



Introduction

The City of East Palo Alto hosted its third community workshop for the Ravenswood Business District (RBD) / 4 Corners Specific Plan Update on Thursday, March 24, 2022, from 6:30pm to 9:00pm. The focus of this workshop was on community benefits, including prioritizing benefits that could be provided by new development projects in the RBD. The workshop included an overview presentation, smaller group discussions in Zoom Breakout Rooms, and a group discussion complemented by polling and budgeting exercises. In total, a maximum of 95 people attended the workshop, but this number fluctuated since people joined and left throughout the meeting.

This workshop was held virtually with participants logging in or dialing in by phone to an online Zoom meeting. Spanish interpretation services were provided during the meeting. Recordings and digital copies of the workshop materials were later posted on the project website: <https://www.cityofepa.org/planning/page/ravenswood-business-district-4-corners-specific-plan-update>

A copy of the presentation and video recording in Spanish are also online. [Para leer los comentarios del taller en español, consulte el apéndice al final.](#)

Meeting Agenda

The workshop began a formal presentation by the consultant team (led by Raimi + Associates), followed by smaller group conversations in breakout groups. The evening concluded with a large group conversation, a final budgeting exercise, and a group Question and Answer session. The agenda of the meeting was as follows:

- (6:30p) Welcome & Introduction by Mayor Abrica
 - (6:40p) Overview Presentation
 - (7:30p) Small Breakout Group Conversations
 - (8:30p) Report Back and Group Discussion
 - (8:45p) Final Budgeting Activity, Next Steps, and Final Questions
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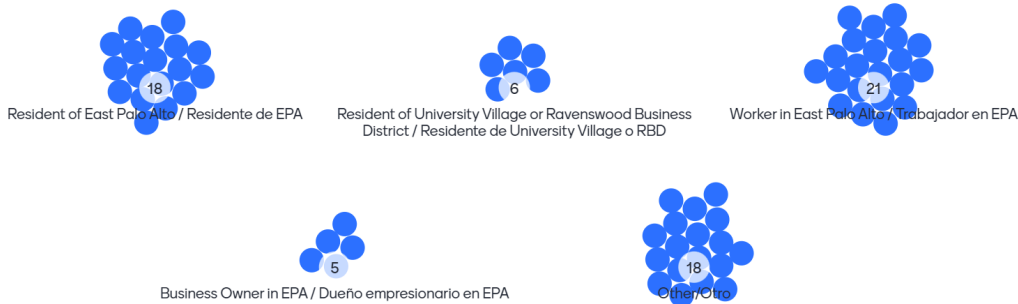
Profile of Meeting Attendees

A voluntary, online poll was conducted at the start of the workshop to better understand who attended the meeting. These questions drew an average of 44 respondents (out of approximately 60 attendees at the time the poll was taken):

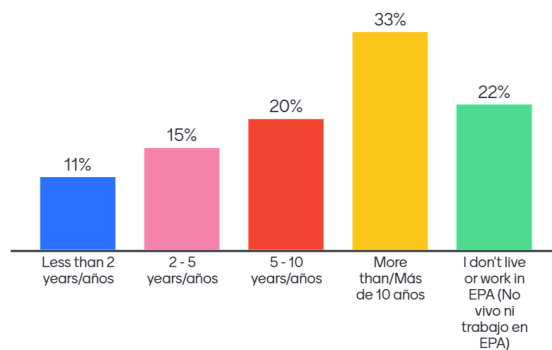
- Approximately half of the respondents were residents (of RBD or East Palo Alto)
- One-third of respondents have lived or worked in the City for more than ten years
- Nearly all of the respondents had participated in previous events such as public workshops, office hours, or City Council meetings

The following figures provide the detailed results of the polling activity.

How would you describe yourself? (Select all that apply) Mentimeter ¿Cómo se describiría? (Seleccione todas las que apliquen)



How long have you lived or worked in East Palo Alto? Mentimeter ¿Cuánto tiempo ha vivido o trabajado en East Palo Alto?



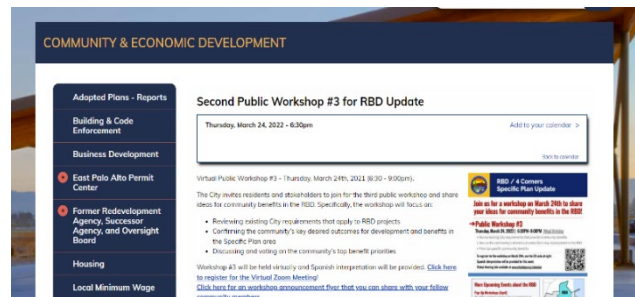
What project events have you participated in previously? ¿En qué eventos ha participado previamente?



Outreach & Noticing

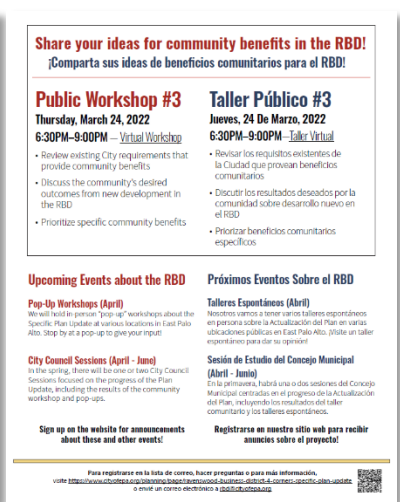
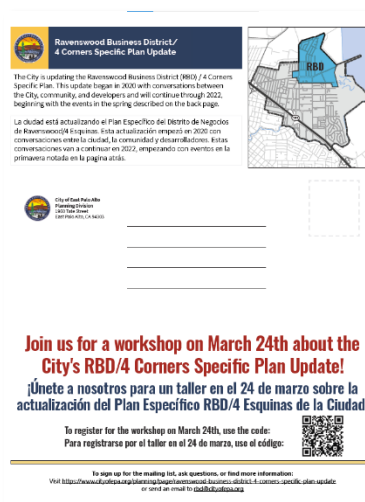
Public noticing for the workshop began in February 2022. Digital announcements and materials were posted on a variety of forums, including:

- Via email as a newsletter blast to a large database of community members
- On the City calendar and website
- On City of East Palo Alto social media sites
- To business owners, organizations, and schools in and around RBD / 4 Corners
- Announcement on “East Palo Alto Neighbors” Facebook page
- Targeted Facebook ads



In addition to digital noticing, physical noticing was conducted including:

- A physical mailer that was distributed to every permanent address in the City of East Palo Alto
- An updated notice board installed at the corner of Bay Road and University Avenue
- Flyers posted around the RBD



Workshop Summary

Presentation Highlights & Key Takeaways

Raimi + Associates, project lead for the Specific Plan Update, took the audience through a presentation that covered a range of topics including:

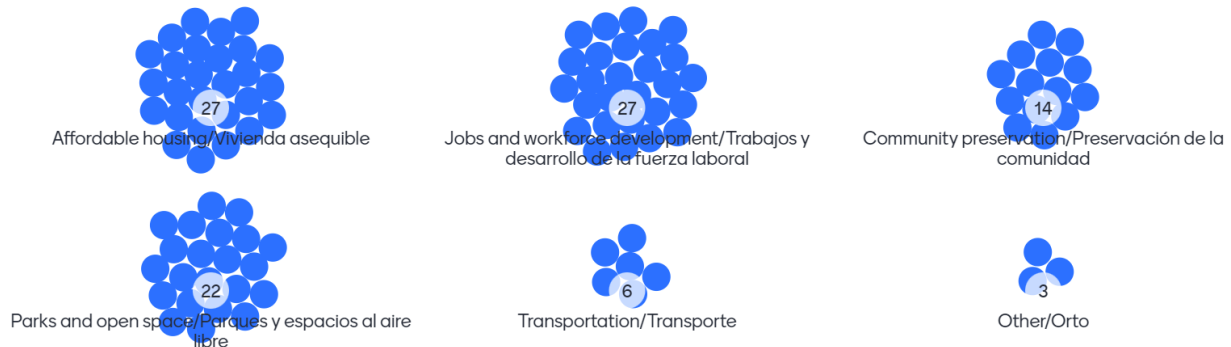
- A recap of the 2013 Specific Plan, including the vision, project goals, and development assumptions;
- Updates and highlights of the work to date, including previous engagement events, major council direction including the two study scenarios, and project timeline;
- A summary of the existing baseline community benefits structure, highlighting current local mandates, impact fees, subsidies, and their relation to the two scenarios selected by Council;
- Identifying priorities for other community benefits in addition to the baseline, and trade-offs from both a spatial and financial perspective.

Input on community benefit priorities from the meeting participations was obtained in three ways:

1. A poll asking participants to prioritize which “category” of community benefits was most important to them.
2. Small group discussions where participants were asked to discuss and provide comments on the specific community benefits identified thus far in the community engagement process.
3. A poll asking participants to prioritize specific community benefits divided into 2 categories: 1) benefits that take up “space” in the RBD, and 2) benefits that cost “money.”

Category Prioritization Exercise

At the conclusion of the presentation, participants were asked to identify their two most important community benefits from amongst five categories. The results showed an equal split between **affordable housing** and **jobs and workforce development** for the top choice, while parks and open space received a similar number of votes:



Breakout Group Discussion Results

Following the formal presentation, attendees were divided into four smaller groups, each group facilitated by staff or members of the project team. These breakout groups were not recorded to maintain participant anonymity.

The purpose of these discussions was to provide an opportunity for community members and stakeholders to react and respond to topics introduced during the presentation, and most importantly share their own insights regarding the different benefits, and the priorities that the city should consider when evaluating potential development projects. To guide the conversation, breakout groups were organized around five key topics: Affordable Housing; Jobs and Workforce Development; Community Preservation; Parks, Open Space, and Conservation; and Mobility. The following guiding questions were asked for each topic:

1. Are the desired outcomes identified in the presentation correct? What's missing?
2. Are the priorities related to space and money identified in the presentation correct? What's missing?
Which of these benefits are most important and why?

Specific feedback from the breakout groups can be found in the [Appendix](#).

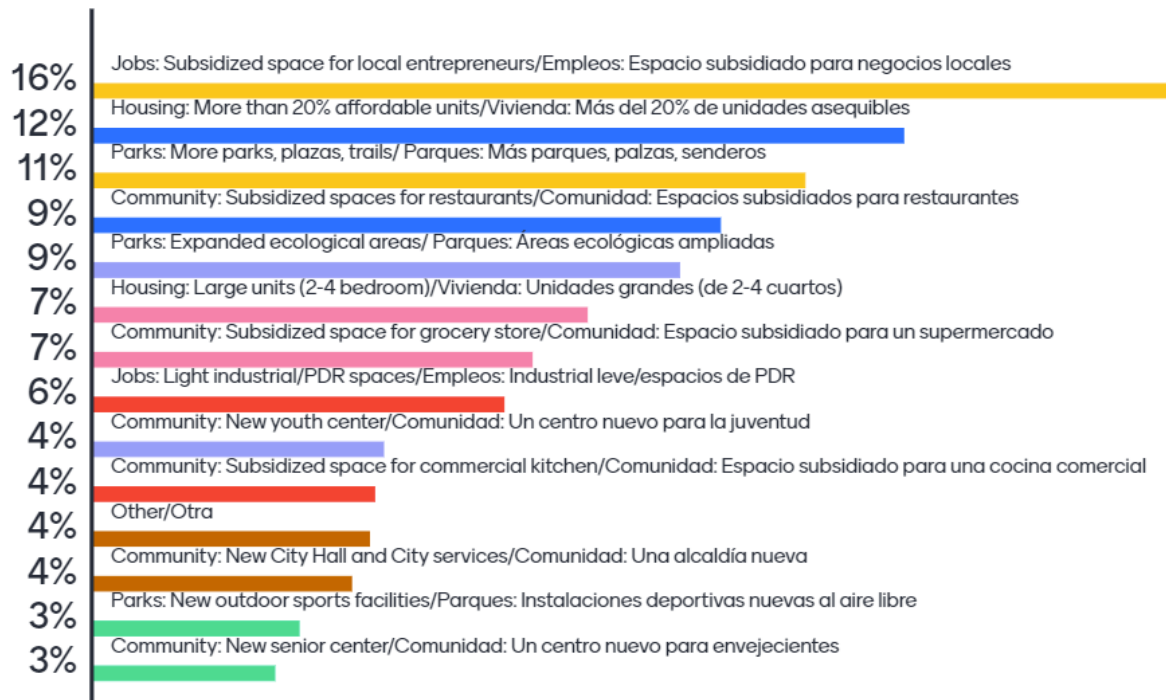
Several key themes emerged from these discussions:

- **Overall value and fairness.** The community wanted to better understand how much developers will make from the city allowing additional development in the RBD, and what is the fair allocation of benefits for the community in relation to that amount. This would help some residents decide how best to prioritize amongst various benefits and ensure that the City and its residents directly benefit from the new development.
- **Deeply affordable housing.** Affordable housing emerged as a key priority, with strong support for the deeper levels of affordability, especially 35% AMI. There was some differing opinions regarding the size of new housing (the ratio between studios, 1-bed, 2+ bed). Some felt that more family and multi-generational housing was needed while other thought that smaller units for young professionals is missing in EPA and therefore should be built in the RBD.
- **Building community wealth.** Home ownership was discussed as a key building block for the EPA community to truly share in the wealth creation of RBD development, and as a way to ensure long-term stability in the neighborhoods.
- **Lifelong pipelines to employment.** Access to well-paying jobs is critical to the health and welfare of EPA residents. Starting in youth and moving through adults, participants expressed that developers in RBD should actively provide opportunities for education and internships/apprenticeships. Other requirements including free training, pilot hiring programs, and stricter local hire expectations were also highlighted by participants.
- **Spaces for activities that residents want to pursue.** Discussions concerning jobs and workforce development emphasized a strong preference for physical spaces within RBD that could accommodate new or displaced local businesses and workers, but especially the wide diversity of potential businesses unique to EPA's residents.
- **Developer accountability.** The community wants to be sure that the businesses that move into new buildings are accountable to the agreements made with the developers of the properties.
- **Parks and mobility** were covered in less detail, but comments included sensitivity of new open spaces to wildlife, fostering safe and accessible public spaces, and considering fees to mitigate traffic concerns.

Final Polling

After the breakout group sessions, one final polling exercise was conducted where participants were asked to identify their priorities for community benefits using a 100-point budget. Using Mentimeter, individuals were asked to vote on the specific community benefits that were most important to them. As was mentioned above, instead of voting by topic, the final poll organized the list of community benefits into 2 categories: 1) benefits that compete for physical **space** in the RBD; and 2) benefits that compete for **money** from development projects. The following tables summarize the results of this prioritization exercise.

Space/ Prioridades - El espacio



As is shown above, jobs and housing are the most essential benefits for this community. This is consistent with the results from previous community engagement efforts. Participants in this workshop expressed that they would like to see developer-provided and subsidized space in the RBD / 4 Corners used for:

SPACE	
Received the Strongest Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local entrepreneurs Affordable housing units Public parks and trails Local restaurants
Received Moderate Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecological areas Larger housing units Grocery store Youth Center
Received Lower Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial kitchen New City Hall/services Outdoor sports fields Senior Center Other

Money/Prioridad - Las finanzas



Similar to the first exercise, jobs and housing again emerged as the most essential benefits for this community. Participants in this workshop expressed that they would like to see money/financial resources allocated in the RBD / 4 Corners towards:

MONEY	
Received the Strongest Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce training (jobs) • Local businesses (jobs) • Home ownership (housing) • 35% AMI Housing (housing) • Wetland restoration (parks)
Received Moderate Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public recreational amenities (parks) • 50% AMI Housing (housing) • Trees and beautification (parks) • Citywide congestion projects (transportation) • Citywide bike/ped projects (transportation)
Received Lower Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceeding local hire (jobs) • Neighborhood traffic calming (transportation) • Donation to community groups (community) • Regional transportation projects (transportation) • Other

Appendix

Affordable Housing

Are these the right outcomes? What's missing?

<p>Utilities and the infrastructure are the starting point. Work with the districts and companies (i.e. water) that will serve the community.</p>	<p>Will AMI still be based on the County's measure? Would like it to be tracked the City's AMI</p> <p>- Would be a City decision overall</p>	<p>Provide housing at varying levels and types that are opportunities for individuals/families at different points (i.e. cycle housing)</p>	<p>mix of housing types (single, multi family), access to housing (ownership opportunities at all income levels, deed restricted rented), and mix of income/affordability are necessary to include</p>
<p>Numbers don't match for cost of living and AMI numbers. Vulnerable people are being missed due to numbers. Should also have chart for family size versus income and how it correlates with AMI. this would give context to what is affordable.</p>	<p>There has to be a component of what the economic mobility plan is to help support residents access housing opportunities and a pathway towards ownership</p>	<p>university village neighborhood is primarily single family homes, certain areas could be more dense (duplexes?), increased density should meet the characteristics of the area</p>	<p>Diversity is important. Need to give opportunity to young people to work and live in EPA. Need to mitigate traffic and have enough housing. Need greater number of diverse housing. Need balance of affordable and diverse housing. Provide housing for working population. Need to look at categories. Also need to look at future needs. Housing needs to match proposed nonresidential growth. Need to provide homeownership opportunities.</p>
<p>Not enough housing for everyone. If we know how many people are in each category, then can understand the need. Would like to understand meaning of first three bullets. Need housing for homeless, young college graduates who are returning home. Should also try to address housing needs for those just above.</p>	<p>is this housing Q focused on RBD or on the city? A-tonight's convo is focused more on RBD but other topics do need to occur at a larger, comprehensive level</p>	<h1>Senior housing</h1>	<p>Wondering about ownership numbers. Ownership is a wealth builder. Need to address lowest AMI and also accommodate home buyers who want to be in EPA, encouraging diverse population.</p>
<p>Important to understand what is the potential for contribution from developer.</p>	<p>To document the actual displacement that occurs and think about how to provide opportunities that who have been displaced from EPA could have a pathway to return.</p> <p>Go back 5 years</p>		<p>There should be a consideration for length of residency in EPA regarding the examination/consideration of displaced persons.</p>
		<p>There is a need for the missing middle (returning college students).</p>	

Is there anything missing for this category? Which benefits are most important, and why?

multi-generational housing

be specific about affordability - what income levels does that include?

Wealth building so that housing could be afforded throughout one's lifespan

How will the parking be set up for these units? What is the ratio of units per acre for the Four Corners Project

having units allocated for lower income, median income + senior units

want to see more low, very low income home ownership opportunities within the developments --> can allow residents to live here more long term and add to the community

Is this addressing all Four Corners Project? If so, we are not fighting for more (i.e. is a low number).
Housing was the number one priority of the participants tonight, yet the number of housing provided is low.
I'd love to see a graphic of how much housing is being offered at each individual location (good for visual people).

Housing for more people would create more traffic/less parking. We need to think about preservation/beautification.
Is the housing going to be in the RBB area? That's confusing.
Housing in Whiskey Gulch would be ideal. Building up would also be helpful and expand the tax base.

nice to have community services, markets along with the housing development (community-serving mixed use)

the low income units need to accommodate current residents, not just reserve a few units for low income families/people

What is the community gaining? How much?
Housing and education are interconnected. Shouldn't be a versus situation.
How much are the developers gaining and how much is the community gaining?

Are there programs / community benefits that could provide assistance for families or individuals to stay in the community.

development should have more mix of income levels and people, shouldn't consolidate one section by itself - always best to mix affordable with low income, seniors - more intergenerational and diversity of income to create better understanding between each other

Is this affordable housing going to be limited to a certain amount of years for low income people? Will the housing later become market rate?
Will this be sufficient profit for developers?
What can be done to help the people who were displaced and the low income EPA natives, especially those with children?

want more low income housing that is reserved for long time residents with AMIs below 50% (extremely low, very low)

need to address how students will travel to school from the new housing developments, already have to drive to bus stops

What is the criteria for the workspace?

from chat: Work in community engagement and families ask that any new construction units should include childcare facilities and adult daycare.

Can we make office space open to the public and community friendly?

developers have a responsibility to create more jobs and those displaced from the whiskey gulch - re-establish the trust with community

necessary to create solutions at the systems level that connect mobility, jobs, and housing

new non-profit for school drop-offs starting up

We need more space for local startups and nonprofits. Can we make it clearer how the space is divided for the community i.e. # of units/sqft? Can this be delivered prior to development? Can this space be held long term?

Office space should be prioritized for local residents and publicly accessible.

the previously stated concern of existing traffic issues and traffic impacts from potential RBD developments - any solutions to cut down travel time, especially for workers and families, would alleviate traffic concerns

from chat: Whiskey Gulch redevelopment is entirely different from the Ravenswood redevelopment with HD & Ikea

There should be a path for small businesses to grow to medium and large size. The spaces available will shape these outcomes.

A pilot program with many of the large companies to train residents so that they could obtain jobs to afford to live in the community

Jobs can be created. But local population may not qualify for those jobs. Need program to help people find/create opportunity for jobs and growth. Should have mix of job types/housing/incomes.

Need to address economic development. Project needs an economist who will show research what has failed and produce solutions to address real needs. Need more home owners and entrepreneurs. How can it be made sustainable and more diverse. How can we train the people and connect them to the jobs around us. Should leverage JobTrain. Need equitable and diverse community to reflect residents. Follow through on commitment.

the issue of childcare needs to be addressed - if with the housing developments, would alleviate some traffic issues

Is there anything missing for this category? Which benefits are most important, and why?

Implement a policy to first source local hires.

Emphasize the importance of the outcome of when people cannot afford to stay in the city in order to say that access to well paying jobs is important.

Think about the tech jobs we want.

What will the quality of the space be like? Should be state of the art.

Have developers purchase/hire locally

Entrepreneurship. Consider ways the City can support small businesses, including residents who are undocumented.

Coordinate efforts and policy discussions between city council and these outreach events

How can the lawn spaces of office spaces be made publicly accessible

Entrepreneurial Accelerator Programs!

We cannot forget the people from our community who are coming out of the criminal justice system that return home and will need job opportunities.

Have first source hiring within the City (i.e. city employees, contracts)

Job training programs are also important to remain competitive against other cities.

Commercial space where home based businesses could go to work

Leverage academies to train/educate/prepare the community

How can we think about access to loans/capital for small businesses?

How does this section address concerns around public k-12 education quality?

need creative solutions from multiple perspectives within the planning process, not just the engagement process

We don't have banks/are underbanked.

generational wealth - how can be partner with the cities to achieve more of this?

could have a guarantee/set time of worker tenure to get and keep their jobs in the new businesses (including retention with the Exceed required local hire benefit)

Will the wages be acceptable for living in the peninsula?

if seeing new businesses come back or creating business opportunities for current residents would be great

create a space where there are opportunities for small businesses to have short-term leases, can move onto other spaces for longer-term leases? have a shared space (maybe catering/commercial kitchen)

What kind of jobs are we training the community for and will that translate into job opportunities to be able to afford to stay in the community.

need better career education so residents have access to better jobs, especially at the companies that are in RBD

many companies have their own kitchen, but those that don't have it then have employees who go out for lunch. if kitchens are limited, can create more food businesses within walking distance and bring them out into the street

Connecting people to EPA businesses that creating opportunities in EPA like the business creating modular homes.

would love to see businesses see more local hires

Community Preservation

Are these the right outcomes? What's missing?

Need space owned by community. Need space in appropriate areas best for community. Should have space for small businesses, more than just nonprofits. Make community a destination place. Need to bring vibrancy to EPA. Provide space for community to grow and develop. Make this place a destination for the region.

Is Sandhill still proposing library and park?

Need area for young people. Provide space for activities and involved in the City.

Is there anything missing for this category?
Which benefits are most important, and why?

Composting at Fresh Approach site. Opportunity for sustainability business and for EPA.

Difficult because these are all priorities. Developers cannot just provide minimal benefits. Have to focus on building in a way that East Palo Alto will gain and support the community in the long term.

Want to see vibrant plaza. Inviting place for people to access resources/goods and socialize. Need bigger senior center that offers a range of resources. Can existing service centers be made more attractive, larger, improve services. Want EPA to be a community for diverse range of people. Would also want more art opportunities and educational resources.

Need projects to give a sense of place. The place will have the framework to give a sense of place where people have stake in/feel connection to. Can help to define a city. This city is a melting pot. Need to build to enhance these qualities. Can't get it all in one place, but good to build space to develop over time.

I agree - having a downtown/Main Street/plaza again is a priority

Marginalized folks are often segregated from centered folks. We should build spaces that force the two to interact. If a tech company is on the fourth floor of the building, a job training program should be on the third floor for example where low wage folks are being trained and interact with those who can hire them

Legitimate solutions that address the systemic oppression that keep marginalized people marginalized, not just short-sighted solutions that just help marginalized people continue in marginalized conditions

For community benefits, please consider space for the Community Archives Project, as well as space for outdoor learning, festivals, film screenings, and bbq.

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Parks, Open Space, and Conservation

Are these the right outcomes? What's missing?

from chat: Have the city control the drive thru traffic now, before they start any developments. I would love to see the open space untouched. I live on Illinois st and I see the level sea rise and all the wild life.

are the parks and open space plazas within the developments? the slide includes 25 acres but what is the open space exactly referring to? A- some will be dependant on the site (wetlands are more relevant to those near coast for example)

Important community benefits be front-loaded if the community wants. will the benefits be reserved forever? city needs to make it clear that the public spaces are open to public use, not just the companies

How do we make this space accessible to the public but also prevent homeless encampments?

Might preservation efforts stifle EPA's potential?

Is there anything missing for this category?
Which benefits are most important, and why?

How can we preserve wildlife, habitats, limit sound, and keep trees?

We don't need more parks as we have parks that aren't being fully utilized, rather we need trees versus more open space.

We need to upkeep, manage, and keep safe the parks

Yes, we also need to save our valuable life that lives in our baylands and marsh lands. They keep the oracle system in tack and we depend on them for the reason...even when we think little of them.

Mobility

**Is there anything missing for this category?
Which benefits are most important, and why?**

Housing for more people would create more traffic/less parking. We need to think about preservation/beautification.

Collecting fees on parking spaces regardless of whether or not they are used in projects that are constructed.

Impose fees if traffic or construction result in greater impacts.