

City Manager's Weekly Report
For the week ending December 5th, 2008

1. **Meeting Notes**

The next regular City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 16th, which will be the final City Council meeting during calendar year 2008. The City Council is thereafter scheduled to meet on January 6th, January 13th (City Council swearing-in), January 20th, and January 27th.

2. **Update on December 3rd State Lands Commission Meeting**

As you may recall, in March 2007, the City Council adopted a resolution (8-0-1 vote) requesting that the California State Lands Commission require Bay Trail mitigation as part of its consideration of a new 30 year lease by Chevron of "sovereign lands in San Francisco Bay" for operation of Chevron's long wharf. The hearing on certification of the final EIR and issuance of the lease was on the State Lands Commission agenda this past Wednesday, December 3rd. Testimony at the meeting advancing the City's position included Mayor McLaughlin, myself, Deputy City Attorney Mary Renfro, as well as new Assembly member Nancy Skinner, and numerous trail advocates and Richmond residents.

During the hearing, Lt. Governor John Garamendi, who is a member of the three-person State Lands Commission, advanced the notion that construction of the trail should be involve a "stone soup" of funding, including money from Chevron, Caltrans, the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), and the City of Richmond. While he acknowledged Chevron's contribution towards construction of the trail in the form of (1) an easement across their property, and (2) paying the costs for necessary security, he stated that he felt this was insufficient. At the conclusion of the agenda item, the Commission agreed to continue the item to its next meeting on January 29th, 2009, with the hope that a comprehensive funding plan for this Bay Trail segment can be concluded by that time.

Note that the State Lands Commission, as represented by Lt. Governor Garamendi, believes that the City of Richmond should make a financial commitment to construct this Bay Trail segment, and suggested that the combined commitment from the City and EBRPD should be approximately \$3.0 million towards the upwards of \$15.0 million necessary for its completion. At the meeting, both Mayor McLaughlin and I indicated that we could not commit the City to this (or any) amount of funding (representatives of EBRPD were not in attendance), but I indicated that I could recommend to the City Council some amount of financial contribution, if this contribution were leveraged through adequate financial participation by the other suggested parties.

More discussion of this issue will be in front of the City Council in the near future.

3. **Ford Plant Performance Receives Rave Reviews in the *Wall Street Journal***

On December 4th, there was an article in the *Leisure and Arts* section of the *Wall Street Journal* that reviewed Cal Performances' Merce Cunningham dance event that was held in the Craneway Pavilion of the Ford Assembly Building. I have attached a copy of this article for your ready reference (<http://ca-richmond.civicplus.com/DocumentView.asp?DID=3999>). While providing a very positive review of the performance, the article stated that "...the most eye-opening event of Cal Performances' season owed as much to the venue as to the dancing." It went on to describe the Ford Assembly Building Craneway as "...one of the most impressive architectural spaces in the Bay Area." In these troubled financial times, finally some good news appearing in the *Wall Street Journal*!

4. **Lawsuit Filed to Block Unconstitutional Raids of Redevelopment Funds**

As you may recall, the 2008-09 state budget included a one-time raid of \$350 million in redevelopment funds, which redevelopment agencies would be required to pay in spring 2009. This has a detrimental financial impact on the Richmond Redevelopment Agency in an amount in excess of \$3 million. As you know, the League of California Cities and the California Redevelopment Association (CRA) strongly opposed this raid and repeatedly warned state lawmakers and the Administration on behalf of its members that taking redevelopment funds to balance the state's budget is unconstitutional.

Yesterday the California Redevelopment Association and the City of Moreno Valley's Redevelopment Agency filed a lawsuit in Sacramento Superior Court seeking to block the legislation which authorizes the one-time raid of \$350 million in redevelopment funds. The lawsuit seeks both to invalidate this legislation and prohibit the state from forcing county auditors to divert redevelopment funds.

The lawsuit contends that state raids of redevelopment funds to balance the state's budget violate Article XVI, Section 16 of the constitution on multiple counts. First, the constitution requires that redevelopment funds can only be used to finance specified redevelopment activities. Diverting redevelopment funds to pay the state's obligations is therefore illegal. Second, raiding redevelopment funds could also unconstitutionally impair bond contracts.

The League of California Cities and the CRA believe that they have presented the courts with strong legal arguments, but these cases can take months or longer to resolve. We will continue to keep you informed of developments.

5. **Richmond's Newest Mural on Macdonald Avenue**

On Sunday, November 30th a group of people of all ages and cultures gathered on the 800 block of Macdonald Avenue near Harbour Way to watch a mural-in-progress. The crowd watched as artists painted and dancers performed the "robot" throughout the day. The subject of the mural, in progress for the past week, unfolded in response to input by the community as artist Sam Mulberry and his

crew worked. They met several hip hop dancers during the first days, which helped create the theme.

Original “Robotics” dancers -- some coming from as far away as the east coast and LA -- greeted each other at the event for the first time in years – happy to have the opportunity to dance together one more time. Local DJ (and Opportunity West’s own) Darrell Goodbeer provided music all day, and food was donated by both the City of Richmond Arts & Culture Commission and a generous passerby, who contributed three king-sized boxes of Church’s chicken and sodas when he saw what was going on.

The previous mural’s theme at this site was butterflies (by artist Harold Beaulieu and the community) – signifying the loss of loved ones to violence. The new muralists honored this theme and added to it. LeRoy, a local artist who helped with the first mural is represented in a larger-than-life sized image on the new one...reading a book. Cultural themes from the African American and Latino communities are evident throughout the mural, which was completed today (Friday). Sam and his team, who paint murals all over the country, said they had never spent this long doing one, or connected more strongly with a community than they have in Richmond.

PAAC member, Fletcher Oakes offered his photographic services for several hours – capturing this community arts and cultural event. To see more photos go to http://flickr.com/photos/fletcher_oakes/sets/72157610753494382/.

The mural and event were paid for by the Public Art fund, Library & Cultural Services.

6. **Richmond Planning Commission Actions of Note**

- The Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of a 127 unit apartment project for a parcel located at 3151 Garrity Way in the Hilltop area. The project will be presented to the City Council for review on December 16th. A General Plan amendment and re-zoning will be required.
- The Planning Commission approved a height variance that will permit temporary installation of two 166-foot meteorological towers that will enable Chevron to measure wind velocity and patterns at the refinery facility. The towers are less than 12 inches in diameter and will be nearly invisible from the edges of the refinery site.
- The Planning Commission approved the final development plan for Point Pinole Business Park. The new owner, Sares-Regis Group, plans to construct 642,000 square feet of new space in four additional buildings.

7. **Training for Certified Green Building Professionals**

Planning and Building staff members are enrolling in a 16 hour training program to become 'Certified Green Building Professionals.' All staff members will be certified by May 2009.

8. **LEAPing Ahead**

During the month of November, several LEAP (literacy program) students met ambitious goals:

- Four students took the GED test in November and passed.
- Two students enrolled in trade schools.
- One student is now working at Expressions, the Emeryville-based animation institute, where he is being challenged by many more reading and writing assignments.
- Another student found employment and entered the Western Career Institute where she is engaged in forensic science work and criminal justice issues.

Many of the students who move ahead continue to come back to LEAP for additional support and to assist others.

Other interesting notes about LEAP include:

- There are several new community tutors, including an ex-professional baseball player and a retired mechanical engineer. They are working one-to-one with several of our students on basic math literacy and reading comprehension.
- There has also been an increase in Cal-Learn students. Many of them are very basic in their reading and math skills, and they are spending more than 4 hours a day at LEAP working to improve their skills, and doing well. Cal-Learn is a mandatory program for CalWORKs participants who receive cash assistance and are under 19 years of age, are pregnant or parenting, and have not yet completed their high school education. The Program requires participants to enroll in high school or an equivalency equivalent program, necessary to earn a high school diploma or its equivalent. The focus of Cal-Learn is to provide teens with the support they need to complete their high school education. LEAP serves adults age 16 and over who are out of school.

9. **The City's New Enterprise Resource Planning Software "Goes Live"**

On December 1st, the City completed the first of three "Go Live" dates in MUNIS, the new enterprise management information system, with the modules for General Ledger, Treasury Management, General Billing and Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, Purchasing, Project and Grants Accounting and Budget being successfully implemented. Phases two and three, scheduled to "Go Live" during early 2009 include Payroll and Human Resources, Work Orders, Fixed Assets, Inventory, and Contract Managements modules.

Many staff members are working hard to complete this project on schedule, and I will keep you informed as their progress continues.

10. **Recreation Highlights**

The following are highlights from the Recreation Department for the current week:

- **Annual Candy Cane Classic Basketball Tournament:** Registration has begun for the annual Candy Cane Classic Basketball Tournament. Youth are invited to participate in 14 and under, 12 and under, and 10 and under age categories on December 27th and 28th, 2008. Qualifying games will be held at the Richmond Recreation Complex and the final games will be held at the Richmond PAL Gym and the newly remodeled Richmond Auditorium.
- **Senior Center Thanksgiving Dinner:** The Senior Center held its annual Thanksgiving dinner and over 120 community members were in attendance. The Richmond Fire Department served dinner to guests and turkeys and ducks were given out as raffle prizes. Participants also enjoyed dancing during the celebration.
- **Weekly Qigong:** The Annex Senior Center currently hosts a weekly free Qigong program taught by a community member. The class has been well received and after only two classes, enrollment has increased to 10 participants.
- **Nutrition Program Transportation Services:** The Recreation Department and the Paratransit Division met with Contra Costa County Nutrition Services and developed an agreement for the subsidization of transportation for seniors to the Nutrition Program.

11. **Public Works Highlights**

- Public Works completed the resurfacing of 24th and 26th Streets between McBride and Maricopa Avenues this week. Next week, Public Works will resurface South 34th and South 35th Streets in support of the “One Block at a Time” campaign.
- The Richmond Swim Center is closed to the public as of Thursday, December 4th and continuing through December 10th to allow for forensic research and testing of the roof, electric, heating/ventilation and chlorination systems in preparation for construction plans for future facility repairs.

12. **Grand Opening of Trinity Plaza**

This past Thursday marked the grand opening of Trinity Plaza, which is a 66 unit low-income senior housing project that was developed by the Related Companies and Labor and Love Community Development Corporation, a Richmond-based not-

for-profit group. The opening was well-attended under sunny skies, just as it had been for the groundbreaking approximately one year ago.

13. **Read the City Manager's Weekly Report on the City's Website**

This and all of the past and future City Manager's weekly reports can be accessed on the City's website at www.ci.richmond.ca.us. One can access these reports by going from the home page to Departments, Administration, City Manager's Office, and to weekly announcements. The reports are generally posted on the Monday following their Friday release.