



Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan: Land Plan Concept

City Council Study Session #2

Date: Tuesday, 09/16/25, 6:30 pm

City Council Input

At the September 16, 2025 City Council Hilltop Horizon: Land Plan Concept study session, City Council was asked to provide feedback on three focus questions:

1. Do you support stepping down residential density at the west and east plan area edges to create a mid-density residential buffer adjacent to existing homes?
2. Do you support establishing a compact, urban Gateway District near Klose Way and Garrity Way—with strong I-80 access—that allows a mix of higher-density housing and active, people-oriented uses such as shops, dining, and gathering spaces?
3. Do you support creating transitional districts between the mid-density residential areas and the Gateway District that allow a flexible mix of housing, retail, offices, medical uses, and other economic drivers?

General input was received from Council, which has been organized by the following main themes.

1. Land Ownership and Development

- Clarify the number and identity of property owners in the plan area and outline the process for coordinating future development across multiple owners.
- Define the role of Prologis as landowner versus developer, including how the City will coordinate with Prologis during implementation.
- Ensure the plan is market-responsive to support near-term development, while also reserving opportunities for long-term community needs that may not be supported by the market today.
- Attract more businesses, including opportunities for small businesses, while also meeting the needs of the community.
- Seek alignment among key stakeholders and the community to keep the plan moving forward.

2. Affordable Housing and Housing Mix

- Maximize affordable housing options and identify which zoning or land use approaches deliver the highest percentage of affordable units.
- Set clear affordability and anti-displacement measures in the Specific Plan.
- Quantify the total number of new residents anticipated and evaluate impacts on the City's housing supply and services.
- Provide a mix of housing types to support small businesses and the broader community.
- Ensure housing includes a diversity of bedroom counts and a balance of rental and ownership opportunities.
- Recognize the housing crisis and the need for Hilltop to support high-density residential, since this cannot be resolved with just townhomes.

3. Infrastructure, Utilities, and Services

- Evaluate impacts on infrastructure, utilities, and public services, including water, sewer, roads, fire, healthcare, and police, and specify where additional facilities or upgrades will be needed.
 - Explore opportunities for a hospital and grocery store within the plan area to meet community needs.
 - Integrate safety and evacuation planning.
 - Traffic generated by the proposed densities cannot be sustained with existing infrastructure, highlighting the need to phase infrastructure improvements and plan for better site access.
 - Focus on public safety as a central component of infrastructure and service planning.
- 4. Mobility and Connectivity**
- Establish strong bike and pedestrian connections between El Sobrante and the Hilltop plan area, ensuring safe and continuous routes.
 - Enhance transit links to BART, Contra Costa College, and Hilltop Lake Park through partnerships with WestCAT and AC Transit.
 - Consider a trail connection across I-80 to improve access to and from the site.
 - Address limited site access by planning for improvements to car, transit, and bike circulation given the limited points of ingress and egress today.
- 5. Plan Adoption and Implementation**
- Adopt an implementation strategy that aligns with General Plan and RHNA requirements and clarifies phasing of housing and infrastructure.
 - Plan for population growth over the long term with benchmarks for near-, mid-, and long-range planning horizons.
 - Emphasize that Hilltop should be a forward-looking plan that considers the future needs of Richmond.
- 6. Additional Comments**
- Prevent delays by engaging key stakeholders and community members early and consistently throughout plan development.
 - Position the plan area as a regional destination for living, shopping, and visiting.
 - Look at the plan holistically and with a future focus. Dream big, do not let old ideas hold the City back, and mold a vision that is good for everyone.

Summary of Community Feedback

The following summarizes key themes shared by the community on September 16, 2025. The feedback was provided via live speakers, call-ins, and written comments.

- 1. Development Impacts and Outreach**
 - Evaluate the impacts of development on traffic, police, fire, schools, and wastewater systems, and specify if these findings will be addressed in the Specific Plan.
 - Continue local outreach and build on it to ensure inclusive engagement.
 - Expand outreach efforts beyond immediate neighborhoods to reach the broader West County community and regional stakeholders.
- 2. Affordable Housing/Housing**

- Prioritize affordable housing options in the plan area, ensuring high-quality, safe, and accessible homes across income levels.
 - Address the needs of students, people experiencing homelessness, and low-income households.
 - Incorporate measures that prevent gentrification and displacement, such as anti-displacement policies and tenant protections.
 - Note that the General Plan does not assume a minimum density, whereas the City Zoning Code does, which may influence how affordable housing requirements are applied.
 - Recognize that providing a mix of housing types, along with achieving a critical mass of housing, is essential not only for residents but also to support the success and feasibility of nearby businesses, services, and amenities.
3. **Retail, Amenities, and Services**
- Rebrand Hilltop to clearly communicate its future vision and attract desired businesses and investment.
 - Reference successful downtown models such as San Jose, Berkeley, and Oakland to inform how retail and amenities can be curated.
 - Incorporate a grocery store to address the existing food desert.
 - Provide essential services including a police substation, library, AC Transit stop, and space for local organizations and nonprofits.
 - Identify and plan for amenities that support residents, ensuring housing is connected to shopping, recreation, and groceries.
4. **Feasibility and Constraints**
- Review the plan in the context of Measure U compliance and wastewater system limitations.
 - Account for long-term lease agreements, such as Walmart's, when planning for phasing and redevelopment scenarios.
 - Recognize that market cycles indicate Richmond has not historically supported high-density development, and consider feasibility when setting density assumptions.
 - Allow additional time for Prologis to submit an application to the City by November 2025.
5. **Community Vision**
- Support staff's vision for the project as a transformative, once-in-a-lifetime property that gives Richmond the chance to dream big about what Hilltop can become.
 - Position Hilltop as a destination that benefits the Richmond community, reducing the need for residents to leave the city for shopping and recreation.