



DESIGN REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

PLN12-248

TO: Design Review Board

FROM: Community Development Department, Planning Division
Roberta Feliciano, Senior Planner HL

SUBJECT: **LIVABLE CORRIDORS FORM-BASED CODE, PLN12-248:** Study Session to provide comments on the draft Richmond Livable Corridors Form Based Code (FBC) and Architectural Standards. The draft FBC text, FBC Map and Architectural Standards are available for review at <http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/2965/RLC-FBC>

LOCATION: Various (see Map, Attachment 1)

ZONING: Various (see Map, Attachment 2)

GENERAL PLAN: Various (see Map, Attachment 3)

APPLICANT: City of Richmond

CEQA REVIEW: This is a study session and CEQA determination is not required at this time.

BACKGROUND:

In 2020, the City received an SB 2 Planning Grant from the California Department of Housing and Community Development to update and integrate the Form Based Code into the Zoning Ordinance. The grant program provides funding and technical assistance to all local governments in California to help cities and counties prepare, adopt, and implement plans and process improvements that streamline housing approvals and accelerate housing production consistent with the State Planning Priorities. This work builds upon the draft Form-Based Code ("FBC") that was developed in 2015 with funding from a Sustainable Communities Planning Grant from the California Strategic Growth Council.

The proposed FBC, once adopted, would replace the existing zoning and associated standards and regulation to support a more walkable urban environment and create 'complete neighborhoods' as envisioned by the General Plan 2030. The City selected to do a FBC because it reinforces walkable, sustainable, mixed-use environments and development, and builds upon the character of a place. As noted by the Form-Based Codes Institute, "form-based codes foster predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. They are regulations, not mere guidelines, adopted into city or county law. Form-based codes offer a powerful alternative to conventional zoning."

An extensive outreach process was undertaken to gather community input in the development of the 2015 FBC as summarized in the Richmond Livable Corridors Charrette Summary Report (2012). As part of the update to the FBC, the City hosted a virtual community meeting on November 4, 2020, to gather input and address questions.

PROPOSAL:

As part of the Zoning Update, completed in 2016, the City reserved Series 400 in Article XV, Zoning & Subdivisions of the Richmond Municipal Code to establish new Form-Based Zoning Districts.

The project proposes amendments to the Richmond Municipal Code that would add a new Chapter 15.04.400 Form-Based Code to establish new transect zones that comply with the land use classifications established in the General Plan 2030, amend the Zoning Map to rezone certain properties using the transect zones, and establish new standards and regulations for these transect zones.

“The transect is an organizing principle often used in Form-Based Coding that focuses first on the intended character and type of place and second on the mix of uses within the area. This differs from the framework found in conventional or Euclidean zoning in which use, rather than form, is the primary focus.” (Form-Based Code Institute). The FBC also includes adoption of objective Architectural Standards to guide the development and review of projects.

DISCUSSION:

As noted in the introduction of the FBC, “the [FBC] reflects the community vision for implementing the intent of the General Plan to create walkable mixed-use neighborhoods. [The] Form-Based Code standards are intended to ensure that proposed development is compatible with existing and future development on neighboring properties, and produces an environment of desirable character, consistent with the General Plan. The FBC is based on an initial documentation and analysis of the existing conditions at the macro (citywide) and micro (street and block) scales. The results of this analysis helped to classify the different types of places in Richmond and calibrate their subsequent standards. [The] Form-Based Code is also based on the input received by the community throughout the process to ensure that the standards in [the] Code reflect the community's vision for the future of their community as documented in the General Plan (2012), 23rd Street Corridor Charrette Summary Report (2009), and Richmond Livable Corridors Charrette Summary Report (2012).

Chapter 15.04.400 Form-Based Code would be a new chapter under Article XV, Zoning and Subdivisions, that would supersede the existing zoning regulation for the sites proposed to be rezoned using the new transect zones, except where the Zoning Ordinance is specifically referenced.

Chapter 15.04.400 Form-Based Code is divided into the following components:

1. The Preamble Article provides the overall intent of this Form-Based Code as it is applied

within the City and provides an overview of the standards contained within.

2. The Transect Zones Article provides regulatory standards governing building form and land use within the transect zones. The standards in this Article are a reflection of the community's vision for implementing the intent of the General Plan to preserve natural areas, to create walkable mixed-use neighborhoods, and reinforce downtown Richmond. They are intended to ensure that proposed development is compatible with existing and future development on neighboring properties and produces an environment of desirable character.
3. The Building Types Article sets forth the standards applicable to the development of each building type. These standards supplement the standards for each zone that the building types are allowed within. These standards are intended to ensure development that reinforces walkability, relationships within the built environment, and the highly-valued existing character and scale of Richmond's historic neighborhoods and downtown. Additionally, these standards are intended to allow creation of new developments that create new walkable neighborhoods.
4. The Frontage Types Article sets forth the standards applicable to the development of private frontages. Private frontages are the components of a building that provide an important transition and interface between the public realm (street and sidewalk) and the private realm (yard or building). These standards supplement the standards for each zone that the frontage types are allowed within. For each frontage type, a description, a statement of the type's intent, and design standards are provided. These standards are intended to ensure development that reinforces the highly-valued existing character and scale of Richmond's neighborhoods and downtown.
5. The Architectural Standards Article sets forth objective standards that support the zone standards to further refine the intended building form and physical character.
6. The General to Large Sites Article sets forth standards that generate a walkable environment through the establishment of new blocks and thoroughfares and that provide a set of civic space types and their associated standards to use within the transect zones.

Architectural Standards

The Architectural Standards are a critical component of the Form-Based Code. It allows the City to develop objective standards that all new development is required to meet.

The City's subjective design criteria and development regulations cannot be enforced for some housing projects, given changes in State law (SB35, SB330).

The Architectural Standards proposes to transform the previous Architectural Guidelines into objective standards and streamline review. The previous Architectural Standards were developed with input from a DRB subcommittee and ultimately recommended for approval by the Design Review Board in March 2015.

The Architectural Standards provide an overview of some of the architectural styles that are endemic to the City of Richmond, the Bay Area, and the Northern California region. Each style is described, listing some of its typical characteristics and providing photographic examples for each. These descriptions represent a broad sampling of each architectural style and are not intended to be inclusive.

Styles included in the Architectural Guidelines are:

- Main Street
- Victorian
- Spanish Revival
- Art Deco/Art Moderne/Mid-Century Modern
- Industrial
- California Contemporary

The Architectural Guidelines identify the key characteristics of the above architectural styles to enable building design that is rooted in the unique aspects of Richmond. They also give reviewers of projects a tool to assist with: 1) Reviewing proposed projects in an objective manner; and 2) Providing a foundation to create clear feedback and comments based on content of the Architectural Standards. This is paramount given the many changes to State housing laws.

The designer of a building would use the Architectural Standards by picking one of the architectural styles, study its elements, and use the standards to direct them in designing an appropriate building for their project and specific site.

Staff is seeking input from the DRB on the draft Architectural Standards.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

As of the writing of this report, no public comments have been received.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Planning staff seeks comments and feedback from the Design Review Board on the draft FBC, and more specifically, the Architectural Standards.

ATTACHMENT 1: Draft FBC Map
ATTACHMENT 2: Zoning Map
ATTACHMENT 3: General Plan Map

EXHIBIT A: Draft Form Based Code (FBC)
EXHIBIT B: Draft FBC Map
EXHIBIT C: Draft Architectural Standards

Appealing the Decision of the Design Review Board:

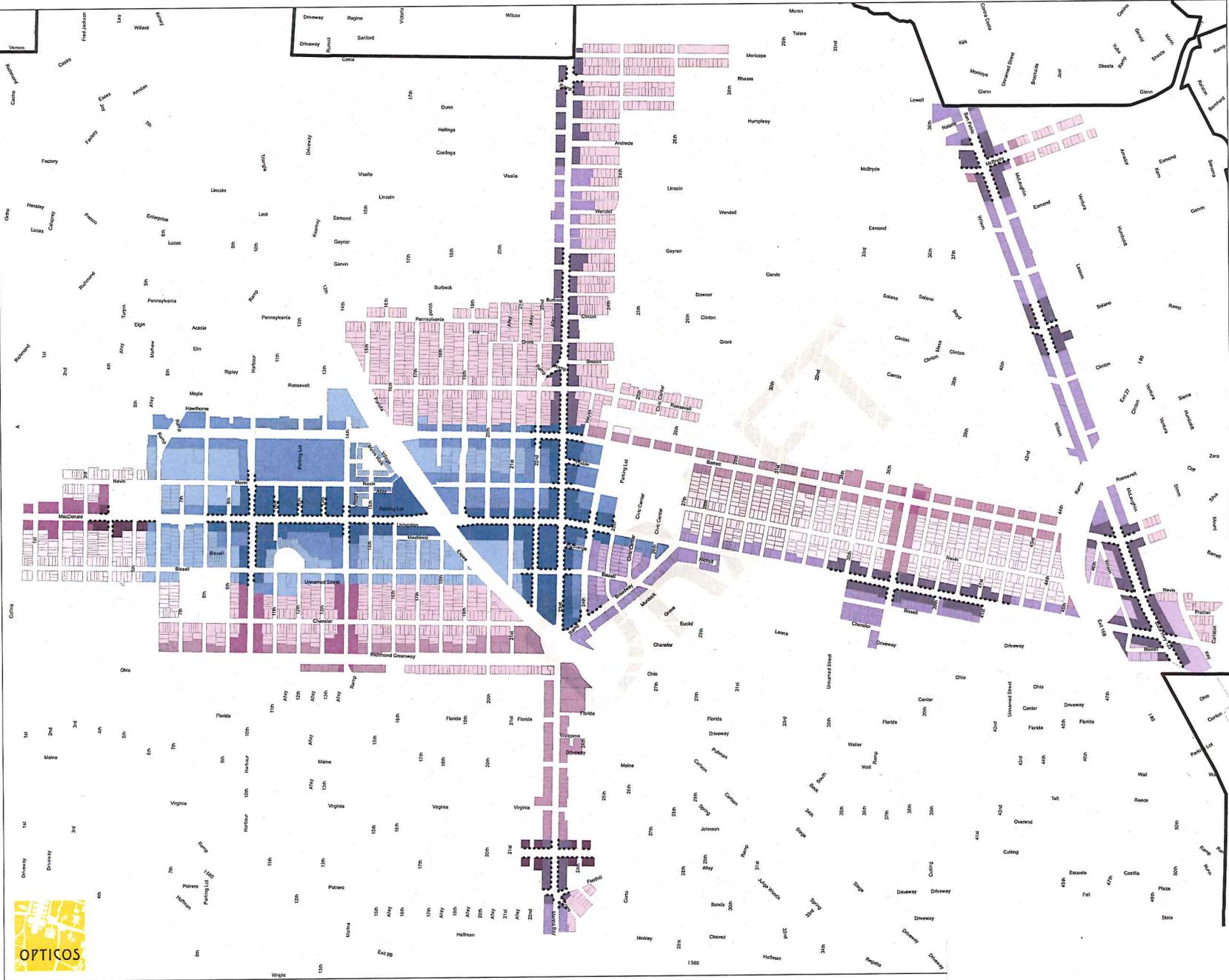
This is a study session. Since there is no formal action by the board, it is not subject to appeal.

Regulating Plan **DRAFT**

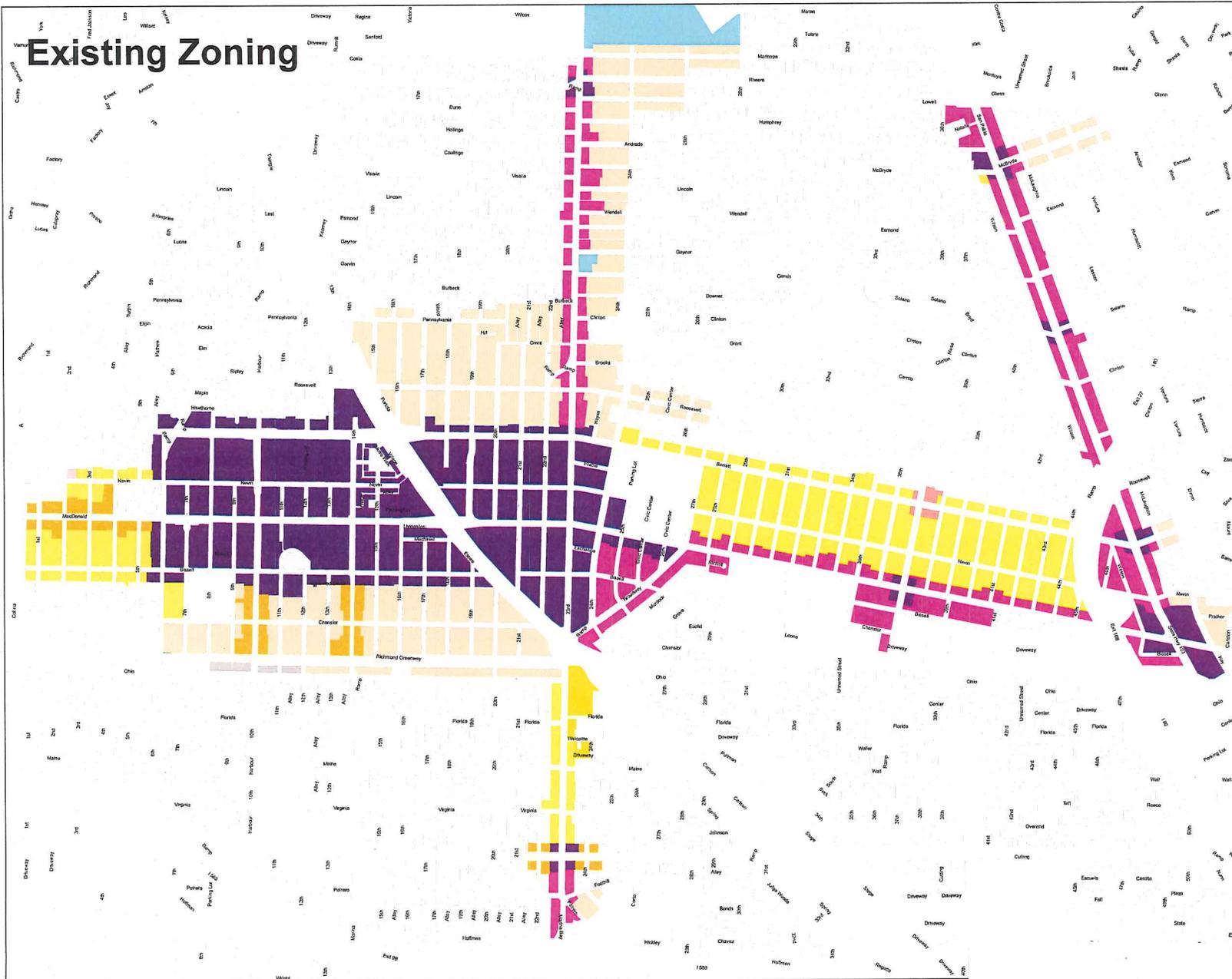
Richmond, CA



- Legend**
- TAN-30
 - TAN-35
 - TAN-O
 - TAMS-O
 - TAMS
 - TSM-55
 - TSM-O
 - TSM
 - TSM-135
 - TSC-O
 - TSC
- 12' Build-To Line Required with Shepfront Frontage



Existing Zoning



Regulating Plan

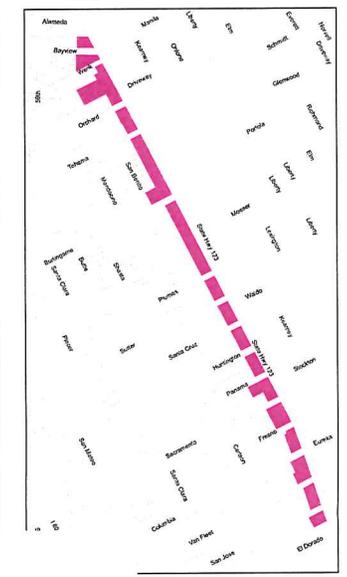
Richmond, CA



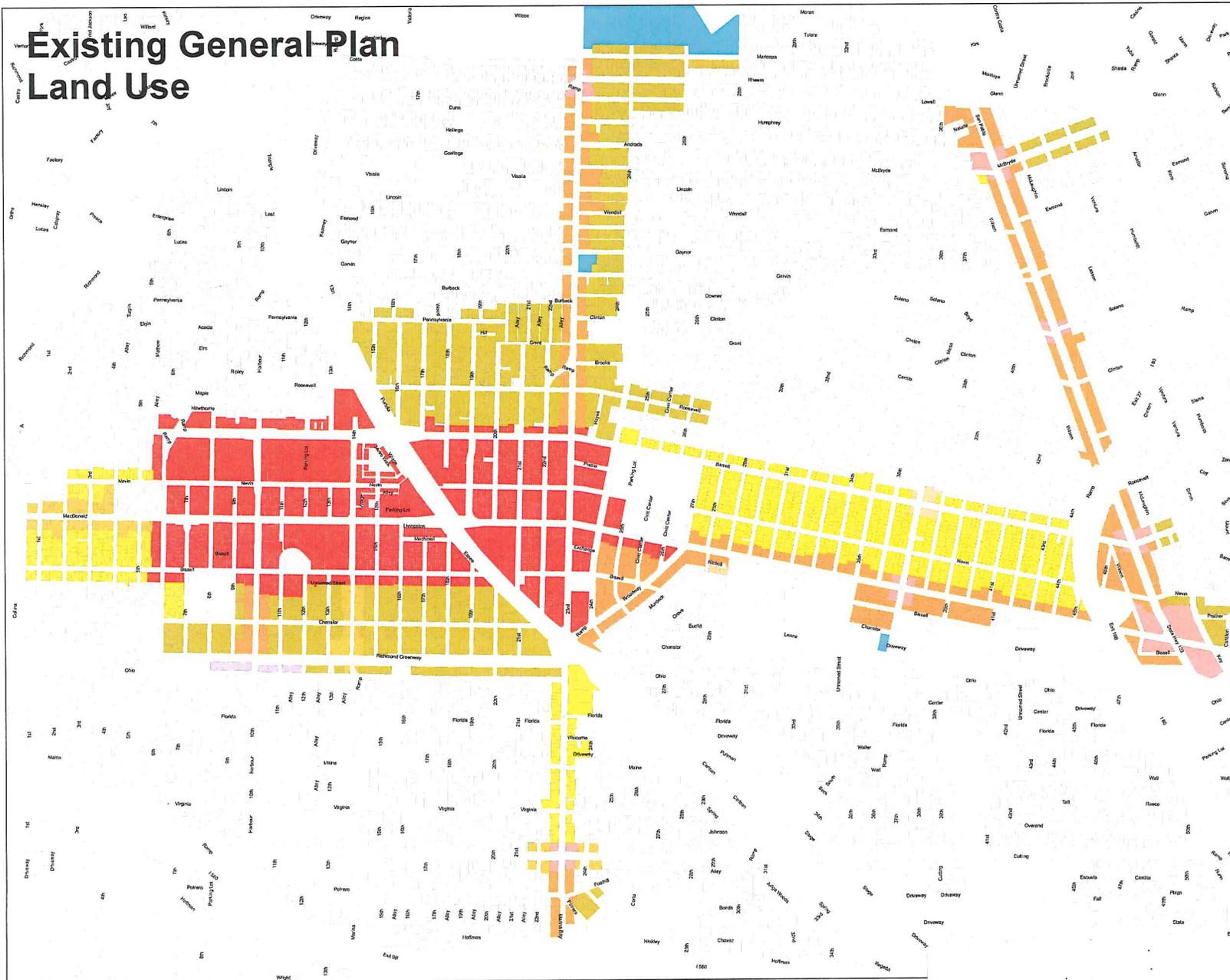
Legend

Zoning District ZONING

- RL2
- RM2
- CM-1
- CM-2
- CM-3
- CM-4
- CM-5
- LW
- CG
- IL
- PCI
- PR



Existing General Plan Land Use



Regulating Plan

Richmond, CA



Legend

General Plan Land Use

- Land Use Designations**
- Low-Density Residential
 - Medium Density Residential
 - Neighborhood Mixed-Use
 - Medium Density Mixed-Use (Residential Emphasis)
 - Medium Intensity Mixed-Use (Commercial Emphasis)
 - Medium Intensity Mixed-Use (Gateway / Community Node)
 - High Intensity Mixed Use (Major Activity Center)
 - Business/Light Industrial
 - Parks and Recreation
 - Public, Cultural, and Institutional

