

Excelsior & Outer Mission Neighborhood Strategy
Working Group
Land Use & Housing Subgroup

Date: Wednesday, August 17, 2017

Staff Facilitators: Rachael Tanner, San Francisco Planning Department

Notes taken by: Rachael Tanner and Kimia Haddadan, San Francisco Planning Department

Attendance:

Working Group Participants

Alan Leung
Faye Lacanilao
Ed Parillon (for Adhi Nagraj) of BRIDGE Housing
Nevada Lane
Charlie Sciammas

Partner Agencies & Organizations

Stephanie Cajina, Excelsior Action Group
Suhagey Sandoval, Aide to Supervisor Ahsha Safai
Crezia Tano-Lee, Office of Economic and Workforce Development
Mara Blitzer, Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development
Kimia Haddadan, Planning Department

Public

Jessie Fernandez
Theodore Randolph
Justin Balenzuela

Notes on Discussion

Aspirations for the Future of the Neighborhood Commercial District

- Is there a magic formula that can lead us to the outcomes that we want? Can City staff bring that to us?
 - While there isn't a magic formula, there are best practices and strategies that staff can present.
 - We can look at cities and find examples of places we want to learn from.
 - Next time, let's have more examples and case studies we can use.
- Assets
 - This neighborhood has many assets and we can build from them. We have senior centers, tailors, and the barbershop. Not every neighborhood can say they have that; let's build from the assets, not from what we don't have.
- I would love to be able to get certain goods and services in the neighborhood; go to Trader Joes, a yoga studio, and get my nails done.
- Vibrant, that's the main word, which means people out and about for their daily activities.
- Building community right here, where we live; going to the corridor for their needs.
- Can we be a Jane Jacob's neighborhood; with a 24/7 vibe, where there is office, retail, and entertainment. Always an activity occurring.

- Development that meets needs w/o making more displacement (evictions)
- *Everyone* can go out and go shopping in the neighborhood corridor. A range of price points and goods.
- Continue to be a place for working people to thrive.

Housing & Affordability of Housing

- Asian Law Caucus did a survey of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) a few years ago. We should look at that to help understand ADUs, both authorized and un-authorized
 - Let's not call them "illegal ADUs"; just like we don't undocumented people illegal.
 - The technical term for ADUs constructed without a permit is unauthorized.
- One strategy to deal with vacancies is to work with commercial brokers to introduce them to the Excelsior so that they know more about the neighborhood and the available spaces.
- HOME – SF is as a city policy that allows a development to have up to 2 additional stories in exchange for building 30% of the units in the building as affordable units. This allows more density.
 - For example, there is a project in the district, adjacent to the corridor that is building 8 units. However, with HOME SF the project could be 22 units—which is way more housing including affordable housing. However, the project sponsor does not want to build it. Though the sponsor cites a number of reasons, the reasons mostly seem to boil down to complexity of going beyond what is allowed by the Planning Code.
 - Perhaps w/more information and understanding, project sponsors will be more willing to utilize HOME SF.
- The design of buildings and housing can actually help promote community. Let's have designs that promote community.
- The cost per unit to construct housing is:
 - \$350,000-400,000 in hard construction costs
 - Plus land, design, permits, etc, known as soft costs
 - Hard and soft costs together, the cost per unit is \$600,000 - \$700,000 per unit—that's for affordable units.
 - To build more housing we need to leverage resources. Below Market Rate (BMR) units cannot be provided by the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD). MOHCD cannot build enough housing. We have to leverage other resources to provide housing.
 - What resources?
 - How to leverage them?
- Construction Types
 - 6 stories are the sweet spot often for housing development. This size allows developers to do a concrete podium and then 5 stories of wood construction; which is cheaper than steel or concrete.
 - The cost of the 7th or 8th story is not worth it because the cost changes dramatically, but not the rents of the building.
- The neighborhoods surrounding the NCD are large; there can be a great distance between homes and shops. It can be hard to get to them for some people.
- Non-profit housing is focused on needs; including having community-serving uses in the ground floor commercial spaces.
 - For example, the health center that will be part of the BRIDGE site.

- Home match program at MOHCD focuses on helping people age in place; matching seniors with spare rooms with boarders. This ensures our existing housing stock is utilized and provides seniors with income as well as some company.
- There is a critical need for more affordable housing, and that includes housing that is affordable across a range of incomes from very low income, to low income, to moderate income. What it seems there is less support for, and less need for, is market rate housing, which too often charges rents that are extremely out of reach of the majority of local residents and more often targeted towards a privileged few very high income community members that do not reside in the local community. This market rate housing often bears the most responsibility for continuing to push the upward pressure on rents in the neighborhood as a whole.
- We need less restrictions on businesses (public comment)
- We need to allow more density. (public comment)

Business Attraction & Retention

- No matter what we say we do or don't want in regards to businesses and services in the district, at the end of the day there has to be a business or service provider with the resources to make it work here in the neighborhood. They have to be able to make money and operate.
- A merchant and/or business association could be part of helping to attract and retain our businesses.
- We need means and incentives to attract and retain businesses.
 - Need to be careful of high-end retail coming in instead of neighborhood serving retail.
 - Attraction of new businesses and filling vacant store fronts doesn't have to be a zero-sum game.
 - Be mindful though of the tipping point; the point where there is upward pressure on the rent and that can be hard for businesses to compete.
- Can we look at the impact of internet shopping on the NCD? The idea of a complete neighborhood and services might change. Knowing the trends can help us respond to the changes.
- Decision factors for attracting retailers are (1) median income and (2) density
 - Tried to get Trader Joes when the Bayview Fresh and Easy closed. They didn't have the AMI needed; nor the density needed to make up for the lower AMI.

Services

- Let's look at services that seniors need.
- There is large housing turnover as the neighborhood population ages.
- It's great to have child-care near where you live. What other goods and services are good to have near your home? Let's promote those.

Connection to Mobility

- Taking cars off the street might make it more inviting for pedestrians.
- The topography of the neighborhood can make it hard for people to access the corridors; some folks live on hills which make walking and biking to Mission Street difficult.
- The neighborhoods surrounding the NCD are large; there can be a great distance between homes and shops. It can be hard to get to them for some people.

Curious – What do we want to know more about?

- Isolate what seniors had to say regarding the sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure
- Homeowner and renters
 - Homeowner and renter distinctions may not be sufficient; it might be more complicated as you have someone living with family, the family member (like an Aunt) owns the house, but the survey respondent is not paying rent. Are they a tenant or owner?
 - At the same time, folks did respond to the survey and selected tenant or owner; with some skipping the question.
 - Let's pull out the distinctions between homeowners and renters
- More information around housing trends, with multi-generational nuances would be great.
- What does cleanliness mean? It is clearly an issue, but are they talking about trash? Litter? Dirt on the sidewalks?
- E-commerce trends?
- What do people drive to do? To buy?
- Learn how some changes impact vulnerable people.

Connections to other Subgroups

This item was not addressed.

Community Meeting

There was support among the group to host a community meeting in October 2017; not September. The desire was to provide enough time to work together and reach consensus before planning an outreach meeting.

Next Meeting

Tentative meetings are set for August 29 and September 12th, from 6 – 8 pm.

In the time allotted, the entire agenda was not covered.