



Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan – Community Workshop #2

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Date: Wednesday, 11/01/23, 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm

Meeting Objectives:

1. Provide an overview of the progression of the concept alternatives.
2. Gain feedback on key plan components to develop a preferred land use vision.

Total Participants: 59

Workshop Facilitators

Name	Organization
City of Richmond Staff	
Hector Rojas	Planning Department
Lina Velasco	Planning Department
Kristi Ellerbroek	Planning Department
Rae Alberts	Planning Department
Maria Leticia Oregon	Interpreter
Consultants	
Beverly Choi	Environmental Science Associates
Stephanie Cadena	Environmental Science Associates
Ethan Wynacht	Environmental Science Associates
Dan Dameron	Environmental Science Associates
Steven Johnson	Environmental Science Associates
Stephanie Hagar	BAE Urban Economics
Woody Hanson	SITE LAB
Arthur Perez-Marseres	SITE LAB
Total Staff/Consultant Participants:	13

Solicitation

Postcard flyers for the Workshop event were sent to approximately 577 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 October City Manager Weekly Report on 10/27/23.

Meeting Format

The Community Workshop #2 was conducted over a virtual Zoom meeting with call-in capability and language options available in English and Spanish.

Agenda

1. Project Recap
2. Concept Alternatives
3. Next Steps
4. Questions

Poll Questions and Results

The following are the outputs from the poll questions raised during the Workshop. The number of responses received for each poll selection, the poll results in percent format, and any additional feedback that may have been provided through the Zoom Chat function are presented below.

Poll #1a: Tell us who you are	Responses
A. I live in Richmond	7
B. I work in Richmond	-
C. I own a business and/or commercial property in Richmond	2
D. My residence or business/commercial property is in the Hilltop area	7
E. I represent a public agency (city, county district, agency)	2
F. I represent a community group/organization	1
G. None of these apply	2
Poll #1b: Have you participated in a City-led Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan meeting/activity (Hilltop Horizon stakeholder interviews, Hilltop Horizon Advisory Committee Meeting #1, Hilltop Horizon Community Workshop #1, Hilltop Horizon community survey)?	Responses



A. Yes	4
B. No	5
C. I don't know	1
Poll #1c: How quickly do you want to see change in the Hilltop Horizon plan area?	
A. 0-5 years	9
B. 6-10 years	-
C. 11-20 years	-
D. 20+ years	-
E. I do not want to see change in the Hilltop plan area.	-

Poll 1

Poll | 3 questions | 21 of 29 (72%) participated

1. Please tell us who you are. Select all that apply. / Por favor díganos quién es. Seleccione todas las opciones que correspondan. (Single Choice) *

21/21 (100%) answered

I live in Richmond. / Vivo en Richmond.	(7/21) 33%
I work in Richmond. / Trabajo en Richmond.	(0/21) 0%
I own a business and/or commercial property in Richm...	(2/21) 10%
My residence or business/commercial property is in the...	(7/21) 33%
I represent a public agency (city, county, district, agency...	(2/21) 10%
I represent a community group/organization. / Represen...	(1/21) 5%
None of these options apply. / Ninguna de estas opcio...	(2/21) 10%

2. Have you participated in a City-led Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan meeting/activity (stakeholder interviews, Advisory Committee Meeting #1, Community Workshop #1, community survey)? Please make one selection. ¿Ha participado en una reunión/actividad del Plan Específico de Hilltop Horizon dirigida por la ciudad? Por favor haga una selección. (Single Choice)

10/21 (47%) answered

Yes / Sí	(4/10) 40%
No	(5/10) 50%
I don't know / No sé	(1/10) 10%

3. How quickly do you want to see change in the Hilltop Horizon plan area? Please make one selection. / ¿Con qué rapidez desea ver cambios en el área del Plan Específico de Hilltop Horizon? Por favor haga una selección. (Single Choice)

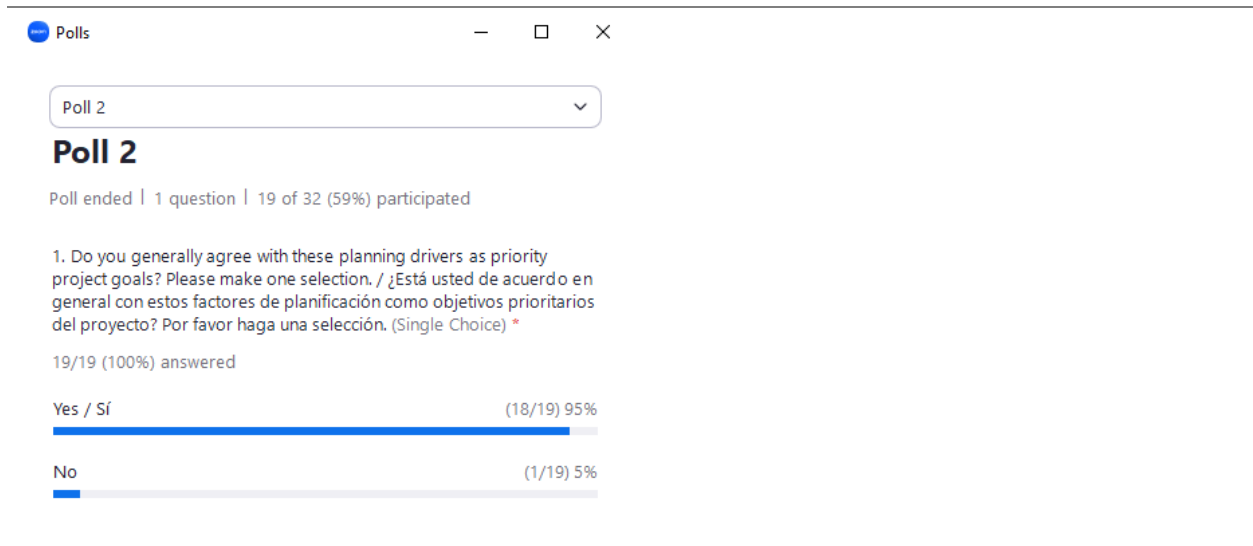
9/21 (42%) answered

0-5 years / años	(9/9) 100%
6-10 years / años	(0/9) 0%
11-20 years / años	(0/9) 0%
20 + years / años o más	(0/9) 0%
I do not want to see change in the Hilltop plan area. / No ...	(0/9) 0%

Poll #2: Do you generally agree with these planning drivers as priority project goals?	Responses
A. Yes	18
B. No	1

Feedback Provided in the Chat Function:

- A new public library branch
- More retail and restaurant options; green spaces
- More retail
- Community space for farmers market, festivals
- A community center
- Use Point Richmond as a model. It's lovely down there!
- I was envisioning more restaurants.
- I was thinking about more retail shops like a Saks.
- Lot more retail and entertainment needed on the mall site
- When I went to New York I saw a lot of retail and a theater.
- I would hope to move forward with a plan that doesn't require rezone, so we can see progress more quickly!

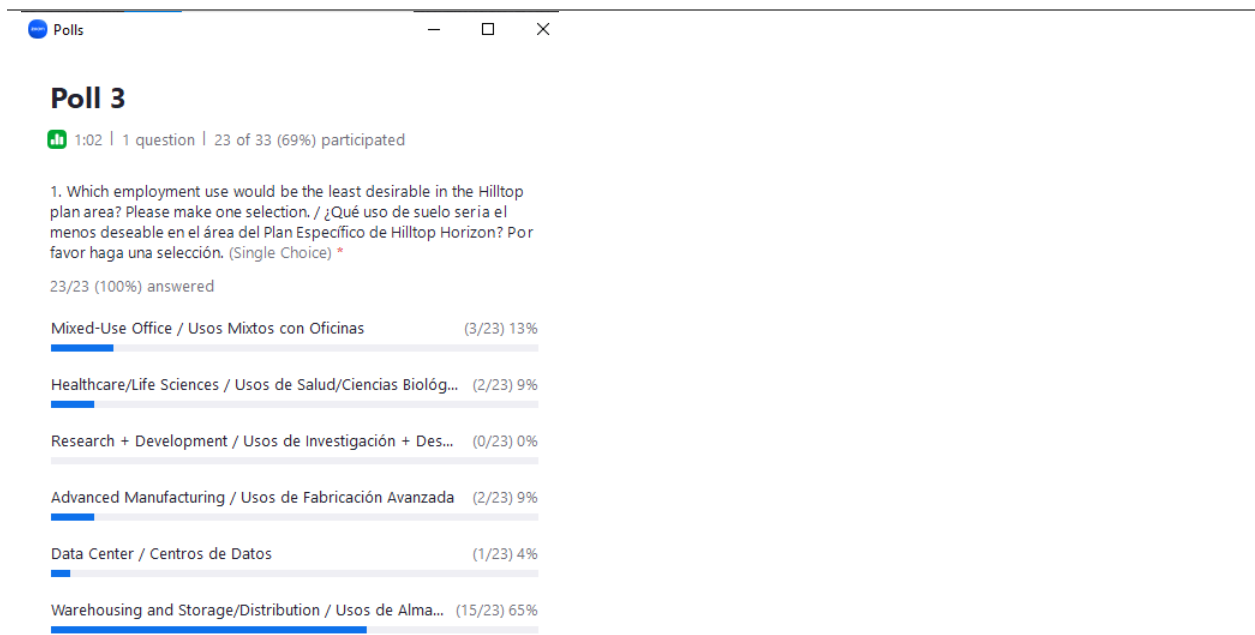


Poll #3: Which employment use would be the least desirable in the Hilltop plan area?	Responses
A. Mixed-use Office	3
B. Healthcare/Life Sciences	2
C. Research + Development	0

D. Advanced Manufacturing	2
E. Data Center	1
F. Warehousing and Storage/Distribution	15

Feedback Provided in the Chat Function:

- Whichever option gets in the way of open green space and community centers is my choice for least preferred



Poll #4: What style of new retail development is most desirable for the Hilltop plan area?	Responses
A. Walkable, Main Street-type retail	9
B. Larger floor plate retail	0
C. Both small and larger floor plate retail	12
D. Neither	0

Poll 4

Poll | 1 question | 21 of 33 (63%) participated

1. What style of new retail development is most desirable for the Hilltop plan area? Please make one selection. / ¿Qué estilo de nuevo desarrollo comercial es el más deseable para el área del Plan Especifico de Hilltop Horizon? Por favor haga una selección. (Single

21/21 (100%) answered



Poll #5a: Would you support a reduction to these density standards at the mall site in the Hilltop plan area in order to spur residential development and other types of development in the plan area?

Response	Count
A. Yes	11
B. No	7
C. I don't know	5

Feedback Provided in the Chat Function:

- 22-40 is reasonable. (This comment received one “thumbs up” reaction.)

Poll #5b: Would you support an increase to this density standard at remaining parcels in the Hilltop plan area in order to spur residential development and other types of development in the plan area?

Response	Count
A. Yes	11
B. No	8
C. I don't know	3

● Polls

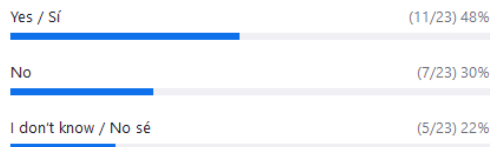
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Poll 5a

Poll | 1 question | 23 of 33 (69%) participated

1. Would you support a reduction to these density standards at the mall site in the Hilltop plan area in order to spur residential development and other types of development in the plan area? Please make one selection. / ¿Apoyaría una reducción de estos estándares de densidad en el sitio del mall de Hilltop para estimular el desarrollo residencial y otros tipos de desarrollo en el área del Plan Específico de Hilltop Horizon? Por favor haga una selección. (Single

23/23 (100%) answered



● Polls

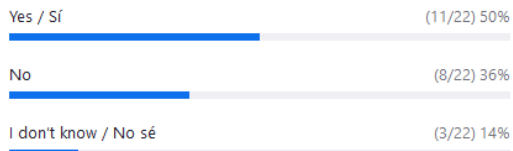
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Poll 5b

Poll | 1 question | 22 of 33 (66%) participated

1. Would you support an increase to this density standard at remaining parcels in the Hilltop plan area in order to spur residential development and other types of development in the plan area? Please make one selection. / ¿Apoyaría un aumento de este estándar de densidad en las parcelas restantes del Plan Específico de Hilltop Horizon para estimular el desarrollo residencial y otros tipos de desarrollo? Por favor haga una selección. (Single Choice)

22/22 (100%) answered



Discussion

Feedback was solicited from Community Workshop participants on the following topics:

- Employment;
- Retail, and;
- Housing.

This section includes both verbal feedback and written feedback submitted in the Zoom chat by Community Workshop participants. The feedback was collected first as written notes during the meeting. Each line represents a perspective shared by Community Workshop participants. Following the bulleted feedback, a summary of the key takeaways is provided for each topic.

Employment

- The community is not interested in warehouses/storage or distribution.
- Warehousing and industrial are not human scale and they don't bring a lot of human interaction.
- Heading out towards the Amazon warehouse area near the golf course, the landscape appears tidy and well-maintained. However, it lacks walkability, remains uninteresting, and features large parking lots, devoid of shops and restaurants.
- Warehousing and storage would not elevate the community as Richmond already has a lot of these types of developments.
- The community has existing warehousing and distribution centers. UPS and Amazon have centers in Point Pinole.
- Other places in the community are better suited for warehousing and distribution centers.
- Having warehousing and distribution could limit the opportunity to have denser housing.
- Concerned that due to the mall property owner's specialization in logistics, the site might predominantly be developed for logistics purposes.
- Opposed to data centers and warehouses, which would bring truck traffic into this residential area. High truck traffic should be kept away from places where families and kids walk.
- Do not want to see industrial.
- A data center, Research & Development facility, advanced manufacturing, and healthcare/life science uses would be okay.
- Having research and development and biotech uses would generate employment and avoid having unleased office buildings. Additionally, employees at these developments would support local businesses.
- Research & Development would bring the wrong kind of traffic and would take away from the community feel of the area.
- Mixed-use development would be a big plus for the community and would bring employment opportunities.

- Want a wide variety of different types of people and businesses at Hilltop and would like to create an aesthetically pleasing area that is aligned with what residents want.
- Healthcare services would be a good use for the site as the community needs these types of amenities.
- Healthcare facilities are needed in Hilltop and are more important than data centers and advanced manufacturing.
- A hospital building should be included as it would be an essential and crucial health and safety element for residents of Richmond/El Sobrante area.

Summary of Feedback Received:

The feedback shows there is general opposition to the inclusion of warehouses, storage, and distribution in the plan area. Concerns include the absence of human-scale interaction and potential impediments to the development of denser housing. Residents also oppose the potential introduction of truck traffic into the residential area that might accompany certain industrial uses. There appears to be more support for research & development, biotech, healthcare, and mixed-use developments. These options are viewed as potential employment generators that align more closely with the community's desires.

Retail

- Would prefer to see community centered spaces and small businesses.
- Would also like to see walkable retail; a walkable main street.
- Restaurants
- Would like to see restaurants and cafes that are walkable from existing neighborhoods in the area.
- It would be great to have the kind of retail like in New York City in the Hilltop area, such as salons, theaters, and more restaurants.
- Retail will be good for new residents.
- Would like small retail businesses included so that people are able to buy things and enjoy their day.
- Malls are dead. Would putting large floor plate retail back in this area be successful?
- Do not want to create pollution from people coming and going straight from the highway to large floor plate retail uses on the site.
- Do not want large plate commercial, such as Costco, as they are too big and require lots of parking which could limit other types of businesses.
- Based on a survey that was conducted in the neighborhood, 96% of the respondents wanted to see Costco in the development. Costco could help make the site a destination and support other uses.

- It would be good to have Costco as an anchor store to draw in the crowds and support the other kinds of uses that the community wants. It would be a shame to lose the interest that Costco has already expressed in the site.
- It would be nice to have Macy's back in the area.
- It is hard to attract businesses to Hilltop because even small businesses have a hard time staying open there. Fear that if small businesses and higher end retailers don't come to the area less desirable uses such as marijuana dispensaries will.
- The Hilltop area is mostly housing and so adding more housing without amenities will result in new and existing residents having to leave the community to access amenities.
- Most of the area west of I-80 is residential and people have to go far across town or to other communities for entertainment, restaurants, and retail.
- Healthcare services such as vision, dental, urgent care would be good uses for this community.
- The site would be the perfect place for transit considering the housing and schools that are nearby.
- This area is underserved and needs a new library.

Summary of Feedback Received:

Some residents favor community-centered spaces, walkable retail, and small businesses while opposing large, parking-intensive retailers, which they fear may generate pollution and outcompete small businesses. Conversely, some participants are in favor of having larger floor plate stores, like Costco, that can serve as anchor tenants to attract a larger pool of patrons, patrons who could also support smaller businesses located in the plan area. 57% of poll respondents are in favor of having both small and larger floor plate retail in the plan area.

Housing Density

- The mall site density could be reduced and the density in the eastern portion of the site could be increased, if it would help spur development.
- Support reducing density at the mall site and increasing density in the eastern portion of the Specific Plan Area.
- No high-rise development right across the street from existing residential uses.
- We have enough housing; we need more entertainment and restaurants.
- The housing density should be kept at about 20 dwelling units per acre. We want the area to continue to feel like a town and don't want to make a micro-city with housing on top of housing.
- Would rather keep the current zoning standards at the mall site if this means getting something rather than nothing.
- Would like to see the Hilltop mall site be used to help solve the housing issues in Richmond.
- A mix of densities would be best.

- Would like a mix of densities like the Hilltop Village.
- Supportive of townhomes.
- More townhouses are favored because they bridge the gap between apartments and single-family homes. They demand less maintenance than single-family homes and contribute to community-building and a more communal atmosphere.
- When discussing housing, the timeline for development should be covered.
- Developments need to provide 10% affordable housing.
- It is difficult to conceptually make the decision.
- Providing local examples of housing densities would help with decision making.

Summary of Feedback Received:

Feedback regarding changes in density within the plan area zones varied. Some participants supported a reduction in density at the mall site (parcels designated as Mixed-Use Commercial, Activity Center [CM-5]) and an increase in density in the eastern portion (parcels designated as Regional Commercial [CR]), as long as both areas adopted a mixed-density approach and avoided high-rise developments across from existing lower-density housing. Other participants would like to see new residential consistent with existing neighboring developments, prefer not to introduce higher-density housing, and expressed interest in having entertainment and restaurant uses integrated instead. Participants also expressed challenges in providing feedback on housing density due to difficulty visualizing different density levels and understanding how future residents would access amenities.

Questions

During the Workshop, the questions outlined below were raised. The following are responses to those questions.

1. Is it possible to implement a phased approach, starting with a small anchor project, to gain a better understanding of what suits the area? Are there plans to consider a phased approach that allows the community to make some progress and assess its suitability for the area?
 - *Given the scale of the plan area, development will most likely occur over several phases over a period of time. Initial development in the early phases may act as catalytic projects that may spur additional development in the plan area, further activating the site. Refer to the response in Question #3 for additional information on development timeline.*
2. Is there a specific action required from the City Council to initiate the next steps in the process?
 - *No specific City Council action is anticipated in the upcoming study session (date to be determined); however, the City team in this study session will request Council feedback on the land plan components.*
3. What is the timeline for development, could it be 0-5 years?
 - *The timeline for development will depend on the preferred land use plan as well as the density and intensity of the uses in that plan. Changes to the market will have impacts on the development timeline as well.*
4. Does the City have any plans for public and/or community space in the Hilltop area?
 - *Through outreach conducted, the City team understands this use has been a highly desirable feature for the plan and the team will take this into consideration as the land plan is being shaped.*
5. Is there going to be any more community engagement opportunities, or is this it?
 - *Community members and stakeholders may participate in the upcoming study sessions to provide feedback. The study session with the Planning Commission is scheduled for 11/16/23 and a date has not yet been confirmed for the City Council study session. These details will be displayed on the project website (<https://hilltophorizon.com/>), under the Events section.*
6. Where can we find information regarding the dates and logistics for upcoming study sessions? Will this information be available on the Hilltop Horizon website?
 - *See response to Question #5 above.*
7. For local retailers and businesses, which spaces are least expensive?

- *The cost to rent commercial spaces in the plan area varies and is dictated by the landlord. Factors such as economics, location, and property can affect rent prices.*
8. Is the Hilltop cinema in the project area?
- *No, Cinemark Century, which is located off Klose Way and east of the plan area, is located outside the plan area.*
9. Rezoning would be required to have industrial uses, so if it is rezoned, wouldn't it be up to the developer to do what they want with it? How does zoning work?
- *No, the developer will need to comply with the standards and regulations for industrial if a rezoning to allow industrial were to be approved by City Council. The standards and regulations for this use along with all other uses in the plan area will be developed by the City team and incorporated into the Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan based on feedback. Zoning allows local governments to regulate development within the jurisdiction.*
10. What do the different housing options mean for affordability? Does the price remain the same regardless of dwelling units per acre?
- *The City has an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance that requires developers to provide anywhere between 7-10% of the dwelling units in residential developments be made available to very low, low, or moderate-income households, dependent on whether the project is an ownership or for rent development. Therefore, projects with more dwelling units within a parcel (higher density residential such as multi-story apartments and condominiums) would yield more units affordable to very low, low, or moderate-income households, than a lower density project would (e.g., single family detached and attached homes). Home prices vary and can be influenced by such factors including location, property size, and development amenities.*
11. How can Hilltop be used to help solve the Richmond Housing plan?
- *Integration of more housing in the plan area, affordable to individuals and families with different income levels, can help meet some of the City's housing goals.*