

COMMUNITY MEETING RESULTS REPORT

Meeting convened Monday, October 22, 2007, 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Mosswood Recreation Center, Mosswood Park, Oakland

Report prepared by Bluhon Planning Group, October 22, 2007

A. MEETING OVERVIEW

On October 22nd, Kaiser Permanente convened the third of a series of public meetings to present and solicit community input on the design of Phase 2 of the Oakland Medical Center. The first two meetings – held September 17th and October 1st – gathered general concerns and issues. This meeting began with a presentation by Kaiser Permanente of a revised plan and was followed by a facilitated dialogue. The agenda consisted of:

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Presentation & Discussion of Proposed Plan
 - a. Site Access Alternatives.
~ Questions & Dialogue ~
 - b. Street Activation & Mobile Tech Dock.
 - c. Loading dock & Parking Garage.
 - d. Oxygen Tank Location.
 - e. Landscape & Streetscape Concepts.
~ Questions & Dialogue ~
3. Identify Areas of Consensus & Disagreement
4. Next Steps and Adjourn

Michael Lane of Kaiser Permanente presented a revised site plan for the new hospital. (A copy of the presentation is available on the City's web site.) Peter Bluhon facilitated community discussion and Julia Kocs recorded comments.

Following the presentation and a Q&A period, the facilitator asked participants to evaluate how well the proposed plan achieved ten key goals expressed by the community at the two previous meetings. An empty circle was placed next to each goal and the group was asked how fully the circle should be filled to represent how well the revised plan achieves the goal. Eight of the ten criteria were fully filled while two received half circles.

This report summarizes comments made by community members at the meeting and are organized by topic, not necessarily in the order in which the comment was made.

ATTENDANCE

Approximately 45 residents and organizational representatives attended the meeting.

Meeting Presenters and Consultants:

Kaiser Permanente: Michael Lane, Project Director; Judy DeVries, Public Relations.

NBBJ Architects: Jeffrey Bailey; Brian Lin.

City of Oakland: Scott Gregory, Contract Planner.

Bluhon Planning Group: Peter Bluhon; Julia Kocs.

B. MEETING COMMENTS GROUPED BY TOPIC

The goal statements below (lettered A, B, etc.) represent key themes derived from community comments at the first two community workshops. The italicized text summarizes Kaiser Permanente's October 22nd design proposal. Comments and conclusions from the 10/22 community meeting follow.

1. GROUND FLOOR STREET ACTIVATION, NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN AND LANDSCAPE

A. Create a safe, aesthetic, and active pedestrian-oriented environment along Piedmont.

Kaiser Permanente Proposal

The new plan consists of a larger pedestrian zone along Piedmont, primarily due to the movement of the oxygen tank unit, placement of the mobile tech dock underground, and moving the loading dock entrance to Broadway.

Community Comments, 10/22

- Lighting is necessary for the walks. Lighting is needed below tree canopies. Use bollard lighting and focus lights downwards instead of upwards.
- Discussion is needed about streetscape and signage.
- The design and aesthetics of the street level façade will require community review.
- Street lighting and pedestrian safety on Piedmont Avenue needs clarification.
- The streetscape plan between Warren and Broadway is needed.

Conclusion

Meeting participants broadly supported the proposed plan for Piedmont, with the condition that the design and aesthetics of the ground floor façade be reviewed by the community.

B: Ground floor uses should be similar to upper Piedmont.

KP Proposal

The retail uses along lower Piedmont have not been determined. Internal hospital programming requirements will determine what, if any "retail" use is provided.

Community Comments, 10/22

- Questions were asked regarding Kaiser's flexibility to put retail uses on the ground floor.

Conclusion

Meeting participants broadly supported the proposed ground floor plan along Piedmont.

C. The mobile tech unit should not be located at Piedmont/MacArthur.

KP Proposal

The mobile tech dock will move down into the loading area below grade. This will increase opportunities for street activation.

Community Comments and Conclusion, 10/22

There was broad support for the proposed placement of the tech unit.

D. Consider a different location for the loading dock. Clarify the direction/flow of trucks. Ideally, trucks should be on Broadway, not Piedmont.

KP Proposal

The parking garage will shift to the north to allow for a service access drive accessible from Broadway.

Comments and Conclusion, 10/22

Meeting participants broadly supported the proposed solution.

E. Consider a different location for the oxygen tank unit.

KP Proposal

The oxygen tank unit will move to the south edge of the site (near the freeway) which allows for a larger green triangular space to the south of the ED auto entrance.

Comments and Conclusion, 10/22

Meeting participants broadly supported this plan.

F. Consider moving the CUP to Broadway.

KP Proposal

The proposed CUP will be a 3-story building along Piedmont.

Community Comments, 10/22

- The parking garage is a known entity, and the CUP is an unknown entity. Greater, more detailed information is necessary on the proposed design of the CUP.
- Based on one community member's visit to the CUP at the Kaiser Walnut Creek, she suggested that the CUP on Piedmont is acceptable in terms of noise impacts.
- The design of the CUP needs to be further addressed.

Conclusion

Meeting participants accepted the location of a CUP on Piedmont with the condition that the design and aesthetics are acceptable.

G. Consider transforming MacArthur into a more pedestrian-friendly route, possibly with retail uses.

KP Proposal

The entire sidewalk and streetscape around the hospital, from Broadway to Piedmont, will have several active ground floor activity zones and a pedestrian-friendly streetscape. A landscaped, pedestrian-friendly entrance will be provided at the end of Howe Street.

Comments & Conclusion, 10/22

Meeting participants broadly supported the plan for MacArthur.

H. The existing informal landscaping along Howe should be emulated elsewhere.

KP Proposal

Kaiser proposes a lush landscaping plan that requires reduced irrigation and maintenance. The plan will be informed by the Oakland landscape guidelines. The plan will include landscaped medians and benches, especially at the pedestrian entry points.

Comments & Conclusion, 10/22

Meeting participants expressed broad support for the proposed landscape plan. It was suggested to look at the landscaping plan in the front of the De Young Museum in San Francisco where layers of space are achieved within a small area.

2. EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT LOCATION, SITE ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

A. Emergency vehicles and trucks will increase noise and congestion along Piedmont.

KP Proposal

The proposed plan provides a clear entry-point to the hospital on Broadway and a clear vehicular entrance to the Emergency Department on Piedmont. The vehicular entrance is aligned with Westall to enhance pedestrian safety. Ambulances will arrive from Broadway and MacArthur are required to turn off their sirens at a three-block radius, except when they need to cross a street.

Community Comments, 10/22

- There is concern about separating private vehicular ED traffic from the regular garage traffic. A suggestion was made to combine the ED vehicular traffic with the outpatient patient traffic in order to decrease congestion on Piedmont. Jeffrey Bailey of NBBJ indicated that this could potentially cause accidents.
- Consider offering the current hospital ED parking space for regular public use.
- The number of parking spaces at the ED should be increased.
- Consider using the ED parking for long-term parking at the current hospital.
- Clarify the flow of traffic to and from the ED.
- KP should monitor ED parking usage by patients who use the ED facilities.
- Background data on Broadway traffic is needed.

Conclusion

Meeting participants expressed partial support for the overall site plan and suggested that further changes could be made to enhance pedestrian safety.

B. Consider three alternatives for locating the hospital entrance and ED:

- i. Entrance & ED on Broadway.**
- ii. Entrance on MacArthur with vehicle drop-off.**
- iii. Pedestrian entrance on MacArthur with an attractive plaza.**

KP Proposal

Each scenario above was presented with a pro/con assessment. Kaiser's proposal consists of the main vehicular and pedestrian entrance on Broadway, an additional pedestrian entrance at MacArthur and Howe Street, and the ED entrance on Piedmont.

Community Comments, 10/22

- Participants asked questions about the scenarios presented. There was particular interest in seeing a scenario where the ED would remain on Piedmont but vehicular access to the ED would be from Broadway.
- It was suggested that the entrance on Broadway should be for drop-off patients, but the primary entrance would be at Howe Street.

- The volume of patient drop-off/pick-ups will continue to make parking problematic unless the increased parking needs are addressed.
- The flow of traffic and the egress from the ED designated parking area needs further discussion.

C. Design the hospital entrance so that the architecture indicates the entrance, not signs.

KP Proposal

Kaiser considers signage important and is reviewing various approaches.

Community Comments, 10/22

- Architectural issues regarding the entrance design need to be addressed.

3. NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC, PARKING AND CIRCULATION

A. Clarify location and flow of traffic for ED area and the parking garage.

KP Proposal

The exact location of the parking garage is still under discussion, but the proposed plan for the new parking garage will alleviate some of the congestion concerns. The flow of traffic through the parking garage and possible exit routes are still being discussed. The current plan allows the option for an exit onto Broadway. A modest increase of traffic is expected compared to current flow. Some of the traffic is already on Broadway, but no current data is available. The BART shuttle will remain on its current route, but there is a possibility of expanding its route.

Community Comments, 10/22

- Community members request background data on current Broadway traffic.
- Consider routing all emergency vehicles through the parking garage by putting in a no-charge entrance. This could cut the traffic on Piedmont dramatically.
- Consider finding more ways to mitigate the impacts of increased traffic in order to prevent gridlock on Piedmont.

C. AREAS OF CONSENSUS AND DISAGREEMENT

At the end of the meeting, the group was asked to evaluate the proposed plan against ten criteria. There was broad support for the proposed location of the mobile tech unit, loading dock, oxygen unit tank, and the CUP. Participants believed the plan would provide an improved, pedestrian-friendly environment along Piedmont and MacArthur and that the ground floor uses would be acceptable. There was strong support for the landscape plan.

There was general agreement that the revised plan is a considerable improvement over the original plan. Some participants, however, indicated that site access and layout improvements could be made. Also, participants suggested that noise and traffic impacts on Piedmont (due to the ED entrance) need to be further addressed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.