



HILLTOP
HORIZON

Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan

Planning Commission Study Session



November 16, 2023

Context

- Impacts from COVID (how people work/commute, e-commerce)
- Housing obligations
- Evolution of General Plan vision
- Grant funding
- Change in landownership at mall site

Reimagining Underutilized Commercial Spaces

American malls getting radical facelifts as pandemic fades and department stores close

© CBS NEWS

Mixing it Up:
Reimagining the
Traditional Mall for
New Uses

Creating New Neighborhoods from Aging Malls & Underused Office Parks



CBRE

Malls represent opportunities to redefine retail and consumers interaction in America and transform these major sites into their highest and best use as new community hubs in the suburban ecosystem.

THE **ROBIN**REPORT



Project Description

- Re-envision a 143-acre site through the preparation of the Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan
- Promote the transformation of the plan area from a low-intensity auto-oriented retail center to a **higher intensity, mixed use destination**



Project Team Overview

Multidisciplinary team of policy and environmental planners, traffic consultants, designers, engineers, and economists that are supporting the City of Richmond



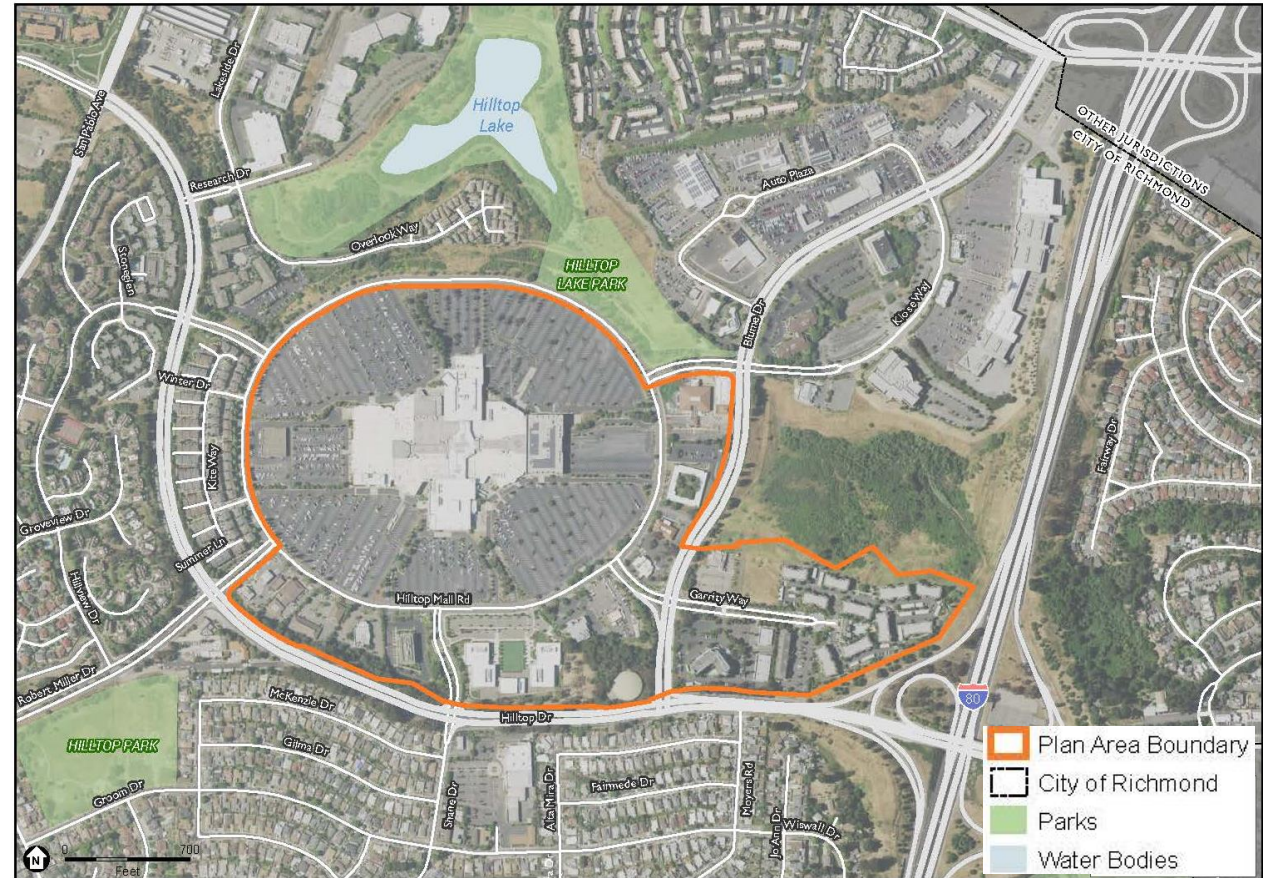
Meeting Objectives



Provide an overview of the progression of the concept alternatives



Gain feedback on key plan components to develop a preferred land use vision



Agenda

1. **Project Recap**
2. **Concept Alternatives**
 - a. Progression of Concept Alternatives
 - b. Outreach Takeaways
3. **Next Steps**
4. **Study Session Questions**



Project Recap

Schedule Overview

We are here!



Informing the Alternatives

1. Existing conditions reports and market analysis
2. Past outreach activities
3. Other engagements
 - a. Neighborhood Council meetings
 - b. Meetings with select landowners

Documents and resources available on the project website:

<https://hilltophorizon.com>

By the Numbers

30

stakeholders interviewed

20+

organizations and agencies
engaged so far

170+

participants at Workshops

472

survey respondents

Top Planning Drivers/Main Themes

1. Attract new businesses.
2. Create entertainment opportunities.
3. Create more housing choices.
4. Promote new land uses that stimulate the local economy.
5. Promote a mix of land uses.
6. Promote safety.
7. Promote employment opportunities.
8. Emphasize community sustainability, resilience, and equity.
9. Enhance mobility connections to accommodate all users.

Concept Alternatives



Increased density



Promote a mix of land uses + new land uses



A growing neighborhood and a destination



Pop-up events

Create entertainment opportunities



Pavilions and Terraces





Local businesses



Commercial corridors



Attract new businesses

New neighbors, businesses, and visitors



Promote employment opportunities



Public markets



Create more housing choices



Emphasize community sustainability, resilience, and equity

Framing distant views



Places to gather

Promote Safety



Expanding mature tree canopy

Spaces to belong, connect, and share



Enhance mobility connections to accommodate all users



A canvas for creativity

Early Mall Landowner Concept Alternatives

- New landowner purchased the mall site in 2020
- Mall site is 78 acres of the 143 acre plan area, or 55% of the plan area
- Initial plans on the mall site from the landowner showed various arrangements of predominantly employment/industrial uses with large floor plate buildings; initial plans also included some retail and housing



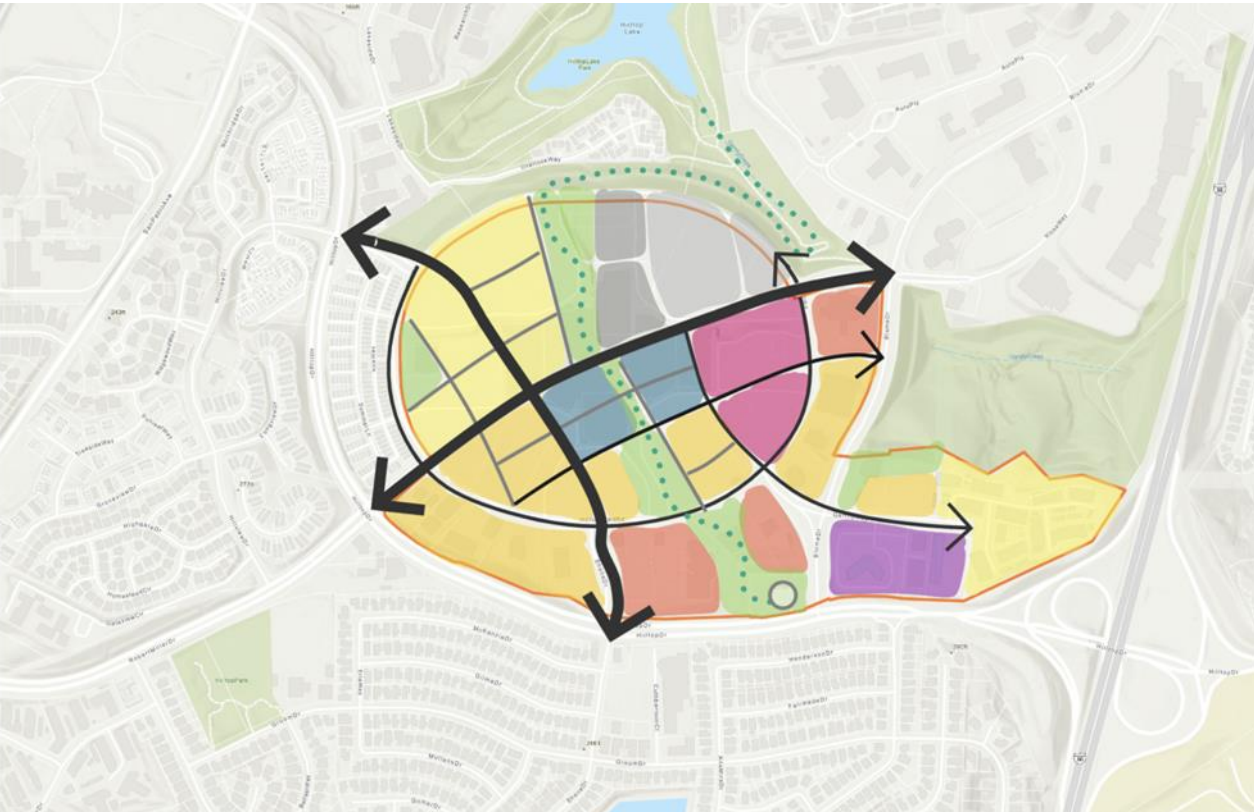
Early City-Developed Concept Alternatives

- Representation of planning drivers and select inputs from key stakeholders
- High emphasis on open space framework and connectivity
- Under the impression that Walmart could be relocated
- Explored the potential for urban big box retail typology and Main Street retail

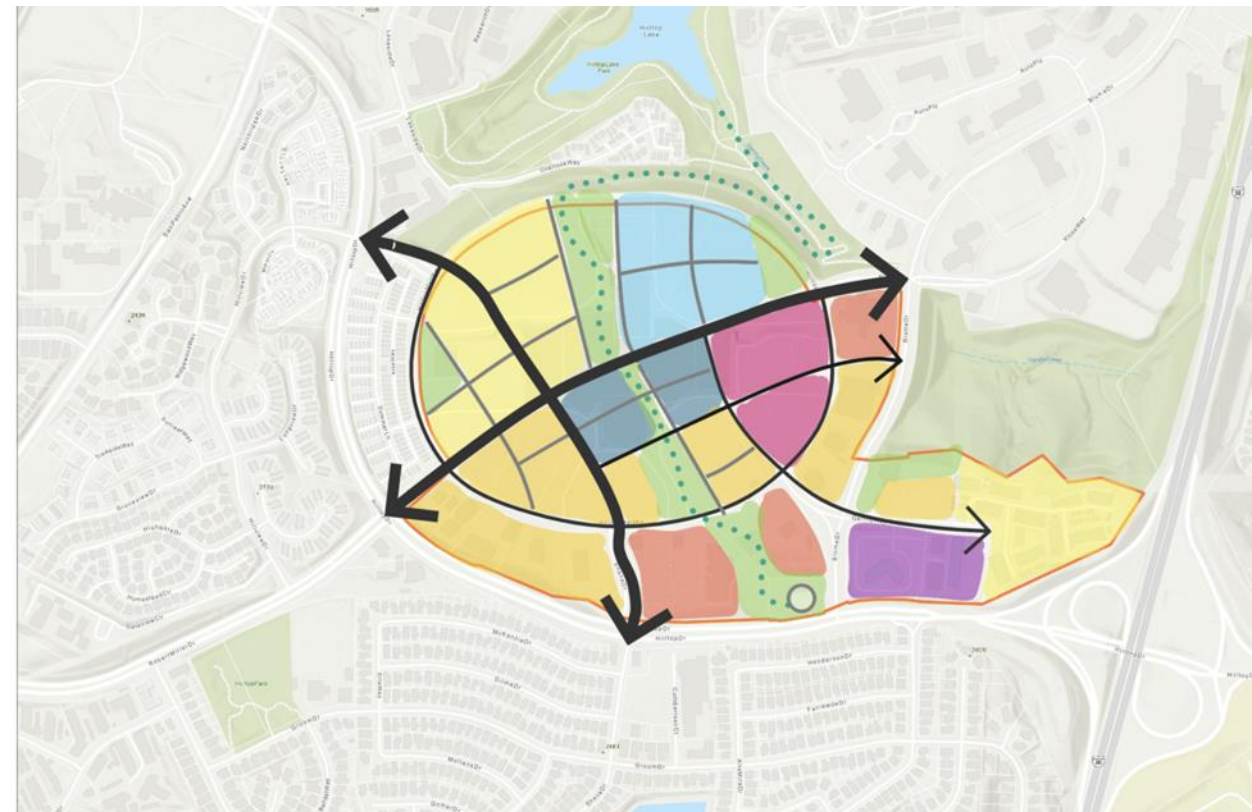


Evolving City-Developed Concept Alternatives

A



B

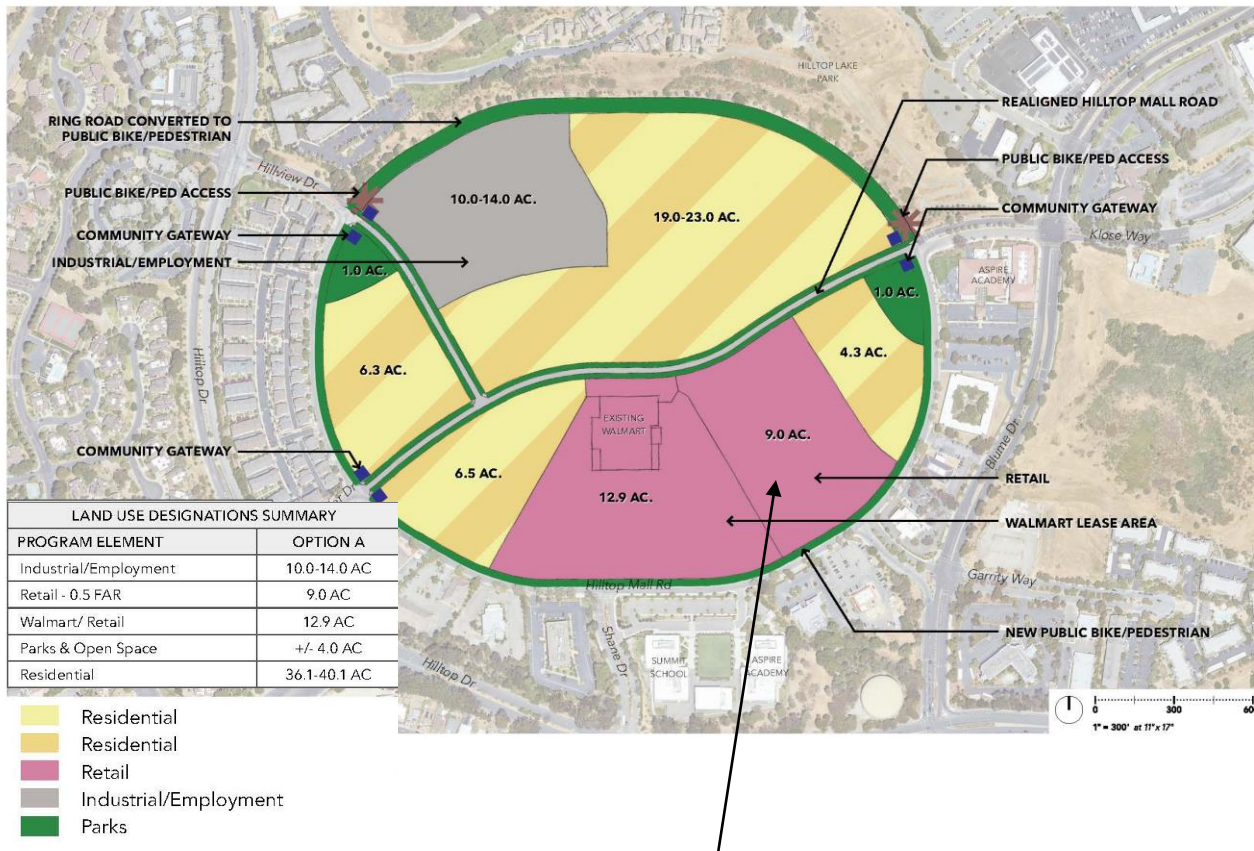


- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Residential | Hotel / Services |
| Mixed-Use Residential | Large-Format Retail Anchors |
| Mixed-Use Office | Employment/Industrial |
| Schools / Entertainment | Open Space |

Refined Mall Landowner Concept Alternatives

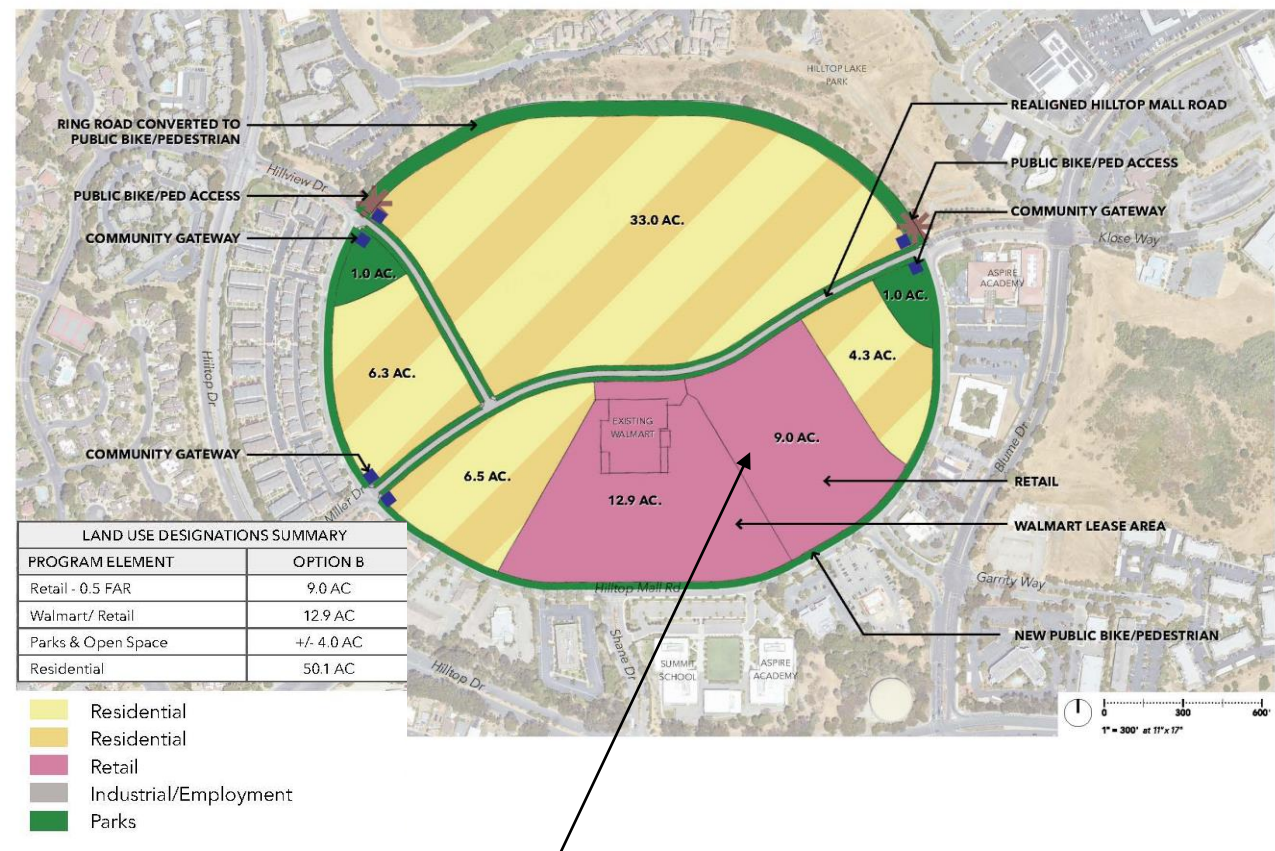
A

Source: Signature Development Group, Hart Howerton



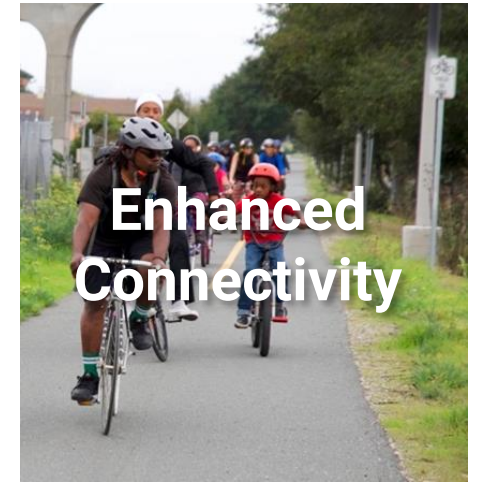
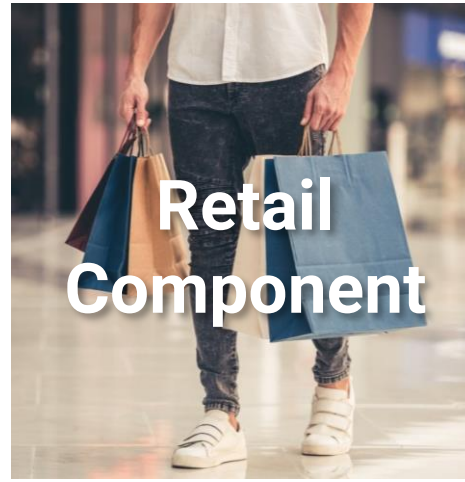
B

Source: Signature Development Group, Hart Howerton



Potential for larger floor plate retail or smaller-scale, experiential retail

Similarities in Concept Alternatives: Summary



Development Timeline: Question 1 and Takeaways

How quickly do you want to see change in the Hilltop Horizon plan area?

- A. 0-5 years
- B. 6-10 years
- C. 11-20 years
- D. 20+ years
- E. I do not want to see change in the Hilltop plan area.

- Most participants/constituents would like to see change in the plan area in the near term (0-5 years)
 - **Survey:** ~90%
 - **Advisory Committee Meeting 2:** 78%
 - **Workshop 2:** 100%

Differences in Concept Alternatives



Employment



Retail



Housing

Employment/Industrial Examples



Potential Timing of Development
(based on 2022 Market Study prepared by City team)

Near Term (0-5 years)

Research and development;
industrial/flex; warehousing/distribution

Medium Term (5-15 years)

Smaller scale mixed use office

Longer Term (15+ years)

Speculative office

Employment: Question 2 and Takeaways

Which employment use would be the **least desirable** in the Hilltop plan area?

- a. Mixed-Use Office
- b. Healthcare/Life Sciences
- c. Research + Development
- d. Advanced Manufacturing
- e. Data Center
- f. Warehousing and Storage/Distribution

- **Survey:** ~44% do not want industrial in the plan area (concerns with traffic, air quality, noise, odor); R&D and data centers were most acceptable
- **Advisory Committee Meeting 2 and Workshop 2:** opposition to warehouse/distribution/logistics; would like complementary uses that enhance quality of life; general acceptance for R&D, biotech, healthcare, and mixed-use developments

Retail Examples



Walkable, Main Street-type retail



Larger floor plate retail



Both small and larger floor plate retail



Potential Timing of Development
(based on 2022 Market Study prepared by City team)

Near Term (0-5 years)

larger floor plate retail based on current conversations

Medium Term (5-15 years)

some smaller-scale retail

Longer Term (15+ years)

additional smaller-scale retail; regional entertainment venue

Retail: Question 3 and Takeaways

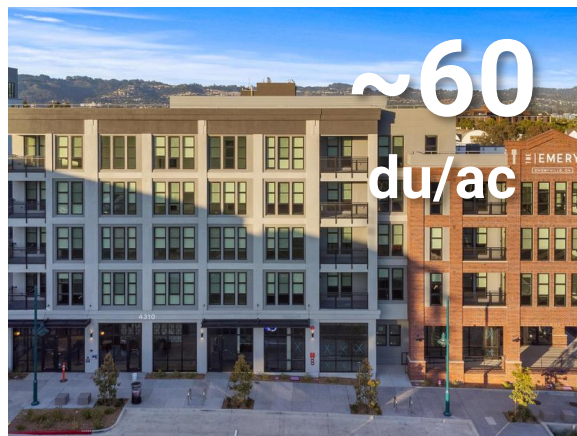
What style of new retail development is most desirable for the Hilltop plan area?

- a. Walkable, Main Street-type retail
- b. Larger floor plate retail
- c. Both small and larger floor plate retail
- d. Neither

- **Survey:** strong desire for restaurants/cafes and grocery stores, followed by an even support for independently owned small businesses and big box stores
- **Advisory Committee Meeting 2 and Workshop 2:** acceptance for both small and larger floor plate retail to activate space with preference towards walkable retail; acknowledgement that big box retail tenants may attract larger pools of patrons who may support smaller businesses

Housing Examples

du/ac = dwelling units per acre



Potential Timing of Development
(based on 2022 Market Study prepared by City team)

Near Term (0-5 years)

For sale housing

Medium Term (5-15 years)

Multifamily rental

Longer Term (15+ years)

Higher density housing
(40 du/ac +)

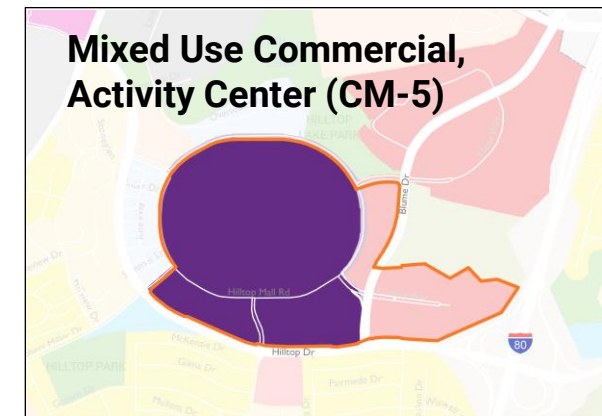
Housing: Question 4a and Takeaways

The current allowable residential density at the mall site (CM-5) is **40** dwelling units/acre (**minimum**) to **135** dwelling units/acre (**maximum**).

Would you **support a reduction** to the density minimum at **the mall site/ CM-5 zone** in the Hilltop plan area in order to spur residential development and other types of development in the plan area?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. I don't know

- **Advisory Committee Meeting:** 63% favored a reduction; support for a mix of housing at various densities
- **Community Workshop:** 48% favored a reduction (33% no; 22% I don't know); support for mixed-density approach; some desire to see new residential consistent with existing neighborhoods
- **Survey:** emphasis placed on affordable housing, for sale housing, and multifamily housing



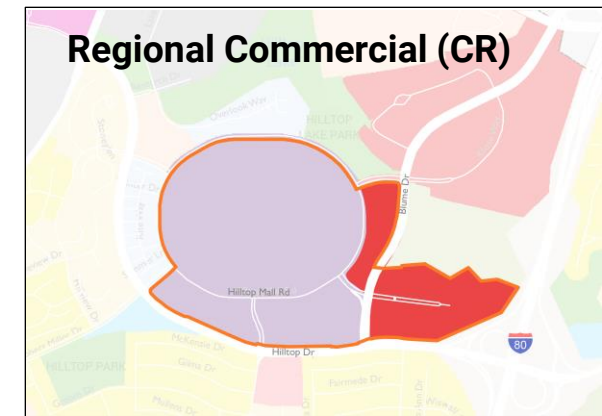
Housing: Question 4b and Takeaways

The current allowable residential density in the remaining plan area (CR) is up to **50** dwelling units/acre (**maximum**).

Would you **support an increase** to the density maximum at **remaining parcels/CR zone** in the Hilltop plan area in order to spur residential development and other types of development in the plan area?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. I don't know

- **Advisory Committee Meeting:** 67% favored an increase; support for higher density housing provided that community amenities are present to enhance quality of life
- **Community Workshop:** 50% favored an increase (36% no; 14% I don't know); support for mixed-density approach
- **Survey:** emphasis placed on affordable housing, for sale housing, and multifamily housing



Next Steps

Next Steps

- City Council Study Session – 12/5/23
- Goal to have Preferred Land Use Plan confirmed by early 2024 to initiate technical studies

Contact:

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Study Session Questions

1. **Development Timeline.** How quickly do you want to see change in the Hilltop Horizon plan area?
2. **Employment.** Which employment use would be the **least desirable** in the Hilltop plan area?
3. **Retail.** What **style of new retail** development is most desirable for the Hilltop plan area?
4. **Housing.**
 - a. Would you **support a reduction** to the density minimum at **the mall site/CM-5 zone** in the Hilltop plan area in order to spur residential development and other types of development in the plan area?
 - b. Would you **support an increase** to the density maximum at **remaining parcels/CR zone** in the Hilltop plan area in order to spur residential development and other types of development in the plan area?



Thank You!

Questions?