

Richmond Keen in 2015?
2014 Year End Review
Predictions and Wishes for 2015

[Tom Butt, Richmond City Councilmember](#), January 1, 2015

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About www.tombutt.com and the [E-FORUM](#)

I started the E-FORUM 13 years ago in 2001 primarily to provide Richmond-related news, information and points of view not readily available in the mainstream media, although I have copied and shared a lot of articles from mainstream media over the years. Since then, Richmond news media sources have increased vastly, including sponsored outlets, such as [Richmond Standard](#) and [Radio Free Richmond](#), academically-connected sources such as [Richmond Confidential](#), politically generated sources such as [La Voz](#), and various political websites such as [Richmond Progressive Alliance](#).

The first E-FORUM was dated January 13, 2001, and carried information about obtaining public records from the City of Richmond.

E-FORUMS typically fall into three categories:

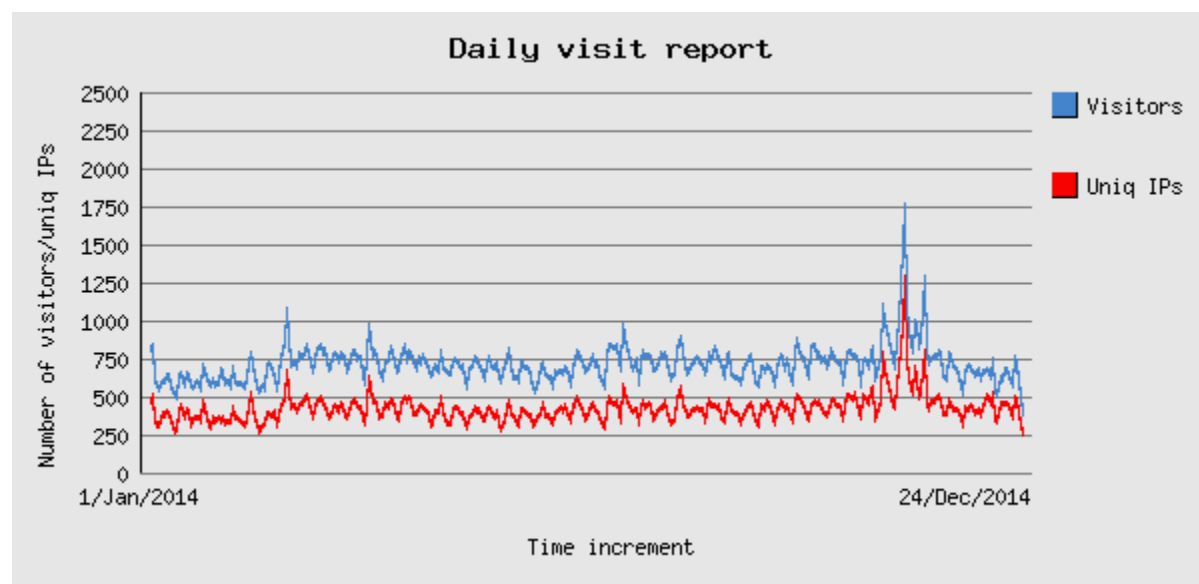
1. Copies of content from other media, including emails from other people and organizations announcing events or providing information.
2. Copies of content from other media with some preliminary editorializing by me.
3. Pieces that are primarily editorial or personal reports.

I have over 4,000 people and about 40 media contacts on my current list, but I understand a lot more people get it through secondary distribution from primary addressees.

In addition to email distribution, all E-FORUMS beginning in 2001 are accessible on my website at <http://www.tombutt.com/e-forum/e-forum.htm> and <http://www.tombutt.com/archives.htm>.

The website, www.tombutt.com gets a lot of traffic. In the past 12 months, there were 254,351 visitors, down 16% from the 301,384 visitors last year, and 2,014,578 hits, up 31% from last year.

Visitors average 710 a day with an average of 5,627 hits per day. The biggest day was November 6 with 31,174 hits from 1,758 visitors, obviously a result of the election.



Statistics		
Hits	Total Hits	2014578
	Total Cached Hits	121088
	Average Hits Per Day	5627
	Average Hits Per Hour	234
	Average Hits Per Visitor	7.9
	Average Data Transferred per Hit	51.1 KB
Visitors	Total Visitors	254351
	Average Visitors Per Day	710
	Average Time Spent	559 Seconds
	Average PageViews per visitor	2.88
	Average Downloads per visitor	1.13
	Average Data Transferred per Visitor	404.4 KB
Uniq IPs	Total Uniq IPs	64400
	Visitors Who Visit Once	50639
	Visitors Who Visit more than Once	13761
PageViews and Downloads	Total PageViews	731705
	Average PageViews Per Day	2043
	Total File Downloads	287979
	Average File Downloads Per Day	804
	Total Images	836782
	Average Images Per Day	2337
	Total failed requests	148435
	Total Incomplete File downloads requests	187925
	Number of visitors bookmarked your web site	36802
Bandwidth	Total Data Transferred	98.09 GB
	Average Data Transferred per Day	280.58 MB

At the website www.tombutt.com, the most popular pages in 2014 were:

- [About Tom](#)
- [Endorsements](#)
- [Final Richmond Election Results](#), December 3, 2012
- [Contact](#)
- [Contribute](#)

The most popular E-FORUMs accessed in 2014 were:

- [Fear and Loathing in Point Richmond?](#) July 6, 2013
- [California Energy Official Says State Wasn't Aware of Crude by Rail Facilities](#), March 17, 2014
- [Richmond Residents Overwhelmingly Reject LED Billboards](#), March 11, 2014
- [A Primer on How to Make Effective Comments on an EIR](#), September 22, 2009
- [LED Billboards Coming to Richmond Highways and Byways?](#) March 10, 2014

The most downloaded files in 2014 were:

- [Mapping Richmond's World War II Home Front](#)
- [Southeast Asia Journal](#)
- [Down the Buffalo](#)
- [Capay](#)
- [Charles Ramsey Form 460](#)

The most active countries in 2014 were:

- United States of America
- Germany
- Australia
- France
- China

I get a lot of responses to E-FORUM postings, and I read and appreciate all of them. Sometimes on a controversial subject I will create and send a digest of responses. I respond to a few, but I just don't have time to respond to all of them all of the time.

I have no staff, other than two people in my office who help me a lot, but only by entering and deleting email addresses and transferring E-FORUM's to my website.

Since 2002, I have prepared some kind of year-end evaluation 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. Since 2005, I have invited public participation, and I have shared the results on my E-FORUM.

- **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.
- **2004**, I went whimsical and authored [Out With The Old – In With The New](#), January 1, 2004, providing a number of awards and multiple choice predictions.
- **2005**, I decided to expand the New Year's Day, [2004 Year-End Review](#), December 31, 2004, 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.
- **2006** was [What Can We Fix in 2006?](#), January 1, 2006.
- **2007**, it was [Will Richmond be Heaven in 2007?](#) January 1, 2007.
- At the beginning of 2008 I wrote [Year 2007 Review and Will Richmond be Great in 2008?](#)
- **2009**: [Will Richmond be Fine in 2009?](#)
- **2010**: [2009 Year End Review – Who Will Win in 2010?](#)
- **2011**: [2010 Year End Review – Will Richmond be Riven in 2011?](#)
- **2012**: [In What Will We Delve in 2012?](#)
- **2013**: [What is Foreseen in 2013?](#)
- **2014**: [New Year 2014 Edition - Richmond Serene in 2014?](#) January 1, 2014

I recommend you take a look at these previous E-FORUMs. You will be amazed at how many challenges have persisted unabated, how many predictions have been fulfilled and how one year's top stories became distant memories a year later.



What follows is not based on a scientific poll or survey by any standard. 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 italics to distinguish them from my own.*

This year-end summary is uncensored. This is an equal opportunity forum, and I welcome responses, comments, arguments and debates. I especially solicit corrections.

I extend special thanks to all those citizens and City

employees who keep me informed of both problems and solutions all year long. Your input is invaluable. Please keep it up. My [E-FORUM](#) is my best tool for dispensing with my own frustrations, and I hope it provides useful information for those who subscribe.

2014 Review – A Good Year for Richmond Dominated by the Election



Like 2012 and 2013, the year 2014 continued to be distinguished by City Council antics deemed “dysfunctional” by some who wanted to “throw them all out,” but in reality, the disruptions and late night meetings were almost solely caused by a single council member, Corky Booze.

Corky continued his race-baiting and homophobic rants playing to a handful of sympathetic spectators, but this year the electorate had an opportunity to make changes, and this they did with a vengeance. People were fed up, and change was in the air.

Booze went from top vote getter in 2010 with 8,426 votes to second place in the race for a two-year seat with 3,753 votes, quite a comedown.

The year’s news was dominated by the election, but otherwise 2014 was a relatively quiet but productive year for Richmond.

The miserable conditions typical of city council meetings are in stark contrast to the actual accomplishments of the City Council and the City of Richmond, which were largely successful and productive with a number of remarkable achievements.

- MCE saved Richmond ratepayers over \$2 million in electricity costs in 2014, including over \$100,000 for City of Richmond facilities.
- Crime continued to drop, and Richmond’s homicide rate in 2014 is lower than last year, which was the lowest in at least 33 years.
- Measure U, a ½ % sales tax focused on street maintenance, was passed without a whimper of a campaign.
- The City Council passed a Minimum Wage Ordinance.
- Chevron’s Modernization Project was approved along with a \$90 million Environmental and Community Investment Agreement.
- Plastic Bag Ban went into effect.
- The City of Richmond was honored at ABAG’s Spring General Assembly on Thursday, April 17th with two awards: the Start It Up Award for innovation in Richmond’s General Plan and Preserving and Protecting the Environment Award for Richmond and Marin Clean Energy. Richmond was the only city to be awarded in two separate categories, displaying the City’s commitment to innovation, sustainability and growth among other communities in the Bay Area.
- Officer Brad A. Moody Underpass is under construction.

Richmond remains a challenging City to manage and govern, and opinions on how to best move the city forward are deepened and divisiveness exacerbated by these challenges, nowhere better demonstrated by the City Council itself.

Compared to other cities in the Bay Area, Richmond has a relatively low income population with greater needs. Fighting to divide a pie that is not big enough to provide everyone all they need is a constant struggle.

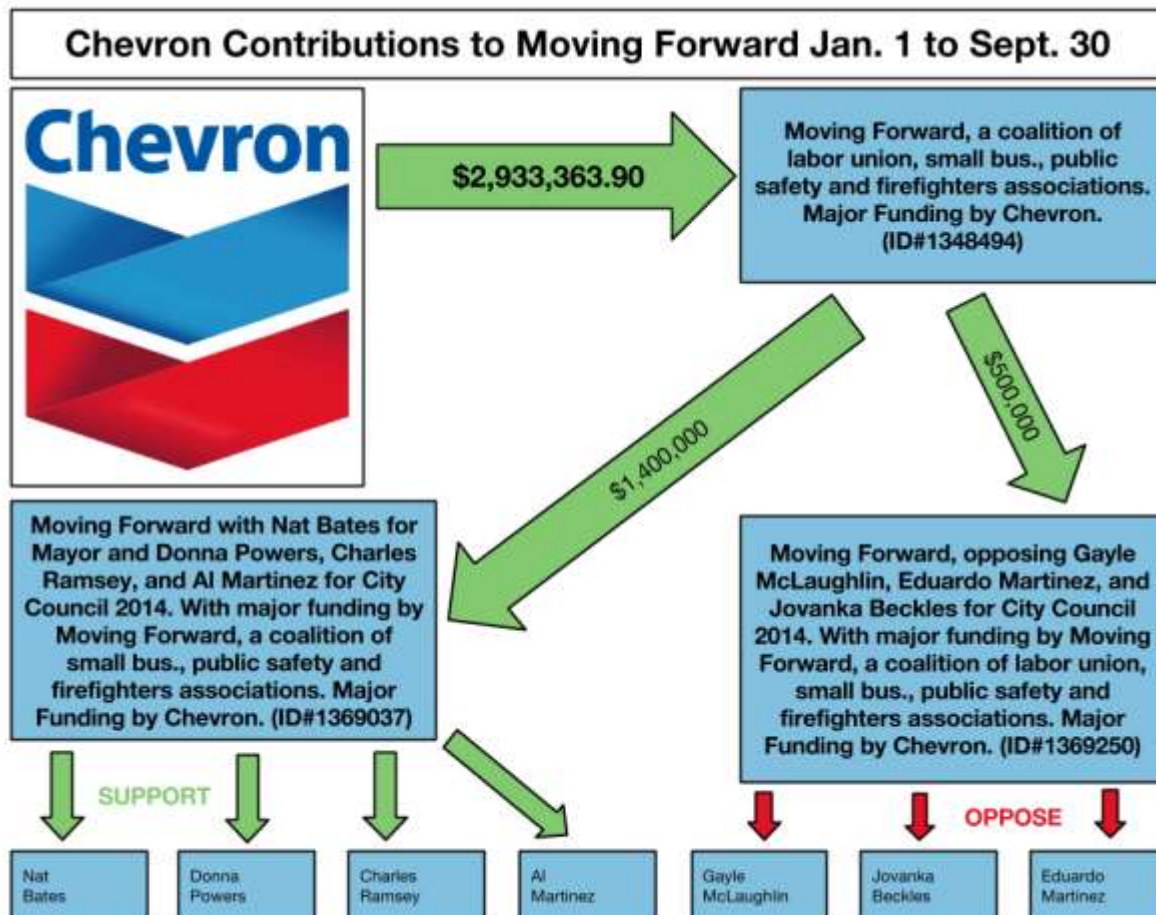
Top Richmond Stories of 2014

Nationally Publicized Election Rebuffs Chevron's Multi-million Dollar Campaign

Doubling down on their 2012 campaign that initially left them batting 667 (prior to the unfortunate and sad demise of Gary Bell, Chevron saturated Richmond with billboards, mailers, broadcast media and paid canvassers backing their favored slate of candidates: Nat Bates for mayor and Charles Ramsey, Donna Powers and Al Martinez for City Council. Chevron stayed out of the race for the two-year seat, wanting neither to publicly support nor publicly deny their most ardent cheerleader, Corky Booze. Chevron did not want to rebuff Booze's ardor by publicly supporting a challenger, but he had become an embarrassment, and polling showed he could not win. Their biggest concern was that his reputation would taint their mayoral candidate and Booze's buddy, Nat Bates.

Old habits die slowly, and not surprisingly and with some minor adjustments, the Richmond Firefighters Local 188, the Richmond Police Officers Association, the Building Trades and the Chamber of Commerce (RichPac) fell in behind Chevron to also inhale the odor of skunk in November.

Not only did Chevron and its coalition spend millions supporting their favored candidates; they spent lavishly opposing Gayle McLaughlin, Jovanka Beckles and Eduardo Martinez, using tactics that won them few friends and likely undying enmity of the victors. Not a real smart move, in hindsight.



Richmond Confidential, October 10, 2014. Based on campaign finance data from Jan. 1 through Sept. 30. Based on available documents, some data not yet available.

At about midnight on Election Day, it became clear that Chevron had been thoroughly skunked, and the national media had a heyday, characterizing it as one of only a few bright spots in an election that largely favored corporate-backed Republicans and resulted in the loss of the U.S. Senate for Democrats.

2014 RICHMOND ELECTION RESULTS
FINAL FINAL FINAL
MAYOR

CANDIDATE	MAIL-IN	% of Total	POLL	% of Total	VOTES	DELTA	PERCENTAGE
Tom Butt	5,594	57.10	4,202	42.90	9,796	—	50.37%
Nat Bates	4,100	59.57	2,783	40.43	6,883	2,913	35.39%
Uche Uwahemu	1,578	58.62	1,114	41.38	2,692	4,191	13.84%
TOTAL	11,319	58.20	8,129	41.80	19,448		

CITY COUNCIL
Full Term

CANDIDATE	MAIL-IN	% of Total	POLL	% of Total	VOTES	DELTA	PERCENTAGE
Gayle McLaughlin	4,986	56.96	3,768	43.04	8,754	—	16.95%
Jovanka Beckles	4,575	54.97	3,747	45.03	8,322	432	16.11%
Eduardo Martinez	4,134	54.19	3,495	45.81	7,629	693	14.77%
Jim Rogers	4,380	64.29	2,433	35.71	6,813	816	13.19%
Donna Powers	4,347	64.83	2,358	35.17	6,705	108	12.98%
Charles Ramsey	3,417	62.16	2,080	37.84	5,497	1,208	10.64%
Henry Washington	1,827	58.30	1,307	41.70	3,134	2,363	6.07%
Al Martinez	1,876	62.54	1,123	37.46	2,999	135	5.81%
Damicon King	951	57.67	698	42.21	1,649	1,350	3.19%
TOTAL	30,598	59.24	21,052	40.76	51,650		

As of 11/26/14

The delta is the difference between a candidate and the next highest candidate

FINAL

2014 RICHMOND ELECTION RESULTS

F I N A L F I N A L F I N A L

CITY COUNCIL Short Term

CANDIDATE	MAIL-IN	% of Total	POLL	% of Total	VOTES	DELTA	PERCENTAGE
Jael Myrick	5,434	58.60	3,839	41.40	9,273	—	50.92%
Corky Boozé	3,353	62.42	2,386	41.58	5,739	3,534	31.51%
Anthony Creer	1,801	57.71	1,320	42.29	3,121	2,618	17.14%
TOTAL	10,640	58.42	7,572	38.90	18,212		

MEASURE U

CANDIDATE	MAIL-IN	% of Total	POLL	% of Total	VOTES	DELTA	PERCENTAGE
YES	6,066	56.70	4,633	43.30	10,699	—	55.20%
NO	5,230	60.23	3,453	39.77	8,683	2,463	44.80%
TOTAL	11,296	58.28	8,086	41.72	19,382		

COUNTY WIDE VOTER TURNOUT: 49.10%
 RICHMOND VOTER TURNOUT: 48.99%
 20,468 Votes Cast 41,777 Registered Voters

As of 11/26/14

The delta is the difference between a candidate and the next highest candidate

F I N A L

This election means that the Richmond City Council will continue to be dominated by progressives for at least the next two years. Whether or not it will be dominated by the Richmond Progressive Alliance will turn on the selection or election of the City Council member to replace me. The seat will be noticed as vacant on January 13, 2015, and the City Council will have 60 days to appoint someone to the vacancy. If no appointment is made in 60 days, City will have to hold a special election within a year.

Approval of the Chevron's Modernization Project

The highest profile public policy decision by the City Council in 2014 was the permit approval for the Chevron Modernization Project, a decade-long effort by Chevron to build flexibility and efficiency into their 100+ year-old refinery in order to accommodate the changing content of raw material on the petroleum market.



The original approval by a split City Council of a larger project in 2008 resulted in the defeat shortly thereafter of most, but not all of the supporters (The Chevron 5) and ultimately a victorious court challenge by environmental groups on CEQA grounds that shut the project down in mid-construction.

The project approved in 2014 was smaller but still carried a \$1 billion price tag. Almost everyone acknowledged that the EIR got it right this time, but the final debate centered on how much additional replacement of existing equipment

could or should be required in the interest of future safety. It was not so much a debate over the value of safety measures as it was over the City's legal authority to demand them.

There was also dissatisfaction over both the negotiation process and content of the Chevron Modernization Project Environmental and Community Investment Agreement. The final version was largely negotiated by Jael Myrick, Jim Rogers and me, and included \$90 million of community benefits, substantially more than most observers anticipated.

The permit approval passed on a 5-2 vote, with McLaughlin and Beckles abstaining.

Both the permit and the release of funds remain contingent on resolution of all legal challenges to the project. There will be no CEQA challenge, as the time for filing one has lapsed, but there the project is still under court jurisdiction pending lifting of the writ that stopped the previous project and a challenge of the BAAQMD permit, both of which are anticipated to play out in early 2015.

Hacienda

The 150-unit Hacienda is one of several housing projects owned and operated by the Richmond Housing Authority. It is reserved for elderly and disabled residents.

In February of 2014, Hacienda became the ground zero poster child of Amy Julia Harris' sensational expose of Richmond's Housing Authority.

In the ensuing months, the Hacienda became much more than a building long past its prime. It morphed into a political symbol embraced by both the RPA and their arch enemies, Bates and Booze, as a measure of how much compassion they had for the elderly and the infirm. Without thinking through the consequences, they both rallied for immediate relocation of the residents and demolition of the offending structure.

When it became clear that immediate relocation would cost the City's already red-inked general fund millions that it did not have, both factions backed down in favor of the City staff's plan to seek HUD funding for relocation instead of impulsively raiding the City treasury to show how much they cared.



It turned out that the facts on which [Center for Investigative Reporting](#) author Julia Harris based her expose was mostly old news and that she relied on years-old public records obtained from HUD. While there is plenty to criticize about public housing in Richmond, and for that matter most other large cities operating housing authorities, I was disappointed that the effort by Harris and published by the *Chronicle and KQED*, was oriented more toward sensationalism and hyperbole than toward objective reporting. There were also a number of factual errors, for which to date no correction or retraction has been offered. Though still far from perfect, the Richmond Housing Authority has made significant progress in the last year to clean up its act, which HUD acknowledges, yet this fact is entirely missing from the coverage.

Most conspicuous by its absence was any criticism by Harris of HUD, which entirely funds public housing and by any informed source, actually underfunds it by billions. Since 2010, public housing agencies have lost a cumulative total of \$3.4 billion in federal funding (ignoring losses due to inflation) to operate and maintain public housing developments, which provide affordable homes to 1.1 million low-income families. These developments now face a \$26 billion backlog of repair needs. While Tim Jones and his crew may have a number of shortcomings, any honest coverage of the problems in Richmond or anywhere else has to start with a lack of resources and unreasonable expectations.

The website of the Center for Investigative Reporting states, “Our work is fact-based, nonpartisan and truth-driven,” and “What keeps CIR alive isn't money or profit – it's impact.” The Center’s stories about the Richmond Housing Authority were neither fact-based nor truth driven, and it the reporter was more after impact than reality.



No one, particularly the Center for Investigative Reporting, ever acknowledged that the problems at the Hacienda, as well as similar problems in other housing authorities, are largely due to a long-time trend of funding reductions by HUD for operations, maintenance and capital improvements.

The condition and operation of public housing in Richmond is clearly less than desirable, but the reality is not nearly as bad as Amy Julia Harris portrays it. Likewise, the causes of any deficiencies are much more complex and the blame wider than Harris would have us believe. The Center for Investigative Reporting must think they have done a great service by taking on Richmond’s public housing, but what they have done borders on yellow journalism, striving for

sensationalism while ignoring both reality and the bigger picture. What they also haven’t done is describe what is needed to fix it.

Writing a critical article about anything is easy, but operating a government is not. There are problems everywhere in Richmond as in any city: potholes, crime, pollution, education, unemployment and public transportation, to name a few. It’s easy to blame any or all of these on government mismanagement and incompetent public employees. But the public gives their government only so much money with which to operate and then leaves it to legislators and administrators to decide how to allocate it. There is never enough to go around.

Neither is poor management and poor judgment a flaw limited to the public sector. The private sector has their share. Chevron’s gross negligence resulted in a devastating fire at the Richmond Refinery in 2012, and when their fracking operation blew up in Pennsylvania last week, they assuaged the community’s trepidation with free pizza and a soda.

As a City Council member, I am committed to do whatever we can, as the governing body, to make the Richmond Housing Authority better or to perhaps to simply turn it over to HUD since they seem to have all the answers.

As of January 1, 2015, we are still waiting on HUD to authorize the funds to relocate the residents of the Hacienda.

How Did my Predictions for 2014 Turn Out?

It looks like four of ten came through and another four had partial successes.

Progressives

1. **Prediction:** After a bitter and expensive campaign, the City Council will maintain a bare progressive majority after the 2014 election.

What Happened: The campaign was definitely bitter and expensive, and the RPA is just short of a majority.



Chevron

2. **Prediction:** The City of Richmond litigation against Chevron will be settled.

What Happened: No significant change.

3. **Prediction:** The Chevron Refinery Hydrogen project will be permitted, and construction will resume.

What Happened: The project permit was approved, but lingering litigation is holding up the permit.



Point Molate

4. **Prediction:** The Point Molate Litigation with Upstream and Guidiville will be resolved, and Point Molate will begin to be developed using the “Presidio Trust” model.

What Happened: No significant change, but the City has prevailed on several important points and motions.



Crime

5. **Prediction:** Crime, including homicides will continue to drop.

What Happened: Crime, including homicides, continued to drop.



Eminent Domain

6. **Prediction:** The eminent domain initiative will not be implemented.

What Happened: The eminent domain initiative was not implemented but is not yet dead.



Streets

7. **Prediction:** A City sales tax for street repair will win on the 2014 ballot.

What Happened: Measure U was placed on the ballot and passed.



Property Tax Revenue

8. **Prediction:** Property tax revenue will rise.

What Happened: Property tax revenue took a hit in 2014.



Quiet Zones

9. **Prediction:** Quiet Zones will be expanded.

What Happened: There is movement at South34th Street, Meade Street and John Avenue, but these are bogged down in bureaucracy and railroad foot dragging.



Shoreline Development

10. **Prediction:** Proposed shoreline development projects will falter due to community resistance and technical design flaws.

What Happened: Only Shea Homes (Bottoms Property) seems to have made it through this year. Several other projects, including Terminal 1 and the Marina Bay project next to Lucretia Edwards Park seem to be bogged down.



FORUM Readers' Choices

E-FORUM Readers – The Best of 2014

Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park

- *The new exhibits at Rosie VC are pretty cool.*
- *Kudos also to the Rosie the Riveter Museum = very well done!*
- *The Rosie is a great draw. Lots to learn.*
- *Rosie the riveter and the blue star marker at the red oak victory ship (I belong to El Cerrito Garden Club and helped with the plantings and dedication.) I hope we continue in a positive mode in the coming year(s).*



Election

- *The election showed that democratic principles prevail in Richmond, that elections cannot be purchased.*
- *Election of Tom Butt as Mayor and failure of Corky Booze to be reelected.*
- *Positive for 2015 is having Tom Butt as Mayor*
- *Best thing that happened in Richmond? We defeated Chevron's money, and elected representatives who care about the people of Richmond, not what is best for Chevron.*
- *Chevron's efforts to derail the Richmond election cycle completely backfired.*
- *Tom Butt elected Mayor*



Bay Trail

- *City of Richmond Bay Trail projects and East Bay Regional Park District's Breuner Marsh Restoration and Public Access Project.*
- *Salute Completion of the Bike Trail connecting Miller -Knox to the Red Oak Victory and Canal Street.*
- *Richmond beautification efforts on the shoreline, including the walking/biking paths*



Salute

- *Menbere and Salute's = our heroine!!!!*



Street Lights

- *Positive project: putting led lights all over Richmond and spreading wonderful lighting in our dark streets!*



UC Berkeley Global Campus

- *" Best" UC Berkeley's commitment to develop a campus at the Richmond Field Station*



Craneway

- *Events at the Craneway demonstrate the great south Richmond Shoreline. So many comments about not knowing what Richmond had to offer. What a wonderful place to visit.*



R-Transit

- *R-Transit, transportation for the elderly and disabled, is a beautifully administered program. The drivers are extraordinarily helpful and cheerful. Kudos!*



E-FORUM Readers – The Worst of 2014

City Council

- *The City Council meetings lack of respect and decorum is a public embarrassment. Councilmembers who chose to disrupt and hinder the business of the city, members of the public who would not follow rules of order and turned meetings into a circuses, and, most of all, those who chose to harangue a councilmember about her sexuality are truly despicable. Our city deserves better!*
- *The tone of this year's city election set by Chevron. The slanderous mudslinging and nastiness in this election all came from Chevron and their \$3,000,000 spent to cram our mailboxes with an avalanche meanness . They offered no positive prospective only a future based on greed and avarice. They should be ashamed of their big money attempt to buy our democracy. Chevron owes every member of our community an apology, especially for the tone they set in this past election.*
- *The fighting on the council. The outrageous disrespect towards the Mayor by Booze & Bates. The outright lies and spin perpetuated by Moving Forward (CHEVRON)....and of course, just one more Flare up at the plant.*
- *"Worst" Richmond City Council Meetings being disrupted by attention grabbing fools*



RPA

- *Divisive Group: Hands down, the anti-Chevron, RPA folks....their "agenda" gets old.*



Chevron

- *Boo Hiss to Chevron for their piss poor election performance.*
- *Chevrons involvement with, and sleazy mailings during the last Richmond election cycle.*



Cutting- Carson Crossing

- *Major example of prejudice in Richmond: finding the money to build the underpass for the convenience of the residents of the Marina to avoid waiting for the trains, while the Cutting Carlson crossing remains a laughingstock slap in the face of the politically powerless poor living in that central location so incredibly dangerous from every possible perspective*



Corky Booze

- *Worst Council member ever.*
- *Booze's antics on the City Council*
- *Thank GOD Corky Booze is gone! What a scourge he was.*



Jim Rogers

- *Worst: Election defeat of Jim Rogers, who has been a thoughtful, moderating voice on City Council.*
- *the failure to re-elect Jim Rogers, the only councilman with any common sense at all*



Fire Department Compensation

- *Egregious incomes and benefit packages of Fire Dept. employees causing serious drains on City financial resources*

Top overtime earners

Name	Department	Position	Overtime	Rate
John Smith	Fire Department	Firefighter	1,200	\$15.00
John Smith	Fire Department	Firefighter	1,200	\$15.00
John Smith	Fire Department	Firefighter	1,200	\$15.00
John Smith	Fire Department	Firefighter	1,200	\$15.00
John Smith	Fire Department	Firefighter	1,200	\$15.00
John Smith	Fire Department	Firefighter	1,200	\$15.00
John Smith	Fire Department	Firefighter	1,200	\$15.00
John Smith	Fire Department	Firefighter	1,200	\$15.00
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CEQA Exemption

- *Exemption from public review and CEQA compliance for fixed array solar project on Freethy property west of Goodrick Avenue.*



Eminent Domain

- *-Eminent Domain is a b-a-d idea*
- *Worst attempt by City: the Stupid Eminent Domain project pushed by Gayle.*



DMC Tax

- *...a property tax for DMC on already burdened senior homeowners*



RPA

- *Worst was the re-election of RPA members McLaughlin & Beckles and the squeak-by election of avowed anarchist Eduardo Martinez*
- *Bill Lindsay, rubber stamping the radical RPA agenda*



Chevron Shakedown

- *The continuing shakedown of Chevron, the largest taxpayer in Richmond*



Green and LGBT

- *The continuation of the phony green agenda and the emphasis on the gay agenda in the formerly blue collar city of Richmond. Raising the gay flag on City Hall without a vote of the City Council*



Barrett Avenue and Bike Lanes

- *Painting bike lanes on Barrett Ave. which are almost never used resulting in avoidable traffic congestion. Neglecting to repave the first 3 blocks of Barrett Ave. past 23rd going toward Kaiser Hospital*



E-FORUM Readers – Best 2014 City Employees and Departments

Yader Bermudez and Public Works

- *Yader Bermudez- Director of Dept of Public Works- Very responsive to citizen requests. He gets it done with no excuses.*
- *Public Works for excellence in maintaining the city's parks, trails and roads, including landscaping*
- *Parks Supervisor Public Works Dept. Parks & Landscaping Div. Greg Hardesty. He and his team literally put up flags around the Judge G. Carroll Park on a last minute request the day before the Point Richmond Business Association's Picnic in The Point event in October.*



Bill Lindsay – Chris Magnus

- *Bill Lindsay is hands down, our BEST City Manager!*
- *Bill Lindsay, and Chief Magnus.*



Lindsay, Magnus and Mitchell

- *Bill Lindsay, Chris Magnus, Richard Mitchell!!! Why? Because they have vision and high intelligence, have made progress, and shown courage. They have also shown respect for antagonists.*
- *City Manager Bill Lindsay and Police Chief Chris Magnus are the stellar standouts!*

Richmond Police Department and Chief Magnus

- *The Richmond Police Department Chief Chris Magnus for his overall excellent leadership, follow thru and willingness to engage the community.*
- *Captain Mark Hagan For his dedication to making Richmond a great place to live and work. He has been instrumental in working with the PRBA with the ongoing safety issues in the Point Richmond area.*
- *Michelle Milam in connecting the RPD with the businesses and community. She helped put together our Coffee with a Cop program. She has been helpful in providing much needed information to the community as situations have arisen over the past few months.*
- *Chris Magnus, Chief RPD, is a GEM!!!!!!! KuDOS to him*
- *Chris Magnus, the best Chief of Police of Richmond.*
- *Richmond Police Department is best Department in all areas!*
- *Kudos to Chief Magnus. If every Chief in the US were more like him I truly believe communities would be better off.*
- *Outstanding city employee is RPD Chief Chris Magnus for his community policing, getting our crime rate way down, and for joining in a peaceful protest holding a sign that said "Black Lives Matter". He is the absolute best!*



Sheila Dickinson

- *My continued respect and affection for children's librarian Sheila Dickinson and the wonderful toddler community she nourishes at West Branch on Tuesday mornings I can't really rate city departments.*



Cruz Caldera

- *I'm glad to see that Cruz Caldera received an award. He did an outstanding job, in collaboration with James, in designing and supervising the pruning of the live oak in front of my house . This is in spite of a power / telephone pole intruding into the tree and masses of badly placed wires come through the canopy. Yay Cruz.*
-

Rochelle Monk

- *Rochelle Monk has distinguished herself. She is great at bringing the community together and shows a real leadership quality.*

E-FORUM Readers – Worst 2014 City Employees and Departments

Library

- *I do feel that Katy Curl, Library and Cultural Services Director, deserves some mention as "bad". Here's why:*

Back at the beginning of Sept I sent a note to the council, copying her and Bill Lindsay, asking that the council direct her to purchase periodicals for the library. Only Jim responded and he asked her to reply to both of us which she did not do.

The background is that a) there was a long period when she did not purchase new books which ended as far as I know when someone (who was not me) asked the council to intervene. b) it is clear from the aged periodicals in the library that they have not been renewed in well over a year. The upshot has been that a sign was posted several weeks later saying periodicals were on the way but some

2 months later none have appeared which suggests none were ordered. If she can order (or say she has ordered) things when pressured then budgetary constraints are not the problem.

I have mentioned this to several librarians who find it inexplicable as do I. At the time when Richmond tried to go bankrupt, acting library director Kathy Haug was so concerned that she asked the Friends of the Library (I was president then) to donate money so she could purchase new items.

Clearly, Ms Curl does not have concern for the quality of the library collection which is a key aspect of the library. Her blowing off Jim and myself is also not to her credit.

I also feel that the Library Commission should get an award for uselessness.

The commission is supposed to represent the public. Having read the minutes going back 2 years it is clear that a major issue for the Commission is trying to figure out what it is supposed to do. I would suggest visiting the libraries and looking at what is there and asking the director why there aren't new books or periodicals; it may also be that other parts of the collection are being neglected but I haven't investigated. Perhaps the Commission could look into that too. I think patrons would welcome having the Commission advocate for their interests.

The Council and City Manager should get some credit for indifference to the library. I like Mr Lindsay but I wish he would hire someone to run the library who really cared about it and its potential to enhance the lives of residents.

Building Regulations

- *Building Regulation Depts continue to gouge homeowners in permit costs for no other end than to make money for their unit. Follow-up inspections are risible--two minutes to sign the permit and get back to the office!*



Compensation

- *City employees' base pay+overtime pay+medical coverage costs+pension costs are egregious. Another rip-off of Richmond residents and loading the City with debt for decades to come.*

Richard Mitchell

- *Richard Mitchell, Director of Planning and Building Services, for abuse of his position to push through building projects that do not adhere to the General Plan, and for cozying up to developers.*



Craig Murray

- *Craig Murray, Development Project Manager, for keeping important information from the Point Molate Citizens Advisory Committee which is needed to make informed decisions, for trying to prevent a group of high school students from going out to Pt. Molate on a field trip, and for signing off for a funky \$14K (yes, that's right, this is what the city spent on this) Osprey nest obstruction that did not work because he wouldn't listen to the experts on Ospreys. The Osprey problem was solved by a donated Osprey platform valued at \$100 and installed by a volunteer.*

Bill Lindsay

- *I don't feel that Bill Lindsay walks on water, i.e. Leslie Knight, and the housing authority debacle.*

Mayor

- *For a ceremonial office the Mayor's self and entourage appear to be a bit too regal for the poor folks of Richmond.*

CERT

- *In 2013 Bill Lindsay instructed Parks & Recs to provide free space once a month, no extra insurance required, to the few neighborhood CERT teams that request it. Only 2 teams asked for space - North & East, led by Angelina Rocco, and Marina Bay. MB asked to meet the 2nd Tuesday, 7 - 8:30 PM at Point Richmond while N&E asked for the MacDonald Avenue senior center on 2nd Wednesday, 6:30 - 8 PM. These centers are not usually staffed at night, so we must contact the designated supervisors to book & confirm staffing for each meeting. We CERTs really appreciate Lindsay's mandate because prior to 2013 we were relatively homeless, expending a lot of time hunting for suitable space to meet. I also appreciate Sharolyn Babb,Ui Bal and Dean Vigil, each who has opened the Point Center and remained there late to close. All 3 reside and commute 60-120 miles one-way, but stay overnight at requests without complaints or excuses.*



I am going to ask Lindsay to allow joint CERT neighborhood meetings at the fire training center instead. Maybe the new fire chief will be more supportive of CERT, given his emergency preparedness interest. I and other volunteers go to other jurisdictions to train because of inadequate support in Richmond. You can review

their city CERT websites and their affiliated citizen groups in Walnut Creek, Concord, San Ramon, Martinez and Berkeley to understand how poorly supported we are in Richmond. Most CERTs are assigned under their fire departments. Concord and San Pablo are assigned to their police departments. Either arrangement seems to work well, as long as those departments are willing to lead and work with the citizens. Walnut Creek and Berkeley have outstanding, organized citizen groups that partner with their city staff. We cannot compare but we can learn from these cities. Concord has a powerful Citizen Corp Council and Berkeley has the Berkeley Disaster Preparedness Neighborhood Network.

Kathy Gerk

- *My nomination for the least effective staffer for 2014 and for previous years is Kathy Gerk. Never mind that she was selected as a runner up for the best. I was hoping that she would retire along with Chief Banks in 2014. In spite of the accolades, Richmond CERT and OES under Gerk is a joke. 20 years with nothing to show for it. Richmond CERT does not even have a complete databank of who trained CERT over 20 years and who is still active. In 2014 more than half of the scheduled classes, including one of two basic training course were cancelled due to low sign up. In Berkeley there is a waiting list for classes .Gerk gives excuses for our non-support by claiming that she is spread thin in her work and has no staff assistance. Yet she just served 6 weeks on jury duty. In her position as OES manager, she should have begged off jury duty. During that period there was no OES. When not on jury duty in 2014, she performed mostly as a glorified secretary, passing around emailed announcements from FEMA or events organized by other jurisdictions. Her position is primarily political. She decides and bottlenecks all issues, using her CAPER group mainly as a rubberstamp for inactivity. They are almost as useless as she is. CERT NTL issues placed on the CAPER agenda are discussed or postponed for months without resolution. Although CAPER is supposed to meet with Gerk monthly, the NTLs, who are the real grassroots leaders, are invited to join them every other month, if meetings are not cancelled. Only 2 members of CAPER attend our neighborhood meetings and Gerk never ventures to check on us either.*

A few months ago when I asked Gerk to share Richmond's emergency master plan, she wrote back that it was under revision and that the current version is available to read in binder form at the main library, not as a .pdf. I was told by a P&R staff supervisor that Gerk leads a emergency table top meeting about 1x per month with department heads. What else does she do beside attend regional meetings? How are Richmond residents benefitting from her effort in emergency readiness preparedness or organization?



E-FORUM Readers Best Organizations of 2014

TRAC

TRAC, the Trails for Richmond Action Committee, for their hard work and successes in working with the City, East Bay Regional Park District and the private sector to construct new sections of Bay Trail in Richmond.



Richmond Trees

- *Richmond Trees is the very BEST group of hardworking volunteers that have planted hundreds of trees all over the City*



RYSE

- *Ryse Youth Center. To be applauded for educating the community regarding LGBT folks, and for helping the young LGBT population.*



Fix Our Ferals

- --Kudos to Fix Our Ferals for their continuing work



Early Childhood Mental Health Program

- *Early Childhood Mental Health Program at 4101 Macdonald, even though I am on the board of directors, and thus a bit prejudiced. ECMHP helps neglected, abused (often both) toddlers under the age of six get a handle on life. Our therapists make house calls to counsel mothers and caretaker grandmas and aunts and do great work helping the most vulnerable kids in the city. Besides our budget (chiefly from Medicaid) of about \$2.6 million per year, our many donors pony up about \$125,000 per year to help with things that aren't covered by our contracts. Anyone interested can check ecmhp.org for more information.*



Saffron Strand

- *Saffron Strand for helping the homeless in Richmond.*



Richmond College Prep Schools

- *Richmond College Prep School*



Urban Tilth

- *-Urban Tilth for engaging youth in urban agriculture. Makes for proud kids, growing their own fruits and vegetables, and learning how to cook and eat healthily.*



Rich City Rides

- *Rich City Rides for getting youth and adults in Richmond on bikes, and for getting us new bike lanes so that more can travel safely by bicycle in Richmond. Good for the environment, good for people's health. Less dependence on fossil fuels.*



E-FORUM Readers – Wishes and Predictions for 2015

Mayor

- *Prediction: Mayor Butt invited onto Rachel Maddow show to discuss Corporate personhood 😊*
- *And Good Luck to our new Mayor and City Council. Please don't hate Chevron too much. Until they prove otherwise, they should be treated with respect despite the recent flaring and their hateful printed matter against City Council candidates. That \$3.5 million could have been used for schools, DMC and other worthy projects around our fair city. I used to laugh at our slogan "City of Pride and Purpose" upon my arrival here 16 years ago, but we have come a long way! Richmond Proud!*



- *Our wish for 2015 is for our new Mayor to run better Council Meetings and get the City business done. To get a handle on a balanced budget and stop giving our City \$\$\$ away to every little group that comes up to the podium begging for the City's \$\$!*

Jim Rogers

- *It is only the right, and, the fair thing, that Jim Rogers be given the empty seat on the Council...he only lost by a few votes, and, brings positive vibes to the Council with his intelligence at every meeting.*



Cutting-Carlson

- *Make the railroad companies complete the fences at the Cutting Carlson Crossing and to install 2 more crossing arms to create a 4 armed safe barrier. Instruct the Public works or Richmond Street Department to rebuild the Cutting Carlson crossing according to Cal Trans pedestrian and ADA safety standards. Why not look to the solutions to urban rail crossings employed in other countries? In urban Melbourne, Australia, the fences on both sides of the tracks has special boxes for pedestrian crossings.. As the train approaches gates automatically close. These are separate from the streets where the fence opening is only wide enough for the vehicles to cross. The crossing arms are longer than the road is wide preventing vehicles driving around them.(at the Cutting and Carlson crossing the crossing arms are so inadequate vehicles can cross easily while the arms are down. That crossing is disgraceful.) May you have both the diplomacy and the mayoral power to demonstrate Richmond cares about all its citizens, not just the Marina and Pt Richmond residents, by fixing the Carlson Cutting crossing.*



Nat Bates

- *Nat Bates, disillusioned with his mayoral election failure and bereft of his Corky attack dog will finally retire from the Richmond City Council.*



RPA

- *An RPA majority on City Council will run amuck pursuing extraneous causes diverting City management from dealing with the City of Richmond's pressing problems. Condemnation of mortgaged houses will lead to litigation and drains on City finances with most homeowners finding it difficult to obtain affordable mortgage financing. Following up on their defeated Gaza Strip initiative, RPA City Council members will travel to Venezuela on a solidarity mission, to Ecuador to bash Chevron and to Israel, Syria and Iraq for friendly discussions with Hamas and the Islamic State.*



City Council

- *I look forward to council meetings without homophobic slurs peppering the meetings*
- *A more youthful City government/Council with new and fresh ideas*
A forward thinking and productive Council



Affordable Housing

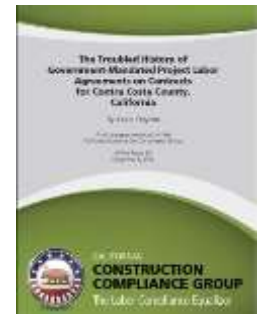
- *Prediction: An investigation into uses of "in lieu of" housing developer projects will*



reveal no affordable housing options developed and further socio-economic segregation cemented.

Hire Local and PLAs

- *Predictions: The Mayor and Council will show vision and courage. They will require projects to HIRE LOCAL. The fear of “displacement” of residents as housing developments are built will be addressed by the requirement to HIRE LOCAL because residents will be able to afford the new homes. Unions will be required to train local residents as apprentices in 50% of jobs. (As an aside, Tom, I believe that less than 20 union members reside in Richmond.) Union cooperation in HIRING LOCAL is key to the economic development and health of Richmond.ⁱ*



Development

- *While I'm not against development, I am against thoughtless development. We have to be smart about how we develop our shoreline. Building high rise town houses and condos does not for a beautiful shoreline make. Neither does outdated glass buildings such as what is being planned for Terminal One and its' accompanying townhouses. Looks like something from the 1970's. We should always build green, with solar in place, and grey water catchments for future droughts which I'm sure are on the horizon given climate change. Our shoreline property is worth a lot of money. Do not sell our land for under market value. We deserve better. We will definitely attract more developers, and buyers with a beautiful and green development plan.*



Positive Changes

- *I'm hoping for more positive changes for Richmond. Now that we have a majority of elected officials that are on the side of the residents of Richmond and not Chevron, dirty industry, and big developers, I'm hoping for an even better Richmond where we will attract more small green businesses and hopefully some worker-owned businesses, smart green development, more parks, more trees, better health and safety by keeping Chevron and other polluting industries in check, more places to recreate and to have a good quality of life. This will attract more people to live, work, and recreate in Richmond which will contribute to the city's overall health financially and physically.*



Hilltop

- *Hilltop District will be brought back to life again in 2015, and looked-at as part of the City*
- *The Hilltop District will have new entrances from I-80 freeway*
- *Art in the Hilltop District, making it a destination and not a pass-through*
- *All Hilltop Parks brought up to standards; making them look and feel like real parks. Especially Hilltop Lake Park*
- *More community involvement from the residents of Hilltop District*



Marketing and Rebranding

- *Overall marketing and rebranding of the City, to show the world Richmond is the place to be.*



Human Rights Commission

- *Bringing the City's Human Rights Commission score from 80% to 100%, on LGBT rights*

North Richmond

- *North Richmond to be annexed into the City. Lots of benefits that the residents of NR can have from being annexed*



Sidewalks

- *More sidewalks in places where they are needed now, to help make all the City more walking-friendly*

Sustainability

- *Continue making our City more environmentally sustainable*

How did E-FORUM Readers' Wishes and Predictions for 2014 Turn Out?

Term Limits

- **Prediction:** *I predict the city council will eliminate term limits on the mayor. All term limits do is to ensure that staff, who stay on the job for decades, have more power than the person we elect.*
- **What Happened:** *Nothing*



Terminal 1

- **Prediction:** *Would like to see the property at the south end of Dornan (near Ferry Park) turned into a park, with Bay Trail access adjacent to the shoreline, rather than becoming another housing development.*
- **What Happened:** *Nothing.*



Homicides

- **Prediction:** *18 murders in Richmond in 2014, hundreds or thousands of burglaries and robberies.*
- **What Happened:** *Thirteen homicides, fewest in decades.*



2014 Campaign

- **Prediction:** *Voters will be deluged by the most and nastiest campaign mailers ever seen during a Mayoral and City Council election*
- **Prediction:** *Corky Booze' will receive the fewest votes ever cast for a City Council incumbent running for reelection*
- **Prediction:** *President Obama and Michelle will make weekly trips to Richmond to urge election of Nat Bates as Mayor*
- **Prediction:** *Booze indicted for fraud. Beckles drops out of race. Final: Ramsey, Butt, McLaughlin, Myrick, Martinez*
- **Prediction:** *Can't predict anything. I'm worried Chevron is going to come out with their big guns and deceitful, lying fliers, billboards, and TV ads in November 2014. They can buy anyone, and they already have at least two bought individuals on the city council, with one tailing not far behind. Heaven help us if Nat Bates gets elected as mayor. It will be the decline of Richmond once again. All good progress will go down the drain, I can guarantee it.*
- **What Happened:** *Not exactly as predicted, but close enough.*



Greenway

- **Prediction:** *In 2014 we will close the Richmond Greenway gap with a "Unity Bridge" for bicycles and pedestrians. It will be built out of steel salvaged from the Bay Bridge.*
- **What Happened:** *Nothing.*



My Predictions for 2015

- The City Council will not be able to agree on a replacement for the vacant seat, and an election will occur, which Jim Rogers will win.
- The City of Richmond litigation against Chevron will be settled.
- The Chevron Refinery Hydrogen project will be permitted, and construction will resume.
- The Point Molate Litigation with Upstream and Guidiville will be resolved, and Point Molate will begin to be developed using the "Presidio Trust" model.
- Crime, including homicides will continue to drop.
- The eminent domain initiative will not be implemented.
- Property tax revenue will rise.
- Quiet Zones will be expanded.
- Residents of The Hacienda will be relocated.

Happy New Year!

Tom Butt

ⁱ Here is some information about PLAs in Contra Costa County.

1) Disastrous bid results under the Contra Costa Community College District PLA.

A. Contra Costa College New College Center <[http://www.4cd.edu/webapps/Files/Bids/BidResults\(C-617\)ApparentLowBidder.pdf](http://www.4cd.edu/webapps/Files/Bids/BidResults(C-617)ApparentLowBidder.pdf)>

- a. Bid results 10.2% over low engineer's estimate of \$45M
- b. General Contractor from out of county
- c. Only 2 subcontractors from Contra Costa County
- d. 1 out of state contractor

B. Los Medanos College Student Services Remodel

<[http://www.4cd.edu/webapps/Files/Bids/BidResults\(L612SSReBid\).pdf](http://www.4cd.edu/webapps/Files/Bids/BidResults(L612SSReBid).pdf)>

- a. Bid results 9.8% over high engineer's estimate of \$15M
- b. General Contractor from out of county
- c. Only 2 subcontractors from Contra Costa County

2) \$26M is the cost of PLAs at West Contra Costa USD to fund three updated construction bids for projects at Kennedy High, El Cerrito High and Coronado Elementary. This 37% increase over the \$44.8 Million allocated by Measures J, D & E is the cost of government-mandated Project Labor Agreements (PLAs). WCCUSD has had a PLA in place since 2000. Learn more

<<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10153520426115182&set=a.10150691590825182.709028.213561725181&type=1&theater>>. Also see attached CC Times Article: Pricey school construction spending at WCCUSD.

FBI article on the investigation of West Contra Costa Unified.

http://www.contracostatimes.com/richmond/ci_27103994/fbi-pursuing-allegations-against-west-contra-costa-school <http://www.contracostatimes.com/richmond/ci_27103994/fbi-pursuing-allegations-against-west-contra-costa-school>

3) Since the Contra Costa County Project Labor Agreement was put into place in 2002, 78% of the bids have been awarded to companies outside Contra Costa County. Only 4% of the total companies that have performed work under the Project Labor Agreement could be identified as non-union. The Project Labor Agreement had the opposite effect and created a monopoly for union contractors from outside the county.

In addition, the First and Second Floor Remodel and Parking Lot Expansion at 1650 Cavallo Road, Antioch for the Employment and Human Services Department built under a Project Labor Agreement was completed 385 days late and \$350,000 over budget. The project experienced numerous delays, excessive change orders and liquidated damages. The General Contractor was found in breach of contract for failure to pay bills for labor and materials on the project. As a result, over 26 stop notices totaling more than \$1.7M were filed on the project. Two subcontractors filed lawsuits. Many subcontractors and suppliers slowed or cut off the supply of labor and materials to the project, causing the work on the project to progress erratically and at a slow pace. As a result, the Board of Supervisors delegated the General Services Director to finish the project.

4) False promises of local hire: West County Health Center Audit Contra Costa County New West County Health Center

81% of TOTAL hours worked OUTSIDE of West Contra Costa County

72% of TOTAL hours worked OUTSIDE of the county

75% of Contractors were located OUTSIDE of the county