

Final

# RICHMOND HILLTOP SPECIFIC PLAN

## Existing Conditions Memorandum

Prepared for  
City of Richmond, CA

July 2022





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# **RICHMOND HILLTOP SPECIFIC PLAN**

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## **Existing Conditions Memorandum**

### **1.0 Executive Summary**

The Hilltop plan area is approximately 143 acres and consists of Hilltop Mall and areas immediately surrounding it to the north, west, and south, and by a larger contiguous area to the east. The site is located within the Hilltop Priority Development Area (PDA) and situated south of Richmond Parkway, between San Pablo Avenue and Interstate 80 (I-80), in Richmond, California. The City's vision for Hilltop, as stated in the General Plan, is for a highly visible and accessible regional district, blended with a mix of vibrant uses that would enhance the site's competitive edge in the region. The City will create a Specific Plan and associated Addendum to the Richmond General Plan 2030 Environmental Impact Report (Project). The Specific Plan will guide the development of the 143-acre site to support the City's General Plan vision to promote the transformation of the plan area from a suburban, low-intensity auto-oriented retail center to a higher intensity, mixed use regional destination.

### **1.1 Opportunity and Constraint Findings**

This Existing Conditions Memorandum finds the following potential opportunities and constraints for the redevelopment of the Hilltop plan area, summarized below. Individual conditions and their potential as a constraint or opportunity to the plan are described in further detail throughout the memorandum sections.

#### **1. Physical Context**

- The plan area is near the cities of El Cerrito, Pinole, San Pablo, and unincorporated areas of Contra Costa County. There is regional access to and from major cities and activity hubs, including San Francisco (17 miles) and Oakland (9 miles).
- There is a strong transportation network providing local and regional connectivity. The plan area is nestled between Interstate 80 (I-80), San Pablo Avenue, and Richmond Parkway, and local transit service is provided by the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit) and Western Contra Costa County Transit (WestCat). To the south of the plan area there is access to I-580 and regional transit stations, including the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and Amtrak lines. Major airports near the plan area include Oakland International Airport (24 miles) and San Francisco International Airport (31 miles). People, services, and goods are connected through this network of diverse travel modes. There is an opportunity to consider increased connectivity for accessing the plan area via different modes of travel and accommodating active transportation users.

## **2. Land Use**

- The plan area is within the City of Richmond's General Plan designated high-intensity mixed use (major activity center) with suitable conditions for supporting high-rise mixed-use developments, including residential development, office, retail, and entertainment uses. The General Plan encourages development of primary urban centers that have mixed uses, generate revenue, and support various modes of transportation. This supports a vision for higher-density and complementary services and amenities for the plan area.
- The secondary land use designation, Regional Commercial Mixed Use, supports mid-rise and mixed-use developments (office, retail, residential) that promote active transportation and pedestrian uses.

## **3. Zoning**

- The plan area parcels are zoned for Commercial Mixed-Use Activity Center and Regional Commercial, with allowable uses for mid- and high-rise developments and mixed-uses at major activity centers. The Land Use and Zoning Ordinance encourages higher intensity uses for the plan area that provide diverse and accessible amenities, promote social gathering, and promote the plan area as a regional destination for the City of Richmond.

## **4. Local Services and Amenities**

- Various community facilities and services are present within and surrounding the plan area. Several parks, open space areas, and community-serving amenities, such as community centers, picnic areas, trails, and recreation areas, are located in close proximity to the site but not within. Therefore, there is an opportunity to integrate community gathering areas in the plan area. Various schools are located close by and three are within the plan area boundary. Access to these services and amenities appears high around the plan area. The Project should consider uses that complement and add to the existing character of the community and accommodate all users, considering the presence of schools, parks, and open spaces that students, children, and families may frequent. There is opportunity to increase access to these amenities through complete street designs.
- The plan area is serviced by the City of Richmond Police Department with the nearest police station located in southern Richmond, approximately five miles south of the plan area. Generally, the police district that includes the plan area has greater reports of robbery, burglary, larceny and theft, and vehicle theft than other districts in the City. This indicates a potential need for an enhanced law enforcement presence and improved safety measures, such as having a police substation within Northern Richmond, increasing patrolling, increasing the capacity of the existing police station, and/or increasing design features that promote safety (e.g., lighting, enhanced surveillance). Through the public engagement process, there is opportunity to engage directly with community members to identify risks, consider vulnerable people and places, prioritize potential solutions, and increase overall sense of safety.
- Fire service is provided by the Richmond Fire Protection District, with the nearest fire station located on the southeastern edge of the plan area boundary. The project may consider the potential for additional service or capacity needs to adequately serve future increases in development density and intensity.
- Several public and private health care facilities are located within and around the plan area with access to primary care services (non-emergency). However, the plan area and surrounding areas in Richmond are identified as Medically Under-served Areas where there



is inadequate service to health professionals and affordable health care for residents. There is a shortage of practitioners within the plan area and surrounding community to need community needs. There is only one full-service hospital, located in southern Richmond. There is opportunity to incorporate programs and resources to help improve access to emergency services and resources, particularly in areas planned for higher-density of housing and social gathering.

- Local bus service is provided by AC Transit and WestCat, with various bus stops and bus routes operating within the plan area. These services provide connection to regional transit services, including BART and Amtrak. There is no direct access to regional transit services. Refer to the Hilltop Existing Conditions Transportation Memorandum for more details.
- There are existing bike and pedestrian facilities that can be enhanced. There is opportunity for multimodal reimaging, by expanding existing bikeways throughout the plan area, connecting to other, nearby bikeways, and adding bike facilities (bike racks and lockers). Gaps in the pedestrian network can also be addressed to increase safety, comfort, and connectivity, and create a pedestrian-friendly environment. Refer to the Hilltop Existing Conditions Transportation Memorandum for more details.
- Historical resources are not found locally, however, significant historical assets are located nearby in Pinole and Southern Richmond. The General Plan encourages increasing awareness and education of these assets to connect more people to the City's rich history and drive increased attraction. Due to distance, there is little opportunity to directly participate in these goals, though the plan area may consider incorporating specific programs or features that provide influence for historical assets and help the community celebrate the local history.
- Dry infrastructure is established, and the plan area is serviced by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), Republic Services, and the East Bay Municipal Water District for electric, gas, waste, and water provision. These may accommodate and serve new and increased uses within the plan area.
- There are few streetlights throughout the plan area, with gaps primarily along Hilltop Drive and Hilltop Mall Road. Portions of Hilltop Drive have no streetlighting and only the inner side of Hilltop Mall Road has streetlights. There is opportunity to add streetlighting to fill missing gaps in the network and support the vision for a more active and safe community.
- Natural resources within and surrounding the plan area include Hilltop Lake, Garrity Creek, an open space and wetland area, and various tree species. Hilltop Lake, Garrity Creek, and the open space wetland provide wildlife habitat, urban greening, and a natural resource amenity for the plan area. There are also a significant amount of the City's trees within the plan area, approximately 11,600, and potential for new planting sites within and surrounding the plan area. The existing canopy and potential future sites for tree plantings provide opportunity to consider multi-benefits of natural amenities within the design of the Project. Trees and increased canopy within urban jurisdictions provide benefits in the form of natural shading, cooling, aesthetic benefits, public and mental health benefits, community gathering spaces, and local air quality improvement.

## 5. Social Equity

- The City is home to a large and diverse population, of which various individuals and groups are considered to be more vulnerable to disproportionate burden. These groups include children, the elderly, people of color, and non-English speakers. There is a large population of Black and Hispanic individuals, seniors, and foreign-born and linguistically isolated

individuals in the community. These groups are more likely to be vulnerable to new development, climate change, changing community characters, and may also lack access to resources and support needed for meaningful civic participation. Equitable planning processes and practices should create opportunities for vulnerable populations to safely participate in shaping their communities.

- The plan area is not within regional- or state-designated Equity Priority Communities or Disadvantaged Communities. However, such designated areas are found directly surrounding the plan area, to the north, west, and south. The plan area has the potential to serve a large population of disadvantaged communities. Understanding current conditions of vulnerable groups and individuals may help reveal new services and amenities needed to uplift and support the most vulnerable within and surrounding the plan area.
- Significant population characteristics that contribute to greater vulnerability within the plan area include high rates of asthma and cardiovascular disease, and low birth weight of infants. Sustainable designs and development can help mitigate the environmental setting and hazards that may contribute to these conditions, such as minimizing impacts from air quality pollution and increasing opportunities for active transportation and physical activity.

## **6. Climate and Environmental Hazards**

- Significant environmental hazards that contribute to pollution burden include hazardous waste facilities and generators, and impaired water bodies in the region. Five hazardous waste facilities are located in close proximity to the plan area. Several waterbodies in the region are found to have harmful pollutants and do not meet water quality standards. Various agencies are monitoring these conditions at local and state levels. The Project offers the opportunity to incorporate sustainable design best practices to improve not only site conditions but conditions downstream from the plan area as well.
- There is little to no risk from environmental hazards of extreme temperatures, flooding, wildfires, and sea level rise to the plan area. There may be secondary hazards that impact the plan area, from worsening air quality and smoke, reduced visitors and tourists, and potential impacts to critical infrastructure and services due to severe flooding, wildfire, and sea level rise in the region. Safety protocols may be considered for mitigating impacts from secondary hazards.
- Earthquakes pose a significant risk, due to the Hayward Fault, San Andreas Fault, and other local faults within close proximity to the plan area. Ensure facilities meet building code requirements.

## **7. Plans and Policies**

- The City's General Plan supports high-intensity, mixed-use projects that enhance major activity centers, promote economic development, increase housing options, and provide community-serving spaces. The General Plan also encourages leveraging existing transportation infrastructure for new developments, and prioritizing locations where there is high transportation access. The Project will be implementing this vision for the plan area.
- The Health in All Policies (HiAP) ordinance supports increasing services and resources that support disadvantaged groups and improve equity, especially relating to health care services, employment opportunities, and affordable housing for residents. Provide opportunities for increasing these services and programs within the plan area.
- The City's Climate Action Plan supports activities that promote complete streets, sustainable designs and green buildings, green workforce development, and increased community resilience.

The Richmond Urban Greening Master Plan further highlights the City’s goals for increasing urban greening and tree canopy within the community to support a healthier and more attractive environment for the community. Green features, green designs, and sustainable development techniques should be maximized within the plan area to comply with local climate action goals, keep greenhouse gas emissions to a minimum, and increase overall sustainability within the community.

- The Richmond Bicycle Master Plan prioritizes improved connections between community services, amenities, and employment centers through increased bikeways that are safe and comfortable for users. The Pedestrian Plan aligns with goals for safety and connectivity, and further highlights the importance of complete streets, public health, equity, and sustainability in transportation infrastructure. There is opportunity for new and improved active transportation infrastructure and amenities that promote urban pathways and increase access to and from the plan area. A complete streets design with sustainability features is encouraged to maximize residents and visitors’ use, safety, and comfort.
- The Contra Costa County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan prioritizes increasing community and environmental resilience to hazards as well as enhancing local systems (environmental and manmade) to minimize impacts. This is encouraged through safe developments that meet building standards and avoid hazardous areas, public awareness and preparation for known hazards, and collaborative planning processes that consider mitigation measures for potential impacts. Project developments need to be able to withstand seismic hazards and should maximize sustainable strategies near hazardous materials sites. Safety protocols may be considered for mitigating secondary impacts from wildfires and air quality pollution, flooding, and sea level rise.
- The Plan Bay Area 2050 supports growth for a mix of uses, affordable housing options, transformation of underutilized and aging commercial, and complete street designs. The Project will be implementing this vision for the plan area. Ensure uses are compatible and provide a diverse mix of services and amenities.

## 2.0 Introduction

### 2.1 Memo Purpose

The Existing Conditions Memorandum (memorandum) is intended to provide an overview of existing conditions for the Hilltop Specific Plan and associated Addendum to the Richmond General Plan 2030 Environmental Impact Report (Project). The plan area is comprised of a 143-acre plan area (“plan area”) within the Hilltop Priority Development Area (PDA) and is generally situated south of Richmond Parkway, between San Pablo Avenue and Interstate-80, in Richmond, California. The Plan area is in its early planning stages. At present, the Project contemplates a mix of land uses. The ultimate mix of uses and development program will be determined as part of the planning process that will involve and be informed by community and stakeholder engagement.

This memorandum is developed to provide context for the plan area, identify potential opportunities and constraints for consideration, and ultimately inform the development of a Specific Plan and supporting environmental document for the Project, which will serve as a development framework to guide the revitalization of the plan area and surrounding area. This

memorandum serves as one in a larger series of memoranda that make up the larger, comprehensive existing conditions analysis, which consists of:

- This memorandum, which focuses on the existing physical context, land use, zoning, and local services and amenities; an analysis of social equity and climate and environmental hazards; and relationship to local and regional plans, goals, and policies.
- Urban design memorandum, which provides an analysis of physical attributes, open space typologies, and building form, as well as supporting case studies of comparable mall redevelopment projects.
- Transportation memorandum, which provides an overview of the existing roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities within the vicinity of the plan area.
- Wet utilities memorandum, which identifies existing storm drain, flood control, water system, and sanitary systems.
- Geotechnical memorandum that will evaluate the site conditions and development limitations, pertaining to geotechnical, geologic, and seismic conditions.
- Market Study that will evaluate market support for new development at the site based on current and future anticipated market conditions.

## 2.2 Memo Organization

This memorandum is organized into the following sections to provide an understanding of the plan area's existing conditions and related planning goals. Key findings on opportunities and constraints are described throughout and summarized at the memorandum's forefront. The following sections within this memorandum are outlined as follows:

- Existing Conditions
  - Physical Context
  - Land Use
  - Zoning
  - Local Services and Amenities
  - Social Equity
  - Climate and Environmental Hazards
- Plans and Policies
  - City of Richmond General Plan 2030
  - City of Richmond Health in All Policies
  - Richmond Climate Action Plan
  - Richmond Urban Greening Plan
  - Richmond Bicycle Master Plan and Pedestrian Plan
  - Contra Costa County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

- Plan Bay Area 2050

## 3.0 Existing Conditions

### 3.1 Physical Context

#### 3.1.1 Regional Setting

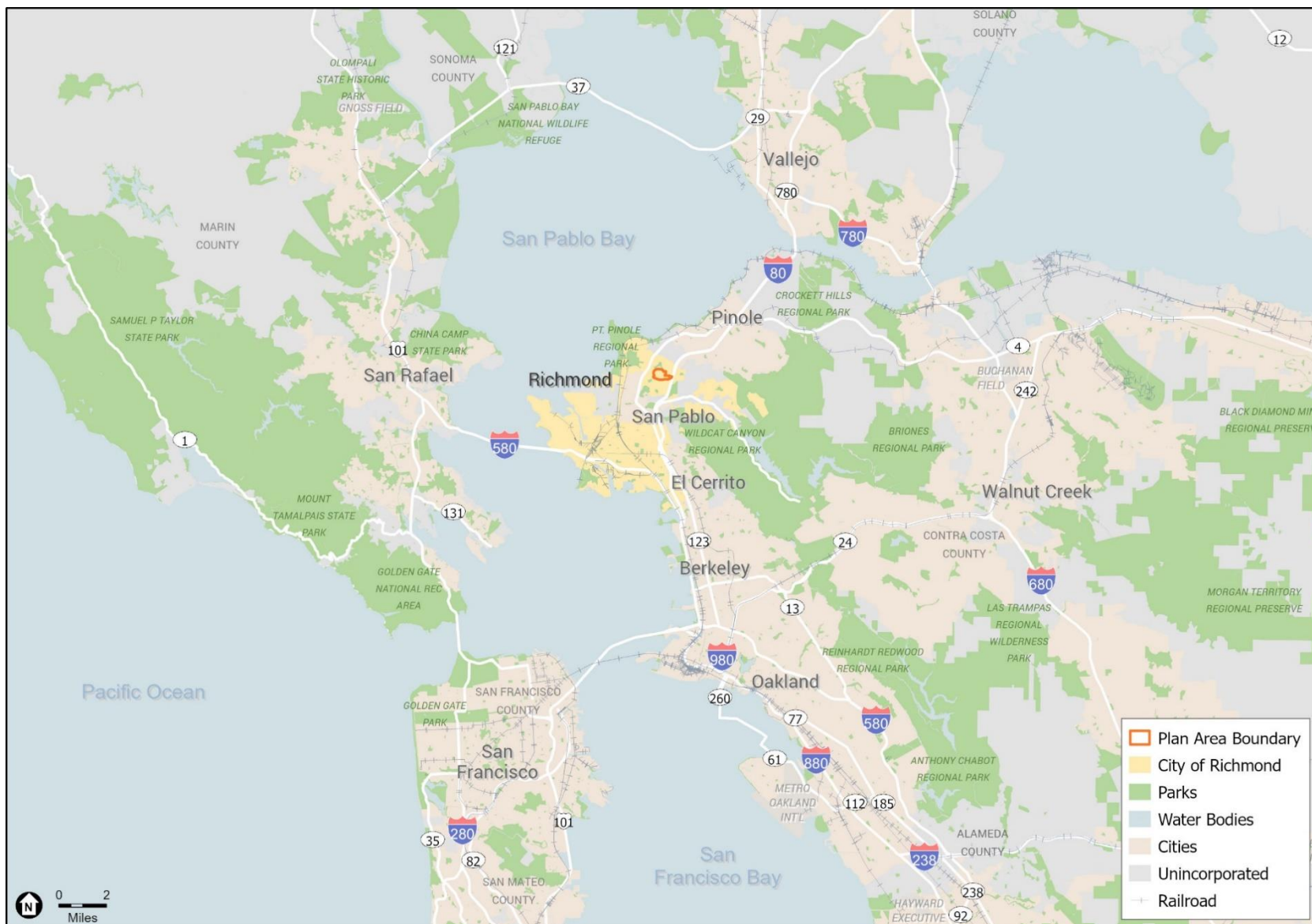
The plan area is situated in the City of Richmond (City), in northwestern Contra Costa County (County), within the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area (Bay Area). To the north and east, the City is bordered by the cities of El Cerrito, Pinole, San Pablo, and unincorporated areas of Contra Costa County. On its eastern edge, the City is bordered by the Berkeley Hills, San Pablo, and Sobrante ridges. The City and County of San Francisco are located approximately 17 miles to the west across the San Francisco Bay and connected by Interstate-80 (I-80); the City of Oakland within Alameda County is located approximately nine miles to the south, and; the City of San Jose in Santa Clara County is located approximately 50 miles to the south. Marin County lies to the west, across the San Pablo and San Francisco bays and connected by I-580, and Napa County lies to the north, connected by I-80. **Figure 1** shows the regional setting for the plan area.

The City is located near major airports and served by various regional transportation systems. Oakland International Airport is located approximately 24 miles south in the City of Oakland, and San Francisco International Airport is located approximately 31 miles to the southwest in San Mateo County. The City is served by two freeways (I-80 and I-580) and Richmond Parkway. I-580 runs along the southern portion of the City from west to southeast and I-80 runs along the City's eastern boundary, in a north-south direction. Richmond Parkway is an arterial and expressway that runs along the western portion of the City, connecting I-580 to the south and I-80 to the north.

AC Transit and WestCat provide local transit service within the plan area. The Richmond Parkway Transit Center, located to the northeast of the plan area, provides a park-and-ride lot and transfers to local and regional transit. South of the plan area, regional transit is provided through BART and Amtrak lines, which connect the City to the rest of the Bay Area, Northern California, Sacramento Valley, and San Joaquin Valley. The Richmond Transit Station, located in central Richmond and approximately four miles south of the plan area, serves as a mass connection hub as it marks the northern terminus of BART, connects to Amtrak, and connects to other local and regional transit lines. Refer to the Hilltop Existing Conditions Transportation Memorandum for more details.

#### 3.1.2 Local Setting

The plan area is limited to a subarea within the City's approximately 300-acre Hilltop Priority Development Area (PDA), comprised of Hilltop Mall, regional open space area of Point Pinole Regional Shoreline, and several residential neighborhoods (Hilltop Bayview, Hilltop Green, Hilltop Village, Fairmede/Hilltop, and Parchester Village). These boundaries of the PDA as described in the City's General Plan differ from those of the plan area, which include only the Hilltop Mall site, select parcels surrounding the Mall site off Hilltop Mall Road, and select parcels east of Blume Drive. The plan area is generally bounded by Hilltop Mall Road and Klose Way to the north; Hilltop Mall Road and Robert Miller Drive to the west; Hilltop Drive to the



SOURCE: City of Richmond, 2022; ESA, 2022.

Hilltop Specific Plan

**Figure 1**  
Regional Setting

south, and; Blume Drive and I-80 to the east. **Figure 2** shows the plan area boundary in northern Richmond. These parcels represent an approximately 143-acre plan area within the PDA.

Hilltop Mall (“Hilltop Mall” or “mall”) makes up the majority of the plan area with approximately 77 acres and 1.1 million square feet of indoor retail. The mall was built in 1976 as a regional commercial designation and includes a Wal-Mart and various retailers. Major tenants, such as Macy’s, Sears, and JC Penney, have since closed. In April 2021, Hilltop Mall was purchased by Prologis, a real estate development and investment firm that specializes in logistics.<sup>1</sup>

## 3.2 Land Use

### 3.2.1 Existing Land Uses

The plan area is comprised of 43 parcels with varying land uses, most of which are characterized by auto-oriented development and the regional shopping mall. **Figure 3** depicts the existing land uses within the plan area, which generally include:

- Apartments of 60 units or more
- Auto agencies
- Commercial stores (not including supermarkets)
- Financial buildings (related to insurance and tile companies)
- Government-owned buildings (e.g., post office)
- Medical and dental buildings
- Motels, hotels, and mobile home parks
- Office buildings
- Restaurants (sit-in service only)
- Service stations and car washes
- Shopping center

### 3.2.2 Designated Land Uses

The General Plan’s Land Use and Urban Design Element designate the location, distribution, and extent of proposed land uses within the City. These designations work in conjunction with General Plan policies and actions to frame the vision for the City’s growth and development while ensuring the provision of adequate infrastructure to serve existing and future populations. The two land use designations prescribed within the plan area are High-Intensity Mixed Use or Major Activity Center (HIMU) and Regional Commercial Mixed-Use (RCMU). **Figure 4** depicts the designated land uses within and surrounding the plan area.

Hilltop Mall and the area south of Hilltop Mall Road to Hilltop Drive are designated as **High-Intensity Mixed Use or Major Activity Center (HIMU)**, a “change area” with suitable conditions for supporting mid and high-rise mixed-use development. This designation is provided to areas where there is lower utilization, incompatible land uses, and high redevelopment potential.<sup>2</sup> HIMU

<sup>1</sup> Avalos, George. 2021. News – Real estate: Prologis buys former Hilltop Mall site in Richmond. East Bay Times. April 23, 2021. Available: <https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2021/04/23/real-estate-prologis-buys-former-hilltop-mall-site-in-richmond/>

<sup>2</sup> City of Richmond. 2012. *Richmond General Plan 2030*. Element 3—Land Use and Urban Design Element. Available: <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/8809-30-Land-Use-and-Urban-Design-Element?bidId=>.



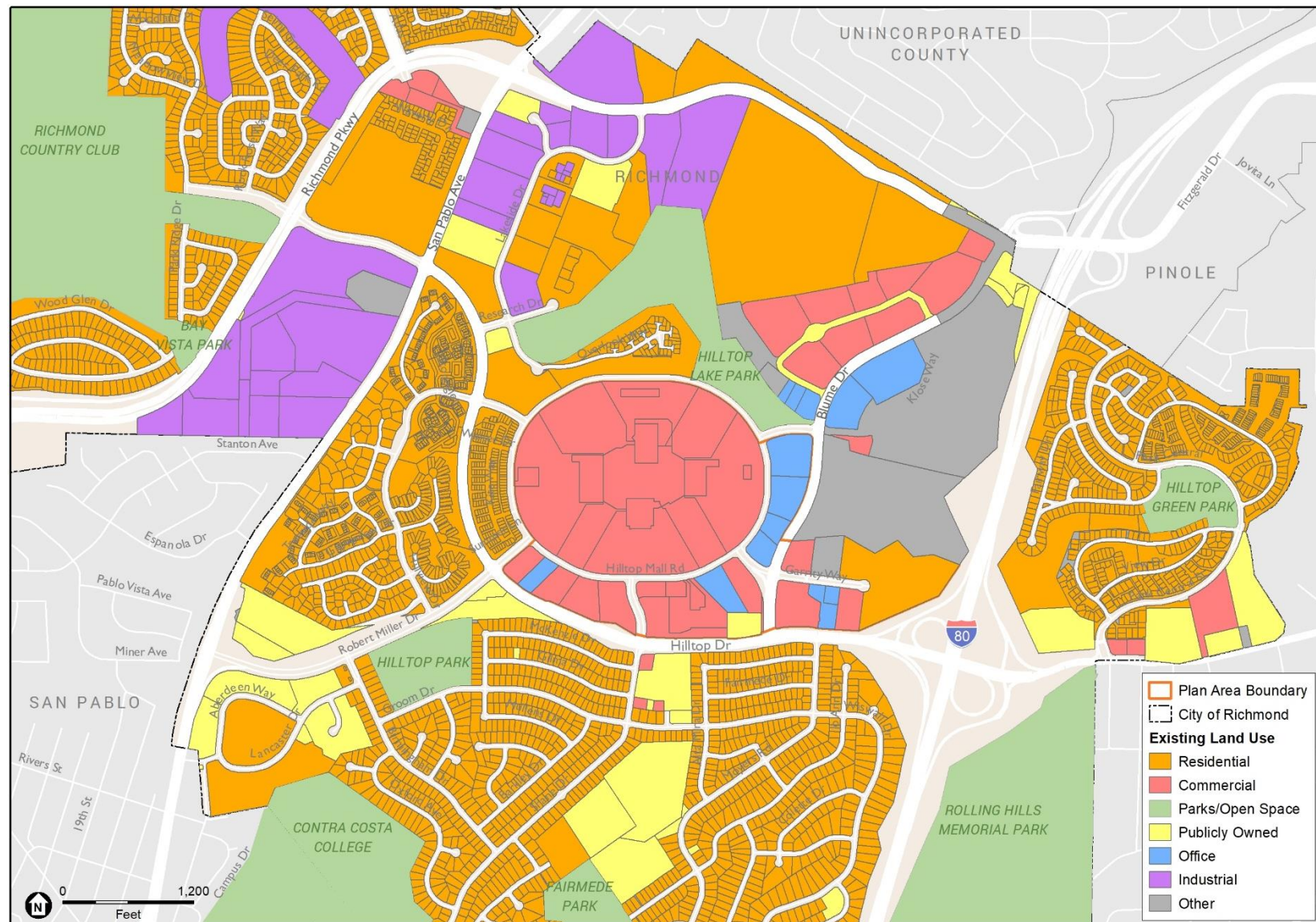


SOURCE: City of Richmond, 2022; ESA, 2022.

Hilltop Specific Plan

**Figure 2**  
Plan Area Boundary



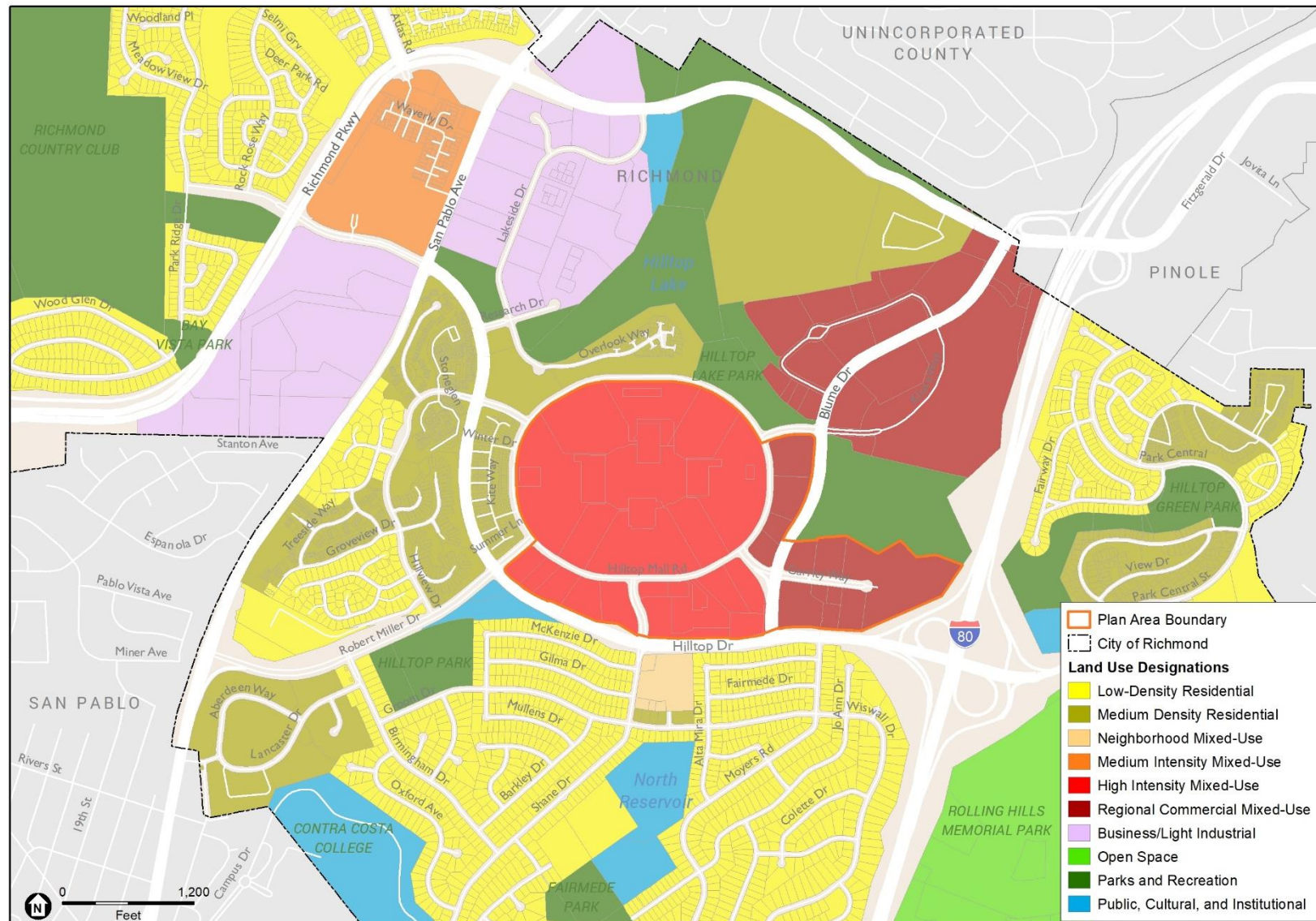


SOURCE: City of Richmond, 2022; ESA, 2022.

Hilltop Specific Plan

**Figure 3**  
Existing Land Uses





SOURCE: City of Richmond, 2022; ESA, 2022.

Hilltop Specific Plan

**Figure 4**  
General Plan Land Use Map

parcels within the plan area make up roughly 102 acres, which is over 70 percent of the total plan area.

It is important to note that the PDA, which envelops the plan area, is also designated as a HIMU by the General Plan. As a designated HIMU or major activity center, the PDA and select parcels within the plan area are intended to serve as a primary urban center with a mix of uses (retail, office, housing, recreation) for the City and region. The General Plan envisions PDAs to be highly visible urban centers with residential, commercial, recreation, social gathering, and revenue-generating activities that are served by a variety of transportation modes. The community character of PDAs is envisioned to support higher-density development that have prime access to services and amenities for residents and visitors.

To the east, approximately 11 parcels along either side of Blume Drive are designated as **Regional Commercial Mixed-Use (RCMU)**, which support mid-rise mixed-use development. These parcels total approximately 30 acres.

Surrounding the plan area, designated land uses include HIMU, RCMU, residential uses, mixed-use, parks and recreation, and public, cultural, and institutional uses.

Descriptions of each land use within and surrounding the plan area are further described in **Table 1**, along with their prescribed densities and intensities. Density and intensity standards are provided for each land use designation (shown in **Figure 4**) to regulate how much development is permitted. Residential uses include density standards, expressed as the number of dwelling (housing) units per acre (du/ac). Nonresidential uses include intensity standards, expressed as a ratio between a building's floor area and total site area (known as Floor Area Ratio, or FAR). Maximum height is also provided for each land use designation prescribed by the General Plan.

**TABLE 1**  
**LAND USE DESIGNATIONS WITHIN AND SURROUNDING PLAN AREA**

Land Use Designation	Description from General Plan	Ranges
<b>Within Plan Area and Surrounding Plan Area</b>		
High-Intensity Mixed-Use (Major Activity Center)	Includes mid and high-rise mixed-use development at major activity centers to serve the community and region. Office, retail, entertainment, and residential uses are allowed. Areas with this designation are characterized by streets with minimal setbacks, wide sidewalks and public spaces that cater to pedestrians and transit riders. Medium-Intensity Mixed-Use (Commercial Emphasis) is allowed within this land use designation.	Density: Up to 125 du/ac Intensity: 1.0 to 5.0 FAR Height: 15 to 135 feet
Regional Commercial Mixed-Use	Includes mid-rise mixed-use development characterized by compact and pedestrian-friendly environments. Office, retail, and residential uses are allowed in mid-rise buildings.	Density: Up to 50 du/ac Intensity: 0.5 to 2.0 FAR Height: 15 to 55 feet
<b>Surrounding Plan Area</b>		
Medium-Density Residential	Includes single and multi-family housing types such as one to three-story garden apartments, historic bungalows, and cottages on small lots, townhouses, and stacked flats. Neighborhood mixed-use development is allowed at neighborhood nodes.	Density: 10 to 40 du/ac ** Intensity: Not applicable Height: Up to 35 ft. *
Neighborhood Mixed-Use	Includes residential and neighborhood-serving retail uses such as shops, markets, professional offices, boutiques, barber shops, beauty salons and restaurants. Residential development above ground floor commercial is strongly encouraged. Development is emphasized at neighborhood nodes.	Density: 10 to 30 du/ac Intensity: 0.25 to 0.5 FAR Height: Up to 45 feet

Land Use Designation	Description from General Plan	Ranges
Parks and Recreation	Includes publicly owned local and regional parks as well as privately owned recreational facilities such as golf courses. Small-scale recreation-supporting uses such as rental shops, bike repair facilities, small restaurants, interpretation centers and museums are also permitted.	Density: Not applicable Intensity: Up to 0.5 FAR Height: Up to 35 feet
Public, Cultural and Institutional	Includes public, semi-public, and educational uses such as civic facilities, community centers, libraries, museums, national park facilities, hospitals, and schools.	Density: Not applicable Intensity: Up to 1.0 FAR Height: Up to 45 feet

NOTES:

\* "Building height in a Medium-Density Residential land use classification may exceed 35 feet as part of an approved Planned Area (PA) district. Any proposed increase in height shall, prior to or contemporaneous with the consideration of the Planned Area (PA) district, undergo adequate environmental analysis under CEQA." (Resolution 110-14)

SOURCE: City of Richmond, 2012.

### 3.3 Zoning

The City of Richmond Zoning Ordinance (Zoning Ordinance), contained within Title XV of the Richmond Municipal Code, designates uses for all parcels citywide at a greater level of specificity. This is done through the establishment of 26 zoning districts with regulations and standards for implementing the General Plan land uses.

There are two zoning districts for the parcels within the plan area. These include **CM-5 Commercial Mixed-Use, Activity Center** for the parcels that include Hilltop mall, surrounding parking, and parcels south of the mall, and; **CR Commercial, Regional** for the parcels that make up the eastern portion of the plan area. **Figure 5** shows the zoning districts for the plan area and **Table 2** lists zoning district descriptions for these parcels, as well as for the parcels that surround the plan area.

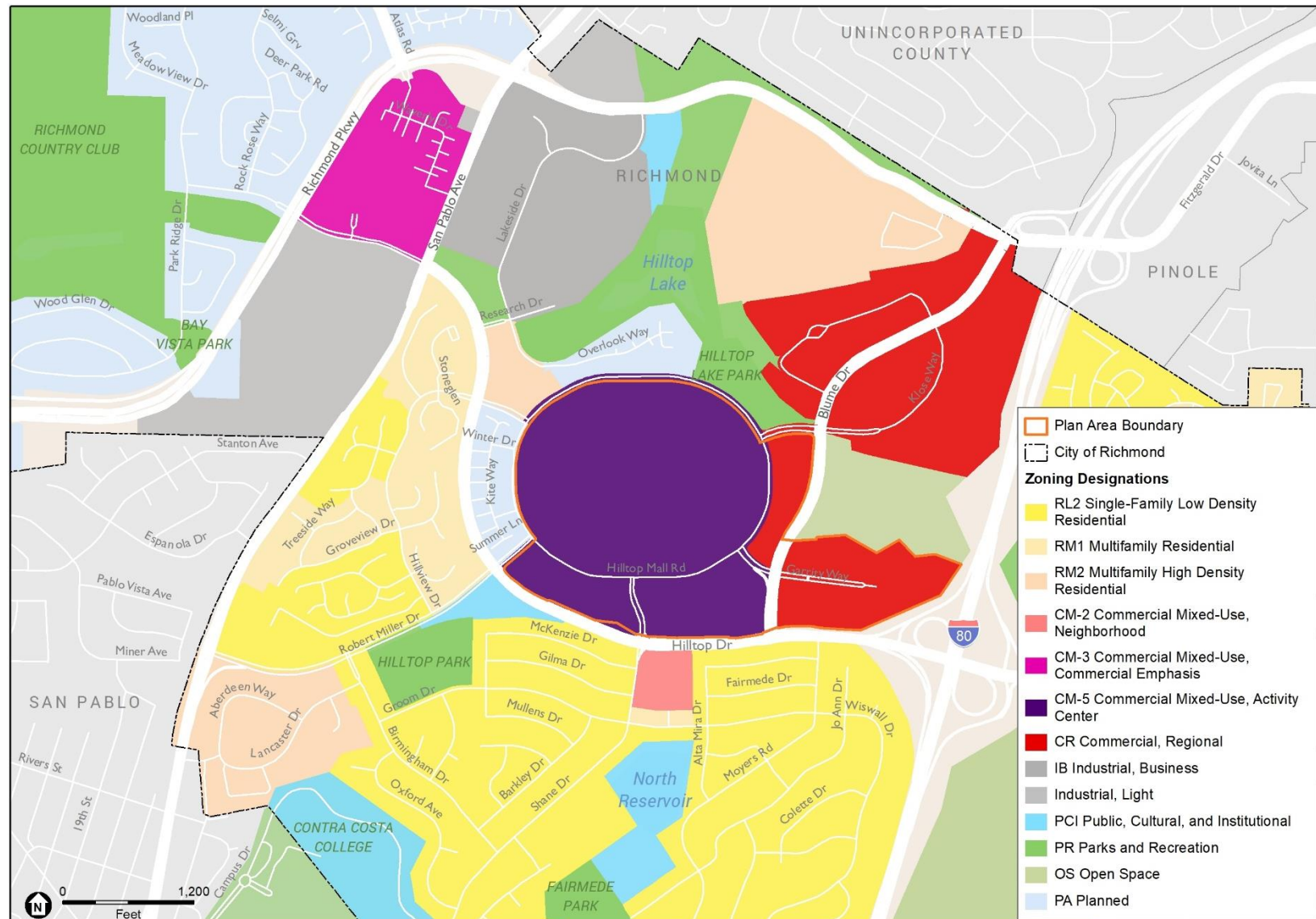
### 3.4 Local Services and Amenities

#### 3.4.1 Community Services

The plan area benefits from a variety of services and amenities provided by the City of Richmond and surrounding jurisdictions, including Contra Costa County, cities of San Pablo, Pinole, and El Cerrito. The following sections describes services and amenities within and near the plan area, including police, fire, health care facilities, schools, parks and open space, transportation, natural resources, historic and cultural resources, and dry utilities.

##### **Police Service**

The Richmond Police Department (RPD) serves the City and consists of 170 sworn officers. The Police Headquarters is located in southern Richmond, south of I-580 and approximately five miles south of the plan area. The RPD organizes patrolling by districts (Northern, Central, and



SOURCE: CORGIS; ESA 2022.

Richmond Hilltop Specific Plan

**Figure 5**  
Zoning Map



**TABLE 2**  
**ZONING DISTRICTS WITHIN AND SURROUNDING PLAN AREA**

<b>District</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Within Plan Area</b>		
CM-5	Commercial Mixed-Use Activity Center	This district is intended for mid and high-rise mixed-use development at major activity centers to serve the community and residents and businesses in the San Francisco Bay Area. Office, retail, entertainment, and residential uses are allowed. Standards for physical form will create an urban character as envisioned in the General Plan with streets with minimal setbacks, wide sidewalks and public spaces that cater to pedestrians and transit riders.
CR-5	Regional Commercial	This district is intended for mid-rise mixed-use development and regional shopping centers (e.g., Hilltop, Pacific East Mall, and Target) characterized by intensive development of retail space in compact and pedestrian-friendly environments. Office, retail, and residential uses are allowed in mid-rise buildings.
<b>Surrounding Plan Area</b>		
CM2	Commercial Mixed-Use, Neighborhood	This district is intended for residential and neighborhood-serving retail uses, such as small stores, markets, professional offices, boutiques, barbershops, beauty salons, and restaurants. Residential development above ground floor commercial is preferred, but not required. Standards will ensure that development at neighborhood nodes is appropriately scaled, so that the physical form relates to and does not overwhelm adjacent single-family residential neighborhoods.
IB	Industrial, Business	This district is intended to accommodate a diverse range of business and light industrial uses, including office, general service, research and development, biotechnology, small-scale wholesale and warehousing facilities, and service commercial uses. It includes flex space, and industrial buildings for single or multiple users, limited personal services such as health and fitness studios, and other related uses. Small-scale retail and certain institutional uses are also permitted.
OS	Open Space	The purpose of the OS Open Space District is to provide land for development of open, space uses, consistent with the General Plan. More specifically, this zoning district is intended for undeveloped publicly owned lands, visually significant open lands, water areas, and wildlife habitat. These areas are set aside as permanent open space preserves and may include trails, trail heads, agricultural uses (such as 4H), and other facilities for low-impact public recreational uses. This zoning district includes wetlands, mudflats, creek corridors and other natural preservation areas, as well as private lands deed-restricted for open space preservation.
PA	Planned Area	This district is intended to facilitate orderly development of larger sites (at least 2 acres) in the City consistent with the General Plan, especially where a particular mix of uses or character is desired that can best be achieved through an integrated development plan.
PCI	Public, Cultural and Institutional	This district is intended for City facilities, utilities, schools, and other public and quasi-public uses.
PR	Parks and Recreation	This district is intended for active and passive public parks, including outdoor and indoor recreation such as playing fields, playgrounds, community centers, and other appropriate recreational uses. This district includes publicly owned local and regional parks as well as privately owned recreational facilities such as golf courses.
RM1	Multifamily Residential	This district is intended for single and multi-family housing types such as one to three-story garden apartments, historic bungalows, and cottages on small lots, townhouses, and stacked flats. A maximum density of 26 dwelling units per acre is permitted, and minimum density of 10 dwelling units per acre is required. In addition to residential uses, this district allows for a limited number of public and semi-public uses such as day care centers, public safety facilities, and residential care facilities that are appropriate in a medium density multi-family residential environment. Neighborhood mixed-use development is allowed at neighborhood nodes identified by the Planning Commission. Small lot single unit and bungalow court development is allowed in the RM-1 District where it would be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.
RM2	Multifamily High Density Residential	This district is intended for multi-family housing types including apartments, condominiums, townhouses, and group housing. A maximum density of 40 dwelling units per acre is permitted, and a minimum density of 15 dwelling units per acre is required. In addition to residential uses, this district allows for compatible public and semi-public uses, including day care centers, public safety facilities, community assembly, residential care facilities, and transitional and supportive housing that are appropriate in a medium-high density residential environment. Neighborhood mixed-use development is allowed at neighborhood nodes identified by the Planning Commission.

SOURCE: City of Richmond, 2022.

Southern) and beats, with officers assigned to each. The plan area is within the Northern District and Beat Eight, with seven assigned officers.<sup>3</sup> Based on the City's General Plan, it is anticipated that a substation will be placed in Hilltop as part of a move to precinct-based policing for improved response times and service.<sup>4</sup> Two other substations are also anticipated to be added to serve the Richmond triangle and Annex neighborhoods in the southern and southeastern portions of the City.

Within the City of San Pablo, Contra Costa Community College has a campus police station located in proximity to the plan area, as shown in **Figure 6**. The campus police station provides services on-and-off campus for patrolling, investigations, dispatch, and other enforcement of local, state, and federal laws. The Patrol Division officers have similar duties to city and county police departments and may collaborate with surrounding police jurisdictions for community safety.<sup>5</sup>

### Crime

Citywide data from the RPD's most recent Crime-Stat Report indicates that violent crimes (includes homicide, aggravated assault, robbery, and criminal sexual assault) have increased 14 percent from the previous year, while property crimes (includes burglary, larceny and all theft, vehicle theft, and arson) have slightly decreased, by 1 percent.<sup>6</sup> Robbery and vehicle theft reports increased by 80 percent and 28 percent, respectively, while aggravated assault, burglary, and larceny and theft reports decreased from the previous year. Homicide, criminal sexual assault, and arson reports had no change.

Of the three districts within the RPD, the Northern District had the lowest reported violent crime (31 percent) from 2021 to 2022, with 114 reports of robbery, 75 of aggravated assault, and 18 of criminal sexual assault. However, the Northern District also had the highest reported property crime (42 percent) of the three districts, with 552 reports of larceny and theft, 442 of vehicle theft, 265 of burglary, and 10 of arson. Overall, this data indicates greater concern for crimes of robbery, burglary, larceny and theft, and vehicle theft within the Northern District.

### Fire Service

Fire service and protection for the plan area is provided by the Richmond Fire Protection District, which operates seven fire stations and consists of 85 professional and civilian members. Fire Station No. 68 lies at the edge of the plan area boundary, on the southeastern corner of Robert Miller Drive and Hilltop Drive. Outside of the City's boundary, the Contra Costa Fire Protection District provides service to unincorporated areas near the plan area. Two stations are located near the plan area, to the east of I-80 and south of San Pablo Avenue. There is also another fire station in the

<sup>3</sup> City of Richmond. 2022. Richmond Police Department. Available: <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/82/Police-Department>.

<sup>4</sup> City of Richmond. 2012. Richmond General Plan 2030. Element 12—Public Safety and Noise. Police, Fire and Emergency Preparedness. Available: <http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/8817/120-Public-Safety-and-Noise-Element?bidId=>.

<sup>5</sup> Contra Costa Community College District (4CD). 2022. Police Services. Available: <https://www.4cd.edu/pd/index.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Richmond Police Department (RPD). 2022. *CRIME-STAT REPORT, Richmond Police Department*. May 5, 2022. Available: <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/61534/2022-April-Crime-Stat-Report-PDF>.

south, just north of San Pablo Avenue, operated by the City of San Pablo. Refer to **Figure 6** for the location of the fire station.

### **Health Care Facilities**

Hospitals, clinics, urgent care sites, and other healthcare services in Richmond are provided by both public and private entities, as shown in **Table 3**. Refer to **Figure 6** for the location of health care facilities near the plan area.

**TABLE 3**  
**HEALTH CARE FACILITIES WITHIN AND NEAR THE PLAN AREA**

Facility Name	Distance from Hilltop Mall (approximate)	Emergency Services Provided
<b>Health Care Facilities</b>		
CCHS, West County Health Center	2 miles	--
CCHS, North Richmond Center for Health	3 miles	--
Concentra, Richmond Urgent Care Clinic	0.2 miles	Urgent care
Kaiser Permanente, Pinole Medical Offices	3 miles	Pharmacy
Kaiser Permanente, Richmond Medical Center	3.5 miles	Emergency room, pharmacy
LifeLong Medical Care, Urgent Care – San Pablo	2 miles	Urgent care
LifeLong Medical Care, Urgent Care – Pinole	2.5 miles	Urgent care
Sutter Health, Richmond Care Center	0.2 miles	--

SOURCE: City of Richmond, Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS), Kaiser Permanente, Sutter Health, LifeLong Medical Care, Concentra.

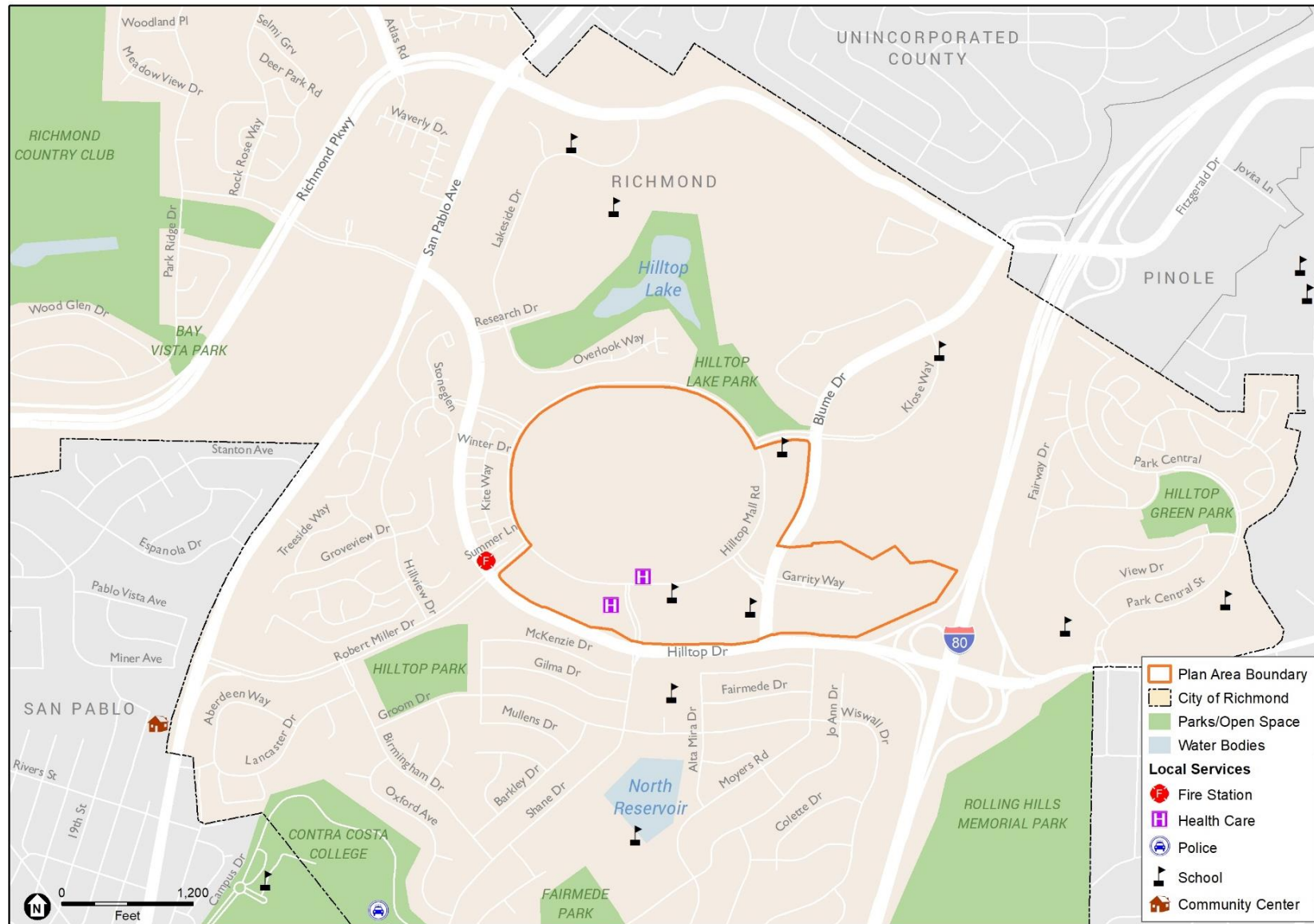
The Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) agency provides county-operated health services in the region, with the nearest facility, West County Health Center, located approximately two miles south of the plan area in San Pablo. West County Health Center provides medical and preventive care; however, emergency services are not available.

There are two health care facilities located within the southern portion of the plan area boundary, Concentra Richmond Urgent Care Clinic and Sutter Health Richmond Care Center. These are suite facilities within the Hilltop Medical Plaza, situated south of Hilltop Mall and Hilltop Mall Road. The Concentra facility provides urgent care services.

The nearest hospital/emergency room is provided by Kaiser Permanente, at their Richmond Medical Center, which serves primarily Kaiser members. This facility is approximately four miles south of Hilltop Mall, located near Richmond’s city center and is the only full-service hospital within the City.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> City of Richmond. 2020. Health in All Policies (HiAP) Progress Report. Available: <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/57209/HiAP-Report-2020>.





SOURCE: ESA, 2022

Richmond Hilltop Specific Plan

**Figure 6**  
Local Services and Amenities

While various health facilities are in the vicinity, the plan area and portions of Richmond are considered to be within Medically Under-served Areas (MUA) and Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas based on the State of California, Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development.<sup>8</sup> This means that residents within these areas lack sufficient health care services and access to affordable health care. **Figure 7** shows MUAs in Richmond, which encompass the plan area.

### **Schools**

Several elementary, middle, and high schools are located near the plan area, and three schools are located within the plan area boundary. Aspire Richmond Technology Academy (Aspire Technology) is located in the eastern portion of the plan area, on the southeastern corner of Hilltop Mall Road and Klose Way (east of Hilltop Mall). Summit Public Schools, including Tamalpais (Tamalpais) and Aspire Richmond California College Preparatory School (Aspire Preparatory), are both located in the southern portion of the plan area, within the parcel south of Hilltop Mall between Hilltop Mall Road and Hilltop Drive. Aspire Technology is a charter school for grades TK-5; Tamalpais is a public school for grades 7-11, and; Aspire Richmond is a charter school for grades 6-12. While these are operated by Summit Public Schools and Aspire Public Schools, the majority of public schools in the region are operated by the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD), which operates almost 60 schools across the cities of Richmond, El Cerrito, San Pablo, Pinole, and Hercules and the unincorporated areas of West Contra County.

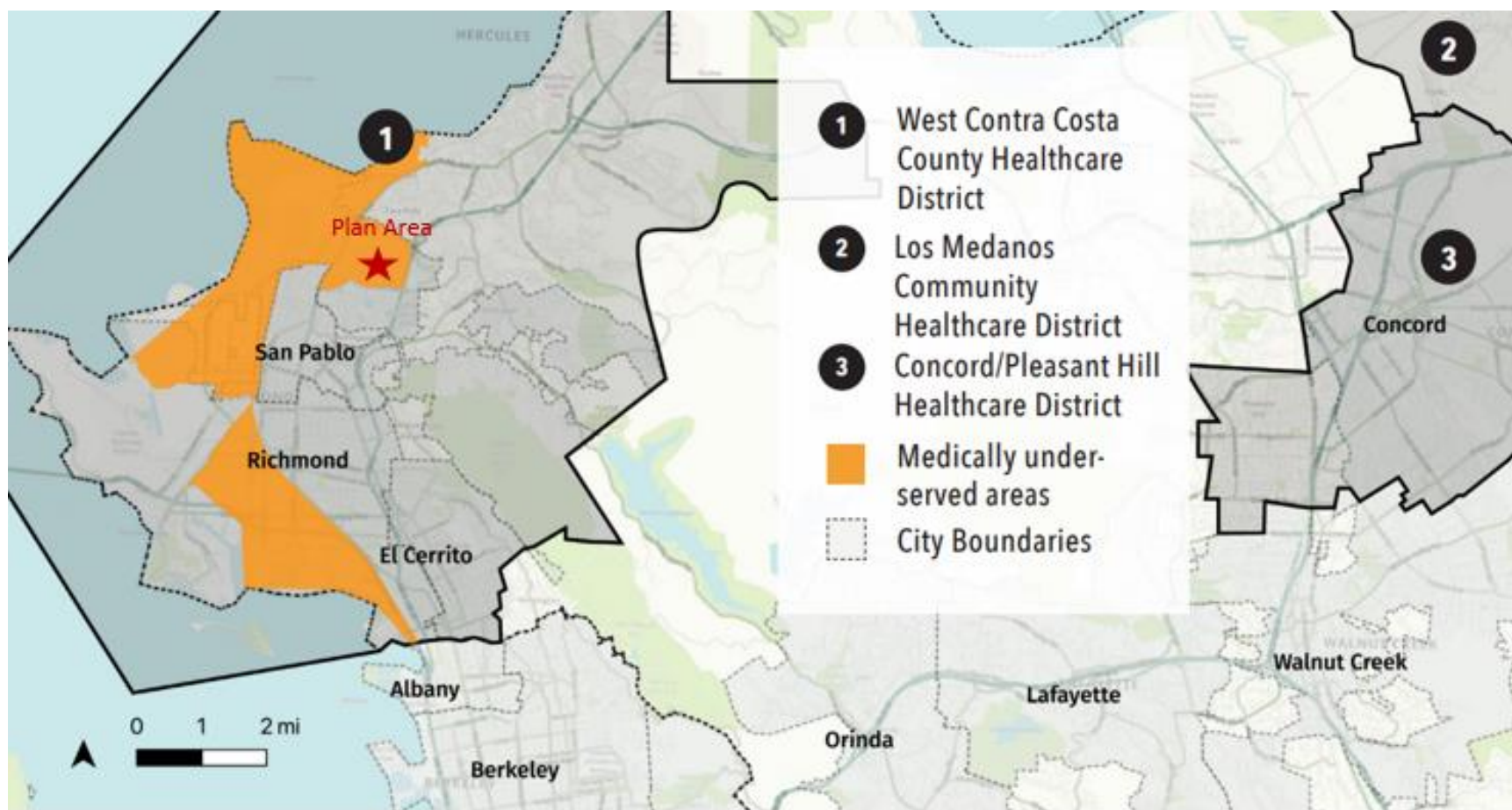
Surrounding the plan area, Making Waves Academy and Caliber Public Schools are two charter schools located north of Hilltop Mall that provide K-12 and K-8 education, respectively. Canterbury Elementary School and Highland Elementary School are two WCCUSD schools located south of Hilltop Drive. Other elementary and high schools are located further beyond the plan area.

The local community college, Contra Costa College (CCC), is located further south of the plan area, approximately one-and-a-half miles from the plan area. CCC is one of three Contra Costa Community College District schools and is described as a Hispanic Serving Institution, serving predominantly students of color in the community.

See **Figure 6** with the locations of schools within and near the plan area, in addition to other community amenities.

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<sup>8</sup> City of Richmond. 2020. Health in All Policies (HiAP) Progress Report. Available: <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/57209/HiAP-Report-2020>.



SOURCE: City of Richmond, 2020.

Hilltop Specific Plan

**Figure 7**  
Medically Underserved Areas in Contra Costa County Healthcare Districts

## ***Parks and Open Space***

The City of Richmond uses a park classification system to help maintain services and recreation activities, assess the distribution of park programs, and help identify opportunities for increasing parkland access, especially for neighborhoods with lower access to parks and open spaces. The system identifies six park types:

1. Compact Parks;
2. Neighborhood Parks;
3. Community Parks;
4. Regional and National Parks;
5. Joint-Use Parks and Facilities; and
6. Public Plazas.

There are nine parks within and surrounding the plan area that provide open space and recreation amenities. These parks fall within three of the six park types: **neighborhood parks, community parks, and regional and national parks.**

**Neighborhood parks** make up four of the nine parks within and near the plan area. These types of parks serve as focal points or activity centers for the local neighborhood, with amenities for children and families such as picnic areas, playgrounds, and community center facilities. Three neighborhood parks are located to the west of the plan area (west of Richmond Parkway), and the fourth is located on the northeastern edge of the City boundary (east of I-80).

**Community parks** make up three of the nine parks that are found within and near the plan area. Community parks serve a larger geographic area than neighborhood parks and generally provide more open space and activities, including fields, trails, community centers and buildings, and greenways. These parks are located close to the plan area boundary. Both community parks, Hilltop and Hilltop Lake, are located approximately 0.5 miles south and north of the plan area, respectively. The 6.7-acre Hilltop Park is located along Robert Miller Drive, south of Hilltop Drive. Hilltop Lake Park consists of 36 acres and is located north of Hilltop Mall Road.

**Regional and national parks** are large-scale open spaces with various natural and biological resources, historical resources, and cultural assets that can cross community jurisdictions. The nearest regional parks are Point Pinole Regional Shoreline, located approximately 3 miles to the west of the plan area, and Wildcat Regional Park and Alvarado, located approximately 3.5 miles to the east of the plan area.

**Table 4** lists the nine parks near the plan area, including size in acres, distance from the plan area, and park amenities. While not listed in the table, the San Francisco Bay Trail is another open space amenity near the plan area that provides open space and pedestrian pathways for community members.<sup>9</sup> A portion of the trail ends at San Pablo Ave and Atlas Road, to the

<sup>9</sup> City of Richmond. 2020. Map – San Francisco Bay Trail. December 31, 2020. Available: <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/56625/RichBT-LR123120>.

northwest of the plan area. This trail leads to Point Pinole Regional Shoreline to the west, and also provides connection to central and southern Richmond through a pathway that travels along Richmond Parkway.

**TABLE 4  
PARKS WITHIN AND NEAR PLAN AREA**

<b>Park</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Distance from plan area (approximate)</b>	<b>Amenities</b>
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>			
Bay Vista Park	0.7	1 mile	Playground, picnic site, open space, basketball court, parking lot
Country Club Vista	2.6	2 miles	Playground, picnic site, BBQ, open space, softball/soccer field, parking lot
Hilltop Green	6.3	1.5 miles	Playground, open space, tennis courts, basketball courts
Parchester	2.1	2 miles	Community center, playground, picnic site, open space, basketball court, baseball field, parking lot
<b>Community Parks</b>			
Fairmede	12	1 mile	Open space, walking path
Hilltop	6.7	0.5 miles	Playground, picnic site, BBQ, open space, basketball court
Hilltop Lake	36	0.5 miles	Walking path, freshwater pond
<b>Regional and National Parks</b>			
Point Pinole Regional Shoreline	2,432	3 miles	Trails, camping, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, beach access, picnic sites, visitor center
Wildcat Canyon Regional Park and Alvarado	2,789	3.5 miles	Trails, biking, hiking, horseback riding, picnic sites

SOURCE: City of Richmond, 2012; East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD).

## ***Transportation***

Local bus service is provided by AC Transit and WestCat, with various bus stops and bus routes operating within the plan area. These services provide connection to regional transit services, including BART and Amtrak. There is no direct access to regional transit services.

There are existing bike and pedestrian facilities that can be enhanced. A Class II bikeway runs along Hilltop Drive and Blume Drive, and a short Class III bikeway runs along the southern end of Blume Drive. A Class III trail runs through Hilltop Lake Park and around Hilltop Lake, to the north of the plan area. Pedestrian infrastructure is limited within the plan area, due to missing sidewalks and crosswalks along Hilltop Mall Road and Hilltop Drive. There is opportunity for multimodal reimagining, by expanding existing bikeways throughout the plan area, connecting to other, nearby bikeways, and adding bike facilities (bike racks and lockers). Gaps in the pedestrian network can also be addressed to increase safety, comfort, and connectivity, and create a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Refer to the Hilltop Existing Conditions Transportation Memorandum for information on public transit, and the bicycle and pedestrian network.

### 3.4.2 Natural Resources

To the north of the plan area is Hilltop Lake, a small freshwater lake with native vegetation and wildlife enclosed within the 36-acre Hilltop Lake Park. Hilltop Lake is accessible by Hilltop Mall Road, with existing trails for pedestrians and bicyclists. Small freshwater marshes and wetlands are also present in the areas surrounding the plan area around Hilltop Lake and within the undeveloped, privately-owned area to the east of the plan area (between Blume Drive and I-80).

The plan area is near Rheem Creek (3.4 miles) and San Pablo Creek (18.7 miles), both located south of the plan area and running through sections of the cities of Richmond, San Pablo and unincorporated Contra Costa County in an east-west direction. The creeks are located approximately two miles south of the plan area. The plan area is within the Garrity and Rheem Creek watersheds, regional San Francisco Bay, San Pablo Bay, and San Pablo Creek-Frontal San Pablo Bay Estuaries. The San Pablo shoreline is located approximately 3 miles to the west.

The plan area is home to various tree species, located within the City's Urban Greening Master Plan, Zone 13: North Richmond Neighborhoods, as shown in **Figure 8**. This zone covers almost 1,400 acres and includes the plan area. A significant portion of the City's total public trees are located within this zone, 11,600 trees of the total 22,000.<sup>10</sup> This zone is also found to have 121 potential sites for new tree plantings (refer to **Figure 7**). Approximately 10 percent of the surface areas within this zone consist of tree canopy. The most prevalent tree species within this zone include:

- Blackwood acacia (*Acacia melanoxylon*);
- London planetree (*Platanus x acerifolia*);
- Coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*);
- Callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana*); and

Most trees within the plan area are “other”, non-City-owned trees, mostly concentrated on the southern portion of the plan area Italian stone pine (*Pinus pinea*).

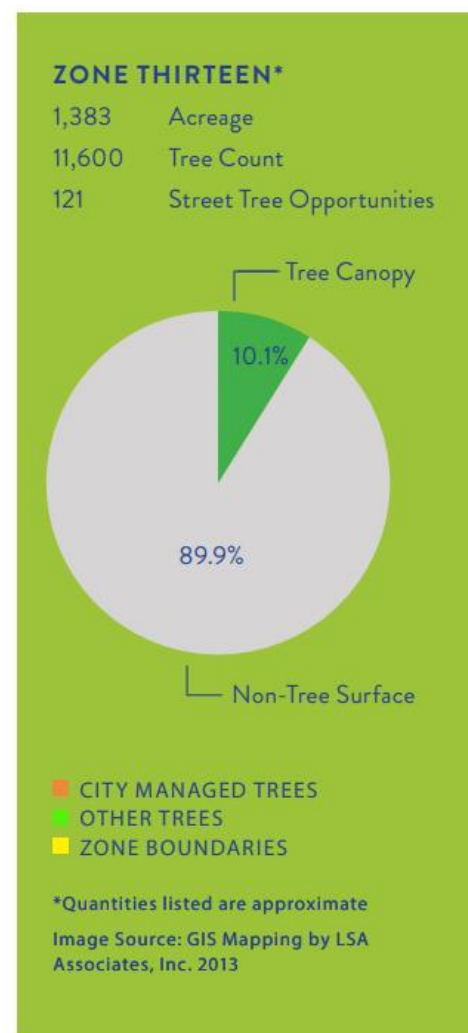
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<sup>10</sup> City of Richmond. 2017. *Urban Greening Master Plan*. March 2017. Available: <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/42026/Richmond-Urban-Greening-Master-Plan-April-2017?bidId=>.





SOURCE: City of Richmond, 2017.



Richmond Hilltop Specific Plan

**Figure 8**  
Hilltop Tree Canopy

### 3.4.3 Historic and Cultural Resources

The City of Richmond is home to various locally and regionally significant historic assets, including landmarks, sites, and districts. While the plan area is not within proximity to historic sites, there are significant assets located further north and south of the site boundary recognized for their architecture and historical relevance. The City of Pinole to the north of the plan area hosts the Bank of Pinole and the Bernardo Fernandez House, both nationally listed for their architecture and Victorian style, respectively. To the south, the New Hotel Carquinez is also recognized for its late-19<sup>th</sup>- and early-20<sup>th</sup>-century architecture. Further south is the nationally-recognized Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park, which contains one of the largest World War II-era collections. The City of Richmond contributed significant resources to the war effort and saw large growth in housing and industrial sectors during and after the wartime.<sup>11</sup> The historical park is located in southern Richmond, within the Richmond Inner Harbor. Though not found within the plan area, other historical assets within Richmond listed by the National Register of Historic Places include:

- Alvarado Park;
- Atchison Village Defense Housing Project, Cal. 4171-x;
- Chinese Shrimp Camp;
- East Brother Island Light Station;
- Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant;
- Nystrom Elementary School-The Maritime Building;
- Point Richmond Historic District;
- Richmond Shipyard Number Three;
- SS Red Oak Victory (victory ship); and
- Winehaven district.

### 3.4.4 Dry Utilities/Infrastructure

The plan area is served by public utilities for electric, gas, water, and waste services. Electric and gas service is provided by PG&E. The electricity is generated from natural gas and geothermal resources from Calpine Corporation energy centers located in the cities of Antioch and Pittsburg and sold to PG&E. Natural gas is generated by Crockett Cogeneration, which operates a natural gas fired plant in the City of Crockett. There are other local refineries within Contra Costa County that have power generation plants to support local operations.

An 11-mile PG&E transmission line runs along the northwestern side of the plan area, while the nearest power line runs closely along the coast, to the west of the plan area. There is one electric substation located to the west of the plan area on the southeastern corner of Hilltop Drive and San Pablo Avenue.

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<sup>11</sup> City of Richmond. 2012. Richmond General Plan 2030. Element 14—Historic Resources Element. Available: <http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentView.aspx?DID=8819>.



There are some locations within the plan area that have limited streetlights, particularly along Hilltop Drive and Hilltop Mall Road, as shown in **Figure 9**. The purple points refer to those streetlights that are owned and maintained by PG&E while the blue points are those owned and maintained by the City of Richmond. The majority of streetlights within the plan area are owned and maintained by the City of Richmond with the exception of those along Hilltop Mall Road. Some portions of Hilltop Drive have no streetlights, such as between Hillview Drive and Robert Miller Drive. The southern side of Hilltop Drive between Robert Miller Drive and Blume Drive also has no streetlights, except for at intersections. Additionally, only the inner side of Hilltop Mall Road that is closest to the mall site has street lighting. There are no streetlights on the outer sides of Hilltop Mall Road, and streetlights are lacking at intersections with Robert Miller Drive and Garrity Drive.

Waste service and disposal is provided by Republic Services, with the nearest waste transfer facility, Golden Bear Waste Recycling Center, located to the south of the plan area at the boundary of the City of Richmond and City of San Pablo.

The City of Richmond receives most of its water supply from surface water at the Mokelumne River watershed within the Sierra Nevada. Water service to the City and plan area is managed and provided by the East Bay Municipal Utility District.

Refer to the Hilltop Existing Conditions Wet Utilities Memorandum for additional details.

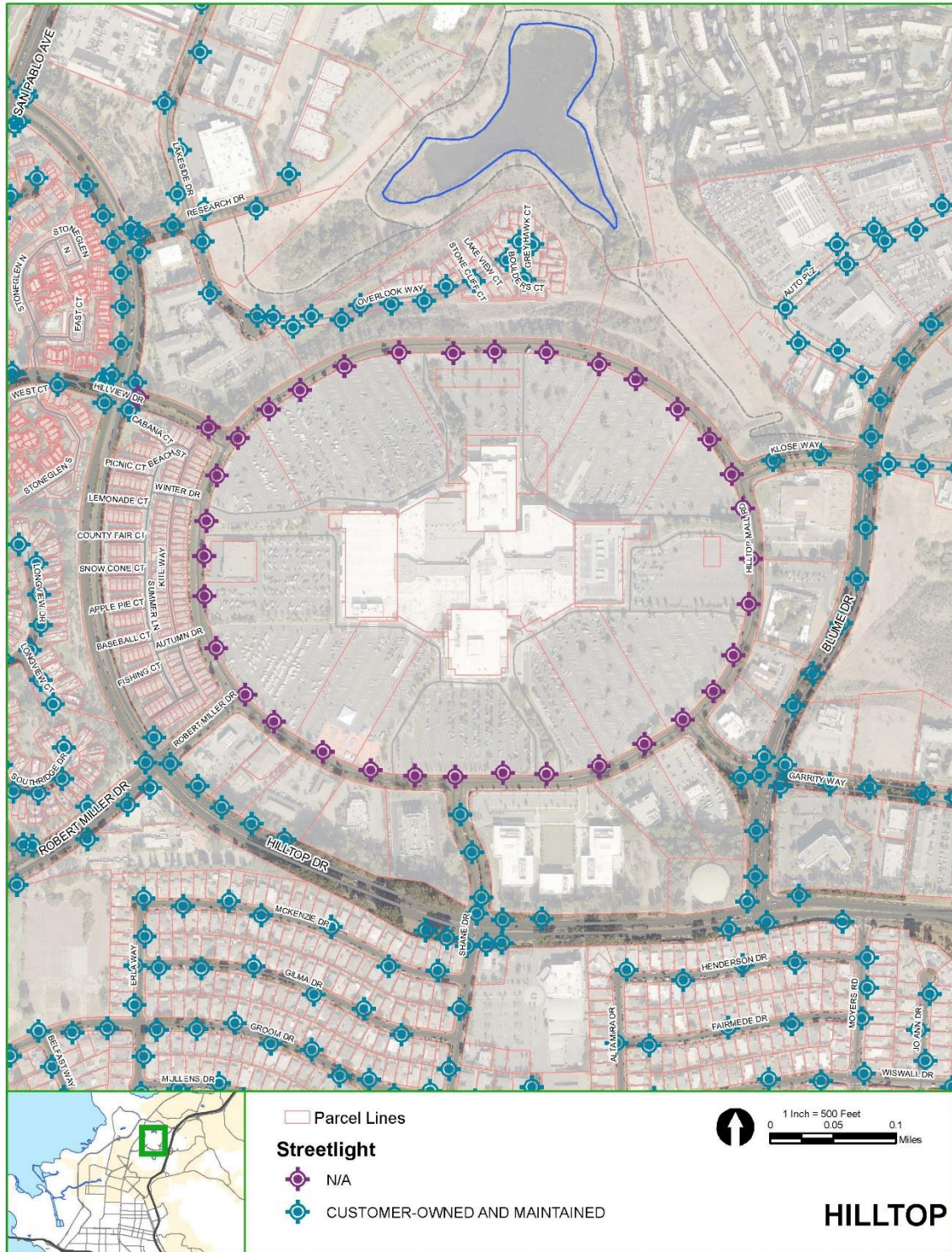
## 3.5 Social Equity

Equity recognizes how individuals and groups face different risks and vulnerabilities to their environment, including impacts from climate change, social programs, and land use development. Different groups may have varying levels of access to services, resources, and planning processes. These and other factors of disadvantage (e.g., homelessness, poverty, unsafe neighborhoods, structural racism) can directly influence health in a medical and physical sense, as well as in finances, housing, employment and upward career growth, education, access to opportunities and more.<sup>12</sup> Equity is an outcome where every individual, regardless of their background, race, income, or neighborhood, has access to the resources and opportunities needed to increase resilience.

Historic practices have contributed to present conditions where marginalized, under-resourced, or disadvantaged groups face inequities relating to housing, income, environmental burden, health hazards, access to opportunities and more. Though there is racial diversity in the City of Richmond and the larger Bay Area, segregated neighborhoods and racial inequality still exist as a result of past housing discrimination and historic redlining throughout the region.<sup>13</sup> African Americans in Richmond were often restricted to living in areas where there is greater industrial

<sup>12</sup> City of Richmond. 2020. *Health in All Policies Progress Report*. Available: <https://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/57209/HiAP-Report-2020>.

<sup>13</sup> Menendian, Stephen and Gambhir, Samir. 2018. *Racial Segregation in the San Francisco Bay Area, Part 1*. Publication. University of California, Berkeley, Othering and Belonging Institute. October 30, 2018. Available: <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/racial-segregation-san-francisco-bay-area-part-1>.



SOURCE: City of Richmond, 2022

Hilltop Specific Plan

**Figure 9**  
Hilltop Streetlights

activity, as these areas were seen as less desirable.<sup>14</sup> The impacts from this were worsened by legal discriminatory practices from banks in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, against largely African American communities who experienced loan restrictions for housing based on socioeconomic maps of cities, including Oakland and Berkeley.<sup>15</sup> Using a grading system, neighborhoods were assessed for their level of risk for money lenders. Neighborhoods where African Americans lived earned a red color (redlining), signifying a high level of risk and allowing banks to practice legal discrimination based on ethnicity and race.<sup>16</sup> This added to barriers for accessing affordable housing and building wealth for African Americans and persons of color, have created current conditions where racial minority groups are more likely to live in areas where there is greater environmental and pollution burden. This causes other challenges for public health and opportunity access, and lowers capacity for individuals to increase their personal resilience against the burdens created by historic systems.

### 3.5.1 Vulnerable Populations

Certain individuals or groups of individuals are more likely to be vulnerable and experience disproportionate burdens, such as persons of color, seniors, children, and non-English speakers. Compared to Contra Costa County, there is a high population of non-white communities within the City.<sup>17</sup> Approximately 44 percent of Richmond's population is Hispanic or Latino, 18 percent is Black or African American, and 15 percent is Asian.<sup>18</sup> In Contra Costa County, these percentages are 26 percent, nine percent, and 17 percent, respectively. As discussed in the previous section, persons of color often face more barriers to accessing community resources that can affect employment, income opportunities, and capacity to increase individual resilience, among other impacts. A variety of factors can contribute to increased vulnerability for these individuals and groups. Though not exhaustive, persons of color in Richmond are more likely to experience or have experienced:

- Lower levels of educational attainment;
- Lower sense of safety in their communities;
- Limited or low English-speaking capacity;
- Lower capacity to access informational resources and programs on emergency preparedness and resilience;
- Lower access to healthcare;

<sup>14</sup> Pacific Institute. 2009. *Measuring What Matters: Neighborhood Research for Economic and Environmental Health and Justice in Richmond, North Richmond, and San Pablo*. Available: <https://pacinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/measuring-what-matters.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Barber, Jesse. 2018. *Redlining: The history of Berkeley's segregated neighborhoods*. Publication. Berkeleyside. September 20, 2018. Available: <https://www.berkeleyside.org/2018/09/20/redlining-the-history-of-berkeleys-segregated-neighborhoods>.

<sup>16</sup> Rothstein, Richard. 2018. *The Color of Law. A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. New York. Liveright Publishing Corporation.

<sup>17</sup> Public Health Alliance of Southern California (PHASoCal). 2021. Healthy Places Index. Available <https://map.healthypacesindex.org/?redirect=false>.

<sup>18</sup> American Community Survey (ACS). 2020. ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates: Table DP05. Selected indicators for City of Richmond and Contra Costa County. Available: <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=contra%20costa%20county&tid=ACSDP5Y2020.DP05>.

- More avoidable hospitalizations;
- Greater risk for developing critical health conditions; and
- Higher mortality rates.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to communities of color, seniors are considered a vulnerable group as they are more susceptible to health impacts, may have less mobility to access goods and amenities, and are more likely to live alone which can impact timely and critical care during emergencies. While Richmond has a lower percentage of seniors (aged 65+) relative to the County (12 percent and 15 percent, respectively), the City has a greater population of seniors in poverty (12 percent of seniors in Richmond are below the poverty line, compared to 7 percent in Contra Costa County). Similarly, children (under 5 years) are considered a vulnerable group as they are more susceptible to hazards and have low capacity to address and respond to vulnerabilities. In Richmond, children make up approximately seven percent of the population, compared to six percent in the County. Data from the Healthy Places Index Tool shows that Richmond is in the 71<sup>st</sup> percentile for this indicator while the County is in the 49<sup>th</sup> percentile. This means that there is a greater percent of children in Richmond's population relative to other communities statewide.

Non-English speakers make up approximately 54 percent of the population in Richmond, which is greater than the County's population (36 percent). Non-English speakers have lower access to informational resources, funding, programs, and other support that can increase their resilience. As a result, they may experience greater inequities relating to climate change impacts, healthcare, emergency preparedness, community planning, and more.

### 3.5.2 Equity Priority Communities

Historically underserved and disproportionately burdened communities in the Bay Area may be designated as Equity Priority Communities (EPCs) (formerly known as Communities of Concern), as defined by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. Designated EPCs may access targeted investments and resources to assist underserved communities and improve access to services, resources, and amenities.<sup>20</sup> While the plan area is not within a designated EPC, it is surrounded to the north, west, and south by EPCs, as shown in **Figure 10**. This is significant as the plan area is envisioned to be transformed to a highly visible and accessible regional urban center that is anticipated to provide a variety of social and economic benefits to the areas beyond the plan area. As a major activity center, the plan area has existing transportation infrastructure that provides access through a variety of modes and is anticipated to attract visitors both locally and regionally. Therefore, the plan area has the potential to serve vulnerable communities and contribute to equitable outcomes for these populations.

<sup>19</sup> Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS). *The Richmond Health Equity Report Card*. Available: <https://cchealth.org/health-data/pdf/Richmond-Health-Equity-Report-Card-Full.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). 2022. Equity Priority Communities. Available: <https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/transportation/access-equity-mobility/equity-priority-communities#:~:text=What%20are%20Equity%20Priority%20Communities,factors%20helps%20define%20these%20areas.>

### 3.5.3 Disadvantaged Communities

The Office of Environmental Health Assessment (OEHHA) identifies disadvantaged communities across the state through the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool: CalEnviroScreen 4.0 (CalEnviroScreen). Through data provided at the census-tract level, this tool measures the cumulative impacts to communities from environmental factors and socioeconomic stressors that contribute to disproportionate burden and increased vulnerability to pollution burden. CalEnviroScreen ultimately provides a relative comparison of the level of pollution burden across communities statewide, according to various environmental and social indicators. This section provides a summary on the social indicators, or population characteristics, measured by CalEnviroScreen that relate to social equity. Relevant environmental indicators from CalEnviroScreen are discussed in the following section, 3.6 Climate and Environmental Hazards.

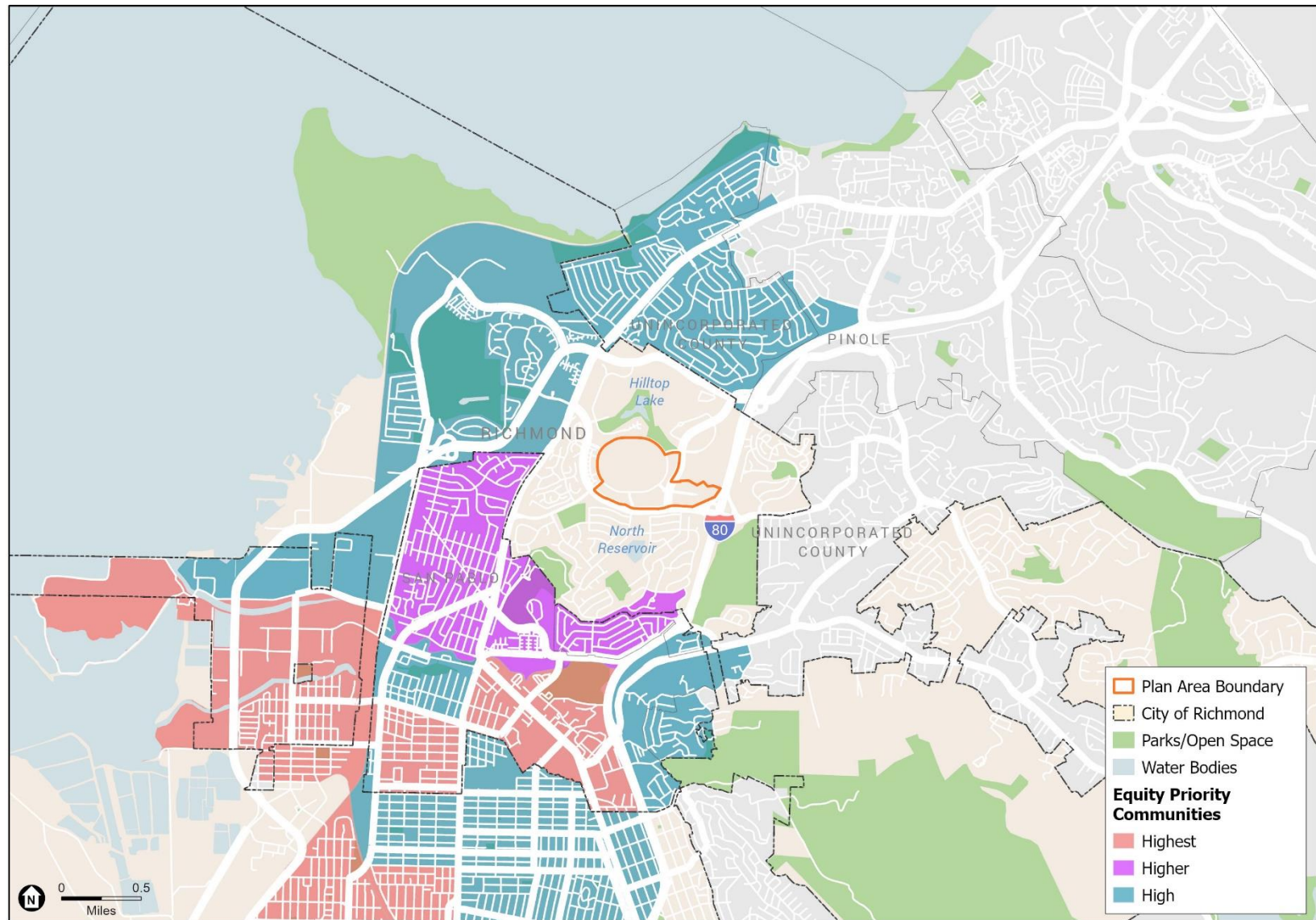
The plan area is located within one census tract (census tract 6013365003), which is in the 52<sup>nd</sup> percentile for cumulative impacts or burden from environmental and socioeconomic factors in California, as shown in **Figure 11**. This area has a lower percentile (meaning better conditions) than census tracts to the west, north and south of the plan area, and tracts further south in central Richmond. Communities found to be within the top 25 percent highest scoring census tracts (75 percent or higher) of CalEnviroScreen are designated as disadvantaged communities by the California Environmental Protection Agency. While the plan area is not within a designated disadvantaged community, there are still significant levels of vulnerability from individual factors that can affect health and air quality in the plan area and the local community.

According to the CalEnviroScreen 4.0, the following environmental and population characteristics are present in the community and contribute to overall vulnerability. Note the population characteristics measured by CalEnviroScreen are similar to those that relate to social equity or inequity listed in the previous section (3.5.1 Vulnerable Populations).

#### **Environmental or Pollution Burden Indicators: Social Indicators or Population Characteristics:**

- Pollution from particulate matter (PM 2.5);
- Diesel particulate matter (diesel PM);
- Toxic releases from facilities;
- Traffic density;
- Groundwater threats;
- Hazardous waste sites; and
- Impaired waters.
- Asthma rates;
- Heart attacks;
- Low birth weight of infants;
- Low education level;
- Housing burden;
- Linguistic isolation; and
- Poverty.

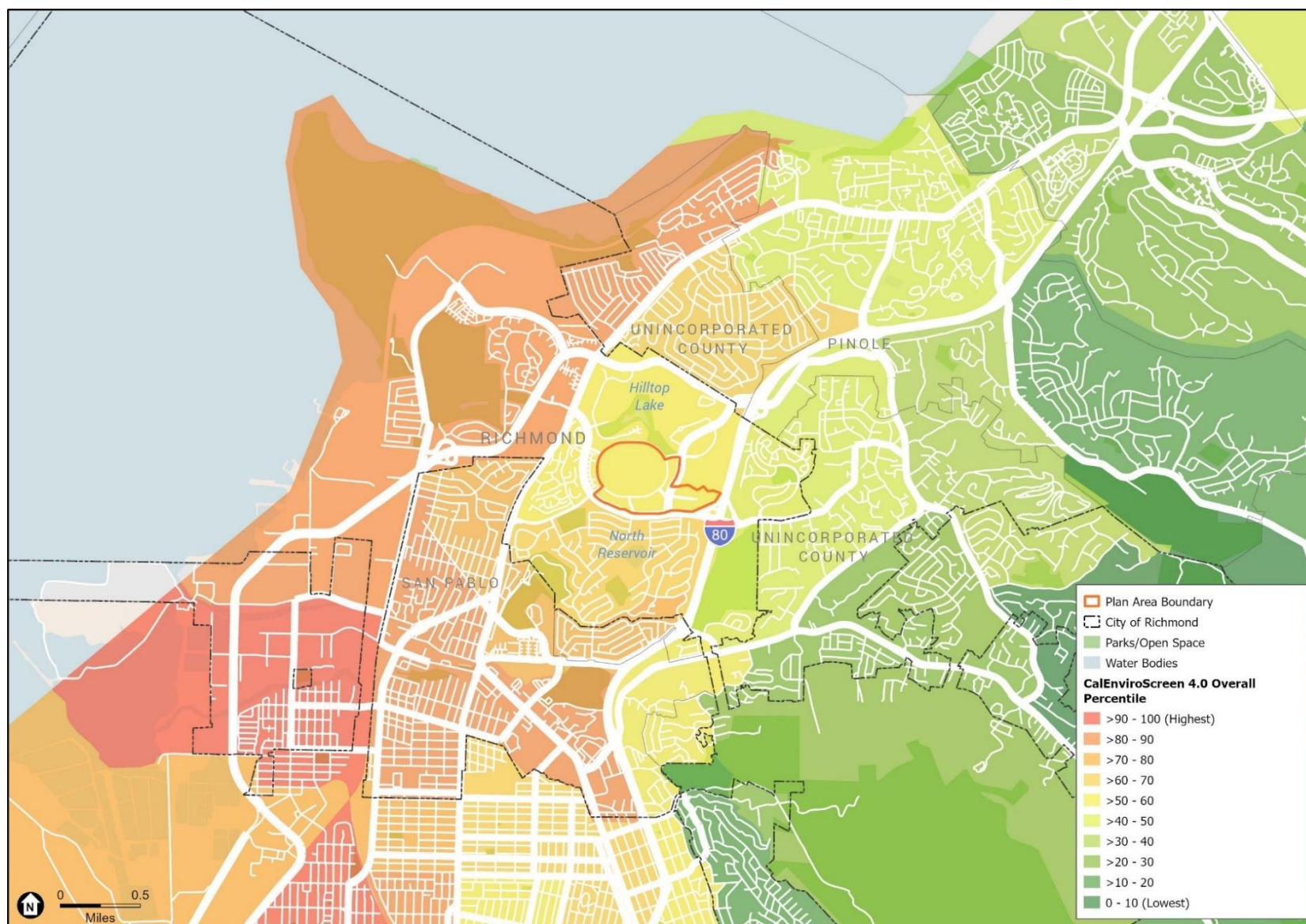




SOURCE: MTC, 2021; ESA, 2022

Hilltop Specific Plan

**Figure 10**  
Equity Priority Communities



SOURCE: OEHHA, 2021; ESA, 2022.

Richmond Hilltop Specific Plan

**Figure 11**  
CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Disadvantaged Communities

**Figure 12** shows the CalEnviroScreen 4.0 indicators and percentiles for the plan area (census tract), relative to statewide census tracts. Based on these individual indicators, the plan area community is most affected (in the top 25 percent statewide) by environmental effects (hazardous waste sites and impaired waters) and certain population characteristics (asthma rate, heart attacks, and low birth weight of infants). The top population characteristics of concern are described below. The top environmental effects concerns are described in 3.6 Climate and Environmental Hazards.

### **CalEnviroScreen Population Characteristics**

#### **Asthma**

Asthma rate is used as an indicator for pollution burden as greater exposure to air toxins and pollutants can trigger asthma attacks. The rate is calculated by the number of emergency department visits for asthma per 10,000 people.<sup>21</sup> Within the plan area tract, an estimated 99 people per 10,000 visited the ER for asthma, which has symptoms of breathlessness, coughing, wheezing, and chest tightness. The percentile for this tract is 92, meaning the asthma rate in this area is higher than 92 percent of other tracts statewide. Individuals diagnosed with asthma have increased sensitivity to air pollutants. Pollutants that can trigger asthma attacks or asthma symptoms include particulate matter, ozone, and nitrogen dioxide. Individuals living in more urban areas with higher traffic density are at increased risk of asthma.

#### **Cardiovascular Disease**

Cardiovascular disease refers to conditions relating to heart blood vessels that are narrowed or blocked, with heart attacks being the most common result. Similar to asthma, risk for developing cardiovascular disease includes exposure to outdoor air pollution, as well as nutrition and physical activity. CalEnviroScreen includes the rate of heart attacks by census tract in its overall measure for pollution burden. The rate used is an estimate of the number of emergency department visits for heart attacks (or acute myocardial infarction) per 10,000 people.<sup>22</sup> Within the plan area census tract, approximately 17 individuals per 10,000 have visited an ER for a heart attack. The percentile for this tract is 76, meaning the rate of heart attacks is higher in this tract than 76 percent of other tracts statewide. Many individuals that have experienced heart attacks are able to return to normal life, however, exposure to outdoor air pollution can increase vulnerability to future heart attacks and increase risk of death. Studies have shown that exposure to air pollutants contributes to cardiovascular morbidity and mortality, with increased risk for individuals that have previously experienced a heart attack, individuals with other existing health conditions, and elderly individuals.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHHA). 2021. California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool: CalEnviroScreen 4.0. Selected indicators for Richmond, CA. Available: <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40>.

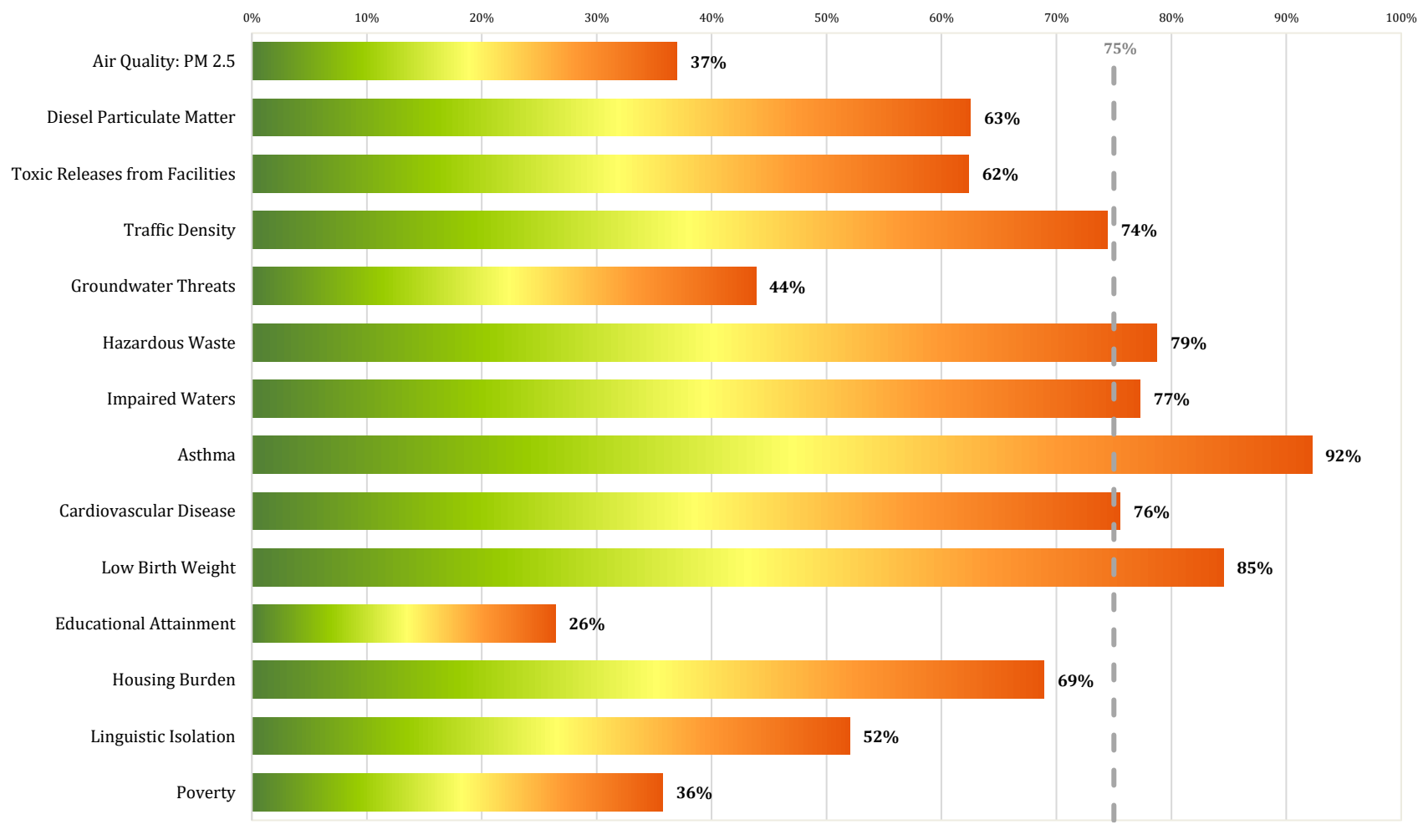
<sup>22</sup> Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHHA). 2021. California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool: CalEnviroScreen 4.0. Selected indicators for Richmond, CA. Available: <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40>.

<sup>23</sup> Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHHA). 2010. *Cumulative Impacts: Building a Scientific Foundation*. California Environmental Protection Agency. Available: <https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/calenviroscreen/report/cireport13110.pdf>.



### Richmond Hilltop Vulnerable Community Indicators Census Tract 6013365003 Percentile (Relative to State)

Source: OEHHA 2021



SOURCE: OEHHA, 2021.

Richmond Hilltop Specific Plan

**Figure 12**  
CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Indicators within the Plan Area (census tract 6013365003)

### Low Birth Weight

The low-birth-weight indicator refers to infants that weigh less than 2,500 grams, or about 5½ pounds, at birth. Both social factors and environmental exposures can increase the risk for low birth weight in infants. Known factors include poor nutrition, stress, smoking, and lack of prenatal care. Race may also be linked to low birth weight, as persons of color experience greater vulnerability to hazards and lower access to programs, healthcare, and other resources that contribute to social inequities. Non-white women, particularly Black and Hispanic women, have an increased risk of birthing low-weight infants compared to white women, even with comparable social factors (behavioral risk factors, prenatal care, and socioeconomic status).<sup>24</sup> Environmental exposures, such as air pollution, are also thought to be a contributing factor. The plan area is exposed to varying levels of particulate matter, diesel PM, traffic density, and toxic contaminants from facilities and hazardous materials that may contribute to the area's low birth weights.

Low birth weight is considered a key marker of overall population health as infants born with low birth weight are at increased risk of developing chronic health conditions that can further exacerbate vulnerability to environmental exposures. Within the plan area census tract, approximately seven percent of births result in low-birth-weight infants. The percentile for this tract is 85, meaning that the percent of low birth weight is greater than 85 percent of other tracts statewide. CalEnviroScreen utilizes the percentage of low-birth-weight infants from the total number of births in its calculation. This factor contributes to the overall burden, as low-birth-weight infants have a greater risk of developing asthma or other chronic diseases later in their lives and have an increased risk of death as infants than others who are not low-weight at birth.

## 3.6 Climate and Environmental Hazards

The climate in Contra Costa County is largely influenced by its location and topography, with the San Joaquin Valley's hot, dry summers and cool winters to the east, and the San Francisco Bay and San Pablo Bay's cool summers and mild winters to the west. The City generally experiences mild temperatures and moderate precipitation, with steady winds in the summertime. Average temperatures can range from 43 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter to low 70 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer.<sup>25</sup> The majority of precipitation occurs in the winter, with annual precipitation near Richmond exceeding 23 inches. The City's proximity to the coast results in high humidity and fog. As global temperatures continue to increase from climate change, local and regional conditions are expected to change and create increasingly hazardous events.

Climate change refers to the significant and lasting shift in global temperatures and weather patterns over a long period of time, due to natural and anthropogenic activity. There is scientific consensus that anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions are the primary cause of global climate change. Climate change increases the risk of more frequent, severe, and extended duration of

<sup>24</sup> Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHHA). 2010. *Cumulative Impacts: Building a Scientific Foundation*. California Environmental Protection Agency. Available: <https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/calenviroscreen/report/cireport13110.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> Contra Costa County. 2018. *Contra Costa County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Volume 1—Planning Area-Wide Elements*. Draft Final. Martinez, CA. Prepared by Tetra Tech, Oakland, CA. January 2018. Available: <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/48893/Contra-Costa-County-Draft-Local-Hazard-Mitigation-Plan-Volume-1-January-31-2018?bidId=>.

natural hazards. Within Contra Costa County and the larger Bay Area, there is varying level of risk to property, humans, and the environment from climate change hazards of extreme weather, drought, flooding, wildfires and worsening air quality, sea level rise and more.

### **3.6.1 Air Quality and Pollution Burden**

Air quality is a significant contributor to public health and quality of life across all environments. Poor air quality has been shown to contribute to asthma, respiratory conditions, and some cancers, as noted in the previous sections. Due to significant risk potential, air quality is closely monitored by regional, state, and federal agencies. The Bay Area Air Quality Management Control District and the California Air Resources Board conduct regional and statewide air monitoring in the City of Richmond, Contra Costa County, and the larger Bay Area. The United States Environmental Protection Agency also conducts air monitoring and identifies major pollutants of concern. In California, common pollutants of concern that contribute to worsening air quality include PM 2.5, diesel PM, and ozone, which are commonly sourced from vehicular emissions, construction equipment, and industrial sources.

According to CalEnviroScreen, the plan area has higher levels of PM 2.5 and diesel PM (37<sup>th</sup> percentile and 63<sup>rd</sup> percentile, respectively) than ozone concentrations (sixth percentile) relative to other areas statewide. The state's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) utilizes the CalEnviroScreen 4.0 tool to present data on air pollutant levels and provide a measure of pollution burden in census tracts across the state. Pollution burden refers to the cumulative impact of various environmental exposure and effect indicators, listed below.

#### **Environmental Exposure Indicators:**

- Ozone concentrations
- PM 2.5
- Diesel particulate matter emissions
- Drinking water contaminants
- Children's exposure to lead risk from housing
- Pesticides
- Toxic releases from facilities
- Traffic impacts

#### **Environmental Effect Indicators:**

- Toxic cleanup sites
- Groundwater threats from leaking sites, including underground storage and cleanup sites
- Hazardous waste facilities
- Impaired water bodies
- Solid waste sites and facilities

While all indicators listed contribute in varying degree to overall pollution burden, the indicators of greatest concern within the plan area census tract are from environmental effects due to hazardous waste and impaired water bodies. These two indicators are described below.

### 3.6.2 Hazardous Waste

Hazardous waste refers to hazardous materials produced from facilities (e.g., from automotive oil, highly toxic waste materials produced from businesses) that are transported to permitted facilities for recycling, treatment, storage, or disposal.<sup>26</sup> Hazardous waste sites are permitted treatment, storage, and disposal facilities that manage hazardous waste, as well as generators, or facilities that generate hazardous waste. **Figure 13** shows there are three hazardous waste sites (generators) within the site's census tract. One site is located directly within the plan area boundary, south of Hilltop Mall on Hilltop Mall Road. This site refers to the Sutter Health Richmond Care Center, an entity identified as a hazardous waste generator due to mostly pharmaceutical waste.<sup>27</sup> Two sites, Zygo Corporation and Coherent Inc. (formerly Tinsley Labs), are located to the north of Hilltop Mall, along Lakeside Drive. These are manufacturing facilities in the optical products industry. Other sites are located just beyond the plan area census tract. The hazardous waste percentile for the plan area is 79, meaning hazardous waste sites here are higher than 79 percent of other census tracts statewide. Vulnerable populations may have increased sensitivity to these facilities. It is recommended that residential developments and community-serving uses, particularly those that serve vulnerable groups, be located away from these facilities to avoid increased exposure and reduce disproportionate burden on these communities. Additionally, these facilities may consider undertaking green retrofits to increase sustainability and health for the surrounding community.

### 3.6.3 Impaired Waters

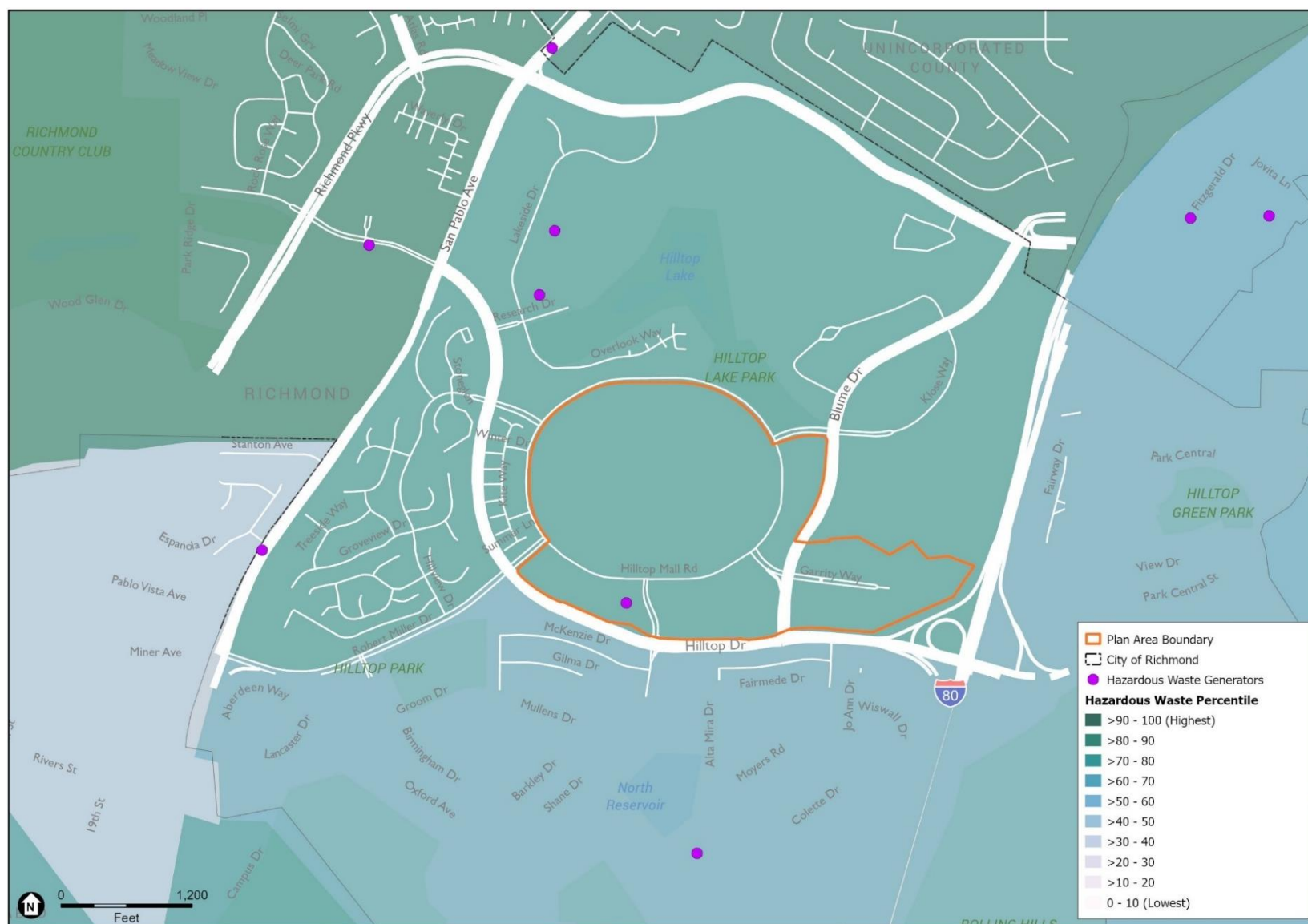
Impaired water bodies refer to estuaries, lakes, rivers, streams, or other surface bodies of water that are polluted or contaminated.<sup>28</sup> Water bodies are designated as “impaired” by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) if they are found to contain harmful pollutants and do not meet certain water quality standards. According to CalEnviroScreen, the plan area census tract is near local and regional waterbodies that contain few impairments, including ammonia, diazinon, trash, and other pollutants. **Figure 14** shows that San Pablo Creek lies closest to the plan area, approximately 2 miles south, and is a designated impaired water body due to trash that exceeds pollution evaluation standards for water quality.<sup>29</sup> Based on data from the SWRCB, trash control provisions are being implemented for the San Pablo Creek, with expected attainment in 2029.

<sup>26</sup> Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHHA). 2021. California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool: CalEnviroScreen 4.0. Selected indicators for Richmond, CA. Available: <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40>.

<sup>27</sup> California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). 2021. Hazardous Waste Tracking System, Handler Profile. Last updated July 7, 2021. Available: <https://hwts.dtsc.ca.gov/facility/CAL000416616>.

<sup>28</sup> Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHHA). 2021. California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool: CalEnviroScreen 4.0. Selected indicators for Richmond, CA. Available: <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40>.

<sup>29</sup> California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). 2018. Final California 2018 Integrated Report (303(d) List/305(b) Report), Supporting Information, Regional Board 2 – San Francisco Bay Region. Available: [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/tmdl/2018state\\_ir\\_reports\\_final/apx\\_c\\_state\\_factsheets/00703.shtml](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/tmdl/2018state_ir_reports_final/apx_c_state_factsheets/00703.shtml).

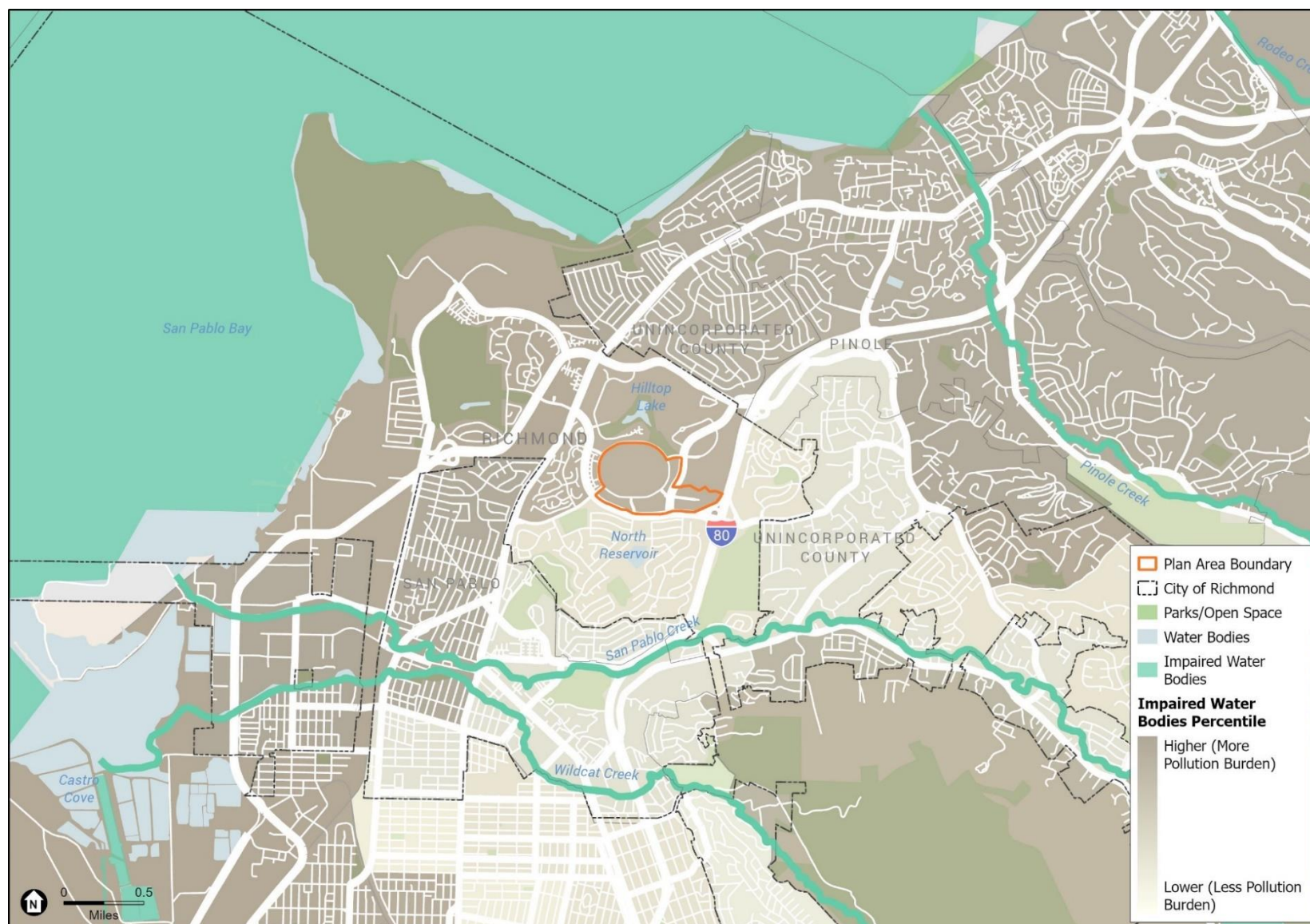


SOURCE: City of Richmond, 2022; OEHHA, 2021; ESA, 2022

Richmond Hilltop Specific Plan

**Figure 13**  
Hazardous Waste





SOURCE: City of Richmond, 2022; OEHA, 2021; ESA, 2022]

Hilltop Specific Plan

**Figure 14**  
Impaired Water Bodies

Other waterbodies in the region listed as impaired are Baxter Creek, Castro Cove estuary, San Pablo Bay, San Francisco Bay, Stege Marsh, and Wildcat Creek.<sup>30</sup> The impaired waters percentile for the plan area census tract is 77, meaning the number of water impairments is greater than 77 percent of census tracts statewide. Potable and recreational uses of these waterbodies are discouraged. The Project offers the opportunity to incorporate sustainable design best practices to improve not only site conditions but conditions downstream from the plan area as well.

### 3.6.4 Heat and Precipitation

As global average temperatures continue to increase, climate change is expected to alter the frequency, duration, and intensity of climate events, including severe weather patterns. Regionally, annual average maximum temperatures are expected to increase from a historic 67 degrees Fahrenheit to 74 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of the century.<sup>31</sup> Extreme heat days are also expected to increase from historic levels (defined as the range from 1961-1990), from three days to 18 days by the end of the century. Extreme heat conditions will primarily impact people and the environment, with greater risk to vulnerable populations. These include children, elderly, individuals lacking access to air conditioning, individuals in lower-quality housing, communities lacking parks and tree canopy, outdoor workers and active commuters. The number and quality of natural and biological resources may also be affected from future heat conditions. These may be factors to consider for future developments that serve vulnerable populations within the plan area.

While there is greater variability in precipitation projections, annual precipitation is generally expected to increase slightly in Contra Costa County and the Bay Area (from a historic 23 inches to 24 inches by end of century). Maximum length of dry spells is also projected to increase, from 107 days historically to 119 days by end of century.<sup>32</sup> These projections in precipitation are not anticipated to have significant impacts within or surrounding the plan area.

### 3.6.5 Drought

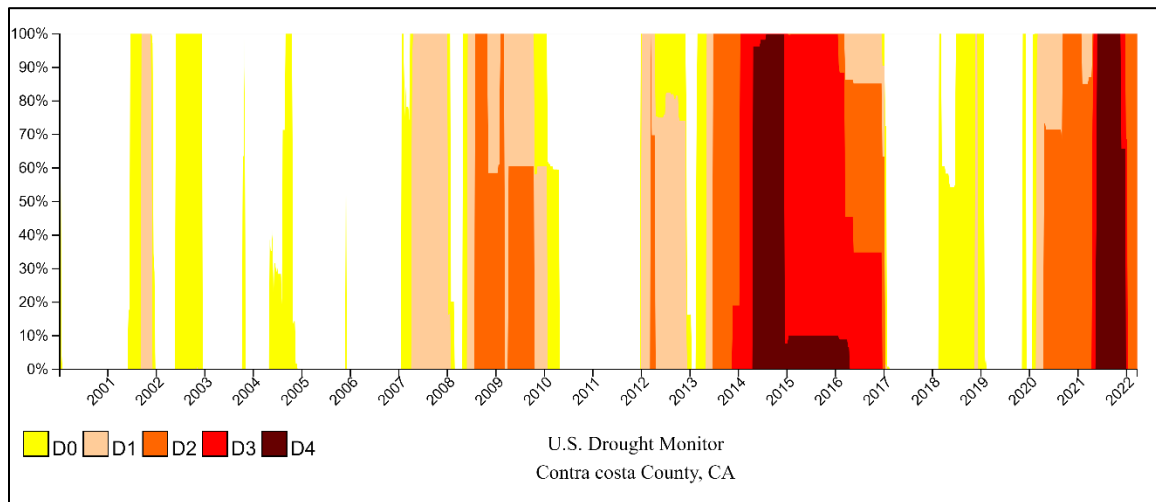
Contra Costa County relies primarily on the Sierra Nevada snowpack for water replenishment and resources. Snowpack melt, reduced snowpack runoff, and low precipitation levels may impact water resources in the region and lead to drought conditions. Currently, the County is under Severe Drought conditions, as classified by the United States Drought Monitor. This classification generally means there are lower reservoir levels, decreased river flows, and stressed trees and plants. While drought conditions in the Bay Area have high year-to-year variability, the region and state can expect drought periods to continue. Drought conditions have the potential to disproportionately affect low-income households, who may find it challenging to afford potentially increased water costs during drought conditions. Public facilities and services may also be affected, such as recreation facilities and programs, parks, and open spaces, as water

<sup>30</sup> Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). 2021. California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool: CalEnviroScreen 4.0. Selected indicators for Richmond, CA. Available: <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40>.

<sup>31</sup> Cal-Adapt. 2021. Local Climate Change Snapshot Tool. Selected indicators for the City of Richmond. Cal-Adapt website developed by University of California at Berkeley's Geospatial Innovation Facility under contract with the California Energy Commission. <https://cal-adapt.org/tools/>.

<sup>32</sup> Cal-Adapt. 2021. Local Climate Change Snapshot Tool. Selected indicators for the City of Richmond. Cal-Adapt website developed by University of California at Berkeley's Geospatial Innovation Facility under contract with the California Energy Commission. <https://cal-adapt.org/tools/>.

resources are typically diverted from these uses during extreme drought conditions. Water conservation measures should be considered for the plan area and developments in California in general due to regular, and more frequent, periods of drought.



*Past and Present Drought Conditions in Contra Costa County, United States Drought Monitor.*

### 3.6.6 Flooding

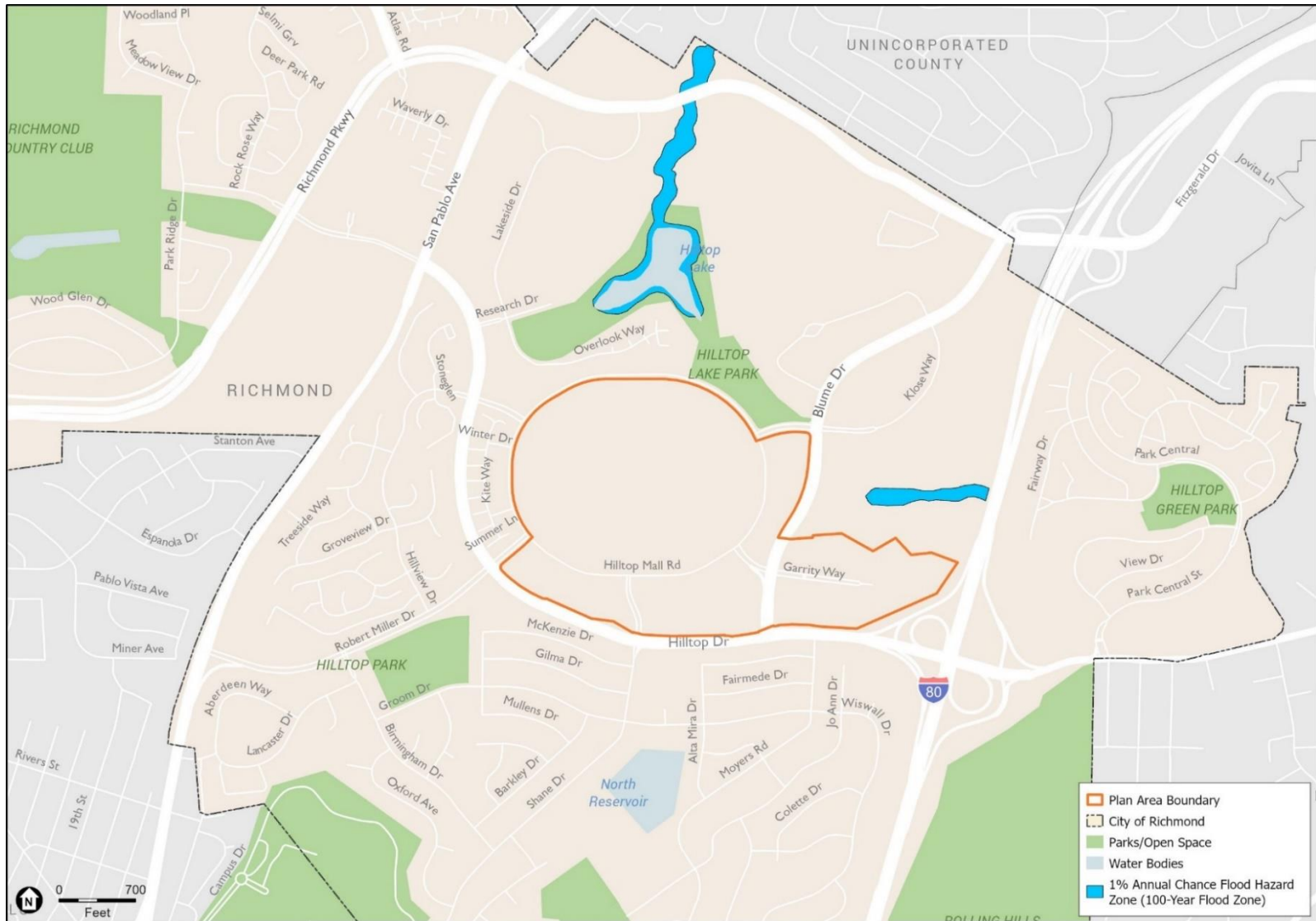
The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) identifies potential flooding hazards and provides disaster response and preparedness across the country. The plan area is found to be within areas of minimal flood hazards, meaning there is low risk of impact from flooding.<sup>33</sup> As shown in **Figure 15**, there are two small areas to the north and east of the plan area that are classified as areas with a one percent annual chance of flooding, meaning these areas may experience flooding from a 100-year storm. These areas include the zone to the north which encompasses the Hilltop Lake water body and the area to the east, a small strip within the undeveloped area between Blume Drive and I-80.

### 3.6.7 Fire Hazard Areas

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) identifies Fire Hazard Severity Zones within the state based on the severity of fire hazard expected to occur due to fuel, slope, fire weather, and other factors. CAL FIRE identifies moderate, high, and very high fire hazard areas. While Contra Costa County has historically experienced wildfires every two to three years, warmer temperatures, drier vegetation, and drought conditions exacerbated by climate change have led to annual occurrences of wildfires in the County.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). 2020. Flood Zones. Last Updated July 8, 2020. Available: [https://www.fema.gov/glossary/flood-zones#:~:text=The%20areas%20of%20minimal%20flood,or%20Zone%20X%20\(unshaded\).](https://www.fema.gov/glossary/flood-zones#:~:text=The%20areas%20of%20minimal%20flood,or%20Zone%20X%20(unshaded).)

<sup>34</sup> Contra Costa County. 2018. *Contra Costa County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Volume 1—Planning Area-Wide Elements*. Draft Final. Martinez, CA. Prepared by Tetra Tech, Oakland, CA. January 2018. Available: [https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/48893/Contra-Costa-County-Draft-Local-Hazard-Mitigation-Plan-Volume-1-January-31-2018?bidId=.](https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/48893/Contra-Costa-County-Draft-Local-Hazard-Mitigation-Plan-Volume-1-January-31-2018?bidId=)



SOURCE: FEMA, 2021; ESA, 2022.

Richmond Hilltop Specific Plan

**Figure 15**  
Flood Hazard Zones



In California, local and state agencies have legal and financial responsibility for addressing wildfires and have designated wildfire responsibility areas, which describe ownership, management, and resources of the area. State Responsibility Areas (SRAs) are lands that are unincorporated County Areas, not federally-owned, and generally have some natural resources. Local Responsibility Areas (LRAs) are lands in cities and other urbanized areas. CAL FIRE has wildfire protection responsibilities for fires within SRAs, while city and/or county departments, and CAL FIRE-contracted cities have this responsibility for LRAs.

The plan area and the larger City of Richmond is not found to be within designated fire hazard areas, as shown in **Figure 16**.<sup>35</sup> The nearest hazard areas to the plan area are located to the east of I-80 in unincorporated Contra Costa County. This area is found to be within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) designation (LRA). Further east, few areas are designated as Moderate to Very High (SRA) hazard areas. These hazard areas are not expected to impact the plan area directly, though secondary hazards can occur and harm the environment and human health within the plan area. The primary concern would be from air pollution and smoke, though other secondary hazards from nearby fires can result in local and regional drought conditions, economic loss, reduced tourism, impacts to critical infrastructure and utility service, landslides, loss of natural and biological resources, loss of parks and open space, contaminated water bodies, soil erosion, and loss of property and life.

### 3.6.8 Sea Level Rise

Climate change conditions are accelerating the rate of sea level rise, with sea levels in San Francisco Bay having risen more than seven inches over the past 100 years.<sup>36</sup> Rising sea levels will have various impacts to community infrastructure and amenities due to increased beach erosion, coastal flooding, impacts to groundwater resources and water quality, and impacts to natural and biological resources. Critical infrastructure and housing within low-lying areas and flooding hazard areas are subject to the greatest risk. Sea level projections for the Bay Area anticipate 11 inches over current levels by 2050, and 36 inches by 2100.<sup>37</sup> While much of south Richmond and western Contra Costa County areas are within sea level rise hazard areas, the plan area, the majority of North Richmond, and the City of San Pablo are not in projected risk areas, as shown in **Figure 17**.

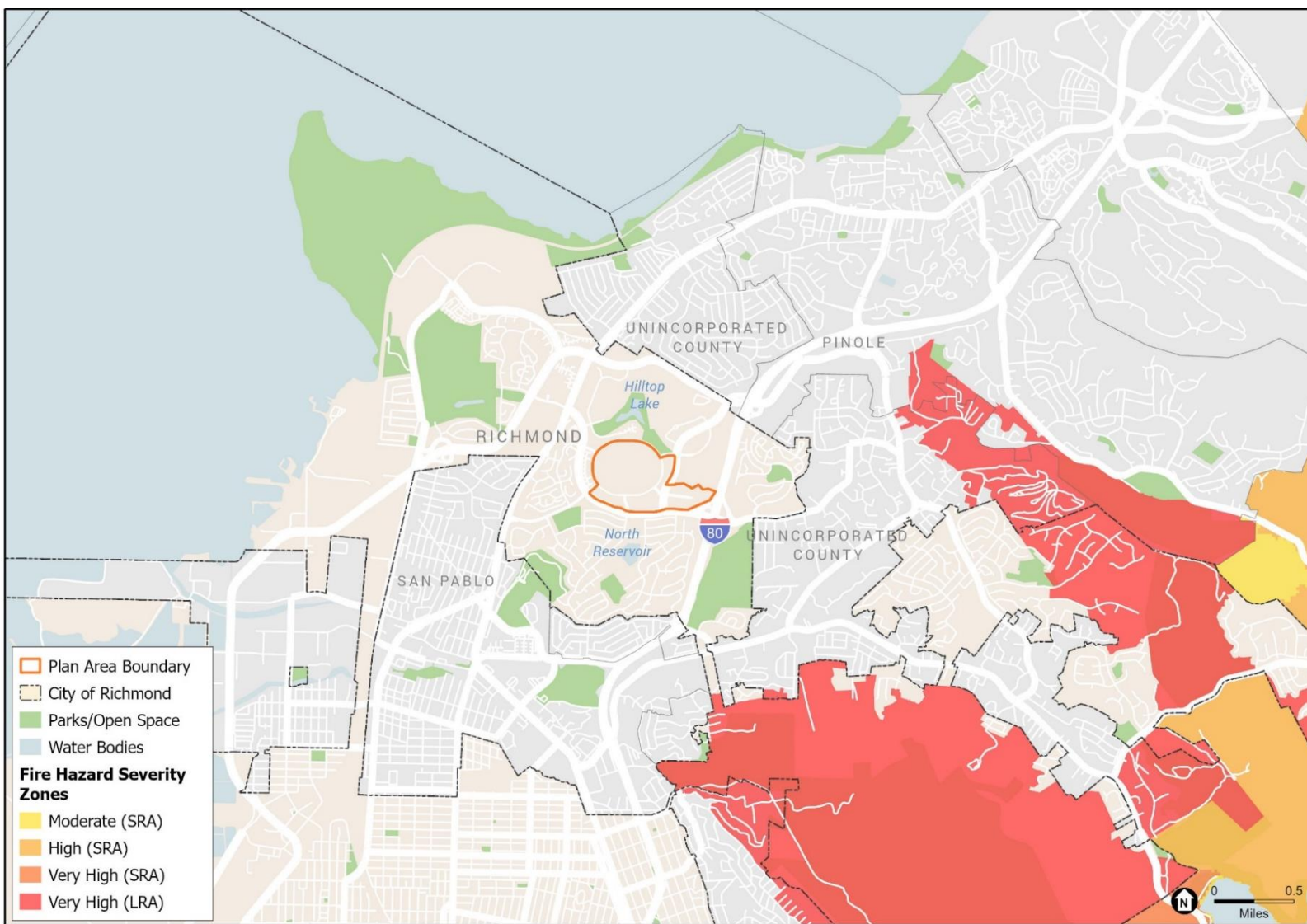
Property and infrastructure closer to the shoreline will experience the greatest impacts, while communities further inland and further from the coastline may experience secondary hazards from sea level rise. Secondary hazards may include impacts to utility services and access to recreation amenities due to inundation, overwhelming, and/or contamination to energy

<sup>35</sup> California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). 2021. *Welcome to fire hazard severity zones*. Available: <https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/divisions/wildfire-planning-engineering/wildfire-prevention-engineering/fire-hazard-severity-zones/#:~:text=California%20law%20requires%20CAL%20FIRE,fuel%2C%20slope%20and%20fire%20weather.&text=Many%20factors%20were%20included%20such,embers%2C%20terrain%2C%20and%20weather>.

<sup>36</sup> City of Richmond. 2016. *City of Richmond Climate Action Plan (CAP)*. Adopted October 2016. Available: <http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/40636/CAP-combined?bidId=>.

<sup>37</sup> City of Richmond. 2016. *City of Richmond Climate Action Plan (CAP)*. Adopted October 2016. Available: <http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/40636/CAP-combined?bidId=>.





SOURCE: California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE); ESA 2022.

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**Figure 16**  
Wildfire Hazard Severity Zones



SOURCE: City of Richmond, 2012.

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Note: Map shows areas affected by potential one meter sea level rise in 2100, in blue.

**Figure 17**  
Potential Sea Level Rise in Richmond

infrastructure (e.g., pipelines, pump stations), sanitation and wastewater treatment facilities, and groundwater resources, among others. Transportation infrastructure near the coast may also be compromised, reducing access to and from the shoreline and reducing coastal residents' access to community services and amenities

### 3.6.9 Earthquake

Most of California and particularly coastal communities experience regular seismic activity due to the movement of tectonic plates. Contra Costa County and the larger Bay Area is located between two tectonic plates, the North American Plate and the Pacific Plate. Located along the plate boundaries, the almost 800-mile San Andreas Fault is the fastest slipping fault responsible for some of the state's largest earthquakes. The San Andreas Fault is located approximately 15 miles to the west of Contra Costa County, near the coastline. While this fault poses significant risk, there are various other local faults that serve as primary seismic hazards for the County. The Hayward Fault, shown in **Figure 18**, runs parallel to the San Andreas Fault through the cities of Richmond and San Pablo in a southeast to northwest direction, into the San Pablo Bay. There is an increasing probability of a high magnitude (6.7 or greater) earthquake from the Hayward Fault occurring within the next 30 years, which could have severe impacts to regional infrastructure.<sup>38</sup> Other faults near the plan area include the Calaveras Fault, Concord-Green Valley Fault, Greenville, and Mount Diablo. The Calaveras Fault, located to the east, has a 26 percent probability of causing a magnitude 6.7 or greater earthquake within the next 30 years. Meanwhile, the probability of experiencing a high magnitude earthquake within the same time frame from the San Andreas Fault is 22 percent. **Figure 19** below from the Contra Costa County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) illustrates the significant fault lines in the Bay Area. As with most development within California, buildings, and infrastructure within the plan area should prioritize safety and stability from earthquake risks.

Refer to the Hilltop Preliminary Geotechnical Evaluation Report for details on geologic hazards.

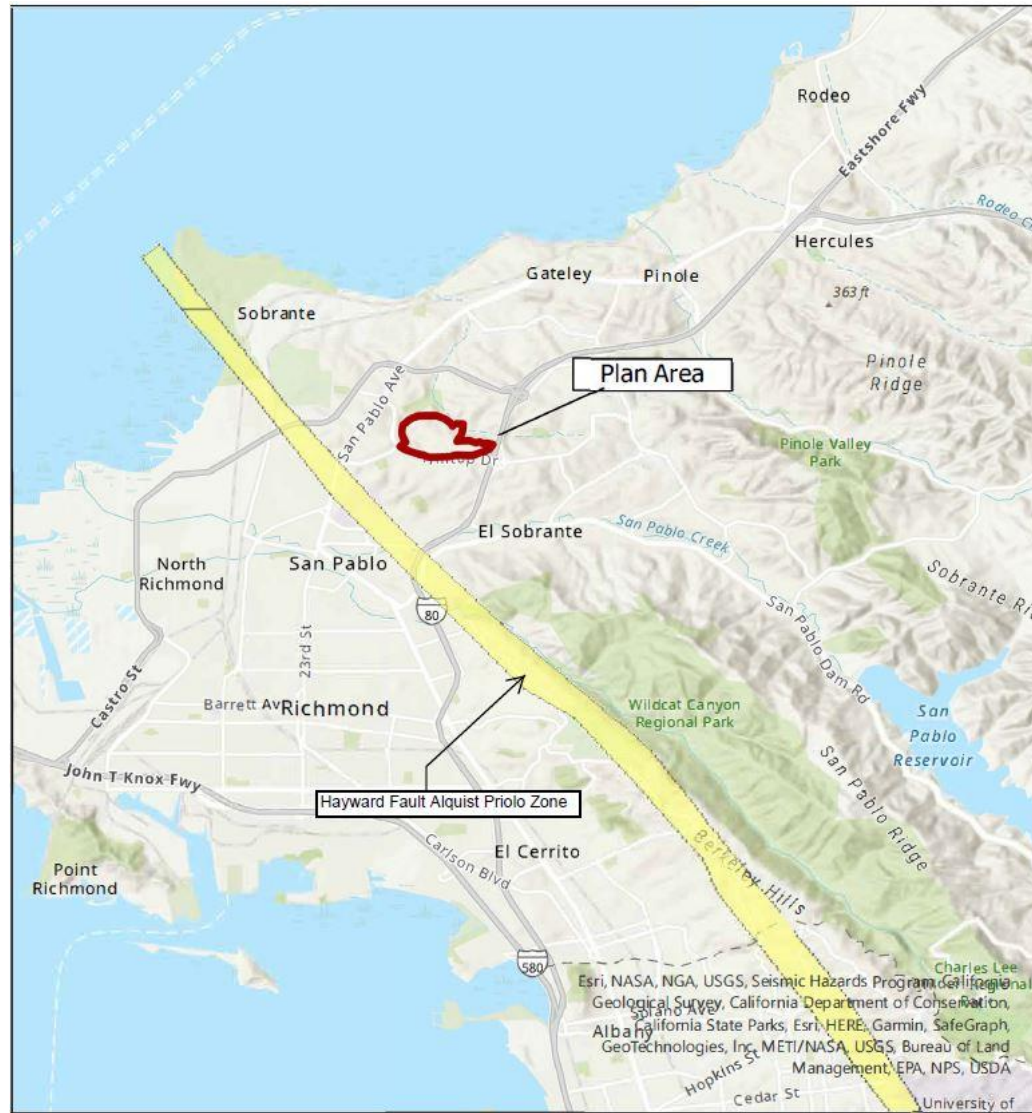
## 4.0 Plans and Policies

This section describes the local and regional planning documents listed below. While the land use program has not been determined for the plan area at this time, the following sections provide a high-level summary of potentially relevant planning document goals and policies.

- City of Richmond General Plan 2030
- City of Richmond Health in All Policies
- Richmond Climate Action Plan
- Richmond Urban Greening Master Plan
- Richmond Bicycle Master Plan and Pedestrian Plan

<sup>38</sup> Contra Costa County. 2018. *Contra Costa County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Volume 1—Planning Area-Wide Elements*. Draft Final. Martinez, CA. Prepared by Tetra Tech, Oakland, CA. January 2018. Available: <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/48893/Contra-Costa-County-Draft-Local-Hazard-Mitigation-Plan-Volume-1-January-31-2018?bidId=>.

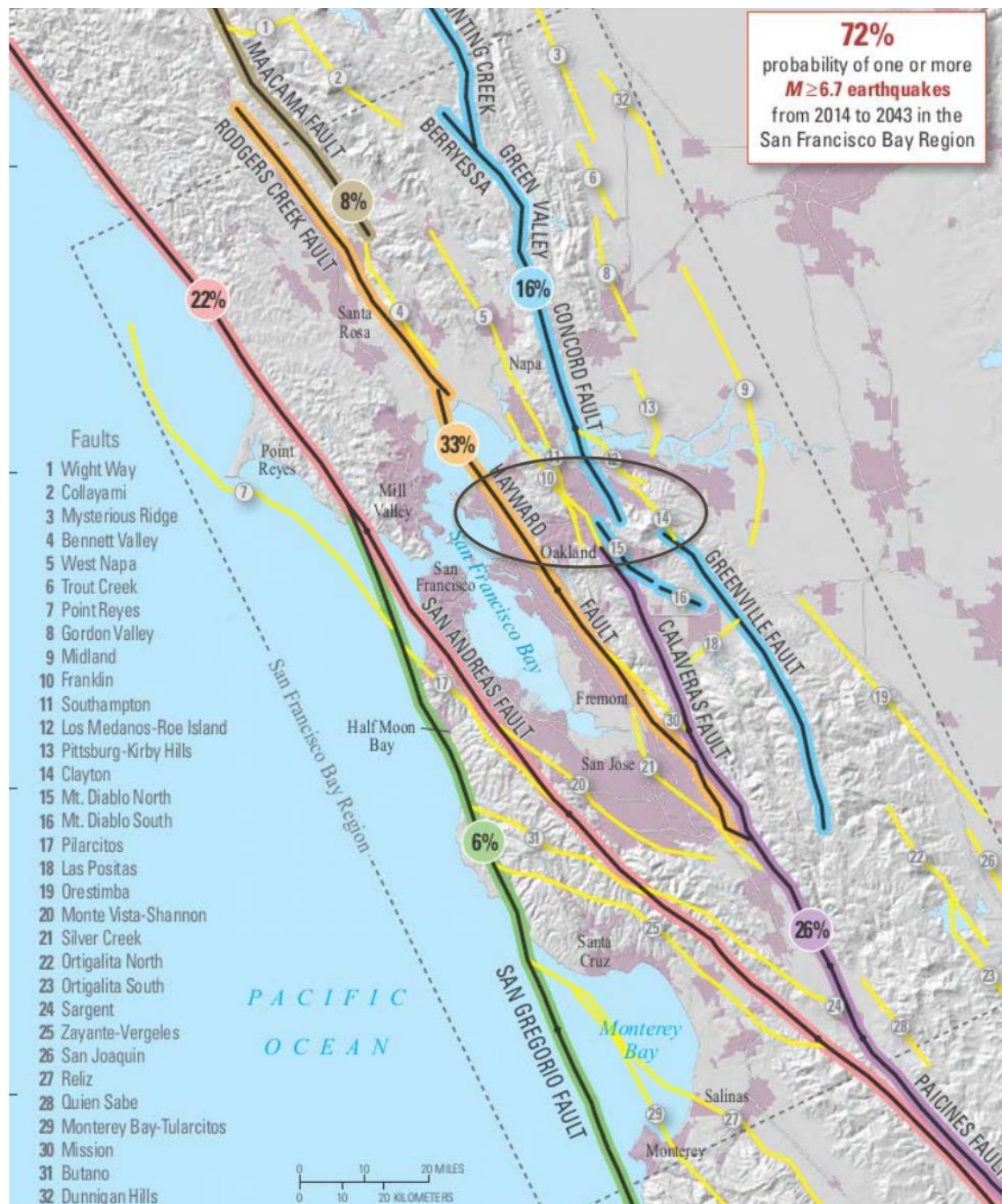




SOURCE: A3GEO, 2022.

Richmond Hilltop Specific Plan

**Figure 18**  
Hayward Fault



SOURCE: Contra Costa County, 2018.

Richmond Hilltop Specific Plan

**Figure 19**  
Faults and Earthquake Probability near Contra Costa County



- Contra Costa County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Plan Bay Area 2050

## 4.1 City of Richmond General Plan 2030

Adopted in April 2012, the City’s General Plan provides a framework with goals and policies to guide the sustainable growth, development, and decision-making in the community through 2030. The General Plan contains 15 elements that address land use, transportation, housing, economic development, climate change, public safety, arts and culture, open space, and other community issues. Each element contains key findings and recommendations to inform goals and policies. The following provides an overview of the General Plan elements and goals that may be relevant to the Hilltop Project. Refer to the City’s General Plan, available on the city website for additional details on the referenced goals and policies that support each goal.

### 1. Economic Development

The Economic Development (ED) element serves as a guide for long-term economic growth and employment. The ED element includes a description of socioeconomic and employment conditions, defines economic development goals, and identifies goals and policies for improving conditions and capitalizing on the City’s strengths. The ED element establishes citywide goals as well as area-specific goals, one of which includes Hilltop Mall within the plan area. Relevant goals are listed below.

*Goal ED1 An Appealing Place to Live and Work*

*Goal ED2 Quality Jobs and Revenue*

*Goal ED3 An Educated and Skilled Workforce*

*Goal ED6 A Regional Destination at Hilltop Mall*

### 2. Education and Human Services

The Education and Human Services (EH) element provides a framework for enhancing educational opportunities and resources for the community. Goals and policies within establish pathways for the City to support educational and employment sectors that will improve the overall health, education, and economy in Richmond. Relevant goals are listed below.

*Goal EH2 An Educated and Skilled Workforce*

*Goal EH3 Equitable and High-Quality Human Services*

### 3. Land Use and Urban Design

The Land Use and Urban Design (LU) element describes the land use, development patterns, and development strategy of the City to support implementation towards a higher density, mixed-use and diverse community. The LU element also identifies urban design principles to

define the character of the community and facilitate planning for a pedestrian-friendly, safe, and sustainable landscape. Relevant goals are listed below.

*Goal LU1 An Improved Urban Environment*

*Goal LU2 Healthy and Viable Neighborhoods*

*Goal LU3 Expanded Economic Opportunities*

*Goal LU5 Balanced and Compatible Uses*

*Goal LU6 High-Quality and Sustainable Development*

## **4. Circulation**

The General Plan Circulation (CR) element addresses transportation infrastructure, connectivity, and mobility options in the City. Goals and policies are designed to create a safer, efficient, and connected network of roads, trails, transit, and other transportation modes. Relevant goals are listed below.

*Goal CR1 An Expanded Multimodal Circulation System*

*Goal CR2 Walkable Neighborhoods and Complete Streets*

*Goal CR3 A Safe and Well-Maintained Circulation System*

*Goal CR5 Sustainable and Green Practices*

## **5. Housing**

The City's Housing Element (HE), adopted in 2015, plans for current and future housing needs for the long-term. This element includes an analysis of population and household characteristics, an inventory of suitable land for residential development, and resources and opportunities relating to development. The goals and policies established within the HE represent the City's commitment to address community housing needs and implement the vision of the General Plan. Relevant goals are listed below.

*Goal H-1 A Balanced Supply of Housing*

*Goal H-2 Better Neighborhoods and Quality of Life*

*Goal H-3: Expanded Housing Opportunities for Special Needs Groups*

*Goal H-4: Equal Housing Access for All*

## **6. Community Facilities and Infrastructure**

The Community Facilities and Infrastructure (CF) element presents a framework for the long-term, sustainable provision of services and amenities in the community. This element includes a description of existing infrastructure and facilities, with improvement strategies to meet current and future needs. Relevant goals are listed below.

*Goal CF1 Facilities that Serve a Diverse Range of Community Needs*

*Goal CF2 Efficient Use and Adequate Maintenance of Facilities and Infrastructure*

*Goal CF4 Neighborhood Revitalization*

## **7. Conservation Natural Resources and Open Space**

The Conservation Natural Resources and Open Space (CN) element presents a vision for the preservation and enhancement of natural resources, including plant species, wildlife, minerals, open space, and scenic views. The CN element describes the status of natural resources in Richmond and provides goals and strategies for conservation and open space planning. Relevant goals are listed below.

*Goal CN2 Conserved Open Space*

*Goal CN4 Improved Air Quality*

*Goal CN5 Environmental Sustainability*

*Goal CN6 A Healthy Urban Environment*

## **8. Energy and Climate Change**

The Energy and Climate Change (EC) element presents a guide and vision for sustainability, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and a resilient community across all sectors. The EC element addresses climate change impacts, energy use, and greenhouse gas emissions, and establishes goals for managing climate change. Relevant goals are listed below.

*Goal EC1 Leadership in Managing Climate Change*

*Goal EC2 Clean and Efficient Transportation Options*

*Goal EC4 Sustainable Development*

*Goal EC5 Community Revitalization and Economic Development*

*Goal EC6 Climate-Resilient Communities*

## **9. Growth Management**

The Growth Management (GM) element provides a framework for effective coordination of land use, infrastructure, and transportation planning in the City. Goals and policies within help ensure a balance of growth and conservation and promote improvements to existing neighborhoods and commercial areas that contribute to greater quality of life. Relevant goals are listed below.

*Goal GM1 Coordinated Land Use and Transportation Planning*

*Goal GM2 Improved Infrastructure and Facilities*

## 10. Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation (PR) element provides guidance for the maintenance, improvement, and expansion of recreational amenities in the City, including parks, open space, and recreation programs. The goals and policies within the PR element are focused on enriching parks, preserving resources, and improving connections to nature. Relevant goals are listed below.

*Goal PR1 An Integrated System of Parks, Green Streets and Trails*

*Goal PR2 Safe and High-Quality Parks and Recreational Facilities*

*Goal PR3 Sustainable Design and Maintenance Practices*

*Goal PR4 Stewardship of the Natural Environment*

*Goal PR5 A Range of Quality Recreation Programs and Services*

## 11. Health and Wellness

The Health and Wellness (HW) element establishes a strong framework for improving the health and well-being of community members as it relates to the natural and built environment. The HW element considers the most vulnerable populations and addresses the factors that contribute to health disparities, negative socioeconomic conditions, and critical health risks. Goals and policies within the HW element identify opportunities for improving overall health through intentional community design, sustainability, walkability, and smart growth. Relevant goals are listed below.

*Goal HW1 Improved Access to Parks, Recreation and Open Space*

*Goal HW2 Expanded Access to Healthy Food and Nutrition Choices*

*Goal HW3 Improved Access to Medical Services*

*Goal HW4 Safe and Convenient Public Transit and Active Circulation Options*

*Goal HW5 A Range of Quality and Affordable Housing*

*Goal HW6 Expanded Economic Opportunity*

*Goal HW7 Complete Neighborhoods*

*Goal HW8 Improved Safety in Neighborhoods and Public Spaces*

*Goal HW9 Improved Environmental Quality*

*Goal HW10 Green and Sustainable Development and Practices*

## 12. Public Safety and Noise

The Public Safety and Noise (SN) element identifies public health and safety hazards in the community and presents strategies for addressing hazards from noise. The SN element

includes a description of potential hazards, overview of emergency preparedness and coordinated response capacity, and policies for minimizing and responding to public safety issues. Relevant goals are listed below.

*Goal SN1 Risk Management of Natural and Human-Caused Disasters*

*Goal SN2 High Levels of Police and Fire Service*

*Goal SN4 Acceptable Noise Levels*

### **13. Arts and Culture**

The Arts and Culture (AC) element outlines the City's approach to integrating arts and culture into community decision-making, projects, and other public spaces. The goals and strategies within this element recognize the significance of cultural assets, and seek to preserve, celebrate, and expand arts and culture in the City. Relevant goals are listed below.

*Goal AC1 A Community Strengthened by the Arts*

*Goal AC2 Enhanced Economic Development Opportunities*

### **14. Historic Resources**

The Historic Resources (HR) element provides a framework for preserving, restoring and leveraging the City's historic assets. HR goals and policies focus on balancing the conservation of significant resources with responsible development.

### **15. National Historical Park**

The National Historical Park (NP) element focuses on goals and policies for the celebration and preservation of the City's role in the World War II home front effort, including the sites and structures upon which the City of Richmond was founded. This element reviews the City's history, describes the historic collection of resources, and identifies strategies for developing the National Historical Park.

## **4.2 City of Richmond HiAP**

Adopted in 2014, the Health in All Policies (HiAP) ordinance recognizes how decision-making influences health stressors, structural racism, and health equity in Richmond and serves as a framework to guide City services (i.e., budgeting, social programs, environmental planning) towards equitable outcomes. The HiAP defines health equity as, "intentionally promoting opportunities for both vulnerable people and places, which include, but are not limited to women, racial or ethnic groups, [and] low-income individuals."

To help improve local conditions, the HiAP provides six intervention areas, listed below, where the City can take action. These intervention areas are meant to include day-to-day decision-making, community planning, and access to services, resources, and amenities. The 2020 HiAP Progress Report builds on these with recommended actions for making progress on health equity. The report also highlights the importance of partnerships between jurisdictions, community



organizations, residents, and service providers for projects and programs that benefit community members. The HiAP intervention areas and recommended future actions are listed below.

### **Governance & Leadership**

*Develop ongoing training & practice guide for city staff and public outreach/ communication of HiAP & Health Equity work*

### **Residential & Built Environment**

*Analyze and redesignate truck routes away from areas with high asthma rates and sensitive land*

### **Economic Development & Education**

*Seek new partnerships with clinical training programs in San Francisco Bay Area*

### **Environmental Health & Justice**

*Work with regional regulators to enforce regulations for mobile sources*

### **Full Service & Safe Communities**

*Connect neighborhoods that lack healthy food outlets to areas with such stores.*

*Protect neighborhoods from gentrification that leads to displacement of residents.*

### **Quality & Accessible Health Homes & Services**

*Commit to expanding the training and employment of lay health care workers, and community health workers (CHWs), in partnership between the City's employment training programs, health care providers, and non-profits currently working with CHWs.*

## **4.3 Richmond Climate Action Plan**

The Richmond Climate Action Plan (CAP) provides a framework of priority policies and programs to guide the City's action towards a healthier environment and community. The CAP includes a municipal and community greenhouse gas inventory, emission forecast and reduction targets, emission reduction objectives and strategies, and tips for local community action. There are eight CAP objectives, which are derived from the Richmond General Plan. The following lists the eight CAP objectives and strategies that relate to development and may be relevant to the Project.

### **Energy Efficient Buildings and Facilities**

*Leverage Existing Programs and Rebates to Improve Efficiency of Existing Buildings*

*Promote Green Building*

### **Increase Use and Generation of Renewable Energy**

*Promote Conversion from Natural Gas to Clean Electricity*

### **Sustainable Transportation and Land Use**

*Promote Smart Growth and Complete Neighborhoods*

*Promote "Complete Street" Improvements*

*Improve Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure*

*Expand Public Transit Options and Network Connectivity*

*Support Outreach and Education for Public Transit and Active Transportation*

#### **Zero Waste**

*Increase Participation in Recycling Programs and Incentives*

*Increase Diversion of Construction and Demolition (C&D) Waste*

#### **Water Conservation**

*Green Building Strategies for Water Conservation*

#### **Green Infrastructure, Urban Forestry and Agriculture**

*Support Urban Tree-Planting Programs*

*Support Local Agriculture and Food Production*

*Support Green Infrastructure and Streetscape Design*

#### **Green Business and Industry**

*Green Workforce Development*

*Reduce Use of Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (SLCPs)*

#### **Resiliency to Climate Change**

*Increase Resilience of Local Housing to Climate Change*

*Increase Resilience of Parks & Ecosystems to Climate Change*

*Protect Public Health and Promote Health Equity*

## **4.4 Richmond Urban Greening Master Plan**

The 2017 Richmond Urban Greening Master Plan was developed to provide an inventory of public trees, identify potential tree planting sites, and develop goals and strategies for expanding the City's urban forest. The plan supports preservation, sustainable management, and expansion of the urban forest, and aligns with other local planning efforts that support a cleaner, healthier, more connected, and aesthetically pleasing community. Through this effort, the City found that it has approximately 22,000 street trees and 13,00 potential planting sites (refer to 3.4.2 Natural Resources for more information). The following Urban Greening Master Plan goals relate to development in the plan area:

*Protect the Urban Forest*

*Expand the Urban Forest Through Urban Greening Initiatives*

## **4.5 Richmond Bicycle Master Plan and Pedestrian Plan**

In November 2011, the City of Richmond adopted a Bicycle Master Plan and a Pedestrian Plan with the goal of improving infrastructure, access and safety for biking and walking. The Bicycle

Master Plan outlines several proposed bikeways for Class I and Class II paths. Near the plan area, the Bicycle Master Plan envisions a bike network that connects the plan area to parks and trails, residential neighborhoods, and Central Richmond. The City is in the process of creating a new, upgraded proposed bicycle network that expands on existing infrastructure.

Similarly, the Pedestrian Plan provides recommendations for improving physical barriers in the built environment and creating complete streets that are safe and efficient for people to bike, walk and gather. The Bicycle Master Plan and Pedestrian Plan aim to achieve the following goals, that relate to the Project:

**Bicycle Master Plan Goals:**

- Comfort & Access*
- Connection to Transit and Employment/Retail Centers*
- Connection to Schools and other Community Facilities*
- Connection to the Waterfront, Parks and Open Space*
- Connection to Regional Bikeways*

**Pedestrian Plan Goals:**

- Increased safety*
- Improved Security*
- Improved Connectivity*
- Increased Equity*
- Improved Health*
- Increased Sustainability*
- Neighborhood and Downtown Revitalization*

## 4.6 Contra Costa County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Contra Costa County Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinated a partnership with local jurisdictions to develop the Contra Costa County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). The City of Richmond is included within this LHMP as a planning partner.

The LHMP is a multi-jurisdictional planning effort that provides an overview of the region, identifies hazards, and provides a mitigation strategy for the Contra Costa County area, including the City of Richmond. The LHMP risk assessment covers regional hazards of concern, including dam and levee failure, drought, earthquake, flood, landslide, severe weather, tsunami, wildfire, climate change, and other hazards. Various hazard mitigation objectives are included in the plan. The following lists those objectives that relate to hazards within and near the plan area:

- Increase resilience of infrastructure and critical facilities.*

*Inform the public on the risk from hazards of concern and increase awareness, preparation, mitigation, response, and recovery activities to promote public safety.*

*Prevent or discourage new development in hazardous areas or ensure that, if building occurs in high-risk areas, it is done in a way to minimize risk.*

*Encourage all development to meet applicable standards for life safety.*

*Enhance codes and their enforcement where feasible, so that new construction can withstand the impacts of known hazards and to lessen the impact of development on the environment's ability to absorb the impact of natural hazards.*

*Consider the impacts of known hazards in all planning mechanisms that address current and future land uses within the planning area.*

*Establish a partnership among all levels of government and the business community to improve and implement methods to protect property.*

*Encourage hazard mitigation measures that promote and enhance natural processes and minimize adverse impacts on the ecosystem.*

## 4.7 Plan Bay Area 2050

The Plan Bay Area 2050 provides a vision for the nine-county Bay Area region through 2050 and beyond. The vision for the region is for a connected, diverse, healthy, and vibrant community for all residents, guided by 35 strategies relating to housing, transportation, economy, and the environment. The plan area supports the following Plan Bay Area 2050 Strategies.

### **Housing**

*Transform aging malls and office parks into neighborhoods.*

*Preserve existing affordable housing.*

*Allow a greater mix of housing densities and types in Growth Geographies.*

*Build adequate affordable housing to ensure homes for all.*

*Integrate affordable housing into all major housing projects.*

### **Economic**

*Allow greater commercial densities in Growth Geographies.*

*Provide incentives to employers to shift jobs to housing-rich areas well served by transit.*

### **Transportation**

*Build a Complete Streets network.*

*Advance regional Vision Zero policy through street design and reduced speeds.*

### **Environmental**

*Fund energy upgrades to enable carbon neutrality in all existing commercial and public buildings.*

*Maintain urban growth boundaries.*

*Modernize and expand parks, trails and recreation facilities.*

## Climate Emissions

*Expand clean vehicle initiatives.*

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