

**City Manager's Weekly Report**  
**For the week ending February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

**1. Meeting Notes**

The next City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008, beginning with a **3:30 PM** Closed Session (note the early start), followed by a 6:45 PM Redevelopment Meeting and a 7:00 PM regular session. Please note also that the Finance Committee is meeting at 9:00 AM earlier that day.

**2. City Offices Closed on Monday, February 18<sup>th</sup>**

As a reminder, the City offices will be closed on Monday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, in recognition of Presidents Day.

**3. A LEAP Report, from Sherry Drobner, Literacy Program (LEAP) Manager**

The following is a great anecdotal outcome/performance measurement report from Sherry Drobner, LEAP Manager:

“I am pleased to report that we had a student come back to LEAP yesterday with his passing GED scores. When asked what helped him most, he said, “Sensei”. The breathing class and the regular Friday Ki aikido classes, he said, helped him remain calm as he prepared for and took the GED test. He is 24 years old. Now that he has passed the test he said he is looking at attending a State University so that he can study business administration. He started LEAP about 6 months ago. During that time he regularly attended the program and received support from some of our senior volunteers. He also made a commitment to do work at home as well. All of this made for an inspiring talk to 23 students at LEAP on Tuesday morning. Next month, 2-3 more students will be taking either some part or all of the GED. Although they are far from ready when they come to LEAP, the individual attention they get from the volunteers and staff makes a huge difference their ability to keep on the path.

The Ki to the Future program, a collaboration between LEAP, the Library, Recreation, the Center for Human Development, and Peaceful Resolutions to Conflict, is located at the Shields-Reid Community Center, and is a family-based program using aikido and literacy classes to help families relieve stress and focus better on their studies. About 21 signed up folks come throughout the month. Of those about 12 are regular – weekly – participants. At Booker T. Anderson Community Center, the aikido program operates throughout the week for both children and adults, and is expected to develop the literacy component soon.

At a recent Parent Network meeting of the West County Unified School District, 2 different parents stood up and gave testimony to others about LEAP and our programs. One parent praised our work at Shields-Reid, expressing approval of the discipline her son receives in his aikido class as she learns English, another parent talked about how much she enjoyed our GED readiness program at LEAP. “

Nice work, Sherry!

4. **California Society of Municipal Finance Officers Award of Excellence in Public Finance**

Each year, the California Society of Municipal Finance Officers (CSMFO), a statewide organization serving all California municipal finance professionals, presents its “Award of Excellence in Public Finance” to a finance officer who demonstrates exceptional work ethics, leadership, creativity and service, especially as it relates to the issuance of municipal debt. In recognition of his hard work, dedication and successes in these areas, James Goins, Finance Director, is being honored as the recipient of this award for 2008.

In Jim’s honor, the California Public Securities Association will make a \$10,000 contribution to the CSMFO scholarship fund. Scholarships are awarded to upper division or graduate student in a public administration major.

Nice work, Jim!

5. **Finance Department Wins Distinguished Budget Award**

For the second year in a row, the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has awarded the City of Richmond GFOA’s Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the City’s 2007-08 Budget document. The award reflects the commitment of the City and staff in meeting the highest principles of governmental budgeting. In order to receive the budget award, the City had to satisfy nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation. These guidelines are designed to assess how well an entity’s budget serves as:

- A policy document
- A financial plan
- An operations guide
- A communications device

Budget documents must be rated “proficient” in all four categories to receive the award.

Nice work, Finance Department!

## 6. Meeting on the Central Rail Trade Corridor

I attended a meeting the week before last, which was hosted by the East Bay Economic Development Agency, to hear about plans for railroad improvements which are designed to increase the volume and efficiency of the intermodal container traffic that is currently bottlenecked around the Port of Oakland. While the Port of Oakland has unused container handling capacity, both of the major rail companies serving the Port, the Union Pacific (UP) and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF), are limited in transporting additional cargo by bottlenecks between Oakland and Martinez, as well as at other major corridors around California, such as Donner Pass.

Each corridor problem is being addressed separately, but a rail improvement that potentially affects Richmond is a proposal to add a 4th track between Oakland and Stege junction at the southern city limit of Richmond, where the UP and the BNSF split. All the cities along this rail corridor are potentially impacted by a possible doubling of rail traffic, but, according to Port of Oakland, MTC, and BAAQMD representatives who were in attendance at the meeting, there is no plan to provide funding for grade separation projects that mitigate the impacts of this additional rail traffic, and this has a severe impact on the City of Richmond, where at grade rail traffic is already a problem.

This is clearly an important issue, and it is not too early for the City of Richmond to begin a dialogue regarding appropriate mitigation measures for a Port of Oakland expansion and associated rail improvements. I will continue to keep you informed.

## 7. Update on Wastewater Sludge Dewatering Facility

Last week, on February 5<sup>th</sup>, Administrative Chief Janet Schneider made a presentation before the West County Wastewater District Board (WCWD) regarding the City Council's direction to negotiate a contract with Synagro for a dewatering facility at Republic's landfill and pursue the possibility of a West County Agency owned, Synagro-operated regional dewatering facility for both the Richmond Wastewater District and the WCWD. Based on Synagro's estimates of the combined dewatering capacity needs, Ms. Schneider presented the following:

- ▶ Total 6,000 dry tons per year for a regional facility
  - 3,700 tons Richmond and 2,300 tons WCWD
- ▶ Two belt presses, 2 shifts/day, 5 days/week (although current capital costs include 3 belt presses)
- ▶ Total operating cost at \$183/dry ton (compared to \$195 a dry ton for a Richmond-only facility)
  - Annual costs are estimated to be \$677K Richmond, \$421K WCWD (compared to \$1.25 million at Richmond-only facility)
- ▶ Total capital costs 5.2M +20%=6.24M cost

- \$3.8M Richmond, \$2.5M WCWD (compared to \$5.2 million Richmond-only facility)

The WCWD Board asked its staff to hold a workshop in the next few weeks to consider a regional dewatering facility. The West County Agency Board will be discussing this as well at its February 21, 2008 meeting.

#### **8. Status on the Richmond Natatorium**

Engineering Services held a pre-bid meeting last week for the rebid of the renovations to the Richmond Natatorium. The meeting was well attended with 9 general contractors present along with several subcontractors. The architect's cost estimate for this work is \$4,500,000. The bids are due March 6<sup>th</sup> and construction is expected to start by the end of April. The project is expected to take a year to complete.

#### **9. Reissuance of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit**

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program controls water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants into waters of the United States. The Regional Water Quality Control Board administers this federal program locally, and met on January 30, 2008 to discuss, among other things, the reissuance of the City of Richmond's NPDES permit. The City's permit is jointly held with the West County Wastewater District and covers wastewater discharge. The Board approved the reissuance of the permit with the following revisions: 1) establish a more stringent effluent limit for a number of toxic pollutants like mercury, selenium, and heptachlor; 2) require the development of a program for plant improvements to reduce bypasses during peak wet weather events ("blending"); and 3) set forth capital improvement requirements that would be necessary to ensure compliance with the effluent limits that the Board is legally mandated to enforce. The permit number is CA0038539, becoming effective April 1, 2008 and expiring on March 31, 2013.

#### **10. Recreation Department Activities Report**

The following is an update on Recreation Department activities:

- The Department collaborated with Crazy Legs Production Inc. of Berkeley California to shoot a Coco Cola commercial at the Richmond Swim Center on Wednesday January 30, 2008. An arrangement was made for the Recreation Department to receive an amount of \$2,105.00 in rental fees and for a \$2,500.00 donation to the Richmond Friends of Recreation.
- Twelve Recreation staff members are scheduled to attend the California Parks and Recreation Society (CPRS) conference February 26<sup>th</sup> thru 29<sup>th</sup> in Long

Beach. This will assist staff in acquiring applicable program information to improve service delivery to the Richmond community.

- The Youth Sports division, in collaboration with Richmond PAL, Coronado YMCA, and WCCUSD, is off to a strong start for 2008 season. Thirty basketball teams are participating in the basketball league. Participants range in age from 7 to 16 years. Sixteen teams are also participating in the Futsal (indoor soccer) at the Recreation Complex on Sundays from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM and Mondays from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM.
- The spring activity guide will be distributed to the WCCUSD during the month of February. Preparation has begun on the summer activity guide which will be mailed to all Richmond residents during the month of May.
- Additional activities during January included an athletic field users meeting on January 23, 2008, to discuss rules and regulations, free blood pressure screenings and reverse mortgage seminars for seniors, and submittal of a grant application for the Stewardship Council to bring outdoor youth adventure programs to the Shields Reid community.

Note that the City is still recruiting for a permanent Recreation Director. In the meantime, however, I believe that the work done to rebuild the City's Recreation programs under the current managerial leadership of Monique le Conge, together with the group of program managers which she has assembled, should not go unnoticed.

#### 11. **Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS) Activities**

The Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS) continues to actively develop its Street Outreach strategy, and has identified its first group of Neighborhood Change Agents (NCA's). The NCA's began work this past Monday, and have begun an intense series of trainings and staff development that are designed to build and strengthen their capacity to be an effective Street Outreach/Community Resource Team. The NCA's will immediately begin to engage the identified communities and perform preliminary community asset mapping and service provider assessments functions. ONS, the City Attorney's Office and the Richmond Police Department continue its work to ensure the development and implementation of appropriate operating protocols and procedures to ensure proper implementation of the strategy.

Key activities for the ONS during the past two weeks were:

**Non-Violence Youth Outreach Event** - The Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS) sponsored a Youth Forum and Basketball Game for 60 Richmond youth and their chaperones at the Oracle Arena in the Oakland Coliseum Complex on Monday January 21, 2008. Youth participated in playing basketball on the Oracle

Arena (Golden State Warriors) floor, a youth forum on non-violence, youth empowerment workshops, and a pre-game tail gate lunch. Each youth and chaperone also received tickets to watch the Golden State Warriors vs. Minnesota Timberwolves game played that day live.

**National League of Cities 13 City Gang Initiative Site Visit** - ONS with the Richmond Police Department, Contra Costa County Probation Department and the Richmond Children's Foundation hosted a site visit from the NLC 13 City Gang Initiative. ONS provided information about the City's street outreach strategy, community resource building and its re-entry service coordination and delivery activities. ONS is responsible for writing the City's plan for addressing gang/street violence as part of the City's involvement in the Initiative.

**Richmond Re-Entry Family Orientation and Support** - ONS, the Richmond Recreation Department and the Richmond Parole Unit have created a partnership to provide the families of parolees re-integrating into the City of Richmond with a safe environment to receive information and education relating to available resources and services for parolees and their families. This partnership is developing a plan of operations and delivery to ensure that all of the identified families have access to this resource. The goal is to build and enhance re-entry support opportunities that translate into greater success for those coming home.

**The Fighting Back Partnership (Vallejo, CA.) with the Office of Congressman George Miller** met with the ONS and RPD to provide information about the Fighting Back Partnership Program and its Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative. ONS will continue to work with these stakeholders to determine how to best integrate the appropriate elements of this initiative into the ONS strategic work plan.

We will continue to keep you informed of these activities.

## **12. Current Interest Rates on Variable Rate Debt Obligations**

You may have read that Fitch's Rating Agency and Standard & Poor's (S&P) Rating Agency recently downgraded the credit ratings on several bond insurance companies. As a result of these actions, the capital market has seen an increase in variable rates, as investors "look through" the ratings of the insurance companies to the underlying ratings of the issuing agency. With an underlying rating of BBB S&P and Baa2 from Moody's, the Wastewater Bonds variable rate increased by 25 basis points from last week's rate, to 5.25%. Increasing 50 basis points from last week's rate of 4.50%, the Civic Center Bonds interest rate of 4.5% reflects the City's underlying lease ratings of A- (S&P) and Baa1 (Moody's). The Redevelopment Agency Tax Allocation Bonds, Series 2007A received an interest rate reset of 5.00%; a change of 75 basis points from the prior rate. Staff continues to work with the City's Financial Advisors and Underwriters to monitor these rates.

### 13. **Department of Planning and Building Update**

The following is an update on significant activities in the Planning and Building Department:

#### **General Plan Advisory Committee meeting**

On Wednesday, January 30<sup>th</sup>, the General Plan Technical Advisory Committee met to hear an update on the status of the General Plan and received a draft of the Circulation Element.

#### **San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan**

Planning staff met recently with El Cerrito Planning staff hear an update on the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. Discussion focused on development options for the El Cerrito –Del Norte Station and the Macdonald Avenue – San Pablo Gateway. Other critical activity centers will be discussed at subsequent meetings.

#### **Neighborhood Design Standards**

Opticos Design staff will complete their work on Traditional Neighborhood design standard by the end of February. Subsequent efforts will focus on neighborhood commercial and mixed use standards for commercial nodes that have been identified in the General Plan.

### 14. **Black History Programs on KCRT**

The following is a list of Black History Programs airing this month on KCRT:

- North Richmond Story (parts 2 and 3)
- Historical Elected Officials and Community Leaders
- Georgeva (documentary on the Richmond resident)
- Black Americans of Achievement (profiles on Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and Colin Powell)
- The Jook Joint – A Blues music program
- California's Gold - Black History episodes
- Black History Salute, created by Noni Thomas-Hill
- And an On-Line Exclusive: A Look at the Past... a Look to the Future: The African-American Experience