




City of Oakland

Downtown Oakland Specific Plan (DOSP) Zoning Amendments

Meeting # 1: Land Use Activities May 11, 2022, 6:00-7:30pm

Meeting Materials

- [Presentation](#) 
- [Handout](#)

Meeting Summary

This was the first of three meetings addressing the key components of the recently released Draft Zoning Amendments intended to implement the Downtown Oakland Specific Plan (DOSP). The additional two meeting topics will be:

- Special Districts (May 16, 6:00-7:30pm)
- Development Standards & Zoning Incentive Program (date to be announced)

City staff gave an overview of the DOSP and its goals and an overview of the proposed changes to the Planning Code and Zoning Map. The presentation was followed by questions by the public and answers by City Staff. Then attendees broke into three small groups to discuss questions about the land use activities and then reported key highlights back to the main group. Notes from the questions, small group discussions, and large group report-back were recorded here and will be incorporated into a revised version of the Draft Zoning Amendments.

Introductions

CITY STAFF

City staff attending included:

- Ed Manasse, Deputy Director of Planning
- Laura Kaminski, Strategic Planning Manager
- Joanna Winter, Project Manager
- Neil Gray, Khalilha Haynes & Daniel Findley, Planners
- Stephanie Skelton, Public Service Representative

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Attendees included: Naomi Schiff, Peter Birkholz, Justin Zucker, Ronnie Turner, Nathan Landau, James E. Vann, Chris Buckley, Grant Alvernaz, Jeff Levin, Trevor Thorpe, Seung Yen Hong, Savlan Hauser, Sarah Ravani, Garrick Huey, David Allen, Clint Loftman, Victor Flores, Belal Kaddoura, Joshua Simon, Susan Shawl, Eli Mayerson, Alice Rice, Art Hardy, Gary Knecht, Scott Forman, Paul Bickmore, G P, Claire Pelley, Danielle Dynes

Attendees were invited to share their organizations or neighborhoods, and what they would like to know more about:

- **Jeff Levin**- East Bay Housing Organizations. Would like to learn about latest developments and the extent to which public comments have been incorporated into the zoning proposal.
- **Ronnie Turner**- Development resource group; involved in several potential residential areas downtown and want to know what is changing and staying the same in the DOSP.
- **Trevor Thorpe**- Managing Director CBRE East Bay Offices Business Occupant in CBD; interested in potential updates to land uses n CBD, including Life Science uses.
- **James E Vann**- Lake Merritt/ Park District.
- **David Allen**- Museum of Jazz and Art District 2, Arts and Cultural Uses.
- **Belal Kaddoura**- Affordable housing developer working with Workbench. Appreciates the meetings.
- **Nathan Landau**- A planner in the Long Range/ Strategic Planning unit of AC Transit.
- **Naomi Schiff**- Oakland Heritage Alliance and DD Coalition. Longtime business owner in Downtown; would like to see what changes are happening.
- **Peter Birkholz**- Interested Oakland Resident. Would like to know what has changed in the plan.
- **Justin Zucker**- Reuben, Junius, and Rose. Piedmont Ave resident. Interested to find out what's changed / what's new.

Questions

- **Art Hardy**- Are there any plans to reinforce the shorelines against sea level **change**? *The city, with the City of Alameda, is undertaking an Oakland-Alameda Estuary Adaptation Project with a planning grant from Caltrans that will answer these questions.*
- **Eli Mayerson**- Does "D-DT-C Downtown District General Commercial Zone" require ground floor retail? Or is it just permitted? *It is just permitted.*
- **Peter Birkholz**- Did TDR policies get incorporated? *Yes, they are in the Draft Zoning Amendments and will be discussed at the Development Standards/Zoning Incentive Program meeting.*
- **Jeffery Levin**- Has the City analyzed the extent to which the existing Density Bonus program has been utilized in downtown and any barriers to its use? How does this inform the structure of the ZIP? In what way does the proposed zoning reduce racial segregation? Why do we want to put high-density housing in areas susceptible to sea-level rise (i.e., in Victory Court)
 - **Jeff** has not analyzed the extent to which the existing Density Bonus Program has been used. Anecdotally...
 - *The proposal allows greater density and encourages affordable housing, which should bring more diversity to Downtown. In addition, the proposal contains the Arts and Culture Combining Zone, which has an intent "to foster a sense of belonging for all Oaklanders, highlight Oakland's rich history and diverse cultures, celebrate and*

strengthen ethnic enclaves, support communities harmed by racial inequities, and increase access to artistic and cultural expression.” *This is intended to reduce displacement of businesses, organizations and other institutions downtown owned by and serving Black Oaklanders.*

- *The proposed policy would leverage the development opportunities in Victory Court to invest in sea level rise infrastructure that will benefit the Downtown.*
- **David Allen-** Why do we want to concentrate high density residential in an at-risk area? *We are trying to leverage the development opportunities in Victory Court to invest in sea level rise infrastructure that will benefit the Downtown.*
- **Eli Mayerson-** Does rent stabilization or rent control apply to new construction? *Not as part of this plan. State law does not allow rent control to apply to new construction.*
- **Christopher Buckley-** Is there a reason why the arts and garage building are not selling Transfers of Development Rights (TDRs)? *The TDR program will be discussed at the Development Standards/Zoning Incentive Program meeting.*
- **Peter Birkholz-** Asking about the industrial zoning and the A’s ballpark, if the A’s ballpark goes ahead, how would that get reconciled?
 - The proposed A’s ballpark at Howard Terminal is outside the boundary of the Downtown Plan and is undergoing a separate review process. The Plan does not include any industrial zoning changes tied to a city decision on the Howard Terminal project. As part of the General Plan update that is currently taking place, there is an Industrial Lands Study as well as further analysis with the Land Use and Transportation Element update that is starting in early 2023 will continue to analyze industrial uses on a citywide basis.
- **James E Vann-** Can you discuss in future meetings how will the community benefits come about? *Yes, this will be discussed at the Development Standards/Zoning Incentive Program meeting.*

Comments/Feedback from Participants

BROOKLYN BASIN

- **Suzanne Shawl-** Transportation out to Brooklyn Basin: hard to get out there other than to drive and the parking lot out there is very limited, especially for people that are handicapped, is there any thought because that place is very popular?
- **Naomi Schiff-** I second Brooklyn Basin needs transit.
- **Jeffery Levin-** Lack of transit access to Brooklyn Basin is a long-standing issue that really needs to be addressed, with connections to BART.
- **Nathan Landau-** In terms of transit, we need to look at what the transit mitigations are and how they are designing with transit stops. If I recall correctly, the Brooklyn Basin approval required the developer to provide transit once a certain level of development was reached. That could be directly provided by the developer or by contact with AC Transit.
- **David Allen-** I also agree that Brooklyn Basin needs transit.

NOISE

- **Naomi Schiff**- There are some noisy art workshops to add that conflict of use; I think we have already built in some conflicts of use; I just came from a glass factory near the estuary, and now they want to put a logistics warehouse; I do think potential conflicts of use are a thing.
- **Nathan Landau**- What we want is a performance standard, no louder than X if adjacent to a residential zone.
- **Jeffrey Levin**- Decibel standard needs to be looked at, that's why the chamber has been making noise about exclusive market zones.

GROUND FLOOR USES

- **Joshua Simon**- Look at the experience of Macarthur BART, if we are not careful about what happens with the ground floor that makes it a neighborhood, we should look at a single floor of cultural uses, some sort of place concentration. For instance, in the garage district we have jewelry street. We also need to look at how to focus uses that are amenities.
- **Eli & Cody Mayerson**- So much empty ground floor retail. I'm concerned with an overabundance of ground floor retail and not enough residential which subsidizes the retail. Flexibility is important, though residential isn't necessarily the answer.
- **Justin Zucker**- we need neighborhood-serving uses, grocery store or childcare
- For the 25% allowance of non-active ground floor uses in the Pedestrian Zone, there should be some kind of requirements for window display, such as could display artwork.

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

- Zoning needs to encourage family-friendly, and neighborhood-serving uses near residential uses, including grocery stores and pharmacies. The Caltrans building is a great example; has childcare at the bottom. Having children while living downtown means you need a car to get to any services.
- Dismayed by the loss of [Community Foods] grocery – a grocery store needs public financing or developer funds, not just land zoned for it.

HOUSING

- **James E Vann**- Please say "Live/Work (instead of "Work/Live). *Note: these have two different meanings in the Oakland Planning Code*
- **Peter Birkholz**- Preservation for housing: "You can never build more affordable homes than you already have" (i.e., you can't build housing that costs less than what you already have)." See work at UPenn regarding economic analysis of historic preservation.

GENERAL COMMENTS

- **Joshua Simon**: (Activity Incentives general comment)- Other activities we may want to implement might include Ceramics, 3-D printing, soap making, hand-made paper production, printing, single occupant vehicle production (bicycles, skateboards, drones, etc.)- If we can workshop the current allowed uses, I suspect that we would identify others worthy of consideration.

- **Christopher Buckley**- Would like there to be tower design standards that would address things such as maximum length and maximum width; would like to know why the current standards have been found to be unwieldy.
- **Jeffrey Levin**- For future presentations, it would be helpful to either better highlight the zone you are discussing or provide individual maps for each zoning designation to make it clearer to see.
- **Christopher Buckley**- We think that we need more specific standard regulations; we notice that specific standards are not available to every zone. Thinking of buildings that are not historic and can be sites for TDRs.
- **Peter Birkholz**- The Produce District is unique but the buildings need significant work. Likes that the zoning identifies it, but needs to more proactively preserve it. I'm in favor of preservation that allows some type of development on the upper floors so long as the buildings (and district) can maintain its historic importance.
- **Art Hardy**: [Oakland needs] open, breathable, reflective green space" in the face of the pandemic. This is critical. I'm in favor of rooftop gardens, public art, workspace with large art installations.

Additional Feedback Opportunities

Participants and community members are invited to share their feedback:

- Visit the [DOSP Zoning Amendments website](#) to read summary materials and make comments on an interactive version of the Draft Zoning Amendments (using a tool called Konveio).
- Send an email to PlanDowntownOakland@oaklandca.gov.
- Fill out a [survey](#) to share feedback on the meeting and allow us to learn about who attends the meetings.
- Attend future meetings, including a meeting of the DOSP Community Advisory Group and hearing of the Planning Commission's Zoning Update Committee (ZUC) – both to be scheduled.
- [Sign up](#) on the [DOSP website](#) to receive email updates, including an upcoming survey.