



City of
OAKLAND
California

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News from: **Planning & Building Department**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City to host Design Open House to gather Public Input on Downtown Oakland's Future

Oakland, CA — The City of Oakland invites residents and business owners to roll up their sleeves and dig into planning and designing Downtown's future. From October 20-27, the project team will lead an open house and design "charrette" to develop the first preliminary draft of "Plan Downtown" with hands-on involvement from the public. The charrette is the cornerstone of a two-year planning process to develop a community-driven vision for the future of Downtown. The resulting Downtown Specific Plan, dubbed "Plan Downtown" will guide development to support convenient and attractive walking, biking, shopping, working and living in Downtown Oakland.

Over a short period of time, the charrette focuses community input from myriad participants representing all of Oakland. This phase of engagement includes a combination of on-location planning, a design studio and numerous meetings, which provides the public a week of intensive opportunity to exchange ideas and share input.

"All roads lead to downtown Oakland," said Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf. "Our Downtown is the epicenter, not just of Oakland, but of the entire East Bay. Every day tens of thousands of people travel through Oakland's downtown to access essential services, conduct business, attend school, work, live and play. Given the vital role our downtown hub plays in generating revenue and activity in our city, it's essential that all Oaklanders play a role in making sure that plans for the area's future use and growth are shaped and molded to equitably serve us all." With its easy accessibility via excellent transit services, Downtown Oakland is a vital cultural, business, government and entertainment hub. More than 40 percent of the jobs in Oakland are located in or adjacent to Downtown, making this core area vital to the entire city.

From **Tuesday, October 20 to Tuesday, October 27**, the public is invited to drop by the open house anytime between **9 a.m. and 6 p.m.** (till 8 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday) at 1544 Broadway, the future home of SPUR Oakland, across from Latham Square.

Additional charrette events are also open to the public, including a **Hands-on Design Workshop on Monday, October 19**; a **Downtown Walking Tour on Saturday, October 24**; and a **Work-in-Progress Presentation on Wednesday, October 28**, the same night as Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf's inaugural State of the City address. For more details or to sign up for project announcements, please visit **oaklandnet.com/plandowntownoakland**. Those who are unable to attend the open house or one of the scheduled meetings may join the discussion online and take a quick survey at **speakupoakland.org/projects/plan-downtown-oakland**.

The project's community kick-off event in early September attracted more than 160 participants. Mayor Libby Schaaf gave a passionate opening address and Council President Lynette Gibson-McElhane shared inspirational words about the possibilities for Downtown.

(more)

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The Downtown Specific Plan is the City's effort to comprehensively review a variety of land use-related issues to ensure appropriate growth and revitalization and develop a streamlined regulatory framework for future development and public improvements. SPUR's timely report, *A Downtown for Everyone: Shaping the Future of Downtown*, documents the opportunities and challenges facing Downtown today. To view the report, please visit <http://bit.ly/1g9Vfj2>.

The City of Oakland has completed four Specific Plans and one Area Plan in the last two years to catalyze growth, but this will be the first comprehensive specific plan for Downtown. As in the other specific plan areas, the Downtown Specific Plan is expected to encourage investment from private and public sources. A clear plan for the area and accompanying environmental impact report will allow market rate and affordable housing developers to save time and money by initiating projects that match the community's vision from the beginning.

Dover Kohl & Partners – along with their team including Opticos Design, Strategic Economics, Toole Design Group, Urban Planning Partners and others – have been selected to lead the planning process.

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