

City Manager's Weekly Report

This is the weekly report for the week ending July 15th, 2011.

1. Meeting Notes

The next City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 19th, beginning with a Closed Session at 5:00 PM and with the regular agenda convening at 6:30 PM. The last meeting before the August break will be on Tuesday, July 26th.

2. Reminder: July 21st Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory's Welcoming Reception and Town Hall Meeting

As I have reported previously, the City of Richmond is one of the finalists to host the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory's (LBNL) Second Campus at the UC Berkeley Richmond Field Station site. This is an unparalleled opportunity to bring green jobs, economic development, and countless other benefits to the Richmond community.

As part of the selection process, the City will host a welcoming reception and town hall meeting on Thursday, July 21st, from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM at the Richmond Auditorium. The reception will include light refreshments and entertainment beginning at 6:00 PM, followed by the town hall meeting beginning at 7:00 PM.

The town hall meeting is an excellent opportunity to hear representatives of LBNL describe their research activities and what they are seeking in a second campus location. One factor in their decision-making process is to locate in a community in which they are welcome. **Please** come join the community in showing LBNL why ***Richmond is the only choice for the LBNL Second Campus!***



3. **East Bay Center for the Performing Arts Collaborates with the City of Richmond to Earn Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts**

This past week, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) announced the inaugural round of "Our Town" grant funding, totaling \$6.575 million in grants to 51 communities in 34 states that have created public-private partnerships to strengthen the arts while shaping the social, physical, and economic characters of their neighborhoods, towns, cities, and regions. The program is intended to "create partnerships among local governments and arts and design organizations to strengthen the creative sector and help revitalize the overall community." By requiring a partnership between local government and an arts or design organization, Our Town "encourages creative, cross sector solutions to the challenges facing towns, cities, and the arts community."

One recipient of the NEA's Our Town grant is the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, which collaborated successfully with the City of Richmond on a \$150,000 proposal to support the commissioning of an interactive art installation by new media artist Scott Snibbe. The proposed art project will feature professionally choreographed and video-recorded movements of Richmond youth, reflecting both the diversity of the local population and the multicultural dance, rhythm, and performance programs taught and performed at the Center.

Lisa Zimmerman, with the San Francisco-based firm 7Story, worked with both the East Bay Center and Richmond staff to create this successful proposal that we hope will result in a new art landmark in downtown Richmond.

4. **Richmond Receives Grant for *Imagination Playground***

Imagination Playground is a breakthrough playspace concept conceived and designed by architect David Rockwell to encourage child-directed, unstructured free play. With a focus on loose parts, *Imagination Playground* offers a changing array of elements that allows children to constantly reconfigure their environment and to design their own course of play. Rockwell and his firm, Rockwell Group, have partnered with KaBOOM! to inspire children's inherent ability to dream and create by bringing *Imagination Playground* to communities across the country.

Imagination Playground caught the eye of Richmond's Recreation Department staff at the Health Forum held on June 3rd at the Richmond Memorial Auditorium. Since then, staff member Alicia Nightengale has been working with the California Endowment to find funding for this unique "unstructured play structure." The California Endowment connected Ms. Nightengale with Kristen Turek, Senior Philanthropic Advisor at the Marin Community Foundation, who then contacted a donor that fully funded the *Imagination Playground* at a cost of \$5,000.

Imagination Playground will start as a pilot program at the Nevin Community Center and be utilized throughout the remainder of the summer and the start of the new school year. The goal is to have the playground travel to all eight community centers so that each site has a chance to play.

There are only 150 sites throughout the United States that have the *Imagination Playground* and Richmond is now one of those sites.



Thank you to Alicia Nightengale who spearheaded this effort on behalf of the City of Richmond.

5. **Upcoming Lawsuit Announced Seeking to Overturn Illegal State Budget Bills Eliminating Redevelopment**

We have previously reported on the devastating affect of the State legislature's passage of AB 1x 26 and 27 on the Richmond Redevelopment Agency, and other agencies throughout the State. These measures will devastate many critical local job-creating revitalization projects in Richmond and throughout California.

As you will recall, in November 2010, voters passed Proposition 22 by an overwhelming majority. The measure stopped State raids of local redevelopment funds. Despite this clear voter mandate, legislators passed and the Governor signed AB 1x 26 and 27 in blatant violation of Proposition 22 and the will of the voters. AB 1x 26 would abolish redevelopment agencies and AB 1x 27 would allow agencies to exist in some limited capacity only if they agreed to pay a "ransom" payment of \$1.7 billion statewide in the first year and \$400 million statewide each year thereafter.

Press events in Monterey on Monday and Ontario on Thursday launched a series of statewide news conferences with local elected officials announcing their support for the League of California Cities' and the California Redevelopment Association's upcoming lawsuit seeking to overturn the unconstitutional attempt to eliminate redevelopment with the passage of AB 1x 26 and 27.

We will keep you informed.

6. Engineering Services Department Updates

Carlson Boulevard Improvements: The project schedule was interrupted this week with a series of miscommunications from one of the major utilities that exist in the Carlson Corridor. This disrupted the contractor's equipment scheduling and a few days of inactivity resulted. The contractor is now completing potholing of these major utilities such that the final grading excavation can begin early next week. In the meantime, the engineering staff developed a quick RFP to obtain plans for a proposed schematic landscape plan and irrigation backbone such that pricing and possible change orders can be developed to hopefully get this first step of median landscaping in place.

Winehaven Emergency Structural Stabilization:

Building 1 – Complete except for turrets.

Building 6 – Removal of failed structures is complete. A meeting with the contractor has been scheduled to evaluate exposed failed structures.

Building 10 – Complete.

Building 13 – Columns are complete except for diagonal bracing.

Building 63 – Complete.

Railroad Quiet Zones:

Cutting Boulevard near 4th Street – Staff is working with Federal Railroad Administration to approve Alternative Safety Measures.

Canal Boulevard Commercial Driveways – Staff met with officials from the Federal Railroad Administration, California Public Utilities Commission, and the Burlingame Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway, as well as adjacent business representatives, to develop a strategy to install quiet zones. Software has been purchased to design driveway changes while maintaining accessibility for large trucks.

Wharf Street – Construction documents for necessary improvements are 95% complete. Staff is coordinating with BNSF to install their gate mechanisms.

Richmond/Ohlone Greenway Gap Closure: Circulation of environmental documents for this project has been completed. Staff is reviewing consultant responses to comments by public and organizations. Staff also submitted a preliminary grant application with the California Strategic Growth Council Urban Greening program for construction funding.

Park Plaza Series Streetlight Conversion: This project is substantially complete, with punchlist items to be completed that include repairing asphalt concrete trenches.

Safe Routes to School Programs:

Cycle 1 (Ford, Grant, King, & Lincoln) – Caltrans is currently reviewing plans and specifications.

Cycle 2 (Nystrom, Coronado, Highland, Washington, & Wilson) – Staff is working with Caltrans on the required traffic study.

Cycle 3 (Chavez, Murphy, Peres, & Sheldon) – Staff completed the grant application for these locations.

7. **Richmond Parkway Closure Update**

The result of the traffic detour for the Richmond Parkway between Macdonald Avenue and Ohio Avenue appears to be well handled by Engineering and the construction contractor. On-site mobile message boards and advance warning signs have provided proper directions to the motorist. The detour route map provided with details has been available at the City website since last week. The road closure is scheduled to end at 5:00 PM Friday, July 15th (today).

8. **Wastewater Treatment Plant Hydrogen Sulfide Monitors**

In an ongoing effort to monitor and resolve odor issues related to the City's Wastewater Treatment Facility, operated by Veolia Water, the City has installed continuously-operating hydrogen sulfide monitors. The information collected by this equipment is transferred via satellite communication and is available to the community from any computer through the internet. To review the latest hydrogen sulfide monitoring data, go to <https://www.mysmartcover.com/h2s>. If prompted, enter the word "public" in the username field and the word "access" in the password field. A link to this monitoring data is also available on the Wastewater page of the City's website. For more information, please contact the City's Wastewater and Stormwater Division Manager, Chad Davisson, at (510) 620-5486.

9. **US Communities Government Purchasing Alliance Award**

The City of Richmond Finance Department Purchasing Division, Ofelia Alvarez, Rose Gibson, and Courtney Creswell, received the Purchasing Alliance Award on behalf of the City of Richmond, one of 11 jurisdictions across the country to be recognized by U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance for outstanding efforts in saving taxpayer dollars through participation in the U.S. Communities Cooperative Purchasing Program. The program was founded and is co-sponsored by the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities, National Institute of Governmental Purchasing, and the United States

Conference of Mayors. Cooperative purchasing is seen as best practice for public agencies.



10. **Recreation Updates**

Firefighter Training: On July 6th, 8th and 21st from 1:00 to 4:00 PM, the Richmond Swim Center will be hosting Urban Search and Rescue Training sessions, specifically required training for firefighters in preparation for wild water rescues.

Softball: Halfway into the season, with five more games remaining, the “Community Leaders” Adult Co-Ed softball games continue at Booker T. Anderson Park on Thursday evenings at 6:00 PM. The league features teams from the Recreation Department, RPAL and Richmond Sol.

11. **Public Works Updates**

Facilities Maintenance Division: This past week, carpenters completed installing a new floor for the pool room of the Senior Center and installed the new storefront door at the Hilltop RPD Substation. The painters continue painting the exterior of the Disabled People’s Recreation Center (DPRC).

The Electrical Division completed replacing the knocked down traffic signal pole at San Pablo Avenue and Esmond Avenue and continued performing lighting re-lamping.



Parks and Landscaping Division: Staff completed landscaping maintenance and mulching along the Esplanade/Bay Trail Marina, Shimada Park and Vincent Park. Crews are performing major landscape maintenance at the Civic Center Plaza in preparation for the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Community Meeting at the City Auditorium next Thursday. Crews also continued working on citywide very high fire severity zone fuel management (90% complete); weed abatement on Parkway and Giant Road ramps; weed abatement around the Hilltop lake; landscape maintenance on Hilltop and Robert Miller Drives; preparing for a block party at the Nevin Park; weed abatement on Atlas Road; and Bowling Green maintenance at Nicholl Park.

The tree trimming crew will be working next week on Parkside Drive and San Pablo Avenue.

Streets Division: Paving crews are resurfacing 7th Street from Cutting Boulevard to Ohio Avenue this week. Next week, they will resurface the picnic area at Nicholl Park.

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Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments about these or any other items of interest to you.

Have a great week!

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www.ci.richmond.ca.us/list.aspx