

Summary of May 25th Community Meeting

INTRODUCTION

Words to Paper: Show us your vision for the Broadway Valdez District

On Wednesday, May 25, 2011, the City of Oakland hosted a community meeting. The meeting was held from 6:00 P.M. to 8:30 P.M. at the First Presbyterian Church located at 2619 Broadway. Members of the public were invited to give presentations about their vision for future land use and transportation in the Broadway Valdez District and how that vision would be implemented. Eight groups in total gave presentations. Meeting materials are available below, including all of the group presentations. As stated at the May 25th meeting, please be advised that these presentations reflect the views of the individual presenters/groups they represent; they do not reflect the views or opinions of the City of Oakland. The presentations will be considered as one of the inputs in developing a draft land use and transportation concept, which will be the subject of the next community meeting.

Excluding City of Oakland planning and consultant staff, approximately 90 people attended the community meeting. Attendees were welcomed at the entrance and asked to sign in.

City representatives present:

Jennie Gerard, staff for Council Member Pat Kernighan and Planning Commissioner Madeleine Zayas-Mart.

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

Ed Manasse, Strategic Planning Manager; also from the Strategic Planning Department Alisa Shen, Laura Kaminski, Kelly Cha, and Troy Reinhalter; from the Redevelopment Division Patrick Lane and Jens Hillmer.

MEETING FORMAT

The objective of the meetings was for members of the public to show their vision for the Broadway Valdez District. The agenda consisted of an introduction from Ed Manasse, followed by PowerPoint presentations from eight groups and then the rest of the meeting, approximately 45 minutes, was left for questions and comments from the public.

The Agenda and Meeting Materials presented by the groups at the meeting are included on the website. Chinese language interpretation (Mandarin and Cantonese) was provided at the meeting and around 10 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.

A member of the Sierra Club – Wants the City to make sure to get the parking ratios right, the parking should be limited in the project area by eliminating parking requirements for developers.

- **Ed:** A fine balance will be needed to make sure there is sufficient parking to drive the retail but without making residential development infeasible. Preliminarily the City is

CITY OF OAKLAND
BROADWAY VALDEZ DISTRICT SPECIFIC PLAN

exploring the concept of reducing the parking ratio/regulations over time; as the first phase of the development is successful, the next phase would be permitted with fewer spaces.

- **Laura:** The City is also doing a broad parking code update; we will look at Broadway in that city-wide context.
- **Response from Marla with Greenbelt Alliance (one of the presenters from the public):** The Greenbelt Alliance supports a ratio of approximately 3 spaces/1,000 sf of retail, ramping down over time to more like 2 spaces or less/1,000 sf of retail as density increases in the district and hopefully some long-term transit emerges. Ideal scenario is 15% vacancy for on-street parking; the City has in fact adopted this metric as official policy in 2009.

A member of Oakland Heritage Alliance – The City should explore the possibility of site-specific bonuses to developers such as in exchange for preserving certain historic resources give a density/Floor Area Ratio (FAR) bonus. Developers should be required to sign community benefits agreements (sophisticated) and explore all avenues of guaranteeing investment in the local infrastructure.

A resident who lives in the neighborhood – The resident liked what he heard but has questions about the pros and cons of unbundling; would this increase the amount of people who will park their cars on local streets? Could permit parking be implemented? If the City unbundles too much, the streets will be jammed with new cars.

- Permit parking is one tactic to control parking, but other solutions are available as well. Parking benefits district can create revenue that goes back into local neighborhoods. New tenants who own cars are usually not allowed to move in without purchasing a space, the point is to encourage new residents without cars or who are willing to give up their car. Works well when used with affordable housing since these the residents often have fewer cars on average.

A member of the public – The person agrees with the idea to concentrate high density and tall buildings along the spine of Broadway (as most presentations showed).

A resident – Thought the meeting was a positive step it was more informative than the last meeting (more visuals) but do not think the Stadium is the right thing for the City. They are worried that a large anchor tenant coming in might destabilize current property owners. The City needs to make sure that the development/investment process happens over the long run and it is very important to talk about the phasing so that small owners don't get punished, which was not mentioned enough by presenters.

- **Ed:** Phasing will be one of the most important issues looked at in the next iteration of the draft plan.

A member of the public – Concerned over the lack of open space in the area, the plan should incorporate a large park area with playfields and track. Also consider substituting some bike parking in lieu of automobile parking spaces, possibly 3 bikes for every 1 car space.

CITY OF OAKLAND
BROADWAY VALDEZ DISTRICT SPECIFIC PLAN

A member of the public – Contrary to popular opinion, there are lots of children living in the project area, so it would be nice to have a place for them to play such as tennis/volleyball courts, and love the idea of the greenway to have a place to walk/stroll for all ages.

A member of the public – Feel that more open space is needed. Santa Monica is a good example to look at in terms of getting the parking right. Pasadena is also a good example of revitalizing an old retail core. Having real-time signage for parking availability on each garage would help manage the demand and congestion. The City should make sure that this is a community-driven process and not be held hostage by retailers. If retailers want to come to Oakland they will, we don't need to spend all the City's money just to encourage them to come. Give them parking but make sure the outcome favors the residents.

A Business/Property Owner – Wants to know how property owners will be a part of this vision since they did not receive notice of the process until now and are worried about the potential for eminent domain.

- **Ed:** Eminent domain is not in play. The City is looking to involve the property owners, and recently sent a letter of invitation to meet with all landowners. The City wants to create a situation where the property owners can support the vision and are also looking for owners interested in the possibility of combining/aggregating parcels.

A member of the public – Wants to know if tenants have been notified, because it feels like some people have been overlooked in the outreach process. They suggested a large official-looking sign(s) to be posted alerting residents to the meeting.

A member of the public – It would be good to be able to drive and park to get to retailers but feel that this is the minority opinion. Likes the idea of destination retail, believes Oakland lacks it. Not sure if boutique stores can consistently hold down space in ground floor retail developments because there seems like there are a lot of for lease floorplates in new projects. Does not understand the urgent push for housing, seems like there are a lot of vacant/for rent properties already in the city.

- **Ed:** Parking will be important, but we want to make sure it does not *dominate* the overall feel of Broadway Valdez. A park once district would be an ideal outcome.

A member of the public – Does the City have a strategy for the current auto dealers? It would be a shame to lose their sales tax dollars. Also, are we building all parking up front for 1 million square feet of retail? Then if we can't attract enough retail, we'll end up with excess parking and high ratios. There already are two major garages, the YMCA and one other one.

- **Ed:** The full strategy for the auto dealers is not completed, but the City has been looking at Van Ness Avenue in San Francisco as an example. On Van Ness Avenue, there is storefront retail to display autos in a showroom only, but storage for most vehicles is off-site at a different location in the City in parking garages. The parking strategy will involve some initial creation of parking to entice the first major catalyst project but as the phases progress the city will evaluate the need for parking as the project progresses, all of the parking will not get built up front.

CITY OF OAKLAND
BROADWAY VALDEZ DISTRICT SPECIFIC PLAN

A member of the public – Support the strong spine of Broadway and like the idea of housing/retail along this principal spine/corridor. The idea of creating the Echo Creek Greenway is a great one and love the idea of having more open space in the area. The City should consider using protected bikeways which means having a curb separator, or cones/sticks to keep cars from entering the bicycle space. Would like to know more about the future transit that is planned or anticipated for the area, it would be good to capture some work-related trips.

- **Ed:** The City has applied for grant money to do a transit feasibility study for Upper Broadway. Check out the public realm report (WRT) and the city will continue to study opportunities to enhance biking.

A member of the public – What is the chance we could bring back a family diner like Biffs? It was very successful.

- **Response from Joyce Roy (one of the presenters from the public):** Bring back Biffs! It could be economically viable if there is high density nearby (or a high-rise adjacent). It fills a social/community need, many elderly/seniors used to patronize it regularly. Developers should realize it has potential. Developers from outside Oakland need to understand the diversity and purchasing power of Oakland is significant.

A member of the public – How did the development in Berkeley along University Ave work in relation to the community process/high density/historic buildings? Can we learn from their example?

- **Response from Kirk Peterson (one of the presenters from the public):** Berkeley's process is unique. Have to hope that the public likes the buildings you propose and to try to win them over. They tried to design buildings that were respectful of existing architecture and pray.

There was 1 feedback form turned in, see below for link.

WRAP UP/NEXT STEPS

At the end of the meeting, Ed Manasse 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. Members of the public may send questions or comments to Planning staff via email at 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:

[Meeting Materials](#)