

**F. Approval of the Conceptual Land Use Concept for the Area 2 Specific Plan – from
Community Development Director Grindall. (MOTION)**

Background/Discussion – In collaboration with Area 2 landowners, the City of Newark began a planning effort in the fall of 2007 to explore potential development in Area 2 around the planned Newark Dumbarton Rail Station.

Area 2 includes 233 acres of land that has contained various industrial, manufacturing, chemical processing, and salt production facilities since the early twentieth century. Much of the land, which is located at the transition from the bay to the built environment, is currently vacant. Zoning for the Plan area was updated in 1999 with the adoption of the Newark Area 2 Specific Plan, which anticipated the construction of a community college surrounded by multi-level office and R&D buildings. However, after adoption of that Plan, the community college located elsewhere and the market for office space in South Alameda County diminished. The planned Dumbarton Rail Corridor presents an opportunity to create a vibrant new transit-oriented center in Newark that will provide new housing while generating significant ridership for the Dumbarton Rail Corridor.

The recent planning effort included two public meetings that were used to gauge support among Newark residents for new types of development around Area Two. Three proposed development alternatives were presented and the Community provided substantial input into the conceptual plan. Based on the input, City staff concluded that the next steps should be to refine a land use plan, analyze the impact of additional residential development on the site, and propose detailed land use regulations to guide and facilitate transit-oriented development.

Conceptual Plan

Based on input received at the Area 2 community workshops, a Conceptual Land Use Plan has been developed. This Plan represents a medium density transit-oriented residential neighborhood as well as open space. The Plan is conceptual and will require significant refinement and analysis, including detailed design, environmental analysis, evaluation of school impacts, market assessments, and fiscal analysis.

In this Conceptual Plan, higher densities of residential development are located within a quarter-mile radius of the rail station, medium densities such as townhomes are located within a half-mile, and small-lot single-family dwellings are located farthest from the station, in the southern portion of the Plan area. Differing development types and densities can be accommodated within this Plan, with a range of 1,000 to 2,500 units anticipated. Further study is required to determine the impacts, unit count, and set density limits.

Blocks are generally short and pedestrian-oriented, offering pedestrians many different ways to walk through the neighborhood. Most streets are roughly equal in width, with the exception of a curving boulevard connecting the two major vehicular routes into the site, Central Avenue and Enterprise Drive. This is envisioned as a prominent green boulevard with a wide landscaped median.

Retail stores and shops are concentrated near the transit station in mixed-use buildings with apartments above. This mixed-use area would have up to 65,000 square feet of retail. Up to 250,000 square feet of larger floor plan stand-alone retail is accommodated along Willow Street. The Plan also accommodates a performing arts center or other community facility close to the transit station.

In addition to the substantial passive open space north of the railroad and south of Central Avenue, active open space is concentrated in a three-acre central park at the center of the site and a smaller bay overlook park at the west edge of the site. These open spaces are linked by two-pedestrian oriented green spines, one connecting the central park to the transit station and an east-west spine connecting Willow Street with the west edge of the site. Additional pocket parks will also be provided at individual blocks throughout the development. A new bay trail connection is proposed along the entire west side of the site.

The development of a transit-oriented development in this area has the potential to provide retail opportunities to existing and future residents, to help in meeting regional and State housing requirements, to increase transit ridership, to improve recreational facilities and linkages, and to support important community facility needs such as a performing arts center.

Planning Process

If approved, the Conceptual Land Use Plan will be used to guide more detailed analysis in a Specific Plan and environmental documentation. Its adoption by the Planning Commission and City Council would serve as a guide for the study process. Numerous community meetings would be held in an effort to refine the Conceptual Land Use Plan.

Recommendation

Given the significant benefits of more compact pedestrian and transit-oriented development, both to Newark and the region, staff recommends that the City Council approve the attached Conceptual Land Use Plan and recommend that the City Council approve the Conceptual Plan. At their March 11, 2008, meeting the Planning Commission, by a vote of 5-0, recommended that the Council approve the above Alternative Land Use Concept.

Attachment

Action - It is recommended that the City Council, by motion, approve the Conceptual Land Use Concept for the Area 2 Specific Plan.