



Board of Directors

June 5, 2017

Xavier Abrams
Chair

Dean Cameron
United States Postal Service
1300 Evans Avenue, Suite 200
San Francisco, CA 94188

Billy Ward
Vice-Chair

Tami Steelman Gonzales
Treasurer

Dear Mr. Cameron,

Charlene Smith
Secretary

I am writing in regards to the United States Postal Service’s proposal to relocate, close, and/or sell the Richmond Main Post Office located at 1025 Nevin Avenue, Richmond, CA 94801.

Cynthia Haden
Gina Fromer
Grayling Harris
Susan Bain
Virgil Weekes
Zakhary Mallett

Richmond Main Street Initiative is dedicated to revitalizing Historic Downtown Richmond. We strongly believe that any of the proposed changes to this post office’s operations would be detrimental to all residents and businesses, as well as the current revitalization efforts in Downtown. The Richmond Main Post Office is essential to the economic health and historic legacy of Downtown—both in form and function.

Amanda Elliott
Executive Director

The Richmond Main Post Office is centrally located to residents, visitors, and merchants, as well as many public transportation options. This post office is .4 miles from the Richmond Transit Station, hub for BART, Amtrak, AC Transit, R-Transit, and many shuttles. Sidewalks in the area are wide, with ADA compliant curbs. The Downtown district is home to over 60 businesses, including two major employers, Kaiser Permanente and Social Security Administration, which sit on either side of the Richmond Main Post Office.

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Past Chair

Access to a retail Post Office Downtown is necessary for all community members for the purposes of accessing post office boxes, mail-box drop-off, passport applications, and other retail postal services in a timely and accessible manner.

If this office were to close, community members would be forced to travel excessive distances in order to reach other post offices in the area or to the proposed new retail office at the McVittie DDU facility at 2100 Chanslor Avenue. Although located “just” .9 miles away from the Richmond Main Post Office, this facility is not an acceptable location for retail post office services. This facility is located in a residential neighborhood, is not pedestrian-friendly, is not accessible by any forms of public transportation, and sits at the intersection of two dead-end streets. In particular, relocating retail post office services to the McVittie facility will cause significant hardship to seniors and those with physical disabilities, individuals with limited access to the Internet, and people who rely on public transportation.

The loss of a retail post office in Downtown will also adversely affect the wellbeing of future residents and businesses. Current development plans for Downtown include an increase in housing (approx. 1000 units) and retail space (60k sqft) within the next 5 years. Richmond

Main Street is working diligently with a new developer to fill the BART retail space (10k sqft) on Macdonald Avenue with several new businesses, including a café and a business incubator/co-working space that will bring more businesses Downtown.

The City of Richmond recently released a Request for Qualifications and Proposals for opportunity sites in the Macdonald Avenue Corridor. This RFQ/P includes 5 properties in Downtown and outlines that “[d]evelopments, where appropriate, should feature a blend of mid and high-rise mixed-use development to galvanize the major activity center to serve the community and region. Office, retail, entertainment and residential uses are allowed.” These forthcoming infill and future development projects will be located within .5 miles of Richmond Main Post Office, and will bring more residents, businesses, and visitors Downtown.

Additionally, the relocation of public services outside of city center areas is against development best practices and adopted policies of Associated Bay Area Governments, which are actively supporting high-density, transit-oriented development with a variety of private and public services that are centrally located.

Finally, the Richmond Main Post Office is a valuable cultural and historical asset to the City of Richmond and its residents. As one resident at the May 31 public hearing eloquently stated, “the Post Office provides a sense of place.” Many community members, especially long-time residents, have very strong connections to the Richmond Main Post Office and it serves as a local landmark. Since 1938, it has operated as the main post office for the city. During WWII it is where all people of Japanese descent were required to register as ‘enemy aliens’ and it also served as a designated air raid shelter.

The building is a spectacular example of Art Deco architecture and New Deal era heritage, and is a rare example of a building in Richmond that has retained both its original form and function. The relocation of retail operations, and the inevitable closure and sale of the building that would follow, raises serious historic preservation concerns. Downtown Richmond has already lost a large portion of its historic buildings; others have been abandoned or left vacant for many years, with owners who do have the financial means or desire to restore them. A vacant post office would be a setback for Downtown’s revitalization.

Richmond is woefully underserved in many aspects. Many groups are working together to change this. A strong business community and access to robust retail and public services, like the Richmond Post Office, are necessary for these efforts. Closing the Richmond Post Office—the primary and most historically significant post office in the city—will add to this unfortunate trend.

I respectfully ask that the United States Postal Service not relocate, close, or sell the post office at 1025 Nevin Avenue, Richmond, CA 94801.

Sincerely,


Amanda Elliott
Executive Director