

EASTERN GATEWAY STUDY

Stakeholder Group Meeting

November 18, 2020 2:00 – 3:30 PM

Remote Zoom Meeting



SUMMARY NOTES

On November 18, 2020 the City hosted the second virtual Zoom stakeholder group meeting for the Eastern Gateway Study. In addition to City staff and consultants, the following stakeholders participated in the meeting:

- Brandon Marshall (architect)
- Charlie Gardyn (property owner 1401 East 5th Street)
- Kendall Lara (Benicia Family Resource Center)
- Mary Frances Kelly Poh (CAC/Solano Community Housing Corporation)
- Gene Pedrotti (Ace Hardware/property owner owners East 5th and East N)
- Jerry Tenret (study area resident)
- Chris Ferrucci (Benicia Chamber of Commerce)
- Julie Petersen (Benicia Housing Authority)
- Matt Callahan (study area resident)
- Gina Cooper (affordable housing developer)
- Matt Callahan (study area resident)
- Sharon Petrellese (Benicia Community Action Council)

Consultants presented options to address the following five project issues:

1. Residential Uses in Primary Study Area
2. Allowed Uses in Secondary Study Area
3. Building Height
4. Parking
5. Required Permits

Stakeholder comments on options to address these issues included the following:

Residential Uses in Primary Study Area

- Don't be too restrictive with ground-floor residential uses on Military East and Fifth Street

Allowed Uses in Secondary Study Area

- Encourage smaller-scale multifamily (5 units and two stories) on lots 44 and 45
- Positive response to 4-unit sidecourt with greenspace between buildings
- Consider encouraging or streamlining parcel consolidation to allow more efficient development

Building Height

- Consider view corridors and the value that can be added with building heights that provide for views

- Avoid cavernous look and monolithic blocks
- Allow increased height as an accent; some variation in height is interesting
- Minimize shade impacts on adjacent uses
- Three stories may be okay; four stories with commercial on the bottom “screams congestion” and may be excessive for Benicia
- Two stories might be the maximum desirable height; four-story building example is too big for the setting
- Consider cost of elevators for senior housing
- Three to four story buildings could be compatible with this area
- Four story buildings on every parcel would appear monolithic and feel imposing; a mix of building heights would be more desirable
- Revisiting rule for measuring building height could better serve project area

Parking

- Below-grade parking is important; consider incentivizing and/or requiring below-grade parking
- Apartment complexes need to have adequate parking (2 spaces for a 2+ bedroom unit); Inadequate parking can lead to overflow of parking into the street
- Adequate parking for seniors needed (0.5/unit may not be sufficient)
- Overflow parking from development on Lot 29 could impact neighborhood
- A city parking facility would be a good idea on Lot 29
- East L Street will have a difficult time with parking
- New street parking to serve commercial uses in mixed-use development makes sense in the right locations

Required Permits

- Concern about streamlined approval for mixed use project with commercial uses such as bars and cannabis dispensaries
- Why not streamline everything? What are the tradeoffs?
- Good objective standards are key
- A streamlined process is smarter for the city and developer. If a project deviates from objective standards then it could optionally be reviewed by a commission
- Streamlining process could work better in some places than others; residential areas could be treated differently than commercial areas
- Try to avoid HPRC design review which is expensive and time consuming

Other Comments

- Traffic calming needed on Military East and East Fifth Street
- Consider diagonal parking on N Street
- Creek on N Street could become a city park for neighborhood
- ADU’s could be accommodated on south side of N Street
- Desire to see green space and trees; space between buildings
- Create places at the front of buildings to sit out under trees

- Mix affordable housing with other development; don't concentrate affordable housing on one site or area
- Concern about shade and wind impacts
- Will there be a specific plan for area? Concern about spotty development and public grasping concept for area. Consider other tools to convey this to the public (opportunity sites, planning concept)