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 Working Group
 Land Use & Housing Subgroup

Date: Tuesday, August 29, 2017

Staff Facilitators: Rachael A. Tanner, San Francisco Planning Department

Notes taken by: Rachael A. Tanner, San Francisco Planning Department; and Jorge Rivas, San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development

Attendance:

Working Group Participants

Charlie Sciammas
 Kabir Seth
 Nevada Lane
 Mel Flores
 Jason Serafino-Agar

Partner Agencies & Organizations

Stephanie Cajina, Excelsior Action Group
 Rachael Tanner, Planning Dept.
 Jorge Rivas, OEWD
 James Pappas, Planning Dept.

Public

Tom Murphy
 Theodore Randolph
 Rita Celini
 Bill (last name?)

Notes

The meeting included a discussion of a series of strategies for the NCD. The working group members, public, and staff discussed the pros and cons of the strategies.

Strategy: Expanding the Boundaries of the NCD?

Upside	Downside
This could change density limits and bring more housing along the corridor. More housing means more people, and more shoppers to support the corridor	Will an expansion of NCD mean more commercial storefronts? And will that mean more vacant retail spaces?
It also means more foot traffic, people walking along the corridor.	Concentration of businesses could help strengthen the corridor as a place and help the businesses perform better.
Could add more dense housing, and supply more	

places for people to live	
Perhaps newer developments could fill in where there are currently vacant homes.	

Strategy: Developing Nodes Along the Neighborhood Commercial District

Upside	Downside
Each node could be strategic and focused. That would harness and focus energy.	
Foot traffic could increase	
A node could be understood by a pedestrian and the pedestrian may have an easier time navigating one node instead of the entire corridor.	
Each node can become a destination	
Each node can be a hub of activity.	

Other ideas Discussed RE: Nodes

- 20 Minute Neighborhood – a concept from Portland that people can get their daily needs met within a 20-minute walk from their house. Each node could be a “neighborhood” in the sense that it provides those types of amenities.
<http://www.portlandonline.com/portlandplan/index.cfm?a=288098&c=52256>
- Food is a great anchor for a node
- Third Spaces are needed.¹
- Library is a great node. Library + Grocery Store = a magic formula of sorts. Able to run an errand/eat and relax in a public space. Example: grocery store + Library in Glen Park
- Public space is an important foundation; it allows people watching and gathering spaces. Places to rest.
- Bike Share can help people circulate within the neighborhood and between different parts of the corridor.
- To create an inviting place to walk, we need to slow traffic.
- Bikes and pedestrians need to have safe places to ride and walk; that is not the case right now.
- Promote non-car oriented uses on the nodes.

Ideas about how to create nodes

- Physical changes could signal a node.
- Narrower streets could signal a node and improve pedestrian safety.
 - Example is near Daly City border near Daly City BART where there is angle parking and Mission Street changes a little bit.
- Diagonal parking
- Short term parking
- Free parking

¹ Third Places. Throughout his work, and particularly in his book *Celebrating The Third Place* (2000), Oldenburg identifies “third places” as the public places on neutral ground where people can gather and interact. In contrast to first places (home) and second places (work), third places allow people to put aside their concerns and simply enjoy the company and conversation around them. Third places “host the regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home and work.”

- Certain pedestrian only zones during certain times of the day or during certain events; then the streets become open to traffic again.
- Art can create a sense of place; provide cues to the node
- We can create third spaces/public spaces. We can use things we have to make public spaces.
 - Parklets
 - The idea of a “farmlet” which would be like a parklet, but growing food!
 - A pool in a dumpster
 - Can we look to publicly owned land to create new public space, not just rely on private developments as the only strategy? For example, there are public right of ways that could potentially be reconfigured to create more public space. One such example, but I believe there are many others is where Ocean Ave meets Mission Street at the Persia Triangle area, a street closure or reconfiguration could create a public plaza. This would be possible because Ocean easily connects to Mission street via the half block of Persia.
- We need to think about loading zones for uber/lyft/ride hailing.
- The Community Benefits District
 - Could be concentrated in one area and then grow from there
 - Could have a community benefit district or a community benefit district.
 - Explanation of Community Benefit District, CBD: Property owners enter a voluntary assessment to raise funds to be used w/in certain boundaries on certain projects.
 - Green Benefit District, GBD: Property owners enter a voluntary assessment to raise funds for additional maintenance and capital improvements to parks, sidewalks and open spaces within a designated area
- Require developments to contribute to or to build public open space. It could be on site at that development or they could contribute to a centralized fund that constructs open spaces
- Can we get more knowledge and understanding of property owners who don’t do anything with their properties? Why do they let the building sit empty? What can we do?
 - There is a program that fines property owners for “abandoned” property, but it can be easy to avoid paying the fine and the fine is very low. See: <http://sfdbi.org/vacantstorefronts>

Strategy: Permitting Office Uses on Second Floor and Above?

Upside	Downside
These office spaces could be cheaper and more affordable for small businesses	After hours, this space would not be active. We would not want to have areas that are really dead at night.
Co-work/shared office facility might fall into this category; that could be good because the nature of work is changing. I work from home and can imagine it being great to have access to.	I feel we should only consider expanding office space if this will create employment opportunities for our communities in our neighborhoods, given the high need for jobs among many Excelsior residents.
There needs to be balance	
The corridor is a good transit location. Good for people to come, see, explore the area.	

Questions RE: Office Uses

- Can we have an analysis of the workforce considerations for allowing office space?
- What kinds of jobs might be in the offices? What sectors might have interest? What are the skills needed / entry requirements into those jobs?
- I feel we should only consider expanding office space if this will create employment opportunities for our communities in our neighborhoods, given the high need for jobs among many Excelsior residents.
- Who has access to work in these offices?
- Can we currently have gyms under the current zoning? Coworking spaces?
- Can we have accessory uses?
Can we explore making it easier to combine uses? Businesses will have to be nimble in the future and offer more than one good/service/experience to survive.

Increased Housing Capacity

- Let's be more flexible. Let residential uses be considered an active ground floor use. We have too many empty store fronts; we don't need to promote having more.
- Historic preservation can discourage development; let's be sure to understand what is and is not historic in the neighborhood.
- Could emphasize our historic assets so that we preserve the real gems.
- Home-SF developers might need access to non-traditional sorts of financing in order to make the projects pencil; tax credit & bond financing.
- Family size housing is needed; Home-SF doesn't necessarily provide for large enough units for larger families.
- I feel mixed income housing is preferable to 100% affordable buildings.
- Density
 - Geary and Van Ness are wide streets and I don't want the street to feel like that; I want a smaller neighborhood feel.
 - I don't want anything taller than the new building on Mission & Seneca.
 - I feel the main issue with Geary and Van Ness are that they are freeways; and the streets are very large and wide, the buildings are fine to me.
 - I think we need more density.
- I feel we need to look at sufficient parking for developments.

- I feel the pace of this process is very fast and we need to slow down in order to allow more voices that are impacted by these decisions to understand the impacts and weigh in.