



City of Oakland

Objective Design Standards

Advisory Group Meeting

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Presentation
 - Purpose & Meeting Objectives
 - Stakeholder Interviews Feedback
 - Project Timeline
 - Objective Design Standards
3. Questions / Comments - Community
4. Discussion – Advisory Group
 - Existing Process
 - Desired Outcomes

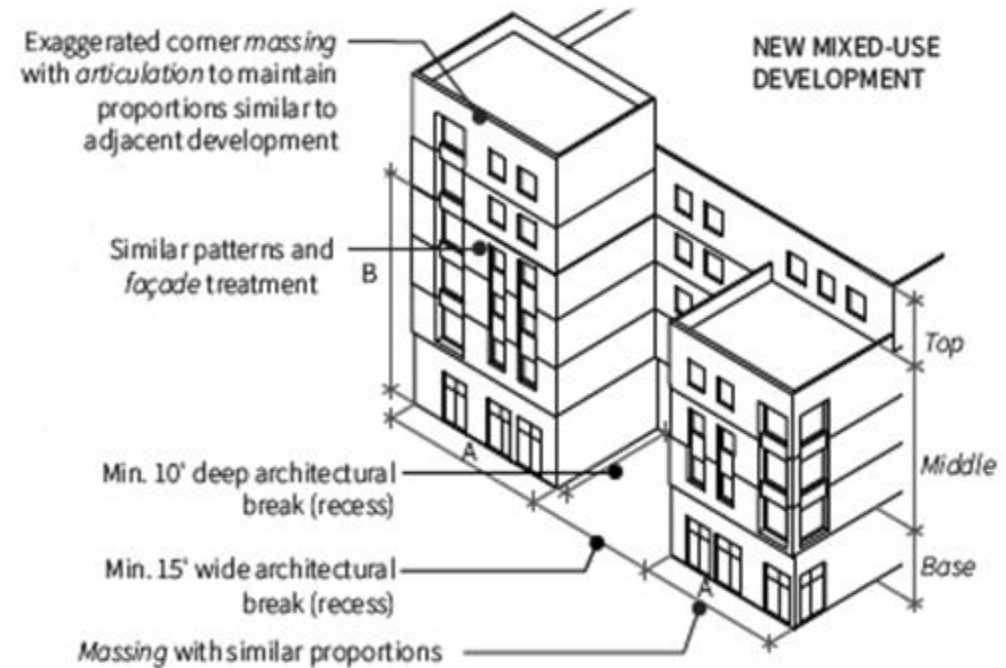
Meeting Objectives

- Meeting 1 (today)
 - Provide overview and rationale for objective design standards process
 - Provide examples of objective standards and areas of application
 - Get your input on challenges and opportunities related to process, existing design standards, and desired outcomes
- Meeting 2 and 3 (Jan, Mar)
 - Review and discuss draft graphics and design standards
- Meeting 4 (Apr)
 - Refine final standards



Objective Design Standards

Design standards are "objective" if they are **measurable, verifiable, and knowable** to all parties prior to project submittal. A planning review process based on objective design standards involves no personal or subjective judgment by a public official.



Purpose

Design Review Today:

- Complex and lengthy process is causing development application backlog
- Discretionary planning review can be unpredictable and require significant resources
- Can contribute to delays and high costs, which hurts groups already burdened
- Recent State legislation prevents governments from using discretionary design review evaluation criteria as barrier to multifamily housing



Image Credit: David Baker Architects and Mariko Reed

"Building frontages should be compatible with existing neighborhood character"

Purpose

Design Review Based on Objective Design Standards:

- A simplified, transparent, and user-friendly approach
- Relies on a set of straightforward objective design standards
- Results in high-quality built environment
- Reduce the barriers for entry, speeds up the production of a wide variety of housing, and aids affordability



Fig. 4.4 Provide a setback for commercial frontage along primary streets to allow for transitions, frontage zones for outdoor seating, and future sidewalk widening.

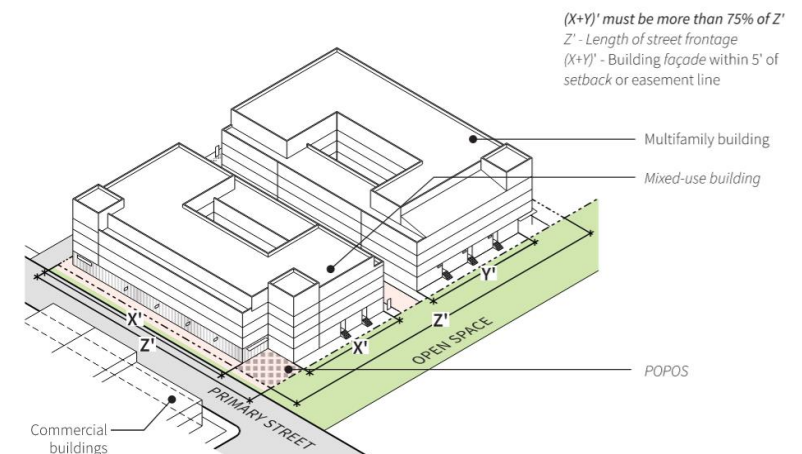


Fig. 2.15 Place buildings along public rights-of-way and public open spaces to frame the public realm.

Public Participation Program

- Stakeholder Meetings
- Focus Groups
- Advisory Group + Community



Stakeholder Feedback

Process & Existing Standards:

- The application process is complex and confusing
- Not enough planning staff to process the applications in a timely manner
- Need a more streamlined application process for smaller projects, or different requirements for affordable vs. market rate
- Several of the existing standards are difficult to meet and require a variance

Stakeholder Feedback

Desired Outcomes

- Don't want all buildings to look the same - Give Designers/Developers a menu of options to allow for creativity
- Limit the ODS to the most important standards
- Standards that address transitions and articulation are key
- Need to carefully consider setbacks for Residential buildings – eliminates units or make the units unworkable
- Ground floor requirements are critical, but so is consideration of ground floor use
- ODS should not only be about form – should also be about regenerative design & equity

Project Timeline

Project Timeline

- August 2022 - Project Kickoff**
Confirm project team, scope and schedule
- September - December 2022 - Research & Analysis**
Identify issues with current design review process and find equitable alternatives
- October 2022 - May 2023 - Community Engagement**
Stakeholder interviews, focus group workshops, and working group meetings
- January - April 2023 - Draft Objective Design Standards for Downtown Oakland**
Create drafts of the objective design standards, focusing on Downtown Oakland
- January - June 2023 - Draft Citywide Objective Design Standards**
Create drafts of the Citywide objective design standards
- August - September 2023 - Adoption of the Objective Design Standards**
Planning Commission and City Council hearings

Components

1. Review Process/Tracks
2. Objective Design Standards
common to multiple facility types
3. Context-specific standards
(geographic area, e.g. corridors,
historic areas, etc.)
4. Specific building type standards

Building Types – Objective Design Standards

Residential

Single/Family/Lower Density Residential
(1-4 units)

Small infill multi-unit development sites,
such as five-plexes and above

Townhomes and Rowhomes

Low-rise multi-family

Mid-rise multi-family

High-rise multi-family

Live-work

Residential Mixed Use

Buildings that are primarily residential
with ground floor commercial

Commercial

Commercial (retail) buildings

Office Building (low-rise and mid-rise)

Office Buildings, High-rise

Research & Development

Work-live

Hotels, Motels

Retail and Entertainment Centers

Auto Dealerships and Auto Service Facilities

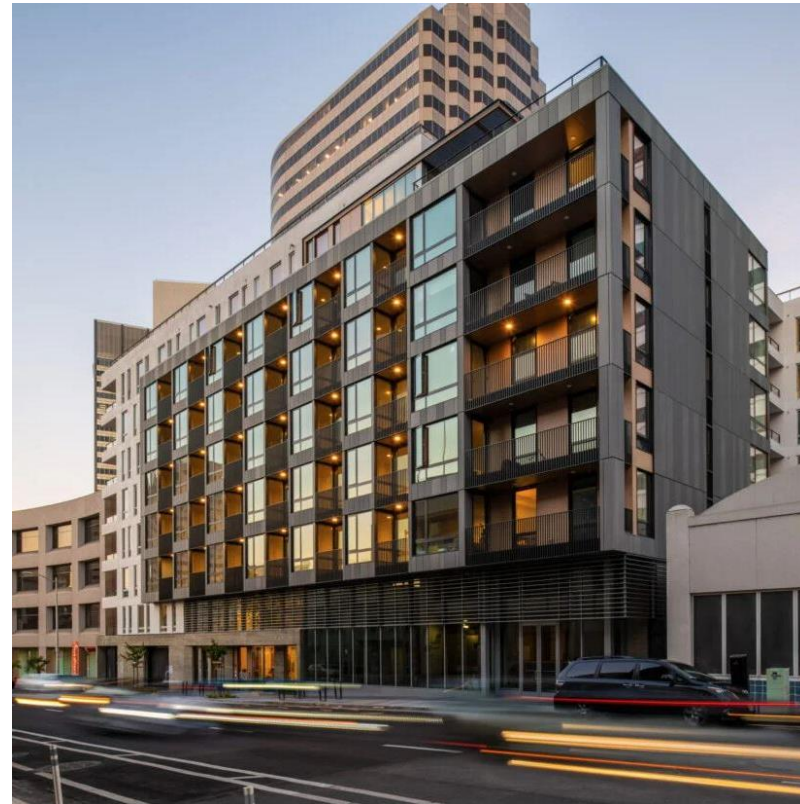
Gas Stations

Downtown

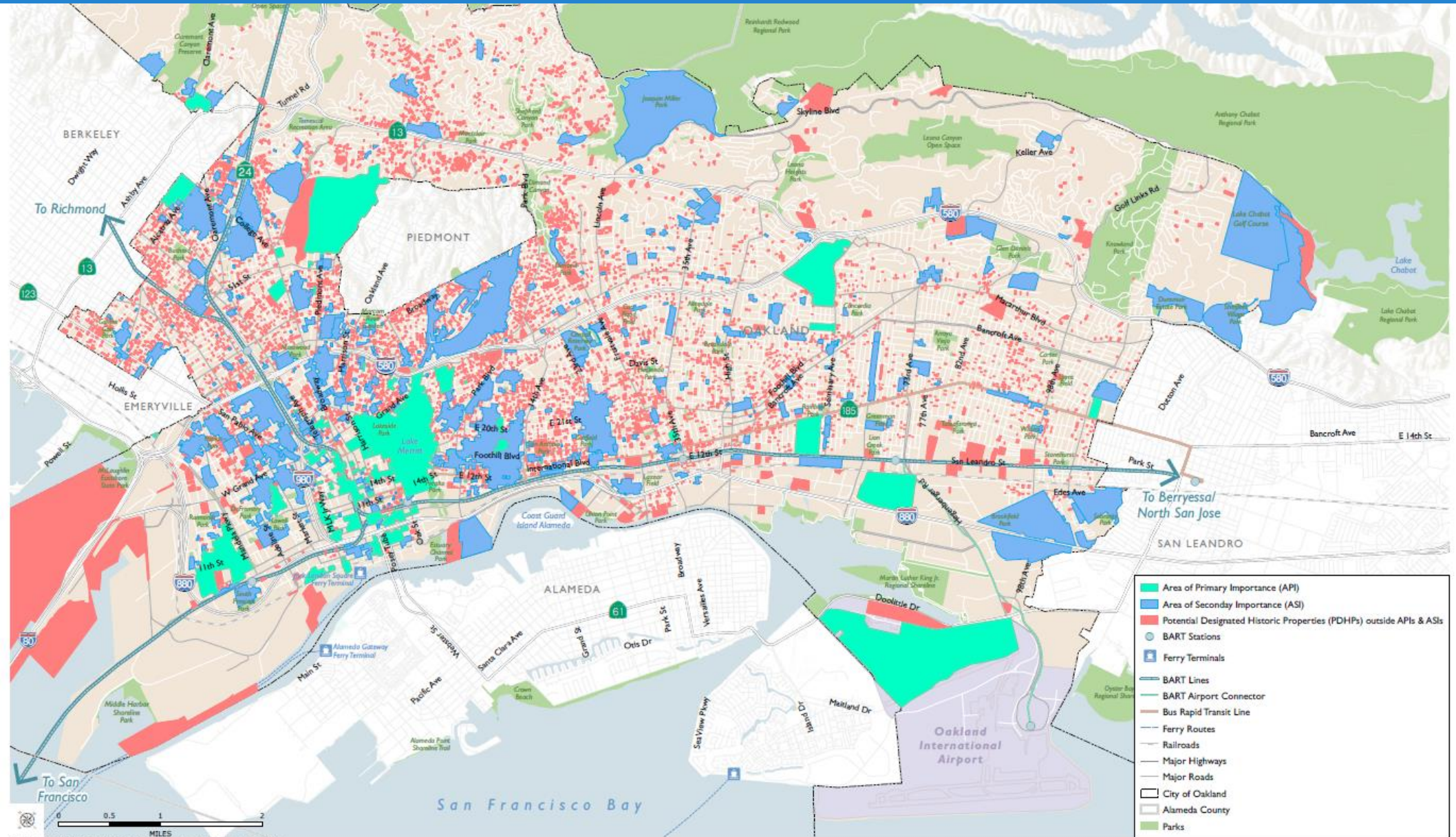
All Land Uses

Categories

- Site Planning
- Ground Floor
- Massing & Articulation
- Tower Controls
- Building Elements



Challenges



Discussion

Process & Existing Standards (15 min):

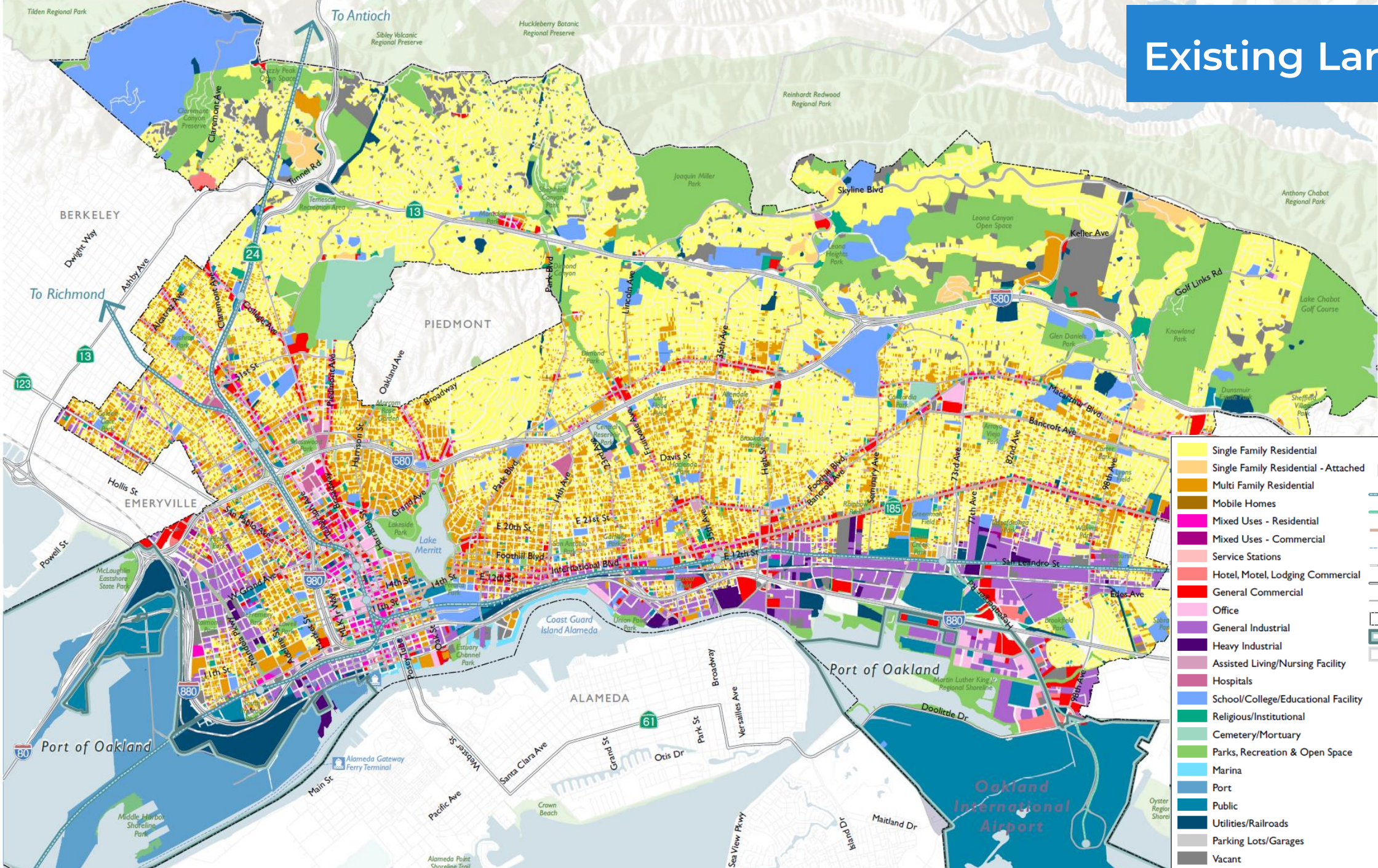
- What are the key challenges you have faced in the City project approval process? What is working and is not working or is challenging?
- Do standards provide clear direction, and have been helpful?
- What standards have been difficult to implement, or have required variances or exceptions? Please be specific.
- Do existing standards limit design creativity and building outcome? How could they be improved?

Desired Outcomes (30 min):

The standards will provide a pathway for ministerial, or without subjective design review, approval. How can we best ensure predictability and also foster design creativity? What would be the most effective ways the City could help address barriers or challenges we discussed?

1. Do you have any suggestions in terms of specific facility types (land uses) or specific building design or housing types?
2. How do you think design standards should address specific building components – such as ground floor transparency and building/street relationship, setbacks and stepbacks, tower controls, transitions to lower density neighborhoods?
3. How do we reflect historic and neighborhood context?

Existing Land Use



- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Single Family Residential | BART Stations |
| Single Family Residential - Attached | Ferry Terminals |
| Multi Family Residential | BART Lines |
| Mobile Homes | BART Airport Connector |
| Mixed Uses - Residential | Bus Rapid Transit Line |
| Mixed Uses - Commercial | Ferry Routes |
| Service Stations | Railroads |
| Hotel, Motel, Lodging Commercial | Major Highways |
| General Commercial | Major Roads |
| Office | City of Oakland |
| General Industrial | Port of Oakland |
| Heavy Industrial | Alameda County |
| Assisted Living/Nursing Facility | |
| Hospitals | |
| School/College/Educational Facility | |
| Religious/Institutional | |
| Cemetery/Mortuary | |
| Parks, Recreation & Open Space | |
| Marina | |
| Port | |
| Public | |
| Utilities/Railroads | |
| Parking Lots/Garages | |
| Vacant | |

Site Planning

- Building Placement and Orientation
- Pedestrian Access
- Accessibility and Universal Design
- Circulation (Pedestrian, Active Transportation, and Vehicular)
- Bicycle access and parking
- Vehicular access and parking
- Service and Utilities
- Public and Private Open Space
- Paseos and Mid-block connections
- Site Lighting
- Landscape and Stormwater Management
- Public Amenities and Public Art



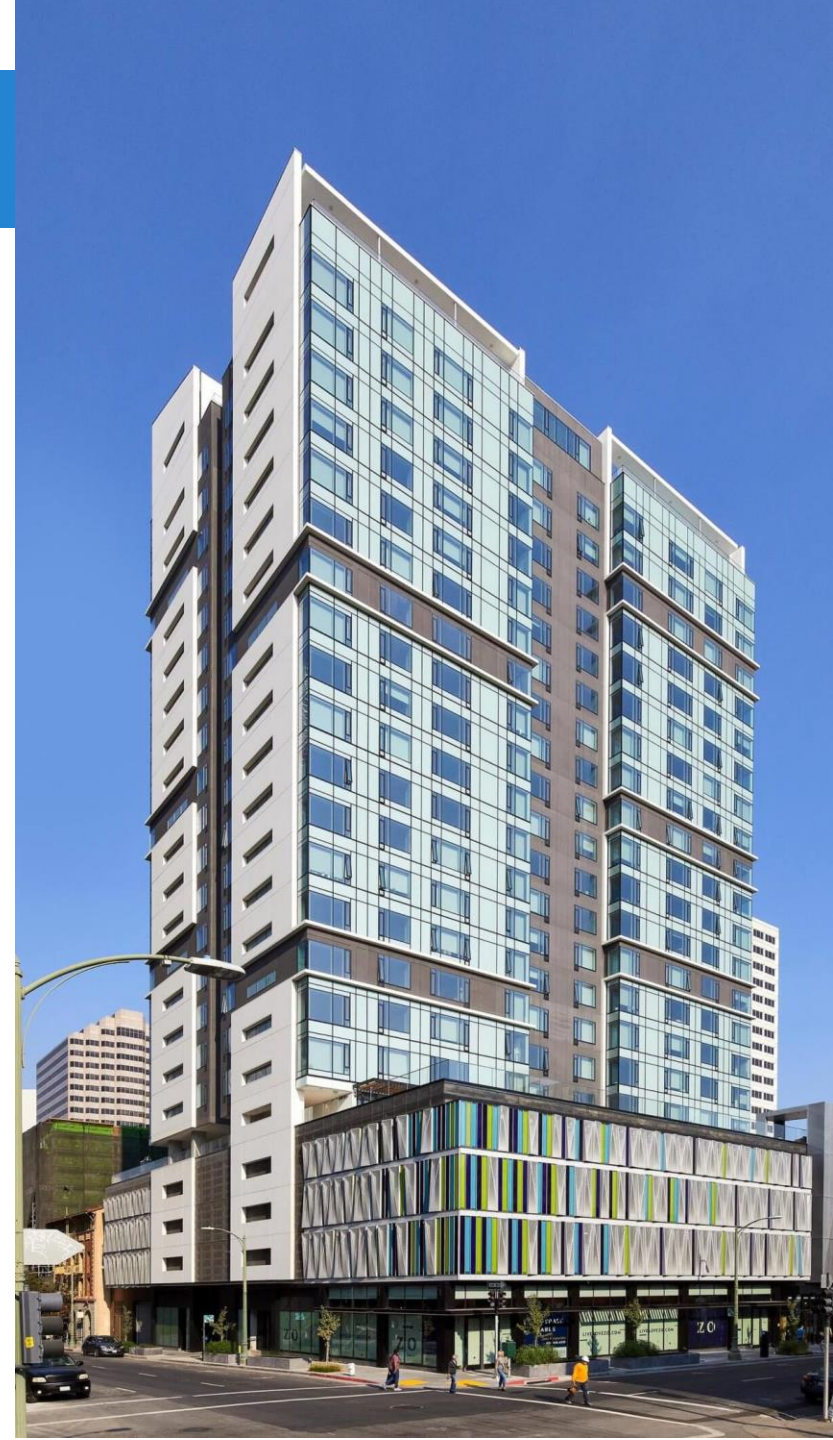
Ground Floor

- Ground Floor Non-Residential Spaces
- Ground Floor Residential Spaces
- Mitigating Blank Walls
- Lighting-Pedestrian Level
- Other Pedestrian-Level Treatments



Massing & Articulation

- Podium Level Massing
- Tower Design



Building Elements

- Façade Pattern
- Roofs and Parapets
- Decks and Balconies
- Windows and Glazing
- Awnings, Sunshades, and Screens
- Materials and Color
- Architectural Lighting
- Signage
- Bird Safety
- Parking Garages



Existing Process



DESIGN REVIEW - CITYWIDE:

Procedures	Project Types	Review Process	Decision Criteria
ZONING WORKSHEET (ZW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repair or replacement of building components that visually match the existing or historical design. Areas of porch, deck or balcony <30" above grade. Change of Sign face copy. 	<p>OVER-THE-COUNTER SIGN-OFF: Zoning will create a new Zoning Worksheet records and sign-off at counter (as long as proposal does not effect the property's <i>Character-defining elements</i>*).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project conforms to all applicable zoning code standards. All exterior treatments match existing or historical design.
DESIGN REVIEW EXEMPTION (DRX)	<p>'DRX' Projects include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Secondary Unit of 500 sq. ft. or less. (Regardless of whether it is less than or greater than 10% of total floor area or footprint) Floor area additions within the existing building envelope <u>not</u> involving the creation of a dwelling unit. Additions that are outside the existing building envelope and equal <u>no more</u> than 10% of total floor area or footprint on site. Sidewalk Cafes with no more than 5 tables/15 chairs. 	<p>DESIGN REVIEW EXEMPTION (DRX): Zoning will issue final decision, usually at counter - as long as the proposal will not have a significant effect on the property's <i>Character-defining elements</i>*.</p> <p><i>*"Character-defining elements" are those features of design, materials, workmanship, setting, location, and association that identify a property as representative of its period and contribute to its visual distinction or historical significance.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project conforms to all applicable zoning code standards. All exterior treatments visually match the existing or historical design of the building. <p><i>If a proposal does not conform to the above decision criteria, the applicable review process listed below shall apply:</i></p>
SMALL PROJECT DESIGN REVIEW (DS) (See following page for definition of DS Tracks 1, 2 & 3)	<p>'Small Projects' include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exterior changes compatible with, but not necessarily identical to, the existing or historical building design. For Residential, front yard fences over 42" in height. Retaining walls over 6 ft. in height that are visually screened from adjacent lots and from the street. Sidewalk Cafes with more than 5 tables/15 chairs. Alteration to Existing Telecom Facilities (6409 projects). New or modified Signs - <i>excluding Advertising Signs and Signs extending above roofline.</i> A Secondary Unit between 500 and 750 sq. ft. in floor area (not to exceed 75% of floor area in primary dwelling). Additions that are outside existing building envelope and equal <u>more</u> than 10% of total floor area or footprint on site, but do not exceed 1000 sq. ft. or 100% of the total floor area or footprint on site, whichever is less.** <p><i>** Upper-story additions to 1-2 unit facilities of more than 250 square feet will be processed as described to the right.</i></p>	<p>SMALL PROJECT DESIGN REVIEW (DS): Upper-story additions of more than 250 sq. ft. will be subject to the following "Track 3" procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant submits for Small Project review. Zoning will provide applicant with the names and addresses of owners adjacent to subject lot, a notice mailing form, and a large Notice Poster to install on site. Applicant will display a large Notice Poster on site, as well as mail notice, with copy of plans, to adjacent neighbors. Public will have 10 days to comment and/or request a meeting with Zoning staff. Issues related to design and potential neighbor impacts will be evaluated against checklist criteria (based on Design Review Manuals). Projects not in compliance will require revision. After close of comment period and/or holding of any requested meeting, Zoning will complete review of plans and issue a final decision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project conforms to all applicable zoning code standards The proposal will not have a significant effect on property's <i>Character-defining elements</i>* (as defined above for DRX). <p>Plus, as applicable –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Checklist Criteria: 1-2 / 3+ Units" Based on Design Review Manuals for: (A) 1-2 units & (B) 3+ units Checklist Criteria: Non-Residential" Based on "Oakland Small Project Design Guidelines" (Signs & Storefront changes) "Checklist Criteria: Telecom." (for addns. to existing Micro/Mimi sites) <p><i>NOTE: The Director may refer any 'Small Project' not meeting the criteria above to the DR process listed below:</i></p>
REGULAR DESIGN REVIEW (DR)	<p>'Regular DR' Projects include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects requiring design review, and not qualifying for either the DRX or DS process (see above). New construction, addition, or exterior alteration requiring a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) or Variance. Creation of one or more new dwelling units, other than a secondary unit. Additions that are outside the existing building envelope and exceed 1000 square feet or 100% of the total floor area or footprint on site, whichever is less. 	<p>REGULAR DESIGN REVIEW (DR):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application will be considered by either the Planning Director or the Planning Commission; Projects involving Landmarks reviewed by Landmarks Board. In parallel with posting of site, Zoning will mail notice to all property owners within 300 feet. Public will have 17 days to comment and/or review plans. Initial decisions by Planning Director will be appealable to the Residential Appeals Committee or Planning Commission. Projects <u>not</u> involving 1-2 Units will be further appealable to City Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project meets the Regular DR findings (17.136). <p>Plus, as applicable –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variance findings (17.148); CUP findings (17.134); Any additional findings by Zone; "Design Review Manual for 1-2 Unit Residences" (for 1-2 units);