HILLTOP
HORIZON

Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan – Community Workshop #1

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Date: Wednesday, 9/27/22, 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

Workshop Purpose: The purpose of the Workshop is to give community members the opportunity to share input on the Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan process.

Meeting Objectives:
1. Provide an overview of project and studies conducted to date.
2. Hear from the community on project priorities and concerns.
3. Provide a summary of what the team has heard thus far.

Total Participants: 112

Workshop Facilitators

Name	Organization
City of Richmond Staff	
Lina Velasco	Planning Department
Marytonae Sanchez	Planning Department
Roberta Feliciano	Planning Department
Andrea Villarroel	Planning Department
Alex Lopez-Vega	Planning Department
Roxanna Molina	Translator
Consultants	
Beverly Choi	Environmental Science Associates (ESA)
Stephanie Cadena	Environmental Science Associates (ESA)
Dan Dameron	Environmental Science Associates (ESA)
Steven Johnson	Environmental Science Associates (ESA)
Ethan Wynacht	Environmental Science Associates (ESA)
Stephanie Hagar	BAE Urban Economics
Arthur Perez-Marseres	SITELAB
Karina Schneider	Fehr and Peers
Total Staff and Consultant Participants:	**14**

Solicitation

Postcard flyers for the Workshop event were sent to approximately 700 property owners within a 500-foot radius of the plan area. The Workshop was also advertised on the Hilltop Horizon project website at https://hilltophorizon.com/, under the Events section, and published in the September City Manager Weekly Report distributions that ran from 9/2/22 to 9/27/22. Additionally, these were the distribution lists that advertised the event and the approximate number of contacts within each distribution:

1. Community Events Calendar – 1129
2. Design Review Board Agendas – 386
3. Development Services – 158
4. Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan – 36
5. Neighborhood Council Fairmede-Hilltop Newsletter – 165
6. List of Planning Projects Under Review – 441
7. Planning Commission Agendas – 438
8. Richmond Neighborhood Coordinating Council – 239

Meeting Format

The Community Workshop was conducted over a virtual Zoom meeting with call-in capability and language options available in English and Spanish.

Agenda

1. Project Overview
2. Project Studies
3. Priorities Discussion
4. What We Heard So Far
5. Next Steps/Questions + Answers

Poll Questions and Results

The poll prompted two questions at the beginning of the Workshop. The first question asked participants to provide information about themselves by selecting characteristics from a list. The second asked if participants were excited to see change in the Hilltop area. Responses from that were submitted in the chat have been recorded as well.16 of the workshop participants responded; see below for results.

Question 1: Tell us who you are	Responses
I live in Richmond	12
I work in Richmond	2
I own a business and/or commercial property in Richmond	1
My residence or business/commercial property is in the Hilltop area	1
I represent a public agency (city, county district, agency)	1

I represent a community group/organization	4
None of these apply	1
Question 2: Are you excited to see change in the Hilltop area?	**Responses**
Yes	12
No	0
Somewhat	2

Priorities Discussion

In the Priorities Discussion breakout rooms, Workshop participants were asked to respond to the questions below, which were captured by facilitators on a Mural board.

1. What is lacking in the community that you want to see in the Hilltop Horizon plan area? Please describe these uses, services, amenities, etc. in detail.
2. What is it that you do not want to see in the Hilltop Horizon plan area?
3. What are the biggest challenges that the project team should focus on?
4. What development should be prioritized in Phase 1 of the project?
5. Other thoughts/comments

Below is a summary of the feedback received. The goal of the summary is to highlight the "Major Themes" expressed by the community. "Major Themes" can be defined as common topics that were expressed by multiple individuals across the breakout rooms. A quantitative analysis of the community input was conducted to identify "Major Themes". This analysis process included categorizing community responses to group similar ideas together and the top four community response categories have been recognized as the "Major Themes". The summaries provide a reference to the most common topics presented by the community. The Mural boards from each room have been included in the Appendix to ensure the original community comments are accessible.

The order of the topics listed are based on the frequently the themes were mentioned (in other words, the theme mentioned most frequently are listed first). Specific community responses that were brought forth multiple times by the workshop participants have been included to provide additional detail. The following are the "Major Themes" expressed across the five breakout rooms.

1. **What is lacking in the community that you want to see in the Hilltop Horizon plan area? Please describe these uses, services, amenities, etc. in detail.**

   Major Themes

   - Parks and Open Space
     - Mixed use outdoor spaces
     - Outdoor recreation and sports facilities
     - Gardens, green roofs, and green buffers

- Connectivity
  - A transportation hub/transit friendly
  - Bicycle and pedestrian connectivity
- Safety
  - General public safety
  - Visitor/child safety
  - Traffic control (i.e., signage)
  - Safety measures for parking
- Entertainment:
  - Live entertainment
  - Fairs

2. **What is it that you do not want to see in the Hilltop Horizon plan area?**

   Major Themes

   - Warehouse and Industrial Uses
   - Pollution
     - Air/noise pollution
     - Litter
   - Traffic
     - Truck traffic
     - Additional schools that would bring in more traffic
   - Unfavorable Retail
     - Big chain stores
     - Smoke shops and dispensaries

3. **What are the biggest challenges that the project team should focus on?**

   Major Themes

   - Communication and Community Building
     - Communication and engagement with community members
     - NIMBYism
     - Building a sense of community
   - Bureaucracy
     - Working with the City Council
     - Zoning changes
     - Measure U (taxes on Richmond businesses)
     - Litigation
   - Feasibility
     - Attracting businesses and people
     - Developing unusable property
     - Project funding and timeline
     - Design challenges
   - Traffic
     - Connectivity
     - Coordination with on-site school pick up/drop off

4. **What development should be prioritized in Phase 1 of the project?**

   Major Themes

   - Parks and Open Spaces
     - Greenspaces
     - Trails
     - Connect to Lake Park
   - Retail
     - Grocery stores
     - Local and specialty stores
     - Outdoor restaurants
     - Costco
   - Housing
     - Educator housing
     - Affordable housing
     - Senior housing
   - Safety
     - General public safety

5. **Other thoughts/comments**
   - Prologis
     - Understand their intentions
     - Prioritize community needs
   - Cohesive Agreement
     - Hilltop must be whole and connected
     - Build consensus among stakeholders

Questions and Answers

During the Workshop, the questions outlined below were raised in the Zoom Chat or were asked verbally. The project team was not able to address all questions live during the Workshop. Below are responses to these questions.

1. What does ESA stand for?
   - ESA stands for Environmental Science Associates, who are the lead consultants working with the City of Richmond on the Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan.

2. What did "urban fabric" refer to on the last slide?
   - "Urban fabric" generally refers to the context, design, and pattern of an urban space.

3. Is there an opportunity to ask questions prior to the breakout, so that we may use the answers to inform our breakout discussions?
   - Questions were reserved for the Questions + Answers section of the Workshop in order to get through all Workshop components.

4. Since Prologis now owns the parcel, what's preventing the site being converted to industrial use? We still have choice?
   - Industrial use in the plan area is not currently a permitted use. Introducing industrial to the plan area will require a General Plan Amendment (GPA) and rezone, a process that would require City Council approval.

5. Was hoping to understand if there are boundaries different than the whole "plan area" which Prologis owns
   - Prologis owns the approximately 78-acre mall site within the plan area bound by Hilltop Mall Road; ownership on the remaining plan area parcels vary.

6. Could the link to the Mural be shared?
   - Mural boards from each breakout room are attached in this Community Workshop summary.

7. Did you look at Biotech as a potential use?
   - Biotech has not been specifically analyzed by the City's project team; however, no uses have been eliminated from consideration at this point.

8. Curious to understand why retail would require new residents?
   - A population base is needed to financially sustain retail. Population growth can be facilitated by residents in new households. Different retail types, such as grocery stores and big-box retailers such as Costco, require a certain population within a certain radius to be viable businesses. Median household income and spending powers are other factors considered that would impact retail viability.

9. Who are the entities behind this project?
   - The City of Richmond, with a team of consultants, is leading the Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan.

10. Who are the current owners of the property?
    - Refer to the response in Question 5. Ownership varies across the plan area. 38 of the 39 parcels within the plan area are privately owned. The remaining parcel, located at the northwest corner of Hilltop Drive and Blume Drive, is publicly owned by East Bay Municipal Utility District.

11. Who do they consider to be the stakeholders?
    - Project stakeholders include representatives from the groups below. Additional stakeholders from other organizations and agencies may be considered at a later time in the planning process.
      i. Education/Faith-based/Social Services/Community Organizations
      ii. Leaders from Neighborhood Councils
      iii. Property Owners/Businesses
      iv. City Council, the Planning Commission, and Design Review Board

12. How many owners are there now?

- Refer to the response in Question 10.

13. How does funding for this work?
    - The Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan is being funded by a combination of the following resources:
        i. Local Early Action Planning (LEAP) Grant through the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD);
        ii. Priority Development Area (PDA) Grant through the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG); and
        iii. City funding resources.

14. Who sits on this advisory committee? Who selected them?
    - The participants listed below were selected by the City/project team and invited to the Hilltop Horizon Advisory Committee (AC) Meeting #1 that occurred on 8/24/22. Not all individuals from this list were able to make the AC Meeting #1 and some participants extended the invite to colleagues in their organization. A summary of the AC Meeting #1, including the attendees and meeting content, can be found on the Hilltop Horizon project website at https://hilltophorizon.com/.
        i. Carissa Lee, AC Transit
        ii. Doug Giffin, Campus LLC
        iii. Bhavin Khatri, Hilltop District NC
        iv. Arto Rinteela, Fairmede-Hilltop NC
        v. Rob Thompson, WestCAT
        vi. Coire Reilly, West County TAC
        vii. Carolina Zanni, Summit Tamalpais
        viii. Armondo Hodge, West County Wastewater
        ix. Katrinka Ruk, Council of Business and Industry
        x. Loren Laumer, Hilltop Community Church
        xi. Luz Gomez, County Public Health
        xii. Abraham Bradley, Hilltop Green NC
        xiii. Jan Mignone, Richmond NCC
        xiv. Samidha Thakral, Prologis
        xv. Adam VanBecelaere, Walmart representative
        xvi. Ron Patel, former Chevy's Restaurant site owner
        xvii. Eric Govan, Fire Marshall (City of Richmond)
        xviii. Captain Timothy Simmons, Police (City of Richmond)
        xix. Patrick Phelan, Public Works/Engineering (City of Richmond)
        xx. Lizeht Zepeda, Economic Development (City of Richmond)
        xxi. Roberta Feliciano, Planning (City of Richmond)
        xxii. Marytonae Sanchez, Planning (City of Richmond)

15. When will this slide deck be made available to the public?
    - The presentation from this Community Workshop is available on the project website at https://hilltophorizon.com/.

16. When will be the first time any ideas for a plan are shared with the City Council?
    - City staff/the project team is anticipating sharing ideas and progress on the Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan effort with City Council by mid-2023.

17. Would be great to hear from the city on the last part of that question about reconciling what Prologis wants with what the community wants
    - Prologis is considered a project stakeholder and has been invited to participate as a Hilltop Horizon Advisory Committee member. City staff/the project team anticipate working with Prologis, among other stakeholders, during the project milestones to discuss priorities, opportunities, and challenges.

18. Residents of where? A specific neighborhood or from Richmond? I always thought that this was a Richmond project and NOT just a Hilltop community project.
    - The project is envisioned to transform the plan area from a primarily low-intensity auto-oriented retail center to a higher density, mixed-use destination that would impact the surrounding Hilltop community as well as the City of Richmond.

19. Do we get to hear Prologis, too?
    - Refer to the response for Question 17. Prologis is invited to express their input towards the Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan process at key project milestone events, including the Advisory Committee Meetings and Community Workshops. Other forms of communication with key stakeholders may occur later in the process.

20. Considering how much Prologis paid for Hilltop Mall, should they be allowed to get a return on their investment, or should they just turn it over to this group to use as they wish?
    - The City/project team would like to work collaboratively with the plan area landowners, plan area neighbors, elected officials, and community at large through the Specific Plan process to develop a cohesive plan that balances the needs and desires of the project stakeholders, a plan that socially and economically furthers the Hilltop community and City of Richmond.

21. Does ESA work for the city or for Prologis?
    - ESA has been hired by the City of Richmond as a consultant to support the Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan effort.

22. How do you reconcile the wants of the community and the wants of Prologis?
    - Refer to the response in Question 20.

23. Can you speak on how the community engagement impacts the specific plan?
    - Community participation is critical to the success of the project. Input provided by the community will provide the project team with a better understanding of the community's needs and priorities for the plan area, which will be used to inform the project alternatives and ultimately guide the selection of the preferred plan.

24. Will other nearby areas be added to the plan area?
    - Amendments to the plan area boundary are not under anticipated at this time.

25. What does Prologis have planned?
    - As of October 2022, the project team has not seen any Prologis plans on the mall site that have been made publicly available.

26. Is it possible for the list of stakeholders to be posted on the website?
    - Refer to the response in Question 11. Stakeholders are listed in the Stakeholder Interview summary, saved on the project website (https://hilltophorizon.com/) under the Events section.

27. Is there a PLA for the project?
    - A PLA, or Project Labor Agreement, has not been discussed at this point though this topic may come up later in the process.

28. Will Prologis care about any of this, or will they just do their own thing?
    - The project team cannot speak on behalf of any landowner within the plan area. Refer to the response in Question 4.

Appendix: Community Workshop Presentation and Mural Board Outputs

The following section contains the Community Workshop presentation and community input, compiled within the Mural boards for each of the five breakout rooms. Please refer to the "Download Presentation" link on the webpage.