



# Oakland Housing Element Housing Sites: Stakeholders Discussion Summary

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**February 2, 2022 9:00 AM – 10:30 PM**

Held via Zoom

## **Participating Organizations:**

- YIMBY Law
- Housing Action Coalition
- Bay Area Rapid Transit
- Nonprofit Housing Association of Northern California
- East Bay Housing Organization
- California Housing Partnership
- MidPen Housing
- Ellis Partners
- LISC Bay Area
- Public Interest Law Project
- Bay Area Community Services

Meeting facilitated by Alison Moore and Rajeev Bhatia of Dyett & Bhatia

## **POTENTIAL VIABLE SITES**

Stakeholders provided examples of sites that may be viable for inclusion in the housing sites inventory, including:

- 40th Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Near the MacArthur BART station. Temporary homeless/navigation center
- Potential along Lakeshore Avenue just south of the I-580
- Closed Oakland Unified School District sites
- Sites owned by faith-based organizations interested in upzoning and development. There are three faith-based organizations actively looking to add housing
- Sites in the Rockridge area that can be upzoned (especially near BART)
- Sites identified along International Boulevard as part of the Oakland Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative process



- Peralta Village in West Oakland – drastically underutilized; upgrade and add more housing

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ON SITES**

- Stakeholders provided ideas for community engagement on viable sites, and shared work they have done to solicit feedback on potential sites. Ideas included sending a flyer or survey to all property owners in Oakland to solicit development interest and reaching out to other public agencies for surplus land
- One stakeholder works with faith-based organizations through Alameda County and sees this as an avenue for community empowerment, as well as an opportunity to locate development in high resource areas
- Another stakeholder has sent a form to members of their organization to get feedback on specific sites with development potential

## **SITE SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS**

- Locating sites within a quarter mile of transit, including bus lines, was identified as a priority by one stakeholder
- Stakeholders also mentioned identifying sites for lower-income housing in gentrifying or at-risk of gentrifying neighborhoods, as well as determining if lower-income sites will be competitive for State funding or tax credit scoring
- The City should use HCD’s site inventory form (available via ABAG-MTC’s HESS Tool) when publishing drafts of the sites inventory
- The City should maintain a reserve list of sites or capacity buffer to meet State no net loss requirements
- When computing site capacity, the City should emphasize minimum or likely capacity of sites to remain in compliance with those requirements

## **FAIR HOUSING CONSIDERATIONS**

- Stakeholders indicated that site selection should be guided by the City’s mandate to affirmatively further fair housing
- The draft assessment of fair housing prepared for the Housing Element should be made available for public and stakeholder input as soon as possible

## **GENERAL BARRIERS TO DEVELOPMENT**

- Stakeholders discussed why sites identified for the 5th cycle RHNA have not developed with housing. Barriers to approval, neighborhood opposition, and the availability of financing were described
- Affordable developers also get outcompeted by private developers for sites due to lack of funding for site acquisition



- One stakeholder suggested the City should consider a set-aside fund for site acquisition that affordable developers can use. This could be a revolving fund
- One stakeholder noted that housing development around the Lake Merritt BART Station requires the development of other amenities in order to make housing development feasible
- Stakeholders also noted that traditional sources of funding are largely depleted

## **CITY CONSTRAINTS ON DEVELOPMENT**

- Stakeholders noted that the City needs to increase opportunities for affordable housing. Some stakeholders noted that City departments often have conflicting priorities or do not agree, especially regarding transportation. It is also difficult to get early feedback on proposals from staff
- While the planning application process was identified as generally smooth, other steps in approval can make it difficult, especially for smaller projects
- One stakeholder suggested the City appoint a “housing czar” or process coordinator to facilitate the approval process
- Appeals process is politicized. Things that are settled—e.g., plans in areas that already have EIRs—still get appealed. Stakeholder suggested that EIR appeals should go to a non-elected body instead of the City Council
- Other stakeholders emphasized the need for by-right approvals, permit streamlining, and entitlement reform to reduce costs, increase competitiveness for State funding, and unlock development potential on smaller sites
- City requires payment of most permit fees upfront rather than at issuance of permit or project completion. This can make development infeasible for non-profits or smaller developers – they can’t have \$1 million just tied up while the project goes through approval process

### ***Zoning and Development Standards***

- Stakeholders remarked that upzoning in various Oakland neighborhoods could increase residential capacity and flexibility, particularly on smaller sites
- Single-family neighborhoods in North and East Oakland were identified as areas that could particularly benefit from such actions
- Stakeholders emphasized flexibility in zoning, including allowing increased density and removing ground floor retail requirements
- One stakeholder remarked that BART sites should maintain sufficient parking requirements for commuters
- Stakeholders suggested the use of various zoning overlays to incentivize development, including both a mixed-use overlay and an affordable housing overlay.
  - Density bonuses for affordable housing were also identified as an important tool



## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**

- Stakeholders discussed the ideal density range for affordable development - one stakeholder noted it was between 40 to 50 dwelling units per acre, while another indicated that it was between 60 to 80 dwelling units per acre
- While one stakeholder suggested a maximum building height of less than 85 feet on smaller sites to incentive private developers to use density bonuses and add affordable units and work their way to 85 feet, another remarked this approach would result in neighborhood meddling and could potentially trigger additional EIR review, and would not count towards the RHNA
- One stakeholder remarked that their organization prefers sites that offer economies of scale, while another indicated that smaller sites may be useful in providing ownership opportunities for moderate-income households
- One stakeholder encouraged the City to incentivize “affordability by design”