
Richmond, California We Will **REVIVE** in 2005



2004 Year End Review

Tom Butt, Richmond City Council Member
December 31, 2004

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Introduction

For several years, I have prepared detailed year-end evaluations of City of Richmond services, problems challenges and wishes. Originally, these were conveyed to my City Council colleagues and the city manager as a way of providing input into the annual city manager performance evaluation and establishing my priorities and legislative objectives for the coming year.

In 2003, I shared one of these priorities on the E-FORUM in [New Year's Resolution - a Full Court Press on Blight](#), January 3, 2003.

In 2004, I went whimsical and authored [Out With The Old – In With The New](#), E-FORUM, January 1, 2004, providing a number of awards and multiple choice predictions. Remarkably, several of the predictions had choices that were dead on, such as:

- Point Molate finally belongs to the City of Richmond (at least 85% of it). What will happen next?
 - A. The City will sell it to ChevronTexaco for \$2, making a whopping 100% profit.
 - B. It will become the site of Richmond's Indian casino.**
 - C. Nothing. We will continue to be wracked by indecision and fear of ChevronTexaco.
 - D. After ChevronTexaco is forced to downsize its ammonia storage, the Alternate Release Scenario shrinks and Point Molate property values rise by \$50 million as a mixed use residential development becomes possible.

- The Civic Center was declared a seismic risk in 1991, and the City Hall moved “temporarily” to Marina Bay in 2003. What will 2004 bring?
 - A. Staff will suggest looking at nearby cities for a new Richmond City Hall location to cut their commute time and save gas.
 - B. See “C” in item 2, above.
 - C. Nothing will happen. Staff is beginning to like working at Marina Bay.**
 - D. Design for seismic retrofit and rehabilitation of Richmond's 50+ year-old City Hall will actually begin.

This year, I decided to expand the New Year's Day E-FORUM to become a broader evaluation of the City of Richmond and to give E-FORUM readers an opportunity not only to participate but to also play the principal role.

What follows is not a scientific poll or survey by any standard. Some of it reflects my personal opinions, and some of it reflects the opinions of people who live or do business in Richmond, including some City employees. The only public input quoted herein is from readers of the E-FORUM, which is a self-limiting sample. Comments from E-FORUM readers are in quotation marks and italics to distinguish them from my own.

Finally, I have pulled no punches. For the most part, I have included E-FORUM readers' comments without editing or censorship, which may offend some people. As always, I welcome responses, comments, arguments, debates and corrections.

Richmond Issues of the Year 2004

No. 1 - The 2004 Budget Crisis

There was no competition for this year's No. 1 story – the revenue and spending imbalance that some labeled a “fiscal meltdown.” This also made Chip Johnson's (*San Francisco Chronicle*, December 31, 2004) East Bay list, as follows:

RICHMOND CITY WOES: The blue-collar city came within an eyelash of insolvency last year and slashed essential services -- including layoffs in the police and fire departments -- in order to close a \$12 million budget gap and stay afloat during the course of the year. City officials seemed incapable of fixing the problem and spent more time arguing about a proposal to slice the size of the council from nine to seven members.

City officials passed on a one-time \$50 million payment from Chevron to reject a casino proposal at Point Molate and rolled the dice on a Sacramento deal that will allow it to be built despite a proposal to impose a ban on casino slot machines operating within a 35 mile-radius of an already approved Indian gaming casino in the neighboring city of San Pablo.

Despite the fact that during roughly the same time period, the State of California went tens of billions in the red and the United States government went trillions in the red, Richmond became the focus of exhaustive media and public criticism. Just as “all politics are local,” the ramifications of the resulting massive layoffs were felt by local people who use libraries, recreation services and other City services, and the enduring presence of affected union members dominated every City Council meeting for months as it did the numerous viewers of KCRT.

As it turned out, the budget crisis, while real and serious, was somewhat overblown. It appears to have consisted to a large extent of sloppy accounting of internal fund balances pooled into a single pot of cash. Untangling this web diminished the problem substantially, which, with substantial layoffs, enabled the City Council to deliver what the City Manager described as a “balanced budget” for 2004-2005. I remain, however, dubious – see [Whiskey to Beer](#), E-FORUM, June 24, 2004.

Various circumstances and individuals have been blamed for the crisis, including State “takeaways,” the former city manager and finance director, inflated union pension plans and the SAP system that was so unusable even the 2004-2005 budget had to be prepared by hand using EXCEL spreadsheets. Although the public clamored for a scapegoat, the long-awaited State Auditor’s report avoided getting too personal, essentially reporting what we already knew -- that the City essentially spent more than it received in revenue. Whether the failure was due to incompetence, negligence or even criminal acts has never been officially addressed. Responsible individuals were not listed by name or title. Most, if not all, of the recommendations in the audit were previously detailed in Interim City Manager Phil Batchelor’s list of 170 reforms, and many of them have already taken place or have been approved by the City Council and are in process. See [State Audit Report Slams Richmond](#), December 8, 2004.

Interestingly, even the budget crisis did not generate the sheer volume of participatory democracy that last year’s leader – the front yard fence height debate – generated. Not once was a City Council meeting transferred to the Auditorium due to audience overflow. It appears that folks can live without jobs, libraries, community centers and even fire stations, but don’t mess with their fences. Incidentally, the provisions of the amended fence ordinance crafted by the City Council after those large and contentious public hearings in 2003 have yet to be implemented by City staff. Go figure.

No 2. – Point Molate

No question about this either. A battle of corporate giants bidding ten of millions of dollars for Point Molate was waged for months concluding with the City Council awarding Upstream Point Molate a five-year, \$15 million option to develop a destination resort incorporating a gambling casino. There were few gray areas on this one. Detractors were convinced it would ruin Richmond forever, and supporters saw it as the City’s salvation. One of the strangest outcomes from the struggle was the alliance between ChevronTexaco and environmental organizations to oppose the Upstream project, each with radically different motivations but a common objective.

No. 3 – Election 2004

For the first time in recent memory, City Council candidates smelled real blood. The budget crisis, layoffs and reduced City services gave eleven challengers a seemingly realistic hope of knocking off traditionally entrenched incumbents. The decision by Rev. Charles Belcher not to run for re-election made one new council member a certainty. For many election watchers, it was not a matter of whether or not incumbents were vulnerable but which challenger would replace them. However, when the dust settled, the voters failed to return only one incumbent, Gary Bell, who strangely enough had a remarkably good record of criticizing the City's financial management and predicting dire results if practices were not improved. Ironically, he was also the only City Council member who voted against the ill-fated 2003-2004 budget.

In my fifth campaign (four for City Council and one for mayor), I finally rose to the top of the vote count, garnering 11,727 votes, more than any other Richmond City Council or mayoral candidate has ever received, helped of course by this being the first City election held simultaneously with a presidential election.

Newcomer Gayle McLaughlin made more headlines than anyone else by nailing third place while running as a member of the Richmond Progressive Alliance and identifying herself as a Green Party member. John Marquez, who ran last in a field of four in the 2001 Richmond mayoral race, redeemed himself with a high second place. Mindell Penn and Nat Bates secured the fourth and fifth places with the other Richmond Progressive Alliance candidate Andres Soto running a respectable but distant sixth.

The final vote count is below:

Tom Butt	11,727	10.5%
John E. Marquez	11,277	10.1%
Gayle McLaughlin	11,191	10.0%
*Mindell Penn	10,645	9.5%
*Nathaniel "Nat" Bates	9,569	8.6%
Andres Soto	8,318	7.5%
Deborah Preston Stewart	7,456	6.7%
*Gary L. Bell	7,288	6.5%
Tony K. Thurmond	6,692	6.0%
Eddrick J. Osborne	6,152	5.5%
Kathy "Storm" Scharff	6,128	5.5%
Courtland Corky Booze	5,809	5.2%
Arnie Kasendorf	4,953	4.4%
Bill Idzerda	2,352	2.1%
Herman Blackwell	2,073	1.9%

Richmond Achievements and Follies of 2004

Tom Butt Nominations for Best 2004 Achievements

My personal best achievements of the City of Richmond for 2004 include the following, not in any particular order:

-
- Closing the sale of the Ford Assembly Building to developer Eddie Orton. This will pave the way for the completion of the structure's rehabilitation and eventual occupation.
 - Completing and selling out the first phase of Metro Walk, Richmond's uniquely multi-modal transit village.
 - Hiring Phil Batchelor as Interim City Manager.
 - Hiring a new permanent City Manager, Orinda's Bill Lindsey.
 - Completing of Lucretia Edwards' Park and additional portions of the Bay Trail as well as final approval of the design of the Richmond Central Greenway.
 - Making a decision on the fate of Point Molate.
 - Collaboration of the City Council and the City's public employee unions to make structural reductions in pension plan and medical coverage costs.
 - Initiating the Easter Hill Hope VI project.
 - Advancing the Rosie the Riveter WW II/ Home Front National Historical Park with a visit from Lynn Cheney, opening of the Interim Visitor Center in City Hall, recent posting of the Bay Trail interpretive markers, and the Ford Motor Company publicity that resulted in nearly 10,000 Rosies responding with their personal stories and artifacts.

E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Best 2004 Achievements

Those listed above pretty well include those nominated by E-FORUM readers with a couple of additions:

- *"The decision to sell city-owned vacant lots."*
- *"Due to the financial mess the city is in, the communities came closer together, trying to help with community related issues, i.e. crime."*

E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Worst 2004 Debacles

- The "No. 1 Issue of the Year" was also the "Worst of 2004 by acclamation." One City employee writes *"Worst – The City's continued plummet of financial instability. Being a City employee, threatened with job loss, loss of stability, losing cost of living increases, losing city paid retirement, loss of knowledge from key personnel due to layoffs and just plain losing. While the instability has forced early or in some cases long overdue retirements, and weeded out some undesirable staff, it has left some fighting for their jobs, and those remaining have had to endure not only cuts in salary but an even greater increase in workload. Believe it or not there were/are some staff in the City that worked hard before the layoffs and are now working harder with fewer resources and for less pay."*
- Several E-FORUM readers took the crises on step further and decried the apparent lack of accountability for those responsible, including *"Letting them off the hook with a "golden parachute package" rather than firing them, but let the tax-payer foot the bill by cutting virtually all services, which put all of us on the brink of disaster."*
- And another contributor" *"The sad state of the Library."*

Development Projects During 2004

E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Best 2004 Development Projects

Although the City is not responsible for all development projects in Richmond, it always plays at least an entitlement and regulatory role that can shape the design, construction and even the location of all projects. Following are E-FORUM readers' nominations for best and worst:

- **Transit Village:** *“Best has got to be the Transit Village- very nicely designed and the density seems just right for that location.”*
- **Point Molate:** *“I think that the Point Molate project has the most potential for our community. The revenue it can generate for the community as a whole as well as for the City’s coffers can only add to the benefit of thousands of good union jobs with benefits that will go along with it. I have to praise many of the City Council members who finally woke up and made an effort to learn more about Point Molate. I praise those that stood by their convictions in the face of angry voters who vowed retribution if these Council members actually represented the City as a whole instead of the special interest groups comprised of the anti-casino open-space-at-all-costs get-into-bed-with-Chevron groups. I also have to shake my head at those Council members who tried to play on both sides of the fence hoping that their votes would not offend any future voters.”*

E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Worst 2004 Development Projects

- **Seacliff Estates and Toll Brothers:** *“Worst is Seacliff where they’ve gone over the pale by removing the last of the trees around the pond - we noticed yesterday not one bird in the pond during this peak migration season. Worst upcoming development (tie) will be Terminal One with nine bulky tall uninspired piles vs. a truly horrible enormous cupola laden condominium proposed smack up against the beautiful Ford Building. Please can someone tell Toll Brothers to go away and leave us alone?”*

“The entire Richmond Bay front is (what’s left of it) has 5 story mega-mansions/condos built on its entirety with parking for at least 100,000 cars. Toll Bros., etc have been kind enough to leave 0.8 acres for open space/green space for the public. All of this, compliments of the Richmond Planning Commission. There is never too much concrete in Richmond!! Bring on the developers and give away for pennies OUR land, the public’s land. Kudos to their foresight and sense of taste”

- **Campus Bay Residential:** *“I think that the bungling of the Zeneca project may haunt us for many years to come. It should rank high on our list for worst development project for this year and may deserve a permanent place on the list.”*

”Simeon Cherokee superfund site. Please support the effort of Richmond residents and the neighboring business to make sure that we don't get shafted. I really appreciate Loni for convening the hearing in November and for Wendell Brunner for his involvement to protect people's health. No residences should go on that site until the pesticides, herbicides, and other toxics are removed. It is not good enough to neutralize the acidic soil and cap the other chemicals, as they have done to date. Steve Duran and his Redevelopment underlings are too willing to sell Richmond down the river on the Zeneca property to make what they believe is an easy buck.”

- **Breuner Marsh Development** *“The land near Breuner Marsh, South of Point Pinole, is under threat of development. This piece of land borders an important, still-intact wetland and connects Point Pinole to the wetland. Only 10 percent of the wetlands that once surrounded the San Francisco Bay are still intact and the Breuner property has additional value as the end point for the SF Bay Trail and as an open space. In addition, Richmond has over 800 acres of vacant and underused land that can be built on. With all this undeveloped land close to current development, the Breuner Property should be protected as open space.”*

Anthony Murphy: *“Mr. Murphy, (one of several local developers who is buying up vacant lots like they’re going out of style (and they are) in Point Richmond. This reminds me of a quote by his honor, Willy Brown the mayor of SF who a few years back said, “if there’s a square inch left, I*

will build on it". It seems that this philosophy holds true in Richmond as well. Open space and trees seem to be a menace and should be gotten rid of for the monetary benefit of a few."

Organizations in 2004

E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Best 2004 Organizations

A lot of what is positive and is accomplished in the City of Richmond comes not from city government but from non-profit organizations operating largely with volunteers and a mix of private contributions, grants and other public agency funding. F-Forum readers have nominated the following:

- **Richmond Art Center:** See [Richmond Art Center](#), 2540 Barrett Avenue, (510) 620-6772. New exhibits opening January 25, 2005.
- **Neighborhood Councils:** *"With everything that has happened to this city in 2004, the Neighborhood Councils provide a means of citizens to get together and make a difference. Not every neighborhood takes advantage of this organization, but those that do, benefit tremendously. Having their support from the City reduced, my neighborhood council started requesting contributions so that they can continue provide the monthly newsletter and meetings and many people did."*

"The Neighborhood Councils in general and the Marina Bay Neighborhood Council in particular, for helping to keep people honest...especially those who are trying to pull the wool over the Redevelopment eyes."
- **TRAC (Trails for Richmond Action Committee)** championing [Richmond Bay Trail](#): *"I am biased because I am part of this organization but I think TRAC gets a lot done with very little help from the City."*
- **[Richmond Main Street Initiative](#):** *"2004 activities included three "Music on the Main" events which included the Chamber of Commerce Mixer, held downtown in July. The Design Committee of RMSI completed its work and recommendations to the Redevelopment Dept. We now have new trash receptacles and benches in the Main Street area between 8th and 16th streets. RMSI held a Holiday festival on Thursday, Dec. 2nd at the Community Room located at 314 11th Street. Santa gave toys to over 400 children from low-income families in the community. Our Santa is Jerrold Hatchett a RMSI Board member."*
- **Neighborhood Watch:** *"With the collaboration of these groups crime can be reduced in our city. Neighbors can get to know each other, look out for each other and have a greater sense of belonging. Yet the importance of this group is underestimated by current city government. They get no funding and recognition."*
- **RAB (Restoration Advisory Board):** *"I would like to offer up my heartfelt appreciation for the efforts of the Point Molate Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) for standing firm to ensure that our community is on the receiving end of a prime piece of land that will be properly cleaned. Without their efforts I am convinced that the future generations of Richmond would only know about Point Molate as they do any other part of Chevron's property. The efforts of the Navy and of some of our business neighbors were not always conducive to the best interests of our community. I mention the RAB not to heap any praise on myself but to make sure that the dedicated volunteers of the RAB get their due recognition. Fully nine of the RAB members (and I'm including Bruce Beyaert) have been with this project for a full nine years in one capacity or another [Lucretia Edwards, Shirley Butt, Jean Siri, Dr. Henry Clark, Dear Sweet Sarah Eeles, Stephen Linsley, Nagaraja Rao, Bruce Beyaert and Don Gosney]. I also have no doubt that without their efforts,*

the City would not have taken the steps to receive this property that may soon become a shining star for our community.”

- **Dr. Lou Hagler:** Not exactly an organization – but more like a one-person crusade against noise pollution, “... for all the work he has done regarding the railroads' danger to our health and safety...”

City Employees

This is a touchy one. Clearly, City employees who have distinguished themselves should be recognized and held up as an inspiration to others. Unfortunately, those who have been nominated are typically those who have frequent exposure to or communication with the public because of the nature of their jobs. There may be others who are working just as hard or making just as much of a difference of whom the public has no knowledge or has no contact. Also, different people have different perceptions. Based on the responses I received, one person's hero is sometimes another person's bum.

Identifying employees held in low esteem is even more problematic. It may feel good to get it off your chest, but as my mother told me, “If you can't say anything good about someone, don't say anything at all.” Some also perceive the public criticism of City employees as poor form that, as a matter of ethics, should be given only to the city manager and only in private.

I was chastised by one City employee for my own criticism using too broad a brush. An E-FORUM reader and City employee requested of me: “*One more item, please do not continue to blame everyone for the few that cannot do things correctly. Not all of us have trouble following rules, but when one department screws up all of us get penalized. How fair is that?*”

Trying to avoid being mean-spirited during the holidays, I have not weighed in on the garlic course for City employees, although I have pretty well made my thoughts known over the last year. Instead, I will register a hope that they will all see the true light and achieve redemption in 2005.

City Employees Nominated by E-FORUM Readers for Roses

- **Interim City Manager Phil Batchelor** was hired by a unanimous vote of the City Council and continues to enjoy the support of the City Council and, it appears, most of the public. One City employee who bemoaned the financial crises and subsequent layoffs noted: “*On the bright side, however, the severe pruning back of department staff forced the more competent employees to find ways to do more with less and streamline workflow. This was encouraged by Phil Batchelor, who established higher performance standards than we're accustomed to seeing in Richmond*”
- **Police Chief Charles Bennett** appears to a cross-section of citizens as the antidote for everything they disliked about Chief Samuels. He is accessible, hard working and an advocate of community oriented policing even with continuing opposition from some factions of the police department. E-FORUM readers write: “*Chief Bennett's approach to crime, prostitution, blight and abatement is successful and hopefully will clean up our city*”

“Bennett ... for having stayed around so long after his original retirement and during a time of hardship for the City. Most people would have left during difficult times as unpopular decisions had to be made, including internal politics, employees having to pay for PERS retirement, budget cuts and staff reductions. During this time crime is down and the response times for Police has remained consistent even though staffing levels have been trimmed by almost 25%. He attended so many community events during this last year, not just making an appearance and leaving, but staying and talking to those in the community. He was there to serve those in the community and his decision making was for the best interest of the community. His out of the box thinking strategies months and sometimes years ahead left most people puzzled. He will be missed.”

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- **Finance Director Pat Samsell:** *“Pat Samsell is a great gift to the City. He is fair and understands what needs to be done. Unfortunately, at times, his hands are tied due to union and HR concerns. The dream for some of us is just to have the authorization to do what we know needs to be done. But that is another dream.”*
 - **Police Lieutenant Ron Berry** *“I have worked with Ron for almost 3 years. Despite the fact that he is overworked, underpaid, and always putting out fires (being pulled 17 directions at once), he deals with me and other members of the community productively and graciously. He has been a productive and consistent ally of many of the neighborhoods”*
 - **Sergeant Shawn Pickett:** *“Lieutenant Berry and Sergeant. Pickett, while on the abatement team, took their jobs very serious, they too responded fast within 24hrs.”*
 - **Police Records Supervisor Margaret Hembree:** *“Margaret has taken a strong leadership role within the Police Department. Her scheduling, coordination and decision making has been exemplary with regards to managing the vendors. Ensuring the Police Department is getting the contracted services it is paying for through strong negotiations and holding vendors accountable for their end of the contracts. Her services not only encompass the Richmond Police Department, but also the Fire Department and the outlying cities of Kensington, El Cerrito, San Pablo, Hercules and Pinole. She deals directly with all the Chiefs for these Cities, and the only recognition she gets is a greater workload.”*
 - **Sergeant Joe Silva:** *“Sergeants Silva and Lawson and their colleagues on the police force continue to give good service in Point Richmond.”*
 - **Sergeant Lawson:** See above.
 - **Sue Kadlec:** *“Sue Kedlac, Rochelle Monk and their colleagues have done and are doing an excellent job.”*

“I think Rochelle Monk and Sue Kadlec in the City Manager's office always do a good job; are always responsive to residents, and always should be given lots of kudos.”
 - **Rochelle Monk:** See above.
 - **City Clerk Assistant Janet Hernandez** *“...is very reliable.”*
 - **Public Services Director and Assistant City Manager Rich McCoy:** *“... for his accessibility and responsiveness about potholes.”*
 - **City Engineer Rich Davidson:** *“... always returns my calls and does what he can.”*
 - **Public Services Superintendent Willie Haywood:** *“... seems to love our city and wants to keep it clean, when ever I report a garbage dumping in our neighborhood, he is right "on the ball" and has it picked up. His response time usually is within 24hrs.”*
 - **Parks Superintendent Sharon West:** *“One of the best City staff is Sharon West. Don't know her title, but she is doing the job of the Parks Director (last done by Art Yamashita) without the title, without the pay and without much staff. She is doing it because she cares so much. And she is doing a great job, in spite of the obstacles. And she is very responsive to her public.”*

“My nominee for distinguished City employee is Sharon West. Sharon has been incredible in stepping into the void left by departure of previous senior management of the Recreation and Parks Department. She has been instrumental in keeping this department operating, although at

reduced levels, despite loss of funds and personnel. She knows how to get the essential jobs done."

- **Parks Supervisor Barry Williams:** *"Since I have lived here, all problems/issues with Atchison Village park, we have called him with. We call him the ONE PHONE CALL MAN. We leave him a message, it gets taken care of."*
- **Sue Hartman:** *"Sue Hartmann (City's web-site) also is a fast responder/problem solver."*
- **Code Enforcement Inspector Coy Charles**

City Employees Nominated by E-FORUM Readers for Garlic

- **City Clerk Diane Holmes:** *"...keeps herself busy to put the blame for mistakes re. info on web-site, response on faxed issues to the fax machine, listed to her office, but would not take any initiative to solve problems in the staff-strapped city hall."*
- **Police Sergeant Dick Tak:** *"...doesn't respond at all to any complaints made"*
- **Human Resources Director Cedric Williams**
- **Planning Director Barry Cromartie**
- **Everett Jenkins:** *"...hands down, is the worst administrator and the worst attorney I know. In his first six months in office, he drew sex harassment, race discrimination and State Bar ethics complaints, all of which are probably going to cost the City hundreds of thousands of dollars to defend. He lies when he is in trouble. He lied about the Whitney case, about his employee and about his motivations. Moreover, he all but dismantled the drug house and code enforcement programs by getting rid of Quintero, the hardest working attorney this City has ever seen who was getting real results and real money for the City."*

"...does he really know what he is doing? He fired an assistant attorney, who did her job very well only to hire somebody, nobody knows anything about her, without any references, background check etc. It appears to me that Mr. Jenkins has the same work-ethics as Mr. Hunter had, none!"

"Mr. Jenkins has the distinction of only going to court TWICE in his 28 year tenure with the City of Richmond. His record is a stellar 2 for 2 -- HE LOST BOTH TIMES. Jenkins will happily spend our tax dollars by the thousands of dollars in order to settle any suit or complaint, as long as he can stay out of court.

In addition, a "still wet behind the ears" ACLU attorney kicked some serious ass (belonging to Mr. Jenkins) at a recent City Council meeting. (At that meeting, the only thing funnier than watching Jenkins get his ass kicked by this young man, was the fact that Mayor Irma Anderson proudly presided over the ass-kicking and let it continue because (1) She determined that the ACLU attorney had stature and (2) she didn't understand what he was saying to Mr. Jenkins.

As "Acting Interim City Attorney," Mr. Jenkins has had a complaint filed against him with the State of California BAR Association, he has had a sexual harassment charge filed against him by staff, and he has made it very clear to the community, via his actions at the Richmond City Council meetings, that he has NEVER read or studied "Roberts Rules of Order."

"Acting Interim City Attorney" Mr. Jenkins brings the kind of flare to Richmond City Government that proves that our city government bureaucrats and politico's work hard at earning and keeping the nickname "The Ship of Fools."

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- **IT Manager Sue Hartman:** “...has absolutely no leadership skills and her department is run by the individuals within it, not by her. She opens and reads the postal mail of her employees and seems to think she is justified in it, last time I checked that was against the law. She is paranoid that her employees are doing something behind her back.”
 - **Stan Fleury IT Department:** “Recently assigned to the Police Department. Maybe he is working out of job classification, but who isn't in today's work environment. His level of knowledge in supporting basic IT functions is minimal and spends most of his time doing his homework during work hours. He is never available when needed and has a lack of interest in learning the job. He even had the audacity to call in a report earlier this year of having his wallet stolen from Hilltop's 24 Hour Fitness where he was working out at 3:00pm. Isn't that well past his lunch break and during work hours? A call to his then supervisor as to his whereabouts, confirmed that he was supposed to be at work but the issue was never dealt with. He is either very well protected or no one is willing to hold him accountable for his actions or lack of. Is that why he was removed from the IT Department to have someone else deal with him or to better protect him?”
 - **City Council Members:** “A select few of the City Council Members.”

Roses from Tom Butt for City Employees

City employees who make a favorable impression on me are smart, honest, fair, hard working, and probably most of all – responsive. I don't expect them to agree with me, take direction from me or do me any special favors. I do, however, expect them to be competent in their jobs, follow through with policies and directives set by the City Council, and provide answers and information I need to do my job. My favorites are the standouts from a list is limited to those I come into contact with most often, so the exclusion of any other deserving employees is not intended as a slight but simply the fact that I may not know them as well personally or know how well they do their jobs.

- Chief Bennett and City Manager Phil Batchelor have been a pleasure to work with. Both are real professionals.
- The “front office” administrative staff is really great, and I include City Clerk Diane Holmes and her assistants as well as Sue Kedlac and Rochelle Monk.
- Trina Jackson is the City Council's assigned liaison, and she always performs perfectly whatever I assign her to do.
- Police Officers Lt. Ron Berry and Sgt. Joe Silva have been particularly helpful in handling constituent complaints I have referred to them.
- In Public Services and Parks, Willie Haywood stands out as an example of extreme motivation, and Sharon West is a real go-getter. Rich Davidson is always overburdened, but he soldiers on with a great positive attitude and no complaints.
- Roi Evron always has GIS stuff ready when I need it, and Sue Hartman was able to get my home computer back on the Internet after a 10-day Comcast fiasco when all else failed.
- Steve Duran and I don't always agree, but he always gets back to me. I appreciate the professionalism of Redevelopment staff such as Richard Mitchell, Alan Wolken, Gary Hembree and others.

- Although it is not a City department, Veolia and its employees continue to make a good impression on me.

City Departments, Policies and Services

City Departments, Policies and Services Nominated by E-FORUM Readers for Roses

Everyone

From a developer: *“Regarding our project, the city departments—redevelopment, planning, building, public works, police, fire--have performed admirably. We appreciate our relationship with Richmond’s staff.”*

Recreation and Parks

- *“This year Mira Vista Park, just down the street from where I live, was graced with a kiosk, table and stools designed by John Toki. This was a collaborative project involving the Recreation and Parks Division, the Mount Street Neighborhood Watch and John Toki. This is a great enhancement to this park and my neighborhood.”*
- *“The Richmond Swim Center for still being open (thank you City Council)”*

Design Review Board

“... not really a department, but I think the Design Review Board does a great job. Very thoughtful, reasonable comments and an attempt to educate. Well run by Roger Hodges.”

Tom Butt E-FORUM

- *“Best source of inside information: The tom butt E-FORUM, of course.”*
- *“I think one of the greatest benefits to the City has been the Tom Butt E-FORUM. Week in and week out it’s still the greatest source of information about what’s going on in Richmond. Our local newspapers and City Hall do very little to keep us informed but we can usually count on the E-FORUM to point us in the right direction for information.”*
- *“-and to you, Tom Butt, for having the cajones to stand up to the City Council and tell it like it is, especially in your emails!. Keep up the good work.”*

Fire Department

“The personnel at Fire Station 61 continue to provide prompt and very important service to us in Point Richmond.”

Veolia

”Chris MacAuliffe and his colleagues with VEOLIA are trying very hard at the Sewer plant and now with the sewers. We’ll know more in about a year; once we see how they handle the chronic sanitary sewer problems.”

Planning

“I have less experience with them but from what I’ve seen so far, Lamont Thompson and Tanya Boyce work well at Planning. However, it does no one an injustice to point out that Judy Battle stands above the

Planning Crowd by a mile. I might find similar things to say about other planners but I don't know them well enough."

Parks and Recreation

"Don't know about best and worst, but really appreciate having the pool at Kennedy High School open and the prices reasonable!!"

City Clerk's Office

:"I have had nothing but excellent cooperation and service from the City Clerk's office over the past two years."

Police Department

- *"I have only lived in Richmond for 10 years and I don't have much interaction with City offices but I think the Police Department is great. As great as they can be with too many calls and not enough officers. I attend a neighborhood meeting (the South/West Richmond Annex) and every month a officer comes and keeps us up to date on what is going on in our area. I assume that the current Police Chief is supportive of neighborhood groups and this is very good in a city like Richmond where there is so many problems"*
- *"Current statistical software does not provide usable crime statistic information."*

Sewer Service

"I don't remember their names, but two guys from the sewer cleaning service came out to my house this summer and did an amazing job of helping me locate and clear a sewer leak."

City Departments, Policies and Services Nominated by E-FORUM Readers for Garlic

Phones and Phone Calls

Telephone communication with City staff leaves some citizens wanting. From my own observations, it is difficult to find on the City website, or otherwise, exactly what phone number to call for a specific purpose. There is no comprehensive phone or email directory available on the City website or in hard copy. All City employees are supposed to identify themselves and their department when answering the phone (see <http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/apmanual/AP657%20Use%20of%20City%20Telephones.PDF>), but some do not. Some individuals, and even some entire departments, have reputations for not returning phone calls promptly – or at all.

- *"We have an interim City Manager that fails to respond to emails or phone messages. I tried contacting him several times to ask for assistance but never got a response back. I realize that he's just interim and that he's been busy but at least while Mr. Turner was there he was very good about responding. Mr. McCoy seems to have forgotten that he's paid to deal with regular citizens as well as businesses. He cannot try to run the city while living inside a vacuum. Pick up the phone, Mr. McCoy! Respond to phone messages and answer an email or two!!!"*
- *"The list of contact numbers for city staff needs to be updated and posted. Not just the departments, but actual names of people. A number of assignments have been changed, people left, people don't respond, especially with respect to services for garbage, abandoned cars, policing,"*

Street Sweeping

After several years of contentious issues including signs, fines, towing, schedules and coordination with garbage service, street sweeping appears to remain the subject of much frustration and criticism. From E-FORUM readers:

- *“It took many, many months for the street sweeping sign posts to be punched into our front yards (with many of them going through the terra cotta sewer lines) but then it took an additional 9 months in my neighborhood for the actual signs to be affixed to the posts. It makes no never mind, though, since there’s no enforcement of the restrictions. I guess the people feel that it doesn’t matter whether they park their cars on the streets on sweeping days since it’s the same day as garbage pickup and each home has two cans sitting in front for the sweeper to go around. I have tried many times to contact someone at City Hall from the manager’s office to those that are supposed to be in charge of such things but no one seems to answer the phone or respond to emails. Whatever happened to the coordination we were promised a couple of years back to make this thing workable?”*
- *“In January of 2004 residents of Richmond Annex were told to move their cars once a month for sweeping days or face signage and ticketing. We were told the City would be watching our compliance by satellite and we must have an 80% compliance rate. The car-moving was voluntary to avoid those huge and ugly signs the City was going to slap up in my front yard. I’d call it extortion, for lack of a better word.”*

“Since January 2004 the City of Richmond street sweepers have managed to show up on my street, Butte St., EXACTLY TWICE! once in Feb. and once in Apr. That’s 2 out of 11. No wonder you voted for a casino in Richmond, the odds are better!! I’ve moved my car EVERY TIME. Oh, and I guess this months out because it’s too close to Christmas to stress those poor city workers, who are fix’n to go on vacation!!”

“I have called, written, etc. 'till I’m blue in the face. I gave up and swept my street frontage as well as my neighbors. But, to tell the truth, most of the stuff just washed out to the bay on the first rain. I wrote Rich McCoy which received absolutely NO REPLY at all.(I guess he’s too busy having a liquid lunch on a City charge card!) I’ve repeatedly called Ralph Lloyd about the problem, since he’s in charge, and was told basically that there’d better be a dead body or medical waste or it’s not going to happen! Budget cuts, you know!”

“Ironically, those who live on the other hill in the Annex ARE swept and don’t see any problem! They come every time, I’ve been told. Yes, and as soon as it’s break time or the sweeper is full they disappear for the day ignoring the accumulation of trash and leaves that have built up on Butte street and the opposing hill now since APRIL!!! “

- *“It seems that we are sweeping the street according to the schedule posted, but since the signs have been up for so long, nobody is moving their car. I was under the impression that the residents would be notified in November that the street sweeping would start and that people who did not move their cars would be ticketed. This did not happen. In addition in some sections of the city the street sweeping is on the same day as the garbage pick-up. That nobody from the City and Richmond Sanitary has been able to work this out is a disgrace. And about Richmond Sanitary when they gave us those big cans it was with the understanding that people would have to put them out of sight. Many people leave them out in the street or on the sidewalk, it makes the neighborhood look very tacky. Why is this not enforced?”*
- *“My nomination for the garlic (stink!) award is the city’s street sweeping program.”*
- *“One of the more frustrating areas of dealing with the city is the general lack of information the people answering the phones have. I think this must come from department managers not keeping*

their staff informed enough of what is going on in the city. For instance, in the case of street sweeping, I tried to find out why my street was not being swept, in fact had never been swept. On phoning the city I was told that it was being swept on a regular basis. When I begged to differ, the person checked with another and finally agreed with me that it was not being swept. I then tried to find out what had happened to the new posts for street sweeping signs that had been installed, and then had mysteriously disappeared. I had got quite excited thinking that the posts meant that signs would follow and then sweeping. Again, no one at the city knew about the posts, signs or sweeping. Finally I got hold of someone who knew something - a new manager who seemed eager to help. He said the posts were taken out because the sign position was in limbo. I have given up trying to get an update since then. But it seems a waste of taxpayer's money to go to the trouble of installing posts then taking them out again. The money could have gone to street sweeping itself. Surely the state of our streets should be one of the basic concerns of our city council. So, I think it important that city employees be informed of changes and new information affecting their departments so they can be more responsive to questions by the public."

Street Deterioration

- *"Potholes. The streets are deteriorating fast. In my neighborhood the side streets are getting to be in terrible condition."*
- *"I live in the Annex and the roads are in terrible shape and the street sweeping never happens...the street lighting is poor and the street signage is really too small to be visible."*
- *"There are so many, too many certainly to reference, but it's a tie between the Street Sweeping Fiasco, and the lay off's of City Staff in Parks & Recreation that denied families of much needed services. . .Closing of Recreation Centers, Library and other cultural services that helped to enrich the lives of so many, giving opportunities and alternatives to the life of crime to so many disadvantaged youth, and forced so many to seek entertainment into other venues of life. . .We are living in a time when if we don't give our youth alternatives to crime, the streets will attract them."*

Parking Enforcement

Parking with one wheel on the sidewalk, parking in driveways blocking sidewalks and parking in front yards strikes me as perhaps a unique Richmond cultural phenomenon. Blocking sidewalks is dangerous and a violation of disability rights. Parking in front yards is just visually annoying. I have often wondered why there is no enforcement in Richmond, and I figured that perhaps I was the only person who noticed. But at least one E-FORUM reader appears to have observed this practice, so maybe I didn't dream it after all:

- *"Enforcement of parking rules. Many people block the sidewalks with their cars. They do not leave enough room for people in wheelchairs. We are supposed to call the police department and they may or may not come out the ticket the offenders. Why can this not be seen as a source of revenue for the city? There must be many times when police officers are not busy during the night where they could spend some time ticketing cars that block sidewalks and similar minor offenses."*

Code Enforcement, Abatement and Dumping

The City of Richmond has struggled with code enforcement, abatement and dumping for decades but has yet to come up with a program that is truly effective. I don't know why this is, but it appears to be a combination of circumstances that include (1) the City's dysfunctional SAP system, (2) a cultural distaste of public employees to become involved in contentious issues, (3) a general lack of accountability for performance of assigned tasks, (4) relegation to a low priority, and (5) periodic funding shortages. Here is what E-FORUM readers have to say:

- *"For several years now I've made efforts to work with the Manager's Office and those staffers who deal with community problems about such things as the commercial businesses being run out*

of my neighbor's homes (with employees and construction vehicles parking up and down the street); about the overabundance of taxi services being run out of the homes in my surrounding neighborhood (at least six of them by my count within a two block radius); the tractor trailer rigs being parked on residential streets; the used car dealerships who park their "for sale" vehicles in front of people's homes to conduct their business; and about the blight caused by neighbors who leave free furniture and home/office equipment on the streets for anyone who wants it (sometimes sitting there for weeks at a stretch). I've had staffers like Ray Lambert who were great about calling but not so great about the follow through. I've had police officers like Sergeant Berry who came to my home and checked out the infractions (along with viewing the dozens of digital images I took of the infractions) but no further action was taken. The word on the street is that unless it's a real crime (with blood by the gallon) or one in a Council member's neighborhood, this city is open territory."

- *"what doesn't work in Richmond: accountability for anything; to wit, my next-door neighbors just had a HUGE prefab storage space erected in their backyard. It's the size of a barn. It went up in a day's time with no warning (aside from their mentioning, some months ago, that they were going to build a shed in the yard). I don't want to get them into any kind of trouble, but the fact is that the shed, or, BARN, is illegal, an eyesore, and no one in the city cares. Here in Richmond it's the Wild West, folks, anything goes. And my neighbors know that full well (the wife's father has worked in city government)... the same experience with Mr. Bal - with his illegal remodeling (signed off, wink wink, by the city's building dept.), his string of problematic tenants with regular visits by the police etc. In the end, he could do anything he wanted - he knew that full well. And everything's worse now what with all the city layoffs. Are there any standards in this town? Any enforcement of codes & laws designed to provide & maintain quality of life for its residents? Not as far as I can see. Residents have no recourse. Scofflaws rule."*
- *"Due to cut back in city employees there is a lot more dumping going on in the City. This has a major impact on the quality of life in this city. I see dumping especially at the Richmond Swim Center, next to Kennedy High."*
- *"I will share this one experience, I purchased a property four years ago and I am currently building on that lot. In order to get my construction loan the property had to clear title, well the City did not record the abatement liens from the previous owner in time to receive payments in escrow, therefore the liens carried over to me in the amount of \$990 or so, well it took several phone calls and a visit finally to Captain Hudson who cleared the matter. He was stocked and thought the system was working better than this. I truly believe that the City has so many opportunities to bring in revenue this is just one. When my lot was vacant, I immediately had it fenced to prevent dumping. I know of numerous lots that are not fenced and the owner's attitude is lackadaisical or they simply don't care because there is no consequences to their negligence. If I received a \$220 violation every other week and knew it was going to triple, there would be action taken. "*
- *"We've become the City of Crime and Grime. The only area's of the City of Richmond that are deemed worthy of maintaining are Marina Bay, Carriage Hill, Laurel Park or other upscale area's. . .Even the area considered as "downtown" doesn't have the regular street sweeping or streetscape to attract families, vendors or business to Richmond. . .and now the Redevelopment Agency wants to invest in East Macdonald, when they haven't done anything to improve the real "downtown". . .What is wrong with completing ALL the projects for one area before embarking on other projects? Prediction: The redevelopment efforts for Eastern Macdonald Avenue (23rd - San Pablo) will be completed and more successful than the Western Macdonald projects (Gerard - 23rd Street). . .Just like the Greenway Project. . .The promise of 10 years, hasn't materialized YET."*

BNSF Railroad Regulation

- *“Why is Santa Fe railroad allowed to make noise all night long with trains moving and blowing their horns within earshot of neighbors and Hotel Mac guests?”*
- *“The railroads, their noise and their opposition to change! The City Council needs to do still more...the Marina Bay crossings - when all are blocked for 20 minutes or more, and even less - are a disaster waiting to happen if an ambulance can't get through, or a fire truck or a cop car!”*

Mayor and City Council

- *“Irma Anderson, Mayor, is "rubber stamping" to many proposals, and most of all, doesn't have a clue, how to conduct a democratic Council Meeting, almost act like a dictator”*
- *” I am absolutely embarrassed by the conduct of a number of the City Council members at almost any Council meeting. Evidently those that argue, chastise and demean have completely forgotten they are being viewed by hundreds of residents from their homes. Mayor Irma Anderson is particularly guilty. She doesn't know procedure, doesn't care, and argues with everyone. A good part of her job is to see that the council meetings proceed in an orderly and polite fashion! So, a New Year's resolution for her would be to make a decision to be polite, learn a few things and keep close guard on her mouth - or get off the Council. It's more like a kindergarten squabble and frankly I've had to turn off the TV when the conduct gets so disgraceful.”*
- *“The City Council for letting "the staff" run the City. A lesson learned I hope...for the future.”*
- *“The City Council members, especially those who live in Marina Bay, who bitch about Marina Bay and our so-called "elitism!" We are tired of hearing it...and it isn't true!”*

Building Department

“It is taking a long time to get permits reviewed and some decisions are arbitrary. Revisions to permits take much longer than they should. This is a problem at the top - the counter people seem to work hard and are very pleasant.”

Permits and Licenses

“Red tape and bureaucratic delays in processing permits and licenses. Example, is registering a new business operation in Richmond. To help them walk through the red tape to register as a business occupant, I gave them the attached guide. I even offered to escort them through the process to avoid wasting days just to get a business license. I would say that the front line staff working the desks in the business - permit area, including the cashiers, are very gracious and helpful to the customers, even as they struggled with uncertainties and insecurities of their jobs. But the system should be streamlined and clarified. It is silly that the applicant has to see 4-5 different people over two days minimally to be processed for a business license.”

Sewer Maintenance

“The City of Richmond employees cleaned up and disinfected, not the contractors, residue from the sewer was left on the sidewalks. Finally the rain came and cleaned it up.”

Planning Department

- *“...had dealings with the planning department last spring about the proposed construction of a 2 story add-on to the overfilled lot behind me. I prepared an eight page written response (with photos) for the Design Review Board delineating my objections on a point by point basis. The proposal was declined and returned to the owner for reconsideration and revisions. The staffer I dealt with assured me that we would be re-noticed when the new plan was brought back before the Board. Within a month or so construction was started. The staffer never followed through and I—along with my neighbors—were left out of the process.”*

- *“...for its inconsistencies (example, when my architect went to the counter to find out what he had to do, the planner looked at it and signed off on it). What he should have said was, "I can't sign off on it until you've sent a copy to the Neighborhood Council and made a presentation there. Instead, I received a "go-ahead." That example didn't happen however this year. What did happen this year was related to our "lovely" Stauffer/Zeneca superfund site: when the developer began turning over contaminated soil WITHOUT A PERMIT, we residents and those working nearby were the people who called to ask if the EIR had already been issued. No, was the reply, ("why?) and the dept. was informed that "clean" topsoil had been moved onto the site and dozers were building a berm, using contaminated soil. So the dept. issued a cease and desist order. Some 10 days later it reversed itself and sent them a grading permit (no EIR has yet been issued). The Planning Dept is obviously more concerned about seeing the developers building then warehouse some 3200 people on a contaminated site than protecting the residents and businesses (and their employees) who have a stake in the City of Richmond NOW!”*
- *“My two recent experiences with the City on two simple projects was that there are too many hearings on the same issues. Planning Commission, Design Review Board, Development Review Committee of the Planning Commission and then another committee created for just this project, which was a combination of some members from the Design Review Board and the Planning Commission. The later committee was created because the Planning Commission and Design Review Board had exactly opposite recommendations on the same subject. Painfully got it resolved. Suggestion, eliminate the Design Review Board and replace it with standards and a staff architect, who reports to the PC. Eliminate the Development Review Board, it does nothing.”*

City Departments, Policies and Services Nominated by City Employee E-FORUM Readers for Garlic

Internal Communication

Although the City's Administrative Manual states that the City has an open door policy for employee communication with superiors, such communication is not always encouraged, and communication with City Council members is allowed only after exhausting the chain of command. The City of Richmond Administrative Manual, AP11 states:

“It is the City of Richmond's policy that employees shall have access to their supervisory and/or managerial staff through productive, open communication. Work related communication shall first be established between the employee and their immediate supervisory authority. In those instances where additional dialogue may be needed, the chain of supervisory authority should be strictly followed. Employees shall be afforded the opportunity to communicate openly without fear of retribution. Employees shall not communicate with any member of the City Council without first thoroughly exhausting the established chain of supervisory authority. Employees are to inform their respective managers when a Council member contacts them directly.”

While in a healthy organization, this may appear to be a reasonable guideline, I am eternally grateful to the many City employees who have come to me directly with information about dysfunctions and problems left unresolved by their superiors. If it were not for City employees who came directly to me, I would not have had, for example, early knowledge of the SAP system failures. Here is what one highly respected City employee had to say about the inside operation of City government:

- *“Richmond is still plagued with favoritism and lack of accountability with staff. The people that are working hard are rarely recognized and those that are lazy are still in ranks. No one holds them accountable and in some cases they are protected. The good old boy network is still alive in Richmond. Here is my list:”*

“What would help the working stiffs would be one set of rules and procedures. The constant changing of protocol and procedures gets very tiresome. It is hard to keep up with who, what, where and when for paper work. Also, it does not help when Council Sub-Committee meetings are constantly canceled. With the current new procedures to get something on the Council Agenda, it does not help if the sub-committee meetings do not happen on a regular basis.”

”Personally, I would like to feel more comfortable in going to Council members without the Chain of Command. But, if the city manager or assistant city manager get wind of employees talking to Council members we get brought up short. There were some of us that had a pretty good idea that things were going very wrong but our department heads would not allow us to talk about the problems in Finance. I truly believe if we had been allowed to talk to Council the finance situation could have been discovered earlier.”

Human Resources

- *“The most corrupt is Human Resources. There is no set of rules that apply to ALL employees. Every situation is handled on a case-by-case basis. . .if you are a "veteran" of the City you get special treatment; if you are related to someone, there is another set of rules; if you are someone that plays by the rules, and known to raise HELL (like I am) there is another set of rules. . .”*

“Most departments are dysfunctional because the entire operating systems (HR/Finance/Risk Management/City Attorney/MIS) are corrupt. Talk to any department head about these factors, .i.e., Ask any department head, why it takes 6-8 months for a recruitment of employment for much needed staff? The department that needs the employee has to develop the job specification; develop the testing/qualification matrix; It literally takes HR this long to advertise a position, accept applications; convene a panel or testing for the position, formulate a list of eligible candidates; and get a list to the department head to begin the interview process.”

“Another interesting point, there has been major layoffs in every department. To date over 250 employees have left Richmond due to layoffs; retirements, etc. Why hasn't the number of employees in HR gone down? More so, why hasn't the quality of service improved in HR, if there are fewer employees?.”

“The same goes for Finance (pre Patrick Samsell), There are a number of employees who have been overpaid for various reasons, but there is no program in place to collect. If you ask Rob Larson, Bruce Soublet or Everett Jenkins what is the policy on collecting funds from overpaid employees, they will state "There is none." There is a story going around of how one employee previously working in Finance ran out of accumulated leave and continued to receive a payroll check back in 2000. Because this person was an "insider" and was overpaid approximately \$13,000, nothing was done about it. Now, this employee is free to "go and sin no more". . .and as Mr. Soublet states, "unless we take them to court, we can't collect". . .Fat chance of this happening.”

“The story goes on that this same person continues to submit falsified time sheets for time not at work and continues to enjoy a full salary without being at work. The closest ally for this person is Cedric Williams, who intervenes at the drop of a hat. . .the balance owed the city at this juncture is \$21,000 on this one employee. If you could request a list from someone of all the money that is owed to the City of Richmond by employees the number would be shocking. . . this largely results from Risk Management overpayments, or other payroll overpayments.”

2005 Predictions from E-FORUM Readers

- *“Things will probably be better than last year.”*

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- *“Unless the New City Manager comes in and with FULL cooperation of the City Council to make sweeping changes; hold ALL employee's accountable, without exception; it will be business as usual in the City of Richmond. It's time the City of Richmond is run like other Bay Area Cities (Concord, Walnut Creek, Vallejo, Marin) better yet, like a major corporation. . .This City should be run like a Fortune 500 firm, where services are provided, and revenue is generated and collected. . .If there is "dirty laundry" within these cities, it isn't broadcast on every major network EVERY night. . .Those other cities aren't on the list for **MOST DANGEROUS** place to live. . .Truly make us the City of Pride and Purpose and determine what the purpose will be.”*
 - *“The City of Richmond will have an unprecedented increase in the budget coming from property taxes due to the increase in property values from new home and existing home sales. The results will be a surplus of funds.”*
 - *“Chief Bennett will return from retirement and take the reins as permanent Chief of Police.”*
 - *“Unaccounted for loss of jobs and knowledge will devastate the City departments as staff leaves for greener pasture, finally fed up with the losses and increased workload. Other cities will offer better packages with greater salaries.”*
 - *“Prediction for next year: how could it get any worse?”*

Tom Butt 2005 Projects and Legislative Objectives

Following, in no particular order, are my personal priorities for 2005:

- Get code enforcement and abatement functioning effectively and self-supporting.
- Get SAP and its users operating sufficiently to actually keep track of revenues and expenditures, including tracking employee time and allocating it to projects and tasks, tracking fees and fines, and producing a budget document that a City Council member can understand.
- Get the new General Plan and Zoning Ordinance off the ground along with new Design Review and Development guidelines.
- Resuscitate implementation of the City's historic preservation program.
- Begin making progress in solving railroad problems, including horns at grade crossings and long trains blocking grade crossings.
- Complete the move and development of the Santa Fe Reading Room/Trainmaster Building.
- Initiate a plan for the rehabilitation and seismic upgrading of the City Hall and other Civic Center buildings.
- Formulate a long-term plan for maintaining City infrastructure, particularly streets.
- Initiate an annual City-wide poll and survey on residents' perceptions of City services and priorities for resource allocation.
- Implement a program for measuring productivity and performance of City departments and compare this data with other cities.
- Achieve a reliable and steady revenue source for the Library and Parks and Recreation.

-
- Complete the first phase of the Central Richmond Greenway.
 - Adopt a plan for rehabilitation of the Plunge and a means of financing it.
 - Change the culture of City government so that the City Council sets policy, and staff actually carries it out.
 - Capitalize on the City's centennial to spark an image change for Richmond, complete with a new logo, new slogan and new vision of the City's future.