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**Richmond's Kennedy High School students
to propose park and community center redesign
to city manager and key community stakeholders**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RICHMOND — Design proposals by more than two dozen 11th-grade students at Kennedy High School in Richmond for the redevelopment of the MLK Community Center and Park at Harbour Way South and Cutting Boulevard will be formally unveiled on Thursday, May 8.

Working with the office of Richmond City Manager Bill Lindsey, the 25 students from Richmond High's Architecture, Construction and Engineering Technology (ACET) Academy have spent the past four months analyzing youth and community needs and developing proposals for the community center and park physical and program redesign.

The center and park, which are underused and in need of upgrades, have been the focus of ongoing revitalization efforts in Richmond's Nystrom neighborhood. Those efforts include five major capital projects that target housing, the Maritime Center/Charter School, Nystrom Elementary School, the MLK Community Center and the MLK Park.

The students' recommendations will be presented to a professional jury, city officials, community leaders and residents at 5 p.m., Thursday, May 8, at the MLK Community Center, 360 Harbour Way South (at Cutting Boulevard). Student proposals will be taken into account as the park and community center renovation proceeds.

The student work is the product of the Y-PLAN (Youth - Plan, Learn, Act, Now) – an award-winning university-community collaborative project that has brought Kennedy High students together with undergraduate and graduate students from the University of California, Berkeley's Departments of City and Regional Planning and Architecture to study how to improve their community. Y-PLAN is exploring opportunities for the youth to stay involved through summer internships and through continued involvement in their community and school.

Operating out of the UC Berkeley's Center for Cities & Schools, Y-PLAN is a model for youth civic engagement that uses urban space slated for redevelopment as a catalyst for community revitalization and education reform.

"One of our goals is to understand the youth perspective so that we can enhance participation at and stewardship of the community center and park," said LaShonda Wilson, an analyst in the city

manager's office. "Y-PLAN offers a vehicle for the City to hear and incorporate youth input into this complex planning project."

"[One] significant thing I learned is that the only way to fix Richmond is to fix it ourselves," says Julio C. Arauz, an ACET Academy student who participated in the project. Another ACET Academy student said the Y-PLAN project "has been significant because it's helped us figure out ways to improve our community and has given us, as youth, the opportunity to speak out for the different things we would like to see in our community."

The Y-PLAN began in 1999 as an interdisciplinary course between the Department of City and Regional Planning and the Graduate School of Education and has reached over 500 high school students in five school districts across the Bay Area with support from the UC Links Program and Stuart Foundation.

Over the past decade, dozens of teachers, professional urban planners, developers and community leaders have partnered with Y-PLAN to create authentic project-based learning experiences that both impact student's communities and address a range of Social Studies and Language Arts academic standards.

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