

## **Executive Summary**

In 2005, the City of Richmond celebrated its one hundredth anniversary and three years later in 2008, it plans to adopt a General Plan that will guide the city's land use decisions and development for the next 15-20 years. Today, Richmond, with its tremendous history, is also in the midst of change. It is one of the few centrally-located cities in the Bay Area region with available land for development and reuse, an expansive shoreline – one of the longest in the Bay Area, an existing transportation network and hub, including BART, Amtrak and direct access to two major freeways, and a community that represents great cultural and ethnic diversity. While the City has valuable assets and opportunities, it also faces challenges that particularly burden low-income and people of color communities.

Like other urban cities, Richmond faces social problems such as higher unemployment rates – 13 percent in the Iron Triangle neighborhood and 8 percent for the city overall – compared to 5 percent for the East Bay Area. Richmond also has the unfortunate distinction of being one of the most violent cities of its size in the country, although, upon closer examination, this statistic represents conditions in only a few of the City's poorest neighborhoods.

Many of these challenges have root causes in a broken educational system, federal disinvestment in urban areas, a declining tax base, and poverty. For example, 28 percent of the residents living in the Iron Triangle neighborhood are living in poverty. Citywide, the number is 16 percent compared to a rate of 10 percent in the East Bay.

In addition, Richmond's present and past industrial infrastructure will continue to significantly impact its future. On one hand, Richmond is an industrial city that coexists with several petrochemical and industrial companies that put the community at risk of environmental toxins and pollution. On the other hand, these chemical and industrial companies provide many jobs (though many do not benefit Richmond residents).

Richmond's various sectors and communities are working to address many of its challenges through revitalization efforts in downtown, active attraction of green industry and businesses, development of strategies to address neighborhood safety and grassroots efforts that address violence prevention, improving the local education system, a cleaner environment, more affordable housing, and other issues important to the Richmond community.

### ***Richmond Equitable Development Initiative (REDI)***

The Richmond Equitable Development Initiative (REDI) partners that have actively worked together on the General Plan Campaign include regional social justice organizations, researchers, and community-based organizations and their Richmond members. These organizations include the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), Asian Pacific Environmental Network's (APEN) Laotian Organizing Project, Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), Contra Costa Faith Works!, East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (EBASE), Ma'at Youth Academy, University of California, Berkeley's Center for Community Innovation, and Urban Habitat.



REDI believes that Richmond's unique assets – its opportunities and challenges alike – provide an important opportunity to implement policies that guide Richmond towards a healthier environment for all who live, learn, work, and play in Richmond.

## ***Policy Recommendation and Implementation Focus Areas***

REDI developed a series of policy recommendations and implementation measures in the areas of land use, housing, transportation, economic development and health. The goal of these policies is to discourage displacement, segregation and gentrification practices that have occurred in cities that are undergoing similar change. When implemented, these policies can provide community benefits for all residents, specifically low-income communities and communities of color.

REDI's policies were developed with technical assistance from Public Advocates, the East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy (EBASE), Urban Habitat, Partnership for Working Families, and Human Impact Partners. All policies were carefully reviewed and prioritized by community members and edited by the technical assistance partners.

The following recommendations and implementation measures provide a snapshot of REDI's larger proposals that we believe can guide the City toward a path of greater equity and sustainability. To read the full document, please visit:

[www.urbanhabitat.org/richmond](http://www.urbanhabitat.org/richmond)

## ***REDI's Land Use Recommendations and Implementation Measures***

- ▶ **Policy:** Create a long-term strategic plan for Richmond's industrial land that provides a framework for future industrial land use and economic development decisions. This strategic plan should consider a wide range of issues pertinent to Richmond's future, including the need for high quality jobs and a healthy local environment, and should be conducted with a wide range of stakeholders, including labor, industry, environmental justice organizations, open space advocates, and neighborhood residents.

**Implementation Measure:** Conduct a comprehensive survey and analysis of Richmond's industrial land, including, but not limited, to current uses, new net job growth, job density, job quality (including wages and benefits), vacancy rates, land values, emissions and environmental impact, access to transportation infrastructure (rail, highway, bus and transit centers), proximity to residential neighborhoods, regional concentration and contribution to regional economy.

**Implementation Measure:** Collect model industrial land strategies and retention policies from across the country, including creation of employment zones and other specific planning areas that strategically retain industrial land and mitigate unsystematic conversions (i.e. spot zoning). Assess the applicability of these model policies to the City of Richmond.

- ▶ **Policy:** Establish a community land trust to ensure long-term housing affordability for Richmond Residents.



**Implementation Measure:** The City of Richmond in collaboration with local community-based organizations including housing and economic development institutions will convene a meeting to discuss the long term affordability of Richmond's land. Bring in experts on land trusts to help participants understand the feasibility of a land trust in Richmond.

**Implementation Measure:** Develop an inventory of all city- and non-profit-owned property (including religious institutions), especially vacant or underutilized parcels.

### ***REDI's Housing Recommendations and Implementation Measures***

► **Policy:** Amend the existing Inclusionary Housing Ordinance to assure a greater percentage of affordable units. Increase in-lieu fees to reflect the developers' cost of constructing affordable units.

**Implementation Measure:** Amend the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance to require a percentage of low- or very low-income inclusionary units.

**Implementation Measure:** Only permit developers to pay in-lieu fees instead of constructing inclusionary units under a narrow set of circumstances.

► **Policy:** Help low-income households remodel to meet health and safety codes without displacement or rent increases.

**Implementation Measure:** The City Council will prioritize neighborhoods based on their need for rehabilitation of substandard housing and will direct the Redevelopment Agency to prioritize housing rehabilitation funds in those neighborhoods.

**Implementation Measure:** The Office of Code Enforcement and the Community Economic Development Agency will create or fund community outreach and education programs to educate Richmond tenants on their legal rights and protections related to building regulations, health and safety code standards, complaints and enforcement practices.

### ***REDI's Transportation Recommendations and Implementation Measures***

► **Policy:** Maintain and strive to improve air quality through transportation planning that incorporates environmental justice principles.

**Implementation Measure:** The City of Richmond should take appropriate measures to meet the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's (BAAQMD) goal for improved air quality by continuing to participate in regional planning activities to meet air quality goals.

**Implementation Measure:** The City of Richmond should work in coordination with the Contra Costa Redevelopment Agency, local residents, local businesses and local jurisdictions to develop



alternative truck routes that minimize the use of neighborhood streets.

- ▶ **Policy:** Provide equitable, safe and affordable transit access and services for low-income communities in the urban core.

**Implementation Measure:** Work with AC Transit to develop solutions to improve bus headways and intervals.

**Implementation Measure:** Participate in the administration of low-income discount youth passes funded through Measure J.

### ***REDI's Economic Development Recommendations and Implementation Measures***

- ▶ **Policy:** Expand targeted hiring requirements and job-training opportunities for low-income residents.

**Implementation Measure:** Regularly assess and report enforcement and outcomes from the city's recently expanded Local Employment Program, which currently covers city-assisted businesses, contracts and construction, as well as permanent operational jobs.

**Implementation Measure:** Re-evaluate and establish new criteria for selecting the top three industries or business sectors in Richmond for targeted workforce development investment.

- ▶ **Policy:** Establish community impact studies that measure positive and negative impacts, including social, economic and health impacts of major planning and development decisions.

**Implementation Measure:** The City Council will enact and make effective an ordinance requiring the City to release a Community Impact Study for any development project that either (i) includes over 80,000 square feet of built space, 250 residential units, or \$500,000 estimated construction costs, and requires a discretionary approval or legislative action by the City, or (ii) includes over 50,000 square feet and for which the developer requests a subsidy from the City or the Redevelopment Agency.

### ***REDI's Health Recommendations and Implementation Measures***

REDI approached the health element by looking at how land use, transportation, economic development and transportation are all connected to health. The City's health element framework addresses health disparities by examining access to public transit and safe, active transportation options, access to quality affordable housing, and access to economic opportunities. REDI's support of this framework is reflected in its recommendations for the land use, economic development, housing, and transportation elements for achieving a healthy environment through equitable development. By incorporating into the General Plan the policy recommendations outlined in the following document, REDI believes there will be a significant and positive impact on the health of Richmond residents.

