

Sustainability, Health, Safety, Recreation & Open Space
August 3, 2017, 5:30-8:00
Oakland Asian Cultural Center

A. Opening: Grounding in Equity, Introductions, Background and Where we are Going Now

Meeting facilitator **Greg Hodge** of **Khepera Consulting** opened the proceedings with African drumming, call-and-response clapping and singing, as well as a call to order, followed by a working definition of equity.

Ed Manasse from **Oakland's Bureau of Planning**, concluded the opening remarks with context about the downtown specific plan in relation to other planning efforts around the Downtown Plan area and the role the plan will play in light of projected growth in downtown. Ed provided an agenda for the day as well as a brief discussion of the vision, timeline up to date, plan for moving forward and restatement of the purpose of the evening: to review tonight's topic, sustainability, health, safety, recreation and open space, with an equity lens and to discuss and receive feedback on the draft goals for this topic using that lens.

B. Grounding in Racial Equity Framework and Setting Context

Jme McLean of **Mesu Strategies** opened with an introduction to the social equity consultant team led by I-SEED, including who the sub-consultants are, where their expertise lies, and what their work within the downtown specific plan entails. The equity work so far has included an analysis of the work on the plan and the community comments received to date to assess existing conditions, to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the indicators that have already been identified, and to make recommendations for other equity indicators Oakland can use to target change and measure how successful the plan is at achieving it. Jme briefed the community on how these and future public meetings will lead to a plan concepts memo that will then be passed through a racial equity impact analysis.

“A racial equity analysis is a systematic process in which we ask questions about race and we look at what the history has been related to some of the plans and decisions that have made and we make projections about what kind of impacts will be made in the future.”

– Jme McLean

Jme then described some of the problems and inequities Oaklanders face today regarding sustainability, health, safety, open space and recreation. This was to frame the meeting participants' collective understanding of the issues before they discussed how the draft goals

can best address these topics. Jme also briefly presented the vision statements and goals for related to this topic in preparation for the small group discussion.

The main points from Jme's presentation included:

- Downtown is composed of many micro neighborhoods with varying access to opportunities.
- 8.5% of downtown residents are working at or below the poverty line, and a majority of this community is made up of African Americans and Latino immigrants.
- High priority issue of improving connectivity, walkability and bikeability to avoid car-related injuries, pollution and greater access by everyone and especially vulnerable communities.
- Important considerations include sea-level rise, parks and greenspace accessibility and improvement, and reducing crime.
- Feedback the City received from the community in the first year or so of the planning process included: more walkable, bikeable downtown; planning for climate change; increasing the connections between parks and open spaces; making sure parks are maintained better; connecting the waterfront to trails, watersheds and bike paths; more neighborhood cultural gathering spaces; and restorative justice for policing to make sure that all residents feel welcome in downtown.
- There is a high prevalence of services downtown, including health, safety, and emergency.
- Downtown needs to be equitable and thriving to promote prosperity for everyone, and needs to have a just food environment where everyone is able to access healthy affordable foods.

C. Small Group Activity

Participants broke into smaller groups by topic to discuss the draft goals that had been developed in response to community input during the first year or so of the planning process. Participants were asked to identify changes they'd like to see, as well as potential barriers for their community to reaching the goals and possible solutions to those barriers. This information will be used to inform the next phase of the process. See Appendix II for a summary of this feedback, or the Plan Downtown Oakland website (www.oaklandnet.com/plandowntownoakland) for the full spreadsheets of community input into the goals.

Each group was asked to report their most significant idea back to the larger group. Ideas reported back included:

- Need more youth spaces.
- Expand ambassador program with the Oakland Police Department to build more friendly relationships with police officers.
- Need more police officers who are from and live in Oakland and receive cultural competency training.

- Improve accessibility and infrastructure for people with chronic conditions and mobility issues.
- Increase gender neutral spaces such as transgender bathrooms etc.
- Create traffic restrictions like limited hours for cars to drive in high density areas.
- More multilingual services and messaging.
- Improve urban agriculture and urban forestry to reduce greenhouse gasses and improve health effects.
- Addressing food deserts with more farmers' markets.
- Preserve public open space and provide resources to maintain it.
- Thoughtfully integrate Downtown Specific Plan with other specific plans and connect them and projects trying to do that.
- Iterative mechanisms for accountability to the benchmarks and indicators that are also flexible and able to adjust based on the success of those efforts.
- When improving transit access and walkability think about the human experience, making sure places are well lit, safe to walk, have access to public bathrooms and benches.
- Walkable path to Alameda.
- More welcoming public gathering spaces.

D. Streetwyze Presentation

In closing, **Antwi Akom** and **Aekta Shah**, the **Co-Founders of Streetwyze**, shared a brief presentation describing the Streetwyze tool and its value to this process. Streetwyze is a mobile mapping and SMS platform that collects real time information about how people are experiencing cities and places and turns them into actionable analytics. The City of Oakland hopes that Streetwyze can be an authentic method for two-way engagement with community members on the ground, helping the community identify priority community assets in downtown and helping City staff to better understand and support the diversity of community needs in the planning process.

Streetwyze provides an opportunity for the community to be experts and share their stories so their voices are included in the planning process. Furthermore, Streetwyze can uplift cultural assets, the communities experience sustainability, health, safety, recreation & open space in downtown, what needs to be supported as well as what needs to be changed or fixed.

Aekta shared some of the live data that has been collected in Chinatown and **Mike Lok** of **Asian Health Services** spoke about how Streetwyze can act as a tool to document culture and history in Chinatown through sharing local knowledge and personal experience. Mike also made an important distinction; mobile platforms cannot solve all community engagement problems but can act as a powerful complement to traditional forms of engagement.

“Jme showed us the data that is going into the racial equity impact assessment, but it doesn’t include your experiences. We’re asking you to put in your experiential data to ensure it’s captured in this as well.”

– Aekta Shah

E. Next Steps

Joanna Winter, from **Oakland’s Bureau of Planning**, continued the meeting with a brief discussion of next steps, including:

- Use community input to revise the goals and help guide the next phase of work
- Technical analysis meetings will dive deeper into the possible strategies and solutions to the issues discussed at this meeting
- Neighborhood design workshops to focus on strategies and solutions to specific areas
- Reconfiguring the Community Advisory Group membership to represent more community voices
- Drafting a plan concepts memo for the community to review and provide feedback
- Beginning a prioritization process for plan actions, and developing the draft plan, which will go through public and environmental review
- Utilizing Streetwyze for ongoing input into community priorities