



Growth Management
Richmond General Plan 2030



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.



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Growth Management

Richmond has experienced renewed growth in recent years and 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:

- Describes the status of growth management in Richmond;
- Highlights key findings and recommendations;
- Defines goals for promoting growth management;
- Identifies policies and implementing actions to balance protection and conservation of natural resources with responsible development;
- Provides a summary table identifying lead responsibilities for each implementing action; and
- Reviews the existing regulatory framework that guides growth management 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.

Legal Requirement

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 has 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 which requires each municipality to adopt a growth management element to be eligible for local transportation improvement and street maintenance funds.¹ Richmond’s Growth Management Element is con-



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

sistent with voter-approved Measure J, the Contra Costa Transportation Authority’s Transportation Sales Tax Expenditure Plan.² 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.³



Richmond Today

Richmond has grown in popularity in recent years given its proximity to regional employment centers, comparatively lower housing costs, multimodal transit services and spectacular bay 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.

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 county-wide Urban Limit Line.

Countywide Urban Limit Line

The Countywide 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 encourage sustainable infill development and preserve non-urban agricultural lands, open space and environmental resources.

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 set the stage for increased transit ridership along these routes. Through an active partnership with neighboring El Cerrito, Richmond has 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)



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

Infrastructure

Richmond seeks to provide adequate public facilities to both its current and future residents and infrastructure plays an integral role in its vision for long-range growth management. 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 and the community's vision for the future.

Finding 1: Richmond will experience substantial 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. The City will continue:



The Metrowalk neighborhood in Downtown Richmond is an example of transit-oriented development.

- 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 served by public infrastructure; and
- Strengthening regional planning by coordinating land use and transportation planning in partnership with other jurisdictions and agencies in the East Bay to create an efficient and balanced transportation system that supports long-term regional economic vitality.



Transportation demand management solutions such as connections to and from BART can encourage the use of public transit, walking and bicycling.

Finding 2: 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 community improvements through impact fees, development agreements and other mechanisms;
- Monitoring infrastructure improvements for 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

Coordinated Land Use and Transportation Planning

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

Improved Infrastructure and Facilities

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



Policies and Implementing Actions

A range of policies and implementing actions are outlined below in relation to each of the goals. These policies mandate, encourage or allow certain actions to be pursued throughout the duration of the General Plan. Together they serve as strategic directions for City staff and partners, highlighting where time and resources should be focused.

Each policy may either be correlated with a number of actions, or simply a single key implementing action. Conversely, some actions may support a range of policies. The policies and implementing actions are organized in two parts. First, all goal-related policies are described and each policy description is followed by a list of its associated implementing actions. Then, implementing actions are described in greater detail in the following section.



GOAL GM1

Coordinated Land Use and Transportation Planning

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 : 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.

Policy GM1.3

Regional Transportation Planning

Participate in ongoing multi-jurisdictional regional transportation planning efforts by participating in efforts sponsored by the West Contra Costa County Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC), the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA), the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA).

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

Coordinated Land Use and Transportation Planning

Action GM1.A***Urban Limit Line***

Maintain the established voter approved 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; and
- Helping to develop additional plans and programs to study other transportation and growth management issues.

Action GM1.C***Transportation Demand Management Program***

Develop a transportation demand management (TDM) program that encourages use of public transit, bicycling and walking. TDM programs may include transit subsidies, car-share service, parking cash-out programs, bicycle-share programs, bicycle amenities and facility enhancements, among others.

Include an incentive program to promote TDM in the City. Program elements may include reduction in transportation impact fees for new or redevelopment projects that demonstrate commitment to TDM strategies and reductions in parking requirements for mixed-use development and for projects that provide TDM programs and/or shared parking. Explore the feasibility of developing citywide TDM program that would be funded by annual fees or assessment on new development.

See also: CR5.A



GOAL GM1

Coordinated Land Use and Transportation Planning

Policy GM2.1

A Range of High-Quality Community Facilities and Infrastructure

Maintain high-quality facilities and infrastructure to serve diverse community needs. Upgrade, maintain and expand infrastructure to meet current and future needs and provide an effective and consistent level of services and utilities in all neighborhoods. 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: CF1.1; LU1.3

Policy GM2.2

Community Amenities for New Development

Require new development to 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

Improved Infrastructure and Facilities

Action GM2.A***Capital Improvements***

Coordinate development with the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to ensure completion of high-priority facility and infrastructure projects. Ensure that CIP projects are prioritized in economically depressed neighborhoods with the highest need.

See also: CRI.G; CF1.B; PR1.I

Action GM2.B***Regional Development Mitigation***

Support regional development mitigation measures consistent with the Countywide Comprehensive Transportation Plan which funds regional transportation projects, community facilities and infrastructure for planned and proposed development. Continue to participate in the West Contra Costa County Subregional Transportation Mitigation Program (STMP) community facilities and infrastructure for planned and proposed development.

Action GM2.C***Local Development Mitigation***

Regularly review and update the impact fee schedule to offset costs of new development.

See also Action CF1.J



Summary of Implementing Actions

The table presented on the following pages is a tool for guiding implementation of the City's Growth Management Element. Organized by the community's broad goals, the table provides an overview of policies and implementing actions detailed in the previous section. Each action is linked to a designated lead responsible party. Related policies are identified in the final column.

Goal GM1: Coordinated Land Use and Transportation Planning

Action		Lead Responsibility	Supporting Policies
GM1.A	Urban Limit Line	Planning and Building Services	GM1.2
GM1.B	Regional Collaboration and Joint Planning	Planning and Building Services	GM1.1, GM1.3
GM1.C	Transportation Demand Management Program	Planning and Building Services	GM1.3

Goal GM2: Improved Infrastructure and Facilities

Action		Lead Responsibility	Supporting Policies
GM2.A	Capital Improvements	Public Works	GM2.1
GM2.B	Regional Development Mitigation	Planning and Building Services	GM2.2
GM2.C	Local Development Mitigation	Planning and Building Services	GM2.2



Regulatory Framework

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

Organizations

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

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.

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.⁵

WCCTAC

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. 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.⁴

Related Regulations

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.

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.²

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. Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA). <http://www.ccta.net/about>.
2. Contra Costa Transportation Authority. “Measure J: Contra Costa’s Transportation Sales Tax Expenditure Plan,” 2004.
3. Official California Legislative Information Website. <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/>.
4. West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC). <http://www.wcctac.org/about>.
5. Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA). <http://www.ccta.net/about>.

Cover Artwork

1. Left: Photograph by Hector Rojas
2. Right: “Process” by Andres Cisneros-Galindo, Richmond Resident