



RICHMOND
SHAPING THE NEW 100 YEARS

Richmond General Plan Update
LEADERSHIP TEAM INTERVIEWS: SUMMARY REPORT

Overview and Purpose

In order to gain a deeper understanding of important background information for the Richmond General Plan Update, consultants MIG and Davis & Associates conducted a series of one-on-one and small group interviews with the Richmond “leadership team.” Interviewees included the City Council, Planning Commissioners, the City Manager, the Police Chief, and other officials. For a complete list of interviewees please see Attachment A.

These one-hour interviews were conducted during March 2006. This document summarizes information from the interviews without attribution. This background information will be used, in combination with other input gathered through focus groups, community workshops and other background research, to inform the General Plan outreach program about issues and opportunities facing Richmond in coming decades.

Interviewees were asked a series of open-ended questions, including their vision of how Richmond might be different in the future, key community assets and opportunities, and potential impediments to change. For a complete list of questions please see Attachment B.

Response Summary

The following is a summary of the Leadership team's comments and responses during the interview sessions.

Question 1. Vision For Richmond in 30 Years

Land Use

- Many will see the city as being "transformed" in every aspect from shoreline to downtown. (2)*
- Richmond will primarily be a Port city and will have more influence in the Bay Area, economically and politically.
- There will be more residential developments on the shoreline. There will be ferry service at the end of Harbor Way.
- The city will be thought of as a good place to raise a family. There will be more retail, community, and development. The city will contain everything a town of 125,000 should have.
- Vacant land around waterfront will be better utilized for the benefit of the whole community, not just for industry or any single land use type. Standard Oil site is an example of an underutilized site that should be used for new waterfront development.
- Richmond will become less fragmented and more inclusive.
- Richmond will be a better-integrated city and more integrated within the region.

Economic Development

- There will be more jobs.
- There should be destination points and attractions such as museums.

Shopping/Restaurants

- More restaurants and cafes that encourage a pedestrian environment, especially along the waterfront.
- Self sufficient, good shopping, family oriented, business friendly, a destination with a good downtown.
- The city will have functional neighborhoods like Clement Street/Fillmore of old. Neighborhoods are blended with commercial and residential.

* Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of interviewees who made the comment

Zoning

- A recognizable place that is not sprawling and is within defined boundaries.

People/Youth

- The city will retain its diversity. There will be room for everyone.
- Population will grow from a good size small town to big town.
- Need outdoor activities and after school services for kids.
- More opportunities for youth.

Open Space

- There will be better schools with parks that are nearby and safe.
- A modern Richmond that is environmentally friendly that can coexist with open space.
- The Bay Trail will be uninterrupted.

Transportation/Infrastructure

- Richmond will have a thriving railroad, port and ferries.
- There will be more investment in infrastructure and on-going maintenance of streets and public facilities.

Question 2. Issues and Concerns

Leadership

- Police force, City Manager, City Council, Planning Commission need to show more leadership. There have been too many interim/temporary people holding positions of leadership. This has had a negative impact on Richmond and has slowed down progression.
- Dormant city council; inactive city leaders – Richmond needs strong motivated leadership. Leaders need to work with people and be visible in the community at community events and workshops.
- Politicians aren't accountable. People will say "why bother?" because plans and ordinances have too many allowances and variances.
- There is not a lot of innovative thinking going on within the City. Donna Powers was an innovative thinker.
- Leaders should work for positive change instead of maintaining the status quo.
- Port's slowness of growth over decades is related to structure of decision-making.
- Leaders are not good at developing clean-cut policies.

Neighborhoods

- In Easter Hill there is continued pressure from housing in slide areas. Council has overruled decisions for Planning Commission.
- There is segregation and many inequalities, between those who live in the hills and those who do not.
- North & East neighborhood will not want growth.

Education

- Schools need improvement in areas including curriculum, physical building, etc. have been affected by the economic segregation throughout the City; need better, more seasoned teachers.

Land Use/Development

Port/Shoreline

- Residential development will put pressure on port operations.
- Port is an under-appreciated asset.
- No focused plan for how the port will develop its business in coming decades. Port has been underutilized for decades.
- The Port needs to determine what is the niche of the Port.
- Waterfront is a battle between city and business.
- Port is afraid City Council will side with residents and limit port operations and/or port expansion.
- Waterfront should not just be given away to ready developers. The City should be careful and thoughtful about what goes there.
- Concessions and exceptions in land use decisions are the norm because much does not conform to existing regulations.
- Most of shoreline is privately owned. Therefore the Port and the City must work with or around shoreline property owners.
- Shoreline has no affordable housing.
- Port of Richmond is department and is not autonomous. City Council has authority over port operations. BCDC Seaport plan supersedes city council. Port is looking at update of business plan.

Toll Brothers Projects

- Toll Brothers is currently developing a number of projects in Richmond. The development projects are a source of contention to some neighborhoods. Pt. Richmond in particular has issue with Toll Brothers-style housing coming to their neighborhood. However, Marina Bay is supportive of Toll Brothers and ferry service projects
- The three Toll Brothers projects include:
 - The project next to City Hall is (under appeal);
 - Housing project at Terminal 1;
 - Sea Cliff estates/Bottoms

Campus Bay

- The Campus Bay area is contentious. Richmond Annex residents have expressed concerns. They say that development at Campus Bay will block their views.
- There is a great deal of DTSC clean up in the Campus Bay area. The work is serious but curable.

Richmond Parkway

- The County and City boundary lines are very obscure along Richmond Parkway. Much of the new development like the KB Homes is located in the County.

Point Molate

- There is an existing proposal for a casino at Point Molate. There has been a great deal of contention surrounding the possible casino.

Tiscornia Estates

- Tiscornia Estates Specific Plan was adopted in 1986. The large landowner, Goss would not sign off on amendment. Staff is under the impression that amendment went through. Tiscornia was never subdivided.

Hilltop Area

- Sign ordinance needs to be redone (wouldn't know Costco was there) Hilltop Barnes & Noble, Petco not seen if it wasn't for movie theatre. The automall is invisible from freeway and Richmond Parkway.
- Wal-Mart not a great fit for the Hilltop.
- There is too much turnover at Hilltop.
- A specific plan is needed for Hilltop before continuing with development.

Barrett & Ripley

- Second Street side- housing on ground next to abandoned steel factory. Residential zoning doesn't extend to existing housing there. Need a policy decision whether to move to residential or keep as industrial.

Cutting

- The street is very wide for what is needed. There could have been much better use of that space.

Developers

- Many developers make promises but then do something else.
- So many developers knocking on door but the General Plan is outdated.
- In-lieu fee for affordable housing is too low and allows too many people to pay instead of complying. (2)
- People are fearful of doing business in Richmond, because it is perceived as being risky.
- Richmond is perceived as negative by outsiders because of the city council's indecisiveness, crime, drugs and other obstacles. Developers want to know that they can come in, build and leave (Build and leave? What does that mean?)
- For residential and port operations to coexist there needs to be buffer zones and transitional zones. But there are many different ideas of what a buffer should be.

Infrastructure

- There is flooding in many areas that needs to be addressed.
- Many of the hazardous materials need to be removed.
- There are insufficient roadways and infrastructure.
- Noise has been an issue.
- What is the seismic integrity of fill areas?

Public Safety

- There is a great deal of crime and drugs.
- People do not go out and use public facilities/amenities because they feel unsafe at many locations (day and night). There are too many physical indicators such as neglect, lack of maintenance and loitering) Cutting Blvd is crime-ridden.
- There are too many liquor stores. Liquor store too close to schools creating an unsafe environment for students and residents.

Transportation

- Trains are a concern. There are underpass/overpass discussions and trains are very long. It can take up to 45 minutes for a 100-car train to pass. Three routes could work for overpass/underpass. The best solution is underpass at Marina Bay Parkway
- The City has been sitting on the Water Transit Authority study for ferry service for over a year. City must make a call on the WTA study and whether to move forward with efforts to get ferry service in Richmond.

Question 3. Assets and Opportunities

Land Use/Development

Port/Shoreline

- Intensify shoreline! By developing the shoreline, it will give the city money to redevelop more downtown and the Iron Triangle. The shoreline is the key to bring in more money to strengthen the hardship areas (2)
- With Wal-Mart in the Hilltop area, there is opportunity for small shops to come Downtown near BART transit village.
- With the development of the Port areas will come jobs. Port hires own labor ancillary jobs – longshoremen, truck drivers.
- Port has opportunity to grow in the bulk/noncontainerized market (which includes products like building materials, rocks/sand, and cars).
- Waterfront should have a balance of land uses – industrial/housing/resort/recreation- arranged in a compatible manner.
- There is opportunity for the longshoremen industry to grow and could bring in lots of money into Richmond. (2)
- Richmond is positioned as a gateway to water.
- Shoreline can be something like Sausalito and San Francisco's shoreline.

MacDonald/80

- A new Target retail store will be opening around Fall 2007.
- The MacDonald Ave Revitalization plan has been warmly embraced.

Hilltop

- A Wal-Mart store is planned to open where the original Macy's used to be. The Wal-Mart will not carry grocery items. This makes it feasible for a grocery store to move into the Hilltop Mall area. Wal-Mart is expected to open by November 2006.

Neighborhoods/Housing

- Open and vacant land provides an opportunity for upscale residential such as Carriage Hill.
- Potential to become like Emeryville with nice shopping, safe residential neighborhoods and a rejuvenating downtown.
- The revitalization of the Easter Hill area looks very good. Point Richmond, upscale housing along waterfront is good, it helps anchor the waterfront.
- Upscale housing will attract people and businesses and better paying jobs.

- Multinational population is Richmond’s biggest asset. Richmond has a nice mix of different people and cultures.
- There are lots of churches, senior centers, community organizations (especially Easter Hill Church which is one of the most important community/activity centers).

Infrastructure

- Developers should contribute to shuttles to BART.

Leadership

- There are great opportunities with the new leadership that is in place. Many are optimistic that under the new leadership, the City will move in the right direction.
- People are excited about new police chief, planning director. (3)
- New and permanent city leaders. City commissions work well.

Business

- Great opportunities with food industry because of distribution lines. There is access to rail and freeways. (2)
- Marin is a great place to “poach” businesses from because Richmond can offer equal or better regional access and a similar feel at a lower cost.
- There are strong workforces in Richmond, which should attract many new employers.

Question 4. What Should be Included in the General Plan/Process

Outreach Process

- There needs to be interpreters for Spanish-speaking community.
- Keep seniors in mind.
- Places should be safe and accessible for all.
- Keep small business in mind and reach out to merchants. They are not well represented on Chamber of Commerce. Small businesses need access to capital/ façade/ tenant improvement --educate them as to what's possible. There is currently no merchants association except for Pt. Richmond.
- Vision of city needs to be clearly communicated to residents instead of popping up project by project.
- Work more effectively with neighbors.
- You can't talk enough with the community and be clear and concise with messages.
- Notices should be in English and Spanish. St. Mark's church is a good resource for Spanish outreach.
- There should be a way to reach the Lao and Indian communities.
- Use churches to create opportunities for synergy.
- Make effort for Asian outreach. The General Plan must be sensitive to cultural values.
- Staff should distribute questionnaire to residents to get their input on the future of Richmond.
- Work through schools to reach youth.
- Demonstrate benefits when talking to communities.

Land Use/Development

- There needs to be a place(s) to take families – something to get people excited; keep them in the city and attract others from outside the city. A large park with a kid train, or a zoo on a large piece of land.
- Attractions to keep people in Richmond and to attract others to Richmond.
- Richmond needs is a vision to become a "Dream City" – if space and vision are provided, the money and developers will come.

- Use eminent domain to redevelop parts of downtown.
- Need much visioning for Hilltop area.
- Downtown needs to be revitalized first.

Education/Youth

- Richmond should prioritize recreation funding for youth.
- After school facilities are needed for kids/teenagers (current facilities are not being used and are being shut down for financial reasons). There needs to be space allowed for more schools, colleges and cultural facilities.

General

- Need better definition of “infill development.”
- Get rid of word “moral” in general plan.
- Plan needs to be written for 25 to 30 years instead of 5 years.

Question 5. Other Comments

- Walnut Creek and Emeryville could serve as examples for a new development direction in Richmond.
- West Contra Costa Times holds a once-a-month information sharing session- good opportunity to get press covering and disseminate info to the community.
- September 6 – Port conducts waterfront tour.
- Richmond needs a marketing plan to attract people to the city. There needs to be coordination between City Manager and Redevelopment to be 100% on marketing Richmond’s assets. Cohesive marketing plan must reflect the City’s vision.
- Talk to or consult with:
 - Sierra Club
 - Restoration Advisory Board
 - City commissions
 - Schools
 - Seniors
 - School Board Member Karen Leong Fenton
 - Housing Authority
 - UC Berkeley
 - Vision 2000
 - Faithworks
 - Rev. Shumake

ATTACHMENT A
CITY OF RICHMOND LEADERSHIP TEAM INTERVIEW ROSTER

	Title	Name
1.	City Council, Mayor	Irma Anderson
2.	City Council, Vice Mayor	Jim Rogers
3.	City Councilmember	Richard Griffin
4.	City Councilmember	Nathaniel Bates
5.	City Councilmember	Thomas Butt
6.	City Councilmember	John Marquez
7.	City Councilmember	Gayle McLaughlin
8.	City Councilmember	Tony Thurmond
9.	City Councilmember	Maria T. Viramontes
11.	City Manager	Bill Lindsay
12.	Planning Commission, Chair	Virginia Finlay
13.	Planning Commissioner	Zachary Harris
14.	Planning Commissioner	William Coleman
15.	Planning Commissioner	Nagaraja Rao
16.	Planning Commissioner	Ludmyrna Lopez
17.	Planning Commissioner	Vicki Winston
18.	Port Director	Jim Matzorkis
19.	Economic Development & Redevelopment	Steve Duran, Alan Wolkin, Lisa Hamburger
20.	Police Chief	Chris Magnus
	Planning Commission, Vice Chair	Stephen Williams - <i>Did not show</i>

ATTACHMENT B STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1. Vision:** 30 years from now, how do you think people will describe Richmond?
And/or: Thinking about your vision of Richmond 30 years from today – what words would you like people to use to describe Richmond?
- 2. Constraints:** What do you see as the major hurdles/challenges to achieving your vision of Richmond in the future?
- 3. Assets/Opportunities:** What do you see as the City’s greatest assets (physical, social, economic, etc) *And/or:*What are major opportunity areas?
- 4. General Plan Needs:** What would you like to see as we move through the General Plan process?
- 5. Resources:** What people or resources do you think we ought to talk with/consult in our work?

