

ATTACHMENT J

WEST OAKLAND REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT AREA BLIGHT REPORT 2009

HOW GOALS, OBJECTIVES, PROJECTS AND EXPENDITURES WILL ELIMINATE BLIGHT

The West Oakland Redevelopment Plan proposes to reduce and/or eliminate the blighting conditions found in the Project Area by focusing on 25 key goals and objectives, including:

1. Improve the quality of housing by assisting new construction, rehabilitation, and conservation of living units in the Project Area.
2. Maintain and improve the condition of the existing very low, low, and moderate income housing in the Project Area.
3. Increase opportunities for homeownership in the Project Area.
4. Develop renter stabilization strategies that encourage and assist renters to remain in the Project Area.
5. Mitigate and reduce conflicts between residential and industrial uses in the Project Area.
6. Provide streetscape improvements, utility undergrounding, open space, and community facilities to enhance neighborhood quality and foster economic and neighborhood vitality.
7. Support recreation, education, healthcare and programs for all members of the Project Area community, especially youth, seniors and disabled persons.
8. Improve public safety for people living and working in the Project Area.
9. Restore blighted properties in the Project Area.
10. Assist neighborhood commercial revitalization, and attract more uses that serve the local community including neighborhood- serving retail.
11. Retain existing businesses and attract new businesses to Project Area locations designated for business activity; promote economic development of environmentally sound, light industrial and commercial uses.
12. Increase employment opportunities for Project Area residents.
13. Facilitate economic development by improving and rehabilitating substandard buildings and targeting infill on vacant lots on commercial corridors in the Project Area.
14. Minimize/eliminate environmental hazards within the Project Area.
15. Improve infrastructure, transportation, and public facilities throughout the Project Area.
16. Incorporate ongoing community participation in the redevelopment process so residents of all income and wealth levels, geographic areas, language groups, and ages have opportunities to

learn about and participate in the redevelopment decision-making process.

17. Promote equitable development that benefits the residents of the Project Area and minimizes the displacement of current residents and businesses.
18. Maintain the mixed-use character of the Project Area in a manner equally beneficial to both businesses and residents.
19. Preserve and enhance existing residential neighborhoods and core industrial and commercial areas.
20. Not encourage or support block-busting development, developments that demolish historically significant structures that can be rehabilitated, or developments that destroy the positive functioning character of existing areas.
21. Support and recognize the benefit of new residents and incomes that can be encouraged through market-rate development and done without displacing existing residents or businesses or destroying the existing cultural assets of the Project Area.
22. Encourage and assist the rehabilitation of historically significant properties to avoid demolition or replacement.
23. Relocate displaced residents or businesses, whenever possible and feasible and with their consent, within the Project Area.
24. Not concentrate any very low income housing as stand-alone high density projects, but rather as infill projects, scattered site, and/or in mixed-income projects.
25. Improve street configuration on main arterials and their relationship to the surrounding neighborhoods; do urban design for street improvements such as center dividers, bulb-outs, tree planting, and landscape improvements.

BLIGHT ALLEVIATING ACTIVITIES IN FY 2008-09

The West Oakland Redevelopment plan was adopted on November 18, 2003. Activities to reduce blight within the West Oakland Project Area in FY 2008-09 include: staffing the West Oakland Project Area Committee (WOPAC) and its three standing subcommittees, which advise the Agency Board on projects and programs for implementation. The WOPAC also monitors new development in the Project Area and sponsors an annual picnic and newsletter as outreach activities. Specific activities include:

1. West Oakland Transit Village: The West Oakland Transit Village Action Plan (Transit Village Plan), a joint effort between the City of Oakland, the Oakland Housing Authority and BART, was completed in 2005. The Transit Village Plan provides a blueprint for public and private development at and around the West Oakland BART station. There are several projects associated with the Transit Village Plan which are in progress. They include residential, mixed use, commercial and ground floor retail space.

During 2008-09 Agency staff worked to get WOPAC recommendation and Agency Board

approval to make an offer to purchase 1396 Fifth Street (the “Red Star” site) from the local developer and owner, “1396 Fifth Street, LLC.” The owners did not accept the City’s offer of \$2.81 million and it was instead sold to Global Premier Development who made a higher offer.

Staff also worked to get Agency Board approval to co-apply with local developer “Capital Stone Group” for the 2nd round of Prop 1C funding, located at 1357 Fifth Street.

2. Commercial Façade Improvement and Tenant Improvement Programs: The Agency approved additional funding of \$250,000 for the West Oakland Façade and Tenant Improvement Programs in December 2008. The programs offer matching grant funds for improvements and limited architectural assistance. Staff worked with 15 projects and completed 5 projects during FY 08-09.
3. Mandela Foods Cooperative: Mandela Foods is a new locally-owned and operated grocery store that will enhance the supply of fresh and healthy foods for West Oakland. The Agency Board approved an additional commitment of \$58,000 to help cover cost overruns incurred during the rehabilitation of this 7th Street grocery store. This amount was added to the existing \$200,000 tenant improvement matching grant awarded by the Agency in 2007. Staff has worked to obtain Agency Board approval for the grant and has worked with Mandela Foods to develop the project’s scope of services and contract. Mandela Foods had its grand opening on June 6, 2009.
4. 7th Street Streetscape Project: Since 2000 the area around the West Oakland BART Station has been designated with the zoning "S-15 Transit-Oriented Development". The City has also developed a streetscape plan for 7th Street using an \$185,000 Environmental Justice grant from Caltrans. The streetscape project will restore the traditional role of 7th Street as a local commercial and cultural center for the West Oakland community, as well as strengthen its historical identity as a transportation hub through pedestrian, bicycle and transit improvements around the West Oakland BART Station Street commercial historic district.

The 7th Street Streetscape Improvement Project goals are as follows:

- Bring an overall improvement to the vehicular and non-motorized circulation, and enhance streetscapes within the Project Area.
- Provide safe pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular access and amenities while connecting neighborhoods to the main BART entry and the 7th Street commercial corridor.
- Enhance the appearance of 7th Street and the area around West Oakland BART Station and provide incentives for residents of Oakland to access the West Oakland BART station by foot, bicycle and local transit.
- Promote economic revitalization to encourage additional residential development.
- Celebrate the history of blues and jazz in Oakland.

Improvements include lane reconfiguration, traffic signal modifications, paving, sidewalk and curb and gutter work, street furniture and street lighting, construction of a gateway structure and pedestrian mall canopy, landscaping, public art, construction of new ADA

ramps and pedestrian crossings.

The Project Area is on 7th Street, between Union and Peralta Streets and is intersected by Kirkham Street, Mandela Parkway, Cypress Street, Chester Street, Center Street and Henry Street from north and south. The Blues Walk of Fame will run through to Wood Street in the Historic Commercial section. The design has been completed and construction of Phase I is scheduled to begin in 2009. The section of 7th Street between Union Street and Peralta Street will be Phase I.

The WOPAC approved an additional allocation of \$650, 000 in May of 2009 to complete construction of Phase 1 of the 7th Street Streetscape Project.

5. Alliance for West Oakland Development Job Training Program: The West Oakland Project Area Committee approved a grant of \$100,000 to the Alliance for West Oakland Development on April 11, 2007. The grant is for their job training program which trains at-risk West Oakland youth for careers in the construction industry. The Agency Board approved this grant on July 1, 2008. Staff is working on implementation of this grant.
6. NPI Neighborhood Project Initiative Program: The Agency approved an allocation of \$200,000 for the West Oakland Neighborhood Project Initiative in March 2008. The program offers capital grants of up to \$50,000 for small-scale neighborhood improvement projects within the Project Area. Staff has worked with the WOPAC during Spring 2008 to refine the program parameters and has issued a Request For Proposals, responses to which were due in September 2008.

Staff worked with WOPAC to select the 7 projects to be funded through the NPI Program. The Agency Board approved the selected projects in April 2009. Staff is working on implementing 6 of these 7 projects: 2 security cameras; a dog park at Grove Shafter Park; landscaping of the West MacArthur median; seismic retrofitting of Black New World Community Center; and facility upgrades for City Slicker Farms. The seventh project was determined to be ineligible.

7. Fitzgerald Community Farm: This project consists of improving two adjacent blighted pocket parks for use as a community garden. The WOPAC approved an allocation of \$100,000 in August, 2007, for a project that will combine the parks and develop a community garden at the site. Agency Board approval was granted on March 31, 2009. The project is managed by the Office of Parks and Recreation. Staff worked with OPR and the CitySlicker Farms, the project developer, during FY2008-09 to implement the project.
8. Brown Sugar Kitchen Tenant Improvement Grant: The WOPAC approved an allocation of \$75,000 for tenant and façade improvements for Brown Sugar Kitchen, a new restaurant located at 2534 Mandela Parkway in May 2008. Agency Board approval was granted on July 1, 2008. The improvements include new lighting, opening windows in the façade, new outdoor seating and interior improvements. Staff is working on implementation of this grant which is currently in the design phase.

9. PS Print Tenant Improvement Grant: The WOPAC approved an allocation of \$75,000 for tenant and façade improvements for PS Print, located at 2861 Mandela Parkway. Agency Board approval was granted on October 21, 2008. The grant will fund office expansion, improvements to the retail entry and conditions in the delivery areas. Staff is working on implementation of this grant which is currently in the design phase.
10. Rebuilding Together Oakland: The WOPAC approved an allocation of \$50,000 for Rebuilding Together Oakland to renovate homes in the Project Area. Agency approval was granted on April 21st. This project has been completed.
11. Grid Alternatives: The WOPAC approved an allocation of \$48,000 for installation of solar panels on at least four homes. Agency approval was granted on June 2, 2009. Agency staff is working with Grid Alternatives, project developer, to implement project. Construction will begin approximately 4 – 6 months after the qualified homes have been identified.
12. Business Assistance Center: The WOPAC approved a contribution of \$54,000 for the build-out of the Business Assistance Center, the total cost which was \$569,716. Agency Board approval was granted in April 2009. The Business Assistance Center had been open since July 2009 and its official grand opening is scheduled for October 14, 2009.