

Appendix C

Comments Received During Small Group
Breakouts at Public Meetings

Appendix C – Comments Received During Small Group Breakouts at Public Meetings

The following are the comments and issues heard from participants in the small group breakouts and captured on flip charts at the public meetings for the Oakland Waterfront Oak to Ninth Public Participation effort. Please note this is not intended to serve as a precise transcript of the discussion in each small group, but representative of the information recorded on the flip charts. Comments are organized by the questions that participants were asked to answer during the small group breakouts:

- What issues about the proposed Project are important to you? Why?
- What specific changes to the proposed Project would you recommend?

Public Meeting #1 – Wednesday, March 30, 2005

Jack London Aquatic Center (5:30 pm – 9:30 pm)

Small Group Breakout Comments/Flip-Charts

RED GROUP

Issues

- The proposed Project should maintain visual openness to the waterfront providing views of open space areas for the public.
- Keep open space areas available to the public.
- Enforce fair housing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Explain how issues affecting people with disabilities and seniors (primarily accessibility) will become rigorously and robustly included in the development and discussion planning (the public process).
- Major opportunity to make Oakland a waterfront city! “Make this a treasure for everyone in Oakland” should be the criteria by which the project should be judged.
- Explain how the 9th Avenue terminal will be reused. Very important to know how the history of the area will be incorporated into the project.
- What is the exact housing mix? What size units and floor plans are there? Want mix of low, moderate and upper end. Need to include senior, disabled housing units.
- Do not allow any gates to exist 2 to 3 years after development is built.
- Transportation from Alameda, Harbor Bay – what will be done to keep the routes open and accessible and uncongested?
- Safety routes? How will areas be evacuated and emergency vehicles get access?
- Not enough follow through on questions – what is done to respond to issues raised? Need tighter follow up to ensure that people get invited to sessions and get feedback.
- Accessibility of parks and recreation, etc., including waterfront.
- Compatibility and suitability of proposed Project with existing community – e.g. 5th Avenue artist community with live, work and marinas (open studios, etc.) – Find a way to encapsulate the artist community.

Suggestions

- Separate entertainment (festival area) from “bedroom” community development area.
- Soundproof all housing units.
- Create more open space close to waterfront. Proposed Project should include a wider green belt.
- Lower the height of buildings to be consistent with current buildings. Reduce the number of units overall.
- Include a more detailed and robust discussion and plans around 9th Avenue terminal reuse.
- Make this area a destination:
 - Signature of Oakland
 - Use multiple developers to bring some “difference” and variety to the design.
 - Should be “real” rather than manufactured by incorporating and enhancing existing artisan community.
 - Provide historical connection to Oakland and celebrate people and uniqueness of the city.
- Provide a transportation link to square and waterfront area.

- Explain the public draw into the area. What is being done to invite the public in?
- Make sure there is visibility and a way for public to know what is available.
- Provide better visualizations/models to understand what the development would look like.
- Define corridor view vs. vistas.
- Do not put condos on the cash and carry spot next to the Jack London Aquatic Center.
- Include view corridors to the waterfront and open space areas from public locations.

PURPLE GROUP

Issues

- Provide affordable housing. Include information designating the number of units that will be affordable.
- Concerned that there will not be enough rental units versus for sale units.
- Need to include opportunities for existing local and small businesses.
- Include a job training/apprenticeship program for Oakland residents.
- Need to include a local hiring provision in construction contracts.
- Provide access to open waterfront for all residents.
- Concerned about equity and social justice enforcement for surrounding neighbors.
- Want to see 5th Avenue retained as an access point for the waterfront.
- Need pedestrian friendly bicycle paths.
- Concerned about connectivity between proposed Project and existing neighborhoods.
- Need connection to nearby neighborhoods like Eastlake, San Antonio and Jack London Districts.
- Development should include small to medium business that are localized on a human urban scale.
- Concerned about traffic impacts and the need to upgrade current Oak and 5th Avenue routes.
- Concerned about the amount of parking needed for 3100 dwelling units and commercially zoned units.
- Consider alternatives to decrease the number of cars in the area and develop relationship to larger transit network.
- Want to see this area become a destination for Oakland and surrounding areas including Jack London Square.
- Concerned about safety of people accessing the site.
- Incorporate the San Francisco Bay Trail in the open space areas.
- Concerned about flood control along the waterfront and the Lake Merritt Channel. Need to evaluate the existing facilities that manage storm runoff and provide flood control.
- Need to address safety issues at freeway underpass, around bridges, around pumping station and around railroad lines.
- Concerned about connectivity with the rest of Oakland.
- Concerned about the public review process and how comments/questions are addressed.
- Need to see the feedback loop to address questions and comments provided by participants.
- Provide information on changes made based on citizen input.
- Concerned that changes will not be made. Concerned that comments will just be shelved.

- Concerns over concurrent EIR process and planning city approvals (Design, Landmarks and Planning Commissions, etc).
- Can the City guarantee public recommendations will be considered beyond required public meetings? Are the comments binding?
- The 9th Avenue terminal building should be retained and reused – the entire structure (no “facadectomy”). Consider the historic value of the 9th Avenue terminal building:
 - National register eligible at state level
 - California register eligible
 - The last remaining example of a building of its kind
- Need to fund pedestrian overcrossings where appropriate.
- The proposed Project needs to evaluate alternative transit opportunities and integration.
- The public needs to see a better developed design prior to baseline approval.
- Need to provide public access for pedestrians and bicycles.
- Concerned about the impacts on the 5th Avenue community. Concerned that the whole 5th Avenue community was not included early in the process.
- Restoration of wetlands – mandated so more visible than other wetland areas also in need of restoration.
- Concerned about fire safety as the fireboat that used to be on the waterfront was removed.
- Concerned about the density of buildings proposed; do not wall off the waterfront with high rise buildings.
- Concerned about safety in terms of access over railroad tracks.
- What is the percentage of affordable housing?

Suggestions

- Refer to the suggestions in the proposal prepared by the Oak to Ninth Community Benefit Coalition, *Making a Neighborhood for All of Oakland – The Oak to Ninth Community Benefits Coalition’s Proposal for the Oak to Ninth Project*.
- Provide more rental units making the owner/rental ratio 50:50.
- Include mass transportation opportunities to reduce the number of cars coming in to the development.
- Provide more playgrounds accessible to the public.
- Include designated uses for open space areas (e.g. kids park, dog park, etc.).
- Need a safety plan accounting for all issues and areas along the waterfront. Provide more Specific Plan for fire and safety issues on the waterfront.
- Keep all of 9th Avenue terminal.
- Follow the open space/recreation goals provided in the Estuary Policy Plan and Bay Trail Plan.
- Show how this proposed Project is in compliance with Oakland’s General Plan. Address if this proposed Project would require a General Plan Amendment.
- Improve participation process.

ORANGE GROUP

Issues

- Need public access to open space and the waterfront.

- Ecologically functioning open space.
- Integration with neighboring communities: no “yuppies living on an island.”
- Provide affordable housing.
- Tax revenue will go to the redevelopment agency and not to the city for public services.
- Density: 3100 units is a lot, more than Jack London Square in a smaller space.
- Open space does not need to be pitted against historic preservation; there is enough room in the development for both.
- Adaptive reuse of the entire 9th Avenue terminal. Consider the highest and best use of the building.
- Provide meaningful retail for the local community such as grocery stores, laundry, mail/parcel center.
- Divergence from the Estuary Policy Plan that focused on open space, the 5th Avenue artist community, and public amenities.
- The community needs to be educated on the Estuary Policy Plan.
- Create a credible transit plan to provide access to the area. Consider ferry routes, BART, and AC Transit. Integrate the proposed Project with regional transportation needs and prepare for the future.
- The cost of preserving the 9th Avenue terminal is prohibitively high; who will pay for it?
- The 9th Avenue terminal could become the Fort Mason of the East Bay and should be preserved. It is in better shape than the San Francisco Ferry Building was before it was restored.
- This project should be completed without further delays. Preserving the 9th Avenue terminal would now change the proposed Project significantly and would result in an entirely different project.
- Hire construction workers from the local communities; provide jobs and training.
- Don’t hire construction workers from outside the area because they take and spend money away from Oakland.
- All Oaklanders should feel welcome to use the area (retail space and open space), not just residents.
- There is not enough parking to serve the residents and the outside community. It is not realistic to assume that a significant amount of people will use public transportation.
- There will be an increase in traffic as a result of all the added cars in the area. Trains and traffic/accidents on I-880 will create huge delays as well as noise.
- The proposed Project creates walls along the Embarcadero.
- Some density is needed to create a welcoming community. Otherwise there is no “there” there.
- Public comments should be made available on the City website as soon as possible (including small group meeting comments).
- The rebuilt I-880 is going to be taller and wider and will change the view and character for residents.
- 9th Avenue terminal can be used as covered open space instead of tearing it down.
- The property is being sold and not leased as originally proposed.
- Tearing down the 9th Avenue terminal to preserve views is contrary to the Estuary Policy Plan. It is similar to tearing down the Fox Theater so that Forest City has a view.
- The landscape should not be a monoculture and native plants should be used.

- Utilize green building processes.
- Study the feasibility of keeping the 9th Avenue terminal and decide what the best use of the space is.
- Create open, pedestrian-friendly streets.
- Do not name the project after a politician.
- Stick to the initial plan (Estuary Policy Plan) of a responsive public process. There should be more meetings throughout the process and not just a reaction to a proposal.

Suggestions

- Preserve 9th Avenue terminal and knock out some waterfront buildings to create more open space.
- Adaptive re-use of the 9th Avenue terminal similar to the Ford Building in Richmond.
- Modify the 5th Avenue entrance to provide access to the rest of Oakland.
- Oak to 9th Community Benefits Coalition recommendations (written report provided).
- Some community members are pursuing a referendum to stop the project, then create a commission to oversee any new development.
- Create multiple entrance points to Ninth Avenue along Tenth Avenue.
- Reassess the street widths. Do they need to be that wide or can they be reduced to create more open space in other areas?
- Discard the idea of interior courtyards and create more street facing units.
- Create a public access website where people can provide a feedback dialog (a blog or Yahoo group).
- Study the feasibility of preserving the 9th Avenue terminal. Create citizens advisory committee to oversee the study.
- Turn one of the high-rise towers into a hotel. It would bring in visitors and revenue.
- Create a citizens advisory committee to oversee the entire project.
- Expand Estuary Park and do not build apartments on/around it.
- The project on both sides of 5th Avenue should be cohesive and context-sensitive.

GREEN GROUP

Issues

- Expand the live-aboard boating communities at both of the marinas.
- This project may not meet the parking demands of the residents and outside visitors.
- Include more affordable housing (e.g. 20%).
- There should be plenty of bike and walking opportunities.
- We need good transit services because access to the area is limited.
- Open space and parkland are important.
- This project is too dense.
- The buildings are too tall; they obstruct views of the water.
- Impacts on buildings from trucks using and exiting I-880.
- There is potential for a log jam of traffic at 5th Avenue coming off of I-880.
- Preservation of active park uses, such as soccer.
- Distribution of buildings to leave a smaller footprint.

- There does not seem to be enough parking for public use.
- Putting residences next to Channel Park will create problems because they are incompatible uses (due to noise).
- Improve walkway to surrounding areas (e.g. Jack London Square).
- Implications and/or interface for Measure DD projects.
- The project should provide accessibility to the waterfront for all of Oakland.
- Link Estuary Park to Channel Park with a bridge over the Lake Merritt Channel.
- Create more open space at 5th Avenue and Embarcadero to be visually inviting.
- The project will improve the Jack London Area.
- There is need for housing in Oakland, so the residences are a good idea.
- The proposed Project should be comprised of 20% affordable housing, regardless of density.
- Consider building active senior housing.

Suggestions

- Include floating home communities.
- Do not build high buildings/towers.
- Save and rehabilitate 9th Avenue terminal for mixed-uses.
- Widen the sidewalk at Merritt Channel Bridge.
- Increase open space to 60% of project.
- Improve 5th Avenue and Embarcadero intersection for pedestrians and bikes.
- Build only tall buildings, leave the rest as open space.
- Build a pedestrian/bike bridge across the channel.
- Move Jack London Aquatic Center to the 9th Avenue terminal site.
- The area adjacent to 5th Avenue community should be live-work or open space.
- Include more grocery and wholesale in commercial spaces.

Public Meeting #2 – Saturday, April 9, 2005

Oakland Asian Community Center (9:00 am – 1:00 pm)

Small Group Breakout Comments/Flip-Charts

GROUP #1

Issues

- The waterfront is OUR land and this proposed Project eliminates 1/3 of the open space designated in the Estuary Policy Plan.
- Participants spent a significant amount of time and effort on Estuary Policy Plan. This proposal does not conform to Estuary Policy Plan.
- The proposed Project includes too many units.
- Proposed Project eliminates possibility for festival site because the large open areas appropriate for festivals would be too close to residential areas.
- Channel Park is located too close to wetland habitat area.
- The freeway poses a huge challenge for connectivity, access and safety.
- The waterfront is the property of California and Port of Oakland should not sell it to the developer. The sale of property is subject to a referendum.
- The property should be managed by a public committee or group.
- The proposed Project is too dense with residential/commercial buildings.
- Must provide community access to open space areas.
- Need to maximize habitat restoration while areas are available for restoration.
- Multi-use is too big of a goal for this parcel. The development will not be able serve all needs.
- This is a “design and defend process” rather than the dynamic process that was promised.
- The 9th Avenue terminal is an opportunity for inside festival space.
- Concerned that the opportunity will be lost to work with the developer. Community members need to work with the developer now to address issues and concerns to create a win-win for all.
- Continue with the process.
- Part of the property is in the Public Trust and housing was never a use for the area.
- Changes to plan were made behind closed doors – Exclusive Negotiation Agreement.
- Access for all of Oakland – proposed Project seems like it’s cutting out property for private owners instead.
- Proposed Project should celebrate Oakland and be representative of Oakland.
- Want to see an active waterfront (e.g. Seattle/Portland/Baltimore).
- Public has access to the waterfront now and people are not using the waterfront.
- Need “neighborhood” feeling.
- Connections with Oakland to draw others in (physical connections).

Suggestions

- Include a sculpture park (park celebrating Oakland talent).
- Provide a connection to Main Street – Link 5th Avenue to the waterfront.
- Building should be no more than 8 stories high.

- Decrease density of residential units.
- Increase amount of open space.
- Proposed Project with BART/improve freeway access/provide additional access at 5th and 17th Avenues.
- Review the “Big Dig” proposal putting the freeway underground – would provide connectivity (think Paris).
- Provide more detailed view impacts evaluation – especially communities above and below I-580.
- Use historic resources as a draw to waterfront – We already have a destination.
- Combine adaptive re-use of 9th Avenue terminal with other interests (e.g. Richmond plan – Ford motor plant).
- Keep the building at Estuary Park for commercial use.
- Preserve and enhance existing uses (e.g. 5th Avenue artist community and existing commercial)
- Keep all of 9th Avenue terminal (e.g. Fort Mason).
- Provide a pedestrian/bike bridge to Channel Park.
- 3rd Street Bridge should be part of Bay Trail.
- Main Street should be larger to become a major promenade to pull people to open space (e.g. San Francisco Marina Green) – buildings would then go to the east of open space areas.

GROUP #2

Issues

- The public process has had no feedback loop for the comments submitted.
- The project does not change in response to our comments and the alternatives to this proposed Project have not been released.
- Worried about the integrity of the developer. Signature Properties sold another waterfront property and it is being used to build an Indian casino.
- These meetings feel like a charade and that the project has already gone through the legislative process.
- This proposed Project abandons the Estuary Policy Plan, losing the five year planning process with Planning Commission and City Council approval.
- This proposed Project loses open space in what should be the most important recreational space in Oakland.
- Crescent Park (as laid out in the Estuary Policy Plan) does not exist in this proposed Project. The open space along the 9th Avenue terminal is cut from roughly 11 acres to roughly 4 acres.
- This proposed Project feels like it privatizes public property because the open space is closed off from the community.
- 5th Avenue currently has 100 residents and 25 businesses in live/work studios.
- Did the Port give guidelines to the developer (i.e. number of units)? Answer: No, the Port release and RFP for the development of the area with no guidelines. The proposal by Oakland Harbor Partners was selected.
- Public Trust Lands are not being recognized appropriately. The State Lands Commission has the final say if this land can be sold.

- A new law was passed that allows for a land-swap on Public Trust Lands. There was a preference hierarchy established in the legislation for other waterfront land in Oakland. They are currently looking for another piece of land to exchange (not yet identified).
- The public would like to see the specific Trust issues that have been identified.
- An earthquake on the Hayward Fault would be a disaster for residences in this area. The land is unstable, that is why no residences were proposed in the Estuary Policy Plan.
- There are too many people and too much density in this proposed Project.
- Traffic and parking will be an issue. You can not rely on people using enough public transit because people want their cars.
- The open space will feel like someone's backyard. There should be more space between the water and buildings in order to avoid that feeling.
- Why is the developer allowed to proceed since changes to the Estuary Policy Plan have not been approved? Answer: The proposed Project is still a proposal; the City has not received an application to build yet.
- The Estuary Policy Plan called for commercial and hotel space. Adhering to the Estuary Policy Plan means no residential development in the area.
- Open space along the waterfront is too small to accommodate the Bay Trail.
- There is concern about where the money for schools and other public services will come from. Are there impact fees imposed on the developer?
- This proposal is not compatible with the 5th Avenue community and marine area.
- This area is of vital interest to the entire City of Oakland.
- Natural preservation: public access to the waterfront should be natural and educational.
- What is the definition of open space? What is included in the 45% open space in this proposed Project?

Suggestions

- Preserve the entire 9th Avenue terminal. Restore the building and adaptively reuse as a retail use or indoor event venue.
- There should be a dynamic, iterative planning process with the public before the proposed Project goes to regulatory hearings.
- Incorporate the standards set by the Estuary Policy Plan.
- Estuary Park should be expanded and made more visible to the public. This proposed Project creates a smaller park by building over a portion.
- Make everything west of 5th Avenue open space; use that area for festivals.
- Work out the Tidelands Trust issue with the State Lands Commission in a public forum.
- Preserve the 5th Avenue artist community. It is unique to Oakland and the waterfront area.
- Create a site-specific design that reflects the history of the area and the community.
- Have early involvement of landscape artists to help design the open space.
- The City's Cultural Affairs Board should review the project.
- The Parks Commission should also review the project.
- Integrate public buildings into the project site.
- Study the seismic safety of the area, especially for residences.
- Study the emergency access in the area. Trains might block access during an emergency and there is no longer a fire boat to serve the area.

- Open space should feel public by creating visual public access. 5th Avenue is a key view corridor.
- One of the Peninsulas should be fully open space (plus possibly a hotel) to be used for large community events. Segregating the open space and residential areas will avoid conflicts.
- 20% affordable housing is recommended to address the housing crisis.
- This is the last undeveloped property on Oakland's waterfront and it should be created with a real waterfront interface.
- Set aside a percentage of the industry space (6%?) for new marine trade opportunities. There is a history of boating/marina workers in the Bay Area that is dying out; this is a chance to preserve that.
- Create more diversity of use in this area; this proposed Project feels a monoculture. Keep the historic diversity of the area alive.
- Reduce the building height near the 5th Avenue community.
- Contact State Lands Commission about the Public Trust lands.
- Move Embarcadero to the West. Locate all of the housing away from the water and keep the opens space and 9th Avenue terminal near the water (similar to San Francisco's Marina Green). This would allow better access to the public open space.