

Location:	Area bounded by 27th Street to the north, I-980 and Brush Street to the west, the Jack London estuary waterfront to the south, and 5th Avenue to the east
Proposal:	Provide status update on the Downtown Oakland Specific Plan project, including progress to date in integrating a social equity strategy into the planning process.
Applicant:	City of Oakland
General Plan:	<u>Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE)</u> - Business Mix; Central Business District; Community Commercial; General Industry and Transportation; Neighborhood Center Mixed Use; Urban Park and Open Space; Urban Residential <u>Estuary Policy Plan (EPP)</u> - Light Industry 1; Mixed Use District; Off-Price Retail District; Parks; Planned Waterfront Development 1; Planned Waterfront Development 4; Produce Market; Retail Dining Entertainment 1; Retail Dining Entertainment 2; Waterfront Commercial Recreation 1; Waterfront Mixed Use; Waterfront Warehouse District
Zoning:	C-40, C-45, CBD-C, CBD-P, CBD-R, CBD-X, CC-1, CC-2, CC-3, CIX-1A, CIX-1B, D-LM-2, D-LM-4, IG, M-20, M-30, M-40, OS(LP), OS(NP), OS(RCP), OS(RCA), OS(SU), R-80, RU-3, RU-4, RU-5, S-2
Environmental Determination:	An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared as part of the Downtown Oakland Specific Plan.
Historic Status:	52 Landmarks, 21 Areas of Primary Importance (API); 27 Areas of Secondary Importance (ASI)
Service Delivery District:	Metro, 1 & 3
City Council District:	2, 3
Status:	Ongoing
Action to be Taken:	Request for Planning Commission and public comment
For Further Information:	Contact project manager Joanna Winter at 510-238-2166 or email at jwinter@oaklandnet.com

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to update the Planning Commission and public on the progress made to date on developing a specific plan for downtown Oakland.

The process of developing a specific plan for downtown Oakland began in July 2015. A Community Kick-Off event was held in September 2015, followed by a ten-day charrette & open studio in October 2015. Between November 2015 and March 2016, a series of community meetings and public workshops were held. Then the *Plan Alternatives Report* for the Downtown Plan was published in April 2016. The City received over a thousand public comments on the report - the majority of which were centered on issues of affordability, gentrification, displacement, and the perception that the outcomes of the Specific Plan could negatively affect historically marginalized communities of color.

Responding to these concerns, the City issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in early 2016 for a social equity consultant to engage the community in a dialogue about social and racial equity issues, and develop specific policies and implementation measures that will lead to an actionable equity framework for the Downtown Specific Plan. Planning Bureau staff worked with the City's Department of Race and

Equity, and selected an equity consultant team lead by I-SEED to work collaboratively with the existing Dover Kohl lead consultant team to revise the Downtown Plan process.

In April 2017, the City relaunched the Downtown Oakland Specific Plan process, with the I-SEED social equity team on board to supplement the work of the existing Downtown Specific Plan consultant team, and to add a new approach centering social equity in community engagement, analysis, strategies and implementation.

Additionally, the City was able to add additional grant funding so that enhanced transportation, economic and environmental analysis will now be included in the revised Plan process. As a result of these project scope enhancements, the draft specific plan will now be able to include more detailed transportation, land use, and economic development recommendations. The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Plan will also be more in-depth, and include project-level analysis of greenhouse gas emissions, enhanced noise analysis, including collection of noise measurement data and additional historic resources impact analysis.

PURPOSE OF SPECIFIC PLAN

The Downtown Oakland Specific Plan will establish the framework for how downtown Oakland will grow and change over the next 20 to 25 years. The Specific Plan will include clear plans for connecting Oakland's distinct neighborhoods and waterfront areas to one another and to the rest of Oakland, and help guide the city's future public investment decisions. The Specific Plan is projected to improve downtown's role as the economic engine and transportation hub of the City, and thereby support the delivery of services to residents throughout the whole city.

To align with the City's commitment to racial equity, the plan is incorporating a social equity strategy to enhance the City's standard community engagement practices, policies and programs, while simultaneously providing more predictability for developers and businesses wanting to locate in downtown. The social equity strategy will specifically respond to community concerns about the impact of change and development in downtown Oakland, particularly on vulnerable populations, so that the Downtown Specific Plan can guide and mitigate change in a way that is beneficial to all people, including low-income communities of color.

Once completed, the Downtown Oakland Specific Plan and its Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will:

1. Provide a comprehensive, clear and certain set of development standards, requirements, regulations, design guidelines and other criteria that will govern downtown development in a predictable way;
2. Provide a comprehensive environmental analysis, along with concurrent downtown-wide mitigation measures, under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA);
3. Provide short-, medium- and long-term public sphere and infrastructure improvements needed to support the land uses and developments desired in the plan. These include, but are not limited to transportation, sewage, water, energy, and other essential services;
4. Provide an economic development strategy that includes specific actions and initiatives consistent with the Economic and Workforce Development Department's projects and policies;
5. Provide a comprehensive downtown transit-oriented development strategy that includes specific actions to increase transit ridership, walking and biking; connects Oaklanders from throughout the city with the resources of downtown; and supports BART's goal of increasing ridership in the reverse commute direction;
6. Provide land-use goals that balance environmental, economic, preservation, social equity and quality of life-related interests; and

7. Provide an inclusive community engagement process, community-driven social and racial equity goals and outcomes, and community-driven action items to achieve those equity goals and outcomes.

PROJECT UPDATE

In April 2017, the City relaunched the Downtown Oakland Specific Plan process with a fundamental shift in its approach, applying a social and racial equity lens. This equity lens will help Oakland develop a plan that will specifically address impacts to vulnerable communities and communities of color to achieve a downtown that serves the entire community. The enhanced analysis of downtown's role in the city and region and of the multi-modal transportation network began as part of the relaunch, also with an equity lens.

Equity Analysis of Work to Date

The I-SEED social equity consultant team joined Dover, Kohl & Partners on the project team in April 2017. Their first step was to study the process and content of the work to date to identify gaps in the community engagement process and the content of the *Priority Development Area Profile Report, Plan Alternatives Report* and other plan documents. This gap analysis is grounded in an understanding of the disparities in Oakland between racial groups in outcomes such as health and quality of life and access to opportunities such as jobs, transportation, and housing. Principles from the analysis include:

- Build from a strong understanding of the Oakland community
- Reinforce the structural integrity of downtown as the heart of Oakland
- Guide equitable development throughout downtown Oakland
- Foster and grow the economic inclusion of Oakland's diverse cultural communities

Enhanced Community Engagement

The gap analysis identified additional populations who are affected by planning decisions but had been underrepresented in the planning process to date, including youth, homeless residents, and residents living outside the downtown. As the first step to engage these groups, the project team conducted two capacity building workshops to familiarize community leaders with the downtown planning process and planning's relationship to social equity, provide a space for them to raise concerns or questions, and discuss ways involve their communities in the planning process. Participants at the workshops helped identify additional advocacy groups and individuals, who were contacted for further conversations. The goal of the further outreach was to learn more about their communities' issues of concern, as well as to share information about the planning process and invite community members to participate in the process, including the upcoming social equity working group meetings.

At the same time, the team launched an external outreach-focused webpage and brand to reflect the revised approach to the process, Equity In Downtown Oakland, or EQT:DTO (www.eqtdto.com). The existing City webpage (oaklandnet.com/plandowntownoakland) continues to be a repository for plan information and documents, but the outreach page acts as a more user-friendly, interactive landing page for the project.

In addition to enhanced targeted outreach events, improvements to engagement strategies have also been made to the core public meetings to engage populations who may not feel welcome using more traditional approaches. To reduce barriers to participation, the social equity working group meetings were held in various locations around the downtown, one-on-one outreach was done to encourage new participants from underrepresented communities, food and childcare were provided, and the meetings were structured to be casual, culturally sensitive, welcoming and interactive. These types of changes will be incorporated into other planning events moving forward.

Enhanced Economic and Transportation Analysis

Concurrently with the enhanced outreach, the economic and transportation sub-consultants have conducted additional research and analysis to inform the team's understanding of challenges and possible strategies for addressing those challenges. These study topics have included:

- The role of downtown in the local and regional economy
- The fiscal contribution of downtown's land uses to the City
- Strategies for preserving arts, culture and production, distribution and repair uses
- Affordable housing strategies
- The existing condition of the multi-modal transportation networks that serve downtown Oakland

This work included review of relevant plans and studies, including the City's Pedestrian Master Plan and Draft Economic Strategy, as well as the I-SEED team's gap analysis, which identified some areas for further study. The I-SEED team's policy sub-consultants have acted as advisors to the economic and transportation sub-consultant teams on this research.

Applying Equity Lens With the Community

The equity, transportation and economic analysis work has helped the team understand how racial disparities in Oakland manifest in the topic areas that were identified during the beginning of the Specific Plan process - including housing, economic opportunity, transportation, health, safety, environmental sustainability, arts and culture, and parks and open space. With this information, the project team has engaged the community to collectively review these topics with an equity lens.

The first round of public meetings was a series of four working groups, each addressing a different set of these topics through the lens of social equity. Participants were introduced to the new equity framework, and then invited to discuss in small groups the draft goals for that evening's topics that had been drafted in response to community comments during and after the Alternatives Report. They were asked to identify any missing issues, identify barriers their community faces in accessing opportunity, and share any initial ideas they had for strategies to bridge those barriers. Demographic data on participants was collected to help track how successful the outreach was to target populations and adjust the approach for future meetings.

Next Steps

The team is currently studying input from this most recent round of community engagement as well as the analysis of existing conditions and disparities to identify what community priorities the Specific Plan should address. The next step is to return to the community with research into strategies that the Specific Plan can use to address those priorities. These initial strategy ideas will be presented, added to, and discussed interactively at a series of "Creative Idea Labs" focusing on four different topic areas:

- Housing & Economic Opportunity
- Arts & Culture
- Streets & Mobility
- Sustainability, Health and Built Environment

In addition to these meetings addressing strategies by topic, the public will also be invited to attend a series of neighborhood design sessions to consider place-based interventions. The Jack London district was addressed at a meeting in fall of 2016, and the neighborhoods to be addressed are:

- Uptown/KONO (including the Art + Garage District)
- Central Core (City Center and up Broadway to the Lake Merritt Office District, including the Black Arts Movement and Business District)
- Old Oakland
- Chinatown

Chinatown was covered under the policies of the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan, which was adopted in 2014; but because Chinatown is a key part of downtown Oakland, the Downtown Plan team is including it in its current analysis and outreach, and will include it in Plan policies and actions where appropriate to better connect it with the rest of downtown.

In the coming months, the Community Advisory Group (CAG) will be re-formed to incorporate a broader range of community voices, and will provide additional input into the strategies vetted at the creative ideas labs and neighborhood design meetings.

Plan Options Memo & Racial Equity Impact Assessment

Following these meetings, the project team will draft a "Plan Options Memo" that will outline a set of vetted strategy options for achieving the equity and other goals of the Specific Plan. The purpose of the Plan Options Memo is twofold: 1) to provide a preliminary set of recommendations that the community can respond to, and 2) to provide an initial set of policy options that can be assessed for their impacts on racial equity.

A "racial equity impact assessment" is a systematic examination of how different racial and ethnic groups will likely be affected by a proposed action or decision. Functioning much like an Environmental Impact Report, the racial equity impact assessment of the Plan Options Memo will provide a mechanism for disclosing potential impacts on communities of color and other vulnerable communities, as well as potential mitigation strategies. Analyzing the equity impacts of the plan recommendations at this preliminary stage in the process, in addition to the work that will have been done up to this point to center equity, will provide the City and community with the background needed to make equitable choices about the policies and actions that are written into the eventual draft Specific Plan.

Developing the Plan

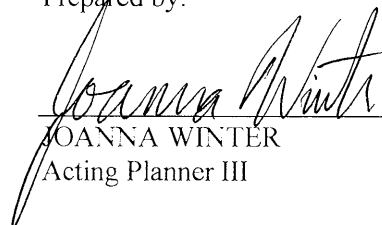
The racial equity impact assessment of the upcoming Plan Options Memo, combined with community input, will help narrow down the Downtown Plan options to a set of draft recommendations, at which point the City will go back out to the community to discuss prioritization and implementation actions in preparation for developing the draft plan itself. The formal Draft Specific Plan is anticipated by spring 2018, and the final adoption of the specific plan and EIR is anticipated by fall of 2019.

CONCLUSION

As this Director's Report is an informational briefing only, staff is not requesting any formal action by the Planning Commission. However, staff invites any comments from the Planning Commission and members of the public.

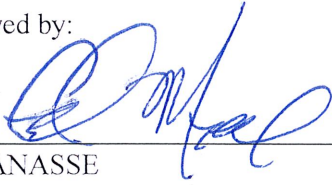
For questions regarding this report, please contact Joanna Winter, Acting Planner III, (510) 238-3362.

Prepared by:



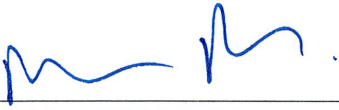
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