

Streets, Traffic Circulation, Connectivity & Built Environment August 2, 2017, 5:30-8:00p Oakstop

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.

This opening was then followed by statements from **Ryan Russo, Director of the Department of Transportation at the City of Oakland**, who spoke about the department's focus on Oakland's streets and their commitment to equity: "The department was formed with equity front and center. We are working with committed professionals to better understand how to take issues around race and equity and inclusion and truly operationalize them around city government. For example, what is an equitable paving program? What is an equitable bicycle development program? How do we do traffic safety and vision equitably?" Ryan also spoke about the importance of operating with a sense of urgency because downtown streets contain the most pedestrians and cyclists, and the most accidents in the City of Oakland. Furthermore, with current and future growth expected downtown, efficient transit is imperative to ensuring that the increased density is functional.

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, streets, connectivity and built environment, with an equity lens and to discuss and receive feedback on the draft goals for this topic using that lens.

B. Grounding in Racial Equity Framework and Setting Context

Jme McLean of **Mesu Strategies**, opened with an introduction to the social equity consultant team led by I-SEEED, including who the subconsultants are, where their expertise lies, and what their work within the downtown specific plan entails. The equity work so far has included an analysis of the work on the plan and the community comments received to date to assess existing conditions, to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the indicators that have already been identified, and to make recommendations for other equity indicators Oakland can use to target change and measure how successful the plan is at achieving it. Jme

briefed the community on how these and future public meetings will lead to a plan concepts memo that will then be passed through a racial equity impact analysis.

“A racial equity analysis is a systematic process in which we ask questions about race and we look at what the history has been related to some of the plans and decisions that have made and we make projections about what kind of impacts will be made in the future.”

– Jme McLean

Tracey Ross of **Policy Link** then described some of the problems and inequities with transportation and the built environment facing Oaklanders today. This was to frame the meeting participants’ collective understanding of the issues before they discussed how the draft goals can best address these topics. Tracey also briefly presented the vision statements and goals for related to transportation and the built environment in preparation for the small group discussion.

The main points from Tracey’s presentation included:

- About 21,000 people currently live in downtown, making up 5% of the city’s population, 60% are single and 9% are households with children and including Chinatown, households with children totals to 26%.
- Oakland has a racialized poverty issue, with the most severe instances of poverty in any racial category felt by immigrants.
- Where you live determines access to transportation, quality and access to health care and services.
- Most of downtown Oakland’s population has lower incomes than the rest of Oakland.
- Most people currently get downtown using a car.
- There is a closely linked relationship between accessing a car and social mobility or escaping poverty; in Oakland, most households that don’t own a car are African-American.
- Many neighborhoods in downtown experience high levels of pollution from cars.
- Ideas for solutions: Looking at conversion of one-way streets, complete streets design, and better connections between downtown and other neighborhoods in Oakland with transit; remove highways; consider how to preserve character; increase walkability, bikeability, and affordability; and help people move through space with more ease.

C. 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 planning 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:

- Chinatown residents expressed concern that traffic isn't well monitored in the neighborhood. People drive too fast and it poses a threat to all residents, but especially children and seniors.
- Seniors should have free access to public transportation.
- Chinatown residents expressed concern that their involvement in plans and studies, especially with the Lake Merritt Plan, has yet to result in positive outcomes for residents.
- Develop a safe and high-quality bike and pedestrian network.
- Find innovative ways to move goods and people sustainably and efficiently.
- Coordinate land use, parking and transportation to support a more livable experience for all people.
- Do more outreach, education and prototyping before implementing new street changes (bike lanes, etc.)
- Create an amenity-rich public realm, recognizing the cultural uses of public open space and the ways different cultures use open space, provide safety and curb cuts for pedestrians.
- Density in Chinatown is getting dangerous, resulting in dirty, dangerous public spaces and parks.
- Consider transit options for vulnerable populations like seniors and disabled, i.e. informal car shares and shuttles.
- If we don't take language into account for immigrant communities, language is the first barrier we need to overcome in order to have our opinions heard, and today was a great step in that direction.

D. 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