

NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA

IMAGE PROBLEM OR VISION PROBLEM?

**AN ISSUE PAPER
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A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite widespread wishful thinking to the contrary, Richmond suffers from a serious and, unfortunately, not undeserved negative image problem. This does not mean that there are not numerous positive aspects to the City of Richmond. We all know there are, and we all know many dedicated residents, as well as business persons and city staff, who have spent their lives making Richmond a better place to live.

What Richmond most lacks is a vision shared by the majority of its resident and the collective will to bring such a common vision to fruition. Our city continues to be wracked by competing interests that pit our industries against our residents, ethnic groups against one another, neighborhoods against neighborhoods, and politicians who put special interests above the city's interests. As a result, Richmond has a significantly dysfunctional city government with a budget crisis at the same time the rest of California is benefiting from an unprecedented economic boom. Our city continues to be best known for its worst characteristics, and no amount of hand wringing appears to be able to change that.

The one thing we all agree on is that Richmond has potential. We have always agreed on that. The question is, when will we be able to come together to realize that potential?

B. INTRODUCTION

Most serious conversations at Richmond City Hall or the Richmond Chamber of Commerce sooner or later get around to the topic of Richmond's ""image." In fact, the City Council authorized appointment of a citizen's "image committee" last year, and the City has a consultant on a \$48,000 per year retainer to "improve the City's image."

When I first moved to Richmond some 25 years ago, I remember Chamber of Commerce executive Jack Horton describing Richmond as "a diamond in the rough." The implication was one of unrealized potential. Twenty-five years later, I have heard those same words recently used by another Chamber leader. That elusive greatness always seems to be just around the

corner for Richmond, as echoed by new city manager Turner:

Richmond has a very unique opportunity in the next five to eight years to realize its economic potential because we're so strategically located in the Bay Area.¹

By most assessments, Richmond does not score high in the image category when compared to other northern California cities. Much of this is structural, deeply embedded in the history of a city born to serve heavy industry and now struggling to compete for new residents and business in a different type of world. Can we change our image? Yes, but only if we are honest with ourselves in recognizing who and what we are and undertaking an ambitious and aggressive program to achieve that change. Most of all, we must have a collective vision of where we want to go and what we want to be. And we have to have the persistence to get there.

C. OBSESSING OVER IMAGE

For the 25 years I have lived in Richmond, the city has been obsessed with its image. In 1996, the West County Times once again chronicled this obsession:

Business people, city officials – and perhaps most of all – residents themselves constantly wring their hands over Richmond's image as a dangerous, undesirable place.²

Vern Whitmore of VSW Associates, the consultant hired by Richmond in 1996 to polish its image had a similar observation:

There is a pervasive and corrosive tide of misinformation and negativity that has tarnished the City of Richmond's image. As a result of this cynicism, there is an urgent need to reverse the distorted information related to crime, schools and neighborhoods, which has so far prevailed over the positive news of Richmond's progress and accomplishments. Because of this

¹ "Turner Ready for Richmond City Manager Role," *West County Times*, May 17, 1998

² "Image is City's Worst Enemy," *West County Times*, October 21, 1996

negativity, the perception of non-residents is tarnished as well.³

The *City of Richmond Image Survey*, conducted by Whitmore's firm, VSW/P-W Group and the Public Research Institute (PRI) in 1996, reports that a majority of Richmond residents (66%) agree the City has a poor reputation.⁴

For those who are most protective of Richmond's image, the media is a popular scapegoat, particularly the local press:

If perception is the problem, many place the blame at the feet of the media... Top city officials regularly complain to the [West County] Times about what they see as negative coverage... Some say the key to a new image is new information. Newspapers and television stations should stop playing up the bad news and do more stories of growth, progress, kindness and achievement, they argue.⁵

D. IMAGE OR VISION?

What is *image*? The Webster's definition that most closely matches what we are discussing here describes *image* as:

...a mental picture of something; conception; idea; impression; the concept of a person, product, institution, etc. held by the general public, often one deliberately created or modified by publicity, advertising, propaganda, etc.

Closely related to image, but more connotative of what could be rather than what is, is *vision*:

a mental image; esp., an imaginative contemplation. The ability to perceive something not actually visible; as through mental acuteness or keen foresight (a project made possible by one man's vision).

Is Richmond's image distorted, or is it that we our image doesn't match our vision? Or, can we simply not accept reality? In a 1996 West County Times article on Richmond's image, Council member Donna Powers supported the latter:

It will not improve until we do a better job. An image can't be purchased. You can't buy it off a guy like Vern [Whitmore] or anyone else. When we're doing a good job, then we'll get good press.⁶

Richmond's current motto, *City of Pride and Purpose*, is, itself, a curious and ironic reflection of this dichotomy between envisioning Richmond as it is, or as we would like it to be. Webster's first definition of *pride*, which is probably not what author's of the motto intended, is:

An overhigh opinion of oneself; haughty behavior resulting from this arrogance.

Webster's second definition is:

Proper respect for oneself; sense of one's own dignity or worth; self-respect.

What exactly is Richmond's image, and how does it square with reality? When we discuss the subject, do we tend to get *image* confused with *vision*? Is there only one image or vision, or do different groups have different perceptions of what Richmond is or should become? If we could change our image, what would we want it to be? Would we change the reality, or just the image? What is it we want? Do we just want people to think well of our city, or do we want them to move here, visit here, or move their business here?

And finally, are there groups of residents or businesses that would be, or believe they would be, adversely affected by certain aspects of a changing image? These are some of the questions that this paper will try to answer.

³ *Image Campaign, Marketing Richmond, CA* (Richmond: VSW Associates, undated)

⁴ *Image Campaign, Marketing Richmond, CA* (Richmond: VSW Associates, undated)

⁵ "Image is City's Worst Enemy," *West County Times*, October 21, 1996

⁶ "Image is City's Worst Enemy," *West County Times*, October 21, 1996

E. NEGATIVITY - FACT OR PERCEPTION?

If, as Whitmore says, "there is a pervasive and corrosive tide of misinformation and negativity that has tarnished the City of Richmond's image," what is the source, and is it accurate or misleading? In the 1996 *City of Richmond Image Survey*, residents reported that Richmond was best known for crime/drugs, violence, oil refineries and the shipyards.⁷

1. Crime, Drugs, Gangs and Violence

The City of Richmond Image Survey found that crime, drugs, gangs and violence dominated opinions about the most serious problem in Richmond.⁸ Similarly, respondents listed crime, drugs and violence as the things for which Richmond was best known.⁹ Statistics bear this out, showing that Richmond is still a leader in crime compared to other Bay Area cities. In 1995, Richmond's homicide rate was number three at 28.6 per 100,000 population, just behind Oakland and San Pablo. For comparison, San Francisco had 13.1, and Danville, Pinole, San Ramon and El Cerrito had zero.¹⁰

Although all crimes in Richmond are significantly down from 1991, only four of seven categories showed drops in the last year, between 1996 and 1997. The overall average drop between 1996 and 1997 was only 1.3 per cent. This is significantly less than the national average, although homicides, with a 12 per cent decrease in Richmond, was slightly better than the national average.

Serious crime reported to the police in 1997 declined nationwide for a sixth consecutive year, with reductions in every region led by a plunge of more than 10 percent in homicides in larger

cities and suburban counties, the FBI said.¹¹

Within the bay Area, San Francisco had the biggest change with a plunge of 9 percent in the crime index. The index dropped 5 percent in Berkeley; 2 percent in Concord; 3 percent in Oakland; 5 percent in San Jose; 4 percent in Stockton; 8 percent in Sunnyvale and 3 percent in Vallejo. But Fremont, Hayward and Santa Rosa showed increases of 3 percent, 4 percent and 6 percent, respectively.

⁷ Image Campaign, Marketing Richmond, 1996 Richmond Image Survey (Richmond: VSW Associates, undated), 7

⁸ *Image Campaign, Marketing Richmond, CA* (Richmond: VSW Associates, undated)

⁹ *Image Campaign, Marketing Richmond, 1996 Richmond Image Survey* (Richmond: VSW Associates, undated), 7

¹⁰ "Image is City's Worst Enemy," *West County Times*, October 21, 1996

¹¹ "Homicide Showed The Most Dramatic Drop -- 9 Percent Nationally -- However, The Levels Were Up In Oakland And San Jose ,"*West County Times*, May 18, 1998

Richmond Crimes 1991-1997¹²

Crime	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1997	1997
Homicides	62	46	52	52	26	34	30
Robbery	752	919	979	731	702	555	525
Aggravated Assault	1626	1745	8101	1224	1177	1036	1066
Burglary	2271	2182	2098	1745	1481	1428	1364
Theft	4373	4049	3699	4156	3773	3574	3749
Auto Theft	1804	1651	1480	1174	988	938	976
Arson	135	149	116	103	89	91	78
						9653	9785

According to a *West County Times* article, car insurance is 40% higher in Richmond than in

other East Bay communities, presumably because of the higher crime rate.

¹² Memo dated May 28, 1998 from Chief William Lansdowne to Mayor and City Council

East Bay drivers living in financially struggling urban neighborhoods are charged hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars more each year for the identical coverage sold to residents of more affluent communities in Alameda and contra Costa counties.¹³

In the 1996 *City of Richmond Image Survey*, residents reported crime and drugs as the city's most serious problems, followed by schools, gangs, violence and unemployment.¹⁴ In the 1995 Business Community Survey, business respondents listed crime as the primary disadvantage of doing business in Richmond.¹⁵ In a 1997 *San Francisco Chronicle* poll, 46% of those surveyed in West Contra Costa County said they were very or somewhat fearful that they will be victims of crime. Four in 10 said the fear of crime keeps them from going to local shopping malls and stores. This is contrasted to central Contra Costa County where only 14%¹⁶ of poll respondents cited crime as a big problem.

In the Richmond Image Survey, 30 per cent of respondents believed the rate of violent crime in the City was increasing, and an additional 30 per cent believed it was staying the same.¹⁷ In the *Chronicle* poll, 45% of those surveyed said crime in West County has increased in the past few years, a perception that persists despite local police departments reporting that crime is down.¹⁸ Richmond is experiencing a decrease in crime, but so is almost every other city. According to FBI statistics, the Richmond Crime Index dropped from 10,374 in 1993 to 9,300 in 1994 and 8,216 in 1995.

In a Chronicle interview, Richmond Police Chief William Lansdowne commented:

...people's fears that they will be victimized by crime are largely unfounded. The vast majority of people involved in serious crime have put themselves in harm's way. Random violence is a myth. If you don't use drugs and don't gamble, if you know how to walk away from a fight, the chances of you being involved in a violent crime are much less.¹⁹

Substantiating the chief's contention that crime is location specific, the *Richmond Image Survey* indicated that most respondents reported feeling either very safe (31%) or somewhat safe (42%) in their individual neighborhoods, and most (71%) reported that they did avoid places in Richmond because of the possibility of crime.²⁰ The *San Francisco Examiner*, in an article on Richmond real estate, noted:

Problems remain. Foremost, crime in the downtown neighborhoods. But many other neighborhoods are safe. Crime: High in parts of flatland Richmond, near the old downtown, suburban average in other parts of town. Much attention to security, crime prevention. FBI in 1996 reported 34 homicides. Counts for the previous years are 26, 52, 52, 46, 61, 36, 38 and 31... Yes, crime and safety are concerns, but the trade off is low rents and housing costs. Many law-abiding citizens reside in these neighborhoods; unfortunately, so do a disproportionate number of the troubled. The practices of the affluent, security gates and guards are showing up more in the low-income neighborhoods.²¹

Is crime really the problem, or only a symptom? A high crime rate is a function of the city's demographics, which are characterized by high unemployment and poverty.

¹³ "Location Still a factor in Vehicle Insurance," *West County Times*, December 12, 1997

¹⁴ *Image Campaign, Marketing Richmond, 1996 Richmond Image Survey* (Richmond: VSW Associates, undated), 7

¹⁵ *Business Community Survey - 1995*, (Richmond: City of Richmond and Richmond Chamber of Commerce, 1995), 7

¹⁶ "Poll on Contra Costa Crime," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 12, 1997

¹⁷ *Image Campaign, Marketing Richmond, 1996 Richmond Image Survey* (Richmond: VSW Associates, undated), 7

¹⁸ "Poll on Contra Costa Crime," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 12, 1997

¹⁹ "Poll on Contra Costa Crime," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 12, 1997

²⁰ *Image Campaign, Marketing Richmond, 1996 Richmond Image Survey* (Richmond: VSW Associates, undated), 6

²¹ "Richmond's Appeal," *San Francisco Examiner*, March 15, 1998

2. Schools

Ranking just behind crime and drugs, but ahead of gangs and violence as Richmond problems, were schools.²² Richmond is served by the 30,000 student West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD), formerly the Richmond Unified School District, which critics often characterize as troubled or underperforming.

Some of this reputation stems from the 1991 bankruptcy of the school district, its discredited former superintendent, Walter Marks, and the resulting litigation. The remainder comes from schools with low test scores. The popular way to evaluate the quality of a school or school district is to compare its test scores to those of other schools or districts. When aggregated by school or district, however, test scores simply a function of the socio-economic characteristics of the population served and not necessarily an indication of the quality of teaching or of the opportunities for individual students (see Annex A - Education).

The fact is that the West Contra Costa Unified School District is made up of students from families representing a wide range of demographics. Some schools serve areas with relatively high levels of family income and education, and the correspondingly high test scores reflect this. Others, serving areas characterized by poverty and high levels of public assistance, have high dropout rates and some of the lowest test scores in the state.

Though West County's dropout rates are decreasing, as are the rates statewide, they are still the highest in the county, along with Pittsburg Unified. In the school year 1995-96 the dropout rate in West County was 2.9 percent of all students; the countywide rate was 2.2 percent.²³

Not unlike many urban school districts the WCCUSD constantly struggles with the challenges of an aging physical plant, non-

English speaking students and uninvolved parents.

The West County school district's bilingual, vocational and special education programs are out of line with California or federal guidelines, according to a state evaluation released Friday. The Coordinated Compliance Review, conducted every four years by the state Department of Education, cited the district for a lack of qualified teachers, not following teaching guidelines and having a number of struggling bilingual students. The review found 45 items to be out of compliance. In producing the report, state representatives visited eight schools during a nine-day span recently. The team evaluated Bayview Elementary, Ford Elementary, Montalvin Elementary, Tara Hills Elementary, Riverside Elementary, Crespi Junior High, Richmond High and Pinole Valley High.

At Verde Elementary School, asphalt is cracking, birds nest in holes in the ceiling and teachers have sent a note to students telling them it's not safe to drink the school's water. Parents are fed up. They say the West Contra Costa Unified School District is ignoring conditions at Verde in favor of other schools in wealthier neighborhoods. Administrators acknowledge Verde has problems, but they can't all be fixed at once. They say the school will be at the top of their list when they begin maintenance work next summer and emphatically deny they are ignoring the school.

The school, located at 2000 Giaramita St., serves students from kindergarten through sixth grade. It's in the heart of one of West County's poorest census tracts, with a median income of less than \$10,000 per year, census figures show. Contra Costa County's median income, by comparison, is \$45,087.

Parents and community leaders contend poverty, the fact that the school is in a relatively isolated corner of the district and that North Richmond residents

²² *Image Campaign, Marketing Richmond, 1996 Richmond Image Survey* (Richmond: VSW Associates, undated), 7

²³ West County Times, May 5, 1988

rarely complain about issues is contributing to the problems..²⁴

The link between the quality of schools, the value of property, and Richmond's image appears to be well-understood.

"People want to have their children in newer schools, and they want attractive facilities," said Virginia Finlay, a real estate agent with Century 21 in Richmond and a member of the city Planning Commission. "If we can improve our schools, people will want to live here."

The district's 1991 bankruptcy was a black eye for the entire West County region. Traced to a misguided reform effort, the district's financial collapse almost closed schools and did reduce salaries. The district suffered the embarrassment of being the first in the country to be bailed out by the state.

The district's problems were another hit to an area already hurting from a recession and Richmond's reputation as a high-crime area. In the six months following the bankruptcy, West County home prices tumbled 16 percent, and Richmond Chamber of Commerce officials say businesses looking to locate in the area because of its affordability and easy access decided it was not the best place and went elsewhere.

Officials with the Richmond Image Enhancement Committee said the financial breakdown has sometimes made it difficult to sell the city to prospective homeowners and businesses.

"The bankruptcy left a stain of incompetence and the perception that administrators did not know what they were doing," said Jehon Dotson, committee chairman. "But building a new school will show that the financial burden is being relieved and that there's a regrowth."

The bond measure has gained support from organizations that traditionally have opposed taxes, such as the Contra Costa County Taxpayers Association. Dennis Spaniol, executive director of the Council of Industries, said there is a connection between the quality of schools and the ability of students to learn.

"It's going to speak to the quality of the job applicants we're going to expect in future years," Spaniol said. "We're not talking about a Taj Mahal or an elaborate school, but students shouldn't have to worry about leaky roofs or bathrooms not working. We just want to take care of what we have."²⁵

3. Chemical Industries

After crime, drugs and violence, Richmond residence listed Chevron, oil refineries and chemical spills as things Richmond was best known for.²⁶ The mention of "Chevron" was never coupled with positive comments and was often given negative connotations, such as:

- *The Chevron refinery has a negative impact on our future. It used to be a very rich place.²⁷*
- *It [Richmond] has lots of chemical spills.²⁸*
- *It's known for the drugs, the danger, the Chevron refinery ...²⁹*
- *The refineries catch fire all of the time.³⁰*

²⁵ "School Bond Issue Facing Uncertainty, Foes Say The Schools Must Improve Academic Scores Before Seeking More Funds," *West County Times*, May 24, 1998

²⁶ *Image Campaign, Marketing Richmond, 1996 Richmond Image Survey* (Richmond: VSW Associates, undated), 7

²⁷ *Image Campaign, Marketing Richmond, 1996 Richmond Image Survey* (Richmond: VSW Associates, undated), 37-38

²⁸ *Image Campaign, Marketing Richmond, 1996 Richmond Image Survey* (Richmond: VSW Associates, undated), 37-38

²⁹ *Image Campaign, Marketing Richmond, 1996 Richmond Image Survey* (Richmond: VSW Associates, undated), 37-38

³⁰ *Image Campaign, Marketing Richmond, 1996 Richmond Image Survey* (Richmond: VSW Associates, undated), 37-38

²⁴ *West County Times*, December 27, 1997

In a 1997 *San Francisco Chronicle* poll of Contra Costa County residents, 62% said refineries pose a very serious or somewhat serious threat to their well-being and health. Fears ran highest in West Contra Costa, where 46% believe that the Chevron, Pacific and Tosco refineries pose a “very serious” risk to their health, compared with 26 and 27 percent, respectively, in central and eastern Contra Costa County. “The poll results deflate the hopes of oil company public relations crews, which have spent decades trying to reassure neighbors that the danger is minimal.”³¹

Richmond grew up as a community providing housing and commerce to support what is now the Chevron refinery and the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railroad, and during World War II, the Kaiser shipyards. This industrial legacy, which is concentrated on Richmond’s south and west extremities, has been a mixed blessing, overall, but a clear negative when it comes to image. Even with high visibility industry, Richmond is, like most East Bay cities, essentially a bedroom community with 73.7 per cent of its residents commuting to work outside Richmond.³² Even at the Chevron refinery, fewer than 10 per cent of the workforce is made up of Richmond residents. From an image standpoint, Richmond has to compete with other Bay Area communities without heavy industry.

Whether or not Chevron is an economic boon or a boondoggle for Richmond continues to be hotly debated. Chevron boosters are always quick to point out the large proportion of municipal taxes that are paid by Chevron, often erring on the side of embellishment with estimates as high as 30 per cent.

The total assessed value of Chevron and Chevron subsidiary property in Richmond is \$2,156,926,342.³³ The value of the refinery, alone, is approximately \$2 billion. While Chevron taxes are, in fact, a significant contributor to municipal coffers, they constitute only 17.2 per cent of the general fund and 7.3 per cent of the total operating budget. Furthermore,

Chevron is appealing over \$800 million of assessed value.

³¹ “Refineries a Worry to many,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 14, 1997

³² ABAG 1990 Census data,

<http://www.abag.ca.gov/cgi-bin/pickcensus.pl>

³³ Memo from Trina Jackson to City Council 5/23/97)

Chevron Share of Property and Utility Taxes

	Total Tax 1996-97	Chevron 1996-97 Share ³⁴	Projected Property tax 1997-98	Projected Chevron 1997-98 Share ³⁵
Secured Property	16,824,100		17,077,944	
Unsecured Property	1,041,052		997,091	
TOTAL PROPERTY		3,900,000		3,000,000
Utility Tax ³⁶	17,090,422	9,413,703	16,940,422	9,121,408

City of Richmond 1997-98 Budget

	Total Revenue	Proportion from chevron taxes	Chevron %
General Fund Budget	70,378,987	12,121,408	17.2
Non-General Fund Budget	93,968,385	0	0.0
TOTAL	164,347,372	12,121,408	7.3

***Summary of Chevron Property Tax
Appeals***

Appeal #	Applicant	Parcel #	Assessor Value	Applicant Value	Difference
961799	Chevron USA, Inc.	561-100-013	998,705,947	611,684,111	387,021,836
961800	Chevron USA, Inc.	561-100-040	997,797,766	576,172,425	421,625,341
TOTAL			1,996,503,713	1,187,856,536	808,647,177

³⁴ The City of Richmond allocation of property taxes is 28.59% (Memo from Trina Jackson to City Council 5/27/97)

³⁵ Memo dated 7/18/97 from Floyd T. Johnson and Marva Taylor to City Council

³⁶ The annual change in the Chevron utility tax under the maximum tax payable elective is a function of the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index, All Urban Consumers, San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose, Gas (piped) and Electricity (energy services), 1982-84 base = 100. The base amount was \$1,148,137 x 8 (%) = \$9,185,096. This is adjusted annually by 90% of the total percentage of two-year change in the Consumer Price Index. For 1995 to 1996, this was -3.11%, and from 1996 to 1997, this was -4.32%, or \$150,071.

4. Poverty

Although income, or lack thereof, was not specifically categorized as a serious problem in the *City of Richmond Image Survey*, unemployment did make the short list of the most serious problems. Since school test scores and crime are symptoms of an economically-challenged community, poverty has been added as an additional negative image breaker. By aggregated statistics, Richmond is by almost any measure a depressed area compared to its Bay Area neighbors. The November 1997 unemployment rate in Richmond was 7.8%, almost twice the Contra Costa County figure of 4.1% and more than twice the Marin County rate of 2.8%. Of all Contra Costa cities, only San Pablo is higher at 8.4%.³⁷

Of Richmond's approximately 90,000 residents, 9,662 are on AFDC, more than any other city in the East Bay, except Oakland and Hayward, both larger than Richmond. This constitutes 11 per cent of Richmond's population, compared to 2.8% for neighboring Hercules, 2.5% for Pinole, 1.0% for El Cerrito, and none for Kensington. Richmond shares a high percentage with only unincorporated North Richmond at 52.0%, San Pablo at 17.0% and Pittsburg at 13.0%.³⁸

5. Appearance

A recent article about a pioneer Richmond photographer who documented the black community during World War II described downtown Richmond as "blighted, with block after block of boarded-up stores." A San Francisco Examiner article picked up a similar theme in describing Richmond:

Rundown in some parts, well-maintained in others. In some sections,

³⁷ State of California, November 20, 1997, Employment Development Department Labor Market Information Division, 916-262-2162, labor force data for sub-county areas, (data not seasonally adjusted) <http://www.calmis.cahwnet.gov/file/lfmonth/contrsub.txt>

³⁸ "Welfare is Ending, So What Now?" *West County Times*, January 11, 1998 (Source: Contra Costa County Socioal Services Department, U.S. Census Family Service Centers in North Richmond and Bay Point)

the views of the Golden Gate and Mt. Tamalpais are spectacular.³⁹

A poor city does not have to be a run down city. Richmond has ample ordinances on the books to force property owners to keep buildings, grounds and vacant lots in presentable condition. Unfortunately, these are not well-enforced. A recent random inspection of local businesses found some 25 properties out of compliance with local ordinances regulating barbed wire, inoperative vehicles, unscreened outdoor storage, landscape maintenance, trash, garbage, debris, etc.⁴⁰ Virtually all of these properties were owned by persons who were not Richmond residents.

Systematic and committed enforcement of ordinances regulating the appearance and maintenance of property could pay huge dividends in improving both the reality and the perception of Richmond's appearance.

Richmond has certainly made improvements in nuisance abatement over the last five years, but the city may once again be slipping behind other more aggressive cities due to cumbersome ordinances and budget-cutting.

East Bay cities are cracking down on eyesores that blemish neighborhoods, turn off home buyers and businesses, and convey an image of blight. They're using every code enforcement tool available. They call on police, tax collectors and mortgage lenders to put some bite into official "friendly" cleanup requests. That bite is coming sooner rather than later as cities shorten the abatement process by a few costly steps.

"City fathers are realizing if you want to bring in business and make it attractive to businesses, you're going to have to make the city itself attractive," said Bill Davis, Antioch's neighborhood improvement coordinator. "One way to do that is code enforcement." Two

³⁹ "Richmond's Appeal," *San Francisco Examiner*, March 15, 1998

⁴⁰ Memorandum dated May 7, 1998, from Jack Judkins, Assistant City Attorney, to Councilmember Tom Butt, Status report - Abatement - Various Properties.

weeks ago, the Antioch City Council voted to no longer require a public hearing before ordering abatement of a property. Owners can still request a hearing. "It was very costly. It was just taking too darn long," said Davis. "Most of the cities are going to go to that way streamline the abatement process."

Concord also recently changed its cumbersome and paper-intensive nuisance complaints process, which required staff members to follow 13 steps from the receipt of a complaint to its abatement. The leaner approach eliminates a "show cause" hearing and another one before the City Council. Now, the city offers one hearing before a hearing officer, if requested. City costs in formal abatement cases are expected to drop from \$344 to \$163, and by a third when nuisances are cleared voluntarily, from \$97 to \$62. "We will not cut people as much slack as before. We're going to hold them to a higher expectation," said Richard Crawford, Concord's neighborhood preservation manager. "Most of the time, people clean up after one letter. The ones who don't respond promptly are few. But they tend to be the ones with the biggest messes."

Messes were a familiar thing in Pittsburg, which one code enforcement officer said looked like a war zone when she came to the city a few years back. A year ago, the city took a \$100,000 state grant to pay overtime to officers who would walk their neighborhood beats and identify code violations. All code violations, stressed Pittsburg Police Cmdr. Bill Hendricks, of the code enforcement bureau.

In most cities, complaints about blight go to city building inspection departments. "We're doing code enforcement, and that's vehicle code, housing code, tax and revenue code and muni code," Hendricks said. For instance, the state tax and revenue codes prohibit property owners from claiming certain tax deductions if they own substandard housing. "The

enforcement agency can notify the state Franchise Tax Board," Hendricks said. "Believe me, it gets the property owner's attention."

Another persuasive tool is holding owners to the terms of their mortgage contracts. Many stipulate the lendee will obey all state and municipal statutes. If the person allows a property to become a drug house or a public nuisance, Hendricks said, "they're in violation of their mortgage contract and we'll notify the mortgage company." "We're pretty creative here. We proceed aggressively against substandard properties criminally and civilly. We're taking a big strike at the problem of urban blight and substandard properties. The community message is: It's not OK to not take care of where you live." Those who ignore that message in Vallejo will soon find themselves fined tens of thousands of dollars.⁴¹

6. Homes and Property Values

Richmond joins Contra Costa communities of San Pablo, Pittsburg and Antioch in having the county's lowest property values. Richmond median home prices in October 1997 were \$148,000, lower than all other Contra Costa County cities except San Pablo at \$118,500, Pittsburg at \$125,909, and Antioch at \$146,000.⁴²

Richmond home prices have failed to recover since the recession of the early 1990's. While Contra Costa cities such as Lafayette show median home sales price increases of 12.75 percent between 1993 and March of 1998, Richmond prices decreased 9.9 percent. Only recently has the decline in Richmond prices shown a turn around.

⁴¹ "Aggressive Cleanups Sweeping East Bay, A Desire To Attract Home Buyers And Businesses Is Driving Some Cities To Crack Down On Perceived Blight And Neighborhood Eyesores, *West County Times*, April 4, 1998

⁴² California Association of REALTORS®; Transamerica Intellitech MetroScan®, <http://www.car.org/economics/housingdata/>

While housing prices boiled over in the poshest Contra Costa and Alameda county communities, prices in less fashionable neighborhoods fell. Nowhere is that difference more clear than in Contra Costa County. In Lafayette, median home prices jumped 14.9 percent last month, compared with the previous year, according to the real estate association. In Richmond, they rose only 7.9 percent last month. Meanwhile, in Antioch, median home prices dropped by about 1.8 percent.⁴³

If you are shopping for a home or apartment, Richmond offers many choices. The town has built housing in every decade of this century. For homes and apartments, many of them upscale, along the shore, drive to Point Richmond, marina Bay and Brickyard Cove (generally south of Interstate 580). Point Richmond has a lot of the old and quaint and the Richmond Plunge, a large indoor pool.

For blue-collar neighborhoods, well maintained, take a look at the streets around McBryde Avenue and around Carlson Avenue near Interstate 80. For modern suburbia, drive San Pablo Dam Road east into the country, and the neighborhoods around Hilltop Mall. For low-income housing, look min the neighborhoods in and near the old downtown.⁴⁴

LOCATION, LOCATION, location. Those are the three words that Realtors hold dear. They drive real estate prices and housing demand. A desirable neighborhood is worth plenty. That's why it is in everyone's best interest when property is kept in pristine condition.

Homes and businesses on a well-kept street are worth more than those on a not-so-well groomed one. A neighborhood gains a reputation good or bad based largely on how its occupants keep up appearances. When a vast majority of the houses or businesses are clean looking, nicely landscaped and void of trash and graffiti, it makes a difference. The reverse holds true as well. Homes with peeling paint, foot-high

⁴³ "Changing Places'" *West County Times*, May 3, 1998

⁴⁴

weeds and junk in the front yard will drive down property values.

When a whole community gets in the proper frame of mind, the image of an entire city can improve. Businesses will want to move there. People will clamor to buy homes there because the quality of life is superior, or at least it is perceived to be so.

That's why Bay Area cities such as Antioch, Concord, Pittsburg and Vallejo that are putting extra efforts into cleaning up eyesores and blight deserve support. They are getting results through code enforcement housing codes, vehicle codes, tax and revenue codes and muni codes. Requiring property owners to clean trash, upgrade substandard housing, as well as holding them accountable to fulfilling mortgage contracts is paying off. Cities are seeing improvements a parcel at a time.

The message is clear: It is wrong to not take care of where you live. The junk piles, the old trailers and clunker cars have gotta go.

Most neighborhoods have a few property owners who refuse to keep up their property. But municipalities are coming to realize that it doesn't just hurt the residents that live next door to the scofflaw. It degrades the whole neighborhood. And one too many eyesores can result in less tax revenue for the city when businesses choose to locate elsewhere because of rundown neighborhoods, downtowns and schools.

Cities are right to use every means in their power to improve their quality of life. Few want to live by a trash heap or a used car "lot." More power to cities making the extra effort to clean up their acts.⁴⁵

F. WHAT RESIDENTS LIKE ABOUT RICHMOND

Despite widely held negative perceptions of Richmond by its own residents, there are aspects of the city that are appreciated. These can form some of the building blocks of a foundation on

⁴⁵ "Cities Clean Up Their Act," *West County Times*, April 15, 1998

which a better Richmond and an enhanced image can be constructed.

1. Location and Affordability

In the 1996 *City of Richmond Image Survey*, residents reported that Richmond was best known for location (to San Francisco, Oakland, work, shopping, parks and/or events), affordability (to live, rent housing, purchase housing, and cost of living in general), neighbors (friendliness and willingness to help out others), weather, and diversity of the community.⁴⁶

2. Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods are a special strength in Richmond. The city has 35 neighborhood councils and neighborhood business associations, many of which have been active for 30 years or more. Each of these meets monthly, as does the Richmond Neighborhood Coordinating Council, which includes representatives from each of the neighborhoods. Many of the neighborhood councils publish monthly newsletters, which reinforce neighborhood identity and pride as well as providing outreach on civic issues to residents who do not attend all the meetings. Richmond has also successfully implemented a community policing program with strong ties to the neighborhood councils.

G. IMAGE ENHANCEMENT - A VISION OF WHAT RICHMOND COULD BE

There are a number of impediments to a Richmond that is not only perceived well but is also a city that works well and instills pride in a majority of its residents. Some of these problems, along with possible solutions are as follows:

1. City Structure

(a) Problem

Because of its geography, demographic diversity, and evolutionary development, Richmond lacks a coherent and recognizable physical structure. The city no longer has a recognizable or functional "main

street" or "downtown" that serves as a logical focus for civic events. The city's commercial centers are concentrated in several strips, such as San Pablo Avenue, 23rd Street, Cutting Boulevard, and San Pablo Dam Road. Hilltop Mall and the surrounding commercial developments are the closest things Richmond has to a traditional downtown, but the heart is just not there either.

Point Richmond is Richmond's "old town," but it seems to be more resented than embraced by the rest of the city. The city's newest neighborhoods in Hilltop, El Sobrante, and Marina Bay have no traditional "village centers." The Richmond Civic Center, though centrally located, is not easy to reach and serves primarily as a center of government and not as a center for a broad range of municipal activities.

(b) Solution

There are substantial opportunities to reinforce or create a coherent organization of the city and a sense of place. The City of Fort Collins has approached a similar challenge by developing a 20-year *City Structure Plan*⁴⁷ that gives meaning and form to the community's vision by defining and enhancing four basic kinds of places:

- Neighborhoods
- Districts
- Corridors
- Edges

These are not intended to be thought of as single-use "zones" in the sense of traditional land-use zoning patterns, but rather as distinct and diverse places that include mixtures of uses and activities.

One thing that Fort Collins, like many traditional cities, has and Richmond lacks is a definable "downtown."

A community is strengthened by an economically healthy town center or downtown combining commercial, cultural, civic and recreational uses. The centers should be linked to both

⁴⁶ *Image Campaign, Marketing Richmond, 1996 Richmond Image Survey* (Richmond: VSW Associates, undated), 7

⁴⁷ *City Structure Plan*, Fort Collins City Plan, Changes and Choices

*local and regional public transportation systems.*⁴⁸

*Residential neighborhoods also benefit from an appropriately-scaled center focus that enhances neighborhood identity and character. Neighborhood centers may include neighborhood civic and recreational uses such as parks, schools and branch libraries as well as retail and service businesses like banks to serve the needs of neighborhood residents.*⁴⁹

Richmond already has well-defined and strong neighborhoods with their identity reinforced by active neighborhood councils. An inventory should be made of each of these neighborhoods, listing their strengths and weaknesses and the changes required to make them fully functioning. Such physical facilities as schools, community centers, parks, and neighborhood retail and service businesses are important

2. Political Exploitation of Ethnicity

(a) Problem

For nearly ten years, the Richmond City Council has been unable to forge a working ability to tackle the city's most pressing challenges because of the political relationship that exists between the city's black leaders and Darrell Reese. Critical decisions involving the city's future are often made, not on the merits of the issues, but on whether or not Reese's industrial and development clients find them palatable. In a rare glimpse into the closely-held workings of the BMW-Reese partnership, former councilman Jim McMillan, a founder and a namesake of the BMW, stated earlier this year:

The Black Men and Women organization is being controlled by a "white, conservative Republican" who doesn't even live in the city, former City Councilman and BMW founder Jim

⁴⁸ Creating Livable Places (Los Angeles: Southern California Association of Governments, April 1996)

13

⁴⁹ undated), 7

⁴⁹ Creating Livable Places (Los Angeles: Southern California Association of Governments, April 1996)

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McMillan said Monday. "He's their Svengali, their guru."

*McMillan, who has endorsed Gioia, said he left BMW last year because he felt Reese had too much influence over the organization.*⁵⁰

The West County Times article elaborated on the claim by McMillin and Gioia that the city's pre-eminent black political organization is dominated behind the scenes by influential power broker Darrell Reese, who has intimidated the group into supporting his preferred candidate for Contra Costa supervisor. According to Gioia:

*Darrell Reese controls the endorsements of the BMW. If Darrell Reese wants to use the BMW to funnel money from industry to a candidate, that's a slap in the face of good democracy. This is exactly why the public is repulsed by politics.*⁵¹

In the Measure H campaign of the November 1997 election, the City Council split along Reese-BMW lines and was unable to forge a united front in support of critical city infrastructure needs. The pitch made to black voters was that the money was being targeted to white neighborhoods:

In a last-minute appeal to black voters, opponents of the Measure H city tax are charging that the proposal would provide no benefit to black neighborhoods while pouring millions into predominantly white Point Richmond.

The Black Men and Women political club and Richmond Fire Fighters union distributed a glossy flier Saturday claiming Measure H would "spend nothing in the black community."

⁵⁰ "Two Charge Reese With Using Influence, Richmond's Top Black Political Group Was Intimidated Into Endorsing His' Pick For Supervisorial Candidate, Politicians Say," *West County Times*, January 20, 1998

⁵¹ "Two Charge Reese With Using Influence, Richmond's Top Black Political Group Was Intimidated Into Endorsing His' Pick For Supervisorial Candidate, Politicians Say," *West County Times*, January 20, 1998

Darrell Reese, the firefighters' political consultant, said the flier was mailed to 7,000 to 8,000 households in predominantly black neighborhoods.

Henry Hornsby, president of the union, and Nat Bates, a founder of Black Men and Women , said Monday that Measure H unfairly benefits the predominantly white Point Richmond neighborhood

"From the perspective of the black community, (blacks) are not getting anything out of it," said Bates, a city councilman. Bates and Hornsby are black..⁵²

The inflammatory political nature of the issue and the exploitation of ethnic differences was later acknowledged when, according the West County Times,

Despite the flier, Bates and Hornsby admitted Monday that some of the projects in the measure would benefit the black community.⁵³

(b) Solution

Richmond will not be able to cope with the most pressing issues of vision and image until the influence of the Reese-BMW machine is broken. The city needs a new generation of young and independent-thinking black leaders who see that the success of every ethnic group is tied to the success of the city as a whole.

3. Inefficiencies in Municipal Government

(a) Problem

The City of Richmond, like many municipalities, and some private sector organizations, is divided into number of departments. There a number of examples of several departments performing parallel functions that could be consolidated into a single component involving the most qualified

⁵² "Blacks Urged To Vote No On H, Foes Say Only Whites Benefit," *West County Times*, November 4, 1997

⁵³ "Blacks Urged To Vote No On H, Foes Say Only Whites Benefit," *West County Times*, November 4, 1997

staff to achieve both cost savings and higher levels of efficiency, service and expertise.

One example that I am particularly familiar with involves the management, design, and implementation of construction projects. Consider the following:

- The Housing Authority contracts with architects and engineers, does some design and specifications in-house and manages construction projects. The Housing Authority also provides these services for maintenance type projects, such as re-roofing and painting/caulking.
- The Port of Richmond contracts with architects and engineers, does some design and specifications in-house and manages construction projects.
- Building Services does design and specifications in-house and manages construction projects, primarily maintenance type projects, such as re-roofing.
- The Public Works Department contracts with architects and engineers, does some design and specifications in-house and manages construction projects.
- The City Manager's Office directly contracts with architects and engineers and manages construction projects. Also under the City Manager is Building Regulations, which has staff architects and engineers (the City's only licensed architect and structural engineer) but has no involvement in other City departments' design and construction functions. Both Building Regulations and Public Works have building inspectors, but they don't get involved with each other's projects.
- The Planning Department is under the City Manager's Office, and has staff planners, as does the Redevelopment Agency.
- The Redevelopment Agency contracts with planners, architects and engineers and manages construction projects.

There are serious existing deficiencies in the leadership and technical resources available in some of these departments to perform the construction-related services that they take on. The results are cost overruns, poor quality of constructed projects, delays, claims, and inefficiency. The City of Richmond has also been slow to adopt new technology and "best practices" in the performance and delivery of

services. Other jurisdictions have been much more aggressive.

For example, in the early 1990's. Silicon Valley's decision process for permit approvals - whether the answer was yes, no, or maybe - was incredibly slow. Explained Robert Perlman, vice-president of Intel, "The eighteen months it took to get a building permit to expand an existing facility in Silicon Valley exceeded the time it took to design a new chp or to build a new facility elsewhere." With the help of volunteer process improvement experts from the private sector, Valley cities have re-engineered processes and slashed permit turnaround times while maintaining community safeguards. Today, public-private teams are piloting a Smart Permitting system so that companies can file applications for building permits on-line. Companies, planners, architects, and builders work on-line to monitor and consider modifications. In Richmond, the permit process (particularly in the Planning Department) is archaic and plagued with unnecessary duplication, plodding staff work and errors that frustrate both applicants and the community.

What seems to make infinitely more sense would be for the City to set up an in-house AEP (architecture-engineering-planning) component to provide the ability and expertise required for all the City's construction and infrastructure-related functions requiring planning, design, specifications, and construction administration/management. Each department would "contract" for required services from a group of "experts" rather than dispersing the work out to underqualified departmental staffers. This would be similar to the way City departments currently "contract" with the City Attorney's office for legal services.

Another example is recreation. Although the City has a Recreation Department under a Recreation and Cultural Services Manager under the Deputy City Manager for Community and Cultural Services, recreation activities are operated out of at least two other departments, the City Manager's Office and the Police Department. The City Manager's Office has run the North Richmond Baseball League since its inception, and the Police Department provides two full-time sworn police officers to staff the Police Activities League (P.A.L.). It would seem to make more sense to have a trained recreation professional and his staff to run all of the City's

recreational programs instead of dispersing them among several departments.

In a discussion I had just today with Patricia Jones, the City's Point Molate Project Director, it was discussed that the historic preservation-related concerns of the City were dispersed among at least three departments, the City Manager's Office, the Planning Department, and the redevelopment Agency.

(b) solution

In summary, the City should analyze all functions for repetitive or duplicative responsibilities and find a way to consolidate these into a single component that is staffed by the best and the brightest. That component would then provide the designated services to any City department having a need.

4. Infrastructure

(a) Problem

For both the long and short term, the capital improvement and major maintenance costs of the city's infrastructure will be a major budgetary item. A related concern is that a city with an insufficient or deteriorated infrastructure will suffer quality of life and image degradation, which, in turn, will adversely affect the city's ability to attract and retain revenue generating businesses and residents. Right now, we are in an infrastructure crisis.

(b) Solution

I recommend that the Arthur Anderson contract be amended to include a full infrastructure audit and evaluation. Richmond should also adopt a "facilities management" approach to managing municipal infrastructure, utilizing one of the many computer software systems available. See the web site <http://www.fmlink.com>.

Fixed Assets Audit - The unaudited estimate of the City's fixed assets are estimated at \$408 million.⁵⁴ The City does not have a fixed assets inventory as recommended annually by its

⁵⁴ General Purpose Financial Statement and Supplemental Information as of and for the Year Ended June 30, 1996 and Independent Auditor's Report, Deloitte & Touche, LLP,

auditor.⁵⁵ The release of an RFP to prepare such a report is scheduled for June of 1998. Although it may satisfy the accounting-related deficiencies of the next audit, it will not include the truly useful information that would be provided by a comprehensive evaluation of the condition and future capital and maintenance needs of the items surveyed.

Capital Improvement Plan - A five-year Capital Improvement Plan has not been prepared since June 26, 1996, and that plan was deficient in that it did not identify viable sources of funding;

Streets, Curbs, Gutters and Sidewalks - The City of Richmond has approximately 260 miles of streets with a replacement value of approximately \$260 million,⁵⁶ but there has been no activity with the Pavement Management System for several years, and there are no current plans for financing future pavement needs.⁵⁷ One of the City's most frequent and expensive claims paid is for sidewalk trip-and-falls and road damage to vehicles.

Urban Forest - There are approximately 10,500 street trees and 5,552 park or facility trees in the City of Richmond,⁵⁸ but an unknown proportion of them are in poor condition, are of inappropriate species, receive little or no maintenance, pose a liability threat to the city, and constitute a density under 1/3 the national average.⁵⁹

Wastewater Collection and Treatment - The Richmond Municipal Sewer District No. 1 serves approximately 60,000 residents with more than 300 miles of collector sewers, 20 sewage/stormwater lift stations, and wastewater treatment plant designed for a peak wet weather flow of 39.2 million gallons per day,⁶⁰ but there

is currently a funding shortfall of from \$6 million to \$16.5 million of maintenance and capital improvement projects required for the Richmond Municipal Sewer District No. 1 system to operate effectively. Frequent claims are paid for property damage resulting from storm and wastewater sewage. The District has insufficient reserves, and the sewer service fee has not been adjusted since FY 92-93.⁶¹ An evaluation is currently being made under a contract with:

Kennedy/Jenks Consultants
Don Weiden, Project Manager
303 Second Street, 10th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94107
415/243-2150
fax 415/896-0999

The 10-year program report was due the week of April 4, 1998, but will not come to the City Council until nearly June.

Parks and Recreational Facilities - The City of Richmond has approximately 248 acres of city-owned or city-leased parks and approximately 150,000 square feet of city-owned recreational buildings with another 16,000 proposed in the future,⁶² but the current City of Richmond standards for recreation and park facilities were prepared and adopted in the early 1960's and should now be updated,⁶³ and there are substantial deficiencies and deferred maintenance in the city's park facilities⁶⁴, including the Richmond Plunge.⁶⁵

Civic Center - The Richmond Civic Center buildings, including the City Hall, Hall of Justice, Art Center, Auditorium, Library and Engineering Building are approximately 50 years old and suffer from deferred maintenance, obsolete utility systems, poor interior space

⁵⁵ Letter dated November 20, 1996 from Deloitte & Touche, LLP, to Mayor and City Council

⁵⁶ Memo dated October 21, 1997 from Ikram Chaudry, City Engineer, to Floyd Johnson, City Manager

⁵⁷ Memo dated October 21, 1997 from Ikram Chaudry, City Engineer, to Floyd Johnson, City Manager

⁵⁸ *Urban Forest Management/Master Plan*, August, 1989

⁵⁹ *Urban Forest Management/Master Plan*, August, 1989

⁶⁰ Memo dated October 17, 1997 from Don Austin, Public Works Superintendent to Floyd Johnson, City Manager, and Letter dated September 28, 1997 from Thomas K. Butt, Coumncilmember, to Floyd Johnson, City Manager.

⁶¹ Memo dated October 17, 1997 from Don Austin, Public Works Superintendent to Floyd Johnson, City Manager, and Letter dated September 28, 1997 from Thomas K. Butt, Coumncilmember, to Floyd Johnson, City Manager.

⁶² *City of Richmond General Plan*, August 1994, Section E, Survey of Community Facilities

⁶³ *City of Richmond General Plan*, August 1994, Section E, Survey of Community Facilities

⁶⁴ Memo dated June 16, 1997, from Karen D. Mallonee, Recreation and Parks Commissioner, to City of Richmond Mayor and Councilmembers

⁶⁵ Memo dated August 29, 197 from Fred J. Clement, City Building Official, to Mayor and City Council

utilization, and seismic vulnerability. The Auditorium is operated as an enterprise fund but typically has a negative cash flow.

Corporation Yard - The City Corporation Yard includes an unreinforced masonry building and a hodge-podge of other buildings not laid out for optimum utilization, is located in a residential area, and has many code violations.

Fire Stations - Six of the City's fire stations are either obsolete or in need of seismic upgrades and gender accommodations, and the seventh (and newest) fire station (No. 63) has a defective floor. The floor is being investigated by:

Subsurface Consultants, Inc.
Robin Bartlett, PE, project Engineer
3736 Mt. Diablo Boulevard, Suite 200
Lafayette, CA 94549
510/299-7960
Fax 510/299-7970

A draft report was due on March 27, 1998, but has been delayed until nearly June of 1998.

Port of Richmond - The City's Port facilities suffer from obsolete and abandoned buildings and deferred maintenance, and the Port, as an enterprise fund, has a chronic negative cash flow and must be subsidized by the general fund. A consultant has been retained to prepare a business plan for the Port of Richmond:

Douglass S. Lathrop
412 Montecillo Road
San Rafael, CA 94903
415/479-5146
fax 415/479-5521

A rough draft was to be completed about April 19, 1998, and the final report submitted before the end of May, 1998. The work is not complete.

5. Richmond Marina

(a) Problem

The Richmond Marina is currently being operated at a loss of approximately \$700,000 per year that has to be subsidized by the general fund. A study of alternatives to solve the negative cash flow is being conducted by:

Ward Realty Advisors, Inc.
Attn: James Reagan

1900 South Bundy Drive, Suite 500
Los Angeles, CA 90025
310/979-3850

The study was scheduled to be completed by April 3, 1998, but the final version has been delayed indefinitely.

(b) Solution

No solution is in sight.

6. Performance Measurement of Municipal Services

(a) Problem

Richmond has no effective means for measuring the delivery of municipal services.

(b) Solution

The high standard of performance set by industries in Japan and elsewhere has increased competition and forced American firms to re-engineer the way they do business. Public managers, faced with declining budgets and cynical voters, have taken note and begun to put into practice some of the concepts found in books like *In Search of Excellence* and *Out of the Crisis*. In particular, as David Osborne and Ted Gaebler's *Reinventing Government* points out, municipal governments across the country have taken the lead in developing new methods of providing--and measuring--services.

This interest in performance has been supported by several related developments. The continuing squeeze on municipal budgets has demanded greater efficiency in service delivery, and encouraged local governments to consider introducing competition into service delivery. In turn, competitive bidding requires useable measurements of performance. In gathering performance data, public managers are also able to take advantage of dramatic changes in information technology which have occurred in the last fifteen years, changes which have helped spur more sophisticated, more reliable, and more cost-effective data gathering and analysis.

As the trend to performance measurement, and ultimately performance budgeting and management continues, more and more public managers are beginning to seek answers to their own particular performance challenges. The

report *Performance Measurement of Municipal Services: How are America's Cities Measuring Up?* began in the summer of 1994 as a special project for one such group of managers in the City of Philadelphia's Finance Department. Michael G. Turner, a student intern in the Department, participated in that project, and it subsequently evolved into his thesis at the University of Pennsylvania.

This report, an adaptation of Turner's thesis, attempts to define some of the difficult issues related to performance measurement and collects current information from eighteen municipal governments to understand how performance measurement is defined and carried out in each of these cities. The Pennsylvania Economy League-Eastern Division (PEL) a public policy research organization in Philadelphia, has published this report in the hope that its survey of the "state of the art" in municipal performance measurement provides public managers with a better sense of the practical possibilities of the art.

In discussing performance measurement, several issues have emerged that must be addressed by every city considering their implementation. What can performance measurement do? What are its advantages, disadvantages, and limitations? What is its role within government? This study has found that American cities are extremely varied in their approaches to performance measurement. The differential in method is the result not of a lack of consensus on what performance measurement is or what the components of a successful system look like. Rather, the diversity found in systems is due to differences in the nature of cities and a lack of knowledge regarding actual implementation.

Among this study's findings are that:

- Experience counts. Generally, the longer a system is in place, the more effective it is. Some newer efforts are also doing quite well, perhaps due to the fact that performance measurement is now coming to the forefront of policy discussion.
- A considerable factor in successful systems is the people running them. In governments like Sunnyvale, performance measurement is part of the public culture.
- Performance measurement is a tool. To be useful, it needs to be easy to handle, precise, and responsive--in this case entailing

simplicity of data presentation, proper targeting of what to measure, and the ability to make changes in response to data.

- Performance measurement is, at best, only a tool. As such, it should assist a person in performing tasks, not become a task itself.
- Performance measurement is not meant to supplant planning and analysis by city managers. Managers must realize that perfect measures might never be developed. These individuals must review the information they receive and weigh it against their professional judgment when making decisions.
- Performance measurement, like all tools, does change to some extent the environment in which it exists and the work done in relation to it. Such an effect is unavoidable.

In light of these findings and the increasing fiscal pressures facing local governments, the following recommendations are made to improve the use and effectiveness of performance measurement in municipal governments:

- The kinds of benchmarking activities conducted as part of this study should be continued both in academia and in the public sector.
- The dearth of knowledge and experience regarding performance measurement implementation should be diminished through the dissemination of research information such as that presented here.
- Managers pursuing this work should utilize telecommunications advances such as the Internet to develop relationships--such interaction is the key ingredient to innovation.

I have ordered a copy of the report by E-mail: pel@libertynet.org from:

Pennsylvania Economy League, Inc.
Eastern Division
One Commerce Square
2005 Market Street, Suite 900
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Phone: (215) 557-4434
Fax: (215) 557-4450

Another great resource may be found on the web site Performance Measurement in Government at <http://www.city.grand-prairie.ab.ca/perform.htm>. It lists hundreds of resources related to

performance measurement in municipal government, and has the following summary:

Key Principles:

- Acceptance of the measurement process is essential to its success as a performance improvement tool. Like Strategic and Business Planning, the process by which you determine what to measure, how to measure, and how to utilize the measures is more important than the actual product itself.
- The audience/user and purpose must be clearly defined. Who are the customers and end-users for the measurement system? What are their requirements? What do they feel they need from measurement to help them do a better job managing, problem-solving, and decision-making?
- The greater the participation in the process of creating a performance measurement system, the greater the resulting performance change, and the greater the ease of implementation of future changes based upon performance measurement. (Morris, 1979). This participation includes Employees, Management, Senior Administration, Council and the Electorate. Measures must be seen to have value well beyond the task performance level. Performance measurement and reporting thus becomes not only an accountability tool, but also an advocacy tool. (Allen, 1985).
- Measurement is hard and complex. Once we accept this, measurement can become less difficult. A complete and effective system of performance measurement will require years of consistent, incremental work to achieve. One of the reasons performance measurement is difficult is that these measures were not available historically; and the resulting uncertainty dampens enthusiasm substantially for some individuals and groups. Further, it is complicated by the fact that there is no generally accepted "bottom line" in civic government because there is no scientific or analytical measurement that indicates the relative benefit to society of, for example, more hospital beds, less toxic waste, less family violence, more reforestation or better public transit. (Allen, 1985).
- Measurement of any kind will affect the behavior of individuals within the organization [for better or for worse]. It has nearly universal capacity to focus attention. Management needs to recognize their obligation to monitor and direct the resulting changes in focus. Reporting performance measures will also affect the behavior of Senior Administration, Council and the Electorate.
- One suggestion is to adopt an experimental approach to measurement systems development in order to drive out fear. Eliminate the use of numerical goals, work standards and quotas. Numerical measures are often achieved, even when improvement is not. (Deming, 1986). Deming, of course, is W. Edwards Deming, a page and extensive references for whom can be found at the Clemson Continuous Improvement Website at:
<http://denning.eng.clemson.edu/pub/psci/>.
- Central Principle: It is NOT "the right measures." Instead, it is a process and culture for choosing, using and revising measures to assist employees in focusing on achieving continuous improvement over the long run.
- Do not make a commitment to measurement, benchmarking, TQM or any other process or program, nor to the reporting of heroic results, nor to assigning the blame. Instead, make a commitment to service delivery improvement [the latter implies changing the way we do things (usually cooperatively and in a spirit of good will), adding new activities and deleting old (sometimes favorite) activities].
- David Osborne and Peter Plastrik, in Banishing Bureaucracy: the five strategies for reinventing government, in the chapter on the "Consequences Strategy," say:
- "We have not listed performance measurement as an approach because we do not believe that the act of measuring itself has enough power to force fundamental change in most public organizations. It is a critical competence organizations need if they are to use the consequences strategy, But some public organizations have measured performance for years, with virtually no impact." [P. 132, their emphasis.]
- Aim to improve the things which will make a difference (those with large costs, large customer value, substantial consequences, etc.).

- Measure what employees can translate into direct corrective action. Measuring global hunger is interesting and is of monumental importance, but few can apply any direct correction.
- Measure what's important strategically (or what is of value to customers), not just what is easy to measure, or already being measured.
- Measure group and team outputs, not individual outputs. Individual performance cannot be measured except over the very long run. (Deming). Deming, of course, is W. Edwards Deming, a page and extensive references for whom can be found at the Clemson Continuous Improvement Website at: <http://deming.eng.clemson.edu/pub/psci/>.
- Have the team that produces the result develop the measures, perform the measurements and report the results.

Caveats:

- Remember: Measurement at its best only tells you something about the history of your performance.
- Remember: no matter how well an employee's work is planned, managed and measured, the outcome will depend much more on how passionate the employee is concerning the work.
- Remember: the word entrepreneurial doesn't mean outsourcing; it means continuously shifting activities away from those with lower returns and toward those with higher returns.
- Remember: problems related to an organization's output are much more often related to poor management of the systems than to poor performance. An excellent manager's superior interpersonal and leadership skills have much greater potential to foster continuous improvement than does performance measurement.
- Remember: it is easy to measure the trivial. It is much more difficult to measure what is truly important, and in an objective way.
- Remember: increased focus on individual employee performance produces decreased focus on responsibility to the team and the organization. Intense focus on individual performance encourages competition at the expense of cooperation. ["Equipment and files just disappeared, sometimes for weeks at a time, when individuals hoarded them for

- their projects. They made their gains; but the team and the organization lost much more."]
- Remember: Outstanding performance has to make a difference (in recognition). If everybody is treated the same when it is all said and done, then in the long run performance will never become outstanding.
- Remember: that nowadays successful management: (a) completes the right task on time and within budget, (b) builds and strengthens the team, (c) develops the individual and (d) fosters continuous improvement.

Related Principles:

- The goal is to design, develop and successfully implement measurement systems that share information such that continuous performance improvement is supported and enhanced.
- The measurement system must clearly fit into the management process and be acknowledged as decision-making and problem-solving aimed at performance improvement support.
- An effective measurement system must build upon consistent and well understood operational definitions for the seven performance criteria (effectiveness, efficiency, total quality, productivity, quality of work life, innovation, and profitability/budgetability).
- The unit of analysis/target system must clearly be defined in order for measurement to succeed. An input/output analysis is a necessary precondition.
- The process of measurement must clearly be separated from the process of evaluation.
- Measure intermediate-term outcomes as well as longer-term outcomes. Set dates for revision of intermediate-term outcomes to reinforce the perception of their temporary status.
- Do not stop with measurement. Take time to analyze results of measurement, changes in behavior, etc. Take time to communicate results, propose improvements, persuade others of the value of the proposed improvements. Reward sound employee initiatives which are not adopted as well as those which are. Remember, it is the processes and the culture and the structures for focusing attention on continuous improvement which contain the long-term big payoffs we are seeking (not just the

- immediate improved results for a specific case).
- Take time to analyze the real causes of the improvements. Adjust effectiveness measures accordingly.
- Balance the degree of management control over the processes being measured with the desirability of measuring outcomes (rather than outputs or inputs). Generally, the measurement of items purely under management control (usually only inputs) or pure global outcomes (usually substantially beyond management control) are not nearly as useful as measures which strike a balance.
- Encourage comment/analysis in measurement reporting. Special circumstances need to be visible along with measures of performance (especially where the measures anticipated only the routine case).
- Control-oriented measurement systems often hinder continuous improvement efforts.
- Measurement is often resisted due to perceptions (real or imagined) of negative consequences. Visibility of good performance leads to diminished resources. Visibility of bad performance leads, initially, to more resources, but eventually to punishment. Visibility of performance therefore often leads to crisis catering, more measurement, micro-management [and little lasting improvement].
- What is needed is not a standard set of measurements created by experts or obtained from a "shopping list" that are imposed on the organization, but rather a method by which measurement teams and their various clienteles create and continually modify performance measurement systems suited to their own inevitably special needs and circumstances. (Morris, 1975).
- Any system should result in a vector of performance measures, not in attempting to achieve a single measure. Much of the controversy and lack of acceptance stems from attempts to make a very complex problem appear too simple. (Morris, 1975). [A corollary here is that the simplistic measure just causes people to focus more on the simplistic view of the problem, usually causing an imbalance of effort that produces results that are worse than the results obtained before the measurement was introduced.]

- A performance measurement system must not appear to those involved as simply a passing fad. (Morris, 1975).
- A useful system must be seen by those whose behaviors and performances are being assessed as being non-manipulative and non-gamed.

7. Richmond as a Place to Visit

(a) Problem

One of the strongest associations outsiders make with a city is that related to the city as a destination for cultural, recreational, and entertainment. The image of a city as a desirable place to live or visit can be related to the quality or quantity of such destinations. The public relations and advertising efforts and expenditures of individual attractions bolsters that image. Richmond has never exploited these types of attractions as a matter of municipal strategy.

Richmond has failed to exploit the full potential, both actual and perceptual, of its waterfront location on San Francisco Bay. Richmond began as a modest port, and its most significant growth spurts were a direct result of seafaring activities. The rich history of the Chevron Refinery, the western terminus of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, and the giant Richmond Kaiser Shipyards have been all but forgotten. Each of these could, however, form the basis for museum displays, history tours, and publicity that could actually attract visitors to Richmond and contribute to an image enhancement campaign.

(b) Solution

There are a number of opportunities for exploitation and marketing of existing attractions. There are already two non-profit history associations active in Richmond, the Richmond Museum Association and the Point Richmond History Association.

1) History

There is a lot of history in Richmond, but there has never been an effort to recognize it and market it in a cohesive and strategic manner. Some of the attractions that could be developed and marketed as a "Richmond History Tour" include:

- *Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad* - As the terminus of a transcontinental railroad, Richmond could encourage development of a railroad museum focusing on Richmond's role in early 20th Century transportation. A suitable building would be the smaller of the two historic depot buildings slated for demolition in the Santa Fe yards. It could be moved to Point Richmond and refurbished.
- *Chevron Refinery* - As the Bay Areas largest and oldest refineries, artifacts and interpretive exhibits could be incorporated into an "Oil Museum" that could be located at Chevron, Point Molate, or Point Richmond.
- *Ford Assembly Plant* - Listed on the National Register of Historic Places and slated for rehabilitation, this building could include a small transportation museum. The Richmond Museum already has the first car produced. Other cars and military vehicles produced here could be collected and exhibited, perhaps as a part of a theme waterfront restaurant.
- *Point Richmond National Historic District* - For years the City has neglected, fought, and ignored this asset. There are no signs directing visitors here, no pamphlets showing "walking tours," and no interpretive exhibits. There is a lot of unexploited potential.
- *Kaiser Shipyards* - At one time this was the largest production shipyard in the world. With the "Rosie the Riveter" project, there is finally some public recognition, but much more could be done, building on the Rosie theme. The City Council has already authorized National Register and State Historic Landmark nominations, and the *Red Oak Victory* will be coming back to Richmond. There are some great historical films telling the story of the shipyards. The migration of African-American shipyard workers from Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana during the early 1940's is a significant historical event that has never been fully recognized.
- *Point Molate* - Also listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Point Molate, with its incomparable waterfront location and easy freeway access can be a true destination spot if properly developed. The wine-related themes, an inn built around the winery workers village and its history as a Chinese shrimp camp are already suggested ideas that have a lot of promise. There is a related opportunity to tie in the entire Point San Pablo Peninsula as an integrated recreation attraction with waterfront trails, hiking in open space, historical interpretive exhibits featuring the sardine canneries, petroleum products shipping, the whaling station and *East Brother Light Station*.
- *East Brother Light Station* - This attraction is an example of how an historic property in Richmond can be a successful tourist attraction. For the last 15 years, East Brother has operated as a successful bed and breakfast inn, charging nearly \$300 per night per room for dinner, bed and breakfast. The island is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a California Registered Historic Landmark.
- *Native Americans* - There are a large number of Native American archaeological sites along the Richmond shoreline. Although the sites, themselves, cannot be opened to the public, interpretive exhibits, such as the one in the lobby of the Richmond P G & E Service Center could be located in various buildings related to the Richmond History Tour.
- *Pullman Shops* - There are some significant African-American historical sites related to the former Pullman Shops in Richmond. Ethyl Dotson has been seeking, for several years, City assistance to help preserve an old hotel used by Pullman Porters.

2) Recreation

Similar to the opportunities to exploit history are opportunities to market cohesively Richmond's waterfront-related recreational opportunities.

- *Richmond Shoreline Trail* - There are parts of this in place already, including the Marina Bay Esplanade, the Marina Bay - Point Isabel Trail, Wildcat Creek Trail and Access, Point Pinole Regional Park, and Miller-Knox Regional Park. The City could make the completion and marketing of these trails a priority, tied in with other waterfront-related attractions. Events

- drawing Bay Area-wide attention, such as bicycle races, runs, festivals, boating events and inn-to-inn hiking could be promoted.
- *Boating* - Richmond has four yacht and boating clubs, the best known and largest of which is the Richmond Yacht Club. The Richmond Yacht Club produces world-class competitive sailors, hosts international sailing competitions, and teaches young people to sail - some of who go on to become Olympic class competitors. There is little recognition of boating and sailing by the City and little recognition of what Richmond has to offer in the media.
 - *Islands* - Richmond has four islands, more than any other city on San Francisco Bay -- Brooks Island, Red Rock Island, East Brother Island and West Brother Island. An *Islands of Richmond* theme, built around boating, sailing, wildlife viewing, hiking, etc., could become a powerful marketing slogan.
 - *East Bay Regional Parks* - Richmond has, or is a staging area, for some of the most visible regional parks, including Miller Knox (shoreline), Point Isabel (shoreline), Pt. Pinole (shoreline), Kennedy Grove, Wildcat Canyon. Who thinks of Richmond as a "City of Parks."

Park

	<u>Area in Acres</u>
ParkAcres	
Wildcat Canyon Regional Park	2,428
Sobrante Ridge Regional Preserve	277
Brooks Island Regional Shoreline	373
Miller-Knox Regional Shoreline	259
Point Isabel Regional Shoreline	21
Point Pinole Regional Shoreline	2,147
TOTAL	5,505

3) Culture

There are several regionally-recognized cultural attractions in Richmond that could be more cohesively marketed. Lumping them together as a "Richmond Cultural Association" could offer publicity and marketing advantages for all.

- *Richmond Art Center* - This facility and its staff and exhibitors are known outside Richmond perhaps more so than locally.

- *East Bay Center for the Performing Arts* - What about bringing this organization into the Civic Center to use the auditorium facilities in a fashion similar to the Richmond Art Center. Together, they could comprise the "Richmond Cultural Center," offering a full program of every art form and solving the City's perennial problem about what to do with the auditorium. The whole will worth more than the sum of the parts.
- *Masquers Playhouse* - This is another regionally-recognized non-profit organization that routinely draws hundreds of persons weekly who not only come to Richmond but also patronize local restaurants.

8. Economic Development

(a) Problem

Although Richmond's strongest economic development prospects are concentrated in the shoreline band, there has been no concentrated effort to strategically link these prospective opportunities. Economic Development in Richmond over the last several years has focused almost exclusively on the area along the Richmond parkway and the shoreline area south of Interstate 580.

Hoping to spark a renaissance along its south shore, the City of Richmond is aggressively marketing three parcels that could hold nearly 1 million square feet of commercial development and an upscale housing complex.⁶⁶

City policies in the shoreline area are in disarray and in conflict. For example, while expending considerable resources toward the development of Point Molate as an upscale location for high-tech or consumer-oriented businesses such as wineries and conference centers, we are seeking to degrade the same area with a new tanker terminal and a tank farm.

(b) Solution

⁶⁶ "Richmond Rolls out its 'Riviera,'" *San Francisco Business Times*, February 6-12, 1998

The shoreline will be Richmond's salvation. This is where new business, commerce, recreation, culture and housing will change Richmond and change the way we are perceived by others. Although Richmond's housing values are close to the bottom in the county, the waterfront offers an attractive alternative to upscale buyers looking for a view.

Across the bay in Point Richmond, a three-bedroom, 3,200 square-foot home is on the market for \$895,000. The bay laps at the pilings, and the owners can cruise a boat up to the back door. Although Angel Island blocks the view of the Golden Gate Bridge, the house has views of the Richmond-San Rafeal and the Bay bridges. Then there are the Tanker ships and the oil tanks. "That's part of the charm," said real estate broker Margi Cellucci. "You get used to the big ships going in and out."

"Most of the people enjoy the view," said Celluchi. "They also enjoy the lifestyle. It's quiet. It's peaceful, and even though it's in Richmond, it's very secure."⁶⁷

H. FORMING A VISION AND IMPLEMENTING A STRATEGIC PLAN

1. Leadership for Visioning and Planning

Richmond lacks both a vision of its future and a strategic plan to achieve that vision. We have many programs in Richmond, pursued by public, private and non-profit organizations that are intended to achieve worthy results. These include job-creation, employment training, economic development, youth activities, festivals, etc. As worthy as these are, they are each pursued independently rather than in the context of a larger strategic plan.

The City Council's primary responsibility should not be to simply make policy and act on agenda items at public meetings. It should be to determine and achieve citizens' desires for the community's future. The City Council should envision the future, providing leadership that starts with vision and evolves to defining the strategic issues that must be mastered to achieve

⁶⁷ "Rooms with a View," *San Francisco Business Times*, April 3-9, 1998

this vision. The next step is development of long range goals that address strategic issues and provide a decision-making and budgetary focus for the successful implementation of goals. In Richmond, we have lived from one annual budget to another and from one council meeting to the next, condemning the community and its future to happenstance and the type of thinking that has crippled national government and policy.

As leaders thinking and acting strategically, City Council members need to focus on the future, engaging the community's commitment to a desired future through creating a vision or picture of what must be achieved. Vision is a sensible and appealing picture of the future that rivets the entire community's attention and enables it to put the priorities of the future over the demands of the present as the basis for decision making and resource allocation. This vision should motivate people to take action to bring about change, provide a context for coordinating all sectors of the community to work toward fulfillment of the vision.

Leadership can be defined as having two essential elements: wishbone and backbone. It's relatively easy to create a vision, strategies and goals, and communicate all these throughout the community. But the backbone comes from creating the will and having the skills to carry out the strategies and goals necessary to achieve the vision.⁶⁸

Vision is not enough. Without a feasible and well thought out approach to achieving the vision, it will be only a pipe dream or hollow aspiration. Strategy and related goals provide the logic and details that show how a vision will be accomplished over time. Communication of the vision to the community so that it is understood and embraced is one of the most critical strategic elements. In order for a strategic plan to work, key players from the community must be on board, skills and insight must be developed or available, credibility must be maintained and the community's leaders must work in partnership with each other and the entire community.

2. Look for Models

⁶⁸ "Municipal Strategic Planning, From Vision, to Goals, to Implementation," *Nation's City Weekly*, February 16, 1998

Chattanooga - There are a number of cities that have historical and demographic commonality with Richmond that have remade themselves. For example, Chattanooga, TN, population approximately 150,000, was an old industrial city with high unemployment, decaying urban core, air pollution, and seemingly nothing going for it. An inspired and forward-looking city council teamed up with the business community, and, with extensive citizen participation, remade the city. Here are some representative media stories about how Chattanooga remade itself:

- *Istanbul, Turkey (June 5, 1996) -- Air pollution was once so thick in Chattanooga that residents often could not see the mountains that ring the city, and federal authorities declared it the dirtiest city in the United States. Three decades later, the metropolitan area of 450,000 has cleaned up its air and its act, passing Environmental Protection Agency standards and winning international praise as America's best turnaround story.*

At its conference for urban problems, the United Nations recognized Chattanooga municipal authorities Tuesday for the cleanup initiatives. Among them: developing natural resources, expanding green areas and pedestrian sites, installing an electric bus system and beginning a project on affordable housing.

"We started from the point of clear recognition that the governments could not do it alone and invited participation from public and private sectors to achieve our goals," said David Crockett, a city councilman. Figuring out how to use the same approach elsewhere is one of the focuses of the city summit, which opened here on Monday. Grassroots activists, mayors and government delegations from countries around the world are attending.

The United Nations recognized 12 civic projects Tuesday, selected

from 640 submissions from 91 countries." Best practices represent change in terms of broad-based participation, which means true partnership of communities, private and public enterprises," U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said at the awards ceremony.

- *Chattanooga and nine other cities have been named in the May-June issue of Utne Reader to the magazine's list of "The Ten Most Enlightened Towns in America."*

"Chattanooga's progress, past and present, demonstrates that problems, however onerous, needn't defeat people who care," said the magazine.

"Our list is not meant to be a tipsheet pointing to cities that have luckily sidestepped the problems of modern life," said Utne Reader's editor, Hugh Delehanty. "Rather, we chose communities that we think are dealing creatively with the challenges they face, places that can provide inspiration and practical ideas about how to improve life in your hometown."

- *Chattanooga, TN
The Sustainable Blue Collar Town*

When the Clean Air Act went into effect in 1970, Chattanooga was dubbed the most polluted city in America, a place where people drove with headlights on in the daytime and came down with tuberculosis at three times the national average. So it came as quite a surprise to us that Chattanooga (population 152,000) is now being hailed as a model of sustainable community development.

Early achievements included a revitalized downtown characterized by historic theaters, small inns, and a five-mile waterfront park where abandoned factories once stood.

Known as Riverwalk, this park eventually will be part of a 75-mile network of city greenways. The \$45 million Tennessee Aquarium opened in 1992 and attracted 1.5 million visitors its first year to a former no-man's land. Every bag of popcorn consumed in the new downtown multi-screen cinema helps fund the free electric (quiet, no exhaust) downtown shuttle bus system. (The model plan has been exported to Costa Rica.) And now that Chattanooga has cleaned up its air, there are plans for zero-emissions industrial zone that would transform a blighted industrial area into a mixed-use district of homes and business.

Environmental racism has been a sorry chapter of Chattanooga's story. A 1991 report showed that a day care center in a predominantly African-American community was within 300 yards of six toxic waste sites, and the grossly polluted Chattanooga Creek ran through other black neighborhoods. The Vision projects tapped local activists, both black and white, to tackle some of these problems, and the African-American community has been highly involved in creating the city's sustainable agenda.

Current projects include reclaiming the 7,000-acre Volunteer Site, once the world's largest TNT plant, designated for reuse as an eco-industrial park. An older TNT site is now a testing plant for natural biological technologies, such as the use of cattails and elodea to cleanse contaminated groundwater. The long-defunct Ross-Mehan Foundry, a 1920s-vintage eyesore, will become an open-air public pavilion, part of the revamping of the poor Southside neighborhood.

Chattanooga's progress, past and present, demonstrates that problems, however onerous,

needn't defeat people who care. Come visit the city the Washington Post described as "well on its way to becoming the prettiest city for its size in America."

We offer a rich combination of world-famous family attractions, museums, restaurants, shopping centers, accommodations, convention facilities, special events and nightlife. Browse these pages to find out everything Chattanooga has in store for you.

Suisun City - is an aging industrial and transportation center, population approximately 26,000, that has remade itself in the last decade, gaining nationwide recognition:

- *By the 1980s, Suisun City was staring trouble in the face. With many empty storefronts, Main Street had become a decaying backwater. At the head of Suisun Channel, an ugly oil refinery polluted the channel's estuary and nearby groundwater. Rundown and abandoned warehouses lined the channel, blocked access to the waterfront, and were a blight on Main Street and the historic residential district in Old Town. Several blocks away, the Crescent neighborhood had become an overcrowded crime-ridden slum.*
- *But look what happened while no one was looking. One town-Suisun City, California, with 26,000 residents located 44 miles northeast of San Francisco in fast-growing Solano County-took these principles to heart and has become a showcase of new urbanism: an ethnically diverse working- and middle-class population; a reinvented community rather than an all-new development; and a remarkable example of cooperation among city government, architects, planners, residents, local businesses, and real estate developers.*

In less than five years, Suisun City has completed over half a dozen redevelopment projects. Working closely with San Francisco-based Roma Design Group, the Suisun City Redevelopment Agency has launched the revival of the historic Main Street, built the Town Plaza, rebuilt the waterfront, replaced a crime-ridden slum with a traditional-looking pedestrian-oriented neighborhood, and created a functioning multimodal transit hub. Other redevelopment projects will be completed this year or are on the drawing board.

- *In 1989, the City focused on the preservation and re-development of Old Town Suisun and its waterfront to recreate the bustling old-fashioned town of Suisun's heyday. As a result, the City has succeeded in building a new Marina, Town Plaza and new neighborhoods. Businesses are returning to the waterfront and a renewed sense of civic pride has taken shape in the Historic Old Town area.*

Future projects commencing in 1996 include Marina Phase II construction of the seawall and extension of the Harbor, new businesses and restaurants along the waterfront, the opening of the "Harbor Theater", and construction of "Live/Work" dwellings adjacent to the Marina. The 4-lane widening of Highway 12, which bisects the city, will also be completed in Spring of 1997.

The Suisun City Redevelopment Agency has spearheaded a comprehensive plan to rejuvenate Suisun City from top to bottom, with special emphasis on its heart - the Waterfront in Old Town. The plan, now in its seventh year, has already breathed new life into many areas of the City, recapturing Suisun's former vitality as a charming waterfront community and a lively economic center.

- *Suisun City has been featured in a number of National Publications and in a PBS Documentary, "Back from the Brink", because of its unique approach to redevelopment. Take a look at the May 1995 Urban Land's article, "New Urbanism in the Real World", by Charles Lockwood.*

Besides an expanded boat launch facility, the waterfront features a new full-service public marina with 150 concrete berths and a 350' guest dock, and the adjacent Harbor Plaza equipped with an outdoor stage and state-of-the-art sound system. Over 160,000 square feet of retail space is available for development adjacent to the new Marina Office and Plaza, and at the North Basin of the Suisun Channel. A lighted and landscaped promenade winds its way along the water, connecting the elements of the waterfront for easy access and enjoyment. The revitalized waterfront area is fast becoming a favorite place for residents and visitors to stroll along the water, go fishing or biking or boating, do a little shopping, or enjoy a meal.

Much of the groundwork for the revitalization has been done. The Channel has been dredged and a permanent dredge disposal site has been approved, assuring a navigable waterway for future generations. Aging, sinking docks have been replaced by concrete berths and many amenities including restrooms and showers have been added. A crime ridden neighborhood has been entirely removed and rebuilt, and a cluster of dilapidated warehouses have been razed. Street infrastructure, some pipes dating from the early 1900's, has been replaced and additional parking with landscaping has been created, preparing the commercial pads for development. A program to assist in refurbishing the historical buildings along Main Street has

been implemented and the Rail Station, offering several forms of commuter transportation, has been completely renovated, preserving the historical facility.

Pasadena - The City of Pasadena has adopted a "Quality of Life Index for Pasadena" developed by a cross-section of citizens. The Index not only measures the existing quality of life but is also used to allocate municipal resources and set priorities. The *Quality of Life Indicators* are used in the performance-based budget process. The ten areas are:

- The Environment
- Health
- Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
- Education
- The economy and employment
- Housing
- Arts and Culture
- Recreation and open space
- Transportation
- Community Safety

3. Schools

There are signs that innovation, leadership, and persistence can overcome traditional performance roadblocks. Recent test score results raise some interesting points. For example, Montalvin Elementary is the highest scoring elementary school in the district? Lincoln Elementary raised its test scores by over 30 points. Mira Vista also had extraordinary gains. The "Many Hands" program at Washington Elementary has brought strong leadership, business participation, community volunteers, and prestigious grant money together to radically change the "image" of that school. These examples reflect either creative curriculum, strong administrative leadership, increased parent and community involvement or all of the above.⁶⁹

North Campus High School and Washington Elementary School will showcase at open houses today what a bang society can get for a few education bucks wisely spent.

The two West Contra Costa Unified School District schools are recipients of Hewlett-Annenberg Challenge grants,

which total \$50 million to Bay Area "leadership schools" in six counties.

The schools that received awards were ones that submitted "reform" plans that made the most sense, said Nicolette Toussaint, director of communications for the nonprofit Bay Area School Reform Collaborative, which administers the grants locally.

Washington Elementary, in Point Richmond, is in the second year of a three-year, \$240,000 grant. It has hired a new science and literacy teacher, a reform coordinator and an early childhood resources coordinator. The reform effort actually began five years ago, said Principal Kaye Burnside, who in 1993 took the helm of a school with 180 kids that was slated for closing.

Since then, schoolwide average reading test scores have climbed from about the 20th to the 40th percentile among state schools, Burnside said. Enrollment today is 354 and there is a waiting list, she said. The grant money helped kick the school's early literacy effort into overdrive.

North Campus, with 118 students, was the only continuation high school to be named a "leadership school" by the collaborative, said Principal Doris Avalos.

North Campus received a one-year grant of \$50,000 this year and can apply for an extension next year. The school has launched a "school-to-career" program that combines classroom education with real-life work situations. A new "job shadow" program sends students out to job sites.⁷⁰

Although the City of Richmond and the West Contra Costa Unified School District are two distinct governmental entities controlled by their own elected officials, they have to find a way to work together to maximize the potential

⁶⁹ Glen Price, WCCUSD Board Member

⁷⁰ West County Times, April 27, 1998

of schools in Richmond and schools attended by Richmond children.⁷¹

Some schools that serve low-income areas have made remarkable turn-arounds with a combination of superior principals, dedicated staff, community and business support, and successful grantsmanship. Washington Elementary, which serves primarily Iron Triangle students is an example.

Washington already has an after-school program, which enlists the help of 45 teaching interns from UC-Berkeley and serves 90 students in the first- through third-grades. It would grow to include fourth- and fifth-graders next year if the Legislature passes the budget and the school secures a share of the money.

"I'm fired up about it and I can't wait to get my hands on it," Principal Kaye Burnside said. "We'll apply for that money beyond a shadow of a doubt so we can move forward."

[Governor] Wilson visited Washington at the invitation of the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative, which had previously awarded the school two Hewlett Annenberg grants for improving its academics and technology. He praised the staff and Burnside for leading the charge to turn the school around.

Less than five years ago, Washington had low enrollment, poor test scores and little community involvement. The school has since boosted its student numbers, with a waiting list of students and teachers. Test scores have risen to grade-level expectations, and the school has cultivated partnerships with the business and residential communities.

"The school has an extraordinary assemblage of talent and good hearts," Wilson said. "But it's essential to act on good intentions and make good things happen. Washington is an example that it can happen."⁷²

⁷¹ West County Times, May 2, 1998

⁷² "Wilson In Pt. Richmond, Governor Visits Washington Elementary To Laud After-School

The passage of Measure E in 1998, as well as the voter support of IMRAD in 1997 is a good sign that public financial support of schools in Richmond may have turned the corner. And that Richmond and the rest of West Contra Costa County is ready to support education.

Measure E, the West County school district's \$40.9 million bond issue, secured overwhelming support Tuesday from residents who wanted a better school environment for the region's children.

Seventy-five percent of voters supported the measure, which will levy an average \$50 annual tax on property owners to fix dilapidated schools. It also will help build a middle school in central Richmond at the former Harry Ells High School.

The measure, which needed a two-thirds majority to pass, is the first school bond issue approved by voters in more than 30 years.

Groups and businesses that traditionally oppose extra taxes were solidly behind the measure, calling it "well crafted and thought out.". School officials said the bond issue's passage signaled a new era for the district.

"This is a rebirth of our community," said Trustee Karen Leong Fenton, co-chair of the campaign to pass Measure E. "We're all saying that we'll do what it takes to take care of the kids."⁷³

4. Public-Private Partnerships

Cities that have successfully remade themselves have found that it is first necessary for all segments of the community to agree on a shared vision. This means that the business community

Program, Push For Increased Funding," West County Times, May 28, 1998

⁷³ "After 30-Year Wait, Success, For The First Time In Three Decades, West County District Voters Approve A Bond Issue To Finance School Improvements And Repairs," West County Times, June 4, 1998

and the residents have to come to terms with any conflicts.

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1. ANNEX A - EDUCATION

It is an indisputable fact that areas of population with concentrated low income and unemployment levels such as North Richmond will result in students with low skill levels as measured by standardized tests. For many years, the California State Department of Education has operated a testing program called the California Assessment Program (CAP), which was intended to measure, collectively, the relative performance in basic skills of students statewide in the third, sixth, eighth, and twelfth grades. Scores are reported by schools and districts but not by individual students. In fact, no student took the entire test so that scores truly represent composites rather than true averages.

The asserted intent of the CAP program was to, *determine the effectiveness of school districts and schools in assisting pupils to master the fundamental educational skills toward which instruction is directed. the program of statewide testing shall provide the public, the Legislature, and school districts evaluative information regarding the various levels of proficiency achieved by different groups of pupils of varying socioeconomic backgrounds, so that the Legislature and individual school districts may allocate educational resources in a manner to assure maximum educational opportunity for all pupils.*⁷⁴

The CAP program correlated the composite raw score and the percentile ranks of scores with the socioeconomic profiles of the students and their families by individual schools and by school districts. Information was collected regarding the highest level of educational attainment by students' parents, the type of employment of students' parents, the level of English speaking ability of the students, the level of residential transience of students' families, and the per cent of student's families receiving AFDC. Based on these factors, a "socioeconomic index" was compiled.⁷⁵ For grades 8 and 12, the SES (socioeconomic status) index for a group was the average of the values assigned for levels of parent education, and for grades 3 and 6, the group index was the average of values assigned for technical level of parent employment.⁷⁶ Low SES indexes tend to correlate with low incomes, and high SES indexes tended to correlate with high incomes. For example, Kensington Elementary, with a Grade 3 SES of 2.94 in 1989/90⁷⁷, is in a community with a median household income of \$61,330⁷⁸, while Peres Elementary, with a Grade 3 SES of 1.31 in 1989/90⁷⁹, is in a community with a median household income of less than \$32,165⁸⁰. Statistically, a low SES index has been found to correlate with low test scores and a high SES index with high test scores. In fact, the socioeconomic index appears to be the principal determinate of test performance for a school or district. The relationship is so predictable it can be graphed as a linear equation.

Three of the lowest -performing schools in the West Contra Costa Unified School District, as determined by 1989/90 CAP scores are also the three schools closest to and downwind from the Chevron Richmond Refinery. A statewide rank of 1 indicated that 99 per cent of the schools in the state have higher test scores while a rank of 4 indicated 96 per cent of schools statewide had higher scores. Washington Elementary School, which is close to but not downwind from the refinery, has a student body made up largely from students living north and east of the refinery. Its CAP scores are higher than the other three schools but still below district average and substantially below state average. In 1989/90, among 116 elementary schools in

⁷⁴California Education Code, Section 60601

⁷⁵Memo, dated April 17, 1990, from Francie Alexander, Associate Superintendent, Curriculum, Instruction, and assessment Division, California State Department of Education, to District and County Superintendents.

⁷⁶Lillian Clancy, A User's Guide to California Public Schools (Walnut Creek: California School Surveys, 1991) 6

⁷⁷California Assessment Program Survey of Basic Skills, Preliminary Report of School and district Results, 1989/90.

⁷⁸Income, Education Levels in Bay Area Cities, San Francisco Chronicle (Source: U.S. Census Bureau)

⁷⁹California Assessment Program Survey of Basic Skills

⁸⁰Income, Education Levels in Bay Area Cities

the Contra Costa County, these four schools ranked 104 (Washington), 111 (Peres), 115 (Verde), and 116 (Lincoln).⁸¹

School	Grade 3 Reading Statewide Rank (1989/90 CAP Scores)	Grade 3 SES Index
WCCUSD (Entire District)	35	1.97
Lincoln Elementary	1	1.22
Peres Elementary	4	1.31
Washington Elementary	19	2.00
Verde Elementary	1	1.46

In a letter dated September 23, 1993, from Santiago V. Wood of the West Contra Costa Unified school District, to James Farah, the School District expressed concern for the health and safety of students and staff at schools near the refinery, including Washington, Nystrom, Lincoln, and Peres. These concerns included :

1. *Increased health risks associated with increased emissions of pollutants into the atmosphere.*
2. *Increased public safety risk from fires, explosions, or accidental release of toxic gas or vapors.*
3. *Increased odors.*
4. *Increased emissions of hazardous materials.*
5. *Increased emissions of hazardous materials.*
6. *Increased noise.*
7. *Increase in traffic, thereby increasing the possibility of major accidents involving tanker trucks resulting in a spill and fire on local roads.*
8. *Increased hazardous waste could pose a threat to the students and staff.*
9. *Cumulative health hazards from increase in hazardous materials.*
10. *Cumulative increase in risk of upset due to increase in hazardous materials.*
11. *Cumulative increase in clean-up of hazardous waste.*
13. *Potential for accidents involving vehicles carrying hazardous materials.*⁸²

An example of how previous accidents at the refinery have affected nearby schools is the fire of April 10, 1989, when 275 children were evacuated from Verde Elementary School.⁸³

Jean Siri discussed the effect of pollution at Peres School: *I have to say that this is where I started working on air pollution, in this school, fifteen to twenty years ago. I spent six months at Peres School. I think then there was an enrollment of about 2,000 children, and I was very upset over the air. The air was abominable. And I felt the children shouldn't be out having recess since it was being blown on directly by the [Chevron Chemical] incinerator which was not under any permit at the time that I know of...In most schools they have earthquake drills. In this school they have earthquake drills and they have toxic drills. It would never be permitted in any upper middle class schools in the area that I know of.*⁸⁴

Smaller class sizes is one effective way that schools in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas can catch up with students from wealthier families. A pilot program in the late 1980's at Verde Elementary illustrates this point.⁸⁵ During three school years from 1985-86 to 1987-88, class sizes were lowered from thirty to fifteen students. At the time the study began, 94 per cent of the students qualified for Chapter I

⁸¹Clancy, 315

⁸²Response to Comments on the DEIR, Volume 1

⁸³DEIR IV.E.16

⁸⁴Tr., 63

⁸⁵Antoinette Henry-Evans, Class Size reduction: Effects on Student Achievement as Measured by Standardized Tests (Master's Thesis at California State University, Hayward, June 1987)

Compensatory Education Assistance (scoring below the fiftieth percentile on standardized achievement tests). The 1988/89 SES Index for Verde was 1.17 for third grade and 1.48 for sixth graders, among the lowest in the state. The ethnicity of the group was 92 per cent black, 3 per cent Hispanic, 2 per cent Asian, and 1 per cent white.

During the three years of the study a ten year trend of declining achievement as measured by the California Achievement test (CAT) was reversed. For some classes, percentage increases of as much as 35 points was achieved. In the spring of 1985, the year before the test began, only 17 per cent of students scored above the 50th percentile on CAT tests. In the spring of 1988, the third and last year of the experiment, 42 per cent scored above the 50th percentile, a 147 per cent increase! At other district schools during the same time period, the number of students scoring above the 50th percentile rose only 2 per cent.⁸⁶ During the first two years of the experiment, scaled CAT scores at Verde's third grade took jumps ranging from 18 to 58 per cent.⁸⁷

Henry Evans concluded that *class size does have an educationally significant effect upon student achievement as measured by standardized tests*.⁸⁸ Her research also indicated that students of lower academic ability, as well as those who are socially or economically disadvantaged, benefit from smaller classes.⁸⁹

The continuing presence of the Chevron Refinery, including the proposed project, makes the neighborhoods downwind sufficiently unappealing that property values and rents are comparatively low, thus ensuring a resident population concentrated and skewed toward the low range of what the California Department of Education measures with a SES Index. This artificially induced concentration of disadvantaged students virtually assures not only low composite test scores but also schools that are held in low esteem by both the community they are located in and by other communities. There is creditable evidence that the cause and effect relationship of poverty and low academic achievement can be broken by substantially reducing class sizes. Hiring more teachers for specific schools to achieve this is a mitigation with a tangible cost and proven results.

⁸⁶Memo dated August 24, 1988, from Frank Carson, Principal, Verde Elementary School, to Dr. W. Marks, Superintendent.

⁸⁷Memo, dated October 8, 1987, from Frank Carson to Dr. Walter Marks.

⁸⁸Henry-Evans, 76

⁸⁹Henry-Evans, 23-28.

2. ANNEX B - CHEVRON AND GENERAL CHEMICAL

1. EIR for Chevron Reformulated Fuels Project - 1994

By relying solely on public records for evidence of adverse impacts by the Chevron Refinery on the surrounding neighborhoods, the EIR authors and City Planning staff circumvented compelling sources of information, including interviews with residents and stories in the media. Within the last few years there have been numerous, well-researched stories in both the published and broadcast media about the adverse impacts of the Richmond Refinery on residents of surrounding neighborhoods. Following are samples of some of these interviews:

1. **Hubert Lewis Griffin** - *The physical and psychological toll that living under the toxic plume exacts from Richmond residents has been well documented in the media. Hubert Lewis Griffin, 65, who has lived in Richmond for the last 25 years, said he's tired of "coughing up old lumps of things" and feeling sick day after day. "You smell all kinds of smells all the time, said Griffin who lives at 329 South 4th Street., "I'm going to try to get out of here as damn soon as possible."*⁹⁰
2. **Jody White**, who has lived along Pennsylvania Avenue in Richmond for 27 years, said he's fed up with living in the shadow of what he perceives as impending disaster. "Chevron (oil refinery) is like a .357 ready to go off. If I could afford it, I'd get the hell out."⁹¹
3. **Jean Young** - *During the day you can smell different kinds of odors. At night you get different mists in the area, said Jean young, 46, who has lived in North Richmond her entire life. "I'm wondering what kind of effect its having on the population. I wonder if there's something that's happening to us physically because of this environment."*⁹²
4. **Willie Dye** - *Every time Willie Dye walks out of the neighborhood grocery his family runs on Filbert Street in North Richmond, he looks over his shoulder to see if there are any problems at the nearby Chevron refinery and manufacturing complex. Dye has lived for eight years in this largely low-income community of 2,500 people. he has endured mysterious odors drifting through his neighborhood from many small chemical spills at the oil refinery and associated chemical and fertilizer plants. he is not convinced by the company assurances that design and operation of the plants make a major chemical accident virtually impossible. "You go to bed; you try not to think about it. But you can't help thinking about it, because you're smelling it all the time. you wonder what's going to be next."*⁹³
5. **Bob Carlson** - *Bob Carlson, who says he lives on "ground zero" across from the Chevron refinery in Point Richmond, woke up on December 6, 1991, to see, "oily black-and-white dust like snow" all over the neighborhood from a 40-ton cloud of dust that had been accidentally released from the Chevron Refinery. "You could attribute short-term respiratory problems to the dust cloud itself", Contra Costa health Director Dr. William Walker told the Bay Guardian last week. "But there was no chemical effect."⁹⁴...But a survey by the Toxic Cloud Task Force, which Bob Carlson helped found, found that 500 people in an 18-mile area reported health problems - not only respiratory problems but also rashes, headaches, two miscarriages, nausea, vomiting, confusion, and inability to concentrate⁹⁵.*
6. **Michelle Ozen** - *Like a canary in a coal mine, Michelle Ozen sniffs the air every morning for chemical smells as she steps off her front porch to go to work.*⁹⁶
7. **Bowler-Cone Study** - *The initial assessment of many treating physicians following the General chemical release in July of 1993, was that symptoms would be temporary and disappear in a matter of days. A follow-up study released in December of 1993 showed that those exposed to the sulfuric acid cloud continue to have, symptoms of either respiratory or skin related*

⁹⁰*Chemical Hazards Just a Part of Richmond Life, The Oakland Tribune*, July 28, 1993.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²*Race and the Environment, West County Times*, August 1, 1983.

⁹³*Living Under a Toxic Cloud of Fear, West county Times*, December 13, 1993

⁹⁴*Clearing the Toxic Cloud, The Bay Guardian*, April 21, 1993.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶*Chemical Hazards Just a Part of Richmond Life, The Oakland Tribune*, July 28, 1993.

diseases along with emotional problems. The Richmond residents had “substantial fears” of future illnesses for themselves and their children,” said Rosemary Bowler, a San Francisco State University professor who conducted the study along with Dr. James Cone of the University of California at San Francisco.⁹⁷

8. **Francis Aebi** - *I am and have been a resident, greenhouse owner and operator at 509 Brookside Drive since 1927. Over that span of years I have not been a stranger to air pollutants that have trespassed upon my property. On more occasions than I wish to remember, I had to close my bedroom windows at night to avoid the stench and then to look at the tissue injury to my plants in the morning.⁹⁸*
9. **Ahmadia Thomas** - *My husband is now ill from this pollution. He went to the hospital. The doctor didn’t know why his temperature was so high and his blood pressure was up. They could not get his blood pressure down for five days, and he is still confined to the hospital. I know it’s from the chemicals.⁹⁹*
10. **Earnest Witt** - *I have been here some 40 years and I have seen not only some of my extended family pass away from illnesses, but I have seen quite a few friends in this area to pass away from illnesses. We always wondered what it was that was killing our people and the women having miscarriages, people having skin rashes like I got, people having breathing problems, and so here in the last 15 years, it finally dawned on us that there was something wrong in this community with the bad smells, you know, with the people laying up from cancer. We go through and drive through Chevron and walk through there and sometimes your eyes would burn. You couldn’t grow things in your garden. You would come out the next day and your paint was coming off your cars.¹⁰⁰*
11. **Willie Parker** - *We believe that Chevron Oil, they are the ones that is causing us to have so many problems with our health. Miscarriages, myself and my wife, we have experiences about three and we believe that plant is the cause of it. And not only us, other people in the community is experiencing the same problems...And you don’t know. You people that don’t live here, you don’t know what we experience late at night. We cannot open our windows late at night. Three o’clock and four o’clock in the morning is when the smell and all the odor starts to come in when they [Chevron Chemical] starts to burn. That’s when its done. It’s not done during the day. It’s done just before the day, and when the wind blows out in North Richmond, it comes right into our living rooms. The house smells during the day after they have burned all night. Your car, it goes into the air and when you go out in the morning, it’s all over your car.¹⁰¹*
12. **Consewella Niweigha** - *As a matter of fact, I am raising my children in the same house I was raised in, and I have watched the 20 houses on this block, with three missing. There is one parent out of every house that died of cancer. I watched this. Now my kids are there, and I am worried about it. We do have rashes. Thaey can’t breathe. Your throat burns. Like you say, you walk out on the porch and your eyes burn. You have got to go back in and close the door. You can’t even come out sometimes.¹⁰²*

2. Social and Psychological Changes

According to Raquel Pinderhughes, people undergo profound social and psychological changes as a result of toxic exposure and the threat of exposure to toxics. The experience leaves them with deep, permanent scars which change the way they view themselves, their family, their community, government, and the

⁹⁷ New Study Details Injuries from Spill, **San Francisco Chronicle**, December 4, 1993.

⁹⁸ Transcript (Tr.) of Public Scoping Meeting, State of California Department of Health Services, Toxic Substance Control Program, ijn the matter of Chevron Chemical Company hazardous Waste Storage and Incinerator Facility Environmental Impact Report, April 24, 1990, 12.

⁹⁹ibid, 45

¹⁰⁰ibid, 64

¹⁰¹ibid, 68

¹⁰²ibid, 74

world. Even if the problem is dealt with, people remain fearful. They are terrified by unknown future effects on their health and the health of family members. Dealing with multiple levels of government and large corporations which make it impossible to define, locate, or meaningfully communicate with accountable officials leaves them with a feeling of vulnerability and lack of control. Helplessness is a reality as well as a strong feeling. Recognition of vulnerability, lack of control and power have radiating effects. There is potential for depression, despair, emotional problems, and substance abuse. Their lack of faith in government institutions has been deeply eroded and affects future interactions with the public sector. Suspicions about information from officials and scientists are high. Frustrations over money, lack of resources, financial burdens, and fear of future health problems have profound effects on family interactions.¹⁰³

3. Environmental Findings

CEQA requires that prior to approval of a project for which an EIR has been prepared, written findings must be made regarding significant effects, and the findings must be accompanied by a statement of the facts supporting such findings.¹⁰⁴ In Attachment A of the original staff report, the Planning Department staff made three findings, two of which are not in conflict with or support the conditions added by the Planning Commission.

Environmental Finding 1 stated that, *changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into the project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effects thereof as identified in the final EIR.*¹⁰⁵ With the inclusion of the conditions added by the Planning Commission, this statement can stand essentially as drafted with one exception. The final EIR was deficient in that it did not fully explore the effects of past and continuing pollution and accidents at the Chevron complex, including the proposed project, on the economic, social, health, and educational quality of life of people living in neighborhoods near the project, especially those living in the path of prevailing winds. The statement supporting Finding 1 conceded that the effects of air criteria pollutants and geology/seismicity were not fully mitigated. The statement erred in concluding that public health and safety were mitigated.

Environmental Finding 2 explains the allocation of responsibility between the City of Richmond and the BAAQMD for establishing conditions and monitoring compliance. *Such changes are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and not the agency making the finding. Such changes have been adopted by such other agency or can and should be adopted by such other agency.*¹⁰⁶ This statement is not in conflict with the Planning Commission's additional conditions. In fact, it supports modified conditions II-2 and II-3 because it justifies requiring the applicant to provide funding for a consultant to the City, if needed, for monitoring conditions of approval.

There is no objection to Environmental Finding 3 which identifies mitigations or alternatives that are infeasible. *Specific economic, social, or other considerations made infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the final EIR.*¹⁰⁷ The reasons for rejecting the "No Project" alternative and Alternatives I and II are reasonable as are the reasons for rejecting flare options which would increase noise and air emissions.

4. Statement of Overriding Consideration

Where the decision of the public agency allows significant effects identified in the EIR which are not required to be at least substantially mitigated, the agency is required to state in writing the specific reasons to support its actions based on the final EIR or other information in the record.¹⁰⁸ The staff report identified three significant, unavoidable impacts:¹⁰⁹

1. Emissions during construction exceeding 150 lbs./day..
2. Emissions during operation exceeding 150 lbs./day.

¹⁰³Raquel Pinderhughes, Social and Psychological Impacts of Toxic Exposure (San Francisco: University of California, School of Medicine, January, 1993) 9-10.

¹⁰⁴CEQA Guidelines, Section 15091

¹⁰⁵Staff Report CU 93-40, Attachment A, page 2

¹⁰⁶ibid, 2-3

¹⁰⁷ibid,4

¹⁰⁸CEQA Guidelines, Section 15093

¹⁰⁹Staff Report CU 93-40, Attachment A, page 5

3. Possibility of damage from groundshaking.

The staff report suggested the following “overriding considerations” to justify permitting the project in spite of unavoidable impacts:¹¹⁰

1. The purpose of the Reformulated gasoline component of the project is to conform to State and Federal regulations for cleaner burning gasoline.
2. Use of reformulated gasoline will result in a decrease of emissions of CO, HC, Nox, and Sox within Contra Costa County.
3. The purpose of the FCC Plant Upgrade is to improve the efficiency and reliability of the FCC Plant, making it more energy efficient and less likely to contribute to an accidental release.
4. The Alkylation Plant modernization will reduce the use of freons and result in less damage to the stratospheric ozone.
5. The project will generate revenues for the City of Richmond and Contra Costa County and will generate jobs and economic activity.
6. The applicant will be required to contribute to the Richmond Urban Forest program.
7. No matter what design standards are used, there will always be the potential for damage in the event of an earthquake.

The Statement of Overriding Considerations concluded by stating that, *the benefits described above, when taken together, override the environmental impacts of the Project and they include for the residents of Richmond which will not otherwise occur without the project. It should also be noted that the environmental impacts that have been identified as relating to the Project's operating air emissions are within an area of controversy, where they are judged as not significant under the regulations of the BAAQMD.*¹¹¹ This statement is not in conflict with the additional conditions imposed by the Planning Commission, and in fact, is bolstered by the additional conditions.

5. The Case for Adequate Nexus

At the heart of Chevron’s criticism of the Planning Commission’s conditions is the claim that there is insufficient connection (nexus) between the specific project and the proposed conditions. Chevron further asserts that portions of the refinery not a part of the specific project are immune from conditions. Chevron erroneously states that there was no evidence before the Planning Commission that existing refinery operations present a nuisance or risk that would be mitigated by the conditions imposed on the CUP.¹¹² The evidence is clear that the existing refinery, with or without the proposed project, is a source of air pollution and safety risks with a history of adverse impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods. These impacts are inconsistent with policies of the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and other provisions of the Richmond Municipal Code. The City has a legitimate governmental interest in reducing pollution, increasing public safety, and protecting public welfare. The nexus between those conditions which are intended to reduce pollution and increase safety could hardly be closer. There is nothing in case law to suggest that a mitigation for an adverse impact has to be limited to the same component of a facility that caused the problem.

The case for adequate nexus of the community foundation is more complex but just as compelling. Because of the unappealing environmental conditions that have existed downwind of the refinery for nearly a hundred years, the neighborhoods have attracted and continue to consist largely of residents of the least economic means. There is also evidence that continued exposure to pollution and periodic exposure to fires, explosions, and abnormal emission releases takes a toll on the physical and mental health of residents (A paper by Raquel Pinderhughes will be submitted - see summary under “Social and Psychological Changes”, above). This population consists predominantly of protected classes, including African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asians. Many residents feel “trapped” in this area, and those that can move out are replaced by others of similar economic means.

¹¹⁰ibid, 5-6
¹¹¹

¹¹²Attachment A to Chevron Appeal, December 27,1993.

Most West Contra Costa County residents have accepted their precarious surroundings like an unpredictable and sometimes violent relative - "it's something you can't change so you learn to live with it," [Michelle Ozen] said...We're victims really. We want things to change, or we want to move, but we can't," said Ozen, a 36-year-old office manager. "You just gotta live with it."¹¹³ ...Some say the reason industry is often found near poor communities like North Richmond is simple. Poor people live near industry because the land there is cheap. Likewise, they say, industry tends to locate where the land is not too expensive... "You're not going to see Chevron build a refinery in Moraga," said Steve Morioka, a hazardous materials specialist with the county.¹¹⁴

6. Congressional Committee on Natural Resources

The disproportionate risks borne by minorities living near hazardous industries has recently attracted substantial attention in the media and by Congress and the Clinton administration under the heading environmental justice, environmental racism, or toxic racism. A congressional committee taking testimony in Richmond heard powerful descriptions of environmental justice.

Michele Washington Jackson - *We are here today to speak of environmental racism. This racism is deadly, insensitive, dehumanizing, and economically deficient for the residents of ... the entire City of Richmond. This racism is symbolic of the racism experienced during slavery whereby a few benefit and the majority suffers.*¹¹⁵

Dorothy Olden - *No matter what we are labeled, we are also a part of America. We deserve clean air. We have the right to live not in fear of our lives or for our children's lives. We realize that the industries and the communities must coexist together. We have long done our part, but why should we suffer so?*¹¹⁶

The congressional study found that, like Richmond, higher percentages of African-Americans and Hispanics live in areas where the air is too dirty to meet federal air quality standards, that the EPA consistently imposes considerably weaker penalties on those who pollute minority neighborhoods than on those who pollute white communities, and that neighborhoods hosting locally undesirable land uses tend to be poorer and have more minority residents than other neighborhoods.¹¹⁷

Speaking of North Richmond, Robert Bullard, a U.C. Riverside professor who has lectured and written extensively on environmental racism, said, “*It's not by accident that African-Americans live close to those factories. It is not just an accident of income alone. Regardless of income, black people tend to be residentially segregated at every level. North Richmond and dozens of communities like it across the country routinely live with industrial accidents that would be viewed as a disaster or potential disaster in other neighborhoods. Poor people live with crumbling schools, dirty water, and polluted air not just because they're poor, but because they're considered disposable*”¹¹⁸

7. The Clinton Administration

In a speech on December 2, 1993, Vice-President Gore revealed the administration is preparing an executive order on environmental justice. Other officials anticipate that it will order federal agencies to ensure that minority areas do not suffer disproportionate environmental harm from government building, investment, or policies and regulations.¹¹⁹ *The Clinton administration has for the first time agreed to investigate complaints that states are violating the rights of blacks by permitting industrial pollution in their neighborhoods. Members of the West county Toxics Coalition have made similar arguments about the high concentration of hazardous businesses in and around North Richmond, a low income community dominated by blacks and recent immigrants from southeast Asia.*¹²⁰

¹¹³Chemical Hazards Just a Part of Richmond Life, The Oakland Tribune, July 28, 1993

¹¹⁴Race and The Environment, West County Times, August 1, 1993.

¹¹⁵Living With Risk, Majority Staff Report (Washington, D.C.: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Natural Resources , December 9, 1993) 35

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 36

¹¹⁸Race and the Environment

¹¹⁹Gore, Black Leaders Discuss Environment, San Francisco Chronicle, December 3, 1993

¹²⁰U.S. Set to Review Complaints by Blacks on Pollution, West County Times, November 21, 1993.

When Gore spoke to the National Council of Churches on December 2, 1993, *the message from the room full of ministers was passionate and poignant: Government has ignored minorities suffering disproportionately from pollution. "Our babies are choking. Our children are sick. Our people are dying,"* the Rev. Charles Adams said, "because governments have allowed toxic plants and waste dumps to be built near them."¹²¹ Adams went on to tell Gore that the poor want economic opportunity, but not at the expense of human health.

8. History of North Richmond

At the time the Pacific Refining Company (later Standard Oil of California and finally Chevron) came to Richmond, the area to the north and east of the refinery site was largely low-lying grasslands and tidal marshes. The initial development of this area started in three nodes.

The earliest development, which already dated from the rancho days of the nineteenth century, was near the present day intersection of San Pablo Avenue and Church Lane where the Alvarado Adobe is now restored. This was the headquarters of Rancho San Pablo, and related development spread east and west along the two creek corridors.

The second area of settlement was sparked by the coming of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad which established its western terminus in Richmond at the turn of the century. This community of railroad employees grew up around the eastern end of the newly constructed railroad yard and thus became known as "East Yard" near what is now Garrard Boulevard and First and Second Streets. Most of the remaining vestiges have been recently demolished to make way for the Richmond Parkway.

The third area, known for a short time as "west yard" is now what is known as Point Richmond. This area gained ascendancy in the first 10 years of the 20th century because of its proximity to both the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad terminus and the refinery as well as its higher ground and underlying geology which made it a more attractive site for construction than the marshes.

As Richmond continued to grow and public transportation made it possible for people to commute beyond walking distance to work, the demand for commercially developable land outgrew the confines of the less steeply sloped parts of Point Richmond, and the City expanded to the east after 1910, taking with it the City Hall and the focus of commercial development. What Washington Avenue was from 1900 to 1910, MacDonald Avenue became from the 1920's on. As MacDonald Avenue became the main street of Richmond, residential development in the form of modest cottages continued in the grasslands north and south of MacDonald Avenue, growing from the west near the town's two major employers to the relatively uninhabited areas to the east and along San Pablo Avenue.

Prior to World War II, Richmond had a population of some 30,000, largely distributed in Point Richmond and in the former grasslands between San Pablo Avenue and the edge of the marshes along the Bay to the west. During World War II, the Kaiser shipyards swelled Richmond's population to some 130,000 virtually overnight, including tens of thousands of black workers recruited from rural areas of Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. Much of the influx was accommodated in new, government constructed public housing, but most of the black families were isolated and crowded into the older homes in north and west Richmond, many of which were sub-standard even 50 years ago.

When the war ended, those workers who could find work elsewhere did so while others drifted back home. Those workers with the least prospects back home, including thousands of black families, chose to stay in Richmond where they had put down roots and started a coherent community. Many, of course, became successful in business and politics and are now leaders of Richmond. Many others who did not find success remained in North Richmond. After being forced to live in a relatively inhospitable part of town which was subject to pollution and flooding, black families were later subjected to pressure to move out, but not to a better part of Richmond. According to Ann Moore, a Cal State, Sacramento, historian who has written on Richmond history, Richmond city fathers in the 1950's wanted black people who settled in North Richmond to return to the South and back east. The City forged ahead with plans to industrialize the North Richmond area, called "cabbage patch" because of its fertile soils.¹²² This drive to industrialize North Richmond and to expand and replace existing industry without adequate consideration for adverse impacts on residents of the area continues and is exemplified by this project.

¹²¹Gore, Black Leaders Discuss Environment

¹²²Race and the Environment

Today, North Richmond is still largely inhabited by disadvantaged minorities, principally blacks, because of the comparatively low land values and correspondingly low rates for residential rents. Values have remained low in these areas for several reasons. The predominant reason is proximity to the petrochemical complex dominated by Chevron's 2900 acres and the resulting exposure to continuous atmospheric pollution and periodic explosions and fires. As a related factor, the existing housing stock is old and poorly maintained. For years, the area was also subject to flooding, a problem finally alleviated by hydrological improvements in the 1980's.

The current socioeconomic profile of North Richmond is well illustrated by a recent study of the unincorporated portion consisting of Census Tract 3650.02 with a 1980 population of 2,341. The 1990 study, North Richmond Redevelopment Area Market study and Alternatives Analysis, was prepared by the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of California, Berkeley. Although focusing on a single census tract, the demographics revealed by the study are indicative of conditions in nearby neighborhoods such as the incorporated area of North Richmond and the Iron Triangle. According to the study, the area :

- was 88 per cent black, 7 per cent Hispanic, 2 per cent Asian, and 3 per cent white.- had 28 per cent female headed households.
- high school graduation rates were especially low
- education statistics represent figures significantly below statewide figures - as well as for surrounding communities.
- residents may be experiencing difficulties in securing and maintaining employment due to low levels of educational attainment.
- 20% of the labor force was unemployed, four times as high as the County rate. A large portion of the population may have stopped looking for work.
- household incomes were extremely low with 31 per cent of household below the poverty level.
- there are low employment opportunities in the area.
- 200 of 432 structures are in need of rehabilitation; an additional 99 are in such disrepair that rehabilitation may not be financially feasible; 25 appear to be abandoned.
- 155 parcels have tax delinquencies.
- the quality of housing stock contributes to the accelerated rate of deterioration, perpetuates the overall blighted character, is a disincentive to investment, and serves to facilitate crime and other infringements on public safety and health.
- North Richmond is currently extremely unappealing as a place to live.

9. Employment

In the press release of December 27, 1993, Chevron boasted that Chevron is the single largest employer in Richmond with its 3,500 refinery and other employees representing one out of eight Richmond jobs. What Chevron did not say is that only one out of every ten of those Chevron employees actually lives in Richmond, and that only 164 (or 4.7 per cent) of refinery workers lives in Richmond.¹²³ Chevron further reduces permanent job opportunities in the Richmond refinery by routinely out-sourcing much of the maintenance and construction work to contractors.¹²⁴ Once the construction is completed, the construction jobs will disappear, and the overall number of permanent jobs will most likely continue to diminish. With 1,571 jobs¹²⁵ spread over 2,900 acres, Chevron has a job density of 0.54 jobs per acre, probably the lowest of any business in Richmond.

Few of the benefits of the jobs Chevron offers go to those in the neighborhoods most impacted by the refinery. As Amos Adams, 71, says, "*neighborhoods like North Richmond and other poor, minority communities suffer with the pollution and accidents of industry, but aren't given the opportunity to enjoy the benefits, namely jobs.*"¹²⁶ Fourth Street resident, Robert Coleman said, "We are not benefiting jobwise, but we are constantly being polluted with chemicals in the air."¹²⁷

¹²³Gruen, 17

¹²⁴Gruen, 30

¹²⁵Gruen, 5

¹²⁶Race and the Environment, West County Times, August 1, 1993

¹²⁷Ibid.

