



Richmond Equitable Development Initiative

EQUITABLE LAND USE IN RICHMOND

Can the city rewrite its General Plan map so as to facilitate a reduction in poverty? Although it may be difficult, both technically and politically, we believe **the answer is yes.** One of the challenges in thinking about land use and equity is that there is no simple formula for creating a just city. There are certain land use patterns - single family housing on large lots for example - that when overused have historically tended to perpetuate patterns of segregation. There are others which are problematic from an environmental justice and health perspective such as locating polluting industries close to residential areas. As a result it is difficult to prescribe what "equitable land use" should be when aiming for a land use pattern that achieves social equity.

However, over the past year, REDI has been participating in the General Plan update process and thinking about exactly what a fair land use plan for Richmond would look like. As the City Council moves closer to considering the tradeoffs for what the new map will look like – not only what colors go where but what those colors mean – we felt it was essential to lay out a handful of key observations, ideas and policy prescriptions to help build a land use plan that contributes towards a more equitable city.

1. Think about segregation and integration. Reducing poverty and violence is not simply a matter of increasing overall opportunity – where those opportunities are located matter. Serious attention needs to be paid to ensuring that Richmond does not become a city of enclaves that reinforces patterns of inequality.

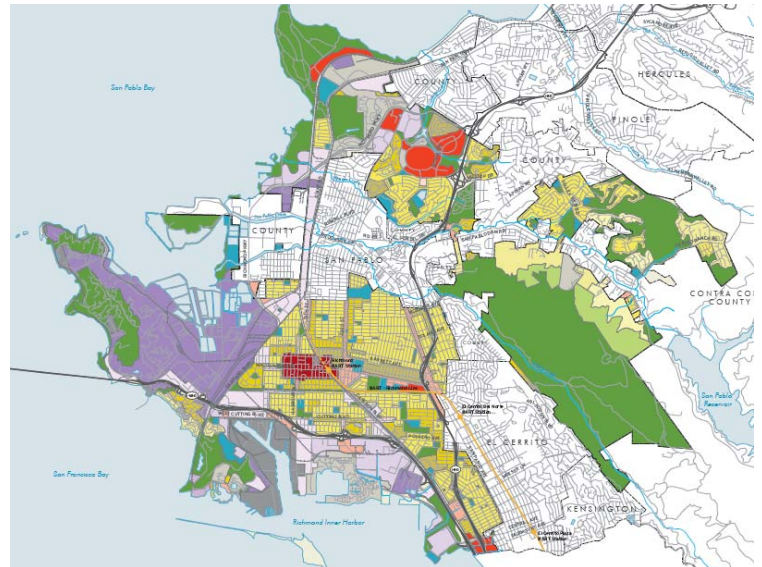
2. Do we have the densities required to allow for affordability? This is a key issue not only in downtown and along key transportation corridors, but in areas like the **southern waterfront** and **Hilltop Mall** that are primed for more intensive change. Good design guidelines and transportation planning can help mitigate many of the concerns about increasing density.

3. Think about Richmond's industrial land more strategically. Our City's economic history was built in good part on the ring of industrial land that lines our waterfront (see the purple and gray areas above). How we (re)use that land will determine much of our economic future. The City should spearhead a process to think more clearly about how this key asset can be best utilized, and should specifically aim for a plan which brings together the myriad interests in Richmond: advocates for environmental justice, industrial businesses, open space and habitat protection, and living wage jobs.

4. Create Specific Plans. A specific plan can be a useful tool for producing a more nuanced and effective strategy for future development in areas where the broader concepts of a General Plan may not be sufficient. The southern waterfront and Hilltop Mall areas surely demand this level of focus. Be inclusive - stakeholders for specific plans must include groups and individuals outside of the immediate area of the plan, especially if they are core assets like downtown, the waterfront or the mall.

5. Land use alone is not enough. Use is only one part of the equity equation – **access** and **ownership** need to be given equal attention. That means thinking about inclusionary housing, community land trusts, local hire regulation, workforce development, and transit with equal enthusiasm.

For more details, see REDI's policy ideas and implementation steps focused on land use, housing, economic development, transportation and health, located at www.urbanhabitat.org/richmond, or contact **Richmond Campaign Coordinator Sheryl Lane** at (510) 839-9608.



REDI is a diverse coalition of organizations committed to growth that benefits rather than burdens existing Richmond residents and that involves low-income residents in the decisions that impact their lives and neighborhoods.