

# NORTH RICHMOND - CONTEXT - 1

Surrounded almost entirely by the City of Richmond, North Richmond was a quiet, rural area until World War II attracted workers to the nearby Kaiser Shipyards. Due to redlining practices and housing discrimination, Black and other minority workers found it challenging to find housing closer to the ports and railyards, forcing them to relocate to North Richmond. North Richmond became a pocket of affordable, accessible housing for minority households, but with little neighborhood infrastructure. Following wartime, many residents stayed to work in the petroleum, railroad, and shipping industries in Richmond, and the community continued to grow.

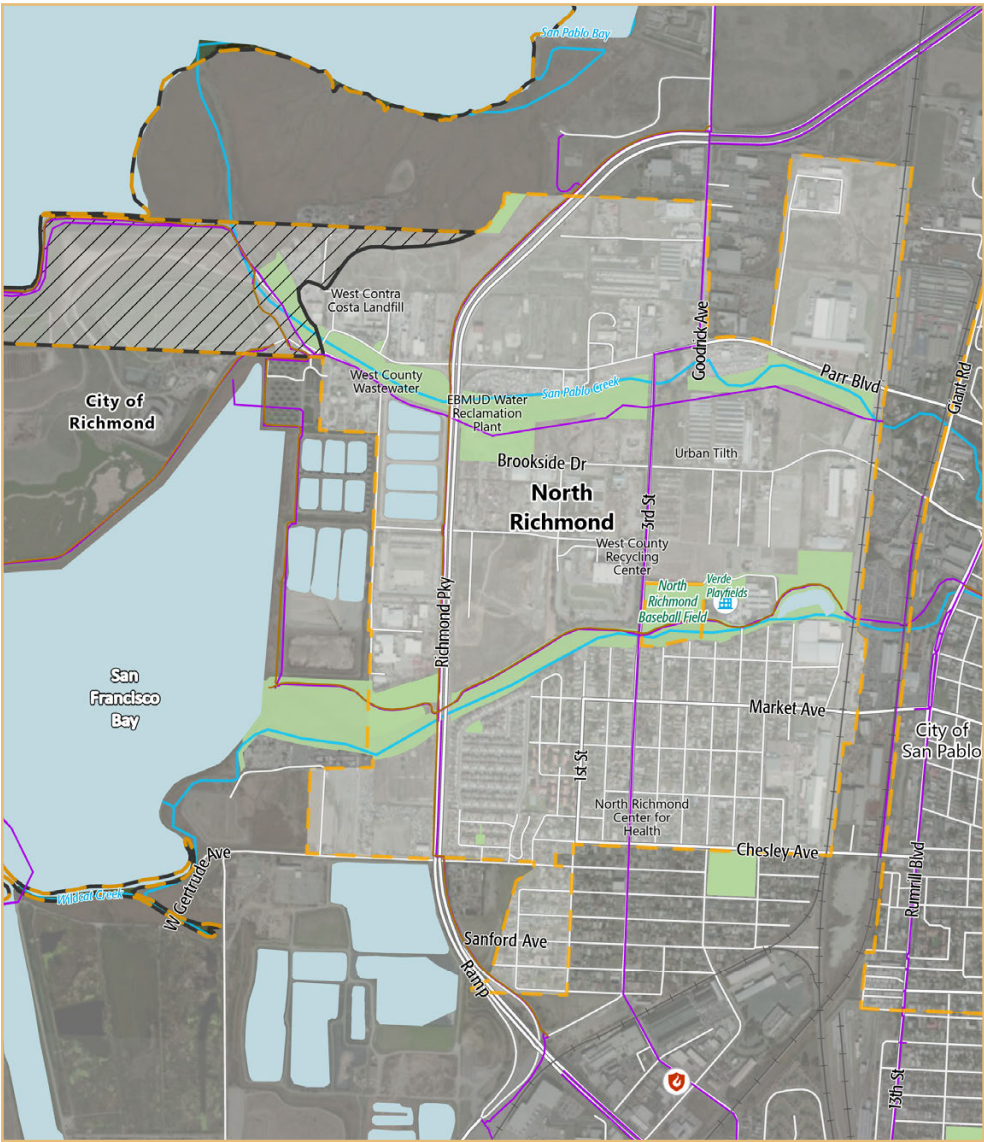
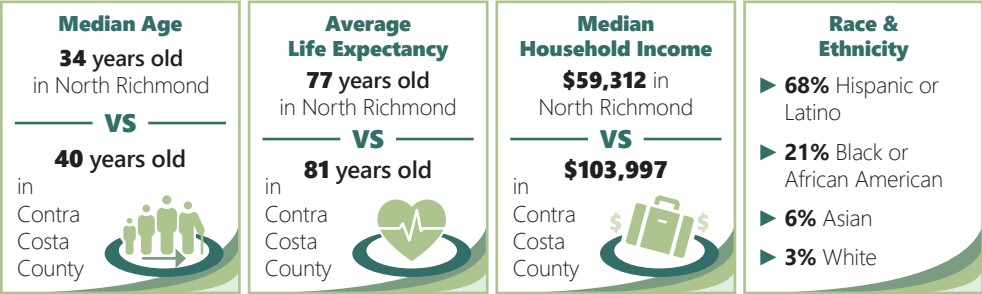


(Community-submitted photo.)

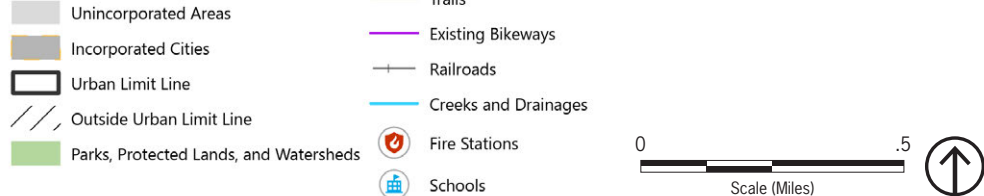
Today, North Richmond is primarily residential south of Wildcat Creek. North of the creek, heavy industrial uses dominate. Housing is relatively affordable compared to the rest of the Bay Area, but the housing stock is aging and many households face high housing cost burdens and poor infrastructure. These factors, combined with North Richmond's proximity to job centers and its location on the Interstate 80 corridor, place the community at risk of gentrification and displacement. The risk is highest for renters, who comprise a majority of the community. While the Contra Costa County Housing Authority offers housing choice vouchers to eligible applicants, residents would like more affordable housing incorporated into new development. There is a strong and growing local urban farming movement that has transformed vacant lots into community gardens, improving access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food.

North Richmond residents are actively engaged in local planning and advocate for their community through Urban Tilth, the Verde Elementary School, the Watershed Project, and other community organizations. Planning is complicated by jurisdictional lines, with part of the neighborhood within the Richmond city limit. Given its proximity to heavy industrial uses, including the Chevron Richmond Refinery, residents are very concerned about community health, along with other issues like crime and illegal dumping. There are regulations in place to mitigate emissions from new industrial users, and the community is working with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) to develop an action framework for community air protection. In addition, while there have been recent levee improvements and streetscape and sidewalk improvements, community members would like additional roadway infrastructure and transit improvements that ensure safe, equitable, and affordable transportation access for all modes. North Richmond is within the planning area of the 2020 Richmond Area Community-Based Transportation Plan, a plan developed by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority to address the community's mobility needs.







## WHO LIVES IN NORTH RICHMOND?



Source: Contra Costa County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2022.

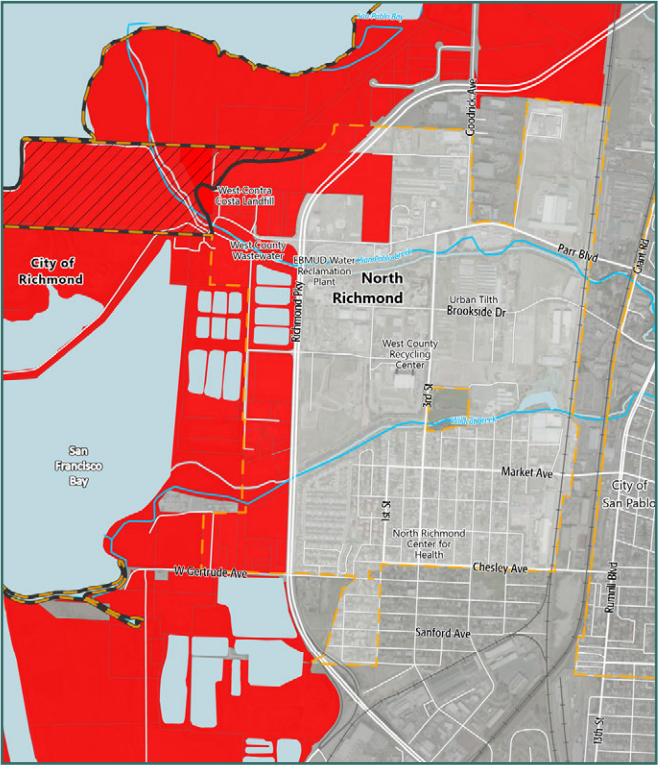


The information on this page presents a summary of hazards and vulnerabilities in the North Richmond community based on the Contra Costa County Vulnerability Assessment; please see the Health and Safety Element for more information about tsunami hazards and the [online Vulnerability Assessment](#) for a full description of the other hazards and vulnerabilities.

HAZARDS	
	Air quality from increased ozone and diesel particulate matter
	Coastal flooding
	Extreme heat
	Flooding
	Human health hazards
	Seismic hazards

MAJOR VULNERABILITIES	
Cost-burdened households and households in poverty are vulnerable to coastal flooding and seismic hazards.	
Persons experiencing chronic illnesses, homeless persons, and households in poverty are vulnerable to air quality, extreme heat, and human health hazards.	
Levees located in North Richmond are vulnerable to coastal flooding.	
The recycling center in North Richmond is vulnerable to coastal flooding.	
Public transit access, water and wastewater services, energy delivery services, and solid waste removal services are vulnerable to multiple hazards.	

TSUNAMI HAZARD MAP



- Unincorporated Areas
- Incorporated Cities
- Urban Limit Line
- Outside Urban Limit Line
- Railroads
- Creeks and Drainages
- Water
- Tsunami Hazard Area



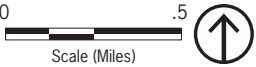
Source: California Department of Conservation, 2022; California Geological Survey (CGS), 2022; California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES), 2022; Contra Costa County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2022.

FLOOD ZONES



- 100-Year Flood Zone
- 500-Year Flood Zone
- Areas of Undetermined but Possible Flood Hazard
- Water
- Incorporated Cities
- Outside Urban Limit Line
- Railroads
- Creeks and Drainages

A 100-year flood zone represents a 1% chance of flooding in any given year.  
A 500-year flood zone represents a 0.2% chance of flooding in any given year.



Source: FEMA, 2019; Contra Costa County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2022.



# IMPACTED COMMUNITY

The County has identified North Richmond as an Impacted Community under Senate Bill (SB) 1000, which requires the County to integrate environmental justice into the General Plan. This law is based on the understanding that some communities have experienced a combination of historic discrimination, negligence, and political and economic disempowerment. Often, this has resulted in a disproportionate burden of pollution and health impacts and disproportionate social and economic disadvantages in these communities.

The 21 indicators that contribute to North Richmond's identification as an Impacted Community are highlighted in the chart to the right, with additional details provided in the maps that follow, based on State data from [CalEnviroScreen](#). The chart shows how North Richmond ranks for each indicator compared to the rest of the state. The County identifies Impacted Communities as those where the combined ranking for all factors is 72 percent or higher.

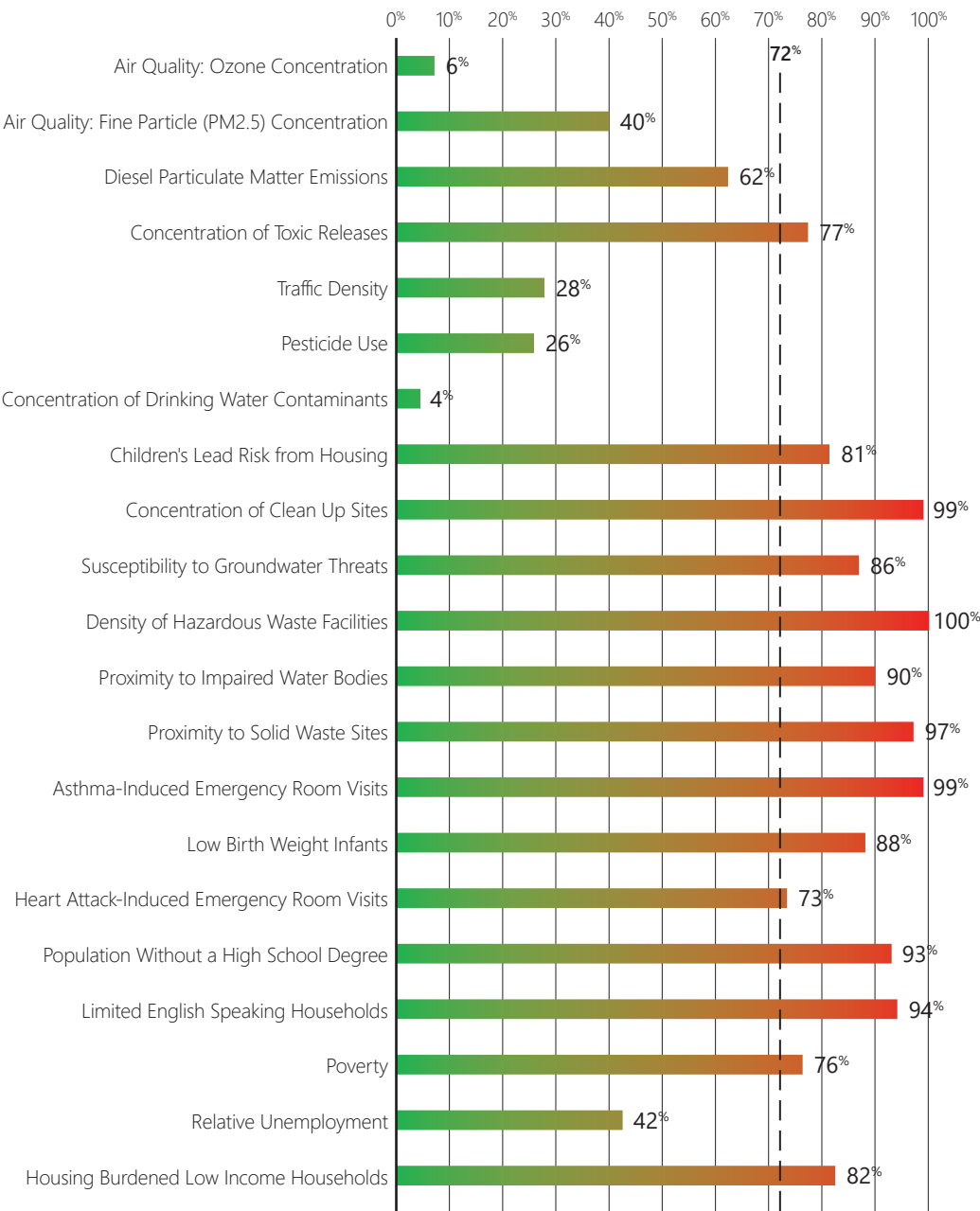
North Richmond experiences high levels of diesel particulate matter due to the oil refinery, chemical companies, highways, truck traffic, rail yards, shipping ports, and marine terminals located within and near the community. Exposure to air pollution and chemicals contributes to eye, throat, and nose irritation, along with heart and lung disease. As shown in the chart, North Richmond residents visit the emergency room for asthma conditions at a rate that is among the highest rate in the state. There are frequent violations of air quality rules from facilities in and around North Richmond, and air testing has found unsafe levels of industrial pollutants inside residents' homes.

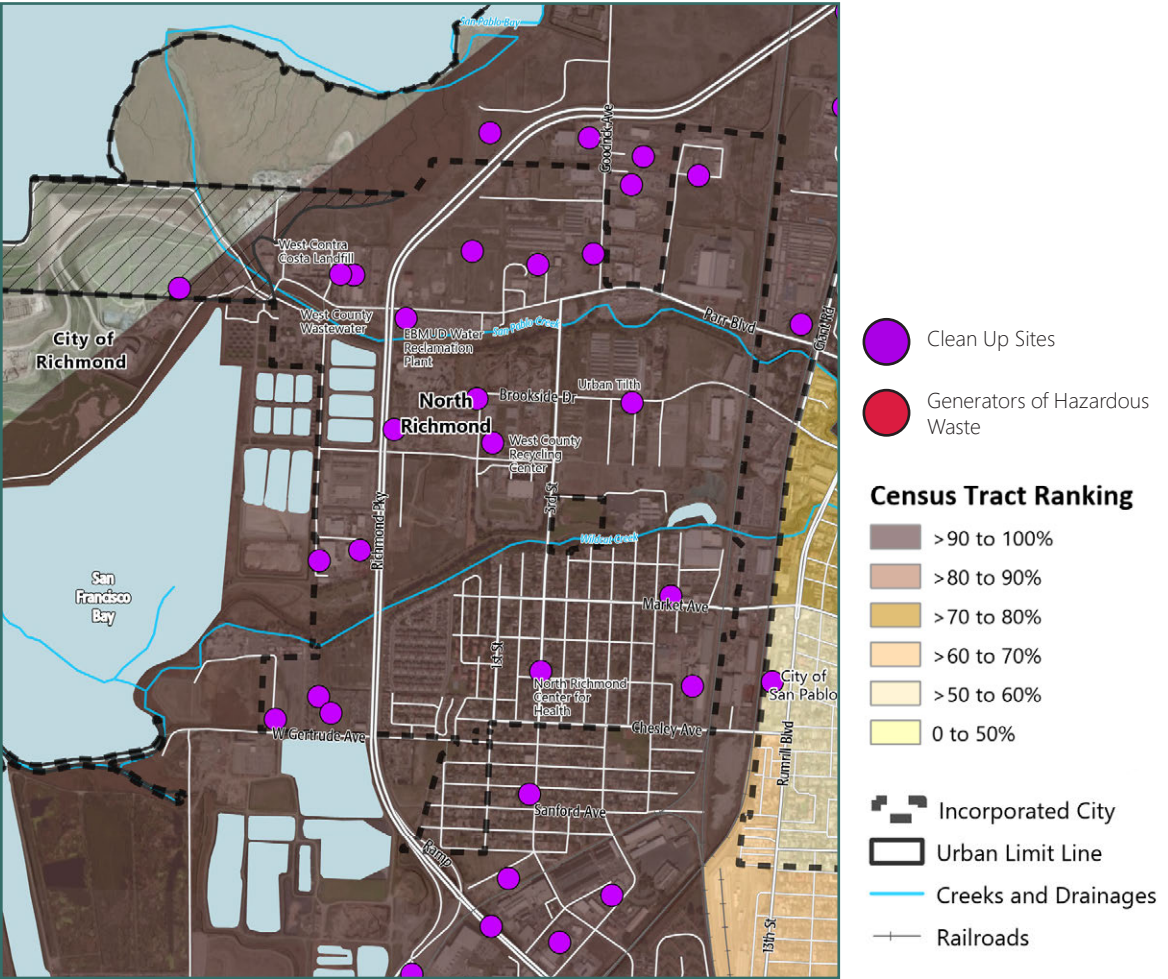
There are also many hazardous waste facilities and generators that affect North Richmond, including the Chevron Refinery, chemical companies, and Superfund sites. Beyond the acute risks to human and environmental health, these sources also raise concerns about odors, vermin, and increased freight traffic.

The community is also burdened by historical and perceived high rates of crime. In addition to safety concerns, outdoor recreation and active transportation are hampered by a lack of trail maintenance and the need for more connected walking and biking infrastructure. Limited access to active recreation and transportation, coupled with limited access to stores that sell fresh and healthy food, can lead to poor health outcomes for local residents. However, a strong and growing urban agriculture movement is helping to bring healthy food options to North Richmond.

## IMPACTED COMMUNITY INDICATORS (2021)

Ranking of Most Impacted Census Tract in North Richmond Relative to the State





## CLEAN UP SITES

This map ranks Census tracts based on the concentration of clean up sites, which are sites undergoing clean up actions by governmental authorities or property owners due to environmental degradation from hazardous substances. The ranking also considers the nature and magnitude of the threat and the site type and status. The North Richmond Census tract is ranked at 99 percent, meaning that the area has a concentration of clean up sites that is higher than 99 percent of the state. In addition, some of the clean up sites in North Richmond are within the 100 year and 500 year flood zones (see map on page 2), posing risk of further contamination during a flood event.

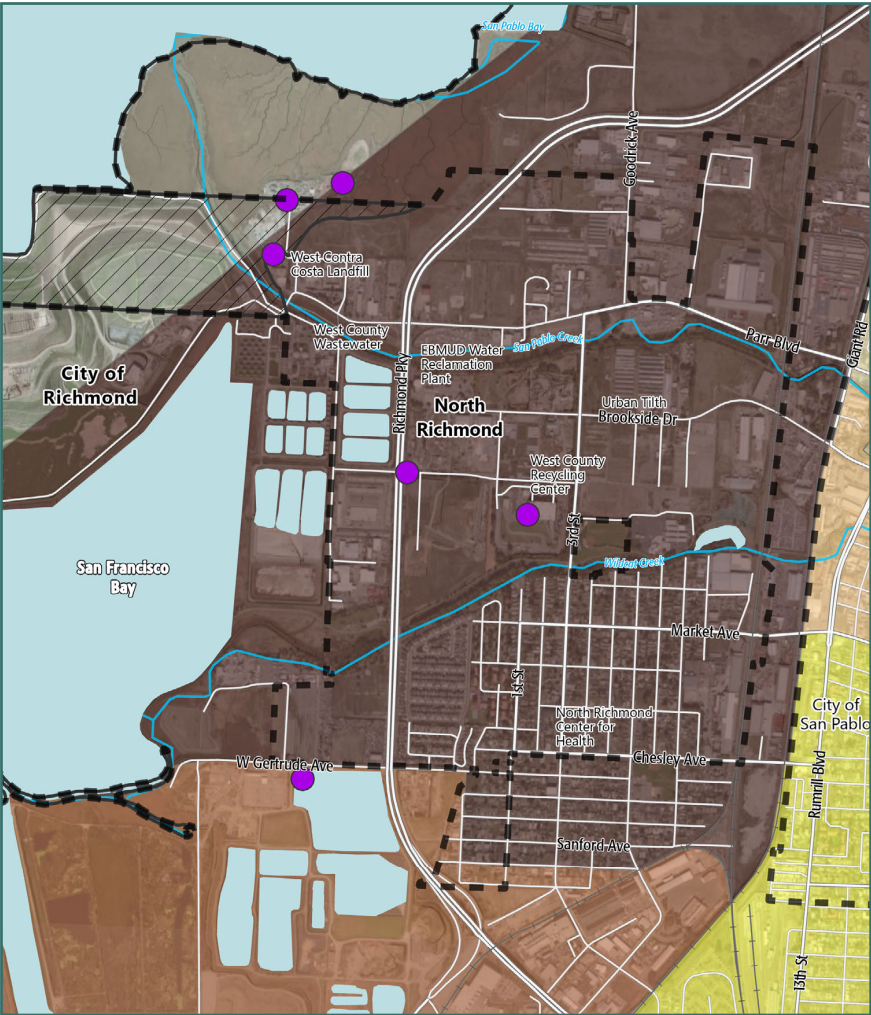


## HAZARDOUS WASTE

This map ranks Census tracts based on the density of hazardous waste facilities and generators (e.g., the Chevron Refinery), considering each facility's type and permit status and generator activities. The North Richmond Census tract is ranked at 100 percent, meaning that it has a density of hazardous waste facilities and generators that is among the highest in the state.







## SOLID WASTE

This map ranks Census tracts based on the proximity to solid waste sites and facilities, considering each facility's type, proximity to nearby communities, reported odor complaints, and more. The North Richmond Census tract is ranked at 97 percent, meaning that the area is more exposed to solid waste hazards than 97 percent of the state.

Source: CalEnviroscreen, 2021; Contra Costa County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2022



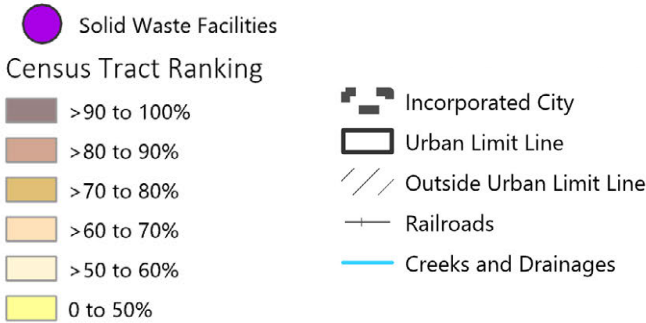
(Credit: Urban Tilth.)



(Credit: Urban Tilth.)



(Credit: Urban Tilth.)







## PLANNED LAND USE

Land use designations for North Richmond are shown on Figure LU-1, General Plan Land Use Map, and are defined in the Land Use Element. Most of North Richmond is planned for continued light industrial, public, and resource conservation uses. The area south of Wildcat Creek is the heart of the community and is planned for the continuation of residential uses at a range of densities, supported by local-serving commercial development. The mixed-use designations along Fred Jackson Way, Market Avenue, and Chesley Avenue are intended to create a combination of affordable, multiple-family residential units and ground-level retail and office uses. The North Richmond Design Guidelines provide more detailed design guidance for development in this area.



Small lot single-family housing in North Richmond.



Multi-family senior housing in North Richmond.



Public facilities celebrating community culture in North Richmond.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In 2019, Healthy Richmond published the Quality of Life (QOL) Plan, which was developed with robust community engagement under the direction of the North Richmond Leadership Team, a group of North Richmond residents dedicated to organizing and voicing the aspirations and concerns of the North Richmond community. The QOL Plan informed the creation of guiding principles, policies, and actions in this community profile; references to specific QOL Plan priorities are noted in parentheses at the end of relevant policies and actions.

The following guiding principles articulate the values, priorities, and aspirations for the future shared by North Richmond community members:

1. Affordable rental and ownership housing opportunities should be expanded and integrated into market rate developments. A range of housing types should be available to meet extremely low, very low, and low income levels, and existing community members should be prioritized for available housing.
2. Achievement of housing development goals should be balanced with maintaining quality of life, parking availability, circulation, and property values for current residents.
3. North Richmond residents who lack housing should have access to quality services and be treated with dignity and respect. Vital, easy-to-access community programs related to homelessness, rehabilitation, education and training, youth, and elderly services should be available.
4. Sensitive uses, like schools, senior housing, and child-care facilities, should be buffered from heavy industrial uses.
5. Industrial uses in and around North Richmond should transition to renewable energy and other clean industries that do not pose health risks to the neighborhood.
6. North Richmond residents should have better access to Wildcat Creek, the shoreline, and other parks and green spaces. Students at Verde Elementary should be able to access open spaces via a safe and connected trail network.
7. North Richmond should provide a healthy and safe environment, where vacant lots have transitioned into vibrant community assets like community gardens and playgrounds.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES (CONTINUED)

8. Streets should be made more inviting by repairing and adding sidewalks, increasing street lighting, planting trees, improving parking, and eliminating illegal dumping. Public infrastructure, including green infrastructure, should be upgraded and well-maintained, and the design of the built environment should contribute to crime prevention.
9. North Richmond should be a safe place for people of all abilities to walk, bike, and drive. Speeding and cut-through traffic should be eliminated, negative impacts from truck traffic should be mitigated, and rail crossings should be separated from roadways.
10. North Richmond residents should have access to affordable and reliable public transportation, with more frequent bus connections to the BART station and bus stops that provide amenities to increase safety and comfort, such as shelters, benches, lighting, and landscaping.
11. North Richmond residents should enjoy easy access to affordable, healthy, and fresh food, including grocery stores, farmers markets, and community gardens.
12. New mixed-use and commercial development that benefits local residents and the community should be encouraged. The local economy should offer diverse employment opportunities that promote social mobility and self-sufficiency.

## POLICIES

1. Coordinate with the West Contra Costa Unified School District, the City of Richmond, and residents, including youth, to enhance existing open spaces, including Shields-Reid Park, Verde Elementary School, and Lucky A's Field, to provide the fullest civic, educational, social, and recreational benefits for the community. (QOL I.3)
2. Coordinate with local non-profits to celebrate the history of diversity in North Richmond through community events, public art, and music.
3. Prohibit the construction of large walls or gates that divide the community. (QOL Y.4)
4. Require that new industrial development pay special attention to upgrading the visual appearance and unity of the area through quality architectural and landscape design and utility undergrounding. (3-188)

## POLICIES (CONTINUED)

5. Continue to monitor air quality through air quality sensors installed throughout the community as part of the Community Air Protection Program (Assembly Bill 617).
6. Require that new development incorporate green infrastructure solutions to minimize flooding and environmental pollution, such as bioswales, detention or retention ponds, and cisterns that capture rainwater for irrigation. (QOL I.7)
7. Promote the use of native plants in green infrastructure, landscaping, and parks.
8. Support implementation of the 2020 Richmond Area Community-Based Transportation Plan.
9. Encourage community engagement, social cohesion, and restorative practices in support of community safety and crime prevention objectives.
10. Support workforce development and wealth-building programs for residents and locally owned businesses, cooperatives, and other uses offering benefits to the community, such as grocery stores, community kitchens, and child-care facilities. (QOL B.1)
11. Seek community benefit agreements for new large commercial developments. Such agreements could include requirements for local hiring, apprenticeship and training programs, and funding for school and education programs. (QOL H.4, B.3)
12. Continue to support vibrant urban agriculture operations. (3-194)

## ACTIONS

1. Seek funding to construct a new community and cultural center that serves youth and families, and support programming that promotes employment opportunities and workforce development. (QOL Y.3, I.5, I.6)
2. Seek Opportunity Zone funding or support community advocacy for a social impact bond, with non-profit governance, to develop funds for renovation of homes by the local labor force.
3. Restore creeks with native plants, including planting an urban forest at the eastern end of Wildcat Creek, and develop new amenities, connections, and access points along Wildcat Creek. Consider partnering with local non-profit organizations to maintain vegetation along the creek.



## ACTIONS (CONTINUED)

4. Construct trail connections to the Bay Trail and to residential areas, including the residential areas adjacent to Wildcat Creek, and install amenities like educational signs, bathrooms, water fountains, and benches.
5. Assist a community-led process to seek funding for a multi-use trail over Richmond Parkway to complete the Wildcat Creek Trail crossing to the marsh.
6. Install and monitor security cameras in areas where illegal dumping is prevalent.
7. Prepare and implement a street corridor and gateway beautification plan that celebrates the unique historical identity of North Richmond and instills civic pride and a sense of unity among residents. (QOL B.6)
8. Update the North Richmond Specific Plan to encompass the entire community and integrate goals and concepts from recent planning efforts, including the 2019 Quality of Life Plan and the 2018 Priority Resilience Plan developed as part of the Bay Area Resilient by Design Challenge. (QOL I.8)
9. Support the Safe Routes to School Program by providing adequate pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure around Verde Elementary.
10. Develop a plan for equitable access to active transportation and to address speeding, dangerous intersections, and cut-through traffic on 1st Street and Richmond Parkway. (QOL S.1)
11. Install pedestrian and bicycle improvements to increase safety along Fred Jackson Way.
12. Designate truck routes that minimize impacts on schools and homes.
13. Adopt viable methods to encourage local residents to open businesses in North Richmond, such as proactive outreach to the community, assisting with funding through various tax incentives, streamlining entitlement processes, and revising County ordinances and fees.

