Richmond, California

In What Will We Delve in 2012?

2011 Year End Review
Prediction and Wishes for 2012

Tom Butt, Richmond City Council Member, Vice-mayor
January 1, 2012
# Table of Contents

A Decade of TOM BUTT E-FORUMS ................................................................. 1
2011 – Settling (Unsettling?) in With a New City Council ..................................... 3

## Top Richmond Stories of 2010 ................................................................. 4
- Point Molate Casino Lurches and Dies .......................................................... 4
- The Two Faces of Chevron ........................................................................... 5
- End of Redevelopment as We Know It ......................................................... 7

## Most Controversial Issues of 2011 ........................................................... 7
- North Shoreline ............................................................................................. 7
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan .......................................................................... 8
- Office of Neighborhood Safety ..................................................................... 8
- Marijuana ...................................................................................................... 9

## Animal News (New This Year) ................................................................. 9

## Did My Wishes/Predictions for 2011 Come True? ........................................ 9
- National Park Visitor Center ....................................................................... 9
- Maritime Center .......................................................................................... 9
- Point Molate ................................................................................................10
- General Plan ...............................................................................................10
- Quiet Zones .................................................................................................10
- Chevron Hydrogen and Energy Renewal Project ..........................................10
- Shipyard 3 Buildings ..................................................................................11
- Crime .........................................................................................................11

## Best and Worst of 2011 .............................................................................11
- My Nominations for the Best of 2011 .........................................................11
  - Richmond Reinvents Itself ......................................................................11
  - Shoreline and Trails .................................................................................13
  - Environment and Health .........................................................................14
  - History and Historic Preservation .........................................................14
  - Festivals, Arts and Music .......................................................................15
  - Jobs .........................................................................................................16
- My Nominations for Worst of 2011 ..............................................................16
  - Community Warning System ................................................................16
  - Train Horns and Grade Crossings ............................................................17

## E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Best of 2011 ......................................17
- Bay Trail ......................................................................................................17
- David Moore ...............................................................................................17
- Landfill Loop of the Bay Trail .....................................................................18
- Nancy Foss .................................................................................................18
- Stege Avenue Sidewalk ...............................................................................18
- Craneway Pavilion .....................................................................................18
- Bridge Storage ............................................................................................18
- Point Richmond ..........................................................................................18
- Parks and Open Space in the Draft General Plan ........................................19
- Point Molate ...............................................................................................19
- LNBL ...........................................................................................................19
- Silly Parade .................................................................................................19

## E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Best Organizations of 2011 ................19
- TRAC ..........................................................................................................19
- City Council and RPA ................................................................................19

## E-Forum Reader Nominations for Best City Employees ..........................20
- Bill Lindsay ..................................................................................................20
- Chad Davisson ............................................................................................20
Predictions and Wishes

Tom Butt Wishes/Predictions for 2011

E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Best City Department 2010

Parks and Landscaping

E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Worst of 2011

Chevron

City Council

Point Molate

Planning Commission

Compensation

COR Connect

Predictions and Wishes

2012 Predictions from E-FORUM Readers

How did E-FORUM Readers 2011 Predictions turn out?

Carlson Boulevard

Point Molate

Parks

National Park

Progressives

City Council

General Plan

Tom Butt Wishes/Predictions for 2011

Shipyard 3 Buildings

Point Molate

Railroads

Crime

Chevron

Elections

Marijuana

Booker et al.

North Shoreline
A Decade of TOM BUTT E-FORUMS

I started the E-FORUM in 2001 to provide primarily 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.

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

In 2002, I published 180 E-FORUMs, but by 2009, I was up to 460. In 2010, it was 506. In 2011, I dropped to 340, but it sure seems like more.

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 about 2,000 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 since 2002 are accessible on my website http://www.tombutt.com/e-forum/e-forum.htm. The website, www.tombutt.com gets a lot of traffic:

- In the past 12 months 231,371 visitors logged 1,099,762 hits.
- Visitors average 639 a day with an average of 3,038 hits per day.
- The five most visited E-FORUMs in the last 12 months were:
  - California's Business Tax Burden No Heavier Than Average, November 7, 2010 (7,062 hits)
  - Final Draft General Plan and FEIR, August 21, 2011 (6,624 hits)
  - North Shoreline General Plan Study Session Postponed, July 2, 2011 (2,028 hits)
  - CC Times Editorial - Hiring Magnus Was a Stroke of Genius, December 30, 2010 (1,750 hits)
  - Berkeley Celebrates Washington Elementary School 103 kW Solar Installation, February 25, 2009 (1,357 hits)
The five most downloaded files in 2012 were an eclectic assortment. The most popular was a memoir of my Army experiences. One related to Rosie the Riveter WW II Home Front National Historical Park. One was the 2011 New Year’s edition. One was a float trip travelogue by my brother. One was a genealogy paper on the Butt family, and the fifth one was about Point Molate.

- Before and After Vietnam 1969-70, Military Experience of Thomas K. Butt (21,008 hits)
- Mapping Richmond’s WWII Home Front (8,185 hits)
- Will Richmond be Riven in 2011? (5,993 hits)
- Down the Buffalo (3,925 hits)
- Descendants of Addison and Elinor Butt of Virginia and Kentucky (3,306 hits)
- Point Molate Resolution (3,184)

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.

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.


At the beginning of 2008 I wrote Year 2007 Review and Will Richmond be Great in 2008?

2009: Will Richmond be Fine in 2009?


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 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.

This 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.

2011 – Settling (Unsettling?) in With a New City Council

A year ago, I described 2010 as “a remarkable year in Richmond – truly a watershed moment.” In the spirit of the water metaphor, I would have to describe 2011 as more like water under the bridge moment. Some of the big stories of 2010, such as the City Council election, the beginning of the end of the Point Molate casino and the successful legal challenge to the Chevron Energy Project played out as policy actions in 2011, but the outcomes were mostly foregone conclusions.

When the new City Council was sworn in on January 11, 2011, there were, as it turns out, overoptimistic expectations for an era of unprecedented harmony. The three-person Richmond Progressive Alliance bloc that makes up 43% of the City Council (McLaughlin, Ritterman and Beckles) were expected to advance the party line and set the tone, with most of the Council to follow sympathetically.

Because of his opposition to the Point Molate casino and his defense of Mayor McLaughlin during vicious 2010 campaign hits, Booze was expected to be a friendly supporter of RPA issues while not exactly becoming a card-carrying member.

Jim Rogers, who has a liberal bent and cherishes the swing vote position, also likes to be in the winners’ column when he can. Prognosticators saw him as a probable supporter of RPA issues.
Richmond, California 2011 Year End Review and Wishes for 2012
Tom Butt and E-FORUM Readers

I really don’t know what people expected of me, but I have voted in the majority with McLaughlin, Ritterman and Beckles more often than not. We have parted company, however, on several controversial issues, such as endorsement of the Gaza flotilla and graffiti as art.

Not much change was expected from Nat Bates, who remains the Council’s most conservative member. Once leading a solid majority, he is now often on the short end of 7-1 votes.

So what happened? Well, the RPA picked a fight with Booze over alleged campaign contribution solicitation improprieties, and he responded with a vendetta against McLaughlin, Ritterman and Beckles. Corky enjoys nothing better than a good fight, and he knows which buttons to push. Looking for help, he moved closer to Bates and changed some of those 7-1 votes to 7-2 votes.

Reportedly, the RPA kicked City Council meeting regular Rev. Kenneth Davis out of the RPA, and he retaliated by joining Booze in slamming the mayor and pulling everything off the consent calendar in order to use the time to criticize the RPA members and bemoan his perception of the City’s failure to address violence in North Richmond. The mayor had him ejected twice from City Council meetings for creating a disturbance, the first time I have seen that happen in my 16 years.

Not that the ejection wasn’t warranted. City Council meetings are beginning to feel more like a combination pep rally, country church service and poetry slam. It is now routine to hoot and holler at every presentation and show approval of almost every speaker with applause.

Rogers is still a social liberal but tends to move towards industry and developers on land use issues. He was the only other Council member to join Bates in not voting to terminate the casino. One of the biggest RPA issues of 2011, the General Plan designation of the North Shoreline remains unresolved, but reportedly both Rogers and Ritterman prefer certain developments over open space. Because of a conflict of interest I can’t vote on it. Bates never met a developer he didn’t like, so that leaves McLaughlin and Beckles defending Richmond’s last open space on the Bay – two short of a majority. You can kiss the North Shoreline as open space goodbye in 2012.

Despite newly minted acrimony, the City Council and the community came together to deliver what is widely acknowledged as the most enthusiastic and welcoming reception for the potential Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory second campus at the Richmond Field Station.

Also on a positive note, the City Council, for the most part, both supports and appreciates the staff leadership team, which continues to deliver a downsized but balanced budget, garners growing community appreciation and confidence, does not play favorites and has a good relationship with the City Council.

Top Richmond Stories of 2010

Point Molate Casino Lurches and Dies

Following an advisory vote in November 2010 and election of a City Council majority unfavorable to a casino, the City Council adopted Resolution 23-11 on April 6, 2011, entitled “A Resolution of the City Council of The City of
Richmond, California 2011 Year End Review and Wishes for 2012
Tom Butt and E-FORUM Readers

Richmond Making Certain Findings and Determining to Discontinue Consideration of a Casino Use at Point Molate.” On a 5-2 vote, with Rogers and Bates dissenting, the casino at Point Molate died.

On September 2, 2011, the Department of the Interior put a stake in the heart of the project by denying Guidiville Band’s “restored lands” gaming application under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act and determining that the Band does not have a modern connection to the proposed gaming site in Richmond and that the band does not have a significant historical connection to the proposed gaming site in Richmond. Among other things, this decision rendered moot for once and for all any criticisms by the Chamber of Commerce and others about the City Council’s decision to discontinue pursuit of the proposed Upstream gaming project at Point Molate.

The E-FORUM included 15 Point Molate-related posts in 2011:

1. **Point Molate Final EIR Released**, February 10, 2011
2. **Point Molate - Notice of Intent to Consider Certification of a Final EIR**, February 11, 2011
3. **Richmond City Council Needs To Decide On Casino**, February 17, 2011
4. **Point Molate EIR Author Paid by Tribe**, February 23, 2011
5. **More on Point Molate's EIR Author and Tribal Complicity - "Tribal Governments are Some of our Best Clients"**, February 23, 2011
6. **City Council Rolls Over on Point Molate EIR**, March 9, 2011
7. **Point Molate Statement from Mayor McLaughlin**, March 10, 2011
10. **Text of Point Molate Resolution**, April 6, 2011
11. **Richmond Axes Point Molate Casino Resort**, April 6, 2011
12. **Contra Costa Times Editorial: Richmond was Right to Kill Proposed Casino**, April 8, 2011

The Two Faces of Chevron

Chevron is always big news in Richmond. This year, the theme seems to be “give and take.” Early in 2011, on the heels of a failed last ditch effort to settle the CEQA lawsuit challenging the refinery Energy and Hydrogen Project, the Richmond City Council took the initiative to urge Chevron to revive the project and successfully complete the entitlement process. Chevron, however, was still licking its wounds and wary of another encounter. Although the City of Richmond did not bring the lawsuit and, in fact, was a co-defendant along with Chevron, the Chevron people considered the progressive election victory of 2010 as a bad sign for future collaboration.

The City Council, unanimously, took the initiative to persuade Chevron that Richmond is open for business and that the City and Chevron can collaborate on permitting the project. The project would provide a lot of sorely needed jobs and make the refinery safer and more efficient while at the same time less polluting. The courts had already provided a roadmap to resolving the CEQA issues that wrecked the previous attempt. It was a no brainer for everyone, and Chevron agreed to reapply, albeit for a smaller and less ambitious project.

Meanwhile, Chevron was bringing onboard a more engaged and friendlier public relations staff, ratcheting up its community giving, participating in community projects, featuring local student in nationally televised commercials and installing an even more user friendly refinery manager than even the affable Mike Coyle.
It was looking like a new and productive era in Richmond-Chevron relations. See [Chevron Highlights Significant Contributions to Richmond in Latest CR Report](#).

Then, in October, Chevron opened its latest appeal of property taxes, which if successful, could result in Richmond having to refund tens of millions of dollars. In the worst case scenario, it could bankrupt Richmond. This is not an issue that Richmond ever had any control over, but the consequences could be devastating.

Chevron wants Richmond to compartmentalize and separate the bad and the good of its relationship with Richmond, but people are finding it difficult to bifurcate the issues. There is talk of a settlement that would put this to bed, but progress is not certain while the appeal moves ahead.

In a move indicative of its new openness, the Chevron Refinery engaged a public policy firm to conduct its own assessment of community perceptions. Click here for the [Richmond Refinery Stakeholder Assessment - Draft Report](#) provided by the Consensus Building Institute (CBI), a not-for-profit organization that helps communities and organizations to address concerns and collaborate. Chevron asked CBI to conduct this assessment as a follow-up to the previous report, which CBI also conducted. It was sent to the 50 people interviewed with a solicitation for feedback.

The report indicates Chevron made improvements in quality of engagement and engaging non-profits but indicates a feeling that Chevron’s investment in the community remains insufficient, that Chevron isn’t sufficiently committed to local hiring, that tax disputes with the City of Richmond continue to cloud the community’s relationship with the community and that health, safety and pollution remain issues.

Interviewees suggested Chevron should increase its level of community support, clarify its commitment to local jobs and the environment, resolve the property tax dispute and work cooperatively with and support local elected officials.

The E-FORUM included 16 Chevron-related posts in 2011:

1. [Cities Consider Suing Contra Costa County Over Chevron Assessment Dispute](#), January 12, 2011
2. [City Council Trio Urges Chevron to Restart Refinery Project](#), January 29, 2011
3. [Richmond to Chevron: We Never Wanted the Project to Die](#), March 6, 2011
4. [Contra Costa Times Editorial: Chevron Retrofit Can and Should Be Worked Out](#), March 9, 2011
5. [With $60 Million at Stake, Chevron Challenges Property Tax Appeals Board Member; Profits and CEO Compensation Rise](#), April 18, 2011
6. [Chevron Profit Rises 36 Percent on High Oil Prices](#), April 29, 2011
7. [Chevron Files Application to Restart Refinery Modernization Project](#), May 24, 2011
8. [Chevron News Digest](#), May 26, 2011
9. [How a Refinery Operates 101](#), September 27, 2011
10. [Residents Told to Expect Flaring as Chevron Refinery Begins](#)
End of Redevelopment as We Know It

On December 29, 2011, the California Supreme Court upheld legislation passed earlier this year abolishing redevelopment agencies in California. Hamstrung by a Republican minority that will not touch California’s current tax scheme and facing reduction of funding for schools and social welfare programs, the Democratically controlled legislature decided to rob the cities. Redevelopment is a 65-year-old program that allows cities to undertake capital projects and finance them with future taxes from the resulting increase in property values.

Richmond would likely still look like the devastated shell left over from the WWII boom if it weren’t for the Richmond Redevelopment Agency. Probably the best example is Marina Bay, including the Ford Building rehabilitation, all made possible by redevelopment. As Marina Bay matured, its tax increment funds were tapped for projects all over Richmond, such as the recent Macdonald Avenue improvements. Since 20% of redevelopment funds must be used for low-cost housing, much of what has been built in Richmond was paid for or subsidized by redevelopment.

All of those opportunities will now go away, with the money siphoned off to Sacramento to keep the State afloat.

Most Controversial Issues of 2011

Unresolved issues aren’t necessarily top stories, because there is no outcome. Others may be contentious but are so petty that they simply don’t rise to the top of the news. Here are some that stand out this year.

North Shoreline

Most people probably don’t care what happens on the North Shoreline, but the RPA and the environmental community have made it cause célèbre, pushing a component of the proposed new General Plan that would preserve the North Shoreline largely as open space, or at least low profile and low impact uses. The four property owners of the undeveloped North Shoreline parcels have enlisted for support of their speculative ventures the Chamber of Commerce, the Council of Industries and a motley and unlikely gaggle of organizations and individuals who believe they might benefit from one or another future use.

Letters and emails of advocates for one side or the other have been rampant. The open space option remains the preferred option going forward for City Council consideration in the draft General plan because the Planning Commission deadlocked on the issue, leaving the staff –prepared draft intact.
Because of an economic conflict of interest I have related to a convoluted business relationship with one of the property owners, I cannot debate, discuss or vote on it in a City Council context.

- June 7 Battle Royal Looms for Future of North Shoreline, May 28, 2011
- Wall Street Journal - Land Battles Stirs Richmond, June 15, 2011
- North Shoreline General Plan Study Session Postponed, July 2, 2011
- Soccer Complex Developer Heading Elsewhere as Fight Over Vacant Land, Continues, July 12, 2011

Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

What should have been a no-brainer sparked more than three hours of contentious debate on November 1, 2011, when the City Council finally certified the environmental review and adopted a Bicycle Master Plan and a Pedestrian Master Plan that keep the city on course to add bike lanes and pedestrian improvements to city streets.

Despite scores of public hearings and prolific public outreach, there was a hard core of detractors that complained of inadequate CEQA review and failure to notify the public. A few asserted that the plans would worsen motor vehicle traffic and divert it to neighborhoods.

In fact, by implementing “road diets” that include redesigning some streets from four lanes to three, the city could slow speeding traffic, increase safety and create space for bikes and pedestrians. The plans, when implemented and funded largely by grants, are expected to have positive public health, environmental and economic benefits.

The council then voted to certify the EIR and approve the plans 5-2, with Booze and Bates voting no.

- Richmond Approves Plan for Future of Bicycles, November 8, 2011
- City Council Adopts Bicycle Master Plan and Pedestrian Plan, November 3, 2011, Coming Soon With Your Help - Richmond Community-Driven Pedestrian Plan, April 25, 2010
- Richmond Pedestrian Plan Meeting! 1/20, 5:30-7PM, January 19, 2011
- Preview Richmond's Pedestrian Plan January 20! January 6, 2011

Office of Neighborhood Safety

When a fistfight erupted at City Hall between rival factions working with the office of Neighborhood Safety to reduce violence, it triggered a debate over the organization and its leader, Devone Boggan, continues. Apparently, those involved in the fight were picking up checks provide by a sponsoring non-profit, for their role in neighborhood peace-making. Supporters of ONS and Boggan defend the program’s successes and cite the fact that it was a fistfight and not a firefight as evidence of progress. Detractors, led by Council Member Corky Booze, say the program is out of control and ineffective. An investigation into related leaks by the Richmond Police Department and the Contra Costa County Sheriff’s Office has been announced by City Manager Bill Lindsay.

- More Insight Into the Richmond Office of Neighborhood Safety, October 19, 2011
- City Manager on ONS Incident, October 19, 2011
Richmond City Manager Declares City Hall Violence Debacle Resolved, October 28, 2011

Marijuana
Despite some differences of opinion, the 2010 City Council came to a consensus on how the City should regulate medical marijuana. All eight existing dispensaries were forced to close, and a process was adopted to competitively select three permits.

- Recent Developments Cloud Richmond’s Marijuana Ordinance, October 7, 2011
- North-shore Zoning Dispute Hits Crux at Planning Commission Hearing, October 8, 2011
- City Council Defies Court - Full Steam Ahead on Dispensary Permitting, November 16, 2011

Animal News (New This Year)
Everyone likes animal stories, so here are a few from 2011:

- Richmond Chicken Ban Story Has Legs, October 1, 2011
- City Council Cries Fowl, September 28, 2011
- Animal Rescue High Drama on Richmond Cliff, February 2, 2011
- Beekeeping in Richmond, March 26, 2011
- Urban Goats - and More, March 26, 2011
- It's a Boy!, March 24, 2011
- Spring Lamb Comes to Nicholl Knob, March 22, 2011

Did My Wishes/Predictions for 2011 Come True?
How did my wishes for 2011 fare? I batted 300, much worse than last year’s 700, but with four more on the cusp. That leaves only one clear loss the General Plan. Even it has an upside, finally getting at least Planning Commission review. Here are the results:

National Park Visitor Center

Wish: When Rosie the Riveter WW II Home Front National Historical Park was created in 2000, its first superintendent, Judy Hart, told me that the National Park Service moved slowly and a Visitor Center was at least three years away. In the excitement of the moment, this delay was incomprehensible. Little did I know that it would be more than a decade, but it looks like it may actually happen in 2012? A combination of funding challenges and bureaucratic entanglements within the National Park Service and intransigence by the Ford Building’s owner Eddie Orton are responsible for the delay, all of which seem to have finally been resolved in December of 2010. Look for an opening at the October 2011 Home Front Festival.
Outcome: While not completed, the Visitor Center is well underway and scheduled to open spring of 2012. I’m going to jump the gun and call this a win.

Maritime Center

Wish: Unless the rains never stop, the historic Maritime Center will be completed in the spring of 2011 and once
again become a pre-school venue for a hundred kids, an office for Richmond Community Foundation and an interpretive center for Rosie the Riveter WW II Home Front National Historical Park.  
**Outcome:** The Maritime Center was completed and occupied in August 2011.

### Point Molate

**Wish:** The year 2011 will find some kind of resolution for Point Molate. It seems the casino plan has run out of steam. Plan B will either emerge and be embraced by the City, or the whole thing will become mired in litigation for years.  
**Outcome:** The casino plan is dead, but there is no plan B, and the litigation phase has begun.

### General Plan

**Wish:** It was May of 2005 when the City Council authorized an RFP to select a consultant for the new General Plan and selection of an advisory committee. Richard Mitchell had just been appointed Richmond’s new planning director. It is now over 5 years later, and adoption of the General Plan is still a distant dream, now scheduled for sometime in 2011. We’ll see.  
**Outcome:** The General Plan was not approved in 2011, although it made it through the Planning Commission. The future of the North Shoreline remains a mystery.

### Quiet Zones

**Wish:** West 5 Quiet Zone extends from the BNSF grade crossing at Ohio Street to the grade crossing at Cutting Boulevard, and horn noise in this stretch probably affects more Richmond residents than any previous Quiet Zone. Its implementation was a mitigation measure for increased noise of rail traffic serving the Honda Port of Entry, but it did not share the Port’s sense of urgency. Hopefully, it will be completed and go into effect in 2011.  
**Outcome:** Progress, but no prize. Train horns in non-quiet zones are getting worse. West 5 is scheduled to go in early 2012; Canal Boulevard appears stalled.

### Chevron Hydrogen and Energy Renewal Project

**Wish:** Speaking of intransigence, the impasse between Chevron and CBE over permit conditions for the Hydrogen and Energy Renewal Project continues with the final negotiating session of 2010 bearing no edible fruit. No one really opposes the project for the increased efficiency and safety it brings to the refinery – not to mention the construction jobs. It’s Chevron’s future intentions with respect to processing heavier and dirtier crude that have this locked up. Maybe 2011 will deliver the key.  
**Outcome:** Permitting for the Chevron energy project is proceeding and is on track.
**Shipyard 3 Buildings**

**Wish:** Four of the six former Shipyard 3 historic buildings at Point Potrero Marine Terminal that are part of Rosie the Riveter WW II Home Front National Historical Park are empty and unused for any productive occupation. Although the Port has spent millions on high-tech Homeland security measures to prevent automobile theft (the Port’s sole cargo), these national treasures have languished. 2011 will be their year.

**Outcome:** Design for shell rehabilitation of the Riggers Loft was completed in 2011. The City has entered a competition for the General Warehouse to become a National Park service.

**Crime**

**Wish:** Maybe it’s too much to ask for, but wouldn’t it be great if Richmond’s violent crime rate and its homicide rate continued to decline on 2011?

**Outcome:** Although all the stats aren’t in, the City continued to trend to a lower violent crime rate, but homicides have increased from 21 in 2010 to 27 in 2011. That’s a lot lower than 47 in 2010, but not the right direction.

**Best and Worst of 2011**

**My Nominations for the Best of 2011**

You can get plenty of bad news in the traditional media, but I tend to gravitate toward good news involving Richmond, which is way underreported. In fact, the E-FORUM is mostly good news about Richmond. The advent of Richmond Confidential in 2009 continues to bring a welcome new source of news that often focused on the positive. You can subscribe to the City Manager’s Weekly Report, which is also an excellent source of information about mostly positive developments and activities in Richmond. Instead of listing stories from the E-FORUM about positive events and happenings of interest in Richmond in 2011, just go to [http://www.tombutt.com/e-forum/e-forum.htm](http://www.tombutt.com/e-forum/e-forum.htm) and browse through them.

**Richmond Reinvents Itself**

The transformation of Richmond from a city significantly controlled by industrial, real estate and corporate interests to a City responding to more broadly-based constituency is subtle but significant. This evolution is far from total, and it remains fragile, but it is happening.

That doesn’t mean that jobs, economic development and business have taken a back seat. It just means that the nature of public policies supporting these has changed.

Nothing exemplifies this better than the continuing discussion of green jobs versus just jobs. The City Council majority has made green jobs and technology jobs priorities for two reasons: they believe science and technology, particularly in support of sustainability, are the future, and they recognize that is where the most job growth is. In the last Weekly Report of 2011, the city manager noted that Ekso Bionics, a company named by San Francisco Business Times as number 24 of the “Fastest Growing Bay Area Private Companies of 2011,” and by Time Magazine as “One of the 50 Best Innovations in 2010” (for their...
eLEGS), recently signed a lease to move their operations to Richmond (the Ford Point Building) in early April 2012.

Mainly because they don’t embrace the progressive majority, the Richmond Chamber of Commerce often groused about the emphasis on green jobs, but in perhaps the biggest local collaboration of 2010, Richmond put together what is widely considered the most enthusiastic and effective campaigns among competitors to land the second campus of Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. A decision is expected in January, 2012. LNBL’s mission is largely involved with energy efficiency, renewable energy and climate change, which makes it attractive to the City Council majority. Even for those who are not impressed by energy research and may not even believe in climate change, the jobs, prestige and business opportunities are just what Richmond needs.

And with programs like Richmond Build, the City of Richmond is playing a role in training people successfully for employment in the green economy.

According to Simply Hired, Richmond has an unemployment rate of 9.7%, compared the national average of 6.9%. However, the California Employment Development Department statistics for November 2011, show 15.3% unemployment. While the discrepancy is unexplainable, it is clear that in either case, the number of jobs is increasing, and the unemployment rate is falling. Contrary to what the Chamber of Commerce would have you believe, the trend is positive.

According to our Richmond Trends data, the number of Richmond, California jobs has increased by 25% since April 2010.

Richmond is blessed with abundant and significant historic resources, yet less than ten years ago, a City Council majority considered historic preservation frivolous, and City staff responded by trying to kill off the City’s fledging preservation programs. In 2011, Richmond was recognized both statewide and nationally for its historic preservation programs and projects that included the Civic Center rehabilitation, the Richmond Plunge rehabilitation and the Ford Assembly Building rehabilitation. The City began to both appreciate and benefit from the economic development and job creation opportunities inherent in its historic resources.

Ten years ago, who would have thought of Richmond as a destination for visitors? Since then, the Richmond Convention & Visitors Bureau was founded (by the Richmond Chamber of Commerce, no less) and has thrived. Look at the Weekly Events Calendar and subscribe to “What’s Happening in Richmond.” Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park came to Richmond in 2000, and it has taken a long time to build funding, staff and programs, but in a few months the Visitor Center will open next to the Boiler House at the Ford Building. The park Service expects 50,000 visitors a year.
The Craneway Pavilion has become a major events venue, and the Richmond Rockets, an American Basketball Association team, now calls the Memorial Convention Center home.

The Bay Trail in Richmond has more miles completed than any other city and attracts a growing number of users from throughout the Bay Area, for both walking and cycling. At the southern end of the Bay Trail in Richmond is Point Isabel Dog Park, the Bay Area’s most popular destination for dog owners.

Urban agriculture has gotten a boost recently in Richmond, and Richmond’s green initiatives continue. For example, we launched the Richmond Recovery Solar Rebate (R3) program, which offers solar and energy efficiency rebates to homeowners, and provides jobs for local graduates of our green job training academy. Community groups have helped us beautify our neighborhoods and promote a healthier Richmond with the planting of new trees and growing of community gardens, and we held our first Urban Agriculture Summit, which has led to the creation of a Richmond Food Policy Council to explore ways of accessing healthier food for our community.

We have seen our community unify and mobilize around the need for more athletic fields by forming a new coalition called SAFE (Safe Athletic Fields for Education), and most recently, the City Council has approved putting a Soda Tax measure on next November’s ballot to discourage child obesity and fund sports fields and anti-obesity programs. To read a great article on the Soda Tax issue published in Richmond Pulse, a youth-led media project focused on health problems in Richmond, click here: http://richmondpulse.org/sugar-is-like-crack/.

Because of complex socio-economic factors and a changing population that includes many English learners, the West Contra Costa Unified School District that serves Richmond is faced with many challenges, yet performance indicators continue to trend upwards. One highlight of the year was the 2011 Golden bell Award from the California School Boards Association for the successful Ivy League Connection program. WCCUSD also has the most ambitious facilities program in the state, on a per capita basis, that the people of West County have voted to fund with over a billion dollars in bonds to rehabilitate or replace every school in Richmond.

Richmond’s biannual community survey found extensive cynicism but improvement from the last survey in 2009.

- Richmond Residents More Satisfied with City, Still Concerned About Crime, May 27, 2011
- Survey Results are In - Richmond Rises!, May 21, 2011

Richmond bucked the Contra Costa County trend with rising property values in 2011.

- Richmond Property Values Rise to Buck County Trend, July 11, 2011

And the City came together like never before to persuade LNBL to make the Richmond Field Station its new second campus.

- LBNL Welcoming Reception July 21, July 16, 2011

Here are some of the highlights from the 2011 E-FORUM:

**Shoreline and Trails**
Richmond, California 2011 Year End Review and Wishes for 2012
Tom Butt and E-FORUM Readers

Page 14

- **MLK Day of Service on the Richmond Greenway January 17, 2011**, January 6, 2011
- **Community Workshop Bay Trail Connection to Point Molate**, January 8, 2011
- **Start the New Year with Bay Trail Outings and Workshops**, January 14, 2011
- **Richmond Shoreline Activities**, January 16, 2011
- **Richmond Bay Trail New Year Report**, January 22, 2011
- **Richmond Bay Trail Mid Year Report**, July 3, 2011
- **North Richmond Shoreline Festival**, September 26, 2011
- **Fun Fall Events Along the Bay Trail in Richmond**, September 26, 2011
- **Invitation - Visit Richmond Greenway Today Between 10 - 2**, December 6, 2011
- **Prop 84 State Parks Visit - Design Tents December 6**, December 4, 2011

**Environment and Health**

- **Community Choice Aggregation Presentation Friday March 4**, March 2, 2011
- **The Richmond Bioswale Project**, March 2, 2011
- **East Bay Express - The Greening of Richmond**, March 9, 2011
- **Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour Registration Closes Soon**, April 8, 2011
- **Register for Urban Agriculture Summit in Richmond on June 4th! Registration Limited**, May 24, 2011
- **Agriculture Summit Draws Big Crowd (Richmond Confidential)**, June 6, 2011
- **Richmond One Step Closer to Banning Bags**, June 10, 2011
- **More - Urban Agriculture Takes Center Stage in West Contra Costa County**, June 13, 2011
- **From Vacant City Lots to Food on the Table**, July 23, 2011
- **Richmond Confidential - $1 Million Grant Hopes to Take a Bite Out of Unhealthy Food**, August 6, 2011
- **Sign Up To Try Out Farm 2 Table!** August 16, 2011
- **See What Happens to Your Green-Bin Waste**, September 9, 2011
- **Arbor Day in Richmond**, October 22, 2011
- **City Council Adopts Bicycle Master Plan and Pedestrian Plan**, November 3, 2011
- **Richmond's First Food Policy Council Meets**, November 14, 2011
- **Community Choice Aggregation Community Meeting - 11/30**, November 22, 2011
- **Community Choice Aggregation and Marin Clean Energy**, November 24, 2011
- **Richmond to Vote on Soda Tax**, December 7, 2011
- **Contra Costa Health Officials to Present Damaging Health Impacts of Sugary Beverages on Richmond**, December 6, 2011

**History and Historic Preservation**

- **UC Berkeley Historians Seek WWII Homefront Workers**, January 12, 2011
Richmond, California 2011 Year End Review and Wishes for 2012
Tom Butt and E-FORUM Readers

- SS Red Oak Victory Awarded $700,000 Grant, February 10, 2011
- Black History Celebration February 26, 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM, February 14, 2011
- News From East Brother Light Station, April 4, 2011
- 2011 City of Richmond Historic Preservation Awards, April 16, 2011
- May is Preservation Month in Richmond, May 18, 2011
- 2011 Rosie the Riveter Trust Gala Fundraiser June 18, May 20, 2011
- Endangered Historic Buildings in Richmond, May 20, 2011
- Rosie the Riveter Trust Gets First Executive Director, June 10, 2011
- SS Red Oak Victory 4th Celebration, June 28, 2011
- Nice NBC Video on Richmond's East Brother Lighthouse, July 1, 2011
- The Plunge, July 12, 2011
- Chris Treadway: Exhibit Recounts 'Richmond Day' at the 1915 World's Fair, August 6, 2011
- Plunge to Receive 2011 California Preservation Foundation Award, September 2, 2011
- A Significant Voyage Coming for Historic Richmond Ship, September 12, 2011
- News From East Brother Lighthouse, September 16, 2011
- Maritime Center Grand Re-Opening 9-29-11! September 27, 2011
- A World War II Preschool Rings again with Children's Shouts (from Richmond Confidential), October 1, 2011
- Richmond Home Front Festival to Honor Extraordinary Workers, October 7, 2011
- Evite Invitation: Road Not Taken - Celebrate Betty Soskin's 90th, October 29, 2011
- Veteran's Day and Red Oak Re-Launch, November 8, 2011
- Veterans Day, November 9, 2011
- Richmond Launching Ceremony Celebrates Veterans and Home Front, November 14, 2011
- You're Invited! NPS Public Tours of the Maritime Center Interpretive Display! November 14, 2011
- Battleship USS Iowa Docked in Richmond Open on Saturdays for Tours, December 19, 2011

**Festivals, Arts and Music**

- The Music Continues Through the Seasons in Point Richmond, January 12, 2011
- The Music Continues Through the Seasons in Point Richmond, January 12, 2011
- March 4 - Pt Richmond Acoustic Presents Claudia Russel and Her Band, February 28, 2011
- Laurie Lewis and Tom Rozum Tonight in Point Richmond, April 1, 2011
- Summertime Means Point Richmond Concert Series, June
Richmond, California 2011 Year End Review and Wishes for 2012
Tom Butt and E-FORUM Readers

7, 2011
• Richmond Art Center’s 75th Anniversary GALA - ARTS ALIVE! 75 March 26, 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM, February 14, 2011
• A Vision for Progress - the Arts & Sustainability, June 10, 2011
• Juneteenth Parade and Festival Tomorrow! June 17, 2011
• Come Downtown for Music on the Main June 22! June 17, 2011
• Matt Eakle Band in Point Richmond Concert July 10, June 28, 2011
• Find Your Fun (Food, Music and Theater) in Point Richmond, June 29, 2011
• Free Point Richmond Music Tomorrow Evening at 5:30, July 7, 2011
• July 3 Fireworks at the Craneway Pavilion. If You Weren't There, You Missed a Good Party! July 4, 2011
• The San Francisco Mime Troupe - Sunday, July 24th - Nicholl Park, July 15, 2011
• Next Point Richmond Summer Free Concert Friday, September 9, August 28, 2011
• Free Point Richmond Music Summer Concert Tomorrow, September 8, 2011
• Richmond Art Center Benefit Reunion 9/24, September 10, 2011
• East Bay Center Grand Opening Events, September 26, 2011
• 3rd Annual Point Richmond Fall Festival Saturday October 8, October 3, 2011
• Anniversary Party & Fall Fest Tomorrow! October 7, 2011
• 3rd Annual Point Richmond Fall Festival Saturday October 8, October 3, 2011
• Anniversary Party & Fall Fest Tomorrow! October 7, 2011
• Richmond Home Front Festival to Honor Extraordinary Workers, October 7, 2011
• Point Richmond Acoustic Season Starts Tonight, October 14, 2011
• Stay Warm Tonight in Pt. Richmond with Music, November 11, 2011
• Point Richmond Acoustic Presents Bluegrass Legend Peter Rowan Dec. 9, December 4, 2011

Jobs
• East Bay Express - Redefining Green Jobs, Richmond Program Places 90%, January 14, 2011
• Most New Jobs are Green Jobs, Study Finds, January 19, 2011
• Big Day for Richmond Build Tomorrow, August 18, 2011
• LA Times on Richmond Cooperatives, November 28, 2011

My Nominations for Worst of 2011

Community Warning System
The good news is that the Community Warning System has not been needed much lately. The bad news is that a false alarm in April reminded us that is never has worked and still doesn’t. The incident caused official to examine its flaws once again and try to fix them. One success was Chevron agreeing to conduct its internal tests the same day as system-wide tests to avoid confusing people.
On Tuesday, April 12, shortly after 7:00 AM, a siren that is part of the Community Warning System in Richmond was activated and continued to sound for approximately 30 minutes. I received a phone call and several emails from people in Marina Bay and the North and East wondering what was going on. Some people who were heading for work decided to hunker down until they found out what was happening. If you followed the procedures listed on the City of Richmond website for the Community Warning System, you would have immediately Sheltered in Place, Another Community Warning System Malfunction, April 16, 2011

Train Horns and Grade Crossings

After early successes in leading the state in establishing quiet zones, City staff let the latest ones languish for years, even though they were required to mitigate increased train activity associated with the Honda Port of Entry. The City Council required this work by a vote on November 18, 2008. On May 5, 2010, (over a year and a half later) it had not been started. City staff emailed me that it would be completed and the Quiet Zone established by the end of July, 2010. On August 16, City staff emailed me that the work would be completed the end of September. On October 1, City staff emailed me that the work would be completed the end of October. On October 27, City staff emailed me that the BNSF work was complete and the City work would be completed mid-November. It turned out that the City hadn't even started its work and that anticipated completion was January 14, 2011. Meanwhile, hundreds of people continue to have their sleep disturbed night after night, and I continue to get complaints. This is callous. Sleep may not be important to some, but it is to residents who live near the RR tracks. I just can't believe that the City did not start its work in time to have it completed simultaneously with the BNSF work. More than two years after the City Council directed this work, its completion is still months away. See Ear Aches: Noise Pollution Rattles Nerves, Harms Health, August 28, 2010.

- Train Horn Relief in Fits and Stops, January 19, 2011
- Quieter Tonight, February 10, 2011
- Train Horns - A Modern Plague, November 23, 2011
- Richmond Train Horns in the Media - Your Federal Government at Work for You, December 1, 2011

E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Best of 2011

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

Bay Trail

- The work done on the Bay Trail throughout Richmond. The shoreline is where Richmond meets nature. As much access should be preserved as possible. The folks at TRAC should be given hearty thumbs up for their tireless work.
- The Bay Trail successes I think are among the many excellent developments to celebrate.

David Moore

- For yet another year David Moore of sincereodesign.com has created and maintained really fine websites that highlight many fine organizations in Richmond like the Plunge, the Museum, Curme, and BikesYes.org (a tasteful and little-known site advocating for multi-modal travel on the Richmond Bridge). In addition, he has in the past year created a sensational series of political cartoons that are as
biting and topical as any in the world (published online by the Richmond Progressive Alliance). How about it? Let’s recognize this Richmond gem!

Landfill Loop of the Bay Trail

- Republic Services completing the 2.8-mile Landfill Loop of the Bay Trail providing the only shoreline access between Miller/Knox and Point Pinole Regional Shorelines.

Nancy Foss

- I want to give a shout out to Nancy Foss, a longtime Pt. Richmond resident. She was recently named Berkeley Realtor of the Year. (see attached). Nancy is a huge supporter of the Richmond Art Center, one of Richmond's fine institutions. She and her partner, Virginia Rigney, have worked tirelessly on behalf of the Art Center. I think it is citizens like Nancy who quietly go about their business with great competence and integrity who often get overlooked when praise is being given.

Stege Avenue Sidewalk

- In my opinion, the best of 2011 is the installation of a sidewalk on Stege Avenue. That area has been so horribly neglected for many years. I was absolutely delighted to see the work started on the project. I don’t live on Stege, but, I had complained for so many years, that I just gave up about 12 years ago after my husband retired from the California Army National Guard and I became less active as a Mollie Pitcher. Jackie Thompson deserves a big round of applause for being tenacious and getting this much needed improvement for safer pedestrian passage by the residents and also for California National Guard Troops who serve our State and Country and deserve to go to the Armory without walking through mud puddles, getting mud on freshly shined boots.

Craneway Pavilion

- The Craneway Pavilion. Who would have imagined that huge barn of a space turning in to an event Venue that is useable and beautiful. The hard work of the technical team in installing thousands of square feet of acoustic paneling, purchasing state of the art sound and video equipment has transformed a former factory into a wonderful public space. I expect to see many high profile industrial shows using that space in the future. I myself worked on an Apple Sales event in October in which the space was divided and softened with curtains and fabrics and the event was a great success.

Bridge Storage

- Thumbs up to Jeff Wright and all the folks at Bridge Storage on Maine Ave. The have taken many of the dull drab storage sheds and developed them into Artists studios and have put together a gallery for local artists to show their work. They have had many events there that have been extremely successful. The atmosphere is one of cooperation and collaboration. A real community is coming together in this new endeavor and use of space. Don't forget the New Years Day “2nd Annual Community Bell Ringing Celebration and Brunch” Food fun bells and music.

Point Richmond

- There are many other great things happening in Richmond (I live in the point so that's what I know) The restoration of the Plunge, the moving of the trainmasters building which created a beautiful new space and made Mechanics Bank a neighborhood business. I also applaud the success of the Up and Under (Try the trivia night) and the ongoing improvement of both the Santa Fe and the Point Richmond markets. The folks who run both of those establishments are
doing a great job. And who would have ever believed that Point Richmond would get its own Pharmacy! After years of frustration with Long’s only to have the service get worse when it was bought by CVS I leapt at the opportunity to walk into a real pharmacy and talk to the pharmacist. I knew that the prices would probably be higher but it was worth it to support a local business. After I moved my prescriptions to Point Pharmacy I was amazed to find that I was paying LESS for my medicines that I did from CVS.

Parks and Open Space in the Draft General Plan

- Parks and Open Space land use designation on the North Richmond Shoreline in the [draft] General Plan.

Point Molate

- The best-the casino got axed

LNBL

Re the site of the Lawrence Lab, the drive from and to the proposed site of the Lawrence Lab, on 580, has, in my experience been traffic jam-free, except on those rare occasions when the traffic on 80 was especially badly backed up from Berkeley. Therefore, the Richmond to Berkeley route is at least as traffic-free as any of the other proposed sites. I drive back and forth to Berkeley on 580 several times a week.

Silly Parade

One of the most stimulating events last year was the Urban Agriculture Summit sponsored by the City and Country and attended by 150 people. We’re still hoping and waiting for that all the energy and cross-pollination of ideas to come to fruition. By far the most exciting and enjoyable family event this past year was the “5th Annual Richmond Silly Parade.” What a tsunami of Latin balladeers, dogs in costume, Marching Mustaches, art bikes, the Senior Citizen Dry-water Swim Team, giant puppets, etc. etc.! I can’t wait to see what next April’s “6th Annual” looks like. Did I mention the After-party with the Taco Truck and that the parade is up on YouTube?

E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Best Organizations of 2011

TRAC

- TRAC, the Trails for Richmond Action Committee, for its vision and leadership in bringing Richmond from 12 to over 31 miles of San Francisco Bay Trail during the last 12 years. Check out the Richmond Bay Trail 2012 New Year Report! Pointrichmond.com

City Council and RPA

- Is the council an organization? if so then the city council is the best. and the Richmond Progressive
- Once again, the Richmond Progressive Alliance whose individual members last year worked to keep the public informed, bring security to immigrants, get more of our money back from Chevron’s vaults, build more soccer fields, bring LBNL to our city, and plant the seeds of democracy in a town notorious for incestuous relationships between big business, developers, and its elected officials.
E-Forum Reader Nominations for Best City Employees

Bill Lindsay

- City Manager Bill Lindsay for continuing to manage our city so well, including the well-organized effort to attract LBNL’s second campus to Richmond.

Chad Davisson

- I am grateful to Chad Davisson and all others involved in analyzing the complexities of our wastewater treatment. Kudos to them for their integrity and courage in undertaking the difficult task of trying to figure out what our most cost effective choice might be, and negotiating the contract considerations.

Tom Butt, Gayle McLaughlin, Chris Magnus

- I am incredibly grateful to those people who are turning Richmond around from a corrupt company town. These people include the Mayor McLaughlin and the police chief, among many others, including Tom Butt. I am so proud that the casino was rejected. I have been impressed many times by the beautiful new city infrastructure, the national park of course, but also the re-done natatorium, also the street “furniture”, (street lights on Macdonald for example) to name some of them. Some of these projects come from citizen involvement, or it all does, since the officials who did such, were elected by the citizens. I hope Richmond will be able to continue to be outstanding, especially in the forefront of greenness.

Lt. Bisa French

- Lt Bisa French. We had issues in our neighborhood and she not only heard us, she has, and continues to, monitor the situation. Kudos also goes out to the rest of the Beat officers for their continued efforts. The neighborhood appreciates their commitment.

Sheila Dickenson

- I don’t have a lot of contact with Richmond departments, but I have to mention the children’s library staff and specifically Sheila Dickenson. She has built a wonderful community of parents in the Point with her story times at West Branch, and I went to one at Bayview that was also very well attended. A few weeks ago I brought my grandchild to Main Library and I was astonished at the busyness of the children's room. There were dozens of children in their checking out books, reading and playing with computers and some toys. A great resource for the city.

Frank Gonzales

- Parks Supervisor Frank Gonzales, who with his crew restored the S. 51st Bay Trail section and installed new landscaping along the renovated Bay Trail between Shimada Park and Meeker Slough bridge.
Bill Lindsay and Chris Magnus

- I love and respect our terrific City Manager, Bill Lindsay, and our fabulous hard-working, deeply respected Chief of Police, Chris Magnus! They bring “Class” to our City!!

Tom Butt

- I vote you as the best council member because of your great communications via the forum and your pragmatic approach to challenging issues.

E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Best City Department 2010

Parks and Landscaping

- Parks & Landscaping Division with leadership of its new Superintendent Chris Chamberlain. With Mr. Chamberlain’s leadership, this division has performed spectacularly using its limited resources to beautify, maintain & improve landscaping of the City’s streets, trails and parks.
- I want to nominate Chris Chamberlain and his Parks and Landscaping Staff. Chris has gone above and beyond to help foster community involvement in parks. We could not have accomplished anywhere close to what we have at the Solano Playlot without his support. And he’s been instrumental in allowing the work of the N&E tree team to flourish. He’s been incredibly responsive, engaging, encouraging and absolutely honest and transparent every step of the way. He and his staff have been a joy to work with, and his passion for parks and park improvement is rare, impressive and exactly what we need to see more of in Richmond today. I’m happy to provide more specific examples if you need them.

Richmond Police Department

- I vote the RPD (and Chief Magnus) as the best department because of their constant self-discipline in frequent dangerous situations.

E-FORUM Reader Nominations for Worst of 2011

Chevron

- The worst is, as usual, Chevron acting greedy again. The tax refund they want is insane. They are breathing in too many fumes.
- The worst development of the year in Richmond - in any category - has been Chevron’s property tax appeal. It really deserves a category all its own: one called “chutzpah,” perhaps. Or “corporate sociopathy.”

Chevron is the most horrible, negative thing about living in Richmond. It’s worse than the crimes and guns, because at least genuine efforts are being made to tackle those social problems, and progress is measurable in numbers. Any ostensible progress on the Chevron front, however, such as the property tax agreement reached a few years ago, is subject to cavalier reversals on the part of the corporation without any apparent concern for their impact on the community.
All of us are well aware of the health problems suffered by many city residents because of their proximity to toxic refinery emissions. Less frequently talked about is the VISUAL BLIGHT inflicted on this city by Chevron. It’s our version of Mt. Tam: nearly everywhere you go in Richmond, you can catch a glimpse of their nasty facilities. But instead of being uplifted by the sight of Mt. Tam, you’re confronted with depressing evidence of pollution. You can’t escape the ugliness - and how does that affect OUR property values? Does Chevron pay a penalty for creating city-wide blight (not to mention ill health)? How does that ugliness affect residents' spirits? Their civic pride? Quality of life?

Some may find it unseemly to point out that the company’s philanthropic efforts in the city are minuscule compared to both their ginormous corporate profits that we read about daily and the harmful economic impacts of Chevron’s activity in our own backyard. But the numbers, frankly, are pitiful, and serve merely to foster the city’s long-term dependency on Chevron’s so-called largesse.

That dependency has infantilized Richmond; it’s really a form of abuse. Richmond will never fulfill its promise until it’s free of this polluting, despousing, prevaricating “neighbor.” I realize that some residents are loyal to Chevron, given their (or family members’) employment histories, but is that loyalty a two-way street? Given the potential devastation that would befall Richmond if Chevron’s property tax appeal were to succeed, I’d say the answer is, obviously, hell no.

- The Chevron Corporation advertising to the world that it treats Richmond students well while at the same time demanding a $160 million dollar tax refund that will abuse the other 99% of students.

City Council

- The worst in Richmond continues to be the City Council meetings. The unprofessional conduct, the bullying, and the preferential treatment that the residents have to endure is without a doubt the most offensive thing that goes on in Richmond. I understand that people have their own ideas of how things should work, but to absolutely disregard any one else’s opinion by an elected official is inexcusable. I understand that the RPA is on the preferred side, no matter how biased or only for their agenda a topic is, but the council people were elected to represent ALL the people, and that is not happening. The council meetings remain an embarrassment to our city. I hear as much talk about them as I do about our crime rate. The bullying is not all done by one council person, as they would like us to believe, but the three RPA members have their stooges to do their dirty work behind the scenes and then pretend that it is not happening. You should all be ashamed to admit that you let this behavior go on and on. There are 4 of you (a majority) and could do something to stop the shameful actions of the minority. Or have they (the RPA) threatened you as they have other council members?
• Not only does BIG BUSINESS hesitate to do business in Richmond, but “Small Business” is also hesitant. The City of Richmond is a hard sell for business. I.e., encouraging marijuana sale and discouraging soda pop sale. Sounds totally unbelievable.

• The attempt at bullying and unbelievable disrespect shown to the City Clerk by the Mayor and some members of the City Council. The attempt by the Mayor and some Councilmembers to intimidate City Clerk Holmes was absolutely disgraceful!! To bully the City Clerk and then to publicly prod the City Attorney to give an illegal opinion to usurp the authority and duties of the City Clerk was the worst public display of “workplace bullying” that I have ever seen. This was the worst display of disregarding the rules "depending on whose ox is being gored" that I’ve had the displeasure of witnessing in a very long time. I am not optimistic that the Mayor and some councilmembers will be more professional or make sound decisions for the good of the City of Richmond and business in 2012. I hope I’m proven wrong.

• With the exception of Tom and Jim, this City Council is terrible. There is loud chaos, disrespect, shouting from the audience. The worst is the so-called Richmond Progressives.... a small group of loudmouth, ill-mannered, slobbering buffoons. Their antics and carry-ons about Chevron have been talked about amongst friends in neighboring Cities. Can't they try to get along with Chevron? I won't even begin on this mayor.....good Lord...with a new election in 2012 we can only go up....

• Worst of 2011 in the City of Richmond was how the Council members behaved toward the public and each other. Have a Retreat with a facilitator and try to do better in 2012. If I was in charge of the Lawrence Laboratory selection, I would not select Richmond because of the unprofessional conduct of the City Council as well as their attitude toward big business. The University is BIG BUSINESS! Richmond is a Corporation also. So stop the bad mouthing of everything big and work for what is best for this city.

Point Molate

• Okay, sorry I know I’m running on but I do want to get to my one big complaint, worst blunder, unbelievable screw up and mind boggling astonishment. Point Molate!

When I first moved to the point the land was still run by the Navy but you could drive over there and sit at a picnic table under a tree and look out at the water. Now there is nothing but chain link fence and no access to anything. I know we were all wowed by developer’s renderings of resort hotels, nightclubs, restaurants and a casino with beautiful people getting off of beautiful ferry boats. The thought of that kind of development with all the jobs it would create was very tempting, but anyone who knows the area knows that access and traffic would be a nightmare and the end product would be poor and ultimately tacky. Instead of the boutique shops and salons there would be liquor stores, cigarette stores, and fireworks sales (remember it would become an Indian reservation)

So at this point I am frustrated and completely pissed off at the City of Richmond, the developer, Chevron and CalTrans at the complete inability to get even safe access to the area considered. Doesn't CalTrans stand for the California Department of Transportation? Why do they only care
about Cars Trucks and Freeways? pedestrians, bicyclists and others are looked upon as a nuisance at best. Why didn't the City make a deal with Chevron giving them the land with the condition that they provide and maintain safe access, clean up the shoreline, build trails and parks and maintain them. Even if the public only had access to the land within 500 feet of the water, it could be a wonderful place. Does Richmond pride itself on eyesores?

I still talk with my friend Dan Doellstedt although he has pretty much become a hermit trapped in his wheelchair because no safe access has ever been available to the end of the bridge. Don't people care? When I look at the money spent on so many wasteful projects I just can't understand why we can’t fix this. And why in GOD's name are Chevron and CalTrans so against it! Maybe they think that when they close the east entrance to I-580 people will just stop going there and forget it exists.

Planning Commission

- Planning Commission not endorsing the North Shoreline Open Space designation in the draft General Plan

Compensation

- Tom as I have mentioned previously, I believe many city employees executives are overly compensated particularly the city manager. However, he certainly is not alone for all bay area city managers, in my view, are fall into that category. I ask you again Tom, do your make over 300k yearly? If not then you possibly are under compensated.

COR Connect

- I want to share my frustration with the Issue/Request form for ETRAKIT (the service that COR Connect links to). For Issue reporting, it doesn't work. The particular issue I was reporting (a San Pablo Ave traffic light at a non-intersection that trips randomly without a pedestrian in sight) does not rise to any level of importance for your annual review. What might rise to that level is the fact that the City allows a citizen issue reporting website that invites input, but repeatedly fails to register the input. At the very least, I would think that the City ought to remove the link while the malfunction gets investigated/resolved. See screen shots below. I tried this three times before giving up and sending an e-mail directly to the director of public works. I asked for an acknowledgment of receipt of the issue report, but received none.

Predictions and Wishes

2012 Predictions from E-FORUM Readers

Apparently, E-FORUM readers lost their interest in prognostications this year. There were no wishes or predictions for 2012.
How did E-FORUM Readers 2011 Predictions turn out?

Carlson Boulevard

Wish/Prediction: I bet most people from the Annex have one holiday wish - Finish Carlson Blvd. My neighborhood has turned into a traffic nightmare. My street is now a dead end and has been for months with no end in sight. Parking is even more limited and there is not much space to turn around once you come down to our end of the street. My neighbor’s plants were destroyed by someone missing the driveway and taking out her plants. The fire truck that came down to the end of the street could not get turned around without people going out and moving their parked cars to give them enough room. That was kind of scary. It’s more than just a hassle and it seems to be taking forever.
Outcome: Carlson Boulevard is completed.

Point Molate

Wish/Prediction
- I predict the EIR by Upstream will be more lies but the good folks of Richmond will call it for what it is.
- The Casino project will be rejected in favor of a Point Molate project that will be a source of pride and pleasure for all who live in Richmond.
- I am looking forward to a new direction for the development of Pt. Molate... one that will produce jobs, environmental protection, and recreation, and will NOT depend on the weaknesses of the population (gambling). I am also looking forward to the continuing reduction in crime.
- The current developer alliance with Upstream for Pt. Molate will ‘fold their tents’ and leave wholly or in parts.
Outcome: The casino project was rejected.

Parks

Wish/Prediction: The City and EBRPD will work to create new public parks and open space with Bay Trail connections on Richmond’s beautiful northern shoreline.
Outcome: No real progress on this, but see Breuner Marsh Restoration Will Turn Old Dumping Ground Into Ecological Gem, January 21, 2011

National Park

Wish/Prediction:
- As the National Park Visitor’s Center becomes a reality at the shoreline this fall, I envision the city’s more creative artists, entrepreneurs, and most imaginative thinkers gathering over their drawing boards planning ways to capture those tourist dollars that will follow by enticing them off the shoreline with memorable events and sights that are only available here where it all happened.
- I can see special performances by the children and youth at the grand and glorious East Bay Center for the Performing Arts in their beautiful historic Winters Building.
I see private bus tours (staffed by NPS interpreters at no cost to the city) taking folks on culturally-specific tours of the scattered sites throughout the city which form this national park.

Early childhood educators who will visit the home of Head Start at the restored Maritime Child Development Centers for a look at where it all began with U.C.'s Dr. Katherine Landreth’s inspiration.

I see tours for those in the medical profession who can find here both the original first aid station at Shipyard 3 and the impressive state-of-the-art Kaiser Permanente Medical Center only a few miles away on Nevin, or the KP training campus on Marina Way. Those who are studying the birth of pre-paid health insurance (HMO) will now have access to that change-producing and enduring history in medicine -- a role that KP continues to play as it continues to lead in the field of medicine.

Where the Japanese/American internment story of the families who led in the century-old cut flower industry in California that can be interpreted through a visit past what remains of their industry, plus a visit to Shimada Friendship park, Richmond’s tribute to the contribution of those who lived that painful history.

and (hopefully) someday there will be restoration of the African American migration story as told through the North Richmond experience that brought black blues and jazz to the west and a restored-for-the-telling of the late Ethel Dotson’s little International Hotel on South Street -- which housed the traveling Pullman porters, where there must surely have been union-organizing by the NAACP’s C.L. Dellums and A. Philip Randolph -- men who figured prominently in that dark chapter in our history.

Where the resurrected story of women’s emancipation into America’s workplace and subsequent dismissal when men returned as told at the Rosie the Riveter Memorial to inspire today’s young women into non-traditional roles that defy limitations.

All that, and more.

Outcome: That’s a lot of predictions, but about 60% came to pass in 2011.

**Progressives**

**Wish/Prediction:** I predict the new progressive bloc on the City Council will punch hard for changes driven by the political ideology of their behind-the-scenes, hard core supporters (Richmond Progressive Alliance, Green Party, etc.). They will discreetly place key progressives on city commissions to influence public policy (which is unethical), and form public attack groups designed to pound their opposition on key issues into submission. The Council will need its moderates more than ever if it hopes to serve all Richmond residents in an equal and non-ideological manner.

Outcome: That’s pretty much what happened.

**City Council**

**Wish/Prediction:** City Council sessions will become even longer drawn-out affairs at risk of delays in badly needed projects.

Outcome: That’s pretty much what happened.
General Plan

Wish/Prediction: I am looking forward to the new year with the new City Council. Hopefully we will get a new General Plan that respects the needs of the citizens of Richmond rather than those of developers whose interests are contrary to what is best for the future of Richmond.

Outcome: The General Plan was not adopted in 2011.

Tom Butt Wishes/Predictions for 2011

Shipyard 3 Buildings
I hope that the National Park Service will lease enough space in the General Warehouse and/or Riggers Loft for the maritime Museum Archives to enable the financing of rehabilitation of the Riggers Loft and tenant improvements for the General Warehouse, and that the work will be completed in 2012. It would also be nice for the National Park Service to designate the Cafeteria Building as its headquarter and begin the rehabilitation of that structure.

Point Molate
I wish that the City will prevail in or successfully settle its lawsuit for interpretation of the Upstream contract and that a new plan for development of Point Molate will go forward.

Railroads
I hope that the proposed Quiet Zones at Cutting Boulevard and 4th Street and Canal Boulevard will be completed and activated. I hope that the City will keep its promise to limit street blockages by trains serving the Port of Richmond during the day. I wish that BNSF would make its engineers more sensitive to the needless harm they are causing by abusing train horn at night. I wish that the Federal Railroad Administration and the California Public Utilities Commission would become as concerned about the adverse impacts of noise as they are about grade crossing safety.

Crime
I hope Richmond’s crime rate continues to decline, and I hope the homicide rate will also decline in 2012.

Chevron
I hope that the Chevron Energy and Hydrogen Project will be permitted and start construction in 2012. I wish that Chevron would either drop their property tax assessment appeals or negotiate a settlement that leaves Richmond whole.

Elections
I hope the 2012 City Council elections will result in a City Council that can work together for a progressive and sustainable future. I predict that one or more incumbents will choose not to run for reelection.

Marijuana
I predict that the City Council’s plan to license marijuana dispensaries will fail due to federal intervention.

Booker et al.
I predict the Booker litigation will be resolved in 2012.
North Shoreline
The idea of the North Shoreline as open space will be toast in 2012.

Happy New Year!
Tom Butt