

# NORTH RICHMOND - CONTEXT - 1

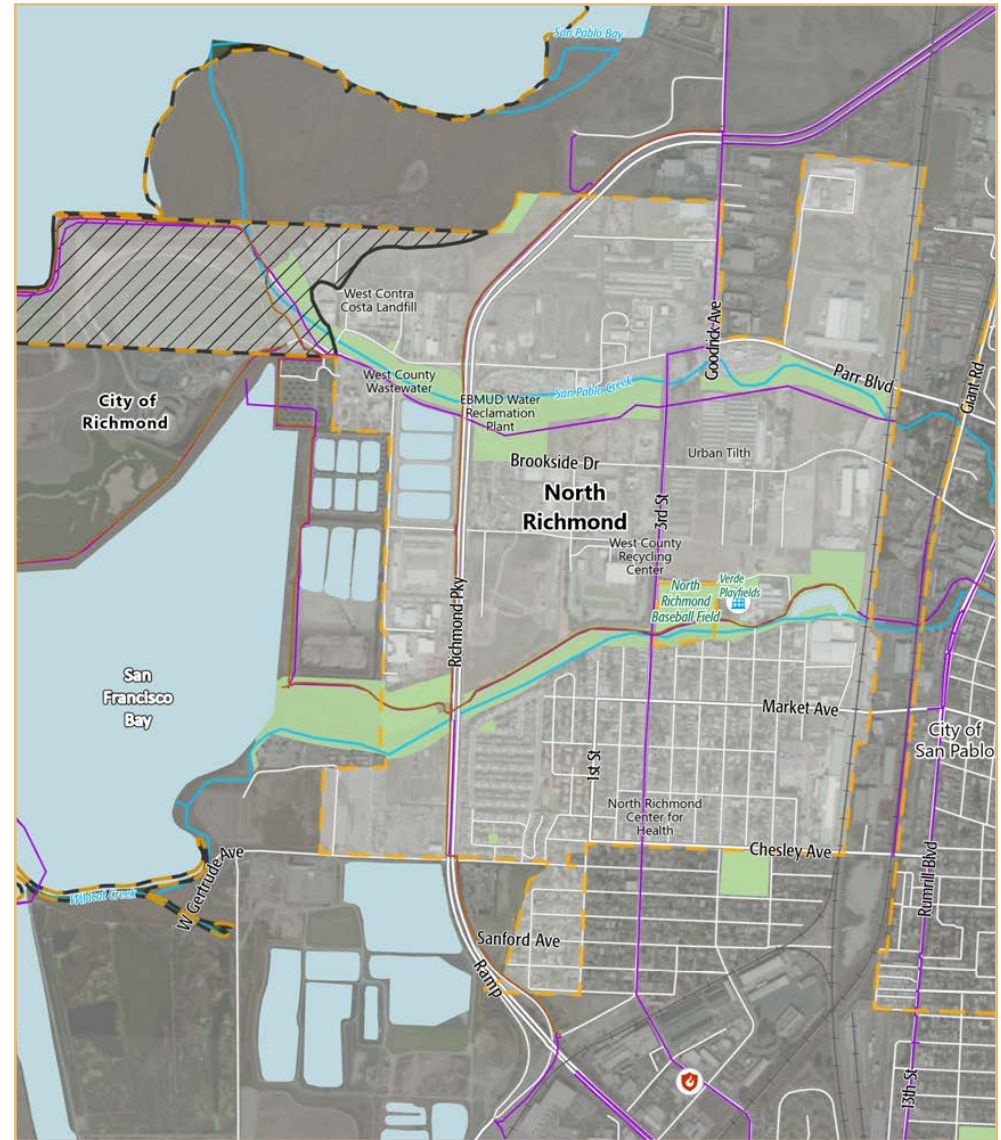
Surrounded almost entirely by the City of Richmond, North Richmond was a quiet, rural area until World War II attracted workers to the nearby Kaiser Shipyards. Due to housing and lending discrimination, Black and other minority workers found it challenging to find housing closer to the ports and railyards, 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 the war, many residents stayed to work in the petroleum, railroad, and shipping industries in Richmond, and the community continued to grow.



(Community-submitted photo.)

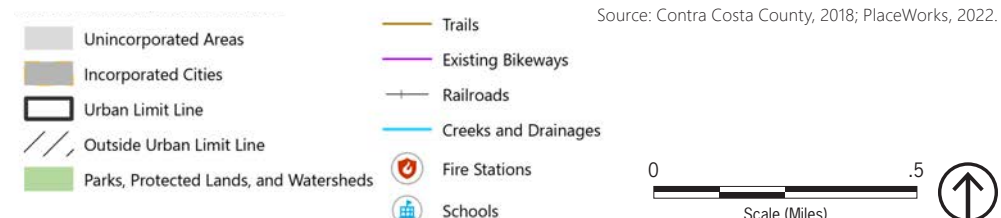
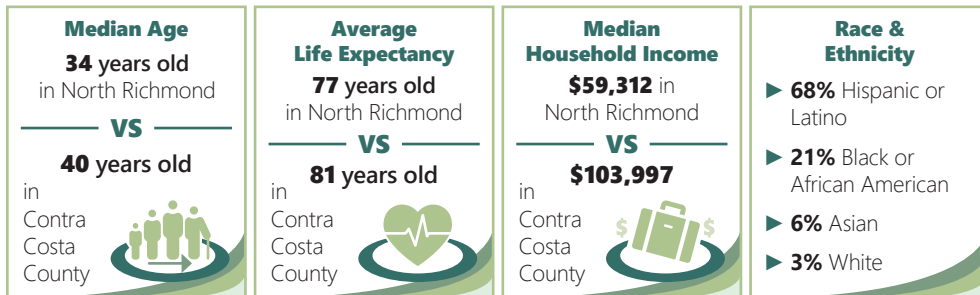
Today, North Richmond is primarily residential south of Wildcat Creek. Industrial uses dominate north of the creek. Housing is relatively affordable compared to the rest of the Bay Area, but the housing stock is aging and many households grapple with high housing cost burdens and poor infrastructure. 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, Community Housing Development Corporation of North Richmond, the Watershed Project, Verde Elementary School, and other community organizations and initiatives. Planning is complicated by jurisdictional boundaries, with part of the neighborhood being 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 has worked with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) to develop the Richmond-North Richmond-San Pablo Community Emissions Reduction Plan. In addition, while there have been levee, 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.



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








## WHO LIVES IN NORTH RICHMOND?





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
-  Sea level rise
-  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.

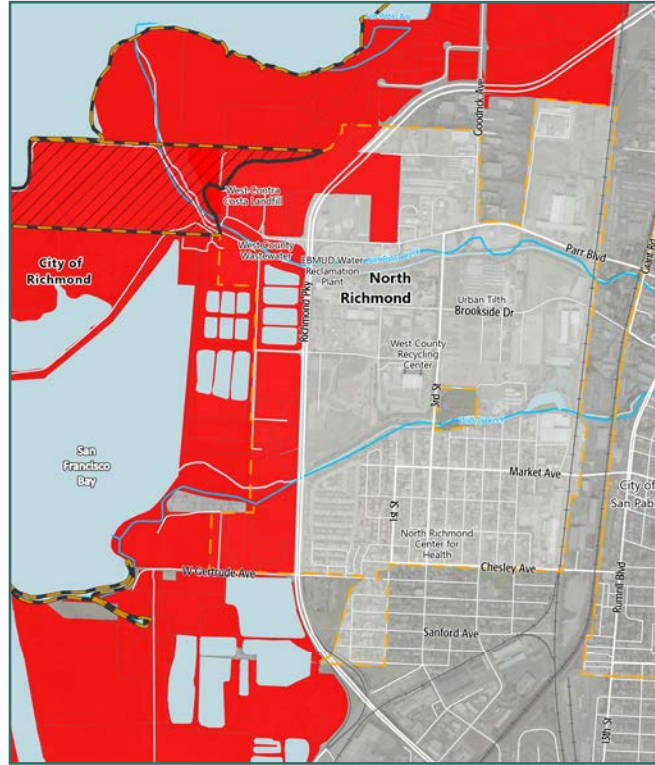
Persons experiencing chronic illnesses, homeless persons, and households in poverty are vulnerable to air quality, extreme heat, and human health hazards.

Levees located in North Richmond are vulnerable to coastal flooding.

The West County Wastewater treatment plant and the recycling center in North Richmond are 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
-  Water
-  Incorporated Cities
-  Tsunami Hazard Area
-  Urban Limit Line
-  Outside Urban Limit Line
-  Railroads
-  Creeks and Drainages



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
-  Incorporated Cities
-  500-Year Flood Zone
-  Outside Urban Limit Line
-  Areas of Undetermined but Possible Flood Hazard
-  Railroads
-  Water
-  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, neglect, 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.

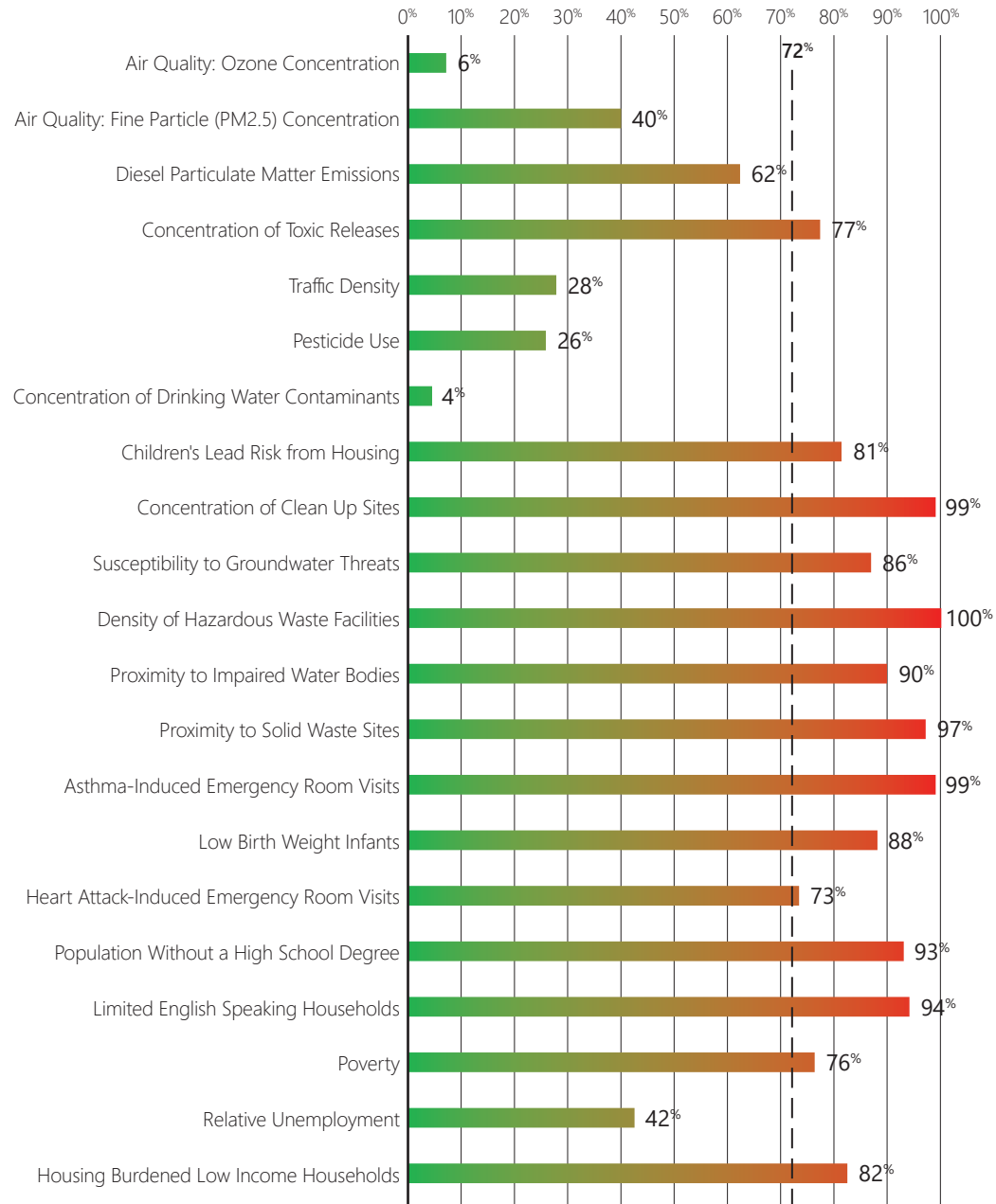
North Richmond experiences high levels of diesel particulate matter due to industrial uses, refineries, chemical plants, highways, truck traffic, rail yards, shipping ports, and marine terminals located within and near the community. Exposure to air pollution and chemicals contributes to eye, throat, 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.

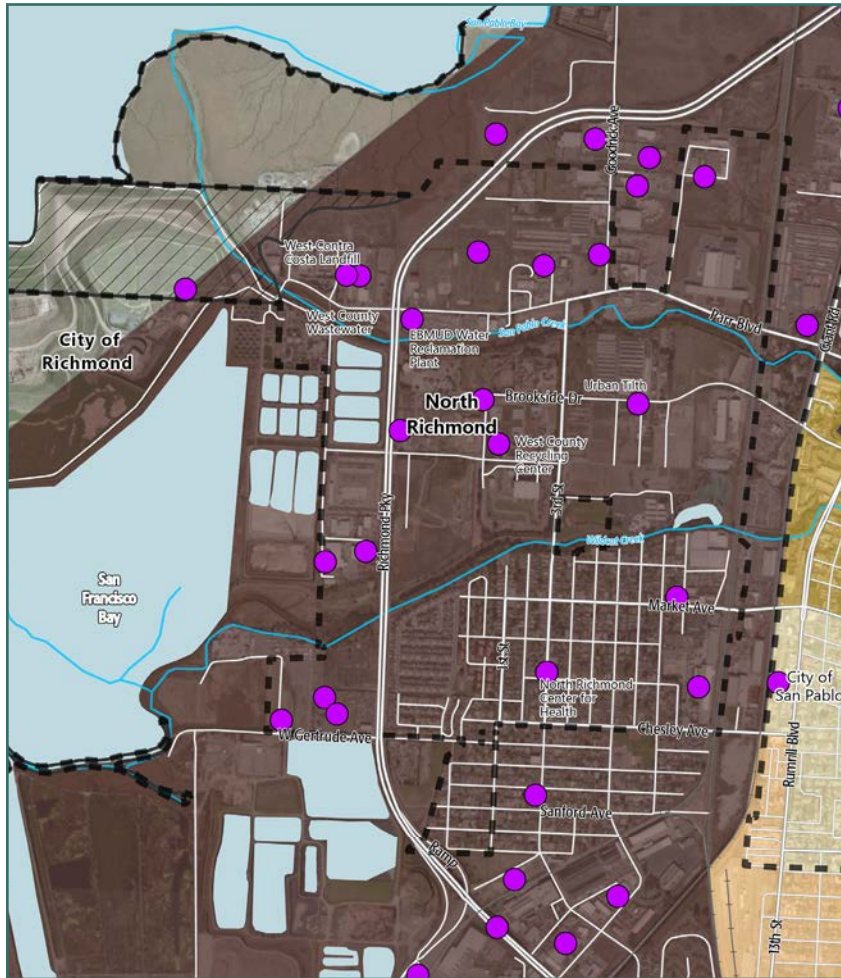
There are also many hazardous waste facilities and generators that affect North Richmond, including the Chevron Refinery, chemical companies, and Superfund sites. Beyond the acute risks to human and environmental health, these sources also raise concerns about odors and increased freight traffic.

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 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, contribute 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

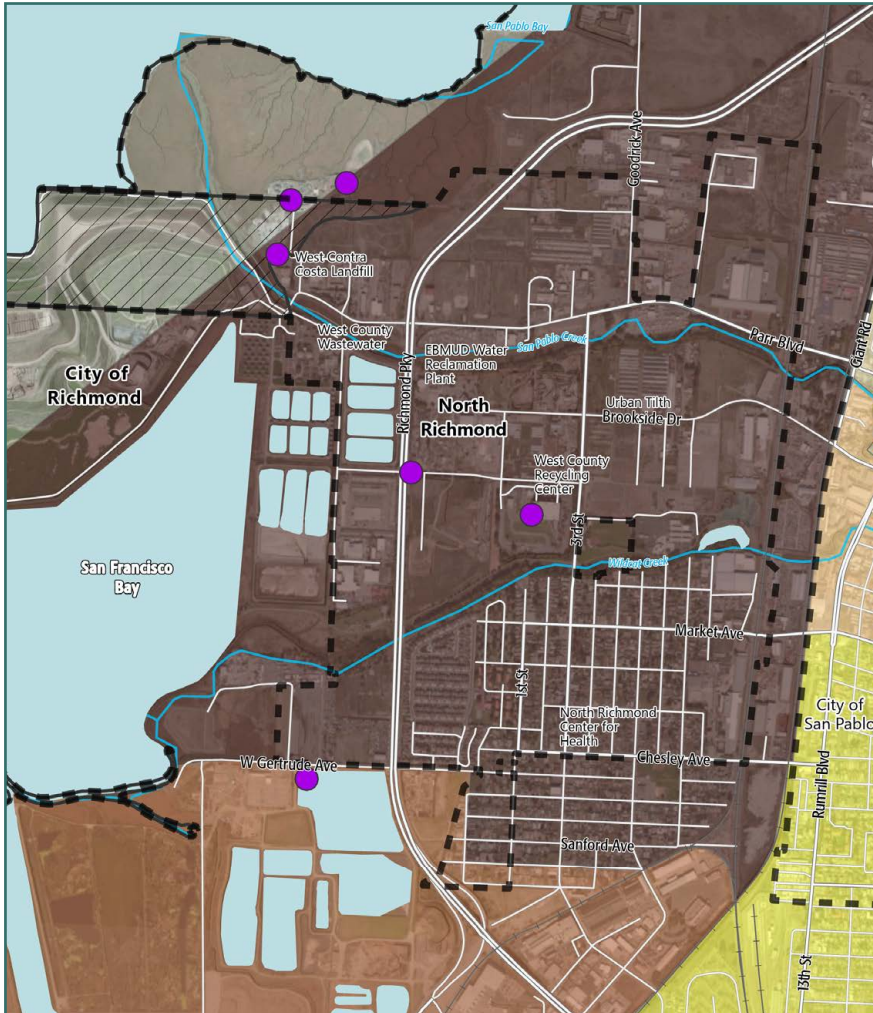
This map ranks Census tracts based on the concentration of clean up sites, which are sites undergoing clean up actions by governmental authorities or property owners due to environmental degradation from hazardous substances. The ranking also considers the nature and magnitude of the threat and the site 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.)



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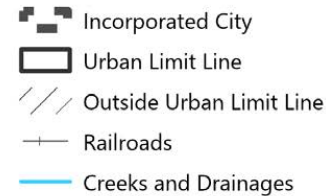
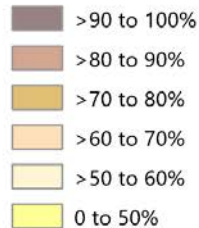


(Credit: Urban Tilth.)



Solid Waste Facilities

Census Tract Ranking



## PLANNED LAND USE

Land use designations for North Richmond are shown on Figure LU-1, General Plan Land Use Map, and defined in Table LU-1 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 continued residential use at various 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 homes and ground-level retail, service, and office uses. The former Las Deltas campus is designated Residential Medium-High Density. The 11.38-acre site is an opportunity for innovative development that addresses a range of housing needs. The North Richmond Design Guidelines provide detailed design guidance.



## 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.

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. Industrial uses in and around North Richmond should transition to renewable energy, zero-emission, and other clean industries that do not pose health risks to the neighborhood.
5. 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.
6. North Richmond should provide a healthy and safe environment, where vacant lots have transitioned into vibrant community assets like community gardens and playgrounds.
7. 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.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES (CONTINUED)

8. 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 as much as possible, negative impacts from truck traffic should be mitigated, and conflicts at rail crossings should be addressed, possibly through grade separations.
9. 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.
10. North Richmond residents should enjoy easy access to affordable, healthy, and fresh food, including grocery stores, farmers markets, and community gardens.
11. 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, City of Richmond, and residents, particularly 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.
2. Coordinate with local non-profits to celebrate the history of diversity in North Richmond through community events, public art, and music.
3. Prohibit construction of large walls or gates that divide the community.
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.
5. Buffer sensitive uses like schools, senior housing, and childcare facilities from heavy industrial uses.
6. Support continued air quality monitoring through air quality sensors installed as part of the Community Air Protection Program.

## POLICIES (CONTINUED)

7. Impose land use conditions on new commercial and industrial development which transitions vehicles/equipment to zero-emission faster than State transition requirements.
8. 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.
9. Support the North Richmond Living Levee Project to provide protection and resiliency to sea level rise and flooding.
10. Support efforts to restore creeks with native plants, including possibly planting an urban forest near Wildcat Creek east of Verde Elementary School, and consider partnering with local non-profit organizations to maintain vegetation along the creek.
11. Support the Safe Routes to School Program by providing adequate pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure around Verde Elementary.
12. Support implementation of the 2020 Richmond Area Community-Based Transportation Plan.
13. Encourage new mixed-use and commercial development that provides neighborhood-scale businesses.
14. Support development of a neighborhood serving grocery store.
15. Encourage community engagement, social cohesion, and restorative practices in support of community safety and crime prevention objectives.
16. Encourage residential projects that offer paths to home ownership and exceed the affordability requirements of the County's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.
17. 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 childcare facilities.
18. Continue to support vibrant urban agriculture operations.



## 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.
2. Study the feasibility of partnering with community organizations to establish a social impact bond to provide funds for renovation of homes, ideally by the local labor force.
3. Work with East Bay Regional Park District to improve connections between the Bay Trail and community, including a potential Wildcat Creek Trail crossing over Richmond Parkway, and install amenities such as educational signs, bathrooms, water fountains, and benches.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of installing cameras to deter illegal dumping.
5. Work with the community to 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.
6. Update the North Richmond Specific Plan to encompass the entire community and integrate goals and concepts from planning efforts such as the 2019 Quality of Life Plan and 2018 Priority Resilience Plan developed as part of the Bay Area Resilient by Design Challenge.
7. Designate truck routes to minimize impacts on schools and homes.

