



# AGENDA REPORT

## Community Development

<b>DATE:</b>	December 5, 2023
<b>TO:</b>	Mayor Martinez and Members of the City Council
<b>FROM:</b>	Lina Velasco, Director of Community Development Hector Rojas, Planning Manager
<b>Subject:</b>	Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan
<b>FINANCIAL IMPACT:</b>	There is no fiscal impact related to this item.
<b>PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:</b>	None
<b>STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:</b>	<p>The City kicked-off the Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan in 2021 and since then, the Specific Plan team has engaged the community and other stakeholders to identify a wide range of hopes and aspirations for this key opportunity area. The purpose of this study session is to familiarize the City Council with the specific plan work; summarize the community and stakeholder input received thus far; and to receive the City Council's feedback on the uses in the initial concept alternatives. It is important for the City Council to keep in mind that the Specific Plan team is not requesting the City Council select a concept alternative at this time. The desired outcome for this study session is to receive feedback that would help the Specific Plan team develop a preferred land use vision, which would be brought back for consideration by Spring 2024.</p>
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b>	<p>RECEIVE a presentation; and PROVIDE comments on the uses in the initial concept alternatives developed for the Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan (PLN23-344) – Community Development Department (Lina Velasco 510-620-6841/Hector Rojas 510-621-1220).</p>

## **BACKGROUND:**

### ***Specific Plan Purpose***

The Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan (HHSP) area covers approximately 143 acres within the larger Hilltop Priority Development Area (PDA). Priority Development Areas are places near public transit planned for new homes, jobs, and community amenities. The Hilltop PDA was nominated by the City Council and officially designated by the Association of Bay Area Governments in 2020. The HHSP area consists of the former Hilltop Mall and properties immediately surrounding it to the north, west, and south, and by a larger contiguous area to the east and south (see Attachment 1, Map of Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan Area). The City's vision for Hilltop, as stated in the Richmond General Plan 2030, is for a highly visible and accessible regional district, blended with a mix of vibrant uses that would enhance the area's competitive edge in the region. The purpose of the HHSP is to support the General Plan vision by promoting the transformation of the plan area from a suburban, low-intensity auto-oriented retail center to a higher intensity, mixed-use destination. The HHSP will contain planning policies, zoning regulations, and urban design standards to help guide this transformation in the near and longer terms.

### ***Funding for the Specific Plan***

The HHSP is funded through a \$500,000 Local Early Action Planning (LEAP) Grant from the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD); a \$750,000 Priority Development Area (PDA) Planning Grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG); and \$200,000 from the City's comprehensive planning fees, which are collected through citywide planning and building permits applications.

### ***Specific Plan Team***

The City has a multidisciplinary team of policy and environmental planners, traffic consultants, designers, engineers, and economists to support preparation of the HHSP. The lead consultant is Environmental Science Associates (ESA). Subconsultants consist of BAE Urban Economics for economic and fiscal analyses; Fehr & Peers for transportation; SITELAB urban studio for design; NCE for engineering; CHS Consulting Group for additional transportation/parking analysis support; and A3GEO for geotechnical.

### ***Supporting Documents***

The Specific Plan team has prepared a series of memorandums, reports, and studies to help inform the specific plan development process. These documents are available for review on the HHSP website at [hilltophorizon.com](http://hilltophorizon.com) under the "Documents and Resources" section. The Market Study prepared by BAE Urban Economics presents

several key findings that are particularly relevant as the City Council considers the initial concept alternatives for the plan area.

### Demographic and Economic Findings

- Richmond has a strong population base that can provide potential support for new retail, entertainment, and recreation opportunities in the plan area.
- The City has a large base of consumers living in family households and households with children. These households may provide support for new specialty retail, eating and drinking establishments, and other family-oriented entertainment and recreation establishments.
- The City's younger population base could help to support new forms of specialty and experiential retail, or the places consumers seek out to spend their discretionary time and discretionary dollars. Specialty and experiential retail offer immersive shopping experiences that help foster a unique "sense of place." A new and distinctive family-friendly retail node in the plan area would likely be very attractive to Richmond residents.
- The City's rich racial and ethnic diversity, with a high proportion of Latinx residents, supports specialty food retail, including ethnic markets and eating and drinking establishments.
- Low household incomes among Richmond residents may present a challenge for attracting regional-serving retail, entertainment, and recreation uses to the plan area. Regional-serving uses may gravitate toward higher-income areas elsewhere in Contra Costa or Alameda County.
- Richmond does not currently serve as a node for office-based employment, which suggests potential challenges for office development in the plan area.

### Residential Market Findings

- Competitive market-rate rents and low rental vacancies indicate potential demand for multifamily rental development in the plan area.
- Significant recent growth in residential sale prices in Richmond indicates strong demand for for-sale housing in Richmond, including single-family homes, condominiums, and townhouses.
- Although Richmond has a relatively strong market for condominiums and townhomes, demand for these product types is focused in waterfront areas with access to amenities, in areas that are perceived as relatively safe communities.

- There is strong demand for affordable housing throughout Richmond and the region, including in the plan area.
- Market-rate residential development in the plan area is likely to target the top end of the market for each product type to achieve rents and sale prices that are high enough to cover the cost of new construction. As a result, new market-rate homes would likely be priced at levels that are not affordable to moderate-income and lower-income households. Strategies to target the production of housing for lower-income and moderate-income households will be necessary to accommodate the full spectrum of housing needs across income ranges in the plan area.
- Providing a range of housing types in the plan area at a mix of price points, including multifamily rental housing, condominiums, and townhomes, could address demand from various segments of the community.
- Attracting market-rate residential development to the plan area is likely to require implementation of placemaking strategies to complement residential uses, create a safe community feel, and provide dining and entertainment for new residents. These strategies will be particularly important for for-sale housing types to achieve the sale prices necessary to attract new development.
- The plan area offers a large site with the potential for a mix of uses that can create a sense of place with a mix of complementary uses that will support demand for new residential development.

### Retail Market Findings

- Population growth in general will generate new retail spending power that can potentially be captured in the plan area. Attracting additional residents to the plan area may be critical for attracting new retailers to the site, and therefore early phases of implementation of the Specific Plan should focus on residential development rather than new retail.
- Noting the lack of nearby full-scale grocery stores, some residential real estate brokers suggested that there may be demand for a grocery store in the plan area, which could be further supported by new residential growth.
- E-commerce is disrupting the retail sector, resulting in the need for less physical space and more efficient use of existing space. Given this environment, only the most compelling sites will be attractive to retail developers or retail tenants. As such, it is critically important to refine how and where to build new retail space within the plan area.
- Overall, retail uses in the plan area will have a greater chance of success if developable sites offer good visibility, clear and unobstructed signage, and are

easily directly accessible from a high-traffic volume arterial or collector street. Sites that are 'mid-block' or located on minor streets are not as attractive to retail developers or retail tenants. Retail developers of neighborhood and community centers prefer sites that are '100 percent' corners on the 'going home side' of the street.

### Office Market Findings

- Richmond is not an established office market and office rents are currently too low to support new speculative office development. However, small-scale office uses within a larger mixed-use project may be feasible by targeting tenants serving local residents and businesses in the future.
- Office tenants prefer physical settings that offer an 'urban' feel, even if situated in a suburban location. The completion of a walkable and amenity-rich mixed-use development project in the plan area could greatly improve the area's attractiveness as a potential office location.

### Industrial/Flex Market Findings

- Richmond is strategically located to capture industrial demand spurred by the Port of Richmond, the Port of Oakland, and the growing demand for last-mile warehouse and distribution space regionwide.
- Vacancy rates for industrial and flex space are historically low, indicating that the market would be receptive to new industrial or flex product in the plan area.
- Although market trends suggest relatively strong demand for industrial space in Richmond, some industrial uses could potentially be incompatible with existing and future residential uses in the plan area. Industrial tenants typically seek locations separated from residential uses to avoid conflicts arising from truck traffic and emissions, noise, and vibrations. Additionally, conflicts between residential uses and industrial uses can hamper the operation of industrial businesses, making industrial operations less viable over time.
- The plan area may be an appropriate location for new smaller-scale industrial/flex, Research and Development (R&D), and PDR uses. Businesses in these industries can provide high-quality job opportunities for City residents.

### Hotel Market Findings

- There are currently two planned hotels in the plan area. New hotels in Richmond may be able to secure a competitive position in the local market relative to the existing lodging inventory by offering a more modern aesthetic and amenities.

- Richmond currently serves primarily as an economy hotel market with limited business travel. Ensuring that the plan area includes a mix of uses and amenities that would support a higher-end hotel property could be critical to attracting a different category of hotel to the plan area, if desired.
- Hotels in Richmond may seek to increase leisure travel stays in part by enhancing connections with local and regional attractions and experiences.

### Entertainment Uses Findings

- Due to low population densities and low incomes surrounding the plan area, the plan area is not currently an attractive location for new region-serving entertainment or retail. However, the development of a new high-quality mixed-used project with a significant residential component should drastically increase the population density in the plan area and may help to build additional support for retail and entertainment uses in the future. Therefore, attracting these types of uses to the plan area might rely on attracting a significant amount of residential development to the plan area during earlier phases of implementation.
- There is unmet demand for drinking places that serve alcoholic beverages in Richmond, such as a craft brewery. Given this significant and unmet existing demand, a brewpub with a full restaurant would be an ideal type of establishment within the plan area due to its focus on on-site sales of both food and beverages.

### ***Community & Stakeholder Engagement***

The specific plan development process was kicked-off in 2021 with an initial phase of public outreach to receive input from the area's neighborhood councils; private property and public agency stakeholders; and the community at large. The initial phase of outreach included a series of stakeholder interviews, an online community survey, an advisory committee meeting, and a community workshop.

### Stakeholder Interviews

The specific plan team facilitated a series of virtual interviews in Summer 2022 to engage key stakeholders in one-on-one or small-group sessions to gain feedback regarding the Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan. The stakeholders interviewed included the Richmond Neighborhood Coordinating Council, Hilltop District Neighborhood Council, Hilltop Green Homeowner's Association, Fairmede-Hilltop Neighborhood Council, transit agencies, Contra Costa Health Services, utility companies, West Contra Costa Unified School District, area charter schools, Prologis, the West Contra Costa County Council of Business and Industry, City Council members (2), Planning Commissioners (3), and Design Review Board members (3). Key takeaways from the interviews are summarized below:

- **Major Challenges:** Stakeholders across the different groups generally agreed on major challenges and concerns, including housing need, safety and security (including police and crime), lack of healthy food options, transit connections, Measure U, economically feasible uses, and adverse effects as a result of industrial uses.
- **Housing:** Stakeholders identified housing as a major need, especially low-income and affordable housing. Stakeholders expressed the need and desire for multiple-story, high-rise, and high-density housing developments that provide views of the Bay and help to meet housing needs. One stakeholder said, “the more of it that you can put in, the better.”
- **Foods and Shops:** Grocery stores, markets, and restaurants are lacking in the community and stakeholders would like to see diverse, healthy food options.
- **Community Identity, Culture, and Gathering Spaces:** Stakeholders expressed the importance of maintaining a community gathering space/center. The mall site has previously served as a gathering area and residents are concerned of this being taken away without being replaced or improved. Stakeholders would like to see gathering spaces with community events, live music, diversity in foods, shops, and businesses, sports amenities, recreation programs, and more parks and trees. Stakeholders want residents, children, and visitors to be prioritized, and for the plan area to, “bring people out to enjoy the city.”
- **Community Safety:** Safety was identified as a major concern across all stakeholder groups. Stakeholders indicated high crime rates, concern for active commuters and children, speed of vehicles within the plan area, vandalism, car safety, theft, and homelessness. Stakeholders would like to see intentional designs that discourage crime and improve safety, including lighting, cameras, open spaces, increased patrolling, and traffic calming measures.
- **Roadways and Connectivity:** Stakeholders expressed the need for an improved street system that is safe and provides connections to transit, bike and pedestrian trails. Stakeholders generally described the current circular road as a “nuisance”. Stakeholders would like to see enforcement of speed limits, street redesign for walkability and connectivity, traffic-calming measures, less surface parking, complete sidewalks, and connections to BART and other transit systems.
- **Separated and Green Industrial:** The potential negative impacts typically associated with industrial uses are generally not desired; however, stakeholders acknowledged their benefits to the economy and employment. Stakeholders expressed that industrial uses should be separated and buffered from residential and social gathering areas, and limit noise, smells, and pollution. Stakeholders are concerned about warehouses taking over the space and for industrial uses being prioritized, or at the forefront of development. Stakeholders do not want to

see or hear large trucks, “honking horns”, heavy truck traffic near residential and schools, or smell exhaust fumes/chemicals. Stakeholders commented that industrial uses can serve as the “economic engine” and subsidize other uses that the community really wants/needs.

- **Economic and Workforce Opportunities:** Stakeholders would like to see new job opportunities for the local community, from new commercial and industrial uses. Stakeholders would like Richmond to be a more active participant in the innovation community, in which the Bay Area is a world leader in.
- **Build Up:** Stakeholders expressed the need for building up and making use of vertical space for housing, businesses, and parking that provide views of Richmond’s unique and scenic views. Stakeholders would like to see vertical buildings and multiple-story housing developments, with innovative architecture and designs.

### Community Survey

A community survey was conducted online through SurveyMonkey from February 24, 2023 to March 15, 2023. An in-person opportunity to complete the survey was also provided on March 11, 2023, at the Richmond Walmart in Hilltop. The survey contained a total of 27 questions and received 472 responses. Key takeaways from the survey are highlighted below:

- Top priorities for the planning area include attracting new businesses (47.03%); creating entertainment opportunities (38.98%); creating more housing choices (36.65%); promoting new land uses that stimulate the local economy (33.47%); promoting safety (30.72%); promoting employment opportunities (28.39%); and enhancing services and amenities (27.12%).
- Types of housing most needed in the planning area include affordable housing (51.83%); multi-family residential (43.58%); for-sale housing (42.89%), single-family attached homes (38.3%); for rent housing (42.89%), and single-family detached homes (25.46%).
- Types of retail establishments most desired in the planning area include restaurants and cafes (85.78%); grocery stores (70.41%); independently-owned small businesses (52.06%); big box stores (50%); and flexible retail spaces (16.74%).
- Respondents would like to see change happen in the plan area within the next five years (89.91%).
- A considerable number of respondents think industrial uses should not be permitted in the planning area (44.28%). Respondents open to light industrial uses in the plan area indicated the following types would be most acceptable:



research & development (42.82%); data center (35.77%); showrooms (23.11%); flex space (19.22%); light manufacturing (17.76%); and distribution warehouse (14.84%).

- The biggest concerns related to industrial uses in the planning area are air quality impacts (72.02%); noise impacts (63.50%); traffic impacts (62.04%); odors (57.66%); and view impacts (38.44%).
- Respondents indicated that improvements for the following mobility options should be prioritized in the plan area: walking (70.56%); transit – bus (57.66%); biking (55.47%); personal vehicle (42.58%).
- Types of community facilities that should be prioritized in the planning area include: active recreational uses (71.78%); passive open spaces (70.80%); community/senior centers (45.01%); libraries (35.28%); health clinics (33.09%); police/fire services (30.66%); cultural facilities (30.41%); and schools (18.0%).

#### Advisory Committee Meeting #1

The first advisory committee meeting was hosted by the specific plan team on August 24, 2022. The advisory committee was formed to serve as a sounding board to provide guidance, feedback, and recommendations throughout the specific plan development process. Advisory committee participants for this meeting included AC Transit, WestCAT, West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC), West County Wastewater, Campus LLC, Contra Costa Health Services, Hilltop Green Homeowner's Association, Hilltop District Neighborhood Council, Parchester Village Neighborhood Council, Prologis, and West Contra Costa County Council of Business and Industries. As part of the meeting, the advisory committee shared that the following themes should be prioritized as part of the specific planning process:

- Community, Culture, and Gathering Spaces (69%): New development should allow spaces to celebrate culture, diversity, and community. Hilltop Mall has one of the best views; try to combine an outdoor development to make use of the view. Provide public spaces to allow community members to connect. Create a center, a focal point to steer away from the uniformness that comes with suburban development.
- Housing (54%): Provide senior housing and supporting resources. Require or incentivize construction of affordable housing rather than payment of in-lieu fees. Encourage building upward to create higher density housing. Transit needs to be coordinated together with housing development like it has on Treasure Island. Housing should be focused around the mall so that the mall site can be prioritized for retail, gathering spaces, etc.
- Connectivity (54%): Transit passes should be made available for future residents. With a few improvements, Hilltop can become a great biking environment. The

schools located off Hilltop Mall Road need a better plan for pick-up/drop-off. Consider having roads/lanes that are exclusively for transit/buses. Increase density in the area to support use of the existing transit center. Consider establishing a transportation management association that could help pay for shuttles and other parking demand management strategies. Consider redesigning existing roadways to provide better connectivity and mobility.

- Safety (54%): Locate a police station or substation in the nearby area. Utilize crime-prevention through environmental design principles to promote safety and prevent crime. People need to feel safe so that they will want to shop, play, work, and live in the plan area. The City should address complaints about dangerous roadway conditions in the area as part of the plan. Fire safety should be addressed as population growth occurs in the plan area.

### Community Workshop #1

The first community workshop was hosted by the specific plan team on September 27, 2022. The purpose of this virtual workshop was to give community members at large the opportunity to share input on the specific planning process. The workshop was well attended with a total of 112 participants. Following is a summary of major themes expressed during the workshop breakout rooms:

- Mixed-use outdoor spaces; outdoor recreation and sports facilities; gardens, green roofs, and green buffers are lacking in the plan area and should be enhanced as part of the specific plan.
- The specific plan should address public safety, enhance traffic control (i.e., signage), and include safety measures for parking.
- Places should be provided in the planning area for people to gather and enjoy community events with live entertainment.
- Warehouse and industrial uses are not generally favored in the planning area due to potential pollution and traffic impacts. Other unfavorable uses include big chain stores, smoke shops, and cannabis dispensaries.
- The types of development participants thought should be prioritized in the early implementation of the specific plan include green spaces, trails, connections to Lake Park, grocery stores, local and specialty stores, outdoor restaurants, a Costco, educator housing, affordable housing, senior housing, and public safety.
- There was cohesive agreement that the plan area needs to be made whole and better connected and that the specific plan team should work towards consensus among the different stakeholders.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### ***Early City-Developed Concept Alternatives***

The Specific Plan team has developed initial concept alternatives for the plan area based on the input provided through the initial phase of community engagement (see Attachment 2, City-Developed Concept Alternatives). These City-developed concept alternatives are intended to address community goals, take advantage of Hilltop's place-specific qualities, and provide flexibility for near- and long-term implementation. The community goals addressed by the city-developed concept alternatives are:

- Growing the plan area into a complete neighborhood and destination with a mix of land uses and entertainment opportunities;
- Attracting new neighbors, businesses, and visitors through expanded housing choices and employment opportunities; and
- Creating spaces to belong, connect, and share while promoting safety, enhancing mobility for all users, and emphasizing community sustainability, resilience, and equity.

The City-Developed Concept alternatives contemplate the following:

- The extension of Robert Miller Drive east through the mall site to connect to Klose Way and the extension of Shane Drive north through the mall site to connect with Hillview Drive;
- A new north-south open space corridor or trail alignment between Hilltop Lake Park to the water tank site at the intersection of Hilltop and Blume that could offer views and recreational opportunities;
- A residential neighborhood and park in the northwest quadrant of the mall site and higher-density residential district in the southwest quadrant;
- A mixed-use residential neighborhood in the southeast quadrant of the mall site with large-format retail anchors near the corner of Klose Way and Hilltop Mall Road;
- In City-Developed Concept Alternative A, the northeast quadrant of the mall site could accommodate employment/industrial uses;
- In City-Developed Concept Alternative B, the northeast quadrant of the mall site could accommodate mixed-use office instead of employment/industrial uses;
- Allowing flexibility for the block bound by Robert Miller Drive, Hilltop Drive, Shane Drive, and Hilltop Mall Road to transition to residential uses;

- Acknowledging the existing Aspire charter schools located at the southeast corner of Shane Drive and Hilltop Mall Road and the southeast corner of Hilltop Mall Road and Klose Way;
- Allowing flexibility for other properties located along Hilltop Mall Road between Shane Drive and Klose Way to transition to entertainment and residential uses;
- Acknowledging the existing Courtyard and Extended Stay hotels along Garrity Way east of Blume Drive and allowing flexibility for other service-related uses to locate in this area; and
- Acknowledging the existing multifamily residential use (Tides Apartments) at the end of Garrity Way and allowing for higher-density residential uses on the vacant properties immediately west of the Tides.

### ***Mall Landowner-Developed Concept Alternatives***

The mall site accounts for approximately 55 percent of the plan area (78 of 143 acres). In 2020, Prologis purchased the mall site with the intent to redevelop the property. At the first community workshop, the community desired to know what the new landowner wanted to do with the property. Initial plans developed by Prologis for the mall site showed various arrangements of predominantly employment/industrial uses as well as some retail and housing. Most recently, Prologis partnered with Signature Development Group to prepare more refined concept alternatives for the mall site that better aligned with the feedback received during the specific planning process and their own community outreach efforts (see Attachment 3, Mall Landowner-Developed Concept Plans). It is important to note that the mall landowner-developed concept alternatives were not prepared by the Specific Plan team – they were prepared and funded solely by the Prologis/Signature team.

The mall landowner-developed concept alternatives contemplate the following:

- Vacating the northern segment of Hilltop Mall Road between Hillview Drive and Klose Way to provide a bike and pedestrian landscaped corridor;
- The extension of Robert Miller Drive east through the mall site to connect to Klose Way and provide bike and pedestrian improvements along this new corridor;
- The extension of Hillview Drive south into the mall site to connect to the Robert Miller Drive extension and provide bike and pedestrian improvements along this new corridor;
- Community gateway elements at the Hillview Drive/Hilltop Mall Road, Robert Miller Drive/Hilltop Mall Road, and Klose Way/Hilltop Mall Road intersections;

- One-acre parks at the Hillview Drive/Hilltop Mall Road and Klose Way/Hilltop Mall Road intersections;
- Potential for larger floor plate retail or smaller-scale, experiential retail on 21.9 acres immediately south and east of the existing Walmart store (which has 25-year lease that constrains its potential relocation);
- In Mall Landowner-Developed Concept Alternative A, a 10 to 14-acre portion of the mall site located at the southeast corner Hillview Drive and Hilltop Mall Road could allow for industrial/employment uses with the remaining mall site reserved for a mix of low to medium density residential uses (approximately 36 to 40 acres); and
- In Mall Landowner-Developed Concept Alternative B, no industrial/employment uses and the majority of the mall site would accommodate a mix of low to medium density residential uses (approximately 50 acres).

### ***Feedback on Concept Alternatives***

The specific plan team presented the concept alternatives at a second advisory committee meeting on October 26, 2023; a second community workshop on November 1, 2023; and a Planning Commission study session on November 16, 2023. The feedback and discussion from Advisory Committee Meeting #2 and Community Workshop #2 are summarized in Attachments 3 and 4 of this report. The Planning Commission's feedback can be summarized as follows:

- **General:** There was support to enhance the existing community, with a focus on creating a family-friendly environment. The specific plan should ensure improvements are made to educational institutions, through investments and contributions to schools. A need for more housing was recognized, with an emphasis on provisions for senior housing and amenities. Integrate high quality transit into the plan and provide a multi-modal system that allows users to move safely and conveniently to and through the community. The specific plan should integrate actionable strategies from the City's Climate Action Plan, to enhance the resiliency of the area. Boost outreach efforts to gain input from participants that represent a range in socio-economic backgrounds.
- **Development Timeline:** While there is interest to see built projects occur within the near term (0 - 5 years), a development timeline of 6 to 10 years (medium term) seems most realistic in order to create a holistic plan that accomplishes all of the plan goals. As market conditions will evolve, a flexible plan that can adapt to market changes is most desirable.
- **Employment:** Employment opportunities should be created in corresponding measure to the housing being developed. The specific plan should promote jobs that allow people to thrive. In the spirit of enhancing the existing community, jobs

created should elevate the opportunities for local as well as new residents, provide healthy salaries for workers, and encourage foot traffic. Incubator, or innovative co-working spaces, are appealing. Input was received both in favor and not in favor of development of logistics facilities and distribution centers.

- Retail: Retail development should be people-oriented and accessible to by transit, cars, bicycles and pedestrians. An active open space concept provides for a pedestrian connection between the retail/commercial areas and the rest of the community. Retail needs to integrate with the existing Walmart, and should have high visibility from the freeway and main roads. Retail should promote community interaction and cater to the needs of existing and future users.
- Housing: Housing should support and provide options for young families, have a range of affordability levels, and be implemented in a range of densities. This would allow for a critical mass of residents, which is necessary to support and induce new development. Mid-density housing such as townhomes and multifamily housing is supported over single-family detached housing. Consideration should be given to mixed-use developments that interact with the street face, and urban design strategies that activate spaces.

## **CONCLUSION:**

At the December 5<sup>th</sup> study session, the Specific Plan team will provide the City Council with an overview of the progression of the concept alternatives, summarize all feedback received on the concept alternatives (including that of the Planning Commission), and solicit additional feedback from the City Council. In addition to feedback on the concept alternatives, the specific plan team will request input on the following:

- How quickly should change happen in the plan area?
- Which employment use types would be the least desirable in the plan area?
- What style of new retail development is most desirable for the plan area?
- Is there support for a reduction to the density minimums at the mall site to spur residential development and other types of development in the plan area?
- Is there support for an increase to the density maximums for the remaining properties in the plan area to spur residential development and other types of development in the plan area?

## **NEXT STEPS:**

The collective Advisory Committee, community/stakeholder, Planning Commission, and City Council feedback will be used by the Specific Plan team to start developing a preferred land use vision for the plan area. Once the preferred land use vision is

prepared, it will be brought back to the Planning Commission and City Council for confirmation. With the finalization of the preferred land use vision, the Specific Plan team will begin drafting the specific plan document and conduct the appropriate level of environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Adoption hearings for the specific plan are currently anticipated to occur by the end of next year; however, this target may change depending on when the preferred land use vision is confirmed.

**DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:**

- Attachment 1 – Map of Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan Area
- Attachment 2 – City-Developed Concept Alternatives
- Attachment 3 – Mall Landowner-Developed Concept Alternatives
- Attachment 4 – Advisory Committee Meeting #2 Summary
- Attachment 5 – Community Workshop #2 Summary



**Attachment 1**  
**Map of Hilltop Horizon Specific**  
**Plan Area**



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

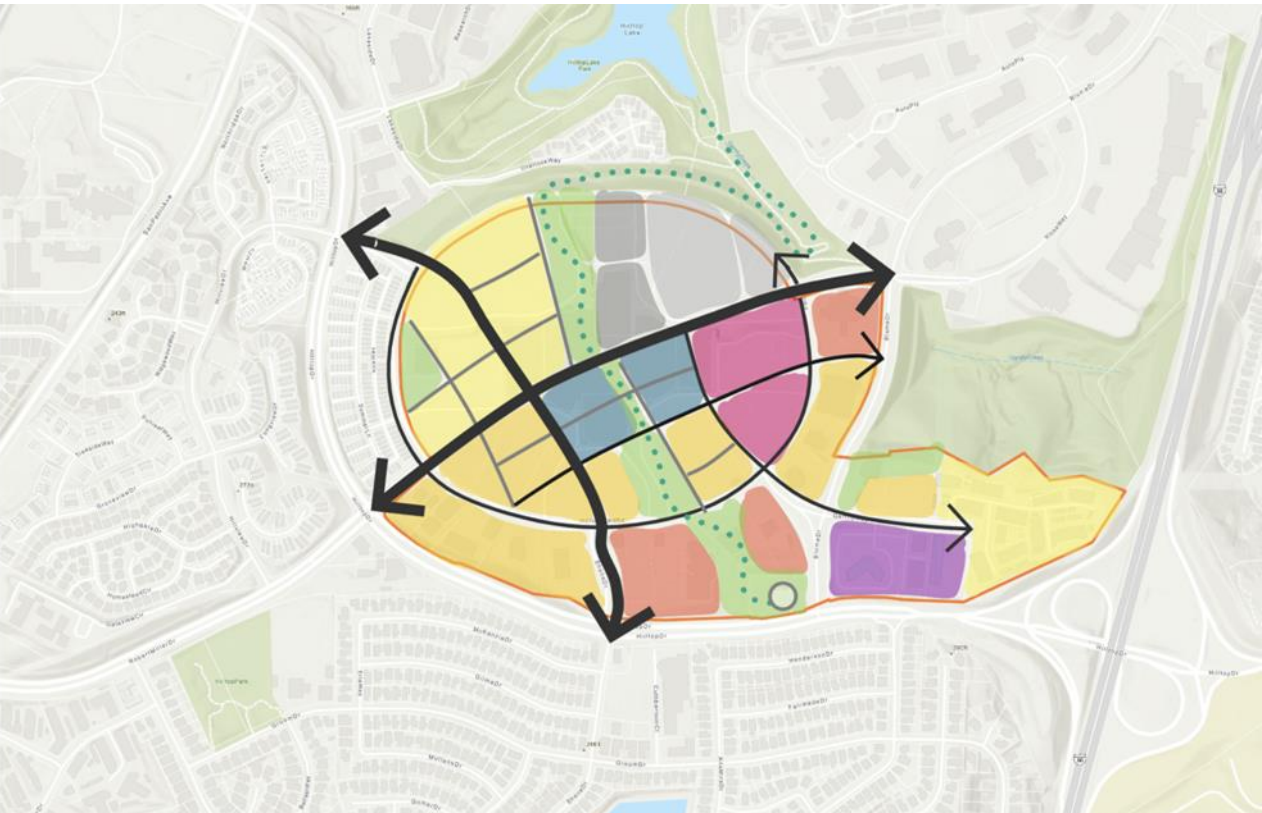
Hilltop Specific Plan

**Figure 2**  
**Plan Area Boundary**

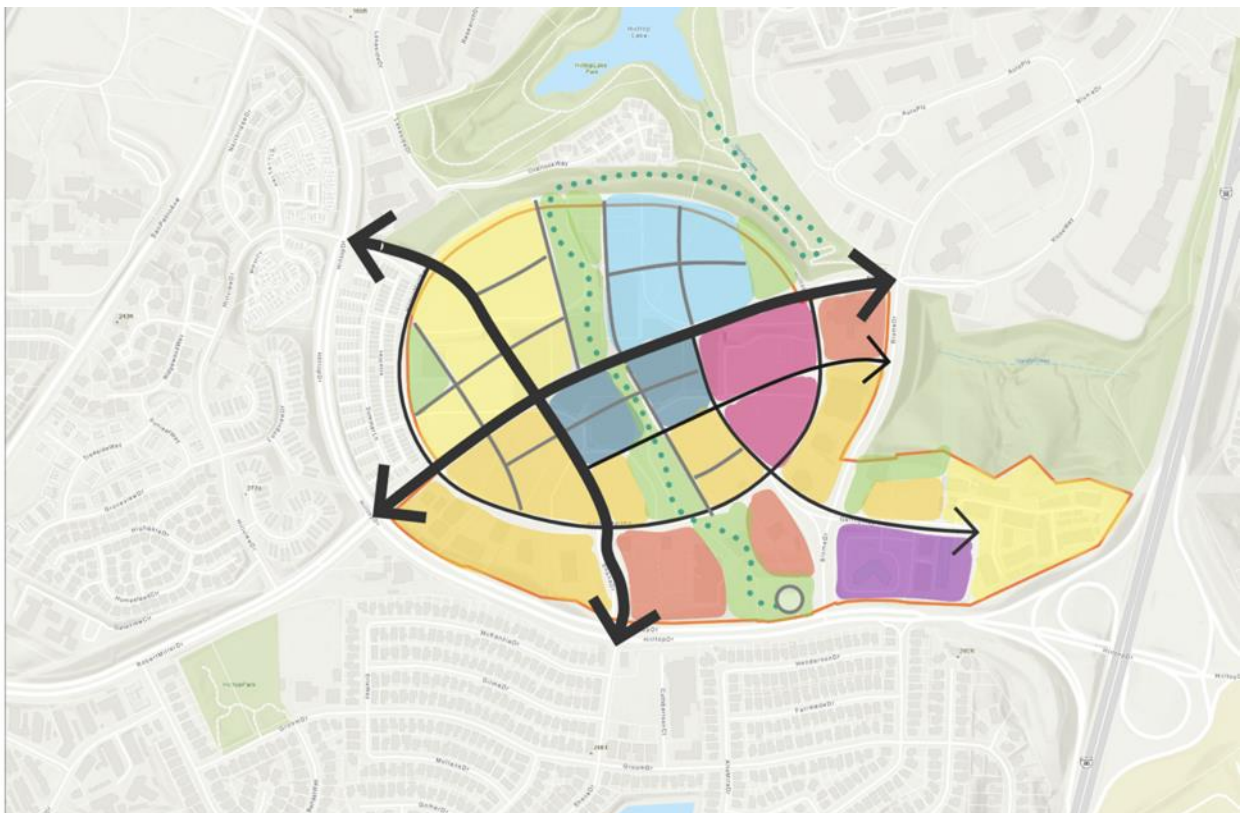


# Refined City-Developed Concept Alternatives

A



B

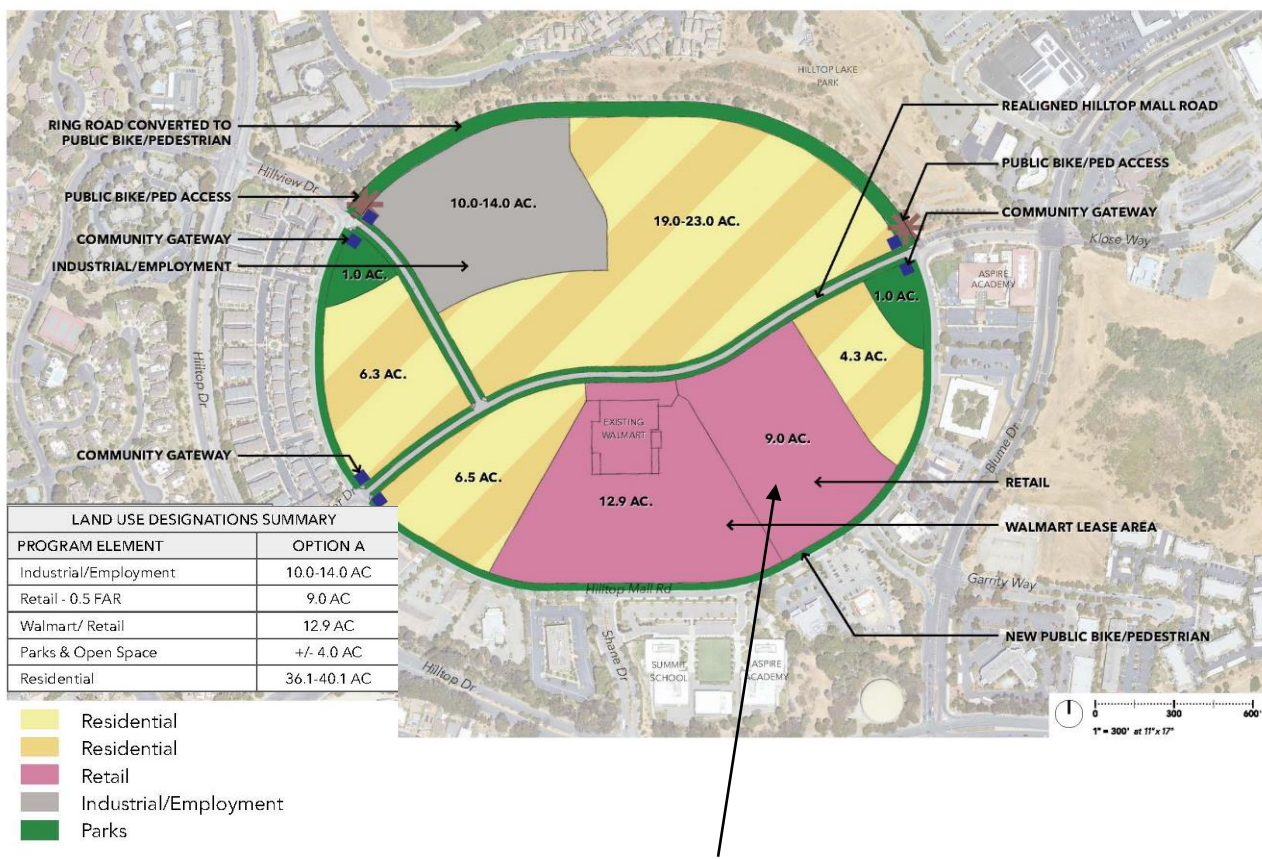


- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Residential             |  Hotel / Services            |
|  Mixed-Use Residential   |  Large-Format Retail Anchors |
|  Mixed-Use Office        |  Employment/Industrial       |
|  Schools / Entertainment |  Open Space                  |

# Refined Mall Landowner Concept Alternatives

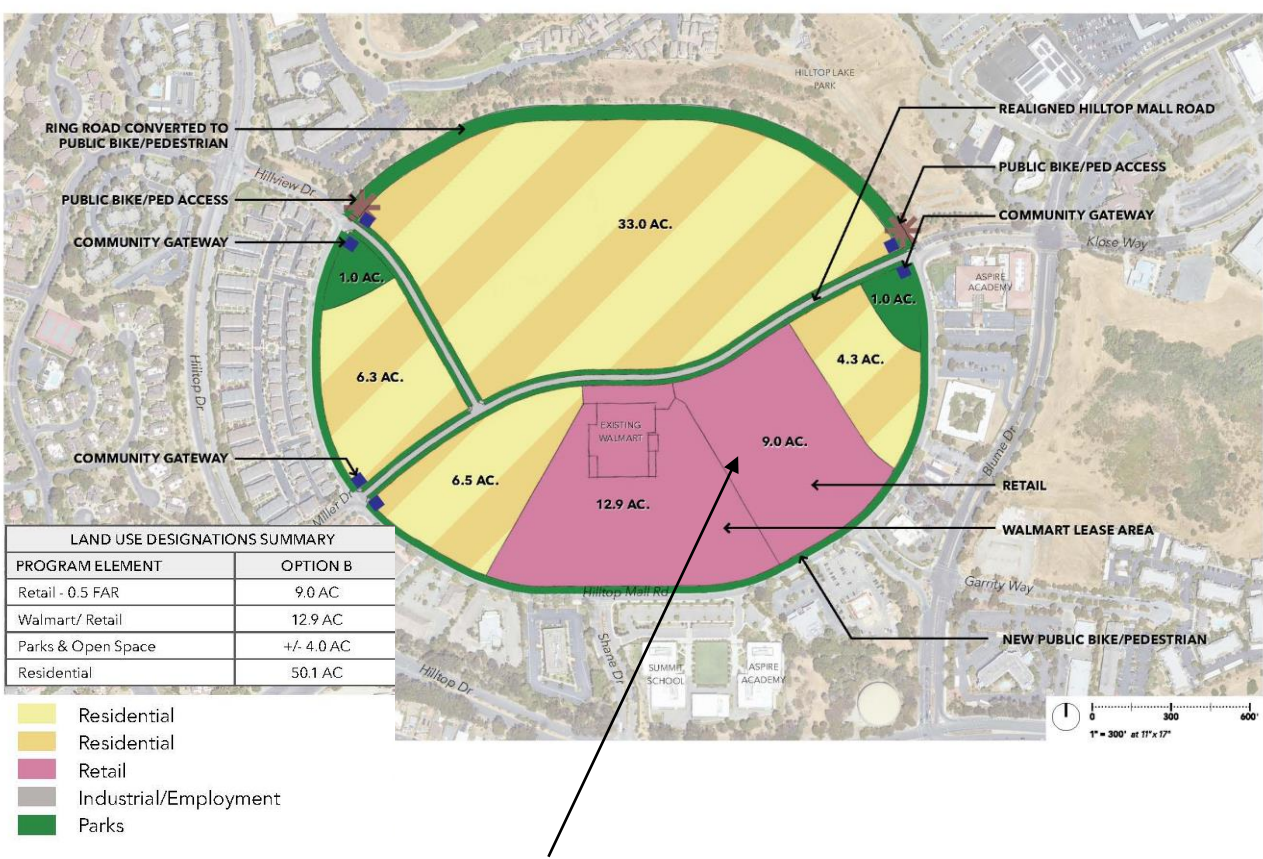
A

Source: Signature Development Group, Hart Howerton



B

Source: Signature Development Group, Hart Howerton



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





## **Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan – Advisory Committee Meeting #2**

**Facilitator:** Environmental Science Associates (City of Richmond consultants)

**Location:** Virtual Zoom Meeting

**Date:** Thursday, 10/26/23, 11:00 am – 12:15 pm

**Purpose of the Advisory Committee:** The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to act as a sounding board to provide guidance, feedback, and recommendations throughout the planning process.

**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.

### Advisory Committee (AC) Participants

Below is a summary of Advisory Committee members who participated in the meeting. Representatives from other or the same organizations, agencies, and City departments who were not able to participate are not shown.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Carissa Lee	AC Transit
Armondo Hodge	West County Wastewater
Doug Giffin	Campus LLC
Bhavin Khatri	Hilltop District Neighborhood Council
Lori Hart	Parchester Village Neighborhood Council
Coire Reilly	West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee
Arto Rinteela	Fairmede Hilltop Neighborhood Council / Richmond Neighborhood Coordinating Council / West County Wastewater
Leah Greenblat	West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee
Matt Kelly	Contra Costa Transportation Authority
May Vang	Aspire Richmond

Nannette Beacham	City of Richmond, Economic Development
Sean Morley	Signature Development Group
Kate Eppler	Richmond Public Library
Eric Zell	Prologis representative
Eric Munson	City of Richmond, Fire Department
Robert Armijo	City of Richmond, Public Works Department
Samidha Thakral	Prologis
Libby Tyler	City of San Pablo
Tom Quaglia	Signature Development Group
Kyle Lam	City of Richmond, City Manager's Office
Michael Ghielmetti	Signature Development Group
Ms. Wilson*	*Contact and affiliation to be confirmed
<b>Total AC Attendees:</b>	<b>22</b>

### Staff/Consultant Participants

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
<b>City of Richmond Staff</b>	
Hector Rojas	City of Richmond, Planning Department
<b>Consultants</b>	
Beverly Choi	Environmental Science Associates
Stephanie Cadena	Environmental Science Associates
Ethan Wynthacht	Environmental Science Associates
Dan Dameron	Environmental Science Associates
Steven Johnson	Environmental Science Associates
Stephanie Hagar	BAE Urban Economics
Woody Hanson	SITELAB
<b>Total Staff/Consultant Participants:</b>	<b>8</b>

## 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 meeting. 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.

<b>Poll #1a: Tell us who you are</b>	<b>Responses</b>
A. I live in Richmond	4
B. I work in Richmond	5
C. I own a business and/or commercial property in Richmond	1
D. My residence or business/commercial property is in the Hilltop area	2
E. I represent a public agency (city, county district, agency)	9
F. I represent a community group/organization	4
G. None of these apply	1
<b>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)?</b>	<b>Responses</b>
A. Yes	9
B. No	2
C. I don't know	3
<b>Poll #1c: How quickly do you want to see change in the Hilltop Horizon plan area?</b>	<b>Responses</b>
A. 0-5 years	7
B. 6-10 years	2

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C. 11-20 years

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D. 20+ years

-

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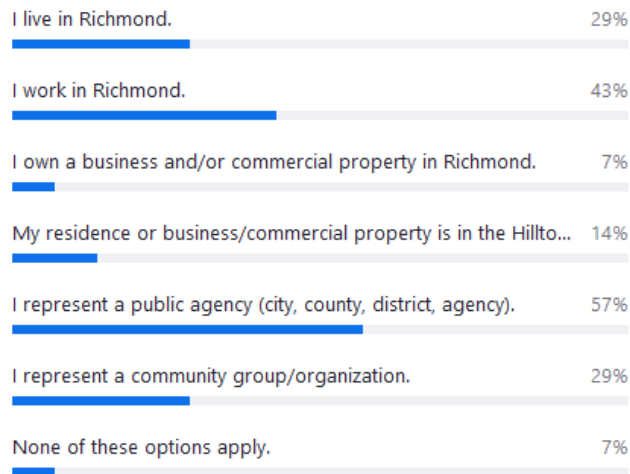
E. I do not want to see change in the Hilltop plan area.

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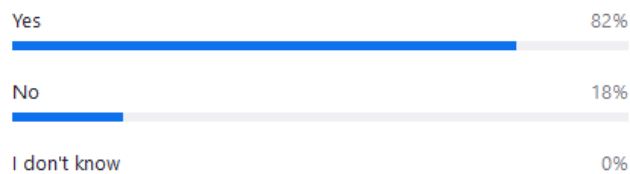
## Poll #1

1. Please tell us who you are. Select all that apply. (Multiple Choice)



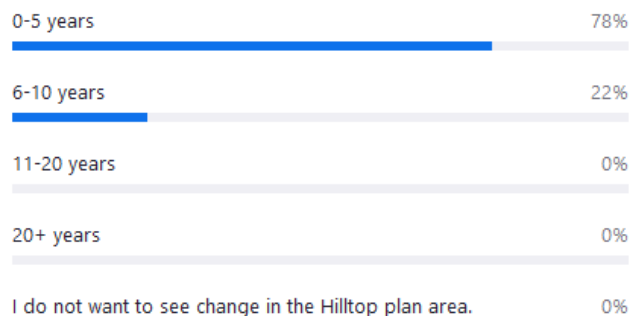
You did not answer this question

2. 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)? Please make one selection. (Single Choice)



You did not answer this question

3. How quickly do you want to see change in the Hilltop Horizon plan area? Please make one selection. (Single Choice)



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<b>Poll #2: Do you generally agree with these planning drivers as priority project goals?</b>	<b>Responses</b>
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A. Yes	10
B. No	0

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**Feedback Provided in the Chat Function:**

- Senior resources and housing.
  - I'd like to see more emphasis on using transit and alternative transportation modes getting to/from and around the site.
- 

## Poll #2

1. Do you generally agree with these planning drivers as priority project goals? Please make one selection.  
(Single Choice)




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<b>Poll #3: Which employment use would be the least desirable in the Hilltop plan area?</b>	<b>Responses</b>
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A. Mixed-use Office	3
B. Healthcare/Life Sciences	0
C. Research + Development	0
D. Advanced Manufacturing	1
E. Data Center	1
F. Warehousing and Storage/Distribution	10

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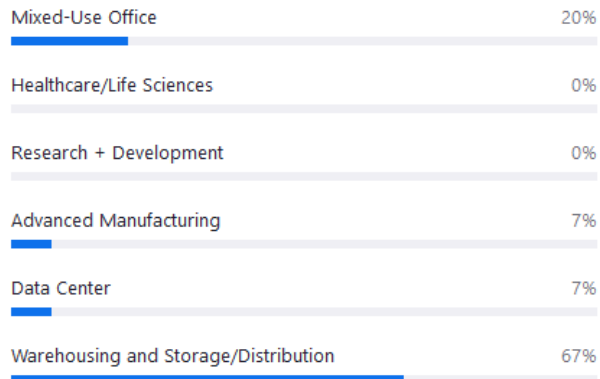
**Feedback Provided in the Chat Function:**

- This question has been asked many times, it's no secret that distribution isn't desired here.
-



### Poll#3: Employment

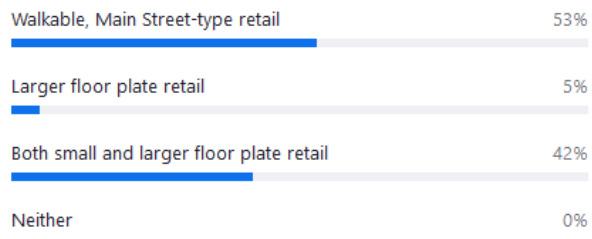
1. Which employment use would be the least desirable in the Hilltop plan area? Please make one selection. (Single Choice)



<b>Poll #4: What style of new retail development is most desirable for the Hilltop plan area?</b>	<b>Responses</b>
A. Walkable, Main Street-type retail	10
B. Larger floor plate retail	1
C. Both small and larger floor plate retail	8
D. Neither	0

### Poll #4: Retail

1. What style of new retail development is most desirable for the Hilltop plan area? Please make one selection. (Single Choice)



You did not answer this question

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<b>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?</b>	<b>Responses</b>
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A. Yes	10
B. No	5
C. I don't know	1

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<b>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?</b>	<b>Responses</b>
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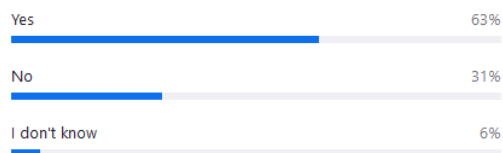
A. Yes	10
B. No	4
C. I don't know	1

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## Poll #5: Housing

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

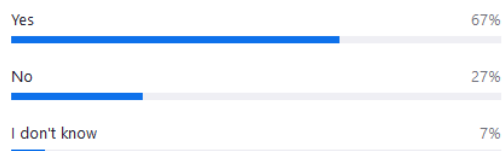
Would you support a reduction to these density standards at the mall site in the Hilltop plan area in order to spur residential development and other types of development in the plan area? Please make one selection. (Single Choice)



You did not answer this question

2. 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 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. (Single Choice)



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## Discussion

Feedback was solicited from the Advisory Committee on the following topics:

- Employment;
- Retail, and;
- Housing.

This section includes both verbal feedback as well as written feedback submitted in the Zoom Chat by Advisory Committee members. The feedback was collected first as written notes during the meeting. Each point below represents a perspective shared by members of the Committee. Following the feedback, a summary of the key takeaways is provided for each topic.

### **Employment**

- The community has been asked many times if we would like to see a distribution center on this site and the answer has been no.
- Warehousing and industrial are not a good use of the site.
- We should look at the highest and best uses for this site: housing and mixed use.
- Warehousing and storage/distribution are lower uses and would result in the underutilization of the site.
- It is a bit insulting to see that warehousing and storage/distribution is still being included as a potential land use. The community has repeatedly expressed that they are opposed to warehousing.
- If development of the site is contingent on the inclusion of a warehousing component, that should be made clear. That way the community can provide input that takes into account a potential balance between desired community uses and warehousing and logistics uses.
- New trips on the highways surrounding the area should come from housing, not a distribution center.
- The area needs to have more retail and parks so that people do not have to leave the community to access these amenities.
- This is an opportunity for West County to create a space that is great to live in.
- Consider uses that promote a "15-minute city" concept, focusing on the accessibility of amenities within a short distance.
- Current transit ridership trends show that many people in the Richmond Hilltop area are working from home. The feasibility of office use is questionable considering these trends.
- Recent ridership data shows people take mostly local trips. AC Transit is looking to create local trips for quality-of-life uses such grocery stores and healthcare services.
- A library branch would be a favorable use.
- Would like to have a library included.
- The area would benefit from a senior center with park and open space.
- We would love to see a Police Station or substation.

- Would rather have Richmond Police Department headquarters being here than a library.

#### Summary of Feedback Received:

Several participants expressed opposition to having warehousing, storage, logistics, and distribution uses in the plan area. There was strong support for enhancing quality of life and complementary uses that can activate and bring more amenities to the site.

#### Retail

- Large floor plate retail can be implemented in a creative way that makes the mall site a destination while also incorporating neighborhood retail uses.
- The concern with street-type retail is that it will be developed and not leased.
- Having a walkable and livable community is most important.
- This region lacks exciting retail environments. Emeryville is a good retail example.
- Mixing large floor plate retail and main street style retail can help support smaller retailers.
- There is community interest in having a Costco at the site.
- Using the site for big box stores would be an undesirable outcome, instead, it would be nice to have a destination that is worth walking to.
- The way that you support retail and small businesses is by providing housing near those uses.
- Would like to see a Lowe's included.

#### Summary of Feedback Received:

While some opposed having large floor plate retail in the plan area, there was general acceptance for accommodating a mix of large- and small-scale retail that could meet daily needs and create an active destination for all users - a destination with multi-modal access and supported by a critical mass of new potential residents in the plan area.

#### **Housing Density:** Parcels Designated as Commercial Mixed-Use, Activity Center (CM-5)

- The mall area should be as dense as possible. Would not like to see the development of new single-family homes.
- Do not want to see high rise residential buildings but do want a mix of housing.
- Would like to see the density reduced quite a bit.
- Do not want a lot of high density housing as that may jeopardize the quality of life in the community.
- Want to see a good quality of life for people who live here, with senior centers, grocers, and healthcare.
- If shopping and retail are included, residential could be placed on top of those uses.

- Support having higher density around dedicated transportation facilities, such as the new transit center being proposed near Hilltop.
- It will take years to get this area fully built out. Such a large redevelopment site should consider a BART extension.
- BART extension studies show this scenario is not a possibility.
- 22 dwelling units per acre looks good.

**Summary of Feedback Received:**

While perspectives related to reduced densities in the CM-5 zone (or generally the mall site) varied among participants, there was general support for a development that would include a mix of housing at various densities. Nearly two-thirds of the Committee members would be open to reducing the density requirement at the mall site.

**Housing Density: Parcels Designated as Regional Commercial (CR)**

- Would like to maintain the quality of life for existing residents. If we do put in amenities, they should be supportive of quality of life such as: healthcare, grocery stores, senior centers and retail. Including these amenities will help maintain quality of life for existing residents while making the area a good place to live for new residents.
- AC transit has a long history of serving the site and would like to continue serving the site.
- It is important to ensure that there is access to public transportation when increasing density in an area.
- Denser housing should be located near transit centers.
- While a new BART station would be desirable, an extension to the Hilltop plan area is likely not realistic.
- With any large increase in population there should be an increase to police, fire, and public transportation.
- Each of the various density levels presented look doable, just need to mix it up.
- Richmond will not support a BART extension from El Cerrito Del Norte, only the Richmond Station.

**Summary of Feedback Received:**

Committee members expressed their support for higher density development on parcels designated as Regional Commercial, provided that community amenities to maintain the quality of life for current and future residents and users are included, along with access to public transportation.



## **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

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
<b>City of Richmond Staff</b>	
Hector Rojas	Planning Department
Lina Velasco	Planning Department
Kristi Ellerbroek	Planning Department
Rae Alberts	Planning Department
Maria Leticia Oregon	Interpreter
<b>Consultants</b>	
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	SITELAB
Arthur Perez-Marseres	SITELAB
<b>Total Staff/Consultant Participants:</b>	13

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## 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.

<b>Poll #1a: Tell us who you are</b>	<b>Responses</b>
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
<b>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)?</b>	<b>Responses</b>

A. Yes	4
B. No	5
C. I don't know	1
<b>Poll #1c: How quickly do you want to see change in the Hilltop Horizon plan area?</b>	
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%

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**Poll #2: Do you generally agree with these planning drivers as priority project goals? Responses**

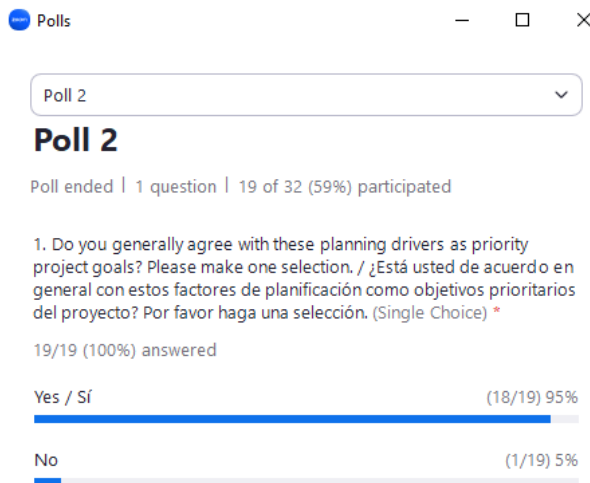

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A. Yes	18
B. No	1

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**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!
- 




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**Poll #3: Which employment use would be the least desirable in the Hilltop plan area? Responses**


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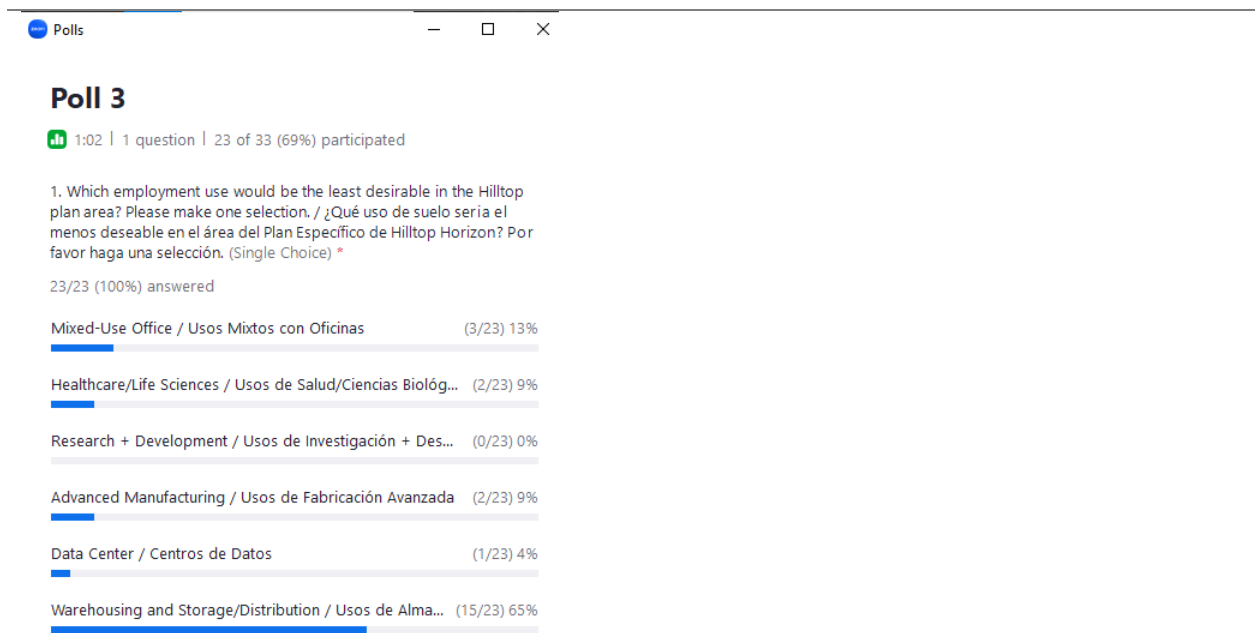
A. Mixed-use Office	3
B. Healthcare/Life Sciences	2
C. Research + Development	0

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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



<b>Poll #4: What style of new retail development is most desirable for the Hilltop plan area?</b>		<b>Responses</b>
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 Específico de Hilltop Horizon? Por favor haga una selección. (Single

21/21 (100%) answered

Walkable, Main Street-type retail / Desarrollo Comercial... (9/21) 43%

Larger floor plate retail / Desarrollo Comercial Orientad... (0/21) 0%

Both small and larger floor plate retail / Desarrollo Co... (12/21) 57%

Neither / Ninguno (0/21) 0%

### 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?

	Responses
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?

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

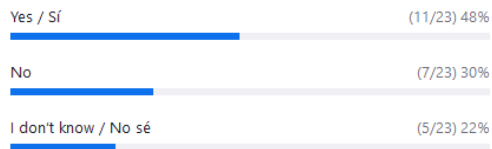
**Polls**

## 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



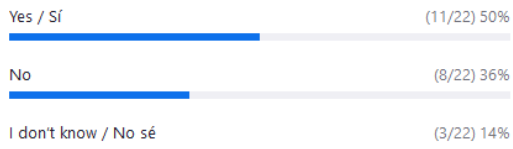
**Polls**

## 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



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## 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.*