



Community Development Department
MEMORANDUM

Date: November 2, 2020
To: Bradley J. Misner, AICP, Community Development Director
From: Danielle Crider, Associate Planner
Re: Eastern Gateway Study – Summary of Feedback from Self-Guided Tour

Walking Tour Background

On September 23, 2020 the City hosted a self-guided walking tour for the Eastern Gateway Study. The purpose of this walking tour was to encourage the public to explore existing conditions in the study area and to provide preliminary input on project issues. The City advertised the walking tour with mailed postcard notices, posters, email notification, Benicia This Week announcements, and social media postings.

Prior to the scheduled walking tour, the City posted videos on the project website describing the Eastern Gateway Study, presenting existing conditions maps, providing a “virtual walking tour” of the study area, and sharing examples of multifamily and mixed-use development types. The City created a walking tour brochure (attached to this summary) with a map showing points of interest, discussion questions, and photographs of example development.

The public could participate in the walking tour by attending the scheduled walking tour, walking the study area at a different time, or viewing the virtual walking tour video on-line. The public could provide feedback to the City by submitting walking tour brochures with written comments, emailing comments to City staff, or answering questions on-line through the City’s Open Town Hall public comment forum.

In total, 50-60 people attended the scheduled walking tour on September 23, 2020. As of October 13, 2020, the project introduction video had 188 views and the virtual walking tour video was viewed 46 times. A total of 25 residents visited the Open Town Hall discussion forum and 15 people provided responses. In addition to the Open Town Hall comments, the City received four walking tour brochures with hand-written comments and eight emails with comments. All public comments received by the City are attached to this summary.

Emerging Themes from Public Comments

Residents shared a wide range of opinions in their walking tour comments. Based on a careful review of these comments, City staff has identified the following common themes in the input received:

- General support for additional housing in the study area (but not unanimous).
- Different opinions on the appropriate intensity of new development (density/height). Many comments supporting a 3-4 story range.

- Interest in mixed-use development, particularly along Military East and East Fifth (but not unanimous support). Desire for more neighborhood-serving commercial uses in study area.
- Preference for more traditional architectural styles.
- Desire for outdoor seating and dining with landscaping; outdoor amenities (e.g., pocket park).
- Some interest in increasing allowable densities in secondary study area, keeping the area residential only. Many people liked small-scale infill housing examples (e.g., sidecourt).
- Parking is a topic of considerable interest. Concerns about existing parking shortage, amount of on-site parking for new development, and design of new on-site parking facilities.
- Desire for bicycle, pedestrian, transit improvements.

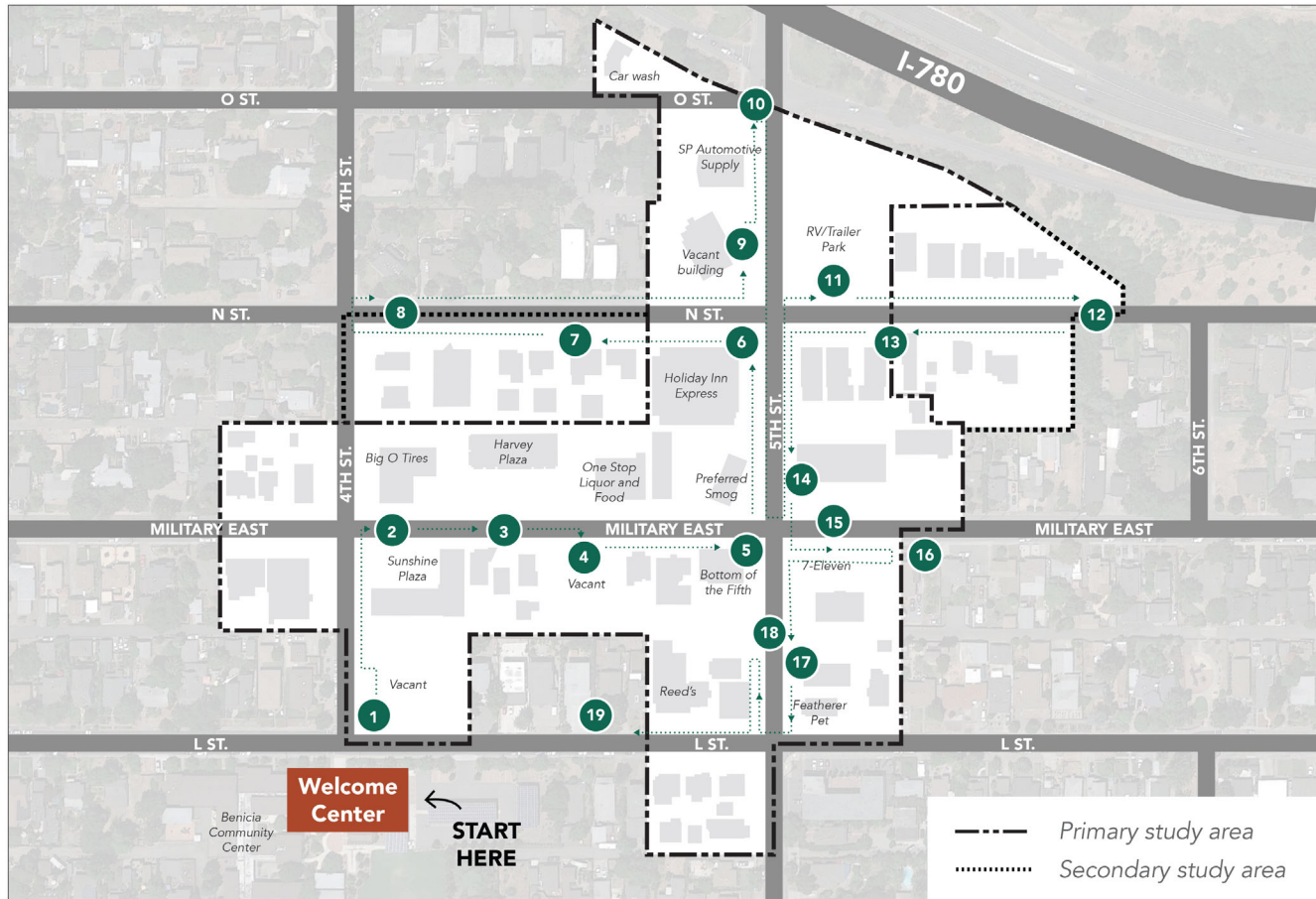
Additional comments received can be found in the attached Open Town Hall responses, completed walking tour brochures, and emails to City staff.

Attachments:

1. Walking Tour Brochure
2. Emailed Comments
3. Brochures with Comments
4. Open Town Hall Responses

EASTERN GATEWAY STUDY WALKING TOUR

Welcome to the Eastern Gateway Study Walking Tour – we’re excited you can join us! Use the walking tour map below to explore the study area and consider the noted points of interest. You can record your thoughts on the following pages.



- 1. Vacant Parcel.** Housing Opportunity Site in General Plan. What type of new housing could go here? How many stories?
- 2. Building/Parking Location.** Note buildings at sidewalk (Big O Tires) and behind parking (Sun Shine Plaza). Should new buildings be built at the sidewalk? Where should parking be located on a site?
- 3. Sidewalk Conditions.** Note existing sidewalk width, utility pole obstructions, driveways. How can sidewalk conditions be improved?
- 4. Vacant Parcel.** Housing Opportunity Site in General Plan. Should ground-floor commercial be required with housing above?
- 5. Bottom of the Fifth.** Note the building entrance location, building placement at sidewalk, architectural details. What do you like about this building?
- 6. Holiday Inn Express.** Note the landscaped setbacks, building height, parking location. What do you like about this building?
- 7. Single-Family Homes.** Single-family homes in secondary study area. Are more intensive residential uses appropriate here?
- 8. Street Width.** Note the 80-foot wide right-of-way. How could this space be better used?
- 9. Vacant Building.** Potential development opportunity site. Is new housing desirable here? Should ground-floor commercial be required with housing above?
- 10. Pedestrian Safety.** No crosswalk at O Street. How can the study area become safer for pedestrians?
- 11. RV/Trailer Park.** Potential development site if RV/Trailer Park relocates. If the site is redeveloped, what would you want to see here?
- 12. Creek.** N Street stops at creek. Could the creek become a public amenity?
- 13. Single-Family Homes.** Single-family homes in secondary study area. Are more intensive residential uses appropriate here?
- 14. New Gas Station.** Under construction. How might new development best fit with the new gas station?
- 15. Bikeway.** Shared bicycle lane with traffic. How can the study area become safer for bicyclists?
- 16. Single-Family Home.** Adjacent to and opposite study area. How could new development on East Military minimize impacts on these homes?
- 17. Medical Offices.** Note building frontage design, landscaping, parking location. What do you like about this building? Dislike?
- 18. Alley.** Existing alleys provide access to properties fronting Military East and L streets. Should alleys be preserved or abandoned to facilitate redevelopment?
- 19. Adjacent Residential.** Existing residential with rear property line abutting study area. How could new development on East Military minimize impacts on these homes?

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

What is your vision for the future of the Study Area? What would you like to see change? Are there things that should remain or stay the same?

Where are the best places for new housing in the Study Area? Are there any areas where you would not want to see new housing?

What should new housing look like? Are there specific design features you would like to see? How many stories should new housing be?

What are the best locations for mixed-use buildings with residences above ground floor commercial uses? Are there places where single-use multifamily housing is more appropriate?

You can drop off your comments at the Welcome Center before 8:00 pm, drop it off at the Planning Division Counter during regular business hours, or email your comments anytime to dcreider@ci.benicia.ca.us.

Are there multifamily and mixed-use housing examples on back page of this brochure that would be desirable in the Study Area? If so, what do you like about them?

How can the City make it easier and safer for pedestrians and bicyclists to get around within the Study Area?

Are there specific types of bicycle and pedestrian improvements shown on the back page of this brochure that you would like to see in the Study Area? If so, where?

Do you have any other comments about the Eastern Gateway Study?

MULTI-FAMILY + MIXED-USE RESIDENTIAL EXAMPLES

Multifamily and mixed-use housing comes in a wide range of types and intensities. Do any of the examples below appeal to you? Where in the Study Area could they be located?



Duplex



4-unit "sidecourt"



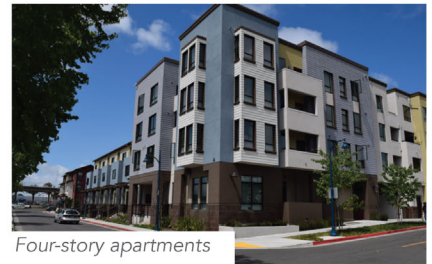
Townhomes



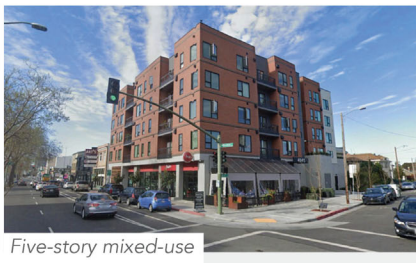
Two-story apartments



Three-story apartments



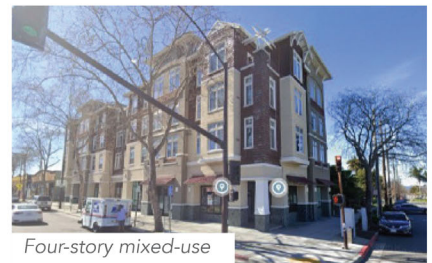
Four-story apartments



Five-story mixed-use



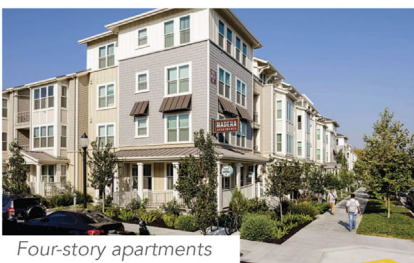
Three-story mixed-use



Four-story mixed-use



Three-story apartments



Four-story apartments



Four-story mixed-use

EXAMPLE PEDESTRIAN + BICYCLE IMPROVEMENTS

Improved pedestrian and bicycle safety are needed to support additional housing in the study area. Below are examples of potential improvements to consider. What type of improvements do you think are needed? Where are they needed most?



High visible painted crosswalk



Buffered bike lane

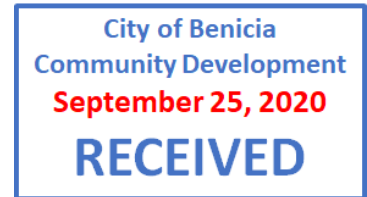


Bulbout with ADA ramp

Date: September 25, 2020

To: Danielle Crider, Benicia Community Development

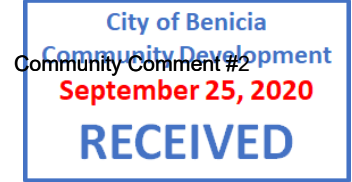
From: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



1. I love the idea of mixed-use residential on this vacant parcel and throughout the area. Up to three stories would not be inappropriate or overwhelming.
2. Big O needs more parking. Its tiny parking lot is always filled and cars not being worked on are parked on Military and on 4th St.
3. Put murals and hopscotch grids on the sidewalk.
4. Yes. Almost always commercial should be ground-floor, with apartments on second and possibly third floors.
5. It's a good-looking building, but a) entrance would look better at parking lot, and b) lots of low-lifes tend to frequent this establishment. Design changes could encourage the drunks and smokers to hang out in the parking lot rather than on the corner of Military and 5th.
6. What's not to like about the Holiday Inn?
7. You want a mix of commercial/multi-family/single-family. These properties on N Street have impressive water views, especially if apartment buildings can rise to three stories. Of course, we want affordable housing here but this area could also have a few high-barrier-to-entry condo complexes.
8. Part of the block is missing sidewalk; put in sidewalk all the way on both sides of the street. For now, keep the street wide. I know it's your job but you don't have to plan *everything*. Part of Benicia's charm and personality is its wide streets. And you never know: Ten years from now (when electric cars are a norm), the community might want a dozen charging stations on the block.
9. Yes. Almost always commercial should be ground-floor, with apartments on second and possibly third floors. Because of proximity to freeway on/off ramps, it would be great to include a drive-through coffee kiosk for morning commuters.
10. Put in a crosswalk North-South on O Street at 5th Street. For an East-West crosswalk, well, jeez, maybe put in one with flashing lights when used by pedestrians across 5th Street at the nearby bus stop. That's a tough one.
11. A Trader Joes.
12. Yes, put in something public and green. If possible, purchase all or part of the adjacent vacant lot and build a vest-pocket park. With more multi-family planned for the area, we're going to want *several* vest-pocket parks.

13. You want a mix of commercial/multi-family/single-family. These properties on N Street have impressive water views, especially if apartment buildings can rise to three stories.
14. Put in a parking lot with electric-car charging stations. At points on the map #9 and #14, it would be great to have some kind of fast-food opportunity – like a place that just has salads to go or another bakery.
15. There should be more delineated bike lanes throughout town, not just in this study area. The lanes should be available for electric scooters and skateboards, too. We have an older population in the town, especially in the downtownish area. We'd love to see more attention to electric scooter and bike options. Encourage a city scooter franchise (like in Oakland, SF, etc.); this would be great for residents and tourists alike.
16. Many homes in this study area and adjacent are no great shakes. In time, they will be replaced by nicer single-family homes or apartments. If you live near Military and 5th Streets, you are accustomed to traffic and you expect change.
17. What's not to like about medical offices?
18. Alleys, like wide streets, are part of Benicia's personality, yet they are no longer needed for stables, outhouses, etc. Homeowners like myself with large lots and alleys nearby should be encouraged to build in-law units on their lots or that would encroach into the alleys.
19. Speed bumps? Stop signs? Again, if you live near Military and 5th Streets, you are accustomed to traffic and you expect change.

I often visit friends on Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts (I have picked my friends wisely). The prettiest, toniest town on the island is Edgartown, where most of the ship captains used to live. The town leaders and planners have encouraged the homes to look similar – "white" is the dominant color, picket fences abound, every home has a patch of green grass, etc. Benicia, to my mind, is a working-class Edgartown. Benicia has – and should be encouraged to continue to have – a look and design unique to the town. For example, so many homes here are painted in similarly bright colors and have peaked roofs and gables and porches/verandas and front lawns with succulents and potted plants and funky lawn ornaments. You planners should encourage property owners and architects and developers to emulate the grand and beautiful buildings in the downtown area and keep that design and historical tradition alive.



Eastern Gateway Study Walking Tour questions

1. Vision for the future of the study area

As best as possible, cohesion in design, landscaping, paint, lighting. All to create a feeling of WELCOME and order (planning). The major change could be an addition of another set of shops along Military at Sunshine Plaza (2), closing off the “U” to cars and adding a coffee place, perhaps some small retail? The parking for Sunshine Plaza could get incorporated into the vacant parcel (1). There is access to everything from the back of Sunshine Plaza or East 5th Street parking as well. Can we start thinking about undergrounding the utilities? And putting in sidewalks?

2. Best places for housing

Vacant lot 1 and 4 seem logical places for new housing....low income for AT LEAST half (OK, 35%). Any height that works under the city plan...is maximum 4 stories? #9, #14 would also work for retail below, housing above. MUST we have ANOTHER gas station? The more housing, the better, i.e.: small additions, infill, NOT large tracts. Possible mixed use 3 story buildings in #1, #9 (include restaurant in lower portion of #9. There are a number of places in this area where there are very large lots. For Example: near #12 are two very large parcels of land which look like 4 housing lots. Each could support at least one ADU and possibly two.

3. Specific look of new housing

We have a mish mash already. Will need to pull it all together with landscaping and color. The attractive three-story mixed use (green and gold) and the four-story apartments (bottom, middle photo) are both possibilities, as long as there is enough on-site parking and greenery. Larger buildings if there is room, as long as there are apartments with access to a common green area, balconies on the top floors (imagine having two kids and no way for them to get outside for a minute). The designs should not be super modern, but also should not be fake old western or “1849 era”. The referenced photos seem like they would fit in, especially if we utilize color and landscaping to harmonize the neighborhood to any extent possible.

4. **Best locations for mixed use** – see #2. Within the designated area, no places that seem more appropriate for single family dwellings. The Benicia CAC proposed building a three story apartment build of about 14 apartments with an area behind the apartments to take in the huge tree. The way the architect designed the project it would be like there were only a few apartments seen from Military East. The landowner wanted so much

money for the land that they were unable to continue with the project. It was to be homeless and low- income tenants with a project manager on site and social services provided by the CAC. Remember when you are building low income housing and using grant funding, the cost of the land can only be a certain percentage of the price and so this didn't pencil out.

5. See #3
6. **Pedestrian and bicycle safety** – notable speed from freeway down East 5th. Traffic calming needed. NO crosswalk at #10. Cars going too fast down East 5th already. Better to slow traffic and PERHAPS create a lighted crosswalk at N and East 5th (like the one by the fire station).
7. **Specific bicycle and pedestrian improvements** - Better marking of bike trail on East Military at East 5th. Improve ALL sidewalks to same standard. Underground utilities.
8. **Other comments** – KEEP the ALLEYS!!!! And encourage the medical building to pay attention to their landscaping. It is mostly dead and unsightly. And utilize the space with the stream! Get rid of the trash trees that are there and since the City owns the lower portion see if there is a cooperative owner above to make this a really pretty area which is so lacking on the Eastside. It could be a lovely little park with a few benches and tables for respite from the sun. Clear it out so that it is clean and usable. It is a treasure worth keeping and utilizing!
9. This was a great foray into making our Eastern Gateway more useful, the beginning of much needed housing considerations and beautifying the entire area in a cohesive, welcoming manner. THANK YOU for your efforts to include the public in this journey. And Thank You for making us walk the area! We saw so much more than if we had driven it.

PS. Manager of car parts store was willing to participate on this committee if owners asked him to. Owners names are Randy Rickey and Mike Penfield

██████████ and ██████████

Danielle Crider

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, September 27, 2020 11:17 AM
To: Danielle Crider
Subject: Eastern Gateway



As a Benicia resident for 75 years and an East Side resident for the last 45 years, I feel that there are some important issues regarding the Eastern Gateway that need to be addressed. The East Side has been neglected for many years, as far as sidewalks and streetlights are concerned. Many of the sidewalks that do exist are in horrible condition filled with gaping holes and cracks. These issues and more need to be addressed first, before adding additional housing units to the area.

The best places for new housing would be the site of the old Sundowner Lounge and the site of the former Boy Scout House. The gas station at the corner of 5th and Military that is currently (and has been so for a very long time) into a car wash would make much more sense than the proposed car wash, etc. directly across from the 7-11. The empty lot on Military East across from Liquor Warehouse and the additional ambulance facility as long as there is underground parking provided for the residents. In keeping with the current buildings in the Eastern Gateway, nothing should be built over three stories. All of the above sites could contain mixed-use housing with the exception of the old Sundowner site which could contain only residential.

As with any area in Benicia, including First Street itself, the first thing that needs to be addressed as to the issue of bicycle safety, is to educate bicycle riders to abide by all rules of the road i.e. stopping at red lights, stop signs, etc. and to ride single file down busy streets, such as First St. and all of Military East. Riders should be ticketed for not obeying the rules and fined repeatedly. ALL riders should be held accountable from kids to bicycle club members.

Like many of us who have lived in Benicia for a very long time, we love the Eastern Gateway and the whole East Side for all its' uniqueness and special charm. We thank you for taking an interest in "our side" and look forward to your comments and ideas.

[REDACTED]
Lindo Street
Benicia, CA

Danielle Crider

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 28, 2020 1:15 PM
To: Danielle Crider
Subject: Re: Share your Feedback by October 9: Eastern Gateway Study

City of Benicia
 Community Development
September 28, 2020
RECEIVED

Hi,

I just wanted you to know that I took the self-guided walking tour, watched the utubes for further explanation and submitted my comments. I was very excited that you are involving residents on this important decision. In my feedback I gave some examples of mixed use and commercial complexes I favor. And I left off one so I wanted to provide it to you here. I like the building where The Chill is located, 362 1st St, Benicia. I like that it has parking in the rear, but set back enough from the curb to offer patio dining and landscaping and seating for the public as they walk by. Offers spaces for restaurants, small retail, and small offices upstairs. the architecture is attractive and in keeping with the look and feel of the rest of the city, as opposed to the complex next to the mixed-use complex next to the Tannery. I have a small business that required a small office. Presently my office is in Walnut Creek. The city seems to be doing away with buildings for small offices and there is a large need. Well, perhaps not duing Covid, but after, there will be again.

Thank you for listening,

[REDACTED]

On Mon, Sep 28, 2020 at 9:07 AM City of Benicia - CA <benicia@service.govdelivery.com> wrote:

Good morning,

It was wonderful seeing so many of you come by the Community Center last week before embarking on your self-guided walking tour. We hope that the walking tour sparked your imagination for the future of the Eastern Gateway area. Whatever thoughts you had in response to the walking tour, we want to hear them. If you weren't able to return your filled out walking tour pamphlet last week, please bring it by City Hall on a business day between 9am and 4pm (please note: City Hall will be closed this Friday, October 4). Alternatively, the same survey questions that are included in the walking tour pamphlet can be answered online through [Benicia Town Hall](#), or you can simply email your feedback to Danielle Crider at dcrider@ci.benicia.ca.us. Please submit your feedback by Friday, October 9th so that we can take it into consideration as we prepare a list of policy issues and options for the project.

If you haven't taken the self-guided walking tour yet, there is still time! Visit www.ci.benicia.ca.us/easterngateway to view the walking tour pamphlet, watch YouTube videos about the project, and complete your walking tour survey. If you have any questions, please contact Danielle Crider at dcrider@ci.benicia.ca.us.

Danielle Crider

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 8, 2020 11:51 AM
To: Danielle Crider
Subject: Eastern Gateway Project



I read the material, watched the video, and walked most of the area. To be honest, I just want to see some housing built in this area, the more the better. I don't want it to be stonewalled by folks who want to block any change. Three-four stories, shops or restaurants on the bottom would be great. You guys are planners-- just get it done! Benicia needs to do its fair share in creating housing.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Comments by [REDACTED] in Response to Eastern Gateway Study Walking Tour
Oct 8, 2020

Community Center #6

My husband and I own the duplex at 1215 East 4th Street, which is across the street from "Site 1 Vacant Lot" (located at the East 4th St./East L St. intersection). We also own the duplex at 385 East L Street which is immediately west of the 1215 East 4th St. duplex. These two duplexes are "Adjacent Residential" (similar to Site 19) with both rear and side property lines that abut the study area. It's fair to ask (as you did for Site 19), "How could new development on East Military and at Site 1 minimize impacts on these duplex homes?". Below are our comments in response to the Study Walking Tour and to the "Draft Preliminary Issues List".

"Site 1 – Vacant Lot"

The Site 1 Vacant Lot should be converted to a Parking Lot to alleviate existing parking shortages experienced by businesses located on all four corners of the E. Military/East 4th Street intersection, as well as, by Community Center patrons and nearby residents. I request that a Parking Study be done to substantiate that the shortage of commercial parking has impacted residential parking along East L Street (from E.3rd St. to E. 5th St.) and along East 4th St (from East L St to East N St) and to determine how much additional parking is needed.

Additional parking is needed by the Community Center, and the commercial businesses at all four corners of the East Military/East 4th St intersection, for these reasons:

- Community Center has a shortage of parking. Their patrons park in the Community Center parking lot in addition to parking on both sides of East L St, and both sides of East 4th St (from East L St to E Military). This has created a shortage of residential street parking along East 4th St and East L Street.
- Big O Tires has an extreme shortage of on-site parking, so that Big O parks their customer's vehicles on E. Military and on both sides of East 4th St north of E. Military.
- Harvey Plaza's parking is used by customers of other commercial properties due to a shortage of parking on E. Military.
- There are two buildings occupied by Jazzercise and Benicia Ballet which are designated as Parcels 20 and 21 on the "Parcels" Map shown in the Meeting Presentation during the 8/19/20 Stakeholders Meeting. Customers for these two buildings park as follows:
 - on both sides of East 4th St (from East L St to E. Military St,;
 - in spaces in the alley behind their buildings;
 - in the alley behind Sunshine Plaza Building;
 - in the alley in the 6-7 spaces that abut the Vacant Lot;
 - in the front parking lot of the Sunshine Plaza Bldg.
- Attached to the Jazzercise Use Permit, the City designated for Jazzercise's use, the 6-7 (?) parking spaces in the alley that abut the Vacant Lot. If residential is built on the Vacant Lot, Jazzercise will lose use of these 6-7 spaces that are attached to their Use Permit and 6-7 more vehicles will need to find street parking, adding 6-7 spaces to the existing shortage of parking.
- The residents at 1215 East 4th Street can not park on the street, during the day, to access their front door, because there is no available on street parking for all of the above reasons. The residents on East L Street (from East 4th St towards East 3rd St) have the same problem.
- Benicia's Housing Element designates this Vacant Lot as High Density Residential (HR) which permits 9-12 Dwelling Units (DU) to be built on this .43 acre Lot and also allows 0.5 to 1.5 on-site parking spaces for each 1-2 bedroom Dwelling Unit. Some state laws, like AB 2345 and SB 35, allow a developer density bonus incentives (e.g. 9-12 DU's) that include reduced parking spaces. Per Benicia's General Plan/Housing Element, with developer Bonus Incentives, the amount of on-site parking can be reduced to the minimum, especially as this project has been designated as "by-right" housing. And per SB 35(?), the State mandates that "by-right" projects can construct even less on-site parking than is usually required. All of which indicates a bare minimum of on-site parking will be a part of any High Density Residential



Comments by [REDACTED] in Response to Eastern Gateway Study Walking Tour
Oct 8, 2020

project. And, once again, our residential neighborhood will be burdened with a building(s) that has a serious shortage of on-site parking and whose residents' vehicles will overflow onto street parking, exacerbating our parking shortage.

For the above reasons, **I request that the City of Benicia develop this Vacant Lot into a Parking Lot** to help reverse, as much as possible, the shortage of parking experienced by these commercial buildings, Community Center and nearby impacted residents.

I also request the City perform a Parking Study in the areas inside and outside the Eastern Gateway Study in the vicinities described above, including along East 4th St and along East L Street. The Study should include interviews with affected customers, residents and all tenants of these commercial buildings including the businesses at the NE corner of E Military/E 4th St intersection. The Parking Study should also include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Permit Parking program in effect along the west side of E 4th Street (between E Military and L St) and along the north side of East L St (from the East 4th/East L St intersection towards E 3rd St). This evaluation should include interviewing all residents in the Permit Parking zone. It is not sufficient to take pictures of the streets at various times of day without interviews as herein described.

Additionally, it should be noted that Covid-19 may have temporarily reduced parking shortages for Ballet, Jazzercise, Sunshine Plaza businesses, Big O Tires, the Community Center and others, in the short term, however, a critical need for more parking will return when the stay-at-home orders are lifted and it is safe to get out of our homes and resume our lives without governmental Covid-19 restrictions.

Response to the Eastern Gateway Study's "Draft Preliminary Issues List":

Design Compatibility asks:

- ***"What design elements can help to ensure that new development & Uses minimize negative impacts on adjacent land uses, particularly existing single-family homes?"***

It is un-ignorably obvious that High Density Residential WILL have "negative impacts on adjacent land uses, particularly existing single-family homes" as well as nearby commercial. A "new Use" as a Parking Lot would help remediate the existing shortage of parking for "existing single-family homes" and for commercially zoned properties in this several block area.

Allowed Land Uses asks:

- ***"Which land uses should be encouraged in the study area? Should any uses be prohibited?"***

Per the "Existing Conditions" video, both of the maps titled "Existing General Plan Designations" and "Existing Zoning" show solid Commercial zoning on E Military St from the East 4th Street area to East 5th Street.

Commercial Zoning implies customers will need parking. If the City's requirement for on-site parking for future development is anything similar to the inadequate on-site parking the City allowed at Big O Tires, then there will be a lack of adequate on-site parking, and customers will be forced to park on the street, which will just exacerbate the existing parking shortage.

This Vacant Lot is the last chance Benicia has to rectify the shortage of parking in this multi-block area. This Vacant Lot should be prohibited from being developed into residential. This Vacant Lot is needed to rectify the existing parking shortage experienced by nearby commercially zoned properties. The Zoning in the General Plan, in the Housing Element, and in the Zoning Ordinance for this Vacant Lot should be changed from High Density Residential to a Parking Lot. **High Density Residential should be prohibited from being developed on this Lot. This Lot should be Zoned as a Parking Lot.**

Danielle Crider

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, October 9, 2020 9:41 PM
To: Danielle Crider
Subject: eastern gateway study
Attachments: Benicia - Gateway Study response.docx



> Hi Danielle,

>

> We live on East L street across from the Community Center. We wanted to let you know our concern about parking in this area. This area is very congested with the Community Center and the many businesses surrounding our home. We have explored the option with the city regarding housing on the vacant lot of site #1. We have worked with our neighbors and are in agreement with [REDACTED] regarding this lot. I have attached the PDF she sent us and I believe she sent you. Please, please have compassion when thinking about developing our little neighborhood. We put up with a lot here and hope to preserve it.

>

> We did the walking tour. As far as the other questions? We don't have anything we really like about Bottom of the Fifth Building or the Automotive building across the street.

>

> As far as the Holiday Inn building, it looks okay but fairly generic.

>

> Some type of landscaping on East 5th would be nice for question # 8.

>

> We love the idea of an arch on East 5th, welcoming people into our city. We love to idea of new restaurants with common area/outdoor eating in the area.

>

>

> We also love the idea of making the area more bicycle and pedestrian friendly. We have raised our children here and when they were little we could go days at a time without using our car as I could walk/bike everywhere we needed to go but we always walked/biked West not East.

>

>

> We look forward to seeing how this project develops and it's ability to enhance the East side of Benicia.

>

> Warmly,

>

> [REDACTED]

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Danielle Crider

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, October 9, 2020 10:26 AM
To: Danielle Crider
Subject: Eastern Gateway

Dear Danielle,

My husband and I watched the video about the "study area," but we cannot remember if the topic of public art was addressed. It would be wonderful to keep this in mind when designing the new district. A mural on the I-780 underpass on E. 5th would be awesome!

Thanks for passing along our suggestion.

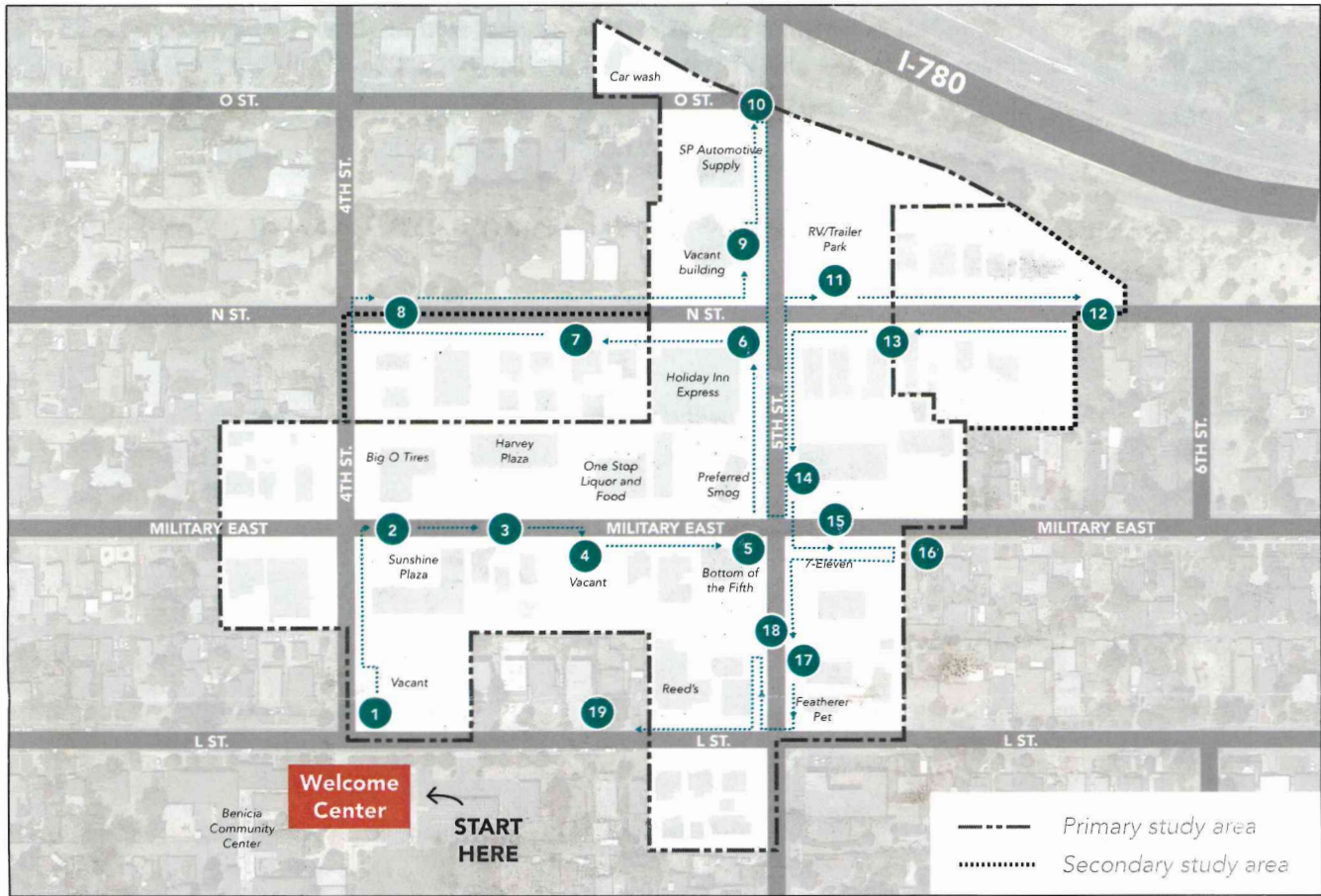
Sincerely,

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



EASTERN GATEWAY STUDY WALKING TOUR

Welcome to the Eastern Gateway Study Walking Tour – we’re excited you can join us! Use the walking tour map below to explore the study area and consider the noted points of interest. You can record your thoughts on the following pages.



- Vacant Parcel.** Housing Opportunity Site in General Plan. What type of new housing could go here? How many stories? *2 STORY APARTMENT*
- Building/Parking Location.** Note buildings at sidewalk (Big O Tires) and behind parking (Sun Shine Plaza). Should new buildings be built at the sidewalk? Where should parking be located on a site? *NO*
- Sidewalk Conditions.** Note existing sidewalk width, utility pole obstructions, driveways. How can sidewalk conditions be improved? *BAD SIDEWALKS*
- Vacant Parcel.** Housing Opportunity Site in General Plan. Should ground-floor commercial be required with housing above? *SHOULD USE*
- Bottom of the Fifth.** Note the building entrance location, building placement at sidewalk, architectural details. What do you like about this building? *DECENT. HAS ITS OWN PARKING*
- Holiday Inn Express.** Note the landscaped setbacks, building height, parking location. What do you like about this building? *BIG SIGN, GREEN PARKING*
- Single-Family Homes.** Single-family homes in secondary study area. Are more intensive residential uses appropriate here?
- Street Width.** Note the 80-foot wide right-of-way. How could this space be better used? *SIDEWALK!*
- Vacant Building.** Potential development opportunity site. Is new housing desirable here? Should ground-floor commercial be required with housing above? *MIXED USE! 2-3 STORIES WANT BLDG USOS*
- Pedestrian Safety.** No crosswalk at O Street. How can the study area become safer for pedestrians? *CROSSWALK*
- RV/Trailer Park.** Potential development site if RV/Trailer Park relocates. If the site is redeveloped, what would you want to see here?
- Creek.** N Street stops at creek. Could the creek become a public amenity? *NO ROOM - MAYBE BIKE TRAIL?*
- Single-Family Homes.** Single-family homes in secondary study area. Are more intensive residential uses appropriate here? *LEAVE*
- New Gas Station.** Under construction. How might new development best fit with the new gas station?
- Bikeway.** Shared bicycle lane with traffic. How can the study area become safer for bicyclists? *NO ROOM FOR DEDICATED LANE*
- Single-Family Home.** Adjacent to and opposite study area. How could new development on East Military minimize impacts on these homes? *STREET PARKING*
- Medical Offices.** Note building frontage design, landscaping, parking location. What do you like about this building? Dislike?
- Alley.** Existing alleys provide access to properties fronting Military East and L streets. Should alleys be preserved or abandoned to facilitate redevelopment? *PRESERVED! GARAGES, ADDS, ETC*
- Adjacent Residential.** Existing residential with rear property line abutting study area. How could new development on East Military minimize impacts on these homes?

PRIVATE CONCERN FOR APT COMPLEX

You can also learn more about the points of interest by viewing the virtual walking tour video on the City's project web page: www.ci.benicia.ca.us/easterngateway



TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

What is your vision for the future of the Study Area? What would you like to see change? Are there things that should remain or stay the same?

EMPHASIS SOME SORT OF ~~UPKEEP~~ ON BUSINESSES. MANY ARE DINGY WHICH WILL KEEP OUT NEW BUSINESSES

ADD BUSINESSES THAT WOULD SERVE LOCAL COMMUNITY: DINER, DRY CLEANER, HARDWARE STORE,

Where are the best places for new housing in the Study Area? Are there any areas where you would not want to see new housing?

1. TWO STORY APARTMENTS WITH THEIR OWN PARKING
2. DUPLEX/QUAD PLEX THAT LOOK LIKE THEY FIT INTO THIS NEIGHBORHOOD VACANT CHURCH?

What should new housing look like? Are there specific design features you would like to see? How many stories should new housing be?

ITS A VERY MIXED AREA, SO SPANISH, VICTORIAN, ART DECO, CRAFTSMAN WOULD ALL FIT IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

NOTHING OVER THREE STORIES, RESPECTING NEIGHBOR'S PRIVACY WELL THOUGHT-OUT PARKING!

What are the best locations for mixed-use buildings with residences above ground floor commercial uses? Are there places where single-use multifamily housing is more appropriate?

ANYWHERE ON MILITARY / 5TH STREET

4. VACANT LOT ON MILITARY - MIXED USE W/ ~~UNDERGROUND~~ UNDERGROUND PARKING FROM ALLEY
11. ACE HARDWARE! OR MIXED USE

Are there multifamily and mixed-use housing examples on back page of this brochure that would be desirable in the Study Area? If so, what do you like about them?

DESIGNS MORE LIKE THE 4-UNIT SIDE COURT AND
LESS LIKE THE MODERN DESIGNS

How can the City make it easier and safer for pedestrians and bicyclists to get around within the Study Area?

FIX SIDEWALKS, CONSIDER UNDERGROUND POWER TO ACCOMMODATE
WHEELCHAIR ACCESS AND REMOVE UTILITY POLES

HIGH-VIS CROSSWALKS ON MILITARY & 5TH LIGHTS!

MORE STREET LIGHTS

TRAFFIC SIGNALS (STOP SIGNS ON FREEWAY ON/OFFRAMP)

Are there specific types of bicycle and pedestrian improvements shown on the back page of this brochure that you would like to see in the Study Area? If so, where?

10. CROSSWALK @ INTERSECTION. CONSIDER STOP SIGNS / LIGHTS AT
COLNOR AND AT INTERSECTION JUST NORTH

NO ROOM ON MILITARY FOR BUFFERED BIKE LANE

Do you have any other comments about the Eastern Gateway Study?

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

What is your vision for the future of the Study Area? What would you like to see change? Are there things that should remain or stay the same?

Reinvest the area to include permanent housing and sustainable, local businesses.

Where are the best places for new housing in the Study Area? Are there any areas where you would not want to see new housing?

No



What should new housing look like? Are there specific design features you would like to see? How many stories should new housing be?

Development could look like a "planned village", similar to the newer area in El Dorado Hills, on the south side of Hwy. 50.

Design ideas: 1) Hi-tech
2) coastal village

Include modern energy saving features such as solar panels and in floor heating + cooling. Include at least one elevator per building so the living spaces are accessible to more people.

What are the best locations for mixed-use buildings with residences above ground floor commercial uses? Are there places where single-use multifamily housing is more appropriate?

Probably place businesses in a central area so they feel walkable for most of the residents.

Are there multifamily and mixed-use housing examples on back page of this brochure that would be desirable in the Study Area? If so, what do you like about them?

4 story mixed use.
Add outside setup areas. People enjoy outdoor space, even if small.

How can the City make it easier and safer for pedestrians and bicyclists to get around within the Study Area?

Walking pathways, bike lanes

Are there specific types of bicycle and pedestrian improvements shown on the back page of this brochure that you would like to see in the Study Area? If so, where?

All look like good ideas.

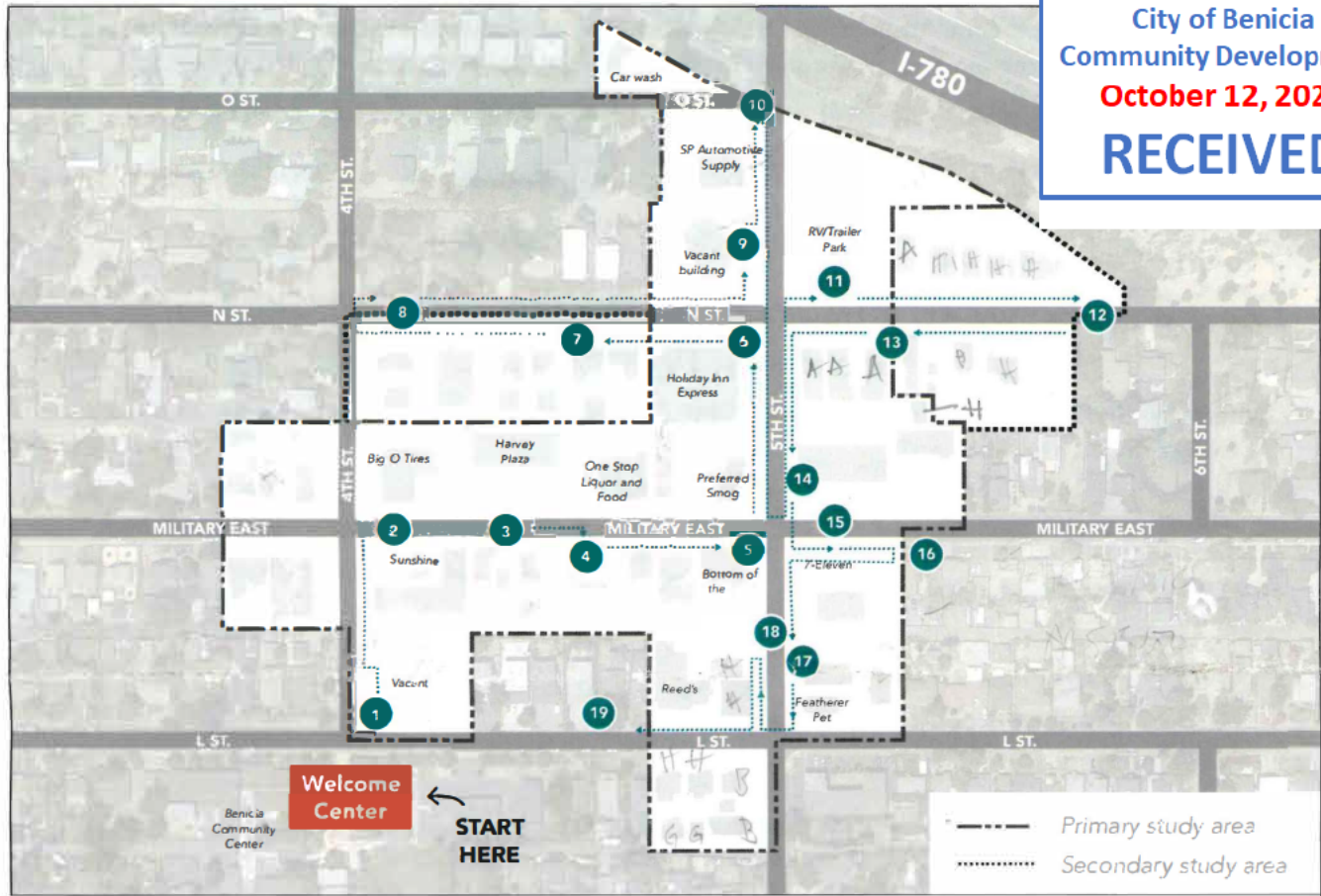
Do you have any other comments about the Eastern Gateway Study?

There will need to be parking for residents and visitors.
Ideally, more options for transit/shuttles to get around town, to and from all areas.

EASTERN GATEWAY STUDY WALKING TOUR

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City of Benicia
Community Development
October 12, 2020
RECEIVED



- 1. Vacant Parcel.** Housing Opportunity Site in General Plan. What type of new housing could go here? How many stories? *2 or 3 story*
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- 11. RV/Trailer Park.** Potential development site if RV/Trailer Park relocates. If the site is redeveloped, what would you want to see here? *I like this RV park here - seems good here*
- 12. Creek.** N Street stops at creek. Could the creek become a public amenity? *yes - at least have a trail through it*
- 13. Single-Family Homes.** Single family homes in secondary study area. Are more intensive residential uses appropriate here?
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- 18. Alley.** Existing alleys provide access to properties fronting Military East and L streets. Should alleys be preserved or altered to facilitate redevelopment? *Preserved - good for walking / biking*
- 19. Adjacent Residential.** Existing residential with rear property line abutting study area. How could new development on East Military minimize impacts on these homes?

B. Bushman A garage + house



TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

What is your vision for the future of the Study Area? What would you like to see change? Are there things that should remain or stay the same?

Signage or design should emphasize this area as a gateway to the historic Benicia Arsenal. I only pass thru this area. I have never used any of the businesses (except SMOG check) How about a garden center or Specialty Grocery. Benicia also needs Senior housing - one-story

Where are the best places for new housing in the Study Area? Are there any areas where you would not want to see new housing?

Vacant lot I would be good for a Senior housing development - preserving some land for park or lawn. Seniors could walk to commercial area - which should have a CVS or Walgreens

What should new housing look like? Are there specific design features you would like to see? How many stories should new housing be?

If multiple stories would allow balconies with views of the strait, people would like that. I am surprised more housing doesn't emphasize beautiful water views. Holiday Inn express totally flubbed on this. They could have an awesome roof deck - instead so bland.

What are the best locations for mixed-use buildings with residences above ground floor commercial uses? Are there places where single-use multifamily housing is more appropriate?

Why make people use stairs or elevators to get to their homes? Don't put commercial on 1st floor. Benicia can't support the businesses it already has. Let housing just be housing. This is not a dense urban area. Let people enjoy land around their homes. They can walk a block or two to a store,

Are there multifamily and mixed-use housing examples on back page of this brochure that would be desirable in the Study Area? If so, what do you like about them?

Townhouses with yards are good. Buildings should only be taller than 4 stories if they are actually going to have a view or balconies. And be sure to not let them block someone else's view. Senior housing should be one story. If it is two stories, parking should be on first level ^{garage} like Holdy Inn.

How can the City make it easier and safer for pedestrians and bicyclists to get around within the Study Area?

Why not direct bikers to the alleys. They have less traffic?

Are there specific types of bicycle and pedestrian improvements shown on the back page of this brochure that you would like to see in the Study Area? If so, where?

Again, I feel safer in the alleys.

Do you have any other comments about the Eastern Gateway Study?

Benicia could use a specialty grocery store, a garden center and senior housing. Vacant building at (9) should be removed + replaced with a ~~grocery store or garden center~~ grocery store or garden center. Please don't tear down S+P automotive supply - the building is charming in its own quirky way. RV, trailer park is also quite nice - but would be a good spot for a Trader Joe's.

MULTI-FAMILY + MIXED-USE RESIDENTIAL EXAMPLES

Multifamily and mixed-use housing comes in a wide range of types and intensities. Do any of the examples below appeal to you? Where in the Study Area could they be located?



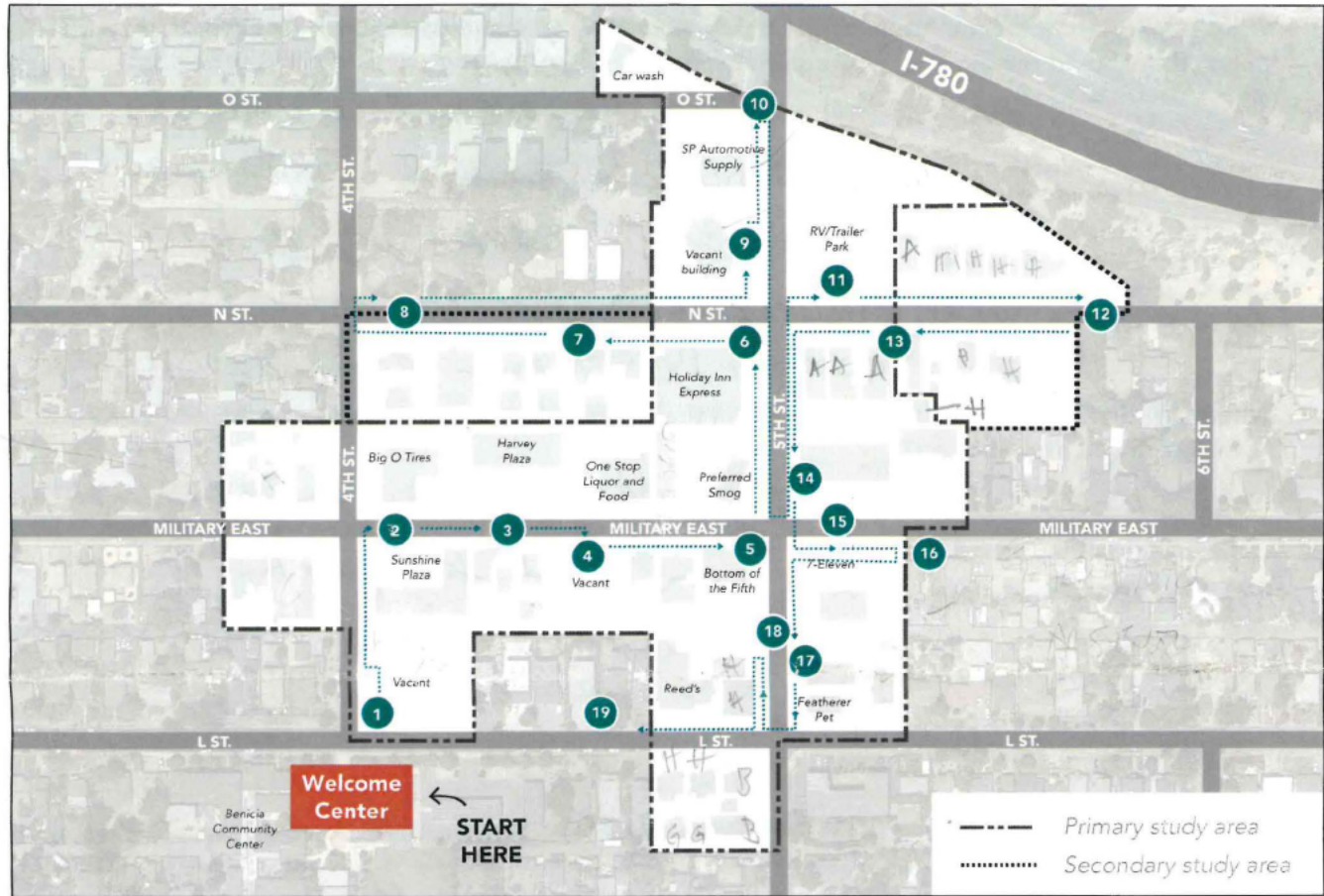
EXAMPLE PEDESTRIAN + BICYCLE IMPROVEMENTS

Improved pedestrian and bicycle safety are needed to support additional housing in the study area. Below are examples of potential improvements to consider. What type of improvements do you think are needed? Where are they needed most?



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B Boston G garage H house

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Survey Questions

QUESTION 1

What is your vision for the future of the study area? What would you like to see change? Are there things that should remain or stay the same?

QUESTION 2

Where are the best places for new housing in the study area? Are there any areas where you would not want to see new housing?

QUESTION 3

What should new housing look like? Are there specific design features that you would like to see? How many stories should new housing be?

QUESTION 4

What are the best locations for mixed use buildings with residences above ground floor commercial uses? Are there places where single-use multifamily housing is more appropriate?

QUESTION 5

Are there multifamily and mixed-use housing examples on page 4 of the walking tour brochure that would be desirable in the study area? If so, what do you like about them? (Brochure: https://www.ci.benicia.ca.us/vertical/Sites/%7BF991A639-AAED-4E1A-9735-86EA195E2C8D%7D/uploads/Brochure_Web.pdf)

QUESTION 6

How can the City make it easier and safer for pedestrians and bicyclists to get around within the study area?

QUESTION 7

Are there specific types of bicycle and pedestrian improvements shown on page 4 of the walking tour brochure that you would like to see in the study area? If so, where? (Brochure: https://www.ci.benicia.ca.us/vertical/Sites/%7BF991A639-AAED-4E1A-9735-86EA195E2C8D%7D/uploads/Brochure_Web.pdf)

QUESTION 8

Do you have any other comments about the Eastern Gateway Study?

Eastern Gateway Study

Self Guided Walking Tour Feedback

Individual Responses

Name not available

September 23, 2020, 3:46 PM

Question 1

In many ways the die is already cast for the area. Given that there are very few empty lots relative to the built-out parcels, not much can be done of any great significance in the near future. Also the architectural and use characteristics of the existing commercial and residential housing stock predetermines what is possible. While this is unfortunate for those of us living on the east side, many small things can be done. I think incentives for existing business owners to keep their facades and landscaping well maintained, and IMPROVED, would be a good plan. Improvements to the 7-11, Benicia Auto Repair, and Bottom of the 5th landscaping, are a few examples. Also the facade and parking area of Benicia One Stop Liquor is particularly dreary and uninspired. While these are not housing solutions, they go hand in hand with having a quality environment to live and shop in, and help attract investment. I appreciate the workaday and blue collar feel of the Eastern Gateway and it is an important resource area for all citizens of Benicia. Besides preserving this, I would like to see more businesses that serve the everyday practical needs of the community.

Question 2

I will mention three: The most obvious place for new housing would be #1- the empty lot on the north side of E. L St. opposite the Community Center parking lot. #2- the site of the old Sundowner Bar on E. 5th next to the Holiday Inn, and #3 -the empty lot on the south side of Military East opposite the Benicia One Stop Liquor.

Question 3

Loosely speaking, the East side is the land of vernacular architecture. Most of the structures don't look like there was an architect involved, the buildings are modest and feature function over beauty. They are modest, older, and don't look like there was much design review or city planning involved, resulting in a hodgepodge look. Any new construction should bear this in mind, but still be interesting to look at, while incorporating some design elements of the surrounding neighborhood. Appropriate to the area, 2 stories would be ideal, possibly 3. But with more density there should be adequate parking required. Prior to Covid, we were already having parking problems on our street because of a lack of parking spaces for nearby businesses.

Question 4

For mixed use locations, see #2 and #3 mentioned under the "best places for new housing" question.

For single-use, see #1.

Question 5

The least offensive multifamily mixed use example might be the newer building at the Northwest corner of E. L and Military. It has some nice landscaping in front, although the wooden picket fence would be more appropriate on a side street.

Question 6

Improved signage and striping would be helpful. Larger lighted signs like the one at Military and 2nd alerting drivers to yield to peds. would help. Also, lighted crosswalk strips like the ones in front of the Firehouse at West 2nd and Military with the audible warning are terrific. Drivers will actually stop for you there. Bicycle racks might be of some benefit in front of appropriate businesses.

Question 7

When I get the brochure I will respond.

Question 8

I am pleased with the the Eastern Gateway Study. While it may have no bearing in my lifetime, it is encouraging to know we are planning for the future. Over time, this area of Benicia can be improved and become a much more pleasant place to be for the whole town.

inside City Boundary

September 23, 2020, 9:55 PM

Question 1

Skybridge across East 5th
Transit community build around biking and Benicia bridge access with parks and walkover (tree lines sidewalks, wider buffered bike lanes)
Traffic circle will landscaping in center
3 Story Buildings mix use buildings with retail and office space below
Electric Car charging stations

Question 2

East 5th/Military East
East 5th /L St
East 5th/N St.

Question 3

Eastern Gateway Study

Self Guided Walking Tour Feedback

Multi-use mix used buildings (retail, office and living)
 Luxury Townhome/Condos
 Minimal parking and cars
 Easy Transit and Biking

Question 4

4, 5, 10,9, 14, 15,18

Question 5

1. 3-Story Mixed Use
2. 4-Unit Side Court
3. 4-Story Mixed Use

Question 6

- Skybrige connecting to Benicia Bridge (Walnut Creek Ygancio Rd Skybridge Connecting Iron Trail)
- Large parks/ open air recreation (skatepark, tennis, etc.)
- Extended Hiking Biking Trail
- Buffered Biking Lanes
- Landscaped Traffic Circles

Question 7

- Skybrige connecting to Benicia Bridge (Pleasanton Iron Trail)
- Extended Hiking Biking Trail
- Buffered Biking Lanes
- Landscaped Traffic Circles

Question 8

- Ensure this is a planned mixed residential and commercial community centered around reducing traffic, healthy/active lifestyles and accessible transit.
- Attract and retain diverse small businesses

Name not shown

inside City Boundary

September 23, 2020, 10:42 PM

Question 1

This is the eastern gateway to our city brings people in to the historic arsenal, art district, and First Street, not the industrial park. I would like to see offices for small businesses, small retail, restaurants, and low-density multi-family homes in this area built that is visually pleasing and fits the character of downtown. Since the Bay Trail traverses the area, bike and pedestrian travel should be available and clearly and easily connect to the trail. I don't want to see chain stores/franchises that require particular building designs, such as some fast food restaurants. I would like to see

plenty of public art represented in this area.

Question 2

#1 Vacant Parcel: could be low profile multi-story multifamily, perhaps a subterranean or semi-subterranean parking under the building accessible from the alley.

#4 Vacant Parcel: could be mixed use. Commercial parking in the street businesses would be the type that would not require a lot of parking along Military and some multifamily in the back entering from the alley with parking underneath the building.

#12 & #13 Multifamily benefiting from the creek as an amenity, perhaps a park/open area for the enjoyment of the multi-family and perhaps create a trail to military.

#18 Preserve the alley perhaps include it a part of the new bike way.

Question 3

From page 4: Town homes, 4-unit side court, duplexes, three story apartments with the first story as parking.

I like the commercial structure where Wipt is located, 1140 E 2nd.

Although it is a bit dated now, one of my favorite mixed use projects is Two Worlds in Mountain View, CA. It has attractive landscaping and has prospering businesses and comfortable homes. Redwood Village in Aptos is one of my favorite commercial villages for its serene ambiance and landscaping.

Question 4

Mixed Use #4 perhaps continue similar structures along the block until (#5) Bottom of 5th.

Single-Use Multifamily: #1, #7, #13. With regard to #8 - narrow the street with landscaping and bike path and have single-use Multifamily.

Single-Use Commercial: I think the commercial along E Fifth should be smaller businesses, retail, and offices over head and perhaps that don't have large trucks deliveries. There is a problem with large trucks turning in the marina parking at the end of E 5th creating noise and wearing the pavement, jumping curbs, etc.

Maybe for #11 (RV Park) the auto parts store at E 5th and O Sts. should be moved to #11 and perhaps similar stores, like hardware store, perhaps the smog check business on the NW corner of Military and E 5th should be relocated to #11.

#9 to the corner if O St.: Eliminate the alley between #9 and the auto parts store dividing the lots. Make those two lots into a nice shopping area, perhaps with a restaurant or two similar to the development on Military and E. 2nd but with the parking in the rear, entering the parking from N and O Sts. to avoid congestion on E 5th. The housing adjacent to those lots can have access to the alley from N and O Sts. using the same drive way that accesses the parking behind the new shopping area. Or that alley can be eliminated all together. The development of commercial businesses along E 5th will allow easy access from 780 and also take advantage of the bus stops there.

With regard to item #2. (Building/Parking Loc.) I prefer the building

Eastern Gateway Study

Self Guided Walking Tour Feedback

further from the street with landscaping, and parking underneath, the rear and accessibly from the side street. I prefer the building style of Sunshine Plaza to Big O but would prefer the majority of the parking in the rear rather than in front. If the parking the majority of the parking was in the rear, the building could be moved closer to the street and still leave room for ample landscaping in the front.

Question 5

#1 three story apartments with the first story as a subterranean or semi-subterranean parking under the building accessible from the alley.

#7 I favor town homes

#13 I favor 4-unit side court

Question 6

There should be a dedicated bike lane (#15) and perhaps going to #8 to take advantage of the wide street and connect it to the multi-family (#13) by the new park with the creek (#12). #3 Sidewalks along Military should be wide, free from utility poles and trees, yet there should be landscaping and permeable paving to allow for storm water runoff and a look that is pleasing to the eye.

There should be a walk light/cross walk at the intersection at the auto parts store to lot #11 (RV park), because it is dangerous to cross O St. and the fwy exit. It is difficult to see pedestrians when exiting 780E (adjacent to O St.). The walk light should not allow cars to turn right on to the 780E on ramp from E 5th when pedestrians are crossing. Pedestrians should walk along the east side of E 5th when passing under 780. On the N. side of 780 there should be a cross walk/walk light to allow pedestrians to safely walk to the west side of E. 5th should they need to continue to walk in that direction.

Question 7

No response

Question 8

#14 gas station - If there needs to be a gas station (there are already two stations on E. 5th) it should be attractive match the look of the nearby homes and offer some other commercial businesses. #16 Any development along Military should have a compatible look with the homes and be set back with landscaping and parking on the side or behind.

That building (smog check place) across from #5 and #14 should be rebuilt to be a nicer looking commercial building. Perhaps the smog check place should be relocated to #11 along with the auto parts store.

#5. I like the roof line and the tower. It is too close to the street on Military with no landscaping.

6. I like the hidden parking underneath entering from the side, landscaping in front, the landscaping along E 5th needs attention - trees are too close together, flower beds are bare. But I don't like the industrial style of that building, squares angles and stucco. It is not quaint or charming.

#17 I don't like the medical building. I like the parking to the side and rear and underneath. But I don't like the stucco, angles and squares. It is not quaint and charming.

I think any existing mature trees that can be saved should be - the pine and oak at #1, large tree along E. 5th at #9 are examples.

Any historic era buildings should be salvaged, if possible, or the materials salvaged and reused in new construction.

I enjoy the car wash on O St.

It is difficult to read the pale gray lettering on the walking tour map/survey form.

Name not available

September 29, 2020, 5:14 PM

Question 1

Keep charming old houses. Bring in artist live/work, small businesses, a cafe, allow air B &Bs, encourage regular B & Bs. No chains (starbucks, etc.) Encourage & invite desirable businesses & developers.

Question 2

No response

Question 3

Wide variety. Lots of color.

Question 4

No response

Question 5

No response

Question 6

No response

Question 7

No response

Question 8

Thanks for doing this!

Name not available

October 3, 2020, 7:22 PM

Eastern Gateway Study

Self Guided Walking Tour Feedback

Question 1

The Eastern Gateway appears in many ways to have been neglected and the area is a bit lost without attracting much attention. A drive-thru to get elsewhere. It is a great opportunity to make it interesting and sparkle. Since Benicia is looking for denser new housing (CA mandate, I think), this area could be charming and an destination if developed/designed with that in mind. Cookie-cutter housing will not do this. Most likely, the housing will not focus on SFR but might be smaller condos for smaller families, first homes, singles, artist, and elderly. It could include a central point, a plaza where people can gather to socialize, play, get a cup of coffee, buy healthy food, trees, flowers (Inspired by southern European towns or downtown Mill Valley). Include some artist live/work housing for fun and inspiration. Develop the N Street creek with fun walking bridge. Develop the trailer park (with low income housing for the current residents) to housing and make N Street mostly walking, sitting, eating with street level stores/food. Maybe a food court/taco stand. Allow for easy/fast vendor permits. Make it different from First Street (inspiration: Oakland Temescal 51st street or their Art walk). Develop the vacant building and include ground floor commercial, artist galleries, etc. Consider developing a Benicia Art and Performance Center on that property. As the city grows, there will be a need for culture to attracts people. Have EV charging stations.

I hear many people are taking the 5th street exit from 780 to E H Street to get downtown because there are fewer lights. Maybe make some easy parking to have them stop and shop before heading home. There are many SFR with elderly/retired owners who would like to stay in town but in smaller homes. Have you considered building co-housing (inspiration: <http://www.wolfcreeklodge.org/>)? I hear people talking about growing old together and this might be a good idea for one of the new buildings.

Question 2

Consider the empty building, the vacant lot, the Military street empty lot, and the trailer court, for new housing sites. Do not place the new housing in the middle of SFR or taking views or light away from existing homes.

Question 3

Have interesting designs with commercial on street level and housing above, and include a roof garden. If near the freeway, they can be higher, maybe 4-story mixed use. Side streets limit to three story apartments. If I owned all of the land, I would build 4-unit side courts everywhere. They have character and give a sense of "home". But I think you are looking for more density.

Question 4

Mixed use on Military and 5th streets and part of East N Street to the creek. The other areas would be multifamily housing.

Question 5

I find the 4-unit side-court very attractive. It reflects the older home style and are inviting to singles as well as families. They look like you want to live there and take care of it for a longer time while the multi-level housing are more sterile, square, a pass-through home. Pride of home is important.

Question 6

Military Street is busy and people drive very fast on this street. It would be important to make safe bike lanes, side walks, so the residents can leave their car at home (or switch to public or bicycle transportation) and still get safely downtown or to Raley's. The e-bikes appear to be popular and would come in handy. Side walk cafes and parklets would make you want to stop and be neighborly. Create safe bike lanes or people will take their cars.

Question 7

I ride my bike across the lower end of town and would love to have the buffered bike lane on the Military and East 5th. Door slamming is so dangerous. The intersection of E. 5th and Military could benefit from the bulbout with ADA ramp as well as high visible painted crosswalk. Have artists help design patterns in the sidewalk, benches, displays, signs.

Question 8

Rename the area. If there are art lofts or live/work, it can be a Creative District or something like that. The Arsenal is the Art District so that shouldn't be used for this area.

A Benicia architect, Marcial Chao, who works with low income housing in Oakland might be a good connection. www.pyatok.com

Name not available

October 5, 2020, 1:51 AM

Question 1

First of all, thank you very much for the invitation to participate in this study. We think this is a great idea that could potentially be very good for the City of Benicia and its residents. This ambitious but doable project is what the city needs and could lead to it becoming a model for other Bay Area neighborhoods. We live on Military East. We moved to Benicia about 5 years ago when we purchased this old house that's been abandoned for several years. We completely renovated the house with a lot of work and support from our families, friends, and the great staff of the City of Benicia. We are very excited about this project because as much as we like the City of Benicia, we have always felt that this area (the "study area") in particular has potential for a lot more, to become a vibrant live and work place going with the new trends of modern times, welcoming people who bring enthusiasm to the community. We think that this study

Eastern Gateway Study

Self Guided Walking Tour Feedback

area would be served best by giving local residents, new residents, and ethical investors the opportunity to maximize the value of their properties, if they are willing to do so. The chances this idea provides is a win-win situation for the residents and the city. This project will create better living spaces, local jobs, a growing dynamic local economy, and good and healthy revenues for the City of Benicia. A project like this will provide a bigger base of tax payers without having to increase taxes. For us, the main value of this city is the warm neighborly atmosphere, and this should be untouchable. Everything else can be improved, always. For example, we can fix sidewalks that are very run down, narrow, and uneven, and reinforce guidelines for green overgrowing, making it hard to walk. On some streets, we could redesign the streets and sidewalks to make them more attractive for pedestrians.

Vision for the future study area:

We think the best solution for this area is to allow for multi-use and work/live properties, especially now that the world is changing, making working from home essential. Having mixed-use properties would invite future investments to the City of Benicia. Having quality new homes and businesses will create a sustainable healthy local economy.

Question 2

The entire study area seems suitable for new housing.

Question 3

Having lived in the Bay Area for a very long time and in various places, we find that the Emeryville-type constructions with businesses at the bottom and living spaces on top like the example you point out in your video are the best solution for modern living. We like the modern, minimalistic style because it optimizes space. It's the new tendency that draws people in by using innovative state-of-the-art materials that maximize insulation, reduce noise and use of energy, thus creating efficient homes that are environmentally friendly. We think having up to four floors in some cases would create very attractive housing and business opportunities for local and new investors.

Question 4

Anywhere in the zone of the study area seems suitable for mixed-use buildings, but especially on the main streets.

Question 5

We like the four-story buildings where the first floor is designated for commercial and the floors above are residential, as well as any other combination of this, like, for example, a business in the front and residential units in the back.

Question 6

Improving the City for pedestrians and bicyclists is generally a good idea, but this should be designed carefully. On streets like Military it would be

impossible to have a wider sidewalk, parking spaces, and a bicycle lane. Military is a busy street lined with businesses and space for parking is a need. It will be vital to have more parking spaces if more mixed-use projects are built. We used to live in Sausalito which has become a cyclists' mecca, which is a serious problem for the residents or anyone driving a car there. Accidents with bikes and cars and also bikes and people happen almost daily. We think it's a good idea to make the city more friendly for walking and biking, but bike lanes should be rerouted to less busy side streets. This will be better for cyclists and drivers and avoid accidents.

Question 7

Cross-walks on busy main streets are a must. Designated bicycle lanes should be left as is on Military and/or moved to less busy side streets.

Question 8

We would like to suggest to please also keep in mind the possibility of having a neighborhood watch, especially on the principal streets. This new development will attract great people and create progress, but it will also attract people who might want to try to take advantage. We have witnessed race-car events on Military as well as drivers that do high-speed 360-turns in intersections at night, putting everyone's lives in danger. This could be prevented by putting up reflective pavement markers, sufficient lighting, and security cameras. An example: The street light in front of the Jazzerize studio on Military has been out for about 3 months and nobody cares. The street is very dark, making it suitable for delinquency. We strongly believe that project launched a new exciting phase in the City of Benicia. We would like to extend our regards to the City of Benicia for this amazing opportunity for all of us. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

Name not shown

inside City Boundary

October 7, 2020, 4:26 PM

Question 1

A great place for higher density housing! And I'd love to see EV charging stations. Also a convenient pullouts for transit buses or vans.

Question 2

No response

Question 3

High density, mixed cost...affordable, as well as up scale.

Question 4

Eastern Gateway Study

Self Guided Walking Tour Feedback

At the corners of Military and Fifth

Question 5

No response

Question 6

Designated bike lanes, center islands to allow pedestrians to 'stage' a crossing on busy streets

Question 7

No response

Question 8

This is a great project to both upscale this area AND provide for mixed use and higher density housing

Name not available

October 7, 2020, 4:28 PM

Question 1

I would like to see mixed use area with height of up to four stories. I think that buildings along Military should have retail or restaurants, coffee shops, ect. on the first floor with housing above. I would like to see some setback similar to what we have downtown in front of Java Point in front of at least one complex. I think building on East 5th could be zoned for mixed use with housing above commercial too. I would like to see 4 story buildings all along East 5th. I would love to see a little park developed at the the creek on N Street.

Question 2

New housing could be above retail on Military and also on East 5th. The vacant lot on L street and East 4th, is a perfect perfect places for a 4 story apartment building, maybe with parking underneath. The vacant lot on Military East #4 would be great for a mixed use building, 4 stories high. Parking in the back off the alley. This would be a perfect lot for parking on 1st floor off the alley and 5 stories in the back, 4 stories in front. The whole area could be higher density housing. I would not want to see trailer park people dislocated without have a place to go.

Question 3

I like mixed use apartment buildings. I think something that has a slightly Victorian feel would be great, maybe with Bay windows. I would not want something that is ultra modern or sleek. 4 stories is fine with me. Some landscaping with useable seating in front of the buildings is always nice. In general I would prefer parking in the back of buildings or underneath

them. Maybe a first floor could have mixed parking and stores or residential. Having parking off an alley makes a lot of sense to me. I always see parking lots as wasted space. Something should always be above them.

Question 4

Military West is really appropriate for ground floor commercial. I think it would also be fine along 5th Street, since it is largely commercial anyway. N Street is more appropriate for multifamily housing, in secondary study area. On N there are a lot of apartment buildings. Again if these are developed there should be accommodations made for the current tenants. All of the units build should have some affordable units and some very small units, studios. I like the idea of townhouses or the 4 unit side court buildings on N Street in secondary study area.

Question 5

I like both the four story apartment and 4 story mixed use buildings. I wish they were numbered for easier reference. I also like the 4-unit sidecourt. It would be nice to zone for those on in the secondary study area.

Question 6

Bike lanes and wide flashing pedestrian crosswalks. Maybe

Question 7

Buffered bike lanes if there is room. High visibility crosswalk is good.

Question 8

I think this is one of the few opportunities in the city that could be available for mixed use high density housing. I also think if there is any way to do it we should be looking at development of senior housing or assisted living in at least one building. This area is so close to the community center that it would be great. I am also concerned about what could happen to the residents of the trailer park and some of the apartments on 5th and N. These are generally very low income people and I would not want to see them displaced unless they were guaranteed affordable housing in a new unit.

inside City Boundary

October 7, 2020, 4:47 PM

Question 1

I would like to see mixed use area with height of up to four stories. I think that buildings along Military should have retail or restaurants, coffee shops, ect. on the first floor with housing above. I would like to see some

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setback similar to what we have downtown in front of Java Point in front of at least one complex. I think building on East 5th could be zoned for mixed use also up to 4 stories. I would love to see a little park developed at the the creek on N Street. I would love to see all of the parking lots go or be in the rear or as a first floor with alley access, except for Big O.

Question 2

New housing could be above retail on Military and also on East 5th. The vacant lot on L street and East 4th, is a perfect perfect places for a 3 to 4 story apartment building, maybe with parking underneath. The vacant lot on Military East #4 would be great for a mixed use building, 4 stories high in front with 5 stories and a parking lot on the first floor in the back off the alley. High density housing could be through out the whole area.

Question 3

I like mixed use apartment buildings. I think something that has a slightly Victorian feel would be great, maybe with Bay windows. I would not want something that is ultra modern or sleek. 4 stories is fine with me. Some landscaping or useable seating in front of the buildings is always nice. In general I would prefer parking in the back of buildings or underneath them. Maybe a first floor could have mixed parking and stores or residential. Having parking off an alley makes a lot of sense to me. I always see parking lots as wasted space. Something should always be above them.

Question 4

Military West is really appropriate for ground floor commercial, with residential above. I think mixed use would be fine along 5th Street. In the supplemental study area I think townhouses or the 4 unit side court building would be great.

Question 5

I like both the four story apartment and 4 story mixed use buildings. I wish they were numbered for easier reference. I also like the 4-unit sidecourt. It would be nice to zone for those on East 5th south of L and in the secondary study area.

Question 6

Bike lanes and wide flashing pedestrian crosswalks.

Question 7

Buffered bike lanes if there is room. High visibility crosswalk is good.

Question 8

I think this is one of the few opportunities in the city that could be available for mixed use high density housing. I also think if there is any

way to do it we should be looking at development of senior housing or assisted living. This area is so close to the community center that it would be great. I am also concerned about what could happen to the residents of the trailer park. These are generally very low income people and I would not want to see them displaced unless they were guaranteed affordable housing in a new unit. I would like to see CAC stay. Provisions for affordable housing and small studio units should be made.

Name not available

inside City Boundary

October 8, 2020, 3:25 PM

Question 1

I like the idea of adding housing and new shops to the study area. As the area evolves, I would like to know that there will be enough parking to accommodate more residents and increased need with additional shops.

Question 2

I like the idea of housing on the vacant parcels (#1 and #4 on the survey) and where the Sundowner (vacant building #9 on the survey) are located.

Question 3

On the smaller parcel (#1) I would love to see the 4-unit sidecourt style housing. That housing would also be nice on parcel #4. I also think townhomes or a two-story apartment would be nice on that parcel. The lot with the vacant building, #9, would be a good location for a larger building. Perhaps a three-story mixed use would be nice there. If the RV/Trailer Park, #11, were to be relocated, that site would be good for three or four story apartments or mixed-use buildings.

* I am using the descriptions from the brochure (Multi-Family + Mixed-use Residential Examples).

Question 4

I think the mixed use buildings with residences would be best on the lot with the vacant building, #9. I think mixed use might also be okay on parcel #4 if there was enough parking. As I stated above, if the RV/Trailer Park, #11, were to be relocated, I think that area would be good for either mixed us or residential only apartments. I think that parcel #1 should be single-use multifamily housing only.

Question 5

I think the 4-unit "sidecourt" is a very good looking residential option. I also thing the duplex and townhomes are nice, but not as nice. Regarding the apartments, both residential and mixed-use, I prefer the look of those in row 3, middle picture and picture on the right and row 4 (or bottom row), the pictures on the left and middle.

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Question 6

I think walkways and bike lanes are a very important part of the overall plan for the area. I am concerned about pedestrian safety on East Fifth Street and think a pedestrian bridge would be needed for new residents to get around safely.

Question 7

Looking at the brochure, I think all of the examples are necessary. I think any apartments should have the bulbout with ADA ramp and the more visible the crosswalks and bike lanes, the better.

Question 8

Thank you for having this walking tour and the opportunity for residence to provide input. I will look forward to seeing how the project progresses.

Name not available

inside City Boundary

October 8, 2020, 6:53 PM

Question 1

1. Turn the Boy Scout area into a parking lot. Maybe Big O and Jazzercise can chip in. Barbershop too!
2. Don't impact the parking in front of my home. We've got a permit system in place across from the Community Center, don't circumvent it.

Question 2

Tear down the Sundowner and put in a four story low-income housing unit. Maybe it can be called the "Benicia Projects."

Question 3

1. As long as it's away from my home and doesn't lower my home value, I don't care if you construct a low-income prison.
2. I'm perfectly OK with a four-plex near my home. ONE STORY!

Question 4

1. Military West or 5th Street.
2. Sundowner lot.

Question 5

Maybe the 5 story structure would fit into Military West.

Question 6

Turn the Boy Scout lot into a parking lot.

Question 7

See above.

Question 8

Is this going to allow the City of Benicia to steamroll their goals? (i.e. the public be damned?)

outside City Boundary

October 8, 2020, 7:50 PM

Question 1

The Vacant Lot at the intersection of East 4th Street and East L Street should be rezoned from High Density Residential to a Parking Lot to accommodate all the commercial zoned along East Military where there is currently a serious shortage of parking that is a burden to surrounding residential.

Question 2

Site 1 "Vacant Lot" at the intersection of East 4th Street and East L Street should NOT be High Density Residential. It should be a Parking Lot! There is a serious shortage of parking in the East Military & East 4th St. intersection area due to the high number of commercial businesses in this area that have insufficient parking. Community Center patrons also contribute to the parking shortage. Rezoning this Vacant Lot to a "Parking Lot" would help rectify the parking shortage for commercial businesses along East Military, for Community Center patrons and for Existing Residents along East 4th St/East L St area where there's frequently not enough parking for residents to park in front of their homes

Question 3

No response

Question 4

No response

Question 5

No response

Question 6

No response

Question 7

Eastern Gateway Study

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No response

Question 8

Any High Density Residential built on Site 1 Vacant Lot will have insufficient parking because the State's "by-right" housing, and High Density housing, both allow developer Density Bonus Incentives that permit increased number of Dwelling Units constructed, with a minimal number of on-site parking spaces. If you think parking is bad in this area now (think of the lack of parking if you're a patron of Big O Tires, Jazzercise or Sun Shine Plaza), wait until they build 9-12 Dwelling Units on "Site 1 Vacant Lot", yet provide less than 9-12 on-site parking spaces. Residents of the High Density housing will have insufficient parking and be forced to overflow onto the street, where there is already not enough parking.

Name not shown

inside City Boundary

October 9, 2020, 12:31 AM

Question 1

What I see for this area includes commercial development for Military and East 5th. The side streets should remain mostly residential. Residential density should increase slightly for the area to include duplexes and in-law units but not large apartment complexes. West side East 5th should be mostly 2 story small business at ground level and office space on the upper story. This includes the NW corner lot of E 5th and Military as well as One Stop store. The east side existing trailer park should be 2 or 3 mid-sized stores including the auto parts store with landscaping and parking lot.

Question 2

Housing should stay where it is at - just increase the density a little. Shouldn't be large scale multi-family apartments. Military and E 5th should be commercial developments and the side streets be residential.

Question 3

Slight increase in density and not large scale apartment complexes.

Question 4

See above. This area should avoid mixed uses of commercial and residential together. This is especially true for East 5th.

Question 5

Most look nice, but this type of use does not fit well in this study area.

Question 6

Wider sidewalks and well marked bike lanes and crosswalks is a start. Landscape areas in the commercial strips would be an improvement. The under-grounding of utilities would remove some poles from obstructing sidewalks. I would suggest only having a sidewalk on the east side of East 5th under I-780 with a crossing light for pedestrians on both sides of I-780. East-bound drivers exiting I-780 and turning right onto East 5th do not pay enough attention to pedestrians to the right as their focus is to traffic to the left especially with the down slope of the sidewalk.

Question 7

The bicycle and pedestrian improvements shown on page 4 would help safety, but are the roads wide enough in the study area?

Question 8

No response

Name not available

inside City Boundary

October 9, 2020, 8:07 AM

Question 1

The area could definitely use improvement. However, this SMALL area is already densely populated and there is never enough parking. It is dangerous to pull out onto East 5th as parked cars block the ability to see oncoming traffic. It would be great to have a couple of neighborhood restaurants and some nice retail shopping, as this area is very walkable, maybe a small market (NOT A MINI MART) but I do not see that there is space for much in the way of additional living spaces. This area is a nice mix of vintage and newer homes and just needs some love, not thousands of new residents. And definitely not 4 and 5 story buildings. That would be UGLY and not appropriate for the area or Benicia!

Question 2

Perhaps duplex homes in Area 1 behind Sunshine Plaza.

Question 3

No more than 2 stories.

Question 4

I could see a mixed use commercial/residential on parcel 4. But again, parking is a huge issue in the area. Residential side streets are already over crowded, our streets NEVER get cleaned by the street sweeper as it's impossible due to parking on the streets!

Perhaps parcel 9 could be a nice restaurant with condos above. A

Eastern Gateway Study

Self Guided Walking Tour Feedback

restaurant would be a draw for the community as well as the Holiday Inn.

Question 5

No response

Question 6

No parking on East 5th.

Question 7

No response

Question 8

If we need more housing, perhaps look at re-zoning the Seeno land.

town character. Two- to three-stories is fine. Four-story buildings are too urban. I like how the Holiday Inn and the Medical Building put parking underneath the structure and used alley access for vehicles. Some new buildings could have gathering spaces on the roof to take advantage of the views. Benicia has great weather so balconies are an appropriate feature. Ground-floor residences that are close to sidewalks need raised foundations so pedestrians can't look into private spaces.

Question 4

Military and East Fifth streets are the best locations for mixed-use buildings. There are not enough customers to spread businesses to other streets. Any commercial uses on corner parcels should be oriented to Military and East Fifth. Mixed-use buildings will need to address noise, glare and odor from commercial uses and keep litter picked up. Commercial uses should not be extended onto East N and East L streets. The car wash on East O Street should be redeveloped for housing, not commercial uses.

Question 5

The four- and five-story examples are too urban for Benicia. The two- and three-story examples are more appropriate for a small town. It is difficult to tell if any of these are successful. About ten years ago a mixed-use building was built on First Street across from the Tannery and I don't think it is very successful. The coffee shop closed and was replaced with a massage parlor. The restaurant is very cramped and uninviting. There was a nice store at the East B Street end, but it closed and has been replaced with a real estate office. I heard that a restaurant wanted to locate there but the residents who lived above the commercial space were against that use. I don't like the architecture for the three-story apartments in the middle column or the four-story mixed use building in the third column, it looks unauthentic. The study area has bad examples of architecture, besides the old apartment buildings. The Bottom-of-the-Fifth has fake western architecture, with fake windows and a clocktower without a clock. The Holiday Inn has cheap-looking windows. The Medical Office building is too boxy, the building frontage is dominated by the ADA ramp and the landscaping is very ordinary.

Question 6

The freeway interchange area needs to slow traffic. I don't think pedestrians feel comfortable crossing East Fifth Street. The City has put some curb extensions on East Fifth Street to reduce the length of crosswalks, I don't know how successful that has been. If there are to be more businesses on Military and East Fifth, the sidewalks on these streets need to be wider. The sidewalk in front of Big O and Harvey Plaza is wide enough, but trees are needed to shade the sidewalk. The sidewalk in front of the Holiday Inn is too narrow and the trees were put right against the building instead of by the curb, so there is not enough room for the trees to grow. The City should have new development use the alleys for vehicle access, which would reduce the locations where traffic crosses sidewalks.

Name not shown

inside City Boundary

October 9, 2020, 10:41 PM

Question 1

The study area looks shabby. The building with the most character is SP Automotive. Military and East Fifth should have neighborhood serving businesses with more housing to provide customers within walking distance and contribute to the small-town character of Benicia. Put utilities underground. I used to live on East O Street in Villa Panorama and had a great view of the Strait. There are parcels in the Study Area that could be developed to provide views from upper floors. The alleys should stay and redeveloped parcels should use them for access so fewer cars will cross sidewalks. The old apartment buildings provide affordable housing to many, they should stay and be rehabilitated to improve living conditions and architecture.

Question 2

All the areas identified in the Walking Tour for housing are fine. If businesses are to line Military and East Fifth streets, housing will be needed to provide more customers within walking distance of these businesses. I would not want new housing to replace the old apartment buildings which provide affordable housing to many. My church delivers food to needy residents in these buildings. I am concerned about how the residents of the trailer park would be re-housed. The parcels along East L Street would be a good site for senior housing because activities are across the street at the community center, and convenient shopping could be provided on Military.

Question 3

The architecture of the new housing should contribute to Benicia's small-

Eastern Gateway Study

Self Guided Walking Tour Feedback

Question 7

High-visibility sidewalks would be good. Military is not wide enough for buffered bike lanes. Curb parking is more important. The Bulb-out with the ADA ramp is a lot of concrete.

Question 8

The housing opportunity site on Military is adjacent parcels that are zoned for higher densities, so think about providing incentives to encourage these parcels to redevelop along with this site. I never knew there was a creek at East N Street. The north side of N Street, east of the creek, is vacant and could be incorporated into the creek site. Consider developing this open space for multiple purposes, like habitat restoration, stormwater retention, and recreation. Are there other drainages in the area that can be daylighted? There should be incentives to encourage the parcels in the secondary study areas to redevelop, as long as the new development improves the streets, alleys, drainage, undergrounding utilities, etc. The best restaurant in the Study Area is the taco truck. Is there more space a Liquor Warehouse for food trucks? A nicer outdoor eating area would be nice. The neighborhood might benefit from some tasteful soundwalls along the freeway. There was a beautiful Pistache tree in front of the Smog store at East Fifth/Military that was recently hacked. Does the City allow this? Try to save mature trees on the housing opportunity sites.