

TO: Members of the Richmond City Council

FROM: Charles Pool

RE: City staff misinformation regarding Res. 2022-R033, amendment to the master plan designating a Residential future land use for the portion of Oregon Hill zoned R-7

Dear Council Members,

I applaud the City Council's unanimous approval of Res. 2022-R033 that approves changing to Residential the future land use designation in the Richmond 300 master plan for the portion of Oregon Hill zoned R-7.

But, I am bringing to your attention the misinformation campaign being waged by city staff to thwart the approval of 2022-R033 by the Planning Commission. The Planning Director is urging the Planning Commission to essentially exercise veto over the elected City Council by not approving the change to the master plan. When asked by Planning Commission members what would happen if they followed his recommendation to defeat the amendment to the master plan that was unanimously passed by City Council, the Planning Director simply responded that the amendment would, "Stop here." This should be a great concern to all Council persons who may later have other amendments to the master plan.

- The city staff misrepresented out-of-date data from 1991 to inaccurately indicate that there are 34 commercial properties in Oregon Hill. Staff was aware that 18 of these addresses are within the B-1 and B-3 zoned areas of Oregon Hill that remain Mixed-use per Res. 2022-R033. Furthermore, 8 other addresses on the list have been converted to Residential use, including the Victory Rug residential building. (Please see attachments.)
- The Planning Director inaccurately informed the Planning Commission on July 18, 2022 that there are no other neighborhoods with above R-5 zoning in the master plan with a Residential future land use. He inaccurately stated, "R-5 is at the top of Residential future land use." This is not true. The Blackwell neighborhood, with the same R-7 zoning as Oregon Hill, has the Residential future land use. Much of the Randolph neighborhood has an even higher R-48 zoning with the same Residential future land use designation. (Please see attachment.)
- City staff falsely allege that the Residential future land use designation for Oregon Hill would somehow not be "equitable" or "sustainable." Through our housing non-profit, the Oregon Hill Home Improvement Council (OHHIC), Oregon Hill has been on the forefront of providing sustainable and equitable low-income housing. OHHIC restored, and built new, 37 quality homes for first-time homeowners within the Residential R-7 zoning. Some of these homeowners have continued to live in these residences for 30 years. (Please see attachment.)

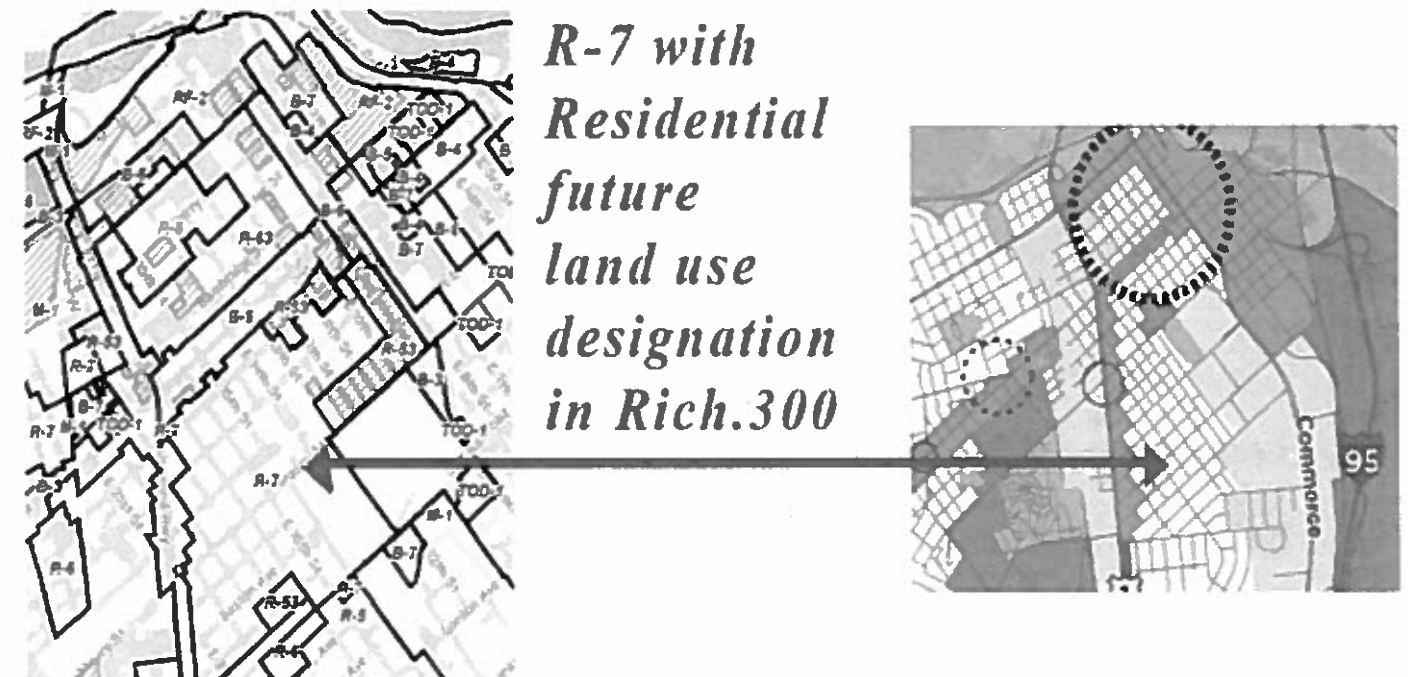
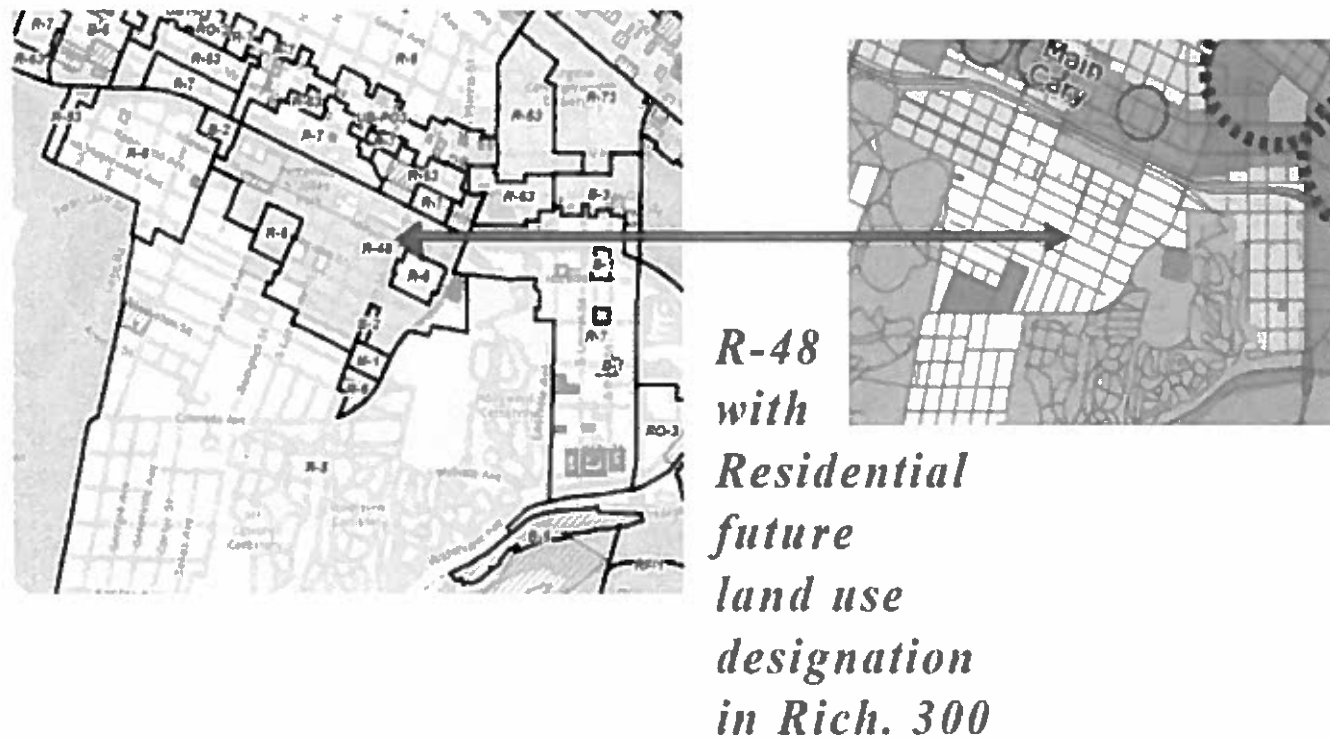
The unelected City Planning Commission, which is chaired by the same individual who chaired the Richmond 300 master plan steering committee, should not have a veto over an amendment to the master plan that was unanimously approved by our elected City Council. I urge Council members to let the Planning Commission know that you expect the unanimous vote of the Richmond City Council to be respected. I also urge Council members to insist that the city staff cease citing misinformation in their effort to defeat Res. 2022-R033.

Thank you very much for your support of the Oregon Hill neighborhood, which has been a resource for affordable housing for 150 years!

The Residential future land use designation in the Richmond 300 master plan for Oregon Hill's R-7 zoning is consistent with the Residential future land use designation for the R-48 zoning of the Randolph neighborhood and the same as the Residential future land use in the R-7 zoning of the Blackwell neighborhood. (The Planning Director misinformed the Planning Commission that there were no neighborhoods with R-7 or higher zoning with a Residential future land use designation in the Richmond 300 master plan.)

Randolph R-48 zoning with Residential future land use:

Blackwell R-7 zoning with Residential future land use:



City staff cited old, inaccurate data from over 30 years ago to count the number of businesses in Oregon Hill. But 18 of these addresses are within the B-1 and B-3 zoned areas that staff knows will remain Mixed-use under Council Res: 2022-R033. Eight other buildings have been converted to Residential use, such as the Victory Rug building at 407-409 S. Cherry St. Within the R-7 zoning in Oregon Hill only 7 of the buildings (or 1%) have a commercial function and 99% of the structures are Residential two-story buildings.

STAFF CITED INACCURATE DATA FROM 1991:

2022 CORRECTIONS TO THIS DATA:

Oregon Hill has historically been a mixed-use neighborhood.

The National Register for Historic Places nomination for the Oregon Hill Historic District, written in 1991, included 34 contributing commercial structures. Currently, 25 of these historic commercial structures remain, as shown in the table below. The properties that are crossed out have been converted to residential, or demolished and rebuilt as mixed-use residential or solely residential structures.

Address	National Register Description	Current Status
809 Albemarle Street	1920s freestanding concrete block commercial	Vacant parcel
821 Albemarle Street	1870s semi-detached Victorian Italianate	Remaining
601 West Cary Street	1870s freestanding brick commercial building	Redeveloped
617 West Cary Street	1950s brick commercial building (NC)	Redeveloped
619 West Cary Street	1950s brick commercial building (NC)	Redeveloped
701-703 W. Cary Street	1880s semi-detached brick	Remaining
705 West Cary Street	1920s attached masonry/stucco commercial	Redeveloped
707 West Cary Street	1910s attached masonry/stucco commercial	Redeveloped
727 West Cary Street	ca. 1900 semi-detached brick	Redeveloped
729 West Cary Street	ca. 1900 attached brick	Remaining
731 West Cary Street	ca. 1900 semi-detached brick	Remaining
803 West Cary Street	1840s semi-detached gable-roofed	Remaining
817 West Cary Street	ca. 1890 attached brick	Remaining
819 West Cary Street	1900s attached brick commercial/residential	Remaining
821 West Cary Street	1900s attached brick commercial/residential	Remaining
825 West Cary Street	ca. 1890 semi-detached brick	Remaining
328-330 S. Cherry Street	1920s freestanding one-story commercial	Remaining
407-409 S. Cherry Street	1890s freestanding brick commercial building	Remaining
626 China Street	1920s semi-detached brick one-story	Remaining
632 Holly Street	1870s semi-detached brick commercial	Vacant parcel
912 Idlewood Avenue	1870s semi-detached frame	Vacant parcel
308 South Laurel Street	1890s freestanding frame	Remaining
320 South Laurel Street	1880s semi-detached frame	Remaining
349 South Laurel Street	1890s freestanding brick	Remaining
400 South Laurel Street	1890s semi-detached brick	Remaining
301 South Pine Street	1880s freestanding brick Victorian Italianate	Remaining
322 South Pine Street	1890s freestanding frame	Remaining
324 South Pine Street	1880s freestanding frame	Remaining
334 South Pine Street	1874 freestanding brick	Remaining
433 South Pine Street	1890s semi-detached frame	Remaining
501 South Pine Street	1920s freestanding one-story commercial	Remaining
519 South Pine Street	ca. 1900 brick commercial/residential	Remaining
526 South Pine Street	ca. 1900 freestanding frame	Remaining
528 South Pine Street	ca. 1920 freestanding brick	Remaining



809 Albemarle, inaccurately shown as demolished

These 14 addresses are in the B-3 Cary Street corridor and will remain Mixed-Use under the amendment approved by City Council (Res. 2022-R033) [619 W. Cary, site of the 1817 Jacob House is inaccurately shown as a vacant parcel]

407- 409 S. Cherry, Victory Rug building converted to Residential

632 Holly, Empty residential Lot

912 Idlewood, Empty residential Lot

320 S. Laurel, converted to Residential

400 S. Laurel, converted to Residential

301 S. Pine, converted to Residential

324 S. Pine, Within B-1 zoning to remain Mixed Use per Res. 2022-R033

334 S. Pine, Within B-1 zoning to remain Mixed Use per Res. 2022-R033

433 S. Pine, Within B-1 zoning to remain Mixed Use per Res. 2022-R033

501 S, Pine, Within B-1 zoning to remain Mixed Use per Res. 2022-R033

519 S. Pine, converted to Residential

526 S. Pine, converted to Residential

528 S. Pine, converted to Residential

City staff documents falsely allege that a Residential future land use for Oregon Hill would somehow not be “equitable” or “sustainable.” Through the non-profit Oregon Hill Home Improvement Council (OHHIC), Oregon Hill has been on the forefront of providing sustainable, affordable housing. OHHIC renovated 22 Oregon Hill homes, and built 15 new affordable homes in Oregon Hill for first-time low-income homeowners. Some of these homeowners have continued to live in their OHHIC homes for 30 years.

EXAMPLES OF THE 37 FINE, EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE RESIDENCES BUILT AND/OR RENOVATED IN OREGON HILL BY OHHIC THAT ARE SUPPORTED BY RESIDENTIAL LAND USE:



City staff provided misinformation to City Council and the Planning Commission citing 34 businesses in Oregon Hill. But 18 of these addresses are within the B-1 and B-3 zoning that remains Mixed-use. 99% of the buildings in Oregon Hill's R-7 zoning are residential buildings, including addresses below that were counted by city staff as commercial but have been converted to residential function:



320 S. Laurel



519 S. Pine



301 S. Pine



528, 526 S. Pine



400 S. Laurel



Victory Rug, 407-409 S. Cherry