



Richmond, California Who Will Win in 2010?



2009 Year End Review Prediction and Wishes for 2010

[Tom Butt, Richmond City Council Member](#)

January 1, 2010

As a disclosure, I published all comments I received from E-FORUM readers verbatim, but they don't necessarily reflect my views, particularly those about City staff and departments.

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Introduction

For years, 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 2002, I have invited public participation, and I have shared the results on my E-FORUM.

- At the end of 2002, I shared one of these priorities on the E-FORUM in [New Year's Resolution - A Full Court Press on Blight](#), January 3, 2003.
- Following 2003, 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.
- At the beginning of 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.
- At the beginning of 2006 was [What Can We Fix in 2006?](#), January 1, 2006.
- Next, 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?](#) January 1, 2008
- See [Will Richmond be Fine in 2009?](#)

I recommend you take a look at these previous E-Forums, and 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 memory 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.*

As before, I have censored nothing, which will surely offend some people. However, I value my reputation as an objective and equal opportunity critic, 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.

Top Three Richmond Stories of 2009

Richmond and Chevron in Petroleum Bowl Matchup

1. It's the end of the fourth quarter, and the game is tied. Richmond and Chevron go into a 2010 overtime to see who gets the trophy. It's been a real ballgame so far, seesawing back and forth on the oily



gridiron. Chevron drew first blood in January, buying the votes of the State Lands Commission to avoid having to provide a Bay Trail link as part of the Long Wharf lease extension ([State Lands Commission Rolls Over for Chevron](#), February 2, 2009). Richmond responded with a vengeance in February, collecting \$28 million in settlement of a dispute over underpaid utility taxes. ([Chevron, Richmond Strike \\$28 Million Deal for Refinery Utility Taxes](#), February 19, 2009). In the second half, it's not clear

who came out ahead when an environmental lawsuit brought the Chevron Energy and Hydrogen Renewal Project to a standstill in July with the Superior Court ruling the EIR was inadequate ([Flash - Judge Turns Off Gas on Chevron Project](#), July 2, 2009). In the third quarter, Chevron hit real pay dirt with a September victory in a long running property tax appeal ([Chevron Prevails in Refinery Property Tax Appeal](#), September 4, 2009) helped out by a local real estate broker with Chevron ties ([A Friend of Chevron Gives It a Costly Gift](#), October 21, 2009). Finally, with only minutes left on the clock, Contra Costa Superior Court handed Chevron the best Christmas present of all by throwing out Measure T ([Court Upholds Chevron Challenge to Measure T](#), December 17, 2009). At the end of the year, it appeared Chevron was in possession of the high ground, but all lawsuits are on appeal, and anything could happen in 2010. Watch for the kickoff, unless Chevron takes its marbles and goes home.

In sheer volume, Chevron stories dominated Richmond in 2009. There are a total of 68 E-FORUM entries:

2. [Lame Duck City Council Cements Four-Year Control of Chevron Community Fund](#), January 7, 2009
3. [Urgent Request to Contact State Lands Commissioners on Point Molate Trail](#), January 28, 2009
4. [Richmond Delegation Heads to Santa Barbara Today to Ask SLC for Bay Trail Contribution from Chevron](#), January 29, 2009
5. [State Lands Commission Ditches Bay Trail](#), January 30, 2009
6. [Green Versus Chevron, a Debate That Has No Place in Richmond](#), January 30, 2009
7. [The Day After Refusing to Fund the Bay Trail, Chevron Announces Record Profits](#), January 30, 2009
8. [More on State Lands Commission Approves Chevron Long Wharf Lease Without Bay Trail Funding Mandate](#), January 30, 2009
9. [State Lands Commission Rolls Over for Chevron](#), February 2, 2009
10. [Chevron Spins Agreement with City of Richmond on Utility User Tax](#), February 18, 2009
11. [Chevron to Pay City of Richmond \\$28 Million to Settle Utility Tax , underpayment](#), February 17, 2009
12. [Chevron Legal Challenge to Measure T](#), February 24, 2009
13. [Chevron Press Release on Measure T and Delaying Continuous Catalyst Reformer \(CCR\) Project](#), February 26, 2009
14. [Chevron and Richmond Go Mano a Mano Over Measure T](#), February 26, 2009
15. [Contra Costa Times Rips Chevron but Predicts Measure T Overturn](#), March 5, 2009
16. [Bay Trail Advocates Sue State, Chevron Over Public Access at Refinery](#), March 26, 2009
17. [Chevron News, Measure T, Ecuador and 60 Minutes, Good Neighbors](#), May 1, 2009
18. [Judge Unlikely to Change Mind on Chevron Ruling](#), May 20, 2009
19. [Challengers to Chevron EIR Prevail in the Tentative Ruling](#), May 20, 2009
20. [Mayor Gayle McLaughlin Confronts O'Reilly Over Measure T at Chevron Shareholders Meeting](#), May 28, 2009
21. [Chevron - Dueling Annual Reports](#), May 27, 2009
22. [Chevron in the News: Adverse Court Ruling, Carbon Tracking and Corporate Responsibility Report](#), June 6, 2009
23. [Breaking News - Court Rejects Environmental Review for Chevron Refinery](#), June 5, 2009
24. [Chevron Ruling Sets Off Spate of Head Scratching - What Does It All Mean?](#) June 9, 2009
25. [Chevron and Richmond in the News in Reuters and Huffington Post](#), June 14, 2009
26. [Poison Pill in Chevron - Agreement Panics City Council](#), June 20, 2009



27. [Councilmember Rogers on Chevron Lawsuit](#), June 23, 2009
28. [Chevron News Clippings](#), July 2, 2009
29. [Flash - Judge Turns Off Gas on Chevron Project](#), July 2, 2009
30. [More on Chevron Project Halt](#), July 3, 2009
31. [Chronicle's Chip Johnson on Chevron Debacle](#), July 7, 2009
32. [Response to Article Blaming Environmentalists for Chevron Job Loss](#), July 12, 2009
33. [From Contra Costa Times - Chevron Project Tied to Increased Dependence on Foreign Oil](#), July 15, 2009
34. [San Francisco Chronicle - Chevron Owes More to Richmond/California](#), July 17, 2009
35. [City, Chevron and Environmentalists Continue Settlement Discussions as Workers Leave Refinery Job Site](#), July 15, 2009
36. [Stop Posturing and Start Talking](#), July 22, 2009
37. [Stop Posturing and Start Talking](#), July 22, 2009
38. [Politicians Urge Settlement at Last Night's Council Meeting](#), July 22, 2009
39. [Vote No on Garamendi for Congress](#), July 21, 2009
40. [Chevron Appeals to State Court to Continue its Retrofit Project](#), July 20, 2009
41. [Let's Get This Show on the Road](#), July 19, 2009
42. [Chevron Family Theatre Festival Mother Goose in Walnut Creek While Refinery Workers Go Hungry in Richmond](#), July 23, 2009
43. [Dueling Opinions on Chevron Impasse Play Out in Local Press](#), August 21, 2009
44. [Judge Pessimistic About Measure T in First Court Test](#), September 2, 2009
45. [Chevron Prevails in Refinery Property Tax Appeal](#), September 4, 2009
46. [Chevron Ranked on Environmental Performance by Newsweek](#), September 25, 2009
47. [Chevron's Dave O'Reilly to Retire](#), October 1, 2009
48. [Chevron Economic Self-Sufficiency RFP for Richmond](#), October 1, 2009
49. [Measure T Hearing in Martinez Tomorrow](#), October 8, 2009
50. [Chevron, Richmond Spar in Court Over Voter-Approved Fee](#), October 10, 2009
51. [Assessment Appeals Board Reappointment Could Cost Richmond, County, Millions More](#), October 13, 2009
52. [Assessment Board Member Who Sold Out Richmond Wants It All Now](#), October 13, 2009
53. [A Friend of Chevron Gives It a Costly Gift](#), October 21, 2009
54. [New Chevron Refinery Appeal Has County Seeing Ocean of Red Ink](#), October 24, 2009
55. [NY Times - Richmond and Chevron Choose Fork in the Road](#), November 2, 2009
56. [Chevron Donates Bay Trail Easement to EBRPD](#), November 3, 2009
57. [Blowback from Fisher Participation in Chevron Assessment Appeal Continues](#), November 11, 2009
58. [Another No. 1 for Richmond - Chevron is State's Largest Point Source of GHG](#), November 23, 2009
59. [Yes, Richmond, There is a Santa Claus](#), November 24, 2009
60. [Chevron Announces \\$1 Million in Grants to Richmond and West County Organizations](#), December 2, 2009
61. [End Chevron's Perk](#), December 1, 2009
62. [The Case Against Chevron and A 12-Step Program for Chevron](#), December 2, 2009
63. [Our Neighbors: Pols Turn on the Hardwood a Boost to Richmond Nonprofits](#), December 9, 2009
64. [Court Upholds Chevron Challenge to Measure T](#), December 17, 2009
65. [More on Measure T](#), December 18, 2009
66. [Life After Chevron?](#) December 29, 2009
67. [Judge Strikes Down Richmond's Chevron Tax](#), December 26, 2009
68. [Contra Costa Times Editorial: Sit Down and Talk](#), December 29, 2009



Richmond Rehabilitates Its 60-Year Old Civic Center

An ambitious project born in the 2003-2004 economic crisis when some wanted Richmond to consider bankruptcy, the LEED Gold Civic Center rehabilitation project was completed with rave reviews and occupied in 2009. It was a “can do” effort that lifted the spirits of (almost) everyone in Richmond. However, the spiteful fight over operable windows left a bitter taste in the mouths of many, including me. The inoperable windows were a bad decision.

1. [City of Richmond Administrative Services Returning to the Civic Center](#), April 16, 2009
2. [Come Monday, Only Rats Will Remain at Marina Bay City Hall](#), June 25, 2009
3. [Chronicle Architectural Critic Likes Richmond's Civic Center](#), May 26, 2009
4. [After 60 Years, Richmond Rededicates a Civic Center Born of 1945 Optimism](#), September 12, 2009
5. [Civic Center Opening Photos](#), September 20, 2009
6. [Richmond Civic Center Rehabilitation Named Overall Top Project in California](#), October 1, 2009
7. [Richmond Civic Center Featured in Heritage News](#), December 14, 2009



And then There Were Seven

Although it may not have changed any outcomes, reduction of the City Council from nine to seven has improved our City government. I perceive that after a bad start just before the changeover ([Lame Duck City Council Cements Four-Year Control of Chevron Community Fund](#), January 7, 2009) the Council has become more collegial and less belligerent, or maybe that’s just because 2009 was not an election year. The bitter fights between the majority Viramontes (or Chevron) Five and the minority are a distant memory. There seem to be fewer late night meetings than before with more business getting done, but we have still had our share of early morning adjournments. I can honestly say that I have enjoyed this year more than most, having participated in a lot of majority votes. It’s a big stress reliever. See [And Then There Were Seven](#), January 14, 2009.



Most Controversial Issues of 2009

I added a new category this year for two reasons: Unresolved issues aren’t necessarily top stories because there is no outcome. Others are so petty that they simply don’t rise to the top of the news. There are two that stand out this year.

Point Molate

Although none of the critical decisions by the Richmond City Council or the U.S. Government that will actually decide the fate of Point Molate has been made yet, a lot of foreplay occurred in 2009. With the developer’s option expiring on January 15, 2010, but likely to be extended by ongoing litigation, no one really knows what the outcome will be. A hard core opposition of unknown strength continues to oppose the project primarily because of objections to a casino. I have not changed my prediction made in 2004 that the project as conceived has at best a 50/50 chance of success.

1. [From Berkeley Daily Planet, "Questions Remain on Fate of East Bay Casino Plans"](#) [From Berkeley Daily Planet, "Questions Remain on Fate of East Bay Casino Plans"](#) January 16, 2009



2. [New Lawsuit Filed Over Point Molate](#), January 26, 2009
3. [Supreme Court Ruling Raises Richmond Casino Questions](#), February 26, 2009
4. [Long Awaited Point Molate DEIR/DEIS](#), July 12, 2009
5. [Newspapers, McLaughlin Weigh in on Point Molate](#), July 27, 2009
6. [Point Molate in the News](#), August 25, 2009
7. [San Pablo Says Casino Would Bankrupt City - Prepares for War with Richmond](#), September 4, 2009
8. [Feinstein, Boxer Oppose Land Transfers for Indian Casinos](#), September 20, 2009
9. [Save Winehaven Historic District at Point Molate - An Endangered Historic Place in Richmond](#), September 20, 2009
10. [Public Comment Time on Richmond's Point Molate Hotel-Casino Resort Extended to Sept. 30](#), September 21, 2009
11. [State Water Board Remands Point Molate Cleanup Order Back to Local Board](#), October 1, 2009
12. [Comment Period for Point Molate EIS/EIR Extended to October 23](#), October 1, 2009
13. [Point Molate News](#), October 8, 2009
14. [County Warms Up to Gaming](#), October 9, 2009
15. [Governor Opposes Point Molate Gaming](#), October 13, 2009
16. [Chronicle Editorializes Against Point Molate](#), October 15, 2009
17. [Contra Costa Times on Governor's Point Molate Letter](#), October 14, 2009
18. [Sad Tale of Two Points](#), October 17, 2009
19. [County Ready to Back Point Molate Casino Plan](#), October 31, 2009
20. [Point Molate Update](#), November 12, 2009
21. [Contra Costa Supes Vote To Support Richmond Casino](#), November 12, 2009
22. [East Bay Regional Park District Offended by Claim of Support for Point Molate](#), November 13, 2009
23. [The Squeaky Wheel Wins the Cash](#), November 14, 2009
24. [Upstream Responds to E-FORUM Point Molate Update](#), November 17, 2009
25. [Richmond Homeless Shelter Denounces Casino Payout](#), November 20, 2009
26. [Back to Back CC Times Point Molate Stories](#), November 29, 2009
27. [Contra Costa Times Editorializes on Point Molate](#), November 30, 2009



The Bulkhead

What can you say? The proposed bulkhead that pitted neighbor against neighbor and neighborhood against neighborhood is, in my opinion, a no-brainer. It never should have even gotten to the City Council, but it became one of the year's most contentious issues, perhaps all the more memorable because it was largely responsible for extending the last meeting of the year to nearly 3:00 AM.

1. ["Bulkhead Benefit" Tonight at Local FOUR2NINE Wine Bar!](#) December 12, 2009
2. [Bulkhead Schmulkhead](#), December 12, 2009
3. [Take the Plunge - With a Bulkhead?](#) December 12, 2009
4. [On Third Try, Bulkhead Still Ahead](#), December 16, 2009
5. [Richmond Confidential Covers Plunge Bulkhead](#), December 17, 2009



Tom Butt Wishes for 2009 Come True

How did my wishes for 2009 fare? I batted only 500, with a three more on the cusp. Here are the results;



Recession

Wish: The City of Richmond will weather the recession without any significant reductions in programs and services, and there will be no layoffs.

Outcome: After an ambitious start that include adoption of the 2009-2010 budget in June, the City took its first hit from the state take-backs, and then the property tax and sales tax reductions kicked in. layoffs occurred but were minimized by encouraging early retirements. Programs and projects will be reduced in 2010.



Chevron Revenues

Wish: All of the potential revenue streams from Chevron, including Measure T, delinquent utility user tax proceeds and the Community Benefits Agreement will kick in, and Chevron will fail in their attempt to lower their property tax appraisal.

Outcome: Chevron was the big winner on this one.



Chevron CEQA Lawsuit



Wish: The organizations that brought the CEQA lawsuit on the Chevron Energy and Hydrogen Renewal Project will succeed in a settlement that brings significant additional environmental protections and mitigations.

Outcome: Although the legal challenge prevailed, there was no settlement. Richmond lost jobs and revenue in the process.

Crime



Wish: Crime will continue to decrease.

Outcome: While violent crime did decrease overall, homicides were up far above 2008. What we thought was a trend turned out to be an anomaly. Richmond is still a good place to die.



Civic Center

Wish: The historic Civic Center will be successfully completed and reoccupied.

Outcome: Done!



Shipyard 3

Wish: A plan to rehabilitate the historic buildings at Point Potrero Marine Terminal (former Shipyard 3) will be adopted and implemented.

Outcome: This got a good start in 2009. A Save America's Treasures grant for \$150,000 helped pay for a comprehensive evaluation and concept design for the Rigger's Loft, and the National Park Service kicked in more money to study the other historic buildings.



Maritime Child Care Center

Wish: The plan and funding to rehabilitate the historic Maritime Child Care Center will come together, and construction will begin.



Outcome: There is good news and bad news. Although complete funding failed to materialize in 2009, the WCCUSD decided to re-commit \$1.5 million in late 2009. The project is now out to bid again, and we are optimistic for a 2010 construction start.



Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park General Management Plan.

Wish: The City of Richmond will adopt the recommended alternative for the Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park General Management Plan.

Outcome: Done!



Visitor Center

Wish: The Visitor Center for Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park will open.

Outcome: Thanks largely to Eddie Orton's intransigency, there was little progress, and the delay cost the National Park Service an appropriation of over \$3 million for construction.



General Plan

Wish: A new general plan will be adopted that provides for maximum feasible North Richmond and San Pablo Peninsula shoreline open space preservation, sustainable and smart growth development.

Outcome: There is nothing slower than a general plan. Maybe in 2010.



Design Review

Wish: The dispute over Design Review will be settled without a complete merger of the Planning Commission and Design Review Boards, and both bodies will be fully appointed with high quality and effective members. The Planning Division will continue to adopt design guidelines for various types of construction and specific geographic areas.

Outcome: In January, the City Council modified the previous draconian directions, and a compromise plan that garnered support of the entire City Council.



Streets

Wish: The Pavement Condition Index for Richmond streets will continue to improve.

Outcome: Yes it did. See [Richmond Streets Trend Upward](#), January 7, 2009



Best and Worst of 2009

Tom Butt Nominations for the Best of 2009

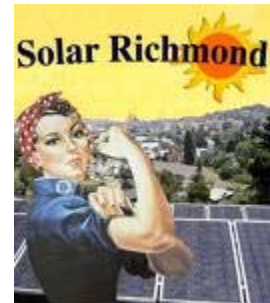
Looking back over a year of E-FORUM posts, I realize that my reporting is not balanced, but that's not just a subconscious bias. You can get plenty of bad news in the traditional media, but I tend to gravitate towards good news involving Richmond, which is way underreported. The advent of [Richmond Confidential](#) in 2009 brought a welcome new source of news that often focused on the positive. Following is a digest of stories about positive events and happenings of interest in Richmond in 2009:



1. [Point Richmond Gateway Foundation Spreads Cheer](#), January 1, 2009
2. [Vetrazzo Keeps Making Headlines](#), January 3, 2009
3. [Richmond Streets Trend Upward](#), January 7, 2009
4. [Richmond Rising - Media Coverage of Crime Reduction](#), January 13, 2009
5. [2009 Richmond Bay Trail New Year Report](#), January 16, 2009
6. [More on Betty Goes to Washington from the Chronicle](#), January 19, 2009
7. [Martin Luther King Jr., Day of Service on the Richmond Greenway 1.19.09](#), January 17, 2009
8. [Richmond Rosie Off To Inauguration](#), January 17, 2009
9. [Arrest Warrant Issued for Richmond Train Cited for Blocking Grade Crossing](#), January 26, 2009
10. [Nevin Park Reopens Saturday](#), January 29, 2009
11. [WCCUSD to Receive \\$27 Million from Stimulus Package](#), January 30, 2009
12. [Countrywide Fined \\$30,000 by Richmond for Foreclosed Property Neglect](#), February 2, 2009
13. [Urban Agriculture Grows in Richmond](#), February 23, 2009
14. [Miller Announces Millions in Federal Funding for Area Projects](#), February 26, 2009
15. [SF Chronicle - "Richmond Hopes to Protect 5 Miles of Wetlands"](#) March 2, 2009
16. [A Remarkable Look Inside the New Richmond Plunge Under Construction](#), March 9, 2009
17. [Harlan Martin Butt Arrives March 9, 2009](#), March 16, 2009
18. [City Council Supports Citywide Train Quiet Zones](#), March 25, 2009
19. [Richmond Settles Lawsuit Over Honda Project](#), March 26, 2009
20. [Ryland Thomas Butt Arrives March 28, 2009](#), March 29, 2009
21. [Train Violation Reporting Made Easier, Two New Quiet Zones Filed](#), March 26, 2009
22. [Richmond on Track to be First in Contra Costa to Pass Green Building Law](#), April 9, 2009
23. [Richmond Rosies in the News](#), April 13, 2009
24. [City Council Unanimously Approves Rosie General Management Plan](#), April 11, 2009
25. [Vehicle Theft Plummets in Richmond](#), May 1, 2009
26. [Richmond-Based Vetrazzo Wins EPA Award](#), April 17, 2009
27. [Tom Butt, FAIA of Interactive Resources is Featured Speaker at "Green is Gold" Expo in Richmond](#), May 7, 2009
28. [Second Annual Richmond Historic Preservation Awards May 18](#), May 2, 2009
29. [Local Green Manufacturers Vetrazzo Continues to Make News](#), May 12, 2009
30. [Richmond Greenway - The Rest of the Story](#), May 13, 2009
31. [Richmond Greenway Makes Cover Story in National Rails to Trails Publication](#), May 15, 2009
32. [Richmond Pays Tribute to its History](#), May 15, 2009
33. ["Green is Gold" Expo A Great Success](#), May 16, 2009
34. [Park Ranger Betty Soskin Featured on KPIX Channel 5 Discussion on Race](#), May 24, 2009
35. [Celebrate Bay Trail and TRAC Anniversaries on June 6-7](#), May 30, 2009
36. [Richmond Shot Spotter Goes Live - Gun Seizures Skyrocket](#), May 30, 2009
37. [Helping Adriana Help Herself](#), June 1, 2009
38. [In the News: Raiders Grant Helps Rebuild MLK Park in Richmond](#), June 6, 2009
39. [Richmond FREE Summer Music Festivals](#), June 8, 2009



40. [Rosie Planner Donna Graves Selected for Harvard Loeb Fellowship](#), June 8, 2009
41. [WW II Home Front Summer Film Festival on the Red Oak Victory Ship](#), June 8, 2009
42. [Rosie National Park Ranger Tours and Events Posted for June through August](#), June 8, 2009
43. [Richmond Tales - Lost Secrets of the Iron Triangle](#), June 11, 2009
44. [A Park Grows in Richmond](#), June 10, 2009
45. [Richmond's Original Farmers Market](#), June 10, 2009
46. [Richmond is Recipient of Toxic Disposal Fines Levied on Zeneca and UC](#), June 11, 2009
47. [Richmond Juneteenth Celebration Promotes Healing, Togetherness](#), June 14, 2009
48. [Free July 3 Symphony Before Fireworks at the Craneway Pavilion - Only in Richmond](#), June 17, 2009
49. [Enjoy the Summer - Fall 2009 issue of the Rosie the Riveter/World War II Partnership Newsletter](#), June 20, 2009
50. [Richmond Prevails in Court Against BNSF in Criminal Complaint for Blocking Grade Crossings](#), June 20, 2009
51. [Richmond Youth Employment Program Snags \\$1.1 million grant](#), June 23, 2009
52. [Richmond is Your Destination for July 3-4-5 Events](#), June 24, 2009
53. [Four Cities Revisit 'Green Corridor' a year-and-a-half Later](#), June 26, 2009
54. [News From Solar Richmond](#), June 25, 2009
55. [East Bay Green Group Draws \\$76 Million to Region](#), June 25, 2009
56. [Richmond BUILD, Solar Richmond Win Conservation Award](#), June 30, 2009
57. [The Craneway Pavilion Celebrates Two Truly Grand Openings on July 5: The Ford Point Segment of the San Francisco Bay Trail and the Boilerhouse Restaurant, 8am-2pm, July 2, 2009](#)
58. [Richmond Ranked as One of Top Three Solar Cities](#), July 7, 2009
59. [Richmond Tightens Smoking Rules](#), July 12, 2009
60. [Richmond Reaches for Smoking Triple Crown](#), July 3, 2009
61. [Funds for Bay Trail Access to Point Pinole and Breuner Marsh Restoration](#), July 14, 2009
62. [Richmond Designated 2009 Solar Champion](#), July 15, 2009
63. [What's New in Richmond? Macdonald Avenue and BoilerHouse Restaurant](#), July 24, 2009
64. [Stimulus Funding for 8 Richmond Police Officers](#), July 28, 2009
65. ["Rivets" at the Red Oak Victory](#), September 2, 2009
66. [Free Showings of Shipyard Play at Nevin Community Center](#), August 28, 2009
67. [Solar Richmond Featured on Cover of Solar Today Magazine](#), September 3, 2009
68. [ABC7 TV Features East Brother Lighthouse as Prime Staycation](#), September 2, 2009
69. [Final Free Showings of "This World in a Woman's Hands" on Labor Day](#), September 6, 2009
70. [Martinez and Richmond Receiving Awards for Secondhand Smoke Protections on Sept 23rd and 22nd](#), September 11, 2009
71. [4th Annual North Richmond Shoreline Festival](#), September 14, 2009
72. [Martinez and Richmond Receiving Awards for Secondhand Smoke Protections on Sept 23rd and 22nd](#), September 18, 2009
73. [God-Forsaken Richmond](#), September 19, 2009
74. [Richmond, Martinez wins anti-smoking accolades](#), September 25, 2009
75. [3rd Annual Home Front USO Dance Kicks off Home Front Festival](#), September 27, 2009



76. [Meet the Ghosts of Shipyard 3 on Halloween and Prevent Violence in Richmond \(correction\)](#), September 25, 2009
77. [Virtual Permit Search Available on City Website](#), September 29, 2009
78. [Garden of Delights Coming to Richmond Waterfront](#), September 29, 2009
79. [Redesigning Baxter Creek in Booker T. Anderson Park in Richmond](#), October 1, 2009
80. [Richmond Regional Parks Cited for Two Firsts](#), October 8, 2009
81. [510ARTS.com - Richmond, Oakland, Berkeley and Emeryville Launch Arts & Culture Website](#), October 9, 2009
82. [Rosie in Richmond](#), October 15, 2009
83. [Richmond Bans Plastic Foam Food Containers](#), October 21, 2009
84. [Honda Deal to Drive Job, Revenue Growth in Richmond](#), October 30, 2009
85. [Richmond PAL's Larry Lewis Joins Sully in Red Cross Award](#), November 5, 2009
86. [Richmond in Time Magazine with GOOD News](#), November 14, 2009
87. [Margarita Vargas](#), November 17, 2009
88. [Taking Back Richmond One Neighborhood at a Time](#), November 21, 2009
89. [New NPS Newsletter & Upcoming Events](#), November 25, 2009
90. [CBS-5 Features North and East Patrol](#), November 25, 2009
91. [Our Neighbors: Gobble! Gobble! Point Richmond's Wild Turkey Tradition Returns](#), November 24, 2009
92. [Where We're From](#), December 2, 2009
93. [Model Train Layout Running in Point Richmond](#), December 20, 2009
94. [Sleep Train Coming to Your Neighborhood in 2010?](#) December 19, 2009
95. [Real 'Rosies' Celebrated at Ford Point](#), December 19, 2009
96. [Practical Preservation - Miraflores FEIR Certified](#), December 26, 2009



Tom Butt Nominations for Worst of 2009

Probably the worst of 2009 is the increased homicide rate, a 74% increase over 2008. Although it occurred only a few feet from San Pablo, the now infamous Richmond High School gang rape brought Richmond national headlines that we didn't need. Next would be the triple whammy of State take-aways, recession fueled sales and property tax reductions and lost Chevron lawsuits that hit the City treasury hard, resulting in budget reductions and diminishing projects and programs. The biannual [Community Survey](#) showed marginal improvements over 2007, but Richmond residents are still close to being the unhappiest anywhere. Others are listed below:

1. [Green Neighbors: The Richmond Chainsaw Massacre, Part One](#), February 21, 2009
2. [From Berkeley Daily Planet - Green Neighbors: Showdown at Baxter Creek, Part Two](#), February 26, 2009
3. [Sneak Preview of 2009 Community Survey](#), May 24, 2009
4. [KGO's Brian Copeland Trashes Richmond, Criticizes Branding Expenditure](#), June 6, 2009
5. [Winners and Losers in UC, Zeneca Settlement](#), June 17, 2009
6. [Dramatic Cutbacks in Store as City Considers Budget Revisions](#), September 7, 2009
7. [Shoreline Cleanup and Skeets](#), September 19, 2009
8. [Follow Up on Plastic Shotgun Shell Wads](#), September 27, 2009
9. [Point Richmond Fabulous Fall Fest!](#) October 12, 2009



10. [On Richmond and Violence](#), November 2, 2009
11. [Report Pegs Oakland with Country's 3rd Highest Crime Rate; Richmond Ranked 14th](#), November 23, 2009
12. [City, Developer in Disagreement Over Alleged Violations at Historic Ford Plant](#), December 21, 2009
13. [Orton Replies to "City, Developer in Disagreement Over Alleged Violations at Historic Ford Plant"](#) December 22, 2009
14. [2009 Ends With Mixed Crime Results](#), December 29, 2009



E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Best of 2009

These are all verbatim as submitted by E-FORUM subscribers. We only had one this year, but it is an important achievement.

E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Best 2009 Projects

Quiet Zones

- *The single best change that has had the most effect on me personally has been the creation of Quiet Zones.*



Civic Center

- *The spectacular renovation of the Civic Center. It's inspiring in all aspects*
- *I do not usually nominate projects for your year-end awards. However, this year is exceptional in that a Richmond project was the top construction project in all of Northern California.*



Skate Park

- *The Skate Park Plaza - \$306,000 and it has been a great success. In use all the time, encourages exercise, no violence at the Park and the participants help keep it clean for their own use.*



Green Development and Business

- *The mayor is the best and anyone connected with green development and business. it is the coming thing, though recent events such as Copenhagen on the international level do not enhance this.*



Downtown

- *The appearance of downtown, including the street lamps and other street "furniture" is very beautiful.*

E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Best 2009 Organizations

TRAC

- *Bruce Beyaert and TRAC deserve kudos for continuing to make Richmond the #1 Bay Trail City.*



GRIP

- *GRIP continues year after year to provide food and services to the homeless, thereby helping to make Richmond a better place.*



E-Forum Reader Nominations for Best City Employees

Everyone

- *The staff of the City of Richmond, for the most part, is much better than they are given credit for. The City Council should consult with them more.*
- *Personally, it's been a surprise and a pleasure how terrific everyone in the city I've come in contact with has been.*

Sue Kadlec

- *Sue Kadlec – Kudos – fast, efficient, helpful and honest – hard to find this combination in Government these days.*

Lina Velasco

- *Lina Velasco is just a marvel, she is informed, she's responsive and she is hard working.*

Bill Lindsay

- *Bill Lindsay is also a really imaginative, quick and efficient city manager.*



Chris Magnus

- *Probably the police chief, who was attacked in a nasty way soon after he came to Richmond, by some policemen.*



Rich Davidson

- *Rich Davidson has distinguished himself as a manager who listens and follows through. His successor has a tough act to follow.*



Tom Butt

- *You're certainly the most valuable public servant we have in Richmond. Everything seems to be better in Richmond this year, and practically every improvement I can think of traces back to you, including the excellent people you've brought in to work for us. I don't have any suggested improvements at this point, just many thanks for the excellent work you have done for us ...*
- *Tom Butt, for keeping residents informed on events and other behind-the-scenes activities. Don't let that go to your head ;-)*

City Departments, Policies and Services Nominated Best by E-FORUM

Police

- *the crime at the west end of MacDonald has declined as far as can be seen by my traveling on that street and living in AV, near it. I appreciate this a lot, and enjoy hearing from the police who come to our crime meetings.*
- *Police Department, for engaging the community in numerous ways, including Crime Prevention.*



Parks and Landscaping

- *Parks and Rec, for doing a good job with community outreach on proposed projects.*



Code Enforcement

- *Code Enforcement, although they appear to be overwhelmed, they're doing the best they can to tackle blight, foreclosures, and other problems.*

E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Worst of 2009

These are all verbatim as submitted by E-FORUM subscribers.

E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Worst 2009 Projects

Civic Center

- *EXCEPT - which brings me to a "worst" - for the fact that the windows don't open. This beautiful project was marred by the galling obstinacy and ignorance of Nat Bates and his fellow "no" voters. Although this ridiculous decision wasn't made in 2009, its effects were made apparent this year - and will be with us as long as the Civic Center stands.*
- *Over designed and developed City Hall Plaza and buildings. Plenty of pot holes in the City streets, but by gumption the staff all have new desks, lights, and art work to look at. What a fantastic waste of money. Way to go.*



Point Molate

- *I personally think the Casino proposal is the worst development idea ever*
- *I would like to hear specific reasons why you support the gambling on point molate. the area is so beautiful, changing it is a tragedy. A park and a separate camp for youth where the Navy is now is a perfect solution.*
- *Local support for Native American casinos. Support by the City of Richmond and Contra Costa Board of Supervisors. These casinos are a blight on the landscape, once approved they are not subject to local land use control but rely for their economic success on the infrastructure provided by others. The casinos may or may not pay a "fair share" of the costs to local infrastructure And there is no way to determine whether fair share is paid. They are leeches on the local community.*



City Employees Nominated as Worst by E-FORUM Readers

Richard Mitchell

- *Worst Manager – Planning Director – Standing in front of City Council announcing he had 8 staff with nothing to do. What does that say about his ability to manage?*



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

City Attorney

- *I am the least impressed by the City Attorney's Office.*



City Council

- *I had high hopes for 2009 with a new majority on the City Council, but it has been more of the same: The Casino is still on track, the General Plan is limping along, and the bulkhead is going into the Plunge.*



Public Works

- *Public Works, if you want graffiti removed from pavement better do it yourself.*



Engineering

- *Engineering, if you want any sort of traffic calming installed in your neighborhood you have yell and scream and copy the City Council. The last thing they'll do is try to help you solve a problem and it's enough to make you slit your wrists.*



Planning and Building Services

- *I am very disappointed with the City and/or Lina Velasco, because of the recommendation that we in future allow tiny sheds only in our village. These are already tiny living units, totally too small for life as it is lived now, and in the case of many units, a shed would be invisible from the street and Park visitors anyway. This is not at all the attitude the City people said they would have when doing the mini-historical report.*



Redevelopment

- *Redevelopment – Lack of coordination with other departments on CIP Projects.*



Predictions and Wishes

2009 Predictions from E-FORUM Readers

1. *More layoffs. Going to end up top heavy again just as we were in 2004. Thought this CM was smarter than I. Turner – guess I was wrong.*
2. *Again, more of the same. The Plunge will finally open late. A flawed general plan will be approved, and we won't get another crack at it for at least 10 years.*



3. *The casino will continue to chug along thanks to the City Council's desire to take advantage of their citizens' weaknesses instead of helping them achieve their potential.*
4. *The election will be a blood bath with most of the City Council Members running for something or other.*
5. *City Council meetings will be even more insufferable with campaign speeches from both sides of the podium and attacks right and left.*
6. *It is the last year the current majority on the City Council can accomplish anything, and if this year is any indication not much will get done, and everything will be politicized.*
7. *Unemployment increases; taxpayers tired of paying corporate welfare: Richmond city officials will be forced to demand any company that does contract work for Richmond, CA will have to hire and use 90% local, legal residents instead of the 90% illegally imported labor that now makes up the workforces of such companies as Bay Cities Paving, the trenchless sewer company.*
8. *Revolution: against specifically Chevron and a new better-written measure to supplant Measure T. Out-spokenness, along with the other green corridor east bay cities against the Senate and any corporation, at Copenhagen, that has betrayed the future. The failure of Copenhagen politicizes green energy and therefore gives more of voice to green energy cities.*



How did E-FORUM Readers 2009 Predictions turn out?



Bay Trail

Prediction: Five to six miles of new Bay Trail will be built in Richmond during 2009 bringing the total to over 30 miles.

Outcome: Although significant progress was made in the way of easements, design and planning, the total was only one mile. For 2009 accomplishments, see:

- Nov 3, 2009 - Chevron donates 1.5 miles of Bay Trail easements on the western side of the Point San Pablo Peninsula to East Bay Regional Park District - [Details >>](#)
- Jun 25, 2009 - [Tentative agreement reached for Breuner Marsh](#)
- Mar 20, 2009 - [Bay Trail advocates sue state, Chevron over public access](#)
- Mar 18, 2009 - [Bay Trail Backers Sue State, Chevron Over Wharf](#)
- Feb 2, 2009 - [No Bay Trail construction money in state lease to Chevron](#)
- Jan 22, 2009 - [Our Neighbors: Bay Trail additions on the horizon](#)



Measure T

Prediction: (1) Chevron will sue the city to wipe out Measure T, causing a prolonged court battle that the city can ill afford. (2) Chevron will spend \$26,000,000 on lawyers fighting implementation of Prop T rather than just paying their prop T assessment.

Outcome: Chevron prevailed in the Superior Court challenge. See [Court Upholds Chevron Challenge to Measure T](#), December 17, 2009.



Carlson Boulevard

Prediction: City officials will tell Annex residents that Carlson Blvd will be fixed in the summer of 2009. Just like the summer of 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2008. Meanwhile Carlson crumbles into the bay and no one really cares

Outcome: In September 2009, the City Council approved a contract with



Gallagher & Burk, Inc. in the amount of \$3,522,166. Paving is expected to begin in April 2010.



Bay Trail and Chevron

Prediction: Chevron will acquiesce to the Bay Trail over their long wharf pipeline but charge a \$3.00 toll to cross it for 'security reasons'.

Outcome: Engineering design of this portion of the trail is underway, but funding for the \$13 million project is nowhere in sight. See <http://www.pointrichmond.com/baytrail/pointsanpablo.htm> for details.



Point Molate

Prediction: The City will sell itself to Upstream/Harrah's for \$1.00 for a massive casino city and make Nat Bates their Tribal Chief.

Outcome: No real decisions have been made. 2010 looks like the decisive year.



Schools

Prediction: One of the issues which I see that's absolutely needed, is a year-round school and after-school program for every minor child:- first grade thru high school + available summer sessions (also in all grades!) And then the availability of sustainable entry-level jobs! That would be heaven! But I'm a realist - and know this won't happen "over-night!"

Outcome: Schools are cutting back, not expanding programs.



City Council

Prediction: I have high hopes for the new majority on the City Council. For the first time in memory, a majority will listen to the people who actually live in Richmond, instead of those who come here to make a buck and then return to their own communities where they wouldn't put up with what they expect us to put up with. I am expecting a good Planning Commission, a good, separate, Design Review Board, and a new General Plan which reflects the principles of Smart Growth and protection of the environment. Too bad it's too late for openable windows for City Hall.

Outcome: The Planning Commission and Design Review Board endure as separate bodies with lots of new members. The general Plan did not make it in 2009 – maybe next year.



Tom Butt Wishes for 2010

Visitor Center

Eddie Orton will see the light, conclude a lease with the National Park Service for the Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park, and the facility will be funded and under construction, if not actually completed.



Maritime Center

The Maritime Center rehabilitation will be funded and under construction.

Point Molate

The Point Molate project will be resolved favorably to the City.



Plunge

The Richmond Plunge will reopen with a bulkhead and a swim team.

General Plan

The General Plan will be adopted with provisions that include low intensity uses for the north Richmond Shoreline.



City Council Election

The City Council race will conclude with a progressive majority that supports the issues that are important to me.

Chevron

Richmond's conflicts with Chevron will be globally resolved in a way that that fundamentally changes the relationship over the long term in a way that is favorable to Richmond and fair for both parties.



State Government Theft

Fiscal conflicts between local and state government are resolved in a way that restores millions of dollars to Richmond.



Homicides

Richmond's homicide rate finally responds to plans and programs adopted since 2004 and takes a nosedive.

Sustainability

Richmond continues to adopt legislation and implement programs that make it a leader in sustainability.



Happy New Year!

Tom Butt