

Broadway Valdez District Specific Plan Community Stakeholders Group Meeting Notes

August 30, 2011

City Hall, 1 Frank Ogawa Plaza, Hearing Room 3
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

The following is a summary of comments provided at the August 30, 2011 Community Stakeholders Group meeting that has been organized **by topic**.

Land Use

- Support flexible regulations with respect to adaptive reuse that focus on life safety requirements
- Need another grocery store option in area like Trader Joe's (Whole Foods is too expensive and Grocery Outlet doesn't provide reliable availability of goods)
- Discussion of housing in Plan Area is lacking in presentation
- Is focus of Specific Plan no longer destination retail?
 - *Note: Staff clarified that the goal of the specific plan has not changed; the goal is still to bring destination retail to the Broadway Valdez District. The intent of staff's presentation was only to present a number of short-term strategies that could "set the table" to make the area more attractive to developers/property owners and facilitate the long-term vision of destination retail, and other complementary uses to make the Broadway Valdez District a "complete neighborhood".*
- Are we really trying to alleviate City's retail leakage? Are we committing to destination retail in the Valdez Triangle and saying that 2-3 property owners need to partner and work with national retailer(s); or is the City saying that it's just going to be incremental growth in the Valdez Triangle and the focus for destination retail is really the Uptown District?
 - *Note: same as above*
- The focus/opportunity sites should be the Valdez Triangle around the Whole Foods, and for the North End, it should be the Dang and Hill properties.
- This Plan needs to include a focus on workforce housing and small, first-time homebuyer housing for families, (e.g. family-oriented, rental housing).
- The Plan needs to focus on capacity: for example, it's not realistic to have retail/pop-up stores/mobile food events along the entire length of Broadway from Grand Ave. to I-580.
- There was support for Morten Jensen's presentation from the May 25th community meeting that expressed the vision for the Broadway Valdez District and noted that the area can have destination retail, housing and maintain the area's historic buildings.
- Property owners, such as Joe Masri, needs to be able to build more housing in order to make a retail project work.

Economic Development/Short-term vs. Long-term Strategies

- Generally support the short-term strategies that build on what is working in the area.
- Make sure that economic development strategies don't focus on getting new businesses on Broadway at the expense of existing Piedmont Avenue businesses.
- Regarding encouraging events to bring people to the Plan Area, the City needs to think beyond Art Murrur; need to include family-oriented events, as well as events for older demographic groups.
- Having a long-term and short-term strategy is OK, but need to avoid a situation where the short-term strategy *becomes* the long-term strategy because it ends up precluding some of the bigger projects to occur pursuant to the long-term strategy.
- The City needs to define what it means by "long-term" and take this into consideration as it develops the Specific Plan; as a business-owner who had to deal with the multiple-years ("25 years") it took to develop the Uptown area, I noticed that many local businesses had to relocate at the early stage of site assembly and they never came back.

Streetscape/Bicycle Lanes/Open Space

- Focus on improving underpasses.
- Contact artist Dan Fontes (who did the zebra and giraffe murals under the Broadway and I-580 underpasses) about renovating murals.
- Avoid problems with original streetscape plan for Broadway Auto Row that used (Redev.) funding for planting, but no money for landscaping maintenance so much of it died.
- Focus streetscape improvements on bike lanes, transit, safety improvements and street trees; avoid pouring more concrete; absolutely avoid banners and other superficial pronouncements of desired area identity.
- Improving bike lane safety at Webster and 25th Street and through the underpasses is important.
- More information about parking retail ratios is desired.
- Include seating in locations that make sense, that foster interaction (e.g. near plazas, open space).
- Need well-designed and functional bus shelters.
- Support streetscape improvements, open space and street trees.

Parking

- The City shouldn't be spending more money on building more parking. It's not clear that we have a real parking shortfall.

Other

- I live closer to the northern end of the Valdez Triangle and I feel "left out" because most of the strategies for my area are relegated to the long-term.
- When we prepared the Upper Broadway Strategy, the developers we talked to all thought that the Valdez Triangle was a great location for comparison goods retail; the City needs to provide certainty to property owners/developers; what happened at that time is that we couldn't get 2-3 property owners to partner to get the critical mass to make a retail project work.
- Wanted to draw attention to timing of BRT planned on Telegraph Ave and what implications that may have to Broadway Valdez District.
- Is the City talking to Alta Bates Summit hospital about their plans?
- 3rd Street in Santa Monica or Old Pasadena are great examples of areas with the type of thriving pedestrian-oriented comparison goods retail, where there had been the challenge of multiple land owners.
- 100 Grand building is an example of a project that was supposed to have ground floor retail but now a lot of it is being turned into live/work.
- The 100 Grand project made the mistake of not having a retail broker that specializes in finding retail tenants to handle their ground floor spaces. That's why they didn't fill those spaces with retail.