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promenades. Opening in 1976, Hilltop Mall Regional Shopping Center had a major impact on Richmond's economy and its old downtown area in particular. Hilltop is a 1.3 million square foot enclosed shopping center located in the northern corner of the City along Interstate 80. Richmond's downtown business district began to decline in the early 1970s as its major retailers (Macy's, J.C. Penney's, Thrifty, and Woolworth's) all either moved to Hilltop or closed their Richmond operations entirely. Another major event occurred in 1978 when the proposed Hoffman Freeway (now the Knox Freeway, Interstate 580) was designated a part of the Interstate freeway system, thereby ensuring its construction. Funding (90% Federal, 10% State) was attained in late 1982, crowning more than 25 years of efforts. Construction began in 1985 and was mostly completed by the end of 1991. The new freeway passes across Richmond's South Shoreline and connects Interstate 80 with the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. The freeway provided seven new interchanges along the South Shoreline, and has made it a very attractive corridor for new high-tech industrial, business park, and commercial development. The fourth major development transforming Richmond has been the construction of the Richmond Parkway, which began around 1990 and is still in progress. A "drivable route" along all sections of the Parkway was achieved by the end of 1994. The Parkway is a 7 1/2-mile, four lane scenic expressway providing a speedy link between the northern edge of Richmond (Interstate 80 at Hilltop) and the City's southwest corner (the new I-580 freeway and the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge). The Parkway has fostered development of a large industrially zoned area in northwest Richmond that has historically remained largely underdeveloped, due to poor access.The City's population remained within the 71,000 - 79,000 range from 1960 to 1987, with little new development until the early 1980s. Between 1987 and 1995, however, Richmond's population grew steadily from 78,900 in 1987 to 93,000 in 1995. This dramatic increase was due primarily to the large number of new homes that were built in the El Sobrante, Hilltop, Brickyard Cove, Marina Bay, and City Center/Downtown areas during that period. The high rate of new housing construction, however, dropped off sharply beginning in 1992Two dramatic demographic changes occurred in Richmond's population between 1980 and 1990. First, the Asian and Pacific Islander population increased by almost 3 times, from 3,600 persons in 1980 (4.9% of the city's total population) to 10,300 in 1990 (12% of the city total). Second, persons of Hispanic Origin increased by almost 5,000 in this 10-year period -- from 7,700 persons in 1980 (10.3% of the city's total population) to 12,700 (14.5% of the total). In the latest census (1990) Richmond's population was 44% Black, 36% White, 0.5% American Indian or Eskimo, 12% Asian & Pacific Islander, and 7.5% "Other."Richmond covers 56 square miles and has a population estimated at 116,448 (source: U.S. Bureau Census 2020 American Community Survey). Richmond's economy is currently undergoing a major transition from its former heavy industrial character toward more high technology ("high tech") and light industrial companies with new business parks accommodating light industrial and "office/flex" land uses. Biotechnology, in particular, has developed as an important new "niche" in Richmond's growing economy. At the same time, the City's major manufacturer, Chevron has continued to upgrade their Richmond facilities, making major investments to modernize and expand their facilities. 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