



Element 9 | Growth Management

The Growth Management Element provides a framework for effective coordination of land use, transportation and infrastructure. This Element outlines a strategy to promote compact urban development, protect open space and provide adequate infrastructure and services to accommodate future community needs in Richmond.



Community Vision

Richmond, California in 2030

The City of Richmond is an inclusive, efficient and livable city that provides its residents with an exceptional quality of life, community facilities and amenities and access to parks and open space. Richmond promotes efficient growth and the protection of open space by directing new residential and commercial development into existing urban areas.

Revenue generated by new development supports the construction and modernization of community facilities. Richmond participates in ongoing, collaborative land use and transportation planning with nearby cities, Contra Costa County and regional transit agencies. Richmond's traditional layout, a grid-based block development pattern, supports efficient and ongoing growth within the core districts.

Metro Walk in Downtown

Richmond offers urban living in a walkable environment convenient to Richmond's BART station and other transit options.

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Growth Management

RICHMOND HAS EXPERIENCED renewed growth in recent years. Population projections suggest that growth will continue into the future. The City has responded by investing in improving existing neighborhoods, commercial corridors and industrial areas. Richmond aims to be an efficient, balanced and livable city that provides its residents an exceptional quality of life.

The Growth Management Element will:

- Describe the status of growth management;
- Highlight key findings and recommendations;
- Define goals for promoting growth management;
- Identify policies and implementing actions to balance protection and conservation of natural resources with responsible development; and
- Review the existing regulatory framework of governing bodies and other mechanisms that currently guide planning efforts.

Purpose of the Element

This Element seeks to assure that new development pays its infrastructure improvement costs and improves the quality of life for current residents. By complying with Contra Costa County's Growth Management Program requirements, the City will remain eligible for County transportation improvement funding. Contributing shared benefits to Richmond and Contra Costa County as a whole, this Element provides a framework for effectively coordinating land use, infrastructure and transportation planning.

Authority for the Element

Richmond has a strong commitment to effectively managing growth and preserving a high quality of life for current and future residents. Although the Growth Management Element is not a state-mandated general plan element, the City included it in its General Plan to reinforce this commitment and ensure that growth management remains a priority. In adopting the Growth Management Element, the City also complies with the requirements of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority's Growth Management Plan that requires each municipality to adopt a Growth Management Element to be eligible for local transportation improvement and street maintenance funds. Richmond's Growth Management Element is consistent with voter-approved Measure J, the Contra Costa Transportation Authority's Transportation Sales Tax Expenditure Plan. In addition, the Growth Management Element is consistent with Section 65303 of the State of California Government Code which grants authority to local jurisdictions to include additional elements to those required by state law when they relate to the physical development of the jurisdiction.¹

Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

The Growth Management Element correlates with several other elements of the General Plan, including: Circulation; Community Facilities and Infrastructure; Conservation, Open Space and Natural Resources; Parks and Recreation; Economic Development; Land Use and Urban Design; and Housing. Cross-references are listed to direct the reader to relevant information in other General Plan elements.



Downtown's remodeled BART/Amtrak station provides regional transit access for Richmond residents.



Richmond Today

Richmond has grown in popularity in recent years given its proximity to regional employment centers, comparatively lower housing costs, multi-modal transit services and spectacular water views. Richmond's distinct character attracts many residents seeking an alternative to the County's eastern suburbs. At the same time, Richmond's relatively inexpensive real estate and access to Interstate 80 and 580 have lured businesses away from neighboring cities, bringing new energy to the City's commercial base. A coordinated growth management program integrating land use, transportation and infrastructure policies will ensure that Richmond meets current and projected community needs.

Walking and bicycling are popular modes of travel used on the various segments of the San Francisco Bay Trail found throughout Richmond.

Land Use

With the exception of hillside parcels in El Sobrante Valley, Richmond has few remaining opportunities for new greenfield development to accommodate growth. Thus, the City has responded to increasing demand for growth through infill development in Downtown, along commercial corridors and on underutilized brownfield parcels within the City's industrial areas. Richmond's growth management policies, land use planning and redevelopment efforts dovetail with Contra Costa County's broader growth management land use goals and the countywide Urban Limit Line.

Transportation

The City participates in local and regional efforts to strengthen the role of transportation planning in growth management. At the local level, Richmond seeks to increase transit ridership and build on the strength of its existing commuter rail infrastructure by promoting transit-oriented development around the Richmond BART/Amtrak station. The City encourages development along key transit corridors such as Macdonald and San Pablo Avenues including higher densities and a mix of uses in order to encourage transit ridership along these routes. Through an active

plannerspeak

Urban Limit Line. An Urban Limit Line (ULL) designates a boundary beyond which no urban land uses may be permitted. The intent of Contra Costa County's ULL policy is to preserve non-urban agricultural lands, open space and environmental resources.



Above: Alternative modes of travel including transit, bicycling and walking are emphasized in Richmond's circulation and land use framework.

Right: Key transit corridors can support higher-density development.

partnership with neighboring El Cerrito, Richmond developed the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan to guide future development along this important corridor. In addition, through the West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC), Richmond participates in regional transportation planning with nearby cities and transit agencies to promote innovative new technologies such as bus rapid transit (BRT) on San Pablo Avenue serving Richmond and six other cities along its route.

Infrastructure

Richmond seeks to provide adequate public facilities to both its current and future residents and infrastructure plays an integral role in its long-range growth management vision. To this end, the City's developer impact fees ensure that new development pays for facility and infrastructure improvements necessary to meet increased demand attributable to that development. These fees apply to new residential, commercial and industrial development and include improvements such as: sewers and waste treatment facilities; schools, libraries and community centers; traffic signals and roadway improvements; fire and police facilities; and parks, trails and recreation facilities.





Key Findings and Recommendations

Richmond's future growth and economic vitality are largely dependent on the strength and innovation in the Bay Area. Managing this growth is essential to meeting the needs of current and future residents and businesses.

The following key findings and recommendations are derived from the analysis of existing conditions, as well as the community's vision for the future.

Finding 1: Richmond will experience new infill development in the coming decades.

Given the limited amount of greenfield development opportunities, the City encourages infill and redevelopment Downtown, along commercial corridors and in underutilized parcels throughout the City. A preliminary assessment suggests that there are more than 1,200 acres of vacant and underutilized land in Richmond that may be available for infill development. Richmond is ideally positioned to respond to regional demand for housing, commercial and job-generating uses while increasing efficiencies and reducing the regional energy footprint. The City is served by regional transit systems including Amtrak, BART and AC Transit to support transit-oriented infill development without adversely impacting regional air quality and traffic. Richmond can integrate land use planning with regional transportation planning to effectively accommodate growth. To maximize the benefits of new growth, the City will continue:

- Promoting infill and brownfield redevelopment by encouraging new development in existing neighborhoods and commercial corridors served by transit and adequate public facilities;
- Encouraging housing development near existing transit and community facilities and providing opportunities for households at all income levels to reside in areas well served by public infrastructure;

The Metrowalk development in Downtown Richmond is an example of infill housing near transit.



Measure J Capital Improvement Projects

Contra Costa County's Measure J Sales Tax Expenditure Plan includes \$142.8 million in regional transportation upgrades for the West County subregion with a percentage of these funds earmarked for projects in Richmond. High-priority capital projects include:

- \$30 million for a HOV lane extension and interchange improvements along Interstate 80, particularly at the Interstate 80 interchanges with San Pablo Dam Road and Central Avenue, and the completion of a HOV lane to the Carquinez Bridge;
- \$16 million for Richmond Parkway upgrades such as interchange improvements and roadway maintenance; and
- \$45 million for new ferry service in West County including service between Richmond and San Francisco.⁷

- Promoting affordable housing and demonstrating progress in producing affordable units and implementing housing policies; and
- Strengthening regional planning by coordinating land use and transportation planning in partnership with other jurisdictions and agencies in the County and East Bay to create an efficient and balanced transportation system that supports long-term regional economic vitality.

Finding 2: New growth will increase demand for public services and facilities.

To accommodate growth, Richmond will need to acquire additional sources of revenue to address future infrastructure and public facilities needs.

Long-term growth management strategies include:

- Ensuring that new development pays its fair share of needed community improvements through impact fees, development agreements and other mechanisms;
- Monitoring infrastructure improvement programs to ensure timely implementation and progress; and
- Maintaining the urban limit line and continuing to promote compact, infill development and the protection of open space.



Goals

GOAL GM1 **Coordinate Land Use and Transportation Planning**

Continue to promote mixed-use, high-density infill development and investment around transit hubs and along transit corridors to maximize the efficient use of available land and infrastructure in the City and the region. Coordinate with neighboring cities, Contra Costa County and regional transportation agencies to manage growth and minimize regional impacts.

GOAL GM2 **Improve Infrastructure and Facilities**

Improve public services and infrastructure to meet the demands of new development.

Transit-oriented developments such as Richmond's Metrowalk contribute to a balanced and livable city.



GOAL GM1

Coordinate Land Use and Transportation Planning

POLICIES

Policy GM1.1

Pedestrian and Transit-Oriented Urban Environment

Promote walkability and public transit by encouraging mixed-use, higher-density development close to community amenities. Promote multifamily and mixed-use infill and brownfield redevelopment close to the Richmond BART/Amtrak Station, Hilltop Area and Marina Bay.

Support increased residential density, commercial intensity and reduced parking requirements in areas well served by transit while protecting and increasing land dedicated to parks and open space.

Support complete and balanced streets and an expanded multimodal circulation system. Locate medium and high-density housing and mixed-use development along corridors where improvements to multimodal systems are planned. Require new development and improvements to include amenities for pedestrians, bicycles and transit users.

Encourage location of new public facilities near primary user groups and existing public transit infrastructure. Encourage new residential uses near existing schools and community facilities (see also Land Use and Urban Design Element, Policy LU6.1).

Policy GM1.2

Urban Limit Line

Promote efficient growth in existing urban areas and protection of open space by adhering to the County's Urban Limit Line for Richmond.

Policy GM1.3

Regional Transportation Planning

Participate in ongoing regional transportation planning efforts in cooperation with other jurisdictions and agencies.

Policy GM1.4

Diverse Range of Housing Opportunities

Encourage a range of housing types that meet the diverse needs of the community. Encourage and support projects and programs that provide quality affordable housing in mixed-income neighborhoods. Promote the development of senior and multifamily housing options in close proximity to major job centers, public transit and community amenities such as schools, parks, shopping and community centers.



GOAL GM1

Coordinate Land Use and Transportation Planning

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

Action GM1.A

Urban Limit Line

Maintain the established Urban Limit Line (ULL) in compliance with the provisions of Measure J, Contra Costa County's Transportation Sales Tax Expenditure Plan.

Action GM1.B

Regional Collaboration and Joint Planning

Participate in an ongoing, cooperative and multi jurisdictional planning process to manage the impacts of growth and create a balanced and efficient transportation system. Specific actions may include:

- Identifying Routes of Regional Significance and establishing appropriate Multimodal Transportation Service Objectives
- Applying Contra Costa Transportation Authority's demand model to General Plan amendments and large developments to study their effect on the regional transportation system
- Helping to develop additional plans and programs to study other transportation and growth management issues.

Action GM1.C

Transportation Demand Management

Encourage use of public transit, bicycling and walking in existing and proposed developments through measures that may include transit subsidies, carshare service, parking cash-out programs, bicycle-share programs, bicycle amenities and facility enhancements (see also Circulation Element, Action CR5.A).



GOAL GM2

Provide Adequate Infrastructure and Facilities

POLICIES

Policy GM2.1

Diverse Range of High-Quality Facilities and Infrastructure

Maintain high-quality facilities and infrastructure to serve diverse community needs.

Retain existing public facilities and uses in the Downtown, and actively work to attract new public facilities, especially within walking distance of the Richmond BART/Amtrak station. Facilities and infrastructure may include community and recreation centers, parks and playgrounds, libraries and senior centers, schools, multi-use trails, pedestrian-scale lighting, and police and fire stations (see also elements: Community Facilities and Infrastructure, Policy CF1.1; Land Use and Urban Design, Policy LU1.3).

Policy GM2.2

Community Amenities for New Development

New development should pay costs attributable to that development including impacts on: local streets; local and regional transportation systems; and public facilities such as parks and recreation, schools and emergency services.



GOAL GM2

Provide Adequate Infrastructure and Facilities

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

Action GM2.A

Capital Improvements

Coordinate development with the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to ensure completion of high-priority facility and infrastructure projects (see also elements: Circulation, Action CR1.G; Community Facilities and Infrastructure, Action CF1.C; Economic Development, Action ED1.F; Parks and Recreation, Action PR1.J).

Action GM2.B

Regional Development Mitigation

Support regional development mitigation measures consistent with the Countywide Comprehensive Transportation Plan that funds regional and subregional transportation projects. Regional mitigation measures may include fees, assessments, exactions or other contributions that provide community facilities and infrastructure for planned and proposed development.

Action GM2.C

Local Development Mitigation

Implement the City's impact fee schedule to raise adequate revenues from development projects for new or upgraded facilities and amenities (see also Community Facilities and Infrastructure Element, Action CF1.L).

Regulatory Framework

A number of organizational bodies and regulations make up Richmond's regulatory framework for managing growth.

Departments, Agencies and Committees

The following City and County-based agencies are instrumental in assuring that Richmond grows while meeting broad quality-of-life goals.

Richmond Planning and Building Services Department

Richmond's Planning and Building Services Department is responsible for approving new construction, reviewing design proposals, overseeing long-range planning and enforcing General Plan policies. The Department also produces specific plans, updates the zoning ordinance and upholds California's Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In its regulatory capacity the Planning and Building Services Department plays an integral role in managing growth by promoting compact urban development and enforcing the City's land use goals (www.ci.richmond.ca.us/planning).

Contra Costa Transportation Authority

The Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) was created in 1988 to manage the funds generated by the voter-approved, half-cent transportation sales tax, Measure C and its extension Measure J. The CCTA oversees planning and construction of capital projects included in Measure C and Measure J Expenditure Plans and implements the County's Growth Management Program (www.ccta.net).⁶

West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee

The West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC) is one of four subregional transportation planning committees created in 1988 to advise the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) on Measure C expenditures and transportation concerns specifically related to the cities of Richmond, El Cerrito, Hercules, Pinole and San Pablo as well as transit agencies serving these cities including AC Transit, WestCAT and BART. The WCCTAC also assists in designing and implementing improvement projects and programs related to local and regional transportation services that are not specifically linked to Measure C or Measure J funding such as air quality improvement and congestion management (www.wcctac.org).⁷



Related Regulations

The City of Richmond currently relies on the following regulatory tools to support growth management.

Measure C: The Contra Costa Transportation Improvement and Growth Management Program

Passed by voters in 1988, Measure C authorizes a half-cent sales tax to fund major transportation improvements throughout Contra Costa County. Under Measure C each municipality can receive a percentage of the collected transportation sales tax funds in order to maintain local streets and roads and to fund local transportation services. In order to qualify for these Local Transportation Maintenance and Improvement funds, Measure C mandates that each municipality in the County adopt a growth management element as part of its General Plan that includes: policies to mitigate the negative impacts of development; a five-year capital improvement program to maintain traffic service standards; a transportation demand management ordinance; and measures to address its balance of jobs and housing. Moreover, Measure C requires that new development fund necessary mitigation measures stemming from its construction. The City of Richmond adopted a Growth Management Element as part of its 1994 General Plan. The Measure will sunset in 2009 (<http://www.ccta.net/planning/growth/cjcompliance.shtml>).

Measure J: The Contra Costa Transportation Sales Tax Extension and Expenditure Plan

Measure J authorizes a 20-year extension of Measure C with modifications to the Growth Management Program including requirements that local cities demonstrate reasonable progress in providing housing opportunities at all income levels and that they comply with the County's 2006, voter-approved Urban Limit Line. As with Measure C, each municipality must demonstrate compliance with Measure J through the inclusion of a Growth Management Element in its updated General Plan in order to qualify for Local Transportation Maintenance and Improvement funds (<http://www.ccta.net/planning/growth/cjcompliance.shtml>).⁸

Contra Costa County Urban Limit Line

In 2006 Contra Costa County voters adopted an Urban Limit Line (ULL) as part of the County's open space conservation plan. The ULL limits urban development in Contra Costa County to 35% of the land area and limits the County's power to designate land outside the ULL for development. In order to comply with Measure J and receive funding, Contra Costa County municipalities must either comply with the County's ULL or adopt a municipal ULL as part of their general plans.

Notes

1. Official California Legislative Information Website. <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/>.
2. AB32 (the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006) requires a reduction in state greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels, roughly a 25% decrease, by 2020.
3. Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA). <http://www.ccta.net/about>.
4. Contra Costa Transportation Authority. “Measure J: Contra Costa’s Transportation Sales Tax Expenditure Plan,” 2004.
5. CA Department of Housing and Community Development, 2008. www.hcd.gov/regulations.
6. Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA). <http://www.ccta.net/about>.
7. West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC). <http://www.wcctac.org/about>.
8. Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA). <http://www.ccta.net/about>.