

**Neighborhood Discussion and Walk Notes Prepared by RBF and Lamphier-Gregory employees.**

**September 12, 2005**

**PANIL Neighborhood Walk and Discussion Group  
Summary of Comments (Organized by General Topic)**

Environmental Quality

*Neighborhood Walk Comments*

- Be mindful of the vistas that will be obstructed by tall KP buildings
- Noise from freeway, reverberating off of new hospital tower, will negatively impact residential quality of life – acoustics definitely need evaluation through the EIR
- Noise and air quality coming from existing parking garage along Howe and Piedmont is very disturbing
- Consider views from the upslope areas – Rose Street, Kingston, Bayo Vista, etc.

*Discussion Group Comments*

- Consider the visual impacts of taller buildings from surrounding areas – if tall buildings are developed, make sure they are attractive to look at
- Care for and restore Glenn Echo Creek
- People heal better in settings that are quiet, beautiful, and serene

Access and Circulation

*Neighborhood Walk Comments*

- Traffic on Howe Street is horrible. It needs to be addressed.
- Monte Vista is used by locals for easy freeway access – a lot of neighborhood traffic results.
- Hospital entrance from Westall is a problem – noise from ambulances, etc. on Piedmont will negatively impact neighborhoods
- Problem MacArthur intersections at Piedmont and Howe cause significant neighborhood cut-through traffic

*Discussion Group Comments*

- Do not want a median along Piedmont west of MacArthur
- Prevent cut-through traffic to neighborhoods, Westall, Yosemite, Monte Vista are among the most affected
- Look to Alta Bates in Berkeley for their application of traffic calming and cut-through prevention techniques
- Consider a hybrid right-turn in and out splitter island at neigh hospital entrance along Piedmont (across from Westall) to allow only eastbound emergency vehicles on Piedmont to turn left into entrance (while still allowing right turns into and out of entrance by all other vehicles)
- Concern that Robley Terrace (off of Monte Vista) will be severely impacted during construction
- A complete transportation system is needed that relates to Pill Hill and BART
- Bring street car back to the area – Kaiser Permanente could lead effort to build light rail that allows people to park further away conveniently

- Existing shuttle from BART only has 2 stops in area – a mitigation measure for Fabiola building
- Will we ever see a transit village at the BART station – perhaps Kaiser and the city could lead discussions with BART

## Urban Design

### *Neighborhood Walk Comments*

- Height and width of new buildings on MB site is worrisome
- Limit or eliminate windows from taller KP buildings that would overlook residences and negatively impact privacy
- Traffic lanes on Piedmont are too wide and sidewalks are too narrow – another 5-8 feet could be added to the sidewalks and removed from the traffic lanes
- Can the wall of the parking garage facing Piedmont be transformed into a vertical garden or backfilled with lofts or micro-retail spaces (assuming Piedmont lanes can be narrowed)?
- Why can't Kaiser buy the gas station and auto repair service to expand and take pressure off of neighborhood impacts caused by more intense tower and tall parking garage?
- A long-term plan is needed for Kaiser and the surrounding neighborhoods so each KP project is not a fight

### *Discussion Group Comments*

- Locate massing as close to I-580 and Broadway as possible
- Shrink overall project – flatten it
- Look to Cal Tech in Pasadena for an institutional use that transitions effectively to the surrounding neighborhood
- Does a publicly accessible document exist that describes Kaiser Permanente's programming needs by building?
- General feeling that KP is following an old model for hospital development
- To minimize impacts:
  - Drive parking underground
  - Reduce scale of buildings – break services out and distribute them horizontally more so than vertically
  - Seek to share parking with other uses
- Buildings are out of scale: can they be dropped?
- Can services be maintained with building scale dropped?
- A world class project opportunity is in front of KP, one that could make the neighborhood proud and serve as an example for large medical institutions compatibly integrated with neighborhoods – KP campus in SF is wonderful, why can't this one be?
- Closer buildings are to the ground, the safer they are – especially during natural disasters
- KP should work very hard to create a new campus design that is as hip, healthy and trendy as its advertising campaign is
- Make the new KP buildings GREEN – Alameda County leads the country with solar panels on buildings
- Consider how KP buildings can better work with the land – topography, vistas, sun and shade, natural features, etc.
- Leighton Street is not accurately depicted on the NBBJ map (it is not a through street)
- Mosswood Park is underutilized – Can Kaiser provide funding for its rehabilitation?
- What will happen with the top 4 stories of the existing hospital? Will they be removed?
- Any possibility for Kaiser to celebrate the history of the area in its designs? Glenn Echo Creek and the City Beautiful Movement. Julia Morgan. Street car. Etc.

## Parking System

### *Neighborhood Walk Comments*

- Can anything be done to improve the aesthetics of the existing parking garage on Piedmont – strategic paint scheme to visually break down the massing?

### *Discussion Group Comments*

- Put as much parking underground as possible
- Consider using new parking technology, like European puzzle lift system that is being used by a developer near Piedmont – use this technology to squeeze more cars in smaller spaces (this could be used for staff)
- Can parking be accomplished on satellite locations – like BART station?
- Can parking be built underneath Mosswood Park? (Concern for trees – do not remove trees!)

## **Howe St. Neighborhood Walk and Discussion Group**

The following comprise the notes taken by myself, Rebecca Gorton, of comments relating to the Kaiser project from the Howe Street residents participating in the Neighborhood Walk on the evening of September 12, 2005. It was my impression the Howe Street residents were very supportive of the project in general and were looking at it as an opportunity to address already existing problems in the area. The main concerns revolved around traffic and parking on Howe Street, with the blocking off of Howe Street being central to their vision for improvement.

- Community member Tom noted some opinions at the last meeting were not representative of what he believes to be the general opinions, specifically:
  - SMWM principal (a woman who's name he doesn't remember) presented a very firm policy at the last meeting and he felt it was not her place to do so. He and other community members he has spoken with did not agree with her points.
  - The Manila Street group is only a small number of people despite how vocal they are at meetings and with the press. He does not believe their views to be representative.
- Amount and speed of traffic appeared to be existing concerns that these neighbors felt could be mitigated by this project. Ideas included:
  - Block off Howe St. just north of the garage entrance to prevent through traffic they believe is using Howe St. to avoid lights and traffic on adjacent streets. **STRONG SUPPORT.**
  - Add diagonal parking or bulb-outs to make the street feel less like a thoroughfare
  - Institute "Hospital Zone" signage and regulations affecting speed and noise.
  - Improve timing of lights on Broadway. They feel poor timing of Broadway lights is one impetus for traffic using Howe Street instead. Broadway/MacArthur light is particularly bad and only lets about 2 cars make left turns each cycle.
- Other comments on traffic:
  - Large postal trucks travel Howe Street at all hours because of postal building farther to the north.
  - They do NOT support any new traffic lights in the area.
  - Think about correcting some strange intersections in the area, such as where Howe Street intersects 40<sup>th</sup> Street/40<sup>th</sup> Street Way with odd stop signs.

- Howe Street never gets cleaned (at least not effectively). They ticket but don't tow cars in the way. Clean the street and if not, at least stop ticketing. Parking gets VERY difficult during street cleaning.
  - Consider adding bike lanes or paths to the area as it is currently dangerous for bicyclists. They could connect to common bike routes on 40<sup>th</sup> and/or 51<sup>st</sup> streets.
- Howe Street Garage comments
  - Consider opening exits onto Piedmont. They currently exist but are always gated. Group felt this could improve traffic flow, specifically if Howe Street is blocked off. Maybe even just for Right only exit (no ingress).
  - Talk of Kaiser acquiring gas station and auto repair at MacArthur end of the block. Not very clear on why except that then they would have that whole area and that it may allow some kind of traffic flow out that way though I'm not too clear on how that would occur.
  - Why not also allow pedestrian traffic out onto Piedmont? Currently no pedestrian exits in that direction. Looks and feels prison-like. They don't feel it is a bad enough area to warrant that design and as the Kaiser campus expands, it will be nice for pedestrians to have more options of how to get where.
- Parking is a big problem
  - Residents include many students and artists with numerous cars per house and limited or no private parking.
  - Hospital visitors seem to find it easier to park on the street and often are unconcerned about tickets.
  - Some believe people park in resident parking areas long term and come out and move their cars every 2 hours. (I was not clear on why people would do this – they seemed to suggest it was hospital staff attempting to avoid parking garage fees.)
- They are not concerned about the amount of parking for Kaiser so much as how to get Kaiser staff and visitors to park there rather than on the streets. How to do that:
  - Do away with parking fee for Kaiser staff. Possibly also for visitors (parking validation).
  - Reduce parking for non-residents from 2 hours to 1 hour and/or make some areas resident-only parking.
  - (My own observation: add some serious signage directing people to the garage! Very difficult to know where to go – I would likely have parked on the street as well if visiting Kaiser.)
  - Consider allowing residents to use the parking structure. They weren't sure of specifics about how that would work. Some sort of shared parking arrangement.
- They support the skywalks. No one there had a problem with them. As long as they are designed well, they agree it could be more convenient for Kaiser-internal trips such as doctors getting around and moving patients. Currently can be dangerous with fast traffic and poor handicapped ramps.
- They are not particularly concerned about Mosswood park and think there may be too much focus on it.
- Get rid of the motels! (Specifically Westwood Lodge) They draw crime to the area and make it unsafe for residents as well as Kaiser clients and staff. Consider using those lots for Kaiser campus.
- What ever is done, make it visually attractive! They understand there will have to be a certain amount of massing, but that doesn't mean it can't look nice. Good architectural design is important to this group. Seems they would like to see something visually compelling, interesting, and attractive.

### **38<sup>th</sup> and Cerrito Neighborhood Walk and Discussion Group**

More specific notes are provided for in the Neighborhood Comments. This is a summary of main comments:

- Kaiser employees using neighborhood streets for parking.
- Hospital litter can be found on street during walk.
- Desire a sensitive barrier between Kaiser and residential.
- Large shadows already exist, would prefer to decrease mass not increase.
- Program lot at 38<sup>th</sup> and Broadway (west side) at residential scale.
- Neighbors are boxed in by Kaiser facilities on all sides.
- City needs to address signage and street cleaning
- Need a pedestrian crossing/stop light at 38<sup>th</sup> and Broadway.
- Bike paths to provide for safe alternative transportation options.
- New design should have large landscaped setbacks similar to existing hospital.
- Parking structure on Piedmont contains undesirable blank walls and inadequate security- (crimes are conducted in stairwells).
- Keep Food Farmacy and other such stores along first level of new hospital.
- Adopt Mosswood Park and integrate portion into hospital uses.
- No sky bridges!
- Oakland auto works and gas station along MacArthur, between Howe and Piedmont should be bought and built upon by Kaiser for Cancer Care Center.
- Need for pedestrian amenities along streets especially trash receptacles.
- Construction will increase noise and trash- needs to be mitigated.
- Crime exists along 40<sup>th</sup> near Howe St.
- Post Office employees also use the residential streets for parking.

**September 13, 2005**

### **38<sup>th</sup> St Neighborhood Walk and Discussion Group**

The following comprise the notes taken by myself, Rebecca Gorton, of comments relating to the Kaiser project from the 38<sup>th</sup> Street residents participating in the Neighborhood Walk on the evening of September 13, 2005. It was my impression the 38th Street residents were less concerned about the impacts on 38<sup>th</sup> Street specifically as on crime in the area.

- They do NOT support the skyways. They referenced reduction of street life would make the area more unsafe. (My observation: they seemed to be passionate not of their own accord but because someone else is very much against them – did this happen in another meeting? Is SMWM against them?)
- Much call for removing and/or improving the motels along MacArthur believed to bring much crime to the area. Thoughts on this topic included:
  - The area is/will be unsafe for Kaiser clients and staff, particularly the walk to the proposed administrative building.
  - Could draw criminals looking for prescription meds.
  - General agreement Kaiser should do something about these motels, possibly buying sites and using them as part of their campus. If Kaiser doesn't do something, city definitely should.
- Other thoughts about reducing crime:
  - Remove public telephones that still exist in the area
  - Add better street lighting to MacArthur for pedestrians. Currently only lights in median.
- They expressed concern for Manila Street residents who they feel will be negatively impacted by development near them.
- Concern was expressed over locating the cancer center near residents (again, they were concerned for other residents as this is not proposed near 38<sup>th</sup> Street). Is there any danger from the radiation? Would this be better located away from residents?
- The current structure occupying the space to the south of MacArthur is not friendly to the street. They would like the new structure to be friendly to the street. Ideas for this included:
  - Landscaped setback – not built to sidewalk
  - More/obvious entryways to sidewalk
- They would like to see inclusion of retail along streets, specifically along the building to the south of MacArthur. This will make the buildings more friendly and tie in better with the nearby Piedmont retail district.
- They believe Kaiser employees are parking in the neighborhood. Consider removing the parking fee for employees to get them to park in the garages.
- Reduce parking from 2 hour limit to 1 hour limit without a resident pass to help keep Kaiser staff and clients from parking on the streets.
- Two ideas were presented to improve traffic flow in the area:
  - Improve timing of lights on Broadway, specifically Broadway/MacArthur intersection
  - Replace MacArthur on-ramp so traffic looking to get back on the highway does not have to traverse local streets to get to the nearest entrances. There is an off-ramp nearby but the on-ramp was removed in 1989(?) and never replaced.

## **Richmond Neighborhood Walk Summary of Comments:**

**Central Utility Plant:** Neighbors expressed concerns about the proposed location of the central utility plant. They were concerned about noise, air emissions, odors, garbage, and the use of hazardous materials at the plant. Others were concerned about the visual affect of the plant along Piedmont Street. The neighbors expressed a desire to visit other similar utility plants to get an idea of the noise and odor impacts. They would also like Kaiser to move the plant away from the neighborhood. They think that the utility plant should be hidden and located in the center of the block or placed underground.

**Parking:** Parking was a major issue of concern for the neighbors. Many homes do not have garages or off-street parking spaces and it can be difficult for them to find adequate parking in their neighborhood. Parking permits are currently required for residents living in the area. The residents are required to pay for the permits. Guest parking for residents is a major hassle. Residents are required to purchase guest parking permits from the City prior to their guest arriving. Despite the permits, Kaiser employees and patients continue to park in the neighborhood (during the walking tour, two employees walked from the neighborhood to the hospital). Neighbors would like to see a better parking system for their neighborhood. They requested the following improvements:

- ❑ Kaiser should pay for all residential parking permits since they cause the majority of the parking problems and create the need for the permit system.
- ❑ Permits should be required for all vehicles parking in the neighborhood at all times. Parking for Kaiser employees, patients, and other retail stores in the area should only be allowed on metered spaces along Piedmont Avenue.
- ❑ Residents should receive extra guest permits that they can give to their visitors. The current guest parking system is a hassle and discouraged neighbors from having guests.
- ❑ The City should consider improving the wider portion of Richmond Boulevard to create angled parking within the center of the street. Parking could be used by residents and guests.

**Traffic:** Currently, there are a variety of traffic and circulation problems in the Richmond Neighborhood. Stacking occurs at the entrances and exits to the Kaiser parking structure on Piedmont Avenue and several of the major intersections during a.m. and p.m. peak hours. To avoid the stacking and the busy intersection, people drive through the Richmond Neighborhood at relatively high speeds. People often drive the wrong way on one-way streets in the neighborhood. There are also several traffic signs that prohibit certain turning movements. Drivers often ignore the signs and drive though the neighborhood. The on ramps to I-580 from MacArthur Boulevard also get backed up because all of the lanes merge into one. Residents would like to see a detailed traffic study that considers cut-thru traffic in their neighborhood. They would also like Kaiser and the City to make the following improvements:

- ❑ Move all vehicle entrances to the hospital to Broadway to prevent traffic problems on Piedmont Avenue.
- ❑ Extend the median on MacArthur Boulevard past Richmond Boulevard to prevent left turn movements from westbound MacArthur Boulevard on to Richmond Boulevard and left turn movements from northbound Richmond Boulevard on to MacArthur Boulevard.
- ❑ Install traffic calming devices in the neighborhood to prevent cut-thru traffic and slow vehicles.
- ❑ Improve on-ramps to Interstate 580 to eliminate stacking caused by the merging of lanes.

- ❑ Coordinate traffic study and improvements with Summit Hospital.

**Building Frontages:** The residents are extremely concerned about uses along the street. They would like to see active uses, such as stores, cafeterias, and restaurants along the street to avoid “dead zones”. Currently, walking along the Piedmont Avenue during the day and especially at night is very scary because the Kaiser parking structure creates a long “dead zone”. People feel very isolated and vulnerable while walking along the street. The lighting is also poor, especially under the freeway. The pedestrian experience is further degraded by fast vehicle speeds, narrow sidewalks, and a lack of landscaping and pedestrian amenities. Residents would like to see active uses, wider sidewalks, improved landscaping, and pedestrian amenities along Piedmont Avenue and other streets.

**Elevated Walkways:** Residents would like to eliminate the proposed overhead walkways for the Kaiser project to encourage pedestrian activity along the street and to minimize visual impacts of the hospital.

**Noise:** Residents would like a noise wall along I-580 to reduce overall noise levels. They are also concerned about noise from vehicles traveling to and from the hospital, including delivery trucks and ambulances. The volume and timing of trips should be studied to determine noise impacts. Noise from parking structures and hospital equipment should also be evaluated.

**Potential Mitigation Projects:** Residents would like the Environmental Impact Report to consider various projects to mitigate impacts on the neighborhoods overall quality of life. Potential mitigating projects include:

- ❑ Improvements to Glen Echo Creek Park: defining the edge with rocks, landscaping, and low fences or walls to prevent parking in the park, installing public restrooms, restoring the historic pedestrian bridge, improving park seating and pedestrian amenities, improving lighting, installing a fountain, etc.
- ❑ Installing native planting along the creek and within Caltrans right-of-way.

### **Manila Neighborhood Walk and Discussion Group**

See Neighborhood Notes

### **Webster Neighborhood Walk and Discussion Group**

More specific notes are provided for in the Neighborhood Comments. This is a summary of main comments:

- City- need street sweeping, street amenities...
- Pedestrian uses should be encouraged and made safe and friendly along streets.
- Bike routes and paths need to be clearly delineated.
- Stop signs are need along Webster to allow for safe pedestrian crossings to Park.
- Mosswood Park-
  - Park needs better lighting and upkeep. (we walked through the park in the dark with few lights working)
  - Playground is dirty.
  - Need a playground for toddlers that is fenced in.
  - Need better programmed uses- (a soccer game and volleyball game were going on and using their own equipment or items found in the park to make goals.)

- Access to Mosswood Park is difficult and is not coordinated with paths within the park.
- Shuttle service between BART and Hospital- made more regular.
- AAA Building- needs better lighting and security fence around parking lot. Crime activities are occurring in the parking lot and in the motel across the street.
- Most pedestrians try to avoid intersection at Broadway and MacArthur- timing of pedestrian light is off.
- Landscaped setback is desired for new Kaiser Hospital.
- Massing of new Hospital should be broken up with pedestrian plazas, landscaping and water features.