



Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan – Advisory Committee Meeting #3

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

Location: Zoom Webinar

Date: Wednesday, 04/30/25, 10:30 am – 11:45 am

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 a status update on the Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan.
2. Gain feedback on the Land Plan Concept.

Advisory Committee (AC) Attendees

Name	Organization
Aaron Winer	West County Wastewater District
Andres J	Community member
Armondo Hodge	West County Wastewater
Arto Rinteela	Fairmede Hilltop Neighborhood Council / Richmond Neighborhood Coordinating Council/ West County Wastewater District
Bhavin Khatri	Hilltop District Neighborhood Council
Carissa Lee	AC Transit
Coire Reilly	West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee
David Alvarado	West County Wastewater District
Doug Griffin	Campus LLC
Eric Munson	Richmond Fire Department
Eric Zell	Zell & Associates (Prologis consultant)
Erica Ramirez	Aspire Schools
Finn Wurtz	Western Contra Costa Transit Authority
Hannah Diaz	Bay Area Metro
Janet Galvez	Prologis
Jay Gauthier	Community member

K. Cyrus Sanandaji	Presidio Bay (Prologis consultant)
Leah Greenblat	West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee
Liz Helmer	Presidio Bay (Prologis consultant)
Mala Mahlebashian	Community member/realtor
Mathew Berglund	Presidio Bay (Prologis consultant)
Nicolas Romano	Campus LLC
Raully Butler	Council of Business and Industry, West Contra Costa County
Reagan Lauder	Gehl (Prologis consultant)
Sierra Lopez	Bay Area News Group
Soren Hemmila	Grandview Independent
Sunil Plaha	Prologis
Timothy Simmons	Richmond Police Department
Total AC Attendees:	28

Staff/Consultant Participants

Name	Organization
City of Richmond Staff	
Avery Stark	Planning Manager
Jesson De Leon	Economic Development – Senior Business Officer
Junne Garcia	Transportation Services – Associate Administrative Analyst
Michele Morris	Senior Planner
Robert Armijo	Deputy Director of Public Works - City Engineer
Consultants	
Beverly Choi	Environmental Science Associates
Daniel Dameron	Environmental Science Associates
Ethan Wynacht	Environmental Science Associates
Ash Singhal	SITELAB Urban Studio
Woody Hanson	SITELAB Urban Studio
Total Staff/Consultant Participants:	10

Agenda

1. Vision and Planning Drivers
2. Land Plan Concept
3. Next Steps

Summary of Feedback

The following provides a high-level synthesis of key themes that emerged during Advisory Committee Meeting #3, held on April 30, 2025. While detailed input was collected in response to three specific focus questions, several consistent themes emerged across all areas of discussion, reflecting shared priorities as well as differing perspectives on the future of Hilltop.

- 1. Support for Balanced Uses**
Members emphasized the need for a well-rounded land use mix, including retail, open space, and community amenities, while expressing varying views on density. Members supported medium-density housing (20–40 dwelling units per acre) as more context-sensitive, while others recognized the need for higher-density housing in appropriate areas to support transit, housing affordability, and General Plan goals.
- 2. Infrastructure and Public Safety**
There was strong consensus that growth must be supported by adequate infrastructure and services, including water, sewer, roads, fire, and police. Members specifically called for a local police substation or similar public safety presence in Hilltop.
- 3. Transportation Integration**
Members emphasized the importance of the transit hub and multimodal connectivity, highlighting the need for the land plan to support transit use and address traffic impacts.
- 4. Align Vision with Feasibility**
Members encouraged a bold but realistic approach, balancing community priorities with what is economically viable and implementable over time.

Focus Question Inputs

This section presents detailed feedback from Advisory Committee members in response to the three focus questions posed during the April 30, 2025 meeting. Comments were shared verbally, through the Zoom webinar chat, and via post-meeting correspondence. The feedback below is organized by focus question.

Focus Question #1: Project Vision.

**Do the draft mission and vision statements clearly describe what we want Hilltop to become?
What changes would make it stronger or more aligned with the community's long-term goals?**

Community Vision and Land Use

- Clarify and communicate the City's current position on land use vision, particularly addressing community concerns about recent shifts in the proposed density and reduction of open space.
- Reaffirm and reflect the community's longstanding vision input, ensuring alignment between past public feedback and the evolving plan.
- Expressed agreement with the vision and mission statement.

Connectivity and Traffic Considerations

- Ensure the vision statement integrates holistic connectivity goals, addressing not only vehicles but also pedestrian, transit, and multimodal linkages.
- Revise the mission statement to explicitly include transportation as a core element, reflecting the importance of multimodal connectivity given the site's regional context and scale.
- Address potential traffic impacts and transportation stress points, especially along Hilltop Drive and adjacent areas already affected by trucking and logistics operations; include strategies acknowledging that not all residents will walk or use transit.
- Highlight the importance of the planned transit hub, recognizing the site's role as a key connection point between AC Transit and West Contra Costa Transportation services.

Focus Question #2: Planning Drivers.

**Do these core planning principles clearly support the vision for Hilltop?
Are there any principles that should be added, removed, or refined to better guide future development?**

Land Use and Planning Drivers

- Clarify the meaning of "flexible land uses" within the planning drivers, providing specific examples and boundaries, to ensure alignment with the General Plan's designation of the site as a major activity center.
- Revise planning drivers to prioritize low- and medium-density housing, reflecting community opposition to high-density residential and emphasizing the need for more open space, retail, and commercial uses.
 - o Expressed concurrence with the revised planning drivers prioritizing low- and medium-density housing.
- Adjust the planning drivers and development targets to reflect both the community's preference for low- and medium-density housing and the economic realities faced by the property owner, ensuring the plan results in a feasible proposal that can realistically move forward rather than remain an unbuilt, static approval.
- Ensure that the plan incorporates a blend of lower-density housing, open space, and retail.

Public Safety Services

- Assess how future police staffing and deployment should be planned to support community safety needs in the growing Hilltop area, including evaluating community support for establishing a police substation at Hilltop.
 - o Consider a police kiosk or small station at Hilltop.
 - o Incorporate a police station into the public safety planning framework, reflecting longstanding community advocacy for added local law enforcement presence.
- Acknowledge that Station 68 currently serves the Hilltop area but that any substantial growth will require evaluating additional fire staffing and resources. Ensure the plan addresses the specific level of fire service and staffing needed to adequately support the Hilltop area as development increases.

Infrastructure and Capacity Planning

- Evaluate infrastructure capacity (water, sewer, roads, public services) to determine if the project can support the proposed population density, and incorporate those findings into the planning framework.

Focus Question #3 Land Use and Development Intensity.

Does the mix of housing and building types feel right for Hilltop? Does the plan also include enough places for people to gather, relax, and connect?

Land Use and Density

- Refocus the plan to prioritize a balanced mix of uses — retail, open space, commercial, jobs, entertainment — within acceptable density ranges (20–40 dwelling units per acre), responding to previously voiced community concerns. If high-density housing is included, incorporate it in the portion of the plan area that is outside of the mall site.
- Refocus the land use plan to remove unrealistic elements, limit densities to below 30 dwelling units per acre.
- Revise proposed densities to better align with earlier community discussions and quality-of-life expectations, addressing concerns that current proposals show disregard for prior feedback.
- Shift focus away from predominantly high-density residential and ensure the plan includes more medium-density housing and expanded greenspace, providing clarity on unit counts and population impacts.

Higher Density

- Include higher-density development to support transit use, reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, and help meet state housing requirements. Distribute green space, commercial uses, and community amenities such as medical offices evenly throughout the plan area.
- Ensure the plan includes sufficient density to make affordable housing projects financially viable, drawing lessons from past development experience, and recognize that traffic capacity existed when the mall was active.

- Ensure the plan meets the needs of community members who are affected by the housing shortage. Treat draft land plan concept opposition cautiously, recognizing the site's potential as a major transit-oriented development opportunity.
- Maintain a bold, visionary plan that supports the General Plan's vision for high density/intensity while addressing community concerns, recognizing this site as a rare, once-in-a-generation redevelopment opportunity. Quantify any loss in development capacity relative to the General Plan buildout to support transparent tradeoffs.
- Ensure that input from broad sectors of the community is heard and incorporated. Allow for thoughtful incorporation of higher-density housing where appropriate, recognizing that eliminating higher-density housing entirely could undermine transit service quality and other community benefits.

Urban Design and Compatibility

- Adjust land use patterns near the two new school sites to avoid sharp height transitions (e.g., single- to two-story schools next to 135-foot buildings) and redesign geometric block layouts to allow for more efficient and reasonable zoning.

Community Amenities and Infrastructure

- Ensure the plan supports necessary public amenities (police, library, parks, infrastructure) through economically feasible development.
- Increase spaces like schools, libraries, and workplaces to strengthen community life.
- Incorporate details related to the transit hub in future engagement, project analysis, and the final plan.