

The Race is on for the Mayor's seat

# EAST BAY EXPRESS

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## The Battle for Richmond's Soul

This year's mayoral election features two major candidates – Nat Bates and Tom Butt – who have polar-opposite visions for the City's future.

By John Geluardi

Richmond voters have three mayoral candidates to choose from this November, but the race is really between Tom Butt and Nat Bates, two men who have a combined 54 years of service on the city council — and polar-opposite visions for the city's future. Bates is considered the most conservative member of the council and is a strong backer of Chevron and its massive oil refinery, while **Butt has a long history of promoting good government policies and challenging Chevron's sphere of influence in the city.** Butt is not as liberal as the council's progressive action, although he frequently votes with it.

*An objective journalistic comparison of the Mayoral candidates — continued on page 2*

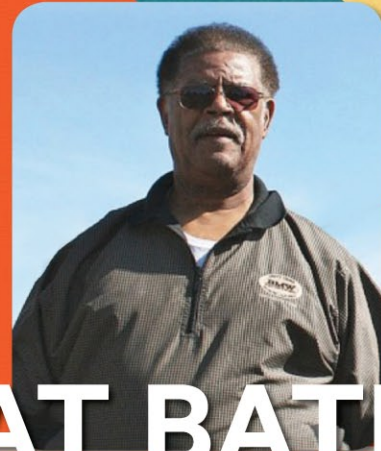


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**TOM BUTT**  
Mayor

Read this article!

“Bates’ views [on hate speech] are a fading historical reflection of a shrinking minority, not the majority of a 21st century Bay Area city. He shouldn’t be elected mayor. He can’t be mayor.”

— Chip Johnson, Columnist, *San Francisco Chronicle*  
 (“United Front Against Bates in Richmond Mayor’s Race,” 8/11/2014)



# NAT BATES

*continued from page 1.*

The third candidate is Uche Uwahemu, but he’s facing an uphill battle against Bates and Butt, who both have far greater name recognition and much more experience in Richmond politics. Uwahemu is not expected to garner a significant number of votes.

Whether it’s Bates or Butt, Richmond’s next mayor could face a serious budget shortfall, along with rising pension costs. The new mayor also will have to deal with a city council that has developed a reputation for petty bickering and unruliness. Furthermore, the coming election will determine if Chevron will regain control of the city’s political structure. The multinational oil giant is spending at least \$1.6 million to elect Bates and three council candidates.

Since Richmond suffered a budget crisis in 2003, the city has made remarkable progress in reducing violent crime, cleaning up blighted neighborhoods, and drawing new businesses to town. In 2013, the University of California announced that it is going to build an extension to the Lawrence Berkeley laboratory in Richmond — a project that is expected to create hundreds of jobs and attract ancillary businesses that should generate millions in new revenue.

Despite the good news, the next council could face a \$7 million

budget shortfall that would force layoffs and cutbacks to city services unless the mayor and city council can find new revenue streams. Finance Director Jim Goins said infrastructure maintenance and pension contributions are a looming problem the new mayor and councilmembers will have to address. One possible new source of revenue is a proposed half-cent sales tax increase on the November ballot. “The new council will be facing some significant challenges,” said Finance Director James Goins. “If the half-cent sales tax measure is not approved, the city is going to need some new revenue sources and I don’t know what they will be.”

The new mayor will also have to cope with a group of Richmond residents who are closely associated with Councilman Corky Booze and have repeatedly disrupted council meetings with homophobic taunts directed at Councilmember Jovanka Beckles, the city’s first openly gay elected official.

Bates, 82, is a retired Alameda County probation officer who has been serving on the council since 1969 with a twelve-year break between 1983 and 1995. During his long political career, Bates has been staunchly pro-business, and, in particular, pro-Chevron, which has rewarded him with huge campaign warchest this year through the political committee “Moving Forward.” The group has

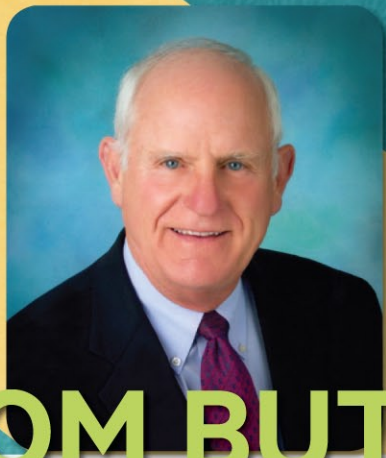
launched an aggressive campaign of radio ads, glossy mailers, and billboards on Bates’ behalf.

Over the years, **Bates, a fiscal hawk, has often voted against projects that are designed to improve the quality of life in Richmond. He has consistently voted against establishing parks and open space and most proposals to fund park maintenance. He also has voted against funding many of Richmond’s historical treasures, including keeping the historic WWII Red Oak Victory ship in its berth at the Port of Richmond and maintaining the historical buildings at Point Molate.**

**He also recently referred to bicycle lanes as “radical” and “socialists” in a neighborhood email forum. He is also wary of alternative energy programs and voted against Richmond’s contract with Solar Richmond, an energy company that offers residents an option for renewable energy service in their homes and businesses. Bates also voted against suing Chevron over safety issues related to a refinery explosion in 2012.**

In an interview, Bates said he has been wrongly characterized as being against parks and open space. He also said the city’s top priority should be to become more business-friendly, especially to heavy industry. “We need

Look at the facts!



# TOM BUTT will be the Best Mayor

## S. TOM BUTT

economic development and the only way we are going to create economic opportunities for our young people is by building factories and by supporting other business,” Bates said. “We need jobs as well as parks and open space.”

Butt, 70, the principal owner of Interactive Resources, a successful Point Richmond architectural firm, has much less campaign money than Bates at his disposal. His campaign has raised \$30,000, which qualifies him for another \$25,000 in matching funds from the city. He also has a popular email forum, which has become a regular source for local news and culture in Richmond. With an estimated 4,400 subscribers, it could also prove to be a powerful campaign tool.

**Butt has served on the council continuously since 1995. His voting record has been diametrically opposed to that of Bates on parks, the environment, and planning issues. Butt, a businessman himself, supports bringing new businesses to Richmond, but he wants a diversity of new enterprises – not just more heavy industry.**

Butt would also like to improve Richmond’s image. “Nat’s voting record shows that he has consistently voted against sustainable, good government improvements,” Butt said.

“Nat has said that Richmond has too many parks and he and Chevron would rather see dirty industry instead of nice condominiums on the city’s waterfront because they can work with dirty industries and nice condos means educated residents who stand up for their rights.”

**Butt said one of the best ways to examine his and Bates’ differing visions for the city’s future is to look at the council’s vote on the General Plan 2014, which Butt voted for and Bates voted against.**

The council adopted the plan in 2012. It contains fifteen elements (in California, cities are only required to have eight elements), including guidelines for creating economic development and sustainable development; building more bicycle and pedestrian pathways; improving neighborhood and public safety; fostering the arts; and developing community gardens. In addition, the Richmond General Plan includes the state’s first of its kind health and wellness element for the city’s ethnic communities and geographic neighborhoods.

Bates said he voted against the general plan because he believes it will fail to create enough business opportunities. “These things become over-politicized and Tom likes to make these accusations because he thinks it will help his

campaign,” Bates said. “That plan is full of loopholes and there are other aspects I didn’t approve of. I may have voted against the plan, but that doesn’t mean I don’t support 90 percent of it.”

Butt, meanwhile, is optimistic about possible solutions to the city’s financial challenges. He noted that Chevron is about to resume full operation after the 2012 fire, and that the refinery is on the verge of a \$1 billion upgrade, which will increase its assessed value as well as city revenues. There’s also a lawsuit over an unexplained discrepancy in Richmond’s property tax assessments, which have decreased roughly 10 percent while home values have increased 20 to 30 percent. There’s also the half-cent sales tax measure, which could add \$7 million to the city’s general fund.

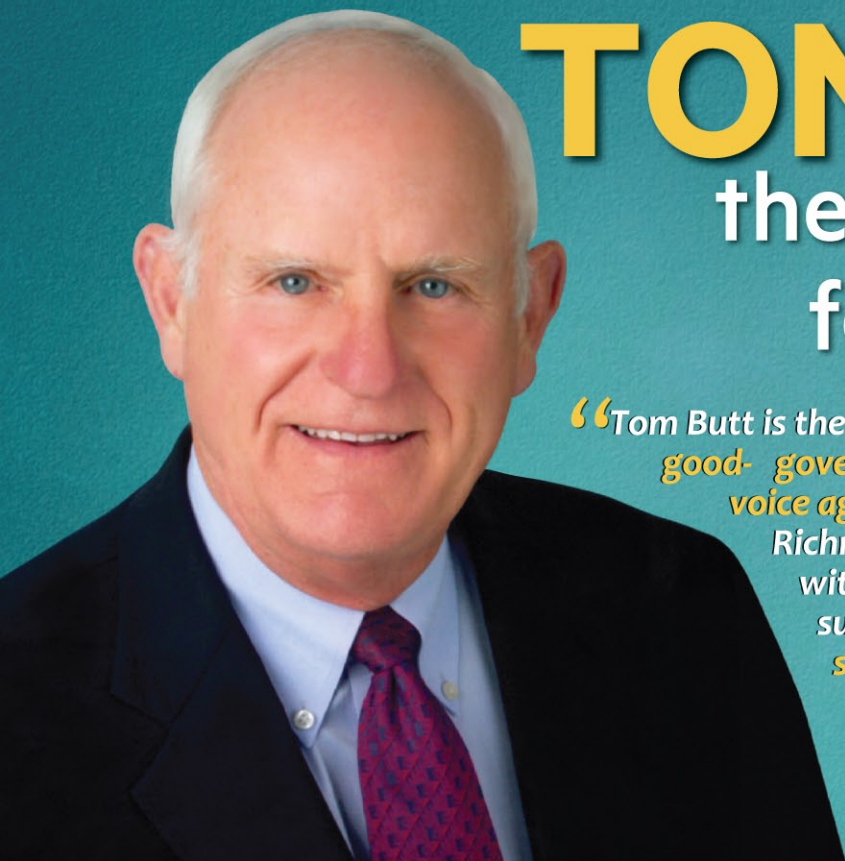
**“It’s important to attract new businesses, but if I’m elected, one of my main issues will be public safety,” Butt said. “Richmond residents want safe streets. We are in a great place where crime rates have dropped across the board and I want to make sure that continues, which will have a positive effect on bringing new businesses to town.”**

**TOM BUTT FOR MAYOR 2014**

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# TOM BUTT

the best choice  
for **Mayor**

“Tom Butt is the clear choice over Nat Bates... Butt, a **good- government advocate**, has long been a **strong voice against the power and influence of Chevron** in Richmond. By contrast, Bates almost always sides with the oil giant... We also wholeheartedly support Butt because **he can be counted on to support the important reforms** implemented by Police Chief Chris Magnus, the Bay Area’s most progressive top cop.”

— East Bay Express

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Paid for by Tom Butt for Mayor 2014 – FPPC #1235726

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