

December 31, 2020

Dear Stakeholders:

As the Planning Group, we want to share our thanks with each of you for your work in 2020 and introduce how we will plan for the Howard Terminal Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) process going forward in 2021.

When we began our work on developing the Howard Terminal CBA in January, we knew our road ahead in 2020 would be challenging. We knew that our equity-centered, data-driven, and collaborative multi-stakeholder CBA process was the first of its kind, and as with all firsts, we were navigating together with equal parts optimism and caution. Thanks to your commitment, together we achieved the following important milestones:

- **January:** Over 150 community members and stakeholders participated in the CBA orientation at Preservation Park to get involved with the CBA.
- **February:** Over 100 community members from the four impacted areas (Chinatown, Jack London, Old Oakland, and West Oakland) collectively selected community representatives to the Steering Committee.
- **March – August:** Almost 200 community members organized into seven Topic Cohorts held 50+ virtual meetings and developed a robust list of initial recommendations.
- **August – November:** The Steering Committee continued to meet to refine the recommendations.

While we have collectively gathered an impressive initial list of recommendations, too little substantive progress has been made since August. We have heard – and share – the frustration of many Steering Committee members in this regard. We are now at a point at which we must reassess and redirect the process in order to achieve the goal of reaching a CBA term sheet in 2021. As part of that reassessment, we have decided to hire an experienced third-party consultant to bolster our team.

At the beginning of this CBA process, six local Black consultants were approached, and all but one, Surlene Grant, who has been working with the group from the outset, either declined to work on the project or did not respond to multiple outreach efforts. Therefore, beginning in January 2021, the services of Estolano Advisors will be retained to work closely with the Planning Group to provide technical review, advice, and guidance on advancing the CBA process and initial list to a final term sheet.

[Estolano Advisors](#) is a woman- and minority-owned consulting firm that specializes in inclusive urban planning and public policy, which includes experience with multiple Community Benefits Agreements. Estolano Advisors has worked positively with the City's Department of Race and Equity previously, has a history of working on projects of this magnitude, and we have a high degree of confidence they will be able to assist us as we work collaboratively towards a successful conclusion to this process.

We are working hard to develop a path forward, including a detailed plan of action and schedule, and will update all stakeholders in early 2021. In the meantime, please continue to contact Veronica Cummings, Stakeholder Engagement Lead with the City of Oakland City

Administrator's Office, at vcummings@oaklandca.gov with any questions, concerns, or suggestions you may have.

Developing a CBA is challenging. In true Oakland fashion of meeting challenges, we are doing so even in the midst of the pandemic. Thank you again for your continued engagement and invaluable service to your community.

Sincerely,

Howard Terminal CBA Planning Group