



CITY OF EAST PALO ALTO
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
1960 Tate Street • East Palo Alto, CA 94303

TO: Community Advisory Committee and Members of the Public

FROM: Sean Charpentier, Project Coordinator II

SUBJECT: Draft Public Outreach Strategy for the **Dumbarton Rail Station Area Specific Plan Process (Specific Plan Process)**

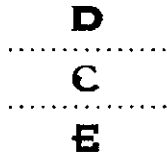
DATE: October 8, 2009

INFORMATIONAL ITEM

As part of the Specific Plan Process, Council expressed a special interest in developing a very strong Public Outreach Strategy to maximize community input throughout the approximately 18 month process. In response to Council's desire, staff is presenting the attached **DRAFT Public Outreach Strategy** for review.

In addition to mailing a meeting notification to all residents and owners within the study area, staff developed an additional list of interested parties, including CAC applicants and members, commissioners of various boards and commissions, City Council and other elected officials, neighborhood associations, media, non profits, and stakeholders from the public and private sector. Notifications of meetings will also be made through popular community email chains, including Mr. Parker, the Police beat, the Cooley Landing and the Community Services email lists. Flyers and postcard invitations to meeting have been posted in all public city facilities, and at several non-profit locations, including the health clinic, and One EPA. Staff is also planning to publicly announce the upcoming public workshops at council meetings, through the broadcast of public meetings and via the city's website.

For any questions, or comments, please send an email to: dumbartonplan@cityofepa.org or contact: Sean Charpentier, RDA Project Coordinator II, at: (650)853-5906.



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MEMORANDUM

DATE September 18, 2009
 TO Sean Charpentier
 City of East Palo Alto
 FROM Bruce Brubaker and Jeff Williams
 RE **Draft Public Outreach Strategy**

This draft memorandum describes our proposed approach for encouraging broad-based community participation in the Dumbarton Specific Plan process. We will review this memorandum with the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) at their first meeting and ask for their comments and approval.

A. Guiding Principles for Public Outreach

The primary aim of our public outreach for this project is to solicit input from the broadest possible segment of the City's population throughout the planning process. We want to make sure that all voices are heard at each step of the process, so that the final plan represents a collaborative vision for the future of the Ravenswood Business District (RBD), Four Corners and other parts of the project area.

To ensure its success, the outreach strategy is based on the following principles:

- ◆ Actively seek participation and input, rather than waiting for individuals and groups to come forward to participate.
- ◆ Make an extended effort to target traditionally underrepresented groups, for whom language or cultural differences, lack of access to technology, and lower mobility may discourage involvement.
- ◆ Work to incorporate existing community groups and organizations into the Dumbarton planning process.
- ◆ Employ a multi-faceted approach that uses several different avenues of outreach, communication and marketing.

- ◆ Design the format of public meetings to be as inclusive and open as possible, providing a variety of ways in which individuals can participate and contribute ideas.

B. Proposed Outreach Methods

The following methods will comprise the public outreach strategy for the project. Working with City staff and the CAC, we will invest substantial effort to attract a broad cross-section of City residents to all project meetings, particularly the Kick-off Workshop and community workshops.

1. Public Meetings

The core of this project's public input process is a Kick-off Workshop for the general public, followed by a series of three community workshops. These meetings will address the following issues:

- ◆ **Kick-off Workshop.** Give participants an overview of the project. Discuss planning for public health as a way to frame the topics that the project will address. Solicit participants' input on the issues that the project team needs to consider.
- ◆ **Community Workshop A: Alternatives Development.** Discuss the consultant team's assessment of existing conditions in the project area. Work in small groups to create a vision for the area and identify potential land use changes and design improvements.
- ◆ **Community Workshop B: Refinement of Alternatives.** Present three land use alternatives, based on the ideas from Community Workshop A, and an analysis of each alternative. Get the public's input on a preferred alternative.
- ◆ **Community Workshop C: Review Draft Specific Plan.** Explain the policies and recommendations in the Draft Specific Plan. Solicit feedback on the document and answer questions.

All four of these meetings will be interactive and engaging. They will provide a structured forum in which community members can discuss issues with one another and recommend policies for inclusion in the Specific Plan. We will gather input from as many individuals as possible. Community members will be invited to share their ideas in many different ways, including facilitated large-group discussions; "dot voting" to prioritize the community's goals; facilitated small-group map exercises to identify places where the community wants to see various types of improvements; facilitated small-group discussions to identify and rank policies that the community wants to see in the Specific Plan; and individual comment cards with free-form comments. We will provide simultaneous translation in Spanish at all four meetings, as well as a Spanish-speaking facilitator, so that people whose primary language is Spanish can participate fully in the meetings.

It is important to choose a suitable location for the workshops. We believe these meetings can be held successfully at City Hall, which is centrally located within the project area and provides the facilities needed for a public workshop. However, it may also be appropriate to consider an alternative venue, such as the Ravenswood Family Health Center, the East Palo Alto Senior Center or Costaño Elementary School. If possible, light refreshments should be provided at each of the meetings.

In addition, we will hold a series of six meetings with the CAC, whose members represent a range of community stakeholders and interests. Our meetings with the CAC will be distributed throughout the project. Preliminarily, we anticipate that they will address the following topics:

- ◆ **CAC Meeting #1.** Provide CAC members with an overview of the project and key policy issues to be addressed.
- ◆ **CAC Meeting #2.** Discuss economic development opportunities that can be addressed through the Specific Plan.
- ◆ **CAC Meeting #3.** Review and discuss the community's input on a preferred alternative for the Specific Plan.
- ◆ **CAC Meeting #4.** Discuss the parking and traffic analysis of the preferred alternative, as well as the proposed circulation plan.
- ◆ **CAC Meeting #5.** Review plans for improving access to a potential Dumbarton Rail station.
- ◆ **CAC Meeting #6.** Review and comment on the Draft Dumbarton Rail Station Area Specific Plan.

CAC meetings will be open to the public. Each meeting will include an opportunity for public comment. The City has determined that CAC meetings are subject to the Brown Act, and each meeting will be noticed accordingly. A Planning Commission/City Council subcommittee will be invited to all CAC meetings, so that the City's decision-makers are engaged with the CAC's process.

Finally, the project team will hold several meetings with the Public Works Commission, Planning Commission and City Council, which will be public, noticed meetings that include opportunities for public comment. These meetings will include a Planning Commission study session midway through the project to discuss the preferred land use alternative for the Specific Plan; a Public Works Committee meeting to review the transportation improvements proposed in the Plan; and the Planning Commission and City Council's review and adoption hearings for the full Specific Plan and its Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

2. Community Contacts and Organizations

City staff will contact CAC members to solicit a list of community contacts that should receive notice of each workshop, so that the outreach effort targets a wide range of community stakeholders. The City will combine this list with its own lists of community contacts, including non-profit groups as well as members of the City Council, Planning Commission, Transportation Commission and other city commissions. To ensure widespread awareness of the workshops, City staff will also encourage CAC members to distribute meeting notices to their friends, colleagues, community organizations and email lists.

DC&E will also draft a letter that the City can send to various neighborhood groups, advocacy groups and other local organizations, so they are aware of the project and their opportunities to participate. The letter will include an overview of the Specific Plan process and will invite community leaders to attend the workshops and publicize them to their members.

3. Meeting Invitations

DC&E will design, print and mail postcards inviting the public to the workshops and CAC meetings. The postcards will be sent to all mailing addresses within the project area and to the community contacts identified by the City. Each postcard will include text in both English and Spanish. A draft postcard design is attached to this memo.

DC&E will provide the City with an electronic copy of each postcard, so that meeting notices can also be distributed on the web and via email. We will provide extra printed postcards to the City for distribution to other community groups that are willing to assist with outreach, and for placement in community facilities such as the East Palo Alto Library. City staff will also post notices in local stores and on community bulletin boards.

4. Media Outreach

City staff, with input and assistance from DC&E, will arrange for publicity of the community workshops through the local media. Media to be contacted include:

- ◆ **Television and Radio.** DC&E will develop a public service announcement that can be displayed or read out loud on the air. We will provide this announcement to City staff to be forwarded to local radio and TV stations. In addition, City staff will invite CAC members to give announcements and interviews on EPA TODAY's public access cable show, as well as at City Council meetings that are broadcast on public access.
- ◆ **Newspapers.** City staff will encourage reporters at the Palo Alto Daily News and EPA TODAY to publicize the workshops in advance and cover each one. Also, if desired, DC&E will adapt our postcard invitations to a size and format that is suitable for use as a newspaper ad in the Daily News. Ads should be published approximately one and a half weeks prior to each workshop.

5. Community Meetings

City staff and/or CAC members will attend other community meetings in East Palo Alto to tell residents about the project and encourage them to attend workshops. One example might include the Police Department's beat meetings within the project area. City staff will also provide regular updates to the City Council, police beat meetings and other community groups to the extent possible. Additionally, the City will announce public meetings at televised City Council meetings in advance, when possible, and provide contact information for the City's project manager.

6. City Website

The City website will provide information about all upcoming workshops, CAC meetings and Planning Commission/City Council hearings for the project. To support this effort, DC&E will provide electronic copies of meeting agendas, PowerPoint presentations, handouts and meetings summaries, so they can be distributed on the web. The City has created a dedicated project webpage (<http://www.ci.east-palo-alto.ca.us/economicdev/dumbarton.html>) and email address (dumbartonplan@cityofepa.org), and City staff will use these tools to post relevant documents online in a timely fashion.

7. Mid-Project Evaluation

Following the Kick-off Workshop and Community Workshop A, Alternatives Development, DC&E will work with City staff to assess the successes and failures of this outreach strategy. If we have not successfully encouraged participation by a wide range of citizens, DC&E will work with the City to refine this strategy, so that there is greater participation at the meetings that follow.

8. Public Involvement Summary

At the conclusion of the project, DC&E will work with City staff to prepare a public involvement summary that includes all of the meeting notices, sign-in sheets, presentation materials and meeting outcomes, so that the City has a consolidated record of all of the outreach activities for the project.

We believe that this outreach strategy provides for a highly interactive community process, which will result in a collaboratively created Specific Plan that reflects a wide range of input from East Palo Alto's citizens. We look forward to working with City staff, the CAC, the Planning Commission and the City Council to ensure the success of the outreach strategy.