

memorandum

To: City of Benicia
From: Ben Noble
Subject: Eastern Gateway Study Stakeholder Meeting #1

On August 19, 2020 the City of Benicia will hold the first stakeholder group meeting for the Eastern Gateway Study. This memorandum provides background information for this meeting.

MEETING PURPOSE

The purpose of the August 19, 2020 meeting is to:

- Introduce the Eastern Gateway Study to the stakeholder group; and
- Present and receive feedback on the existing conditions maps and preliminary issues list.

The City will use stakeholder feedback to help finalize materials for a community outreach event on September 23, 2020.

MEETING MATERIALS

In addition to this memorandum, the following materials are provided for the stakeholder group meeting:

- Meeting agenda
- Existing conditions maps
- Preliminary issues list

BACKGROUND

Project Origin and Goals

In 2017 the State of California established the SB2 grant program to fund city planning to streamline housing approvals and accelerated housing production. Benicia is using its SB2 funds for the Eastern Gateway Study, which focuses on approximately 13.5 acres near the intersection of Military East and East Fifth Street. The Eastern Gateway Study will create a new mixed-use zone district to allow by-right housing when consistent with new objective zoning and design standards. The City hired consultants Ben Noble, Bottomley Design and Planning, and Douglas Herring & Associates to assist with this project.

Project Process

The Eastern Gateway Study includes the following five main tasks:

- **Task 1: Project Initiation.** Document existing conditions and receive preliminary public input on key issues (to be completed in September 2020).
- **Task 2: Issues and Options.** Develop options to address key issues and select preferred options (to be completed in February 2021).
- **Task 3: Draft Amendments.** Prepare General Plan and Zoning amendments (to be completed in June 2021).
- **Task 4: Environmental Review.** Evaluate potential environmental impacts of the project, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (to be completed in July 2021).
- **Task 5: Final Amendments.** Prepare and adopt final General Plan and Zoning amendments (to be completed in January 2022).

Community Engagement

Information about the project will be posted online at www.ci.benicia.ca.us/easterngateway. The public will be able to participate in the Eastern Gateway Study in the following ways:

- Community workshops (2)
- Stakeholder group meetings (3)
- Additional stakeholder meetings and discussions (as needed)
- Planning Commission and City Council study sessions (2)
- Planning Commission and City Council public hearings
- Benicia Town Hall on-line discussion forum

The first community workshop is tentatively scheduled for September 23, 2020 and will include a self-guided walking tour of the study area. This format will allow participants to interact with the study area while maintaining social distancing. All workshop materials will be available online and the City will accept feedback from the public as they interact with these materials.

EXISTING CONDITIONS MAPS

The City has prepared the following existing conditions maps for the Eastern Gateway Study:

1. Context: shows the study area boundary and surrounding context
2. Parcels: includes numbered parcels with existing land uses
3. Building Height and Floor-Area Ratio (FAR)
4. Study Area Development: includes two maps with photographs of existing development

5. Existing Land Use
6. Existing General Plan Designations
7. Existing Zoning
8. Potential for Change
9. Street Conditions
10. Pedestrian and Bicycle Conditions

At the August 19th meeting we will ask for feedback on these maps, particularly if the maps are missing any important information or if they contain any inaccuracies.

PRELIMINARY ISSUES LIST

The Preliminary Issues List includes key issues for consideration during the Eastern Gateway Study, based on the project goals. These issues and questions will guide City efforts to prepare policy options for stakeholder consideration in subsequent project phases. At the meeting we will ask stakeholders for feedback on this document, including which issue areas they think are most important. We will also ask if there are issue areas that they think should be added to the list, removed, or modified.

NEXT STEPS

After receiving feedback from stakeholders, the City will finalize materials for the presentation and self-guided walking tour tentatively scheduled for September 23, 2020. These materials will be available on the City's project webpage and at a "welcome center" to be set up in or near the study area during the walking tour. The City will use public input from the walking tour to develop specific policy options regarding the future of the study area. These policy options will be discussed at a future stakeholder meeting.