



## **CENTRAL ESTUARY PLAN**

A Vision for Oakland's Waterfront

### **Summary Community Workshop #1 Fruitvale San Antonio Senior Center Monday, March 23, 2009 7:00-9:00 p.m.**

#### **Workshop Format and Process**

The City of Oakland is preparing a Specific Plan that will help define and determine a common vision for the Oakland Central Estuary. The plan will provide a framework to support the development and enhancement of the area and to balance land-use goals with the environmental, economic, health, and quality-of-life interests of the community. The City is holding a series of community workshops to encourage public input throughout the plan's development.

The first community workshop was held on Monday, March 23, 2009, at the Fruitvale-San Antonio Senior Center and was attended by over 70 members of the community representing a broad cross section of stakeholders including residential, commercial, and recreational interests. The first meeting served as a visioning workshop, with the objective of outlining the overall purpose and process of the Specific Plan and of generating discussion among participants of their visions for enhancing and improving the area.

The meeting opened with remarks from Project Manager Eric Angstadt and Oakland Vice-Mayor Ignacio De La Fuente. Timothy Rood, Principal of Community Design and Architecture, provided an overview of the project scope, process, tools and team, outlining the area's history and evolution to its present mixed-use configuration, and describing the visioning process as building upon previous planning efforts. (Community Design and Architecture is the lead consultant for a multi-disciplinary team of planners.)

In order to encourage discussion among workshop participants, the group was divided into four smaller breakout groups, which were facilitated by members of the project team. Each group was asked to discuss the same three questions related to "big picture" improvements to the project area. The groups reconvened at the end of the meeting, with each group reporting key issues and themes that arose during breakout group discussions.

The second public workshop, to be held on Wednesday, April 22, will continue the visioning process and introduce the principles of Healthy Development.

#### **Presentation Highlights**

Below are highlights and key points of the twenty-minute presentation provided by Timothy Rood:

## **The Project Team**

Mr. Rood described the Central Oakland Estuary planning process as a collaboration of many groups – with the key groups being composed of those who live, work and own property in the project area; staff from the City of Oakland; and the consultant team, which was hired by the City to provide technical expertise and to help move the project forward.

The project team includes:

- Well known transportation and infrastructure planners/engineers including Arup, with expertise in sustainability.
- Strategic Economics and Center for Community Innovation – experts in helping businesses succeed and creating jobs and better places to live.
- Human Impact Partners using a new tool to assess public health in the built environment, to help make the future of the central estuary a healthier, safer, and more pleasant place to live and work. We'll talk more about that at our next workshop which is on April 22.
- CirclePoint, which is providing public outreach and environmental study support to the project.

## **The Planning Process**

### **The Past**

The planning process began with renewed commitment to the waterfront that was expressed in the General Plan update in 1998.

The Estuary Policy Plan subsequently developed a more focused set of policies related to the Estuary and Waterfront. The EPP included extensive public outreach, but developed much more focused and detailed policies for Jack London Square and the Oak to Ninth area. Many of the recommendations for the central estuary were to support viable existing and new uses, but left the door open for a more specific planning process in the future.

The Estuary Policy Plan had this vision for the Central Estuary Area:

“The land use policies for the San Antonio/Fruitvale District are intended to establish a more compatible pattern of land uses that supports economic development and at the same time enhance neighborhood amenities. The waterfront is a feature which binds disparate activities and provides a needed destination within these neighborhoods. Land use policies reinforce access to the waterfront, while promoting opportunities for neighborhood preservation and enhancement. Emphasis should be put on the reuse of existing structures of historic value and architectural significance.”

### **The Present**

Presently, there are three main reasons for moving forward with a specific plan:

- The area currently has transportation and utility infrastructure deficiencies that would be too much for any one developer to pay for;
- The specific plan allows for area-wide financing to be developed;

- New development would pay “fair share” for needed infrastructure, as well as other community priorities such as parks and open space.

### **Subareas:**

One of the key goals of the planning process is to create a more integrated area. An initial step is to develop a unified vision for what the future of the Central Estuary is - unifying the four sub-areas:

- West Area – West of 23rd Ave. Historically marine and food related industrial business. The area’s food-related industry has continued to evolve along with waterfront uses.
- Central West Area – Between 23rd Ave. and Fruitvale Ave. Kennedy Tract is an historically working class neighborhood with some warehousing and industrial uses.
- Central East Area – Fruitvale Ave. to High St. This area has a few large, long term presences like the Owens Brockway plant and the Home Depot center, in addition to other small industry. Recently, this area is becoming more local and regional retail oriented.
- East Area – East of High Street. Historically and today this area has been comprised of industry like woodworking, aggregates for roads, utilities, and storage. There is also a new waterfront park which is an extension of MLK Shoreline Park and will soon have a Tidewater Boathouse recreation center.

### **Additional Opportunities for Public Input**

Opportunities for future public input are as follows:

- April 22 – Confirm Project Vision, Introduce Healthy Development
- Mid/Late May – Existing Conditions
- June/July – Alternative Concepts for the Area
- September – Refined Alternatives
- October – Preferred Alternative
- TBD – Draft Plan
- TBD – Final Plan significance.”

### **Summary of Breakout Group Discussions:**

The goal of the breakout groups was to have a focused discussion about the project area and to help define a vision based on three fundamental questions:

1. What do you value about the current Central Oakland Estuary Waterfront and project area?

2. What would you like to see changed or different along this area and the waterfront?
3. In thinking about a future vision for this area, what existing examples are ones that you would like to see replicated in the project area:

Each group nominated a recorder, and at the end of the session each group selected a member to report the highlights of the discussion to the full workshop group.

### **Group Reports:**

Below are reports from all groups, by themes. (PDFs of the flipchart notes are available on the project website).

#### Overall

The overall character of the estuary area was a common topic of discussion in the breakout groups. Breakout group participants commented on what they value in the area, how they'd like to see these elements maintained, and how they would like to see it improved.

- What do you value about the current Central Oakland Estuary Waterfront and project area?
  - The area's diversity: racial, economic, and uses
  - The "funkiness" of the community
  - The safety of the area
  - Not crowded
  - Quietness
  - Sense of being "off the beaten track"
- What would you like to see changed or different along this area and the waterfront?
  - Having activities of all kinds
  - Avoiding gentrification and economic displacement
  - Maintaining the area's "funkiness"
  - Lots of public art installments
  - Organically-generated development process
  - Farmer's markets
  - Dog parks
  - More trees

#### Infrastructure

During the breakout sessions, there was much discussion about the infrastructure of the estuary area, including streets, parks, and transit. Common themes included

access to public transit and parks, the lack of sidewalks in many areas, and poor lighting on many streets.

- What do you value about the current Central Oakland Estuary Waterfront and project area?
  - Classic architecture
  - Access to the waterfront
  - The Bay Trail
  - Existing buildings, like ConAgra, are big landmarks and give the area its identity
  - Central location, for jobs and living
- What would you like to see changed or different along this area and the waterfront?
  - More parks, greening, and beautification
  - More water access for boats and the public
  - Completely connected to the Bay Trail
  - Infrastructure improvements
  - Better access for pedestrians, bikes, and more public transit
  - Sidewalks, lighting and streetscapes for safer and less confusing access to the area
  - Traffic safety measures
  - Safer I-880 on- and off-ramps
  - Redevelopment of the area under I-880 to provide better access

### Jobs

With the mix of light industrial, commercial, and residential uses in the estuary, many meeting participants were concerned about employment opportunities in the area. Many commented that they would like to attract new employers, and support the existing ones.

- What do you value about the current Central Oakland Estuary Waterfront and project area?
  - Mixed used industrial and residential, particularly in Jingtowntown
  - Mix of live work space
  - The marina
  - The restaurants
  - Industrial jobs
  - Central location, for jobs and living

- What would you like to see changed or different along this area and the waterfront?
  - More well-paid jobs
  - Develop the area's light industrial uses
  - Avoid gentrification and economic displacement
  - More waterfront restaurants and retail
  - Zoning and planning decisions need to be consistent so businesses can make (informed) decisions

### Land Use

Many group participants identified the current mix of uses in the central estuary as a benefit and a defining characteristic of the area. There was a great deal of discussion about how the area can retain a mixture of light industrial, commercial, and residential uses, while protecting the health and quality of life for area residents.

- What do you value about the current Central Oakland Estuary Waterfront and project area?
  - Mixed used industrial and residential, particularly in Jingtown
  - Mix of live work space
  - Access to the waterfront
  - The marina
  - The restaurants
  - Union Point Park
  - Midpoint Park
  - Existing buildings, like ConAgra, are big landmarks and give the area it's identity
  - Central location, for jobs and living
- What would you like to see changed or different along this area and the waterfront?
  - More water access for boats and the public
  - A greater focus on health; keeping residential areas away from freeway and heavy industry
  - Emphasis on property owners, regardless of zoning, actually using the waterfront
  - Develop the area's light industrial uses
  - A mix of affordable housing
  - Avoid gentrification and economic displacement

- Mixed development near green space
- New high-density housing
- Organic and local development process
- Small scale development
- Zoning and planning decisions need to be consistent so businesses can make decisions

### Other Cities

The final question meeting participants were asked was about areas they would like to see influence the estuary specific plan. Seattle and Portland were repeated names, with an emphasis on learning from their development of waterfront areas.

- In thinking about a future vision for this area, what existing examples (anywhere) are ones that you would like to see?
  - Vancouver
  - Brooklyn
  - Toledo
  - Portland
  - Lost Canyon Winery, an example from within the community
  - Melbourne
  - Seattle
  - River walk areas in San Antonio and Reno
  - Washington DC
  - Petaluma
  - West Berkeley (a good example of mixed use)

### **Wrap-up:**

The next meeting will be held at the same location, the Fruitvale-San Antonio Senior Center at 3301 E. 12th Street, Suite #201, Oakland, CA 94601

For more information, please visit the project website:

Para obtener más información

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