

## Summary of April 28<sup>th</sup> Community Meeting

### INTRODUCTION

On Thursday, April 28, 2011, the City of Oakland hosted a community meeting to re-launch the Broadway Valdez District Specific Plan process. The meeting was held from 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. at the First Presbyterian Church located at 2619 Broadway.

Excluding City of Oakland planning and consultant staff, approximately 125 people attended the community meeting. Attendees were welcomed at the entrance and asked to sign in.

#### **City representatives present:**

Mayor Jean Quan, Council Member Pat Kernighan and staff Jennie Gerard, Council Member Nancy Nadel, and Council Member Libby Schaaf.

#### **City staff present for the Community and Economic Development Agency (CEDA) includes:**

Eric Angstadt, Deputy Director of CEDA; Ed Manasse, Strategic Planning Manager; also from the Strategic Planning Department Alisa Shen, Laura Kaminski, and Troy Reinhalter; Aliza Gallo, Retail Development Manager; from the Redevelopment Division Jens Hillmer and Kathy Kleinbaum; and Jeff Angel from the Housing Division.

### MEETING FORMAT

The objective of the meetings was to re-launch the Broadway Valdez Specific Plan by introducing the new City staff team, giving an overview of the Specific Plan process to-date, reviewing the study area setting, discussing the place-making principles that will inform the plan; and going over key points of what we've heard so far. Then the rest of the meeting was left open to hear more comments from the public.

The agenda consisted of an introduction from Eric Angstadt, followed by welcoming remarks from the Mayor, Jean Quan. Ed Manasse, gave the main presentation and then the rest of the meeting, approximately 1 ½ hours, was left for questions and comments from the public.

The [Agenda](#) and [PowerPoint](#) presented at the meeting are included on the website.

Chinese language interpretation (Mandarin and Cantonese) was provided at the meeting and over 20 people used this service.

Workshop participants were given the option to turn in feedback forms at the end of the meeting, or to send them to City staff via email, or regular mail.

### SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

The following is a summary of feedback received during the large group question and comments portion of the agenda. Click [here](#) to see copies of all the comment cards received.

- Has the potential of redevelopment funds being eliminated been considered and would this jeopardize the project?

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- *Eric – It is more likely that redevelopment will be reformed rather than entirely eliminated; the phasing of the district plan will be very important, we should strive to identify key sites to develop first that would serve as catalysts for the entire project area (incremental steps); and explore potential public/private partnerships to make up lost fund.*
- The city should consider using rebates and/or performance-based incentives to stimulate private investment in the project area (refunding permit fees in return for achievement).
  - *Eric – It will be possible to incorporate a range of funding mechanisms as part of the Broadway Valdez District Specific Plan*
  - *Ed – There already is an existing business and sales tax incentive program which has been approved by City Council and it is possible to help fund new residential development through these innovative incentives (not limited to retail projects).*
- For the presentations for the next meeting we would like to be able to draw/design a plan for the neighborhood, can the city provide GIS shapefiles and other basemap info?
  - *Yes, the City will provide that.*
- The specific plan should make it possible to buy a wide range of goods locally; many residents would prefer not to shop elsewhere.
- The plan should ensure that new development is connected to uptown and other areas in order to generate a critical mass of retail that will attract many shoppers.
- Residents of Valdez Plaza are concerned primarily about safety and would like safer/better sidewalks that are ADA-compliant and in good condition, a bus shelter on 28<sup>th</sup> St, and think that vacant lots are a good opportunity for affordable housing and retail
- It would be good to have more visuals for the project area at the next community meeting including more aerials, ‘on the ground’ views that provide a ‘visual tour,’ and more information regarding the type of retail the City is hoping to attract in order to make sure to keep Oakland’s character - don’t want a Bay Street feel. There is concern that bulldozed/cleared lots would be an eyesore if not promptly built upon and it would be good if an overview could be presented from city staff about what is happening over the next 5-10 years so that citizens can make informed decisions about the merits of development plans.
  - *Aliza – The city needs both local/convenience shopping and comparison good shopping (clothes, electronics, etc) and the City is not planning on emulating Bay Street.*
- A representative of some landowners: There is concern about the economics of the project, can the plan pencil out? There will need to be high density residential development to drive more retail (which can’t support the current land values). If the plan does not have a lot of new residential units, the project can’t reach its retail goals. The city should form a committee reaching across all departments (Fire, Planning, Public Works, etc) and work on raising money since the plan will need a large infusion of city money/subsidies
- A member of Walk Oakland Bike Oakland (WOBO) – The City should look outside the project area to make bike/walk connections throughout Oakland (especially to downtown and Piedmont). The parking requirements for the plan can be reduced, and fewer curb cuts would be better for pedestrians/bikers and blank walls (or obscured windows) are a detriment to the quality of street

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environment.

- A member of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB) – The City should focus on adaptive re-use of historical resources in Broadway/Valdez and help older buildings with façade improvements and other structural upgrades. The plan should incorporate historic structures as an integral part of the plan, not merely building around them.
- A Resident of West Lake (Christian) Terrace – There should be mini-parks along Broadway (or some sort of respite for seniors such as benches and/or shelters.
- A member of WOBO and a resident – Traffic planning is key to the success of the plan, access in and out of the area is critical. Parking ratios should be more carefully defined, previous concepts put all parking structures at 23<sup>rd</sup> St, which will lead to congestion and be unsafe for cyclists. Don't want another Walnut Creek – look to other successful urban models for inspiration.
- Grocery Outlet should stay because for seniors it may be one of the only places to buy food. A pharmacy such as CVS or Walgreens is the type of retail and products also highly desirable.
  - *Ed – Maintaining food outlets in the area is a major priority.*
- A member from American Institute of Architects (AIA) – Does not like the previous alternatives. Was hoping the City would have provided more information regarding existing land use conditions. It was suggested that the City hold the next meeting as a two-day exhibition of ideas rather than two hours of presentations and offered the AIA space as a possibility. More time for public involvement was encouraged, perhaps using online survey tools in order to be more transparent.
- Resident from Oakland – Wanted to know what the average income of residents in the plan area and who are we targeting with the retail.
  - *Aliza – The City is hoping there will be retail that appeal across all relevant demographic groups.*
- Would like the city to arrange walking tours so people can get a good sense of what is actually in the Broadway/Valdez district.
- Likes pocket parks and would like more if possible. The online links are not working for the previous Preferred Alternatives. There is concern that the emphasis on future retail will overlook its impacts on the community and is hoping for assurances that construction vehicles would not use small neighborhood streets but stay on main arteries. There also is concern that tall buildings could overshadow Glen Echo Park and there is now a need for a new library in the area.
- The plan should look at extracting developer agreements similar to Portland where in exchange for in demand parcels developers could provide more parks, affordable units, streetscaping, etc... The plan should create a more walkable community.
- Resident – 1) AC Transit needs more funding and shouldn't spend their money on the Free B. 2) The City needs to foster Oakland's specific human capital, why do we need to import folks from outside of Oakland? 3) The plan does not need to develop every single vacant lot, the Grocery Outlet parking lot gets very full during holidays.

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- The plan needs to preserve the integrity of historic buildings and there is an urgent need for usable open space in the plan area.
- What does “Oakland authentic area” mean?
  - *Ed – Building on what already works by combining the successful existing elements with badly needed new elements that are currently lacking.*
- How do we ensure that the new buildings and the specific plan are green?
  - *Ed – There is a City Ordinance which mandates a high level of green building for new construction, and new building codes also requires high-performing buildings.*
- Perhaps Fourth St in Berkeley is a model for Broadway? A Streetcar would be a huge boost to retail and bring in customers.
- A member of Northgate Neighbors – Would tolerate a new Target but in general prefer smaller local businesses and also encourages the re-use of historic buildings to preserve authenticity of the Broadway corridor.
- Hayes Valley in southern San Francisco is a great model for how an older corridor can evolve into a regionally drawing retail center and add residential above. Make sure we work with the retailers we currently have (Sears, Art murmur galleries) instead of pushing them out.
  - *Aliza – Oakland is pursuing retail projects elsewhere within the city, such as Foothill Square, Uptown, East Oakland, and Jack London and trying to strengthen retailers, not drive them off.*
- There were comments about the Free B shuttle and why the hours are so limited. It would be better if the bus ran from 3pm to 10pm so residents could use it for shopping and going out later in the evening. Would like to see street trees (and on-going maintenance) added in the specific plan. The plan should make sure current small businesses are protected and not pushed out with new (higher priced) development.
  - *Ed/Eric – The Specific Plan will include precise locations for street trees and pocket parks along with secure funding sources for future operations & maintenance.*
- How will the phasing work, will housing or retail come first? Don’t want lots of vacant units so the timing needs to be right.
  - *Ed: The exact phasing of the plan has not been developed yet but both elements will be critical, timing will depend to some extent on the market and the health of the economy.*
- A property owner – 1) The owner has a retail building with very little space for parking and would like to see a major anchor retail to bring other customers around to justify stand-alone parking structures. This location is excellent for a major anchor, with freeway and transit access and untapped demand. A Target store would be okay. 2) Other retail property owners are waiting to sell until an offer for \$70/sf comes in. If mixed-use development is approved property values would rise at that point so owners are sitting on their property. 3) Demographic analysis should include households in Piedmont to encourage investors.
- Chinese resident of Satellite City – Crime is a major issue, his wife was robbed in broad daylight and wants the plan to make it safer to walk around the neighborhood.
  - *Ed – More ‘eyes on the street’ would help a lot with new residents and retail street activity would increase and make everyone safer.*

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- A member of Oakland Heritage Alliance (OHA) – The project area does not overlap with the Uptown Project Area, there are blocks in between that need help as well. The City needs to make connections between the two. Don't siphon off Uptown money but reinforce each other.
- Can 1 million square feet of retail happen? Is this still a feasible/realistic goal?
  - *Ed: The specific square footage of retail is somewhat flexible.*
  - *Eric: The point of this community process is to 'truth-check' the council goals for retail.*
- Resident – How will displacement of any existing affordable housing be handled in the Valdez triangle? Do we have numbers on current affordable units? Criticized the concept of the city subsidizing private development, do not think that taxpayers should pay for parking structures that serve private landowners.
  - *Jeff: By state law, any units lost would have to be replaced and new units will be part of any residential development.*
- Resident of Satellite City – Oakland has ideal conditions for a major development, but again, need to focus on reducing crime.
- Why would large retailers come to Oakland if there is opportunity in Emeryville?
  - *Aliza – Presence of Emeryville has not stopped development of a retail hub near West Oakland (Target/Home Depot).*

There were 32 feedback forms turned in, see below for link.

### **WRAP UP/NEXT STEPS**

At the end of the meeting, Eric Angstadt gave concluding remarks about the next steps and how to stay involved and informed. Meeting schedule and other information about the Broadway Valdez District Specific Plan is available online at the Website at [www.oaklandnet.com/bvdsp](http://www.oaklandnet.com/bvdsp). Members of the public may send questions or comments to Planning staff via email at [bvdsp@oaklandnet.com](mailto:bvdsp@oaklandnet.com) or call the Broadway Valdez Message Line at (510)238-7905.

### **MEETING AGENDA, POWERPOINT, AND FEEDBACK FORMS**

**Click on the following links to see the documents:**

[Agenda](#)

[PowerPoint](#)

[Feedback Forms](#)