

4th District Update



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May 2008

Councilwoman Graziano

Dear Neighbors,

Its spring, and good news is bursting out all over. The latest census projections show that Richmond is growing again -- to more than 200,000 residents. Our crime rate is dropping in many areas of the city, and more families are relocating to homes in the district and across the city.

We have more good news in the Fourth District as well. After working on the project for three years, our first farmer's market south of the river is scheduled to open for the summer on May 3rd. The South of the James Market will be located at the Forest Hill Park parking lot at 42nd and New Kent. The market will be open from 8 am to noon and will run until the end of September.

More than 20 vendors of farm-raised and produced goods have committed to the market. The market is managed by some of the people who have been so successful with the Byrd House community market, so I'm sure we are going to be successful. I'm planning to be the first customer in line.

City Council has set the real estate tax rate at \$1.20/hundred dollars of assessed value. That's a three cent reduction and brings the total reductions in four years to 18 cents. Mayor Wilder has strongly opposed this tax rate cut, and by the time you read this may have vetoed the ordinance. These are difficult times, with fuel and food prices sharply higher, and a majority of council (8-1) felt that the city administration ought to apply the same austere financial management to its budget as our citizens must apply to their own.

What does it mean? For a house assessed at \$250,000 last year, the tax bill was \$3,075. If the house did not increase in value, the tax bill this year will be \$3,000. If the house increased in value 5.5% (the average city-wide), the new bill will be \$3,165, a savings of \$79 over last year's rate.

It's going to be a tough year, but I'm convinced that we can do the job, can continue to look for economies. That's what our residents expect of us.

Thanks again for the opportunity to work with you through the year, and I look forward to seeing you at our district meeting May 14th, as discussed inside.

Kathy



MARK YOUR CALENDAR COMMUNITY MEETINGS

May 14, 7:00 pm

**Forest Hill Avenue
Project**

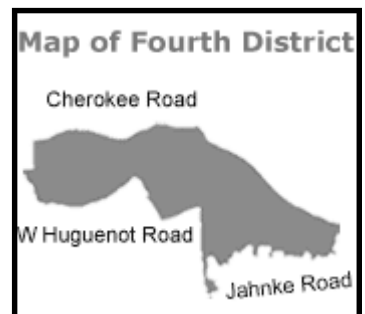
St Luke Lutheran Church

May 21, 7:00 pm

**Jahnke Road
Project**

Crestwood Presbyterian
Church

*Please see back cover for
more information.*



KINDNESS RECOGNIZED

Kathy presents Recognition Awards to three men who helped an elderly resident who had fallen in the street.



From left: Darrell Dobbin, DPW; Reginald Brown, DPW; Kathy; Dale Mayo, Boaz and Ruth

SUMMER CAMPS

Richmond's Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities offers a variety of affordable summer camps.

A nine-week day camp will be offered at community centers throughout the city from June 23 to Aug. 22, as well as camps specializing in tennis, soccer, football, swimming, cheerleading, basketball, science, art, photography, dance, teen activities and more.

For more information, call 646-1125 or visit the department's website at www.RichmondGov.com/parks.

REMAINING CITY HOLIDAYS

Memorial Day—Monday, May 26

Independence Day—Friday, July 4

Labor Day—Monday, September 1

Thanksgiving—Thursday, November 27 and Friday, November 28

Christmas/Winter—Wednesday, December 24 and Thursday, December 25

City offices will be closed. Trash pickup will be delayed one day for Monday holidays.

THE FARMERS MARKET!!

The numbers are in from Council Member Kathy's Graziano's poll, and the results are clear. People overwhelmingly wanted a farm market in our area—and have one, we will:

Name: South of the James Market

Dates: Saturday Mornings May 3 through the end of September

Time: 8:00 am to Noon

Place: End of New Kent Avenue and 42nd Street, at Shelter 2 in Forest Hill Park.

More than a dozen vendors of fresh, locally grown produce will be selling, including Amy Hicks from Amy's Garden, and Carol the flower lady from the Byrd House and the Thursday 17th Street Market. In addition, some growers who participate in Community Supported Agriculture will use the market as a delivery point for community partners.

The market is not associated with the city government. The vendor is renting space from the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities.

RIVERFEST AND THE WICKED RUN

Come celebrate the 8th Annual Southamptton RiverFest and Wicked RiverRun/Walk 5K. Saturday, June 7th.

The 5K Wicked River Run/Walk starts at 8:30 a.m. and other activities start at 10:00. Activities include tree climbing, Ralph White and his river critters, climbing wall, bicycle, wagon and scooter parade, rickshaw rides by RiverCity Rickshaws and more.

Riverside Drive will be closed from Rockfalls to the Pony Pasture allowing bikers and walkers a chance to relax and enjoy the view.

To check out all the activities go to www.scarichmond.com or call Bert Waters for race info. at 502-0619 or 828-1525 or Mary Blanchard for other info. at 272-5959.

Riverfest is held each year along Riverside Drive from Pony Pasture Park west to the Meadows.

ROAD WIDENING AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS ON FOREST HILL AVENUE AND JAHNKE ROAD

The City's Department of Public Works will begin traffic studies and survey work this summer for the long-term widening and improvement of Forest Hill Avenue between Powhite Parkway and Hathaway Road and of Jahnke Road between Blakemore Road and Forest Hill Avenue.

DPW is in the final stages of selecting a consultant for the conceptual project designs will be presented to the public this summer. Meetings will be held to gather input from residents for the design work on both projects. Coming winter, when community final project designs.



The affected portion of Forest Hill Avenue will be widened from four lanes to five lanes. The affected portion of Jahnke Road will be widened from two lanes to either three lanes or five lanes based on traffic studies.



Both projects will install or improve curbs and gutters, sidewalks, bike lanes and trails, drainage systems, traffic signals, landscaping, street lighting and GRTC bus stops. The Jahnke Road project will also improve Safe School Crossings.

Federal funds will pay for both projects, with the Forest Hill Avenue project costing approximately \$12 million and the Jahnke Road project costing approximately \$18 million. Existing federal funding will cover project design and the acquisition of right-of-way lane. Construction will not begin until further federal funds are made available.



DISTRICT MEETING ON MAY 14 WILL FEATURE FOREST HILL AVENUE PROJECT

We will be discussing plans for the widening of Forest Hill Avenue from Powhite Parkway to Hathaway Road.

The project has been funded for the first two steps, and the Department of Public Works is soliciting citizen comment on the design and construction of the roadway. The first two phases of work are federally funded and do not depend on local or state matching funds.

Early plans call for a five lane section, with curbs and gutters, sidewalks and a bike lane. The project will include drainage improvements, signal light improvements landscaping and street lighting along the corridor.

Forest Hill Avenue is what traffic planners call a Minor Arterial Road, serving regional traffic. Traffic projections over the next few years indicate that the street will be severely overcrowded without the improvements.

The Public Works Department has selected a consultant for the design phase of the work. That contract includes significant outreach to the community, with several public meetings in the affected neighborhoods.

The preliminary projections call for a dedicated left turn lane throughout the corridor. It is not decided yet, engineers say, whether there will be any raised buffers between the east and west bound sections or whether all the street will be at the same level with painted turn lanes.

The engineers estimate that the new road will be able to carry significantly more traffic, with a 22% reduction in accidents.

The design phase is scheduled to cost about \$1.5 million and should take about a year or so. Acquisition of necessary right of way is also funded and should begin late next year.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Two District Meetings are scheduled this quarter to discuss the widening plans for Forest Hill Avenue and Jahnke Road. Meetings should last no more than one hour. Parking available.

Forest Hill Avenue Project

Wednesday May 14, 7:00 pm—St Luke Lutheran Church

7757 Chippenham Parkway.

(corner of Chippenham and Custis)

Jahnke Road Project

Wednesday, May 21, 7:00 pm—Crestwood Presbyterian Church

6627 Jahnke Road

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South of the James Farmers Market

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Place: End of New Kent Avenue and 42nd Street, at Shelter 2 in Forest Hill Park

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