



## **CENTRAL ESTUARY PLAN**

A Vision for Oakland's Waterfront

### **Summary Community Workshop #4 Beacon Day School Saturday, July 11, 2009 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

#### **Workshop Format and Process**

The City of Oakland is preparing a Specific Plan that will help define a common vision for the Oakland Central Estuary. The plan will provide a framework to support the development and enhancement of the area and to balance land use goals with the environmental, economic, health, and quality-of-life interests of the community. The City is conducting a series of eight community workshops to encourage public input and foster a collaborative process throughout the plan's development.

The fourth community workshop was held on Saturday, July 11, 2009 at the Beacon Day School and was attended by approximately 35 members of the community – representing a cross-section of stakeholders, including residential, commercial, industrial and recreational interests. This community workshop was interactive and provided participants the opportunity to work in groups and to develop rough concepts for the Plan Area within the larger regional study area. The workshop was facilitated by project staff, who answered questions and guided the process.

Comments and images gathered from the community mapping activity will contribute to the development of three draft alternative land use and transportation concepts for the Plan Area. These alternatives will be analyzed by the consultant team for their economic, environmental and public health impacts, including traffic analysis. The draft alternatives and the results of this analysis will be presented at Workshop #5 in September.

The workshop opened with remarks from Ben Strumwasser, principal of CirclePoint, about the workshop activities. Mr. Strumwasser's comments were followed by a brief presentation by Timothy Rood, principal of Community Design and Architecture, which highlighted the current phase of the planning project, and recapitulated the existing uses within the Oakland Central Estuary Plan Area.

Mr. Rood then divided the meeting attendees into five groups; each group sat at a table with project staff and a large map showing existing conditions. Groups were instructed to identify features that should be changed or improved upon, and features that should be protected from change. Participants placed "chips" with different colors and symbols representing various types of uses on the Plan Area map symbolizing the recommended improvements. Participants also recorded comments and issues on the margins of the map. A summary of the mapping activity outcomes, comments and recommendations organized by group is provided below. After the mapping activity, Mr. Rood answered

questions about the activity, and how participants' input will be incorporated into the final Central Estuary Plan.

The fifth community meeting, to be held in September, will focus on three Plan Area alternatives and a performance analysis of economic, environmental and public health impacts for each alternative.

## **Mapping Activity Comment Highlights**

The following is a summary of comments about plan alternatives, broken out by mapping activity groups. Some comments may have been reworded in order to clarify meaning; comments do not necessarily appear in the sequence that they were made. This summary is not meant to serve as a transcript.

### **Group 1**

Group 1 created a plan which emphasized access to parks and the shoreline. There was a consensus that access for bicycles, automobiles, transit and pedestrians was an important component. This group wanted continuous access, along the shoreline, to each bridge, to the uplands and Coliseum BART via creation of wide boulevards on the west side of the Plan Area. The boulevards would run next to Beacon Day School and down Tidewater Avenue.

Group 1 also wanted to move towards higher density multi-use housing. The group wanted to emphasize the character of the waterfront through the construction of multi-family developments and continuous access to the water.

Group 1 also reached consensus on the concept of buffer zones comprised of parks and open space between uses and zones. For example, they suggested buffers around Union Point Park, in front of and around Fruitvale and Alameda Avenues, and a buffer for the industrial zone north of Tidewater Avenue. Group 1 suggested that the large parking lot near Embarcadero Avenue could be removed and become a park for recreation and civic use, including a farmers' market.



- Changes and improvements suggested for the Plan Area and larger study area
  - Improve infrastructure (e.g., Tidewater area)
  - School district should provide a local school; it will help this area become a community
  - Improve access and circulation at 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue
  - Improve sense of community at 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue; hold a farmers' market

- Provide through-access along the Estuary with crossings underneath the bridges, and at Conagra and Gallagher areas
- Access across the Estuary
- Access to the wetlands
- Improve “bike-ability”
- Better connections to BART
- Harbor business park at (Embarcadero and 22<sup>nd</sup> Area) is a “sea of surface parking;” could become a civic use, like a farmers’ market
- Conagra is an incompatible use with the rest of the Plan Area
- Features to protect from change
  - Bicycle and pedestrian access under the 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Park Street) bridge
  - Bay Trail land
  - Historic shells of buildings
  - Eccentric nature and mixed-use buildings
  - Artists’ community
  - Quinn’s Lighthouse restaurant
  - Do not open a tunnel under 880 Freeway; will increase crime and vandalism
  - Do not see areas that must be protected from change
- Other notes
  - City should find a new place for Gallagher and Burk Asphalt and move it
  - Change rail access so it does not run through Jingtowntown; no train use at 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue – one user for rail
  - Open space for a farmers’ market
  - Research and design industrial, flexible uses with a live-work buffer zone from freeway

## Group 2

Group 2 created a plan which emphasized access to other neighborhoods and regions of the Plan Area, including Jingtowntown. Group 2 wanted better pedestrian access across Fruitvale Avenue, 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. Group 2 liked the idea of moving freight traffic through East 7<sup>th</sup> Street, in order to free up the lower Estuary for more residential uses, and to allow pedestrian traffic to flow more freely. Group 2 also wanted to preserve the Jingtowntown area with improvements to the sidewalks to make the neighborhood more walkable.

Group 2 wanted to change the Tidewater area to become more retail-based





because the current use is not compatible with the rest of the Plan Area and thought that there could be a school in the area, with mixed-use live/work units as a buffer between uses. The group also thought that Alameda Avenue could be more vibrant, while retaining successful existing uses – in order to create more jobs.

Group 2 emphasized keeping industry in the area, but possibly moving those industrial uses closer to the freeway to reduce trip length and emissions by freight trucks. Group 2 considered changing current industry to lighter industrial uses, like biotechnology research and development.

- Changes and improvements suggested for Plan Area and larger study area
  - 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue overpass has serious safety issues that should be improved
  - A boulevard along the Embarcadero could pose potential problems for business access, especially to the waterfront
  - General access issues across I-880, including children's access
  - Set back residential areas from Bay Trail – so trail doesn't go through residents' backyards
  - Right-of-way issues across Alameda
  - Increase parks
  - Priority redevelopment includes Cemex, Conagra
  - Complaints about Oak to 9<sup>th</sup> traffic
  - Increase bicycle amenities



### Group 3

Group 3 designs featured changing the Embarcadero into a boulevard, with light rail, which could extend to and from Jack London Square if the population density was great enough.

Group 3 also wanted to expand the western end to create green collar jobs and create a workforce that provided environmentally friendly jobs, particularly along Alameda Avenue.

Another feature that Group 3 liked was converting the warehouse area south of Alameda into a possible center for biotechnology research and design.

- Changes and improvements suggested for the Plan Area and larger study area
  - Traffic calming
  - Freeway exits, especially at 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Park; maybe they could combine into Park.
  - Improve access to public transit like BART
  - Create a light rail along Embarcadero
  - Create a bicycle network
  - Rethink the warehouse area heavy industrial use; possibly move them to West Oakland
  - A priority change should be more parking for residents, and alternatives to parking (like car-sharing)
  - 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Park area traffic; could be a real interchange and be a gateway into the neighborhood
  - Look at Alameda and Park Street traffic
  - Complete the Bay Trail
  - More Police and Fire
  - Create more active and healthy community uses
- Features to protect from change
  - Existing and proposed green space with more outdoor uses and activity
  - Live/work area with the artist population
  - Sensitivity to height of buildings
  - Availability of flexible space and affordable space
- Other
  - Job creation and a sustainability center for education
  - Enhance the artists' presence in the area by creating an exhibit/ gallery space
  - Fresh produce district
  - Attractors
  - Reclaim ourselves into the community
  - Light rail could connect to BART and Downtown
  - Increase the residential density
  - Collaborations on community development



## Group 4

The plan that Group 4 created featured the preservation of the Jingtowntown community, by maintaining low housing costs and keeping the artists present, but still allowing for some development to occur and possibly subsidize the community. Group 4 also liked the idea of easing and slowing traffic in Jingtowntown, especially near the 7-11.

Group 4 thought two separate nodes of development should be encouraged in the Plan Area: the industrial area of Tidewater as one node, and the Embarcadero Cove area as the other. In Tidewater, there should be compatible uses and a buffer around any heavy industrial uses; possibly use the ABF lot as a transitional use like a buffer. Group 4 liked the idea of solar-based research and design center where PG&E and Home Depot are currently located. Group 4 liked mixed-use near Quinn's and thought it was important to keep new retail close to where it already is prevalent.



Group 4 also wanted to increase transit. They thought the connection to and from Fruitvale Avenue to Alameda Avenue is currently a problem due in part to reoccurring gridlock. Group 4 wanted light rail to alleviate the problem. A connection from the Plan Area to International Boulevard could boost the vibrancy by increasing activity, which could improve business and retail.

- Changes and improvements suggested for the Plan Area and larger study area
  - Create a buffer zone along Tidewater between Lesser Street and a residential area next to a park that consists of industrial uses and live/work area
  - Ferry service to the Oakland Airport
  - Figure out a transition for Hanson Aggregates
  - Light rail from Alameda to Fruitvale BART
  - Improve traffic movement at Park Street Bridge
  - Light rail to Jack London Square and West Oakland BART
  - Mixed-use and live/work retail offices near the end of 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave.
  - Sound wall or tree wall for car noise and smog mitigation along I-880 as a buffer for residents
  - Tidewater side could be mixed use
  - Park at Tidewater; need to keep drug users out and prevent it from being a dumping ground of couches, refrigerators, etc.
- Features to protect from change
  - Lesser Street area should remain an industrial park
  - Do not change business composition near Embarcadero and Union Point Park

- Keep Embarcadero Cove

## Group 5

Group 5 viewed the Plan Area as a tax base which could help to support the City. The group wanted to add some retail opposite Home Depot in the Tidewater area.

Group 5 wanted to create transit for the neighborhood, but realized that Jingtowntown area is mostly single occupants, and not families, so the density may not support extensive transit. They pointed out that the bridges back up during rush hour, and that improvements on the roadways would be highly desirable.

Group 5 found that they all liked the idea of a continuous greenbelt or walkway along the Embarcadero, although some current uses may impede the process.



- Changes and improvements suggested for the Plan Area and larger study area
  - Contamination in the east area of Tidewater
    - Improve aesthetic of waterfront
    - Keep well-defined bike and running path along waterfront
    - Add retail, especially near Home Depot as a buffer to industrial areas
    - Improve freeway flow; there are too many freeway exits
    - Connections through neighborhoods; traffic tends to get blocked up at the Embarcadero
    - Improve connections to Downtown and Fruitvale BART station
    - Does residential zoning belong in the Plan Area? There are concerns about the encroachment of residential areas
    - Concern about need for services
    - Adequate edge along waterfront
    - Need a buffer for industrial areas
- Features to protect from change
  - Industrial uses at Tidewater
  - Concerned about freeway access for trucks
  - Industrial uses should be looked at in terms of viability
  - Area draws people in because its industrial aesthetic; it's a vibrant mix
  - Right to farm ordinance

## Question and Answer Period

Meeting attendees voiced questions about the Plan Area, and potential alternatives to the existing conditions. Attendees wanted to know what would happen if there were improvements on 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue and an interchange was added; how that would ease traffic



on 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to make it more pedestrian safe, and how it might impact 7<sup>th</sup> Street. The project team answered that there could be an improved crosswalk and improved connections, possibly pedestrian bridges to be able to cross the freeway. Also, heavy industry could be moved closer to the freeway to improve access for freight trucks, and to create a more open waterfront. Some attendees wanted to know the status of particular parcels and whether certain uses would remain in the Plan Area.

Meeting attendees also wanted to know how to keep business, like food manufacturing, while reducing the carbon footprint of the area. Project staff replied that clean up of property to high standards can be a substantial expense.

### **Wrap-up**

The next meeting will be held in September. Notification will be sent out in advance of the meeting and posted to the project website.

For more information, please visit the project website:

Para obtener más información

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