

Equity-based Principles and Strategies: Economic Revitalization of Richmond, California

An overview of community-owned principles and practices collectively held and employed by more than a dozen community stakeholders, in partnership with Healthy Richmond, to advance “equity in all policies” related to the economic revitalization of Richmond, California

ABOUT US

Economic Revitalization Action Team

Healthy Richmond’s Economic Revitalization Action Team has the goal to create an employment and business environment in Richmond that brings growth and economic vitality to the region, while residents build their capacity and financial stability and take advantage of employment and other economic opportunities. This goal is achievable through equitable policies and resources, equitable systems/services, and conditions of equity. Economic revitalization that engages residents and organizations in building community wealth and providing a path to prosperity for long-term unemployed residents, is also a step toward health equity.

Healthy Richmond is a place-based initiative of The California Endowment’s Building Healthy Communities program. Its areas of focus include economic revitalization, access to quality health care, schools and neighborhoods, and community safety. The Economic Revitalization Action Team meets at 1015 Nevin Avenue, Suite 101 on the last Wednesday of each month, unless otherwise specified. The current team chairs are Alicia Gallo <outreach@richmondmainstreet.org> and Bill Bankhead <BBankhead@contracosta.edu>.

OUR COMMITMENT

Equity In All Policies

We understand equity as creating opportunities for groups to overcome structural barriers that have historically disadvantaged them. Our commitment to “equity in all policies” is redress for decades of discriminatory government policies in housing, education, employment, and other areas that have contributed to present racial disparities. Public and private institutions should act in concert to reduce economic and social inequities.

We support the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) network as it seeks to bring a racial equity framework into governmental jurisdictions. While the City of Richmond has promoted equity through various ordinances, partnerships and strategic plans, these policies could better leverage community engagement. As community stakeholders working across multiple sectors to advance equity, we can assist Richmond GARE with citywide and regional strategies, implementation, accountability, and communication.

Based on our collective experience in direct services and advocacy for communities of color, we present a set of equity-oriented strategies for the economic revitalization of Richmond. This equity platform reflects our shared principles and priorities in three areas: authentic community engagement, comprehensive workforce development, and equitable physical development. We urge Richmond GARE to collaborate with us to ensure that the implementation of policies and programs yields more racially equitable results.

On race and equity, we can do better, and we should do better.



PRINCIPLE 1 Authentic Community Engagement

We believe in the importance of authentic community engagement, which means real questions, real answers and joint solutions. The community should be informed and consulted about citywide and regional development projects. Land use and planning decisions should be made in the public interest and respect the will of the community. Community input is both an intrinsic and instrumental good. The community engagement process should lift the voices of vulnerable communities who stand to lose the most from inequitable economic development. The talents and aspirations of young people should be directed toward fulfilling the common good. Government and community stakeholders should work together to implement solutions that promote healthy, economically vibrant neighborhoods for all. Public-private collaboration should be carried out with accountability, integrity, and urgency.

Our partner organizations have significant expertise in “authentic community engagement”. As a collective, we can assist Richmond GARE in the following ways:

- design and facilitation of an inclusive community engagement process that ensures the representation of people from diverse backgrounds, in particular communities of color and youth
- leadership development and support for historically marginalized people, creating a resident leadership pipeline for service on local boards and commissions
- funding for and active participation in collaborative efforts toward equity such as violence reduction, reinvestment in education, workforce development, and civic life
- racial healing and reconciliation to repair the historical trauma that may prevent members of different racial groups from working together
- voter registration and civic participation in local events

Case Study: RYSE Youth Center

Over 10 years ago, youth of color in Richmond called on adults to listen, invest, and rethink young people’s place in the city. Today the RYSE Center continues the work of amplifying youth voice and leadership. From educational and economic policy to community healing, RYSE youth continue to strive for liberation, assert their power, and imagine a home where all can thrive. RYSE Commons, a campaign to expand and renovate the center into a 37,000 square foot campus and community cultural hub, has engaged over 100 young people and 14 youth ambassadors in the design process, including surveys and charrettes. From initial vision to breaking ground, young people and those most marginalized will remain at the center, ensuring that RYSE Commons reflects their priorities, needs, hopes and dreams. Inclusive, authentic, and rigorous engagement defines RYSE’s work and remains critical in building a legacy of youth leadership and staying power.

Supporting Partner Organizations:

Cooperation Richmond/Urban Tilth
 SparkPoint Contra Costa
 Richmond Main Street Initiative
 Reentry Success Center
 Rubicon Programs
 RYSE Center
 Safe Return Project/Contra Costa County
 Racial Justice Coalition
 Urban Habitat
 YES Nature to Neighborhoods



PRINCIPLE 2 Comprehensive Workforce Development

We affirm the need for a comprehensive workforce that allows everyone to participate in a thriving regional economy. Youth and adult residents should have continuing opportunities to attain the skills and education needed to earn a livelihood and compete in diverse sectors. Workforce development strategies should promote economic security through access to jobs, asset-building, removal of barriers to employment, and small business development (attraction and retention). Companies should value their employees by providing thriving-wage jobs with opportunities for advancement, and government should invest in local businesses through inclusive contracting. Community ownership structures and benefits agreements allow decision-making, jobs, and revenue to stay within the community. We support a transition to sustainable new industries that do not cause harm to communities or workers, but rather contribute to a more just society.

Our partner organizations have substantial experience promoting “comprehensive workforce development.” As a collective, we can assist Richmond GARE in the following ways:

- Access to markets and market reports, access to capital, compliance, permits (municipal, county, state), and anything else related to starting or growing a business
- Advising small, independent, and locally owned businesses, training current and prospective owners and employees/independent contractors
- Advising and connecting government to small business to understand and remedy barriers and challenges to ensuring business retention and attraction
- Comprehensive array of curriculum and resources to help reentry, youth and undocumented individuals compete in the job market and thrive in their career
- Career coaching, job training referrals, and job placement support
- Engage local employers in providing employment and paid internship opportunities for high-need and underserved populations, including youth and persons impacted by the criminal justice system
- Workforce training in Information and Communications Technology (ICT), hard skills, life skills, and career navigation skills (defined career pathways from entry-level onward)
- Growing and strengthening healthcare career pathways in local high schools and colleges
- Advocacy for equity-promoting workforce development policies, including child-centered policies across all departments

Case Study: Y-Plan Adult Project

According to the Richmond General Plan, there is a need for comprehensive workforce training efforts to prepare Richmond residents for the ongoing shift towards a more knowledge-based economy. The Y-PLAN Adult Project is a workforce development pilot program that seeks to address this need. In 2018, a second cohort of nine adult residents delivered a final presentation to their project client, the City of Richmond. Through mind-mapping, a site visit to the Richmond-based Health Couriers Corporation, a SWOT analysis and community survey, the Y-PLAN Team addressed the question of employee retention and support: “What can the Employment + Training Department and local Richmond employers do to ensure that our employees remain working in local companies?” To make sense of the problem, participants carried out the Y-PLAN curriculum to learn from partners and community, reaching the finding that Richmond residents would like to be paid a living wage and be valued for their work. The survey data and community feedback can be utilized by employers to have a better sense of the needs and challenges faced by current and potential employees. The Y-PLAN Adult Project was made possible through partnership with the Center for Cities + Schools, Healthy Richmond, LEAP, the Stride Center, and the City of Richmond.

Supporting Partner Organizations

Catholic Charities of the East Bay
Center for Cities + Schools
Contra Costa Small Business Development Center
Literacy for Every Adult Program
Reentry Success Center
Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center
Richmond Main Street Initiative
Rubicon Programs
SparkPoint Contra Costa
Stride Center





PRINCIPLE 3 Equitable Physical Development

We are interested in physical development that enhances equity through the improvement of affordable housing, public safety, community health, cultural and business opportunities, and access to transit. Public and private resources should be directed toward building resiliency, livability and opportunity in distressed communities. Physical development should expand affordability and prevent housing and commercial tenant displacement. The designation of certain Richmond neighborhoods as “Opportunity Zones” for private investment should be accompanied by community oversight, and local ordinances should support the efficient use of commercial spaces and vacancies. The revitalization of public and private spaces should bring diverse people together and inspire those who contend with the realities of poverty and violence. Creative place-making should be used to lift narratives of inclusion, collective ownership and homeownership, people power, reconciliation, heritage, and healing.

Our partner organizations have engaged in many projects related to “equitable physical development”. As a collective, we can assist Richmond GARE in the following ways:

- Community visioning and quality-of-life planning in North Richmond, Downtown Richmond, 23rd Street, and other neighborhoods
- Beautification and maintenance of the city’s commercial corridors
- Support homebuilding and homeownership through partnership with first-time homebuyer programs
- Engagement with developers regarding affordability (residential and commercial) and community aspects of new building projects on Macdonald Avenue (Downtown), Cutting Boulevard, and 23rd Street
- Partnerships with community-based and economic development organizations to hold events and bring more resources to the community.
- Address consumer affairs directly related to the Community Reinvestment Act and bank policies to ensure fair practices and services that are provided to communities described as disenfranchised
- Provide opportunities for local artists and residents to participate in creative place-making efforts

Case Study: Richmond Main Street Initiative

Through Richmond Main Street Initiative’s 15+ years of stakeholder outreach/engagement, the community has consistently expressed the importance of a clean and safe Downtown commercial corridor. In response to community input and with support from property owners (through the DRPBID), Richmond Main Street provides beautification and hospitality services, by contracting with Safety1st. RMSI staff works collaboratively with Safety1st supervisors, Neighborhood Ambassadors, merchants, property owners, and others to understand the needs of the district and assist with maintaining a clean and safe commercial corridor and resolving quality of life issues. Additional benefits of the program include creating/providing jobs to residents, strengthening relationships between stakeholders, and reversing the negative perceptions of Downtown.

Supporting Partner Organizations:

*East Bay Center for the Performing Arts
 Richmond Main Street Initiative
 Richmond Neighborhood Housing Services
 RYSE Center
 SparkPoint Contra Costa/
 Richmond Community Foundation*