

Arts & Culture

August 1, 2017 - 5:30-8:00

PolicyLink

A. Opening: Grounding in Equity, Introductions, Background and Where we are Going Now

Meeting facilitator **Greg Hodge** of **Khepera Consulting** opened the proceedings with African drumming, call-and-response clapping and singing, as well as a call to order, followed by a working definition of equity.

Interim City of Oakland Planning and Building Department Director **Darin Ranelletti** followed with additional welcome remarks to participants, thanking everyone for joining the meeting, and reiterating the importance of community dialogue in the success of the downtown specific plan. Darin introduced **Roberto Bedoya**, the City of Oakland **Cultural Affairs Manager** who is leading the City's cultural plan development, and Roberto spoke about the importance of having the cultural plan work collaboratively with the downtown specific plan and other work currently happening in Downtown.

Ed Manasse from **Oakland's Bureau of Planning**, concluded the opening remarks with context about the downtown specific plan in relation to other planning efforts around the Downtown Plan area and the role the plan will play in light of projected growth in downtown. Ed provided an agenda for the day as well as a brief discussion of the vision, timeline up to date, plan for moving forward and restatement of the purpose of the evening: to review tonight's topic, arts and culture, with an equity lens and to discuss and receive feedback on the draft goals for this topic using that lens.

"The guiding principles we've heard from the community for this plan are equity, creativity, diversity, inclusivity, responsibility, vibrancy, connectivity and opportunity."

– Ed Manasse

B. Grounding in Racial Equity Framework and Setting Context

Tracey Ross from **Policy Link** offered a short presentation on the purpose of the racial equity impact analysis tool that the City will apply to the draft downtown specific plan. Tracey identified Race Forward's Racial Equity Analysis Tool as a best practice and provided examples to aid in understanding how the City will apply this tool to help the community choose Downtown Specific Plan policies and actions that will have positive outcomes for the community's most vulnerable members.

Tracey shared that a racial equity impact analysis poses questions like, “Have we identified the proper stakeholders?” and “Are we properly engaging with those stakeholders?” A racial equity impact analysis also examines alternative options and identify indicators for success.

“A Racial Equity Analysis prompts you to ask the right questions, to talk to the right people, to make sure that this plan that we’re creating, not only avoids unintended consequences, but ensures ways of addressing existing structural barriers.”

– Tracey Ross

Kalima Rose of **PolicyLink** then described some of the arts and culture issues Oakland is trying to address, including information from the **Mayor’s Artist, Housing and Workspace Task Force**. This was to frame the meeting participants’ collective understanding of the issues before they discussed how the draft goals can best address these topics. Kalima also briefly presented the draft vision statements and goals for arts and culture in preparation for the small group discussion.

The main points from Kalima’s presentation included:

- Downtown is composed of unique cultural neighborhoods.
- Many downtown neighborhoods have an income average between \$8-24,000 a year, with waterfront neighborhoods having higher incomes.
- The majority of artists have lived here for 10 years; 25% reported being displaced or facing imminent loss of their home or workspace; 60% of those were facing displacement because of rent increases or because buildings were sold.
- In 2014, 24% of the artists that were displaced were black artists.
- Challenges include: affordable housing, affordable workspace, affordable art-use space, and lack of opportunity to purchase space.
- City actions have included hiring a Cultural Affairs Manager, reconstituting an arts commission, and preparing a city-wide cultural plan partially so that the city can play a role in real estate acquisition for the arts.
- Community comments from the first phase of the Downtown Specific Plan process reflected:
 - Value of multicultural community
 - Concern for who new spaces are for (perception that they are for upper middle class, tech, white people)
 - Maintaining and valuing the generations and ethnic groups that created Oakland’s culture
 - Improving transportation access to cultural activities in Downtown
 - Uplifting informal ethnic, cultural spaces (maker spaces, barbershops, etc.)
 - Prioritizing communities of color
 - Create land use policies that preserve community arts and spaces
 - Affordable work and live spaces should go to people who’ve been actively displaced
 - Connect downtown to the cultural riches of Lake Merritt and Chinatown

C. Cultural Plan Presentation

Robert Bedoya, the **Cultural Affairs Manager**, spoke about the **Cultural Arts Plan**, which will be focusing on the cultural infrastructure of the city and will be working closely with the Downtown Specific Plan to “listen intently to what the Downtown Plan is revealing and incorporate into our process,” says Bedoya. Bedoya shared the Cultural Plan’s vision statement: “Culture is a frame, equity is a driving force, belonging is the goal.”

D. Small Group Activity

Participants broke into smaller groups by topic to discuss the draft goals that had been developed in response to community input during the first year or so of the Plan Downtown process. Participants were asked to identify changes they’d like to see, as well as potential barriers for their community to reaching the goals and possible solutions to those barriers. This information will be used to inform the next phase of the process. See Appendix II for a summary of this feedback, or the Plan Downtown Oakland website (www.oaklandnet.com/plandowntownoakland) for the full spreadsheets of community input into the goals.

Each group was asked to report their most significant idea back to the larger group. Ideas reported back included:

- Include youth and people with disabilities in the language of the goals.
- Complete a more thorough citywide and downtown cultural mapping.
- Get information from those who don’t have access to tech, i.e. homeless population.
- Diversify the definition of “public art” to include more than visual art and artists of all racial, cultural economic background.
- Prioritize mid-size performance spaces.
- Improve communication about and for grant opportunities to a larger group of public.
- Bring conversation to stakeholders who should be a part of the process.

E. Streetwyze

In closing, **Antwi Akom** and **Aekta Shah**, the **Co-Founders of Streetwyze**, shared a brief presentation describing the Streetwyze tool and its value to this process. Streetwyze is a mobile mapping and SMS platform that collects real time information about how people are experiencing cities and places and turns them into actionable analytics. The City of Oakland hopes that Streetwyze can be an authentic method for two-way engagement with community members on the ground, helping the community identify priority community assets in downtown and helping City staff to better understand and support the diversity of community needs in the planning process.

Antwi and Aekta emphasized how Streetwyze allows the community to be experts and control their own narratives of spaces, places and experiences as artists. Lastly they discussed the ways in which communities can uplift their cultural assets, their experience of art & culture in downtown and identify what changes they want to see. Meeting participants were shown how to create a Streetwyze account and post a review.

F. Next Steps

Joanna Winter, from **Oakland's Bureau of Planning**, continued the meeting with a brief discussion of next steps, including:

- Use community input to revise the goals and help guide the next phase of work
- Technical analysis meetings will dive deeper into the possible strategies and solutions to the issues discussed at this meeting
- Neighborhood design workshops to focus on strategies and solutions to specific areas
- Reconfiguring the Community Advisory Group membership to represent more community voices
- Drafting a plan concepts memo for the community to review and provide feedback
- Beginning a prioritization process for plan actions, and developing the draft plan, which will go through public and environmental review
- Utilizing Streetwyze for ongoing input into community priorities

G. Question and Answer

The meeting was closed with a small discussion around outstanding questions from the community, which included the following:

- How does the work we're doing impact the development community? We're doing all this work but what is our power? What is our interface with development?
- Is the development community hearing us? How much are they willing to participate and make Oakland the city we want it to be?
- What regulations or processes will you have in the plan that will require developers to adhere to it? We can go through the planning process, but we must be honest with the people and realistic. What are going to be the constraints on development given that you've asked us to participate in the plan?