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1. INTRODUCTION

These Design Guidelines are meant to be used as a tool to inspire and enable economically feasible and environmentally attractive development for the Harbour Way/Macdonald Avenue Master Development. They originated in a series of community outreach meetings that were held to identify and document community expectations for the development of Downtown Richmond.

Historically Macdonald Avenue at Harbour Way has been the center of Downtown Richmond alive with commerce, pedestrian activity and social interaction. The intention of these Guidelines is to create an Urban Design Framework that will enable the revitalization of Downtown Richmond into a contemporary version of its historic role as a social, economic and cultural center.

The Guidelines recommend appropriate Uses, building and street space configurations and sustainable development principles to assist in developing Downtown Richmond into the vibrant center of a complete and integrated community. Considering proximity to the Richmond BART Station and location on Macdonald Avenue, the Harbour Way/Macdonald Avenue Master Development has the potential to become not only a piece of a larger, walkable neighborhood with local

and regional business interests but also a destination location for employment, social, cultural, dining, shopping and entertainment venues for Richmond residents as well as surrounding communities.

Redevelopment of the Harbour Way/Macdonald Avenue Master Development site is part of a larger effort undertaken by the Richmond Community Redevelopment Agency (RCRA) to update the entire length of Macdonald Avenue. The plan is described in the Macdonald Avenue Economic Revitalization Plan published in 2004. The Macdonald Avenue Revitalization Plan is the governing document for redevelopment of the site.

figure 1.1 Aerial view with Harbour Way/Macdonald Avenue Master Development site highlighted in red.

figure 1.2 Historic Macdonald Avenue
2. SITE CONTEXT

Currently the majority of the project site is surface parking or vacant buildings in substandard condition likely beyond repair. The Northwest corner of Macdonald Avenue and Harbour Way is a temporary community open space. Beyond the Project Site to the north is the Kaiser Medical Campus and to the south are mostly single family residences. To the West of the site across Eighth Street are single family residences and across Harbour Way at the eastern site boundary is a three story mixed use development.

Two buildings within the Development Area have been identified by the Richmond community as having historical value. The Mechanic’s Bank Building on the Southwest corner of Macdonald Avenue and Ninth Street and the Anitas Building on the Southwest corner of Macdonald Avenue and Harbour Way are buildings that should be preserved without major exterior alterations. The Mechanic’s Bank Building and the Anitas Building are pieces of Richmond’s rich and colorful past and combined with other historically relevant buildings beyond the project boundaries create an architectural context for future development.

The intersection of Macdonald Avenue and Harbour Way is a point of arrival for Downtown. Development should accentuate this location as a special intersection and focal point along Macdonald Avenue and Harbour Way.

Macdonald Avenue is currently undergoing RCRA sponsored Streetscape improvements as part of the Macdonald Avenue Revitalization Plan. The revamped Streetscape will improve the pedestrian, landscape and traffic environment which will contribute to making Downtown a safe, comfortable and convenient place that will attract people now and in the future.
3. URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The Urban Design Framework portion of these Design Guidelines describes general development criteria for the Master Development Area. General development criteria are defined in terms of Uses, Density, Parking Ratios, Building Heights, Setbacks, Architectural Character, Materials and Open Space.

3.1. Uses

Currently the Harbour Way/Macdonald Avenue Master Development is thought of as a mixed use project incorporating retail, mostly at the ground floor, with office and residential uses above. The Harbour Way/Macdonald Avenue Master Development is envisioned as the center of Downtown Richmond charged with activity during day and night. It is critical that selected Uses will enliven the neighborhood, support commerce and seamlessly integrate with existing adjacent Uses. The retail Uses listed in these Guidelines were identified during a series of public meetings and are not meant to be exclusive, rather they are suggestive of the types of activities that Richmond residents would like to see in the Development Area.

Suggested retail type uses include:
- Restaurants
- Shops
- Dancing
- Cafes
- Antiques
- Music Clubs
- Book Store
- Bakeries
- Open Market/Fresh Food
- Kid's Activities
- Movie Theater
- Neighborhood Services
- Art Galleries
- Delicatessen
- Sushi
- Jewelry Store
- Ice Cream
- Soul Food

Office space should be flexible and able to accommodate a single large multi-floor tenant or divisible into multiple suites for tenants with lesser spacial needs. Building footprints for office space should be as narrow as possible to maximize daylight to all spaces. Bicycle parking and showers should be provided in sufficient quantity and conveniently located to facilitate bicycle transportation.

figure 3.1 Mix of uses at street level
Residential development should be a mix of unit types that will accommodate diverse lifestyles and a range of socioeconomic occupants. Each residential unit should have a contiguous private outdoor space and secure access to a common open space. Live/work spaces are a desirable unit type.

The mix of office/commercial/retail/residential space is greatly influenced by market conditions. Each of these uses brings different amenities to a project and a well balanced mix of each is critical to the lasting success of the Macdonald Avenue/Harbour Way Master Development. Market demand is a determining factor in deciding Uses for a development project.

3.2. Building Heights
Building heights should be thoughtfully studied to provide street level comfort and minimize shadows on frequently used sidewalks and other habitable indoor and outdoor spaces. Building heights are a defining element in creating the character of a street and should be designed to provide a broad view of the sky.

Building heights should vary within the Master Development Area. See the Site Development Characteristics section of these Guidelines for building height recommendations on particular blocks within the project area.

Taller buildings are better situated on the North side of Macdonald Avenue where their shadows will have less of an affect at the street level than taller buildings on the South side of the street. This is consistent with the existing built condition on Macdonald Avenue.
Building heights for sites abutting or adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods should respect the scale of adjacent buildings by not exceeding their height by more than 15’ before stepping back. Above that height buildings abutting or adjacent to residential neighborhoods should step back a minimum of 15’. This height constraint should be evaluated and considered for individual site conditions.

3.3. Setbacks
In general, buildings should be configured to define a street wall that is consistent with and complimentary to existing adjacent street walls. Setbacks should vary in different locations within the Master Development Area. Recommended setbacks for particular site conditions are discussed further in the Site Development Characteristics section of these Guidelines.

Sidewalk widths are fundamental in determining Setbacks. It is important that sidewalks comfortably accommodate anticipated pedestrian traffic. Sidewalks should provide enough room for people traveling in opposite directions to pass without altering their course.

The location of building facades at street level may vary within a project block to provide a varied and interesting pedestrian experience. Pedestrian movement through Downtown should be an experience of spacially engaging events rather than a nondiscript task of going from point A to point B. In retail areas, recesses at entries and sidewalk breakout spaces create a location for social interaction. They enrich the pedestrian experience and should be provided where feasible and useful. Sidewalk seating for restaurants and cafes add interest and activity to the public realm and should be incorporated into the design of pedestrian space.

As a rule, above the street level, building facades should create a well defined, articulated street wall at the designated setback. Street walls should be a composition of solid and void with fenestration to encourage “eyes on the street.”
3.4. Parking
Parking ratios are an important factor of a successful downtown. The Harbour Way/Macdonald Avenue Master Development should incorporate carefully considered parking ratios that will meet parking demand without providing too much parking. Overparking is a costly mistake and encourages the use of automobiles.

Given the proximity of the Harbour Way/Macdonald Avenue Master Development to local and regional public transportation, these Guidelines support the use of Public Transportation. Final parking requirements should address Richmond Parking Standards and be determined through collaboration with the Planning Division. The parking ratios listed below are based on recent reports published by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and review of other city's parking requirements.

- 1 space / 750sf of office space
- 1 space / 500sf of retail space
- 1 space / residential unit

Richmond, not being as densely developed as cities such as San Francisco, nor having the public transportation infrastructure that more densely developed cities can support, will not achieve these minimum parking requirements, but should be able to have less than two on-site parking spaces per residential unit within a quarter to a half mile from BART stations.

Parking regulations in retail areas should limit duration to make short term parking available for shoppers. Full day or multiple-hour parking should be discouraged in retail areas and should be relegated to the perimeter of such areas.

Surface parking lots are discouraged. Parking integrated with buildings is encouraged for this development. Wherever possible, parking should be concealed behind occupied building space at the street and levels above. There should not be parking between the building and the street.

Providing parking off site is a viable alternative for meeting parking demand on sites with limited parking possibilities. This practice is known as “unbundling” parking and is considered one of several key innovative parking strategies. Other beneficial parking strategies can be found in the Best Practices Report published by the MTC (www.mtc.gov/planning/smart_growth/parking_seminar/BestPractices.pdf).

3.5. Densities-
Identifying density levels that support the vision of Harbour Way/Macdonald Avenue Master Development as a vibrant downtown is a goal of these Guidelines. Density is a fundamental element often impacting economic feasibility and ultimately the success of urban redevelopment. These Guidelines suggest density levels appropriate for the site, that respect and enhance the neighborhood, and that will support a vibrant downtown district.

Currently the project is thought of as a mixed use development incorporating retail at the ground floor with office and residential uses above. Ultimately the total area and mix of uses will be determined by market conditions. The highest density of residential development that is feasible in a mixed-use context is encouraged.

3.6. Open Space
Open Space is a vital part of a healthy neighborhood and comes in many varieties. In addition to Private Open Space that should be available to each residential unit, there are
primarily two types, Public Open Space and Shared Private Open Space that should be an integral part of the Harbour Way/Macdonald Avenue Master Development.

Public Open Space that supports social interaction and outdoor gathering should be readily accessible to pedestrians. These spaces can be comparatively small in size and be part of a building entry or niches for pedestrian repose adjunct to main pedestrian routes. Bicycle parking should be plentiful and conveniently located in Public Open Space. Public Open Space provides excellent opportunities for display of art.

Shared Private Open Space is communal open space accessible by residents and building users only. Shared Private Open Space should have secure access and be centrally located to the users it is intended to serve.

Open Space should have ideal access to sun and be protected from wind. Open space should also provide adequate shade during the warm summer months. Building massing should be carefully arranged to minimize shadow and wind impact on Open Space.

3.7. Architectural Character

Building mass and composition of facades should be well articulated and create humanly scaled buildings that harmonize with the existing built fabric. Building mass should be expressed in volumes that are relatively similar in scale with the majority of building in the immediate vicinity. Building facades should be legible as a composition of separate and distinct individual pieces creating a sense of scale and visual interest that is balanced with and enhances the existing context.

Glazing should be generous where advantageous for outlook and to bring available daylight into buildings. Sun control devices should be integrated with fenestration systems and designed based on solar orientation.
Cornice lines and vertical bays should relate to adjacent existing buildings and established datum to maintain and enhance a sense of scale for the street wall that is consistent with the existing.

Shadow patterns should render depth and texture to building facades. Building facades should present solidness and a substantive nature to their construction where appropriate. Overhangs and canopies can be used to create negative space and as a means of punctuating building entries.

Signage should clearly identify buildings and tenants with a restrained level of visual activity. Allowable signage area, locations and types of signage should be carefully defined in a Master Signage Plan based on best planning practices for the Macdonald Avenue/Harbour Way Master Development. Pole Signs, Can Signs and temporary signs are discouraged.

3.8. Materials-
Variety of materials exists in plenty within the vicinity of the Master Development Area. In Richmond, brick has historically been used for civic, commercial and industrial buildings. Terra Cotta Tile although not frequently used today is a quality material that is very visible on the project site as cladding on the Mechanic’s Bank Building. Materials should be selected to compliment and embellish existing materials. Contemporary materials that are common in the vicinity and viable options for this development are brick, concrete, precast concrete and other cementitious materials, metal panel, glass, aluminium and stone. Colors should harmonize with the existing adjacent context and used to create areas of visual focus.

Only the highest quality materials should be used at street level and public spaces to provide a sense of permanence and civic pride. Stone, manufactured stone, brick, precast concrete, metal panel and glass are examples of quality materials that should be used at public and street level spaces.

Only quality materials selected for their durability and aesthetic character should be used throughout the project. Using highly reflective glass or other highly reflective materials is discouraged.
3.9. **Sustainability**

It is required that the Harbour Way/Macdonald Avenue Master Development conform to the City of Richmond protocol for sustainable development including incorporation of the Ahwahnee Principles for Resource-Efficient Communities (see attached link for more information about the Ahwahnee Principles. [www.lgc.org/ahwahnee/principles](http://www.lgc.org/ahwahnee/principles)). The Harbour Way/Macdonald Avenue Master Development has the potential to be a walkable neighborhood and part of a larger complete and integrated Richmond community. By it’s proximity to BART, the project can be a transit oriented regional destination for employment and entertainment.

The project should employ principles of sustainable design as defined by the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) and attain LEED Certification or the equivalent of as a minimum sustainability standard (see the attached link for more information about the USGBC [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org)).

4. **SITE DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS**

The Site Development Characteristics section of these Guidelines provides more detailed design directives for specific locations within the Master Development Area. The Guidelines described in the Urban Design Framework section are meant to be the guiding principles for development of the individual sites identified below.

#### 4.1. **Macdonald Avenue**

The orientation of Macdonald Avenue potentially allows bountiful sunshine to the North side of the street throughout a large portion of the day. This amenity depends on careful consideration of building heights on the South side of the street. It is important that the scale, texture, open space and materials be consistent with the existing built fabric on Macdonald Avenue. Auto traffic on Macdonald Avenue is multiple lane but slow moving with frequent pedestrian intervention. No auto or truck service entry drives should be located on Macdonald Avenue.

**Uses** -

Street level retail and commercial enterprises with building walls that are approximately 70% transparent material. Provide public street level gathering places where advantageous. Retail/restaurant/entertainment space above the ground floor is plausible.

Office and/or residential uses above ground floor are recommended. The site north of Macdonald Avenue above the street is better suited to office use than other parts of the Master Development Area. Considering its dimensions and immediately adjacent uses, between Harbour Way and 9th Street above the street is better suited than the rest of the Master Development Area for a mix of office/residential/retail.

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[figure 4.1](#) Building massing should be arranged to allow sunlight and open space for building users and respect the scale of adjacent development.
Building Entries-
Multiple tenant entries for retail/restaurant and other commercial uses recommended at the street level. Occasional grouped entries to office/residential/retail above are plausible.

Building Heights-
Building heights along much of Macdonald Avenue range from two to six stories. Historically, the Master Development Area has been the location of the tallest buildings on Macdonald Avenue marking it as the downtown core. In order to compliment existing building heights, it is recommended that buildings on the South side of Macdonald Avenue are approximately 40’ and varied, a 15’ step back above 40’ should be considered. Building heights on the North side of Macdonald Avenue should vary and be a balance between structures across Harbour Way and 9th Street.

Setbacks-
Provide approximately 15’ sidewalks minimum on both sides of Macdonald Avenue. Building façades should predominately be built to setback on both sides of the street. Building façades should be legible as separate and distinct pieces. Cornice lines and vertical bays should relate to adjacent existing buildings establishing datum points that maintain a consistent sense of scale for the street wall and pedestrian environment. Shadow patterns should render depth and texture to building facades. Building façades should express solidness and substantive nature to the construction where appropriate.

4.2. Harbour Way
Harbour Way is a main cross town auto route. Of all of the streets within the Master Development Area it is the best suited as an auto route and parking garage access. It is also well suited to service and delivery access.

Uses-
Ground floor office or retail with office and/or residential above is recommended.

Building Entries-
Enteries should be grouped and form secure lobbies or secure breezeways providing access to multiple suites or residences. Auto drop-off at entries is plausible.

Building Heights-
North of Macdonald Avenue building heights should be similar to the existing Wells Fargo Building on the Northeast corner of Macdonald Avenue and Harbour Way.

South of Mcdonald Avenue building heights are recommended to be approximately 40’ with a 15’ step back above 40’.

figure 4.2 Articulated building massing can maintain street wall
Setbacks-
Provide minimum 12’ wide sidewalks to face of curb which establishes setback dimension. Building façade should be predominately built to setback.

4.3. 9th Street
9th Street in the vicinity of the Master Development Area is a fairly heavily traveled auto route. North of Macdonald Avenue is a busy parking structure access point creating a source for auto traffic.

Uses-
North of Macdonald Avenue 9th Street becomes an important link between Macdonald Avenue and the Kaiser Permanente site. This part of the Master Development Area should be augmented with pedestrian amenities and activated with retail and/or eating facilities to help connect the Kaiser site to future retail, eating and entertainment facilities on Macdonald Ave.

South of Macdonald Avenue on the East side of the street retail, residential or office at the street level with office or residential above. On the West side of the street office, retail or residential at the street level and residential above.

Building Entries-
Grouped to form secure lobbies or secure breezeways providing access to multiple suites or residences. Possible auto drop-off at entries Possible stoop type individual unit entries at the South end of the West side of the street adjacent to existing townhouse units

Building Heights-
Building heights approximately 40’ with a 15’ step back above 40’ on both sides of the street south of Macdonald Avenue are recommended. At Southwest end of street, Building Heights should be lower to compliment adjacent existing townhouses

North of Macdonald Avenue building height should be similar to existing parking garage height on the Northwest corner of Macdonald Avenue and 9th Street.

Setbacks-
Provide 12’ wide sidewalk to face of curb minimum on both sides of the street. Building façade should primarily be built to setbacks. At the Southwest end of street the building façade can location can be relaxed to compliment and harmonize with existing adjacent townhouses.

figure 4.3  Conglomerated secure entries provide access and light to interior of block
4.4. 8th Street
8th Street in the vicinity of the Master Development Area is a neighborhood residential street with free standing single family residences across the street from the project. Traffic is often slow paced and local to the immediate neighborhood.

*Uses-*
Residential at street level with residential above

*Building Entries-*
Respecting the predominately one story single family residences across 8th Street, entries should be arranged as individual entries for residential units.

*Building Heights-*
Approximately 37’ with 10’ step back above 20’

*Setbacks-*
Provide approximately 10’ to primary building façade to allow for a buffer “front yard” relating to single family residences across 8th street.

figure 4.4 Individual entries at street level reinforce exiting single family residence entrance patterns
5. SUMMARY

These Guidelines provide detailed design instructions meant to support the Macdonald Avenue Economic Revitalization Plan published by the RCRA in 2004. They are based on best planning practices for urban renewal and encourage the development of the project as a smart-growth Transit Oriented Development. The intent of the Guidelines is to provide directives that will result in an attractive and sustainable integrated community at the site of the Macdonald Avenue/Harbour Way Master Development.

figure 5.1 Aerial view of Harbour Way/Macdonald Avenue Site showing accumulated parcels and adjacent conditions.