assistant to Leslie Knight, and Leslie Knight, the Assistant City Manager/Human Resources Director, who routinely provide me with a head start on the weekly report by compiling and initially editing items that are submitted by department managers. The final edits and responsibility for content of the report rests with the City Manager.

### 1. **Meeting Notes**

There will be no City Council meeting next week due to the election. The next meeting of the City Council is Tuesday, November 16<sup>th</sup>. In the meantime, I wish the very best of luck to all candidates.

### 2. **Wastewater Treatment Plant Odor Update**

As you know, a number of residents within the Point Richmond neighborhood have voiced concern recently over odors caused by hydrogen sulfide gas that was released through confirmed leaks within the covers of the anaerobic digester at the City's wastewater treatment plant. Staff has been working with the Contra Costa County Department of Public Health Services and the Bay Area Air Quality Management Department to identify the public health concerns related to exposure to hydrogen sulfide. The City has also hired an Industrial Hygienist to perform monitoring of hydrogen sulfide gas with Point Richmond and at the Washington Elementary School.

As you will recall, City staff provided an update to the City Council this past Tuesday, which included comments by Dr. Wendell Brunner, the Contra Costa Public Health Director. Dr. Brunner confirmed that the physical reactions that have been reported are consistent with response to strong hydrogen sulfide odor. Based on the data that has been collected, it is Dr. Brunner's assessment that the hydrogen sulfide gas detected within Point Richmond and at the wastewater treatment facility, is below levels that cause exposure-related tissue damage or toxic illness.

City staff is also working with residents to improve the dissemination of information, and has distributed an informational letter to clarify the reporting and response procedures for wastewater treatment plant concerns. The City is continuing to monitor hydrogen sulfide levels and will regularly update residents and the Council on issues related to measurements of hydrogen sulfide within the Point Richmond neighborhood as well as the corrective measures taken at the wastewater treatment plant.

As discussed at the Council meeting, the City will also be installing continually monitoring hydrogen sulfide data loggers at areas within Point Richmond, which will include a mechanism to notify the City and public in the event levels exceed established air quality standard levels.

Status updates as to the efforts to repair/replace the anaerobic digester covers and mitigate any other potential odor causing processes at the treatment facility or within the sewer collection system will be provided for residents and Councilmembers as they become available. The City will notify the public through future correspondence, upcoming City and Neighborhood Council meetings, as well as a dedicated page on the City's website.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Chad Davisson, the City's Wastewater Manager, at (510) 620-5486 or e-mail at [chad\\_davisson@ci.richmond.ca.us](mailto:chad_davisson@ci.richmond.ca.us).

### 3. **Sustainable Contra Costa Award**

Efforts to transform Richmond into a model of sustainability continue to receive local and statewide recognition and support. Sustainable Contra Costa, a growing coalition of individuals, families, businesses and organizations that are committed to creating and maintaining sustainable communities, announced the winners of its 2010 Sustainable Contra Costa Awards this past September 29<sup>th</sup>. First place in the Government award category went to the City of Richmond Environmental Initiatives Team for its holistic approach to sustainability, which includes programs in waste reduction, energy conservation and climate impact, transportation, environmental purchasing, and sustainable food. Urban Tilth was the winner in the Community/Nonprofit award category, with Solar Richmond being one of the finalists.

The Environmental Initiatives Team in the City Manager's office was formerly managed by now retired Administrative Chief Janet Schneider and supervised by Environmental Manager Jennie Oorbeck, who left the City earlier this year. Both deserve high praise for their efforts in launching this unit. The team during the past year has included the outstanding work of both Adam Lenz and Jennifer Ly. It now also includes Jeanette Aames, an Americorps program participant, and is managed by Shasa Curl.

The photo below is of the Assistant to the Mayor Nicole Valentino (left) and Sustainability Associate Jennifer Ly accepting the Sustainable Contra Costa award.



4. **Civic Center Receives Preservation Design Award**

Councilmember Tom Butt and Community & Economic Development Director Steve Duran represented the City of Richmond a week ago Saturday in receiving a Preservation Design Award from the California Preservation Foundation for the Richmond Memorial Civic Center Rehabilitation project. This prestigious award is highly regarded in architectural and historic preservation circles.

Representatives from the project team, including Project Manager Shasa Curl, Civic Center Partners LLC, Charles Pankow Builders, Overaa Construction, Nadel Architects, Preservation Architects, WRT Landscape Architects and Sustainable Design Resources were also recognized at the event.

5. **Richmond Library Wins Award for Transformation**

As you will recall, the City conducts a survey of its residents every two years using The National Citizen Survey™ to measure how well we are doing in our service delivery, and whether we are getting better. The next survey is scheduled for early 2011, and, as during the past two instances, will be conducted by the National Research Center (NRC), which has developed this program in conjunction with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).

The NRC recently introduced the annual The Voice of the People Awards which are announced each year by ICMA and NRC for the jurisdictions with the highest rated services (the Award for Excellence) and the services showing greatest

improvement (The Transformation Award) according to a representative sample of opinion from their own residents. The annual winners are identified among all the jurisdictions (over 350 cities nationwide) that conducted The National Citizen Survey™ in the prior calendar year. The awards are intended to recognize excellence and enhance the utility of citizen survey results.



This year, as announced at the ICMA Conference this past October, the City of Richmond was a recipient of the Transformation Award for its library service. To win the Transformation Award, a city must show improvement in their quality rating for a particular service that is significantly higher than the rating from their most recent prior survey and larger than improvement in that service shown in any other eligible jurisdiction. (Think of it as a national “most improved” award.) Congratulations to the library staff on receiving this award through their hard work and dedication to service.

6. **Richmond Writes!**

This year, Richmond celebrates October as National Arts & Humanities Month with its first city-sponsored writing contest, *Richmond Writes!* The contest was created by the Richmond Arts & Culture Commission, which has sponsored annual Arts & Humanities celebrations for years, for students from local elementary, middle, and high school grade levels – and includes the Literacy for Every Adult Program (LEAP). Students were invited to write original writings in haiku, short essays of 300-500 words, or short poems on one of several themes relevant to *Blossoms & Thorns: the Legacy of Richmond’s Japanese American Nurseries*, the current exhibition at the Richmond Art Center. Entries will be judged by Chris Treadway, West County Times; Dwayne Parish, poet and former Art Commissioner; Susan Antolin, of the Haiku Society of America; and possibly one more to be determined. Winners will be selected in each of the age categories, with first place winners receiving cash prizes, as well as certificates of recognition by the Mayor. They will also read their winning entries at a City Council meeting in November.

7. **Summer Youth Employment Program Report**

The 2010 Richmond Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) closed on September 30<sup>th</sup>. **652 youth participated this year**, down from last year’s 702. One of the major stumbling blocks this year was the defeat in committee of \$1 billion in federal funding for counties to implement an SYEP. Without the federal funding, program staff had to reduce hours and the number of youth in the summer’s second cohort of placements.

Of the 652 youth that were provided with the opportunity to have 100 hours of work experience this year; 56% were females and 44% were males; 53% came from households earning \$10,000 or less, 88% from households earning \$30,000 or less.

Collaborative partners in this year’s program were: Richmond PAL, RYSE Center, Familias Unidas, Neighborhood House, Opportunity West, Southeast Asian Young Leaders (SEAYL, a program of Community Health for Asian Americans), East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, WCCUSD Academies Program, WCCUSD Workability Program, Richmond SOL, Rising Sun Energy, Student Conservation Association, Middle College High School and the YMCA of the East Bay.

Funders responsible for the \$700,000 that was pledged include: the City of Richmond, Chevron, Kaiser Permanente Foundation, Kaiser Permanente Optical Lab, Contra Costa Employment & Human Services Division, Contra Costa County Employment Opportunity Commission, CalWORKS, Mechanics Bank, Levin-Richmond Terminal, Richmond Pacific Railroad, Sims Metal, Veolia Water NA and Genser Watkins, LLD.

On behalf of the SYEP participants, I thank very much our collaborative partners and funders who help make this program possible.

For your viewing enjoyment, the following YouTube links are for three episodes of “La Vie in Richmond”, a series of videos produced by participants in this year’s SYEP.

Episode One: “Where the Heart is at Work”  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNwny4I4zi8>

Episode Two: “Career Exploration”  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5P2RPsoNwk>

Episode Three: “The Skills You Need to Succeed”  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-q24sqtohU>

8. **Refund of Prior Arbitrage Payment**

The Finance Department has been informed by the U.S. Department of the Treasury that the City will receive a \$458,000 refund of a prior arbitrage payment relating to the 1999 Wastewater Bonds. Arbitrage is the profit made when bond proceeds are invested at a higher yield than the interest paid to the bondholders. Any arbitrage earned by a municipal entity must be paid to the Federal Government, but can be refunded if the yield on the related investments later decreases. In 2006, the City requested this refund, and has been awaiting a determination by the federal government. Once received, these funds will be available for Wastewater Enterprise operations.

9. **Draft Bicycle Master Plan**

The Draft Bicycle Master Plan was presented to the public on October 18<sup>th</sup> at 440 Civic Center Plaza. The Draft Bicycle Master Plan provides an overall vision for the future of bicycling in Richmond, with specific policies and programs to achieve this vision. The vision is shaped by the values of the Richmond community, and is supported by policies already included in the City’s General Plan and the Contra Costa Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, two plans that have or are in the process of being updated. The Draft Bicycle Master Plan is available at the following link:  
<http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/index.aspx?NID=2322>.

10. **Richmond Housing Element Community Workshop**

The Planning Division will be hosting a community workshop on Monday, November 8<sup>th</sup> to receive public input on the draft goals, policies and actions that will be part of the General Plan Housing Element. The workshop will be from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM and will be held in the City Council Chambers. The draft goals, policies and actions are available for review at [www.cityofrichmondgeneralplan.org](http://www.cityofrichmondgeneralplan.org). Questions can be directed to Hector Rojas, Associate Planner at (510) 620-6662 and [hector\\_rojas@ci.richmond.ca.us](mailto:hector_rojas@ci.richmond.ca.us).

11. **Sinkhole Update**

The city’s contractor has been working diligently these past few weeks, and the project to construct temporary channel improvements at the Via Verde sinkhole is nearly complete. Last weekend’s rain impacted the construction schedule, and this coming weekend’s rain may cause further delays. The goal has been to complete the temporary channel improvements by the October 31<sup>st</sup> deadline that is mandated by the federal, state, and regional regulatory agencies that oversee San Pablo Creek. The contractor is now working around the clock to meet the October 31<sup>st</sup> deadline; however, we are bracing ourselves for the possibility of a delay of up to five working days. We have notified all the residents of the Sobrante Glen neighborhood of the night-time work, and have directed the contractor to minimize the impacts of the night-time work to the residents. We have also notified all the regulatory agencies and East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) of the possibility of a delay, and EBMUD will postpone the scheduled San Pablo Reservoir releases until after completion of the channel. During construction, the emergency bypass road will be open and fully operational at all times, as usual.

The sinkhole made national news two weeks ago when a second vehicle was discovered and removed.



12. **Bi-Annual REACT/CERT Drill**

On Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, the City of Richmond's Office of Emergency Services, the Richmond Fire Department, the El Cerrito Fire Department, the San Pablo Police Department and the Rodeo-Hercules Fire District held their bi-annual REACT/CERT drill at the Richmond Fire Training Center. This drill is the culmination of twenty hours of life saving training which includes fire suppression, search and rescue techniques, utility control, cribbing and lifting of heavy objects, and first aid. The format was changed this year, as participants were split up into two teams. Each team was given a variety of rescue scenarios to work through during the day. Over 125 people participated and will now go into their neighborhoods to form emergency response teams. These teams will help residents become more self sufficient and increase survivability during a disaster. Feedback from the drill participants was very positive, as they were eager to share their knowledge with family, friends and neighbors.



13. **Richmond Inner Harbor Exercise**

This past Tuesday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, and Wednesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, the City of Richmond hosted the Richmond Inner Harbor Regional Exercise in our Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The focus of the exercise was to effect interaction between industry and government in accordance with the National Contingency Plan, Area Contingency Plan and Facility Response Plans, while responding to a simulated oil spill. Over thirty agencies participated, including Kinder Morgan, IMTT, Conoco Phillips, California Oils, BP Richmond Terminal, U.S. Coast Guard, California Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR), City of Richmond Fire/OES and Public Works staff. This drill provided an opportunity for everyone to improve their preparedness, identify lessons learned and share best practices within a coordinated command framework. All of the participants were complimentary of our city's EOC facilities and felt the exercise had a very successful outcome.

14. **Advanced Environmental Crimes Training Program**

Stephen Friday, Senior Source Control Inspector from the Engineering Services Department, was nominated by Lon Wixson, Contra Costa County Deputy District Attorney, to attend a course at the California Specialized Training Center in San Luis Obispo. Stephen was one out of 14 individuals who received full scholarships. This course was funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Criminal Investigation Division, in cooperation with the California Specialized Training Institute, Western States Environmental Enforcement Project, California Hazardous Materials Investigators Association, and the California District Attorneys Association. This course provides Stephen and the city with a high level of expertise related to responding to environmental crimes and complying with state and federal laws pertaining to hazardous materials and environmental enforcement.

15. **Traffic Engineering Updates**

Traffic warrant studies for stop control were conducted at the request of neighbors at the intersections of 26<sup>th</sup> Street and Downer Avenue, and Valley View Road and Allison Lane/Lenora Road. The study results support the stop control installation and satisfied neighborhood needs. Installation was completed this week at both intersections.

16. **Paving Update**

The contractor has now completed the rubberized asphalt paving on Barrett Avenue and Cutting Boulevard and continues adjusting the utilities to grade on those two streets. Permanent striping was put back this week. Next on the schedule is reconstruction of 18<sup>th</sup> Street and Costa Avenue.



17. **San Francisco Bay Trail Tour**

Hosted by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), Edric Kwan, Interim City Engineer, along with various bicyclist advocacy groups, including Trails for Richmond Action Committee (TRAC), National Park Service, East Bay Bicycle Coalition, and the Richmond Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee, bicycled the San Francisco Bay Trail from Richmond to Berkeley on October 8<sup>th</sup> to better understand bike path gaps, identify potential routes, and be stronger advocates for Richmond's valuable asset.



18. **Pre-Qualification of Contractors for Wastewater Treatment Plant Capital Projects**

The Pre-Qualification of Contractors for Wastewater Treatment Plant Capital Projects was posted to the city's BidsOnline System on September 14<sup>th</sup> and closed on October 15<sup>th</sup>. Five Hundred Eighty-Three (583) vendors were notified of this solicitation and 89 vendors downloaded the solicitation. Veolia Water West Operating Services, Inc. will be establishing a list of pre-qualified contractors for bidding various upcoming capital projects over the course of the next three (3) years totaling approximately \$24M. Typical projects size, based on engineering estimates, varies per project from \$100K to \$4M.

19. **University of California's Pavement Research Center**

This past week, Engineering Services hosted five members of the University of California's Pavement Research Center (PRC) which is located in Richmond. Led by Dr. Jim Signore, P.E., a Richmond Annex resident, their team was specifically interested in the Engineering Services' Carlson Boulevard Reconstruction Project since many of them either live nearby or use the route daily for their commute to work. The PRC acts as Caltrans' Research & Development group. As the group is research-oriented, they were interested to

hear about the various challenges the city's Carlson team has been dealing with over the years of design, utility coordination and now construction. Similarly, the city's team was equally interested in the results of some of the latest pavement research. Both groups agreed that the morning was a success and agreed to look for additional opportunities where a mutual project within the City of Richmond could serve to everyone's advantage.

## 20. **Public Works Department Update**

- Paving crews resurfaced 26<sup>th</sup> Street from Downer Avenue to McBryde Avenue two weeks ago. This week, crews resurfaced Esmond Avenue from 29<sup>th</sup> Street to San Pablo Avenue. Next week, Public Works crews will resurface Lincoln Ave. from 13<sup>th</sup> Street to 18<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Building Services' painters started painting the interior of the auditorium. This work is expected to take approximately three to four weeks.
- This week the Parks and Landscaping Division continued performing vegetation control management along Hilltop Drive and Hilltop Lake. Crews also worked on Cutting Boulevard from 8<sup>th</sup> Street to South Garrard Boulevard and on Canal Boulevard from Cutting Boulevard to the Port Entrance. Next week the Parks and Landscaping Division (in addition to general parks maintenance) will continue performing vegetation control management along Hilltop Drive, Tiller Park, La Moine Park and on Canal Boulevard from Cutting Boulevard to the Port Entrance. Parks crews will also remove dead pine trees in the Fairmede area. Parks crews are also working on spraying pre-emergent though out the city to control weeds in anticipation of the winter season.

## 21. **Recreation Highlights**

- **Hauntatorium**: The newest and greatest haunted house attraction will be open from Friday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, through Saturday, October 30<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM for \$5 per person, and Sunday, October 31<sup>st</sup>, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM for \$3 per person at the Richmond Memorial Auditorium. With all new and unique designs and scares, all who enter this truly frightful attraction will experience a new dimension of fear. Prepare yourself as classic monsters and aliens creep from the basement and impose their malicious intent on those brave enough to wander into the "Hauntatorium". Due to the rather intense scare factor, we recommend only the bravest souls, ages 10 and up, enter the Hauntatorium. However, all age access is permitted when accompanied by an adult. For children under 10, bounce houses, classic carnival games, and other activities will be available. Light refreshments will also be sold.
- **Halloween**: On Friday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, the Shields-Reid Community Center will host a Halloween Party & Dance from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM for local youth ages 6-14. In addition to games, prizes, candy and music, there will be a photo

booth for participants to purchase pictures of their costumes and a small concession stand serving hot dogs, drinks and other snacks.

- Floating Pumpkin Patch: The Richmond Swim Center hosted a floating pumpkin patch on Saturday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, and over 40 families picked their Halloween pumpkins straight from the pool! For the first time ever, the remaining pumpkins sold out, and in only three days time.
- Lap Swim: The Plunge is experiencing an average of 120 participants for the special Friday Night Lap Swim program from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM.
- Futsal: The Shields-Reid Community Center formed a girls (under the age of 13) futsal team to participate during the fall season in the city-wide Recreation Department's futsal program. The team of eight players practices every Tuesday and Thursday and plays on Sundays at the Richmond Recreation Complex.
- Basketball: On Friday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Youth Sports section hosted the annual High School Twilight Basketball Championships. Hercules High School faced off with El Cerrito High School for the girls championship. Rodriguez High School of Fairfield matched up with Berkeley Technical High School for the boys championship. Though none of the Richmond teams made it to the final round, there are several players on each team who grew up playing in Recreation Department Youth Leagues.
- Halloween Dance: The Disabled Person's Recreation Center (DPRC) and the Friends of Disabled Children hosted a Halloween dance for participants and community members ages 16 and over on Friday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Guests got to show off their costumes, enjoyed drinks, treats and a night of dancing.

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