

# Press Release – For Immediate Release

## The Measure DD Community Coalition opposes housing on designated parkland at Brooklyn Basin

May 21, 2024

The Measure DD Community Coalition (the Coalition) was authorized by Oakland City Council in 2003 to provide oversight, input, feedback, and recommendations to City staff on organizing, prioritizing, and spending for Measure DD projects. Complete information about Measure DD and the Coalition can be found here:

[Measure DD Coalition](#)

**Background:** In December, 2023, Signature Properties, the developer of Brooklyn Basin, announced it will seek permits to build market rate housing on Parcel N in Brooklyn Basin believing it can swap the park land for housing. Parcel N, however, is an integral parcel of land within the boundaries of an existing Master Plan for an expanded and revitalized, all-purpose public park - Estuary Park - along the Oakland Estuary. Planning for this park was the subject of an extensive public process, resulting in a draft Master Plan. [Read the draft Master Plan](#) Moreover, Signature has an agreement with the City of Oakland to transfer the parcel to the City once the park project is complete.

Soon after Signature's announcement and without notice or explanation, the Planning Department paused all work on the EIR and other permitting work necessary for implementing the Master Plan. The Coalition only learned of the work pause in March, 2024, a four-month period during which the Coalition was under the distinct impression that permitting work was continuing apace.

**Why This Matters:** If Signature's attempt to build on Parcel N is approved, four acres will be removed from the Estuary Park site. The Master Plan's anticipated new parking lot, dog park, public restroom, boating program showers, boat storage facility, and a picnic area, which all lie within the threatened four acres, will be displaced. Moreover, the \$1.4M already spent developing the plan will have been wasted and the work invalidated, requiring extensive redesign at greatly increased costs and likely resulting in a smaller, compromised park in comparison to the park design envisioned in community workshops.

**The current situation:** Subsequent to learning of the housing proposal and work pause, representatives of the Coalition and the public made repeated requests for information about the proposal and to meet with planning officials. The Coalition made clear its ongoing support for the Estuary Park plan and its opposition to such a drastic change in the draft plan, a change that would negate hundreds of hours of community and City staff time, resources and work. Despite Coalition outreach, City staff has not responded to information or meeting requests.

**Next steps:** Because planning officials have been unresponsive to requests for meetings and for information, the Coalition takes the unusual step to publicly address the communication impasse by issuing this press release. It is necessary for city planners to explain their rationale for such a drastic change in a plan developed through a city-sponsored, community-based process. The Coalition calls on the City of Oakland to be a transparent and reliable partner with respect to Estuary Park and to provide the information requested below:

1. Who is the owner and/or possessor of Parcel N? What are the relevant agreements?
2. What document sets forth the provision that Parcel N will be transferred to the City when Estuary Park improvements are complete?
3. What document sets forth Signature's remediation responsibility for Parcel N?
4. Since no formal application has been received by the City from Signature, why has an "administrative hold" been imposed on the Estuary Park project? What needs to happen in order for the hold to be lifted?
5. When can the Coalition expect to have a face-to-face meeting with City staff regarding Estuary Park?

Please direct any information, comments and inquiries to James Vann at [JamesEVann@aol.com](mailto:JamesEVann@aol.com).

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