

City Manager's Weekly Report

This is the weekly report for the week ending April 9th, 2010.

1. **Meeting Notes**

The next City Council meeting will be Tuesday, April 20th. Enjoy the night off next Tuesday.

2. **Neighborhood Stabilization Program Update**

After nearly a year of working with other cities and agencies to modify the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) rules and processes to make acquisitions of foreclosed houses feasible under the federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), Richmond's NSP efforts are bearing fruit. So far, staff has closed escrow on the purchase of seven properties that are now entering the rehabilitation stage. Ten other properties are in escrow and another ten have pending offers. Richmond's program, which is a revolving purchase and rehabilitation fund, is leveraging local developer funding, bank funding, and Energy Efficient Community Development Block Grant (EECBG) funding to transform blighted properties in the City to affordable, energy efficient homes. The National Community Stabilization Trust, which bundles foreclosed properties and provides a "first look" program for its partners, recognized the City of Richmond as a top five performer in the month of March. This was significant because only larger cities with much more funding had more NSP transactions under their "first-look" program.

3. **Port of Richmond's Honda Port of Entry Project Update**

The Honda Port of Entry Project is moving ahead on schedule. Honda's vehicle distribution operations will commence this month with the first ship scheduled to arrive on approximately April 20th. Although the facilities will be substantially complete by that date, the capital improvement project construction will be ongoing through June. In the meantime, Honda will continue to utilize the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway facility until the end of April for its inbound and outbound rail operations.

The project construction includes the completion of a section of the Bay Trail, linking Canal Boulevard to the Rosie the Riveter historical sites and the Red Oak Victory ship.

Auto Warehousing Company (AWC) has completed their interview process for new employees for Honda's operations and will be making their selections over the next two weeks. This process was done in conjunction with the City's Employment and Training Department.

4. **Senior EPA Officials Tour RichmondBUILD Training Facility**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) held a press conference on Thursday, April 8th to discuss the details of a \$500,000 EPA Brownfields job training grant to the RichmondBuild program. The RichmondBUILD program consists of training in a variety of environmental, green technology and construction skills. During the next three years, hundreds of graduates will receive certifications that will help them secure employment in the fast growing sectors of renewable and clean energy.

On hand at the event were multiple federal, state, and local officials including U.S. EPA Assistant Administrator Craig Hooks, Region 9 Administrator Jared Blumenfeld, Mayor Gayle McLaughlin, the City Manager, and over 125 program supporters, including RichmondBUILD graduates.

The Recovery Act funding will help train 128 Richmond residents and place 102 graduates during the three-year grant. Each 10-week training cycle will include 250 hours of training that encompasses a 40-hour hazardous material operation, pre-apprenticeship construction skills, lead and asbestos abatement, mold remediation abatement, refinery safety, energy efficiency, solar technology/installation and electrician skills training.

RichmondBUILD has established strong connections with a broad range of environmental and green employers in the regions, construction trade unions and community-based organizations that provide support to participants in obtaining and maintaining employment. Life skills and case management will be provided for all trainees.

Applicants seeking entry into the program should contact the Richmond Employment & Training Department.

5. **Pt. Molate Restoration Advisory Board Holds its Final Meeting**

This past Wednesday, April 7th, the Navy convened its final Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) meeting for the Naval Fuel Depot Pt. Molate. It was a well-deserved celebration of the Navy's early transfer of the remaining 41 acres of Point Molate, which occurred in the end of March, to the City of Richmond. The Point Molate Restoration Advisory Board, established in 1996, met at least 4 times annually to help the Navy, Regional Water Quality Board, and city personnel implement the Navy's remediation and monitoring programs at Point Molate. According to the Navy personnel, it was the "RAB members' continued involvement and cooperation that made the transfer possible." The Navy presented a slide show on the history of cleanup activities to date and presented RAB members with Certificates of Appreciation. Special recognition was given to Don Gosney who has been the RAB chair since its inception. Several other members have served alongside Mr. Gosney since 1996 and most of the RAB members have served for

at least a decade. The City of Richmond will now be responsible for the cleanup and is committed to maintaining a citizen advisory group throughout the process.

On behalf of city staff that worked with the RAB over these past 14 years, I would like to thank the RAB members for their hard work and dedication to the process.

6. **Belding-Woods Residential Fire**

On the morning of April 5th, at approximately 7:00 AM, Richmond Fire Engines 61, 62, 66, 67, Truck 64 and Battalion Chief 64 responded to a house fire at 634 20th Street. The single story home was heavily involved with fire when Engine 66 first arrived on the scene. The heat from the fire radiated toward neighboring homes and a large column of smoke was visible from a distance. Fire crews initiated an aggressive attack and were able to suppress the fire, limiting damage to nearby homes. The house was vacant and boarded up with no current electrical or gas service in place. It sustained major interior and exterior damage. The fire is considered to be suspicious and is being investigated by our Fire Inspection Unit. No civilian or firefighter injuries were reported.

7. **City is Unsuccessful (so far) in Securing Stimulus Funding for Broadband**

The City has been fairly successful in securing stimulus funding for worthwhile projects. One recent disappointment, however, was an unsuccessful \$5 million funding application to expand the broadband infrastructure to underserved areas of the Richmond community.

When we were informed by the programming agency, the National Telecommunication and Information Administration (NTIA), that our application had not been funded, we were told that the final decision hinged on a legal issue related to our funding category. Because of questions about the sustainability of municipal wireless programs, NTIA staff, who were otherwise very interested in our proposal, asked the City to remove the components from the original application that provided wireless to end users, and to include only the fiber connections to anchor institutions. What remained would be classified as a "Middle Mile" project; however, our original application had been filed under the "Last Mile" category. The ironic result was that the NTIA legal department informed their staff that the project could no longer be funded in the original category in which we had applied, because it was no longer a "Last Mile" project.

Although the final result was disappointing, the good news is that this was only "Round 1" of this program, and the due diligence process by the NTIA associated with the original application has enabled us to create a much stronger application for Round 2. This application has already been submitted, and we have been given a great deal of encouragement by NTIA staff about our prospects for this current round.

The Glen Price Group's Steven Shultz has been working with the City's Information Technology Director Sue Hartman and her staff on this project, which, hopefully, will bear broadband fruit in the near future.

8. **Public Works Updates**

- The re-roofing of Richmond Fire Station #62 (1065 - 7th Street) is progressing. This project is expected to be completed next week.
- The paving crew completed resurfacing Carriage Drive this week. Next week, they will resurface Robert Miller Drive from Hilltop drive to Hilltop Mall Road.

9. **Recreation Highlights**

- **Sailing**: The Youth Activities section took 14 youth to the Treasure Island Sailing Center where the staff and youth enjoyed a breathtaking 3 hour sailing trip around the entire bay, including touring underneath the Golden Gate Bridge.
- **Spring Break**: The Recreation Department held Spring Break Camps at the Recreation Complex, Booker T. Anderson, May Valley, Nevin and Parchester Community Centers from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM from Monday, April 5th through Friday, April 9th.
- **De Young Museum**: The Parchester Community Center, in conjunction with the Office of Neighborhood Safety staff, escorted 12 youth, ages 6 through 12, to the De Young Museum and the Legion of Honor on Saturday, April 3rd.
- **Bike Ride**: The Youth Activities section will escort up to 18 youth to the Tennessee Valley in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area near the Marin Headlands for a mountain bike ride on Saturday, April 10th from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM.