

Plan Downtown Jack London Neighborhood Focus Meetings

Meeting Notes

August 30, 2016 to September 1, 2016

The Jack London focus meetings included a series of stakeholder meetings and facilitated design sessions to review the draft urban design concepts, as well as community input received to date for key focus areas. Sketch-up modeling, maps, and other design exhibits were used to work interactively with participants in discussing land use, density/intensity and height as well as preservation of historic structures. An equity exercise was used to evaluate the social implications of various proposed development scenarios. The following notes summarize the stakeholder meetings and design sessions held for the Jack London area.

Oakland Heritage Alliance Stakeholder Meeting – 08.30.16.....	1
Port of Oakland Stakeholder Meeting – 08.30.16	2
Jack London Design Session – 08.31.16 (East of Broadway).....	3
Jack London Design Session – 09.01.16 (West of Broadway).....	5
Equity Exercise – 09.01.16	6
Produce Market Stakeholder Meeting – 09.01.16.....	8
Department of Transportation (DOT) Stakeholder Meeting – 09.01.16	9

Notes from Oakland Heritage Alliance Stakeholder Meeting – 08.30.16

- New development shouldn't overwhelm historic character, particularly in areas of primary importance (APIs) and areas of secondary importance (ASIs) (reference to buildings near Jefferson square on 10th Street, also Cathedral API), to retain a sense of time and place
- Height setback in these areas needs to be in accordance with historic buildings (though architectural compatibility is more important than height)
- Guidelines call for mitigations, but they are not good or specific enough
- Zero setbacks in residential areas are problematic; what is appropriate? 20' setback in auto row development in Broadway-Valdez is seen as "less aggressive"
- OHA provided a 2008 map of places they believe are appropriate for taller buildings
- Much of new building design is irregular in historic areas (e.g. 459 8th Street)
- Explore methods or make recommendations for maintaining architectural character with zoning tools
- Suggest design guidelines that pick up historic characteristics
- Can't use existing transfer of development rights (TDR) program because there are no height limits in any of the new zones; also, program needs specific receiving sites
 - Would need to update TDR rules, particularly around issues of receiving sites.
 - Need to have a discussion with development community about TDR and view corridors
 - Need to be clear about base height and maximum height with a transfer

- Need some height limits to make the program work
- Use a multiplier to incentivize TDR (i.e. for every x height transferred, receiving sites can build 3x additional height)
- Acknowledge historic resources:
 - We have just as much valuable architecture as San Francisco
 - The oldest documented building in Oakland (1857) is on Broadway (currently Souley Vegan restaurant); need to acknowledge the presence of this and similar buildings on Lower Broadway in the specific plan, maybe a thematic API
 - Need plaque program
 - Tall buildings, allowed under current zoning, create a discontinuous historic area, which limits ability to apply for API
- View corridors
 - Need to preserve view corridors (not private views from buildings, but views from public places and public streets) to help preserve identity
 - Significant views include City Hall, Tribune Tower, Looking up 14th St.
 - Not any significant views in Jack London, except 880 heading north
 - What's the rule for view corridors in Lake Merritt SP? Look at a stepped height limit
 - Review views from public places or spaces
 - View corridors were raised during the Central Business District zoning update and although view corridors were not ultimately adopted, Special area "A" (regulating a lower height limit near Lake Merritt) was adopted
- Need to preserve identity of Oakland with all the new construction
- ASI/API height and floor area ratio (FAR) needs to be in sync (need architectural vocabulary standards for APIs & ASIs)

Notes from Port of Oakland Stakeholder Meeting – 08.30.16

- Tidelands Trust land (i.e. Howard Terminal and other Port land, including Jack London Square) is intended for publicly beneficial uses that connect the public to the water, including water-related commerce, navigation, fisheries and regional open space/nature preserve areas
- Oakland can use the Port as a utility to support local businesses
- Possible ideas for Howard Terminal include logistics complex, maritime-related retail use
- Moving existing trucking-related uses at Howard Terminal is complex; if trucks are displaced into the neighborhood (West Oakland) it could be a social equity issue
- Flexible zoning is needed for Howard Terminal
- The many changes in maritime industries (globally) right now could result in future land use changes (i.e., delivery of goods, etc.)
- Residential unlikely – would require a change in State legislature; the site has known contamination, access issues (railroad tracks); all lead to a very high price per unit
- West of Broadway – ensure that there are enough uses complimentary to Port of Oakland (5th largest port in the world)
- Address sea level rise

Notes from Jack London Design Session – 08.31.16 (East of Broadway)

Question on intro presentation: can the population data be broken down by age?

Land Use:

- What impact will Brooklyn Basin development have on Jack London traffic?
- Alameda is removing maritime light industry; can City of Oakland capture those uses?
- Some of the industrial buildings are historic – what happens to those under this plan, if use changes?
- There are buildings that date to the 1800s on Broadway – important part of Oakland history
- Homeless encampments need to be addressed in an equitable way

Produce Market:

- Always a topic of discussion; 36 years ago there was a proposal to remove the market
- There are problems with trucks that need to be addressed; market needs to be able to function, but community has complained in the past
- Look at how streets are being used during different times of day
- Access: one-way street, but this is mainly a pedestrian zone; do have a parking issue
- Maybe the market function could move to the Port? Is that a better location for this use? (Port is open to leasing of all types)
- The ground floor market is what makes this place unique; is there potential for residential above, to take advantage of views?
- Preserving the atmosphere, awnings is important; the buildings themselves are not in great condition, not built to last
- Proposed example of changing the ground floor to something like Pike Place Public Market in downtown Seattle and then go higher on top of it; produce market is doing well
- Buildings are shallow, therefore hard to park, hard to reuse for another use
- Very difficult time redeveloping due to parking requirement (which is in the regulations)
- General Plan for Produce Market has a low Floor Area Ratio; any additional height would require a General Plan amendment; but this is the time to make adjustments
- What percentage of wholesalers are open to the public? Is there opportunity to also sell to public during the day? This is already happening with pop-ups on the sidewalk, brewery, wine shop
- Only one building has second floor – other are mezzanines
- Right now produce is only sold by the box; some vendors have permission from market owners to sell in smaller quantities, but others do not
- Has there been any experimentation with relaxing the wholesale only provisions? Challenges: Facilities are limited. Large refrigerators. Different users would need more space. Wholesalers have their own routine/hours, tired by closing.
- How many tenants at 3rd & Franklin: 16-18, both sides of Franklin between 3rd and 2nd, west of Franklin on blocks north and south, 4 blocks total – can look up specific ownership info
- West Coast Produce – [meeting participant] heard West Coast Produce is looking to see what other property owners were going to do
- Retail has moved into some Produce Market – that encroachment is already happening in a way

- New vendors: like at 4th and Franklin, pop-ups.
- Oaklandish started on second floor on 2nd Street – there is precedent to having some variation in the district
- Produce market site is not really suitable for reuse (due to structural issues); preserve atmosphere; can go up to 4-5 or up to 14 stories
- Could go up to 60 feet at the Produce Market without disrupting the views of the Ellington (adjacent residential tower)
- Between 2nd and 4th Street is a historic district; very unique and it's just two blocks
- Not all neighbors are bothered by the noise; so residential is ok
- Preservationists would like to maintain historic character; adding height to some selective buildings may be ok

Building Form/Height:

- Jack London Inn could be an opportunity site on Broadway
- Buildings could be taller, if designed well.
- Along 880 could be an opportunity for taller buildings to accommodate growing population. Air quality needs to be considered.

Mobility/Webster Green:

- Capitol Corridor: passenger train, have thought about long-range options to underground, realign along 2nd Street – this would remove conflicts at Embarcadero, and address sea level rise. Early concepts contemplate a station at Posey & Webster Tube –since cannot go too deep underground here. This would free up Amtrak station as an opportunity site.
- Webster Green, Underpasses: improvements being led by the Jack London BID
- Safety concerns for public spaces? How to prevent Webster Green from becoming a homeless encampment? BID will activate, program public spaces on Webster Green.
- Examples of public/private partnerships (programming open space: Bryant Park in NYC & Octavia St. in SF (where 101 ends – shipping container beer garden).
- Could small scale retail be at the green?
- The green should extend all the way to Chinatown.

General comments and questions:

- Alameda going through similar evolution (they are removing some light industrial – should Oakland capture some of this space?)
- What about the historic buildings? How are they reflected in this plan? Assumption to preserve historic.
- Broadway has some of the oldest buildings in Oakland (1850s-1860s); there aren't any plaques, etc.
- It is really hard to get to Uptown from Jack London; need to look at connectivity and need to address huge homeless encampments, (Bloomberg working on this)
- On Madison, can't walk on sidewalk due to homeless camps
- Should coordinate with Emeryville and develop regional solutions for homelessness

- Also, Freeway Access Project working on access (880, on-ramp to Broadway – re-creating adjacent streets); need to bring value back to street
- Tube traffic will be increased due to activity in Alameda and Brooklyn Basin; major impacts on Oak Street
- How to balance impact of traffic on local neighborhood with those that are just going through
- Re-connect Franklin Street! So there is a transition between retail and wholesale; City and state need to dedicate resources
- Franklin St. connection is critical.
- Franklin St. is not just Broadway off ramp, also on ramp – part of the discussion is having to figure out specifics of design
- Years ago – sketch of how to change grade, at the very least want pedestrian improvements/access on Franklin
- If make Franklin and Webster and Broadway work and pedestrian friendly, will make a big difference

Heights discussion:

- Questions on projections, existing population counts. Assuming all proposed new units get built – want to understand how much new units/people we are looking to find space for
- Victory Court – agree with comments to be an area for taller buildings. The more the better. Questions of access need to be resolved
- I-880 – here are getting into historic areas, produce market borders it, need to look carefully. Franklin, Alice St.
- There are differing views on whether buildings next to historic buildings need to be of similar height.
- OHA supports transitions.
- Broadway corridor – very important 1800s buildings to preserve
- Jack London Inn – opportunity site, 85’ feels appropriate.
- Buildings can be taller if designed well.
- I-880 constraints on taller buildings, need to research

Notes from Jack London Design Session – 09.01.16 (West of Broadway)

- Industrial (and entertainment) is “not nice to live next to.” Need to have a “no whining overlay” if residential is included – people need to understand what they live next to
- Industrial can include residential as work/live only, and uses ancillary to industrial (i.e. wine shop)
- Keep real retail along corridors like Broadway, Embarcadero, Washington
- Retail can complement maritime uses
- Want to maintain existing industrial building fabric
- With light industry uses, building height does not make as much difference (industrial can be multi-story)
- County sites on Broadway could be opportunity for taller buildings with transit hub

- Don't want to lose light industrial to neighboring markets (they're currently leaving for places like Concord and Pleasanton)
- Opportunity to utilize light industrial in unique, creative way (keep enough space for innovative industrial)
- Some are afraid of term "industrial" but don't have to be; it is not necessarily dirty or large-scale
- Truck routes: MLK and Market – Embarcadero
- Howard Terminal
 - Concerns about development on Howard Terminal that might impede access or operations for Schnitzer Steel
 - Concern about a ball park (could impede access for trucks; people complain about Schnitzer Steel metal recycling next door due to lack of understanding of operations)
 - Adjustments to port rules require legislative acts of California congress – has been done before, but difficult
 - Only uses that support water-related commerce or the public's enjoyment of the tidelands (including parks and visitor-oriented commerce) are permitted local-serving uses are not
 - Issues with residential near industrial
 - Maritime industries in dramatic flux; another just went out of business – global economics
 - Modern shipping containers won't come back to terminal (physical constraints)
 - Back of house uses are present at Howard Terminal – truck parking, storage
 - Need to keep trucks out of the neighborhoods
 - Maintenance is a challenge on parks
 - Howard Terminal should support economic development of Jack London and Downtown
 - Can count on Schnitzer Steel remaining, successful company
- Is empty retail in Jack London on Port property due to restrictions on use?
- Could petition the state for more leniency in retailers in Jack London Square
- CIM manages events for the Port in Jack London and has master plan for Jack London Square retail.
- Are the Webster and Posey tubes a permanent fixture? Is a bridge a replacement option for the tubes?
- If there will be a new train station, may be better located to the west of Broadway in Jack London
- In age of sea level rise, tubes will become expensive infrastructure; is there another way to get into or out of Alameda?
- New connection from Adeline to Main Street in Alameda?

Notes from Equity Exercise – 09.01.16

Working in teams, participants used the prototype equity exercise checklist to evaluate the impacts of two scenarios for Howard Terminal (either mixed use development or retain industrial). The resulting notes are provided below.

Scenario 1: Mixed Use Development (Housing, Retail and Transit) Scenario at Howard Terminal

- Who is impacted?
 - Environmental factors with current industry (high rates of asthma, childhood obesity in the surrounding community which consists of primarily lower-income communities and communities of color – discussed as African American, and Vietnamese (Asian))
- Introducing more residential would be problematic (site contamination, requires legislative act, access issues due to railroad tracks), thus residential would be very expensive to develop and the resulting housing would be expensive (luxury housing)
- Who is harmed?
 - Displace “industrial sanctuary” (although industrial is evolving)
 - Blue collar jobs eliminated (industrial industry is in flux / recalibrating due to global economy)
 - San Francisco Levi Stadium invigorated that area
- Who would benefit:
 - Labor unions/union members (for construction trades) during construction of development
 - Retail/service workers (to occupy likely jobs located in new development once completed)
 - Residents who occupy future luxury housing
- What are mitigation strategies?
 - Buffer zone for industrial uses
 - Logistics, new economy jobs (examples cited: 3-D printing, “maker” space) and employment opportunities would be better than mixed use development at Howard Terminal
 - Need to tie the plan to regional economics
 - Housing supply needed in region, not at Howard Terminal

Scenario 2: Industrial Uses at Howard Terminal

- Who is impacted?
 - West Oakland residents
 - Homeless encampments
- Who benefits?
 - Industrial workers
 - Startup industry that can afford industrial space there
 - With Port’s local hire requirement, new operator could benefit local workers
 - What if Schnitzer Steel expands? Schnitzer has compatible neighbors
 - “Working” waterfront – job engine, keep cohesive which has value
 - Communities that have training for these jobs
 - Homeless encampments not driven off by residential development
- Who is harmed?
 - Potential environmental impacts (depends on uses)
 - West Oakland: truck traffic in neighborhoods? Where does parking go?
 - Howard Terminal is isolated from public transit, so people relying on transit would benefit less from jobs
- Mitigation Strategies

- Truck timing/route strategy
- Bus (AC Transit) to West Oakland BART
- Education/training on policies (local hire)

Notes from Produce Market Stakeholder Meeting – 09.01.16

- Opportunity to create tourist destination in Oakland, similar to [Pike Place Public Market](#) in Seattle
- Good location for an attraction, add to tax base?
- San Francisco produce market can be model – City purchased land
- There are two markets – one in San Francisco (by airport), and one in Oakland – that serve the region
- Examples discussed: [Italian Market](#) and [Reading Market](#) in Philadelphia
- Improve access: re-open Franklin St.
- The Port was looked at in the past as potential new site (as was the Army Base) – but would require existing users (vacancy rates for industrial uses at 3%, long line of people that need space)
- Concern about displacing Produce Market tenants if height limits increase; some tenants may be happier with more modern facilities in a less transitioning area (changes in neighborhood putting pressure on producers). Could City broker an arrangement? (in SF, City bought land and led to non-project and relocated the produce market)
- Unless owners want to leave – should go forward on the assumption that market will stay
- Business owners – most are happy, some would like nicer, newer facilities
- Needs to be viable for long-term investment for owners. Options:
 - Keep it
 - If it goes, what should happen on this site?
 - Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)
- Should make list of actions that city, merchants, condo association can do to make interactions better; maybe establish committee?
 - Can put up signs about hours of operation
 - The BID can help with signage, use issues
 - Note that this is the 100th anniversary of the market; could use this opportunity to celebrate and educate about the market and its history, functions
 - What are complaints? Trucks blocking 3rd Street, produce on the street. There is a desire to keep the market, and also to address complaints, need to keep a line of communication
 - Talk to East Bay Restaurant Association
- The existing Floor Area Ratio limit is one of the reasons for viable small businesses. An 8-story building is totally different – with or without awnings
- A general plan amendment to allow new development was discussed in the past
- Need flexibility, plan needs to apply for twenty years, need to adjust to market
- Think about impact to historic buildings (need to improve the historic quality)
- People like the character, want to maintain streetscape, setbacks
- Changes are happening, residential uses are coming to the district

- “Makers” market is a potential reuse
- Need to think about how to foster small locally-owned businesses
- There are ideas for introducing new retail elements, here and there, pop-ups in the street during the day, attract more people
- Consider a pilot program for pop-up retail in sidewalks (circumvent encroachment permit?) and pair with Jack London food festival.
- Should have signs, plaques, photos to celebrate longevity of market
- 3 possible outcomes: 1) preserve in place (TDR? Or with foundation/non-profit support?); 2) Relocate (public/private partnership?); 3) Tactical Urbanism (pilot pop-up approach)

Notes from Department of Transportation (DOT) Stakeholder Meeting – 09.01.16

- Need list of projects that are shovel-ready over next 5-7 years, to get funding, designed to 35%.
- Would need to fast track certain projects to take advantage of upcoming funding opportunities such as the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and the potential infrastructure bond
- Would it be possible for the Downtown Plan to provide short-term and long-term cross-sections?
- DOT Strategic Plan (forthcoming) frames projects around equity, sustainability, gov’t effectivity – can fold the downtown plan in
- CIP will be adopted in May, mostly completed in Feb
- In three weeks, City will no longer conduct transportation analysis for level of service (LOS), and will address vehicle miles traveled (VMT) instead (anticipated Planning Commission date is Sept. 21, 2016); this will streamline transportation analysis needed for future development projects
- Need decision-making tools for identifying trade-offs between options and for deciding on projects to move forward with in each phase
- There are trade-offs on two-way street conversion; need to identify and prioritize appropriate streets for two-way conversion
- Planned or Ongoing Infrastructure Projects (cursory overview provided verbally)
 - Big projects (40+ year ideas): Capitol Corridor (what to do with train); Metropolitan Transportation Commission Core Capacity Study; 980 high speed rail/BART yard
 - Near term: Lakeside Green Street project (Measure DD funded) next to Lake Merritt; BART has grant for 20th Street ‘road diet’ between Broadway and lake, Harrison Street couplet
 - Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) – Freeway Access Project
 - City of Alameda – has \$75M to spend in Oakland, wants to improve ped/bike in Webster & Posey tubes, same money may be used for freeway access
 - Wrap tube on 5th Street to avoid sending people through Chinatown
 - City of Alameda has a drawing for Harrison Street two-way conversion
 - Oak Street – convert four lanes to two, add bike lanes
 - Use all repaving projects as an opportunity to efficiently restripe
 - Broadway is on the list to repave in the five-year paving plan, and we are two years in; give DOT a plan for it
 - Bike Master Plan update (element of the City’s General Plan) – starting in a year or so
 - Technical assistance funding for bikeway improvements available through “the big jump” project (need prioritized improvements to apply for; can integrate the West Oakland Walk)

- Pedestrian Master Plan (element of the City's General Plan) will be finalized in the fall
- 14th Street Protected Bikeways project, based on Plan Downtown charrette concepts, has been submitted to Active Transportation Program (grant funding through Caltrans)
- East Bay Greenway (rail to trail) will run from Hayward BART to Lake Merritt BART; could eventually loop in to the Ohlone Greenway. Needs north/south connector
- How to prioritize two-way conversions:
 - Prioritize the capacity for moving people (via all modes of travel), not just cars
 - Prioritize effects on retail success - for example, 7th and 8th Streets, which (as one-way streets) are currently acting as surface freeways, and E 8th & 10th
 - Franklin and Webster – instead of converting to two-way, there is space to add a separated bikeway without the trade-offs found on some other streets
 - Big picture: two-way is default position for streets, but need prioritized list of areas to convert
 - Cost implications of replacing/modernizing signals
- Must address curb-side management; parking need may be decreasing over time, but loading and delivery (such as rideshare drop-offs) are increasingly important issues
- Need to fix access to Jack London
- Embarcadero needs improvement. One suggestion is to move the trains to one side; however, Union Pacific wants a third track. Capitol Corridor's long term plan is under exploration (could have implications for 2nd Street)
- Bridge to Alameda, instead of tubes? Would need to move coast guard, then could accommodate auto bridge (or possibly a bike/pedestrian bridge)
- Aerial tram, reasonable?
- Baseball – a scenario that needs to be planned for
- Need to set up WebEx and get update from Capitol Corridor team on Vision Report, which discusses separating passenger rail from freight
- Union Pacific looked at undergrounding under the channel, and couldn't find a way to get back to grade in time to get to the station on the east side of Jack London
- Downtown Specific Plan team needs pavement improvement plans from Public Works; can help with near-term projects
- Bridge over the channel is not finalized; considering raising the railroad track and putting bridge under tracks, which would allow reasonable kayak portage and a much shorter ped/bike crossing
- Goal for specific plan direction to DOT: talk about the connection points that are needed, but don't fixate on the methods (i.e. water taxi vs. bridge vs. streetcar)