

City Manager's Weekly Report

This is the weekly report for the two weeks ending August 20th, 2010.

1. **Meeting Notes**

The next meeting of the Richmond City Council is scheduled for Tuesday, September 7th. I hope that you are continuing to enjoy the August recess.

2. **Plunge Reopening**

The Recreation Department hosted a very successful Grand Re-Opening Celebration of the Richmond Municipal Natatorium, "The Plunge," last Saturday, August 14th. In addition to numerous speakers, there were facility tours and free open swim sessions. Thanks to the Recreation Department staff and to all participants for a very successful event.

3. **Via Verdi Emergency Bypass Road Completed Ahead of Schedule**

The Via Verdi sinkhole emergency bypass road project was completed last week and opened to traffic ahead of schedule.

The main components of the bypass road project included a pedestrian pathway, temporary streetlights, fencing, ADA compliant curb ramps, and a three way stop at the intersection with El Portal Drive. Due to the emergency nature of this project and the accelerated schedule, City staff worked closely with Nichols Consulting Engineers, and Bay Cities Paving & Grading as well as local utility agencies, to ensure that the design and construction were completed successfully and on-time. On the afternoon of August 12, 2010, traffic was diverted from the existing one lane temporary bridge along Via Verdi onto the bypass road. The sinkhole area will be barricaded and the temporary one-lane bridge will be removed.

Completion of this access road provides a reliable traffic route for residents in the area of the sinkhole and will allow the City to begin work associated with the restoration phase of the project.

Thanks to the entire project team who put forth a commendable effort to successfully complete the project nearly a week ahead of schedule. Thanks also go to the owners of the Rolling Hill Memorial Park cemetery, who cooperated in providing the land for this temporary road.

4. **Update on Sewer Lateral Grant Program**

The Wastewater Enterprise will be funding all qualifying applicants who submitted sewer lateral grant applications as of the July 31st deadline. City wastewater staff received a total of 129 applications, of which 111 qualified based on the established criteria. The total amount of grant funding for these

111 applications is \$233,860 and the enterprise has identified adequate funds for this amount. As you may recall, the City Council increased the funding for this very successful program for FY 2010-11 from its prior funding level of \$100,000 so that more applications could be accepted.

All lateral grant applications that were received after July 31, 2010 are being kept on file in the event that additional funding becomes available within the remainder of the year.

It should be noted that eight property owners on Chanslor communicated with one another to jointly participate in the program for FY 2010-11. This type of cooperative effort is exceptional and helps minimize the amount of asphalt cutting that will occur over the next several years (after the road resurfacing project is completed).

5. **City Benefits from Credit Rating Recalibrations**

Over the past several months, Moody's Rating Agency has been reviewing the credit ratings of all municipal agencies, and has been applying a "global" rating scale that is intended to bring all municipal credit ratings more in line with the ratings it issues for corporate debt. As a result of these actions, the City of Richmond has received upgrades from Moody's on its General Fund and Wastewater Enterprise credit ratings to A3 and A2, respectively. The Standard & Poor's ratings of A+ and AA for these two funds remain unchanged.

6. **City Receives Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting**

For the third year in a row, the City of Richmond received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2010. The certificate was awarded by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA). The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by the City.

The CAFR was deemed to meet the high standards of the GFOA, including demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the CAFR.

7. **Honda's Port of Entry Results**

At the end of its first four months of operation, the Honda Port of Entry is running strong. Since the first ship arrived in April, through the end of July, a total of 23,480 vehicles have been processed through the facility, resulting in \$850,807 in total revenues earned to date. This more than covers the entire annual debt service of \$838,408 due for this fiscal year.

8. **ABC Channel 7 Reports on Richmond Seedbank**

As previously reported to you, a free seed lending library recently opened in the main branch of the Richmond Library through a collaborative effort by the Richmond Public Library and the Richmond Rivets. Rebecca Newburn is the founder and co-coordinator of the Richmond Grows Seed Lending Library.

Basically, people can "borrow" seeds from the library any time it's open after they attend a half-hour orientation. The program lends seeds for a wide collection of edibles, including dozens of varieties of tomatoes, beans, squash and peppers, as well as seeds of herbs, flowers, California natives and ornamental plants. At the orientation, borrowers learn about how the library is organized, what it means to "borrow" seeds and why a free seed library is valuable to the community. The hope is that people will start to learn how to save seeds and return a portion to the library to keep it self-sustaining.

This past Monday, ABC News Channel 7 did an outstanding report on this innovative program. You can see it here:

http://abclocal.go.com/kgo/story?section=news/local/east_bay&id=7612093

Thanks to Rebecca and Catalin for all their help in establishing and maintaining the library!

9. **Public Work Updates**

1. Public Works, in partnership with the City of El Cerrito, completed the resurfacing of Sonoma Avenue (which is shared by both cities) from Hazel Avenue to Charles Avenue. The City of Richmond provided labor and equipment, and the City of El Cerrito provided the asphalt materials.
2. Crews resurfaced 9th Street from Ripley Avenue to the south end of the street. Public Works also performed dig outs on 23rd Street from Cutting Boulevard to Ohio Avenue. Next week the paving crew will begin grinding Acacia, Elm and Maple Streets between 7th and 8th Streets.
3. A Parks and Landscaping Division contractor continued work this past week at Nicholl Park to replace four old and damaged lighting poles, two at the skate park and the other two along the main walkway.
4. The Parks and Landscaping Division's East Region (east of 23rd Street) conducted vegetation control management along the Greenway from San Pablo Avenue to Carlson Boulevard. The North Region (Hilltop) installed access gates along the sound wall on Southbound Richmond Parkway from I-80 to Lakeside Drive. The North Region also worked on trail vegetation control within the Marina District.
5. The Facilities Maintenance Division did an excellent job in helping to prepare the Senior Annex Center for the recent visit by Congressman George

Miller. Staff entered the center and completed touch up painting as well as detailed cleaning on short notice.

10. **Recreation Highlights**

- **Bar-B-Q:** The Recreation Department, in collaboration with Healthy Neighborhoods, and the West Contra Costa Unified School District's free and reduced lunch program, hosted a free Bar-B-Q on Friday, August 6th, from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM at Lucas Park. More than 100 youth and their families enjoyed food, games and festivities. The barbecue was such a success, another event was held on Friday, August 13th, at Atchison Village. The barbeque programs help provide activities and free lunches to the community.
- **Resource Fair:** The Parchester Community Center will host the Parchester Village Resource Fair tomorrow, Saturday, August 21st, at the Parchester Community Center.

11. **Web Fun Fact**

What do our citizens come to our City website to search for?

Since July 1st, 2010, the top 20 search items include (aside from the usual ones like jobs, maps, and Business License):

- Fireworks
- Sewer Lateral
- Section 8
- National Night Out
- Medical Marijuana
- Point Molate