



AGENDA REPORT

Community Development

DATE:	December 5, 2023
TO:	Mayor Martinez and Members of the City Council
FROM:	Lina Velasco, Director of Community Development Hector Rojas, Planning Manager
Subject:	Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	There is no fiscal impact related to this item.
PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:	None
STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:	The City kicked-off the Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan in 2021 and since then, the Specific Plan team has engaged the community and other stakeholders to identify a wide range of hopes and aspirations for this key opportunity area. The purpose of this study session is to familiarize the City Council with the specific plan work; summarize the community and stakeholder input received thus far; and to receive the City Council's feedback on the uses in the initial concept alternatives. It is important for the City Council to keep in mind that the Specific Plan team is not requesting the City Council select a concept alternative at this time. The desired outcome for this study session is to receive feedback that would help the Specific Plan team develop a preferred land use vision, which would be brought back for consideration by Spring 2024.
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	RECEIVE a presentation; and PROVIDE comments on the uses in the initial concept alternatives developed for the Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan (PLN23-344) – Community Development Department (Lina Velasco 510-620-6841/Hector Rojas 510-621-1220).

BACKGROUND:

Specific Plan Purpose

The Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan (HHSP) area covers approximately 143 acres within the larger Hilltop Priority Development Area (PDA). Priority Development Areas are places near public transit planned for new homes, jobs, and community amenities. The Hilltop PDA was nominated by the City Council and officially designated by the Association of Bay Area Governments in 2020. The HHSP area consists of the former Hilltop Mall and properties immediately surrounding it to the north, west, and south, and by a larger contiguous area to the east and south (see Attachment 1, Map of Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan Area). The City's vision for Hilltop, as stated in the Richmond General Plan 2030, is for a highly visible and accessible regional district, blended with a mix of vibrant uses that would enhance the area's competitive edge in the region. The purpose of the HHSP is to support the General Plan vision by promoting the transformation of the plan area from a suburban, low-intensity auto-oriented retail center to a higher intensity, mixed-use destination. The HHSP will contain planning policies, zoning regulations, and urban design standards to help guide this transformation in the near and longer terms.

Funding for the Specific Plan

The HHSP is funded through a \$500,000 Local Early Action Planning (LEAP) Grant from the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD); a \$750,000 Priority Development Area (PDA) Planning Grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG); and \$200,000 from the City's comprehensive planning fees, which are collected through citywide planning and building permits applications.

Specific Plan Team

The City has a multidisciplinary team of policy and environmental planners, traffic consultants, designers, engineers, and economists to support preparation of the HHSP. The lead consultant is Environmental Science Associates (ESA). Subconsultants consist of BAE Urban Economics for economic and fiscal analyses; Fehr & Peers for transportation; SITELAB urban studio for design; NCE for engineering; CHS Consulting Group for additional transportation/parking analysis support; and A3GEO for geotechnical.

Supporting Documents

The Specific Plan team has prepared a series of memorandums, reports, and studies to help inform the specific plan development process. These documents are available for review on the HHSP website at hilltophorizon.com under the "Documents and Resources" section. The Market Study prepared by BAE Urban Economics presents

several key findings that are particularly relevant as the City Council considers the initial concept alternatives for the plan area.

Demographic and Economic Findings

- Richmond has a strong population base that can provide potential support for new retail, entertainment, and recreation opportunities in the plan area.
- The City has a large base of consumers living in family households and households with children. These households may provide support for new specialty retail, eating and drinking establishments, and other family-oriented entertainment and recreation establishments.
- The City's younger population base could help to support new forms of specialty and experiential retail, or the places consumers seek out to spend their discretionary time and discretionary dollars. Specialty and experiential retail offer immersive shopping experiences that help foster a unique "sense of place." A new and distinctive family-friendly retail node in the plan area would likely be very attractive to Richmond residents.
- The City's rich racial and ethnic diversity, with a high proportion of Latinx residents, supports specialty food retail, including ethnic markets and eating and drinking establishments.
- Low household incomes among Richmond residents may present a challenge for attracting regional-serving retail, entertainment, and recreation uses to the plan area. Regional-serving uses may gravitate toward higher-income areas elsewhere in Contra Costa or Alameda County.
- Richmond does not currently serve as a node for office-based employment, which suggests potential challenges for office development in the plan area.

Residential Market Findings

- Competitive market-rate rents and low rental vacancies indicate potential demand for multifamily rental development in the plan area.
- Significant recent growth in residential sale prices in Richmond indicates strong demand for for-sale housing in Richmond, including single-family homes, condominiums, and townhouses.
- Although Richmond has a relatively strong market for condominiums and townhomes, demand for these product types is focused in waterfront areas with access to amenities, in areas that are perceived as relatively safe communities.

- There is strong demand for affordable housing throughout Richmond and the region, including in the plan area.
- Market-rate residential development in the plan area is likely to target the top end of the market for each product type to achieve rents and sale prices that are high enough to cover the cost of new construction. As a result, new market-rate homes would likely be priced at levels that are not affordable to moderate-income and lower-income households. Strategies to target the production of housing for lower-income and moderate-income households will be necessary to accommodate the full spectrum of housing needs across income ranges in the plan area.
- Providing a range of housing types in the plan area at a mix of price points, including multifamily rental housing, condominiums, and townhomes, could address demand from various segments of the community.
- Attracting market-rate residential development to the plan area is likely to require implementation of placemaking strategies to complement residential uses, create a safe community feel, and provide dining and entertainment for new residents. These strategies will be particularly important for for-sale housing types to achieve the sale prices necessary to attract new development.
- The plan area offers a large site with the potential for a mix of uses that can create a sense of place with a mix of complementary uses that will support demand for new residential development.

Retail Market Findings

- Population growth in general will generate new retail spending power that can potentially be captured in the plan area. Attracting additional residents to the plan area may be critical for attracting new retailers to the site, and therefore early phases of implementation of the Specific Plan should focus on residential development rather than new retail.
- Noting the lack of nearby full-scale grocery stores, some residential real estate brokers suggested that there may be demand for a grocery store in the plan area, which could be further supported by new residential growth.
- E-commerce is disrupting the retail sector, resulting in the need for less physical space and more efficient use of existing space. Given this environment, only the most compelling sites will be attractive to retail developers or retail tenants. As such, it is critically important to refine how and where to build new retail space within the plan area.
- Overall, retail uses in the plan area will have a greater chance of success if developable sites offer good visibility, clear and unobstructed signage, and are

easily directly accessible from a high-traffic volume arterial or collector street. Sites that are 'mid-block' or located on minor streets are not as attractive to retail developers or retail tenants. Retail developers of neighborhood and community centers prefer sites that are '100 percent' corners on the 'going home side' of the street.

Office Market Findings

- Richmond is not an established office market and office rents are currently too low to support new speculative office development. However, small-scale office uses within a larger mixed-use project may be feasible by targeting tenants serving local residents and businesses in the future.
- Office tenants prefer physical settings that offer an 'urban' feel, even if situated in a suburban location. The completion of a walkable and amenity-rich mixed-use development project in the plan area could greatly improve the area's attractiveness as a potential office location.

Industrial/Flex Market Findings

- Richmond is strategically located to capture industrial demand spurred by the Port of Richmond, the Port of Oakland, and the growing demand for last-mile warehouse and distribution space regionwide.
- Vacancy rates for industrial and flex space are historically low, indicating that the market would be receptive to new industrial or flex product in the plan area.
- Although market trends suggest relatively strong demand for industrial space in Richmond, some industrial uses could potentially be incompatible with existing and future residential uses in the plan area. Industrial tenants typically seek locations separated from residential uses to avoid conflicts arising from truck traffic and emissions, noise, and vibrations. Additionally, conflicts between residential uses and industrial uses can hamper the operation of industrial businesses, making industrial operations less viable over time.
- The plan area may be an appropriate location for new smaller-scale industrial/flex, Research and Development (R&D), and PDR uses. Businesses in these industries can provide high-quality job opportunities for City residents.

Hotel Market Findings

- There are currently two planned hotels in the plan area. New hotels in Richmond may be able to secure a competitive position in the local market relative to the existing lodging inventory by offering a more modern aesthetic and amenities.

- Richmond currently serves primarily as an economy hotel market with limited business travel. Ensuring that the plan area includes a mix of uses and amenities that would support a higher-end hotel property could be critical to attracting a different category of hotel to the plan area, if desired.
- Hotels in Richmond may seek to increase leisure travel stays in part by enhancing connections with local and regional attractions and experiences.

Entertainment Uses Findings

- Due to low population densities and low incomes surrounding the plan area, the plan area is not currently an attractive location for new region-serving entertainment or retail. However, the development of a new high-quality mixed-used project with a significant residential component should drastically increase the population density in the plan area and may help to build additional support for retail and entertainment uses in the future. Therefore, attracting these types of uses to the plan area might rely on attracting a significant amount of residential development to the plan area during earlier phases of implementation.
- There is unmet demand for drinking places that serve alcoholic beverages in Richmond, such as a craft brewery. Given this significant and unmet existing demand, a brewpub with a full restaurant would be an ideal type of establishment within the plan area due to its focus on on-site sales of both food and beverages.

Community & Stakeholder Engagement

The specific plan development process was kicked-off in 2021 with an initial phase of public outreach to receive input from the area's neighborhood councils; private property and public agency stakeholders; and the community at large. The initial phase of outreach included a series of stakeholder interviews, an online community survey, an advisory committee meeting, and a community workshop.

Stakeholder Interviews

The specific plan team facilitated a series of virtual interviews in Summer 2022 to engage key stakeholders in one-on-one or small-group sessions to gain feedback regarding the Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan. The stakeholders interviewed included the Richmond Neighborhood Coordinating Council, Hilltop District Neighborhood Council, Hilltop Green Homeowner's Association, Fairmede-Hilltop Neighborhood Council, transit agencies, Contra Costa Health Services, utility companies, West Contra Costa Unified School District, area charter schools, Prologis, the West Contra Costa County Council of Business and Industry, City Council members (2), Planning Commissioners (3), and Design Review Board members (3). Key takeaways from the interviews are summarized below:

- **Major Challenges:** Stakeholders across the different groups generally agreed on major challenges and concerns, including housing need, safety and security (including police and crime), lack of healthy food options, transit connections, Measure U, economically feasible uses, and adverse effects as a result of industrial uses.
- **Housing:** Stakeholders identified housing as a major need, especially low-income and affordable housing. Stakeholders expressed the need and desire for multiple-story, high-rise, and high-density housing developments that provide views of the Bay and help to meet housing needs. One stakeholder said, “the more of it that you can put in, the better.”
- **Foods and Shops:** Grocery stores, markets, and restaurants are lacking in the community and stakeholders would like to see diverse, healthy food options.
- **Community Identity, Culture, and Gathering Spaces:** Stakeholders expressed the importance of maintaining a community gathering space/center. The mall site has previously served as a gathering area and residents are concerned of this being taken away without being replaced or improved. Stakeholders would like to see gathering spaces with community events, live music, diversity in foods, shops, and businesses, sports amenities, recreation programs, and more parks and trees. Stakeholders want residents, children, and visitors to be prioritized, and for the plan area to, “bring people out to enjoy the city.”
- **Community Safety:** Safety was identified as a major concern across all stakeholder groups. Stakeholders indicated high crime rates, concern for active commuters and children, speed of vehicles within the plan area, vandalism, car safety, theft, and homelessness. Stakeholders would like to see intentional designs that discourage crime and improve safety, including lighting, cameras, open spaces, increased patrolling, and traffic calming measures.
- **Roadways and Connectivity:** Stakeholders expressed the need for an improved street system that is safe and provides connections to transit, bike and pedestrian trails. Stakeholders generally described the current circular road as a “nuisance”. Stakeholders would like to see enforcement of speed limits, street redesign for walkability and connectivity, traffic-calming measures, less surface parking, complete sidewalks, and connections to BART and other transit systems.
- **Separated and Green Industrial:** The potential negative impacts typically associated with industrial uses are generally not desired; however, stakeholders acknowledged their benefits to the economy and employment. Stakeholders expressed that industrial uses should be separated and buffered from residential and social gathering areas, and limit noise, smells, and pollution. Stakeholders are concerned about warehouses taking over the space and for industrial uses being prioritized, or at the forefront of development. Stakeholders do not want to

see or hear large trucks, “honking horns”, heavy truck traffic near residential and schools, or smell exhaust fumes/chemicals. Stakeholders commented that industrial uses can serve as the “economic engine” and subsidize other uses that the community really wants/needs.

- Economic and Workforce Opportunities: Stakeholders would like to see new job opportunities for the local community, from new commercial and industrial uses. Stakeholders would like Richmond to be a more active participant in the innovation community, in which the Bay Area is a world leader in.
- Build Up: Stakeholders expressed the need for building up and making use of vertical space for housing, businesses, and parking that provide views of Richmond’s unique and scenic views. Stakeholders would like to see vertical buildings and multiple-story housing developments, with innovative architecture and designs.

Community Survey

A community survey was conducted online through SurveyMonkey from February 24, 2023 to March 15, 2023. An in-person opportunity to complete the survey was also provided on March 11, 2023, at the Richmond Walmart in Hilltop. The survey contained a total of 27 questions and received 472 responses. Key takeaways from the survey are highlighted below:

- Top priorities for the planning area include attracting new businesses (47.03%); creating entertainment opportunities (38.98%); creating more housing choices (36.65%); promoting new land uses that stimulate the local economy (33.47%); promoting safety (30.72%); promoting employment opportunities (28.39%); and enhancing services and amenities (27.12%).
- Types of housing most needed in the planning area include affordable housing (51.83%); multi-family residential (43.58%); for-sale housing (42.89%), single-family attached homes (38.3%); for rent housing (42.89%), and single-family detached homes (25.46%).
- Types of retail establishments most desired in the planning area include restaurants and cafes (85.78%); grocery stores (70.41%); independently-owned small businesses (52.06%); big box stores (50%); and flexible retail spaces (16.74%).
- Respondents would like to see change happen in the plan area within the next five years (89.91%).
- A considerable number of respondents think industrial uses should not be permitted in the planning area (44.28%). Respondents open to light industrial uses in the plan area indicated the following types would be most acceptable:

research & development (42.82%); data center (35.77%); showrooms (23.11%); flex space (19.22%); light manufacturing (17.76%); and distribution warehouse (14.84%).

- The biggest concerns related to industrial uses in the planning area are air quality impacts (72.02%); noise impacts (63.50%); traffic impacts (62.04%); odors (57.66%); and view impacts (38.44%).
- Respondents indicated that improvements for the following mobility options should be prioritized in the plan area: walking (70.56%); transit – bus (57.66%); biking (55.47%); personal vehicle (42.58%).
- Types of community facilities that should be prioritized in the planning area include: active recreational uses (71.78%); passive open spaces (70.80%); community/senior centers (45.01%); libraries (35.28%); health clinics (33.09%); police/fire services (30.66%); cultural facilities (30.41%); and schools (18.0%).

Advisory Committee Meeting #1

The first advisory committee meeting was hosted by the specific plan team on August 24, 2022. The advisory committee was formed to serve as a sounding board to provide guidance, feedback, and recommendations throughout the specific plan development process. Advisory committee participants for this meeting included AC Transit, WestCAT, West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC), West County Wastewater, Campus LLC, Contra Costa Health Services, Hilltop Green Homeowner's Association, Hilltop District Neighborhood Council, Parchester Village Neighborhood Council, Prologis, and West Contra Costa County Council of Business and Industries. As part of the meeting, the advisory committee shared that the following themes should be prioritized as part of the specific planning process:

- Community, Culture, and Gathering Spaces (69%): New development should allow spaces to celebrate culture, diversity, and community. Hilltop Mall has one of the best views; try to combine an outdoor development to make use of the view. Provide public spaces to allow community members to connect. Create a center, a focal point to steer away from the uniformness that comes with suburban development.
- Housing (54%): Provide senior housing and supporting resources. Require or incentivize construction of affordable housing rather than payment of in-lieu fees. Encourage building upward to create higher density housing. Transit needs to be coordinated together with housing development like it has on Treasure Island. Housing should be focused around the mall so that the mall site can be prioritized for retail, gathering spaces, etc.
- Connectivity (54%): Transit passes should be made available for future residents. With a few improvements, Hilltop can become a great biking environment. The

schools located off Hilltop Mall Road need a better plan for pick-up/drop-off. Consider having roads/lanes that are exclusively for transit/buses. Increase density in the area to support use of the existing transit center. Consider establishing a transportation management association that could help pay for shuttles and other parking demand management strategies. Consider redesigning existing roadways to provide better connectivity and mobility.

- Safety (54%): Locate a police station or substation in the nearby area. Utilize crime-prevention through environmental design principles to promote safety and prevent crime. People need to feel safe so that they will want to shop, play, work, and live in the plan area. The City should address complaints about dangerous roadway conditions in the area as part of the plan. Fire safety should be addressed as population growth occurs in the plan area.

Community Workshop #1

The first community workshop was hosted by the specific plan team on September 27, 2022. The purpose of this virtual workshop was to give community members at large the opportunity to share input on the specific planning process. The workshop was well attended with a total of 112 participants. Following is a summary of major themes expressed during the workshop breakout rooms:

- Mixed-use outdoor spaces; outdoor recreation and sports facilities; gardens, green roofs, and green buffers are lacking in the plan area and should be enhanced as part of the specific plan.
- The specific plan should address public safety, enhance traffic control (i.e., signage), and include safety measures for parking.
- Places should be provided in the planning area for people to gather and enjoy community events with live entertainment.
- Warehouse and industrial uses are not generally favored in the planning area due to potential pollution and traffic impacts. Other unfavorable uses include big chain stores, smoke shops, and cannabis dispensaries.
- The types of development participants thought should be prioritized in the early implementation of the specific plan include green spaces, trails, connections to Lake Park, grocery stores, local and specialty stores, outdoor restaurants, a Costco, educator housing, affordable housing, senior housing, and public safety.
- There was cohesive agreement that the plan area needs to be made whole and better connected and that the specific plan team should work towards consensus among the different stakeholders.

DISCUSSION:

Early City-Developed Concept Alternatives

The Specific Plan team has developed initial concept alternatives for the plan area based on the input provided through the initial phase of community engagement (see Attachment 2, City-Developed Concept Alternatives). These City-developed concept alternatives are intended to address community goals, take advantage of Hilltop's place-specific qualities, and provide flexibility for near- and long-term implementation. The community goals addressed by the city-developed concept alternatives are:

- Growing the plan area into a complete neighborhood and destination with a mix of land uses and entertainment opportunities;
- Attracting new neighbors, businesses, and visitors through expanded housing choices and employment opportunities; and
- Creating spaces to belong, connect, and share while promoting safety, enhancing mobility for all users, and emphasizing community sustainability, resilience, and equity.

The City-Developed Concept alternatives contemplate the following:

- The extension of Robert Miller Drive east through the mall site to connect to Klose Way and the extension of Shane Drive north through the mall site to connect with Hillview Drive;
- A new north-south open space corridor or trail alignment between Hilltop Lake Park to the water tank site at the intersection of Hilltop and Blume that could offer views and recreational opportunities;
- A residential neighborhood and park in the northwest quadrant of the mall site and higher-density residential district in the southwest quadrant;
- A mixed-use residential neighborhood in the southeast quadrant of the mall site with large-format retail anchors near the corner of Klose Way and Hilltop Mall Road;
- In City-Developed Concept Alternative A, the northeast quadrant of the mall site could accommodate employment/industrial uses;
- In City-Developed Concept Alternative B, the northeast quadrant of the mall site could accommodate mixed-use office instead of employment/industrial uses;
- Allowing flexibility for the block bound by Robert Miller Drive, Hilltop Drive, Shane Drive, and Hilltop Mall Road to transition to residential uses;

- Acknowledging the existing Aspire charter schools located at the southeast corner of Shane Drive and Hilltop Mall Road and the southeast corner of Hilltop Mall Road and Klose Way;
- Allowing flexibility for other properties located along Hilltop Mall Road between Shane Drive and Klose Way to transition to entertainment and residential uses;
- Acknowledging the existing Courtyard and Extended Stay hotels along Garrity Way east of Blume Drive and allowing flexibility for other service-related uses to locate in this area; and
- Acknowledging the existing multifamily residential use (Tides Apartments) at the end of Garrity Way and allowing for higher-density residential uses on the vacant properties immediately west of the Tides.

Mall Landowner-Developed Concept Alternatives

The mall site accounts for approximately 55 percent of the plan area (78 of 143 acres). In 2020, Prologis purchased the mall site with the intent to redevelop the property. At the first community workshop, the community desired to know what the new landowner wanted to do with the property. Initial plans developed by Prologis for the mall site showed various arrangements of predominantly employment/industrial uses as well as some retail and housing. Most recently, Prologis partnered with Signature Development Group to prepare more refined concept alternatives for the mall site that better aligned with the feedback received during the specific planning process and their own community outreach efforts (see Attachment 3, Mall Landowner-Developed Concept Plans). It is important to note that the mall landowner-developed concept alternatives were not prepared by the Specific Plan team – they were prepared and funded solely by the Prologis/Signature team.

The mall landowner-developed concept alternatives contemplate the following:

- Vacating the northern segment of Hilltop Mall Road between Hillview Drive and Klose Way to provide a bike and pedestrian landscaped corridor;
- The extension of Robert Miller Drive east through the mall site to connect to Klose Way and provide bike and pedestrian improvements along this new corridor;
- The extension of Hillview Drive south into the mall site to connect to the Robert Miller Drive extension and provide bike and pedestrian improvements along this new corridor;
- Community gateway elements at the Hillview Drive/Hilltop Mall Road, Robert Miller Drive/Hilltop Mall Road, and Klose Way/Hilltop Mall Road intersections;

- One-acre parks at the Hillview Drive/Hilltop Mall Road and Klose Way/Hilltop Mall Road intersections;
- Potential for larger floor plate retail or smaller-scale, experiential retail on 21.9 acres immediately south and east of the existing Walmart store (which has 25-year lease that constrains its potential relocation);
- In Mall Landowner-Developed Concept Alternative A, a 10 to 14-acre portion of the mall site located at the southeast corner Hillview Drive and Hilltop Mall Road could allow for industrial/employment uses with the remaining mall site reserved for a mix of low to medium density residential uses (approximately 36 to 40 acres); and
- In Mall Landowner-Developed Concept Alternative B, no industrial/employment uses and the majority of the mall site would accommodate a mix of low to medium density residential uses (approximately 50 acres).

Feedback on Concept Alternatives

The specific plan team presented the concept alternatives at a second advisory committee meeting on October 26, 2023; a second community workshop on November 1, 2023; and a Planning Commission study session on November 16, 2023. The feedback and discussion from Advisory Committee Meeting #2 and Community Workshop #2 are summarized in Attachments 3 and 4 of this report. The Planning Commission's feedback can be summarized as follows:

- **General:** There was support to enhance the existing community, with a focus on creating a family-friendly environment. The specific plan should ensure improvements are made to educational institutions, through investments and contributions to schools. A need for more housing was recognized, with an emphasis on provisions for senior housing and amenities. Integrate high quality transit into the plan and provide a multi-modal system that allows users to move safely and conveniently to and through the community. The specific plan should integrate actionable strategies from the City's Climate Action Plan, to enhance the resiliency of the area. Boost outreach efforts to gain input from participants that represent a range in socio-economic backgrounds.
- **Development Timeline:** While there is interest to see built projects occur within the near term (0 - 5 years), a development timeline of 6 to 10 years (medium term) seems most realistic in order to create a holistic plan that accomplishes all of the plan goals. As market conditions will evolve, a flexible plan that can adapt to market changes is most desirable.
- **Employment:** Employment opportunities should be created in corresponding measure to the housing being developed. The specific plan should promote jobs that allow people to thrive. In the spirit of enhancing the existing community, jobs

created should elevate the opportunities for local as well as new residents, provide healthy salaries for workers, and encourage foot traffic. Incubator, or innovative co-working spaces, are appealing. Input was received both in favor and not in favor of development of logistics facilities and distribution centers.

- Retail: Retail development should be people-oriented and accessible to by transit, cars, bicycles and pedestrians. An active open space concept provides for a pedestrian connection between the retail/commercial areas and the rest of the community. Retail needs to integrate with the existing Walmart, and should have high visibility from the freeway and main roads. Retail should promote community interaction and cater to the needs of existing and future users.
- Housing: Housing should support and provide options for young families, have a range of affordability levels, and be implemented in a range of densities. This would allow for a critical mass of residents, which is necessary to support and induce new development. Mid-density housing such as townhomes and multifamily housing is supported over single-family detached housing. Consideration should be given to mixed-use developments that interact with the street face, and urban design strategies that activate spaces.

CONCLUSION:

At the December 5th study session, the Specific Plan team will provide the City Council with an overview of the progression of the concept alternatives, summarize all feedback received on the concept alternatives (including that of the Planning Commission), and solicit additional feedback from the City Council. In addition to feedback on the concept alternatives, the specific plan team will request input on the following:

- How quickly should change happen in the plan area?
- Which employment use types would be the least desirable in the plan area?
- What style of new retail development is most desirable for the plan area?
- Is there support for a reduction to the density minimums at the mall site to spur residential development and other types of development in the plan area?
- Is there support for an increase to the density maximums for the remaining properties in the plan area to spur residential development and other types of development in the plan area?

NEXT STEPS:

The collective Advisory Committee, community/stakeholder, Planning Commission, and City Council feedback will be used by the Specific Plan team to start developing a preferred land use vision for the plan area. Once the preferred land use vision is

prepared, it will be brought back to the Planning Commission and City Council for confirmation. With the finalization of the preferred land use vision, the Specific Plan team will begin drafting the specific plan document and conduct the appropriate level of environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Adoption hearings for the specific plan are currently anticipated to occur by the end of next year; however, this target may change depending on when the preferred land use vision is confirmed.

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

- Attachment 1 – Map of Hilltop Horizon Specific Plan Area
- Attachment 2 – City-Developed Concept Alternatives
- Attachment 3 – Mall Landowner-Developed Concept Alternatives
- Attachment 4 – Advisory Committee Meeting #2 Summary
- Attachment 5 – Community Workshop #2 Summary