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City of Richmond

**RE: FINAL EIR AND GENERAL PLAN;**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING; OCTOBER 6, 2011**

On June 29, 2011, President Obama delivered his State of the Union address stating that job growth and economic development will help decrease the deficit. He further stated that we need to invest in growth and infrastructure and put aside short term politics and “get it done”, noting that this requires leadership. The City of Richmond can localize this commitment by ensuring the General Plan fosters:

- A shared vision of economic growth;
- Growing of our economic and employment base;
- Attracting diverse businesses to our City; and,
- Planning for focused growth or cluster areas.

The Council of Industries (COI) is proposing the following recommendations to assist in moving this Vision forward.

**FORD PENINSULA / SANTA FE CHANNEL**

The economically successful public and private port is unique to the City of Richmond. This opens the door to an employment base with shipping needs both nationally and internationally, and is attractive to new businesses focused on international trade.

It is essential for businesses along the port area to safely and efficiently transport goods onto major thoroughfares and rail service lines. However, it is a hazard to the public to restrict goods movement along Canal Blvd. and Harbour Way by adding bicycle lanes, expanding pedestrian pathways, restricting travel lanes from four to two lanes, adding elevated medians, and directing bike lanes next to and across railroad tracks.

The Ford Peninsula Transition Zone is envisioned as a vital cluster of light industrial and growing green tech and food manufacturing sectors for the City. Galaxy Desserts and Onion Catering are keystone businesses that would attract national and international manufacturers and suppliers in the food industry. In addition, this area can be earmarked for import/export businesses supported by the public and private port activities. This requires designating the area **Business/Light Industrial** within the buffer/transition zone and eliminating mixed use including any housing elements.

**Recommendation #1- 1. Economic Development Element** : Consult the Milken Report to establish a business plan for the City. This should include marketing outreach for a diverse group of businesses to focus on (a) recruitment of upline and downline business partners, (b) establish business clusters – food manufacturing, green tech, and LBNL incubator spinoffs and locate these in the Ford Peninsula Transition Zone and in a Transition Zone in the Southern Shoreline area.

This will require: (a) removing housing in the Buffer/ Transition Zone in the Ford Peninsula and Campus Bay area (Ordinance 18-08), (b) changing the zoning in the Buffer/Transition Zone to Business/Light Industrial, (c) maintaining four lanes of traffic - without a medium- on Harbour Way South and Cutting Boulevard (d) create overlay zones to reroute the bicycle lanes on Harbour Way South and Cutting Boulevard to Marina Way South and Meeker / Hall Streets to ensure safe travel for bicyclists away from the central truck and rail traffic serving this area, (e) maintain the Knox Cutting Specific Plan in its entirety, and (f) establish a Goods Movement Plan in collaboration with related businesses.

**Recommendation #2: 4. Circulation Element** – for safety reasons, reroute bicycle lanes away from truck routes and railroad tracks (Harbour Way South, Canal Blvd., 23<sup>rd</sup> St. rail yard of Levin Richmond Terminal).

#### HARBOUR TRACT / CAMPUS BAY / NORTSHORE AREA

The Harbor Tract Area is home to a cluster of unique businesses – specialty resins, biofuels, music production, Cybertran, UC Field Station and potential LBNL expansion. Located near I-580, it provides quick access for goods movement and auto traffic. The businesses will continue to work with the City in defining the character of this business crescent sector. With a refined list of acceptable businesses for this area, it will provide an additional welcoming center for incubator spinoff's from LBNL. Similarly, the Northshore area is currently zoned and planned for business development. This should be supported by the City to encourage economic growth in the area.

**Recommendation #3: 3. Land Use and Urban Design Element**– (a) Southern Gateway Change Area 16 (3.LU, pg3.41) Establish the Harbor Tract Business Cluster to include specific industrial, light industrial and commercial businesses to establish a cluster for green tech and incubator spin-off companies. This would include a buffer of commercial development to complement and support the area businesses. (b) Support business development in the Northshore Change Area #12 (3.LU, pg 3.37).

#### BURDENSOME DEVELOPER/DEVELOPMENT FEES

Lengthy, burdensome requirements and fees can be insurmountable obstacles to business development. We recommend the City review the City of Livermore's recently approved reduction of city fees. The City of Livermore also streamlined the development review process. This complements President Obama's comments that business confidence needs to be restored

and one way to do this is to provide business with incentives to relocate and grow in the City of Richmond.

**Recommendation #4 Developer Fees and Review Process: (a) Represent current developer fees as a matrix derived by the current Master Fee Schedule; eliminate duplication, redundancy and excess fees, and ensure that the amount of fees being recommended will not deter future development opportunities,<sup>1</sup>(b) incorporate the City of Livermore’s reduction of fees and streamlining of the development review process: 1) For new developments, reduce conditional-use permit fees by two-thirds, and traffic impact fees by one-third, 2) for those moving into existing buildings, reduce traffic impact fees by half and conditional-use permit fees by two thirds, and 3) reduce residential developer fees for affordable housing “in-lieu” fee for new housing projects by one-third.<sup>2</sup>**

#### **OVER REGULATION**

Overregulation also deters business from expanding and coming to the City. The Plan goes beyond the traditional realm of land use planning into environmental oversight already subject to comprehensive local, state and federal regulation. In the President’s speech he said that we need to focus on smart regulations – to look at the ones already on the books and to get rid of the ones that are not working.

**Recommendation #5 Regulatory Oversight: Work with established agencies like the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and Bay Planning Coalition, and the business community to ensure safe and productive operations throughout the City.**

To accomplish the above, attached is a summary of specific recommendations<sup>3</sup> for the General Plan, and a list of programs, policies, ordinances and guidelines on which businesses would like to collaborate with City Staff. <sup>4</sup>

The value of Richmond to the Community it serves is more than to provide a safe place to live with amenities close by. The value is enhanced through a partnership with the diverse business community that will serve as a model for recruiting new business to the City to grow our economic and employment base. The City can only be positively impacted with all business growth and success. With the appropriate guidance of the General Plan, and a collective effort in the building of ecosystems of businesses and attracting business clusters we can move toward a shared vision of economic and employment growth for the City of Richmond.

Regards,

Katrinka Ruk  
Executive Director

Cc: COI, Board of Directors; Judy Morgan, RCOC

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<sup>1</sup> Council of Industries, Summary of Developer and Development Fees

<sup>2</sup> “Livermore Fees reduced to lure businesses”, West County Times, Vol. 100, #30 (06/30/11)

<sup>3</sup> COI: FEIR and General Plan; Summary Recommendations

<sup>4</sup> COI: Collaboration List: Programs, policies, ordinances and guidelines