



Legislation Text

File #: 20-297, **Version:** 1

Work Session on the Bay Fair Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Zoning Amendments

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

This Work Session is an opportunity for the Planning Commission to receive an update on the Bay Fair Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Zoning Amendments and offer feedback to staff at this preliminary stage. There are no formal actions associated with this item.

This item was continued from June 4, 2020 due to the prior meeting cancellation.

BACKGROUND

In 2014, the City of San Leandro received a highly competitive \$440,000 Priority Development Area (PDA) planning grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to prepare the Bay Fair TOD Specific Plan (Specific Plan) and related Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The City also contributed local funds and in-kind contributions along with contributions from BART, Madison Marquette (the owner of the Bayfair Center) and Alameda County.

The Bay Fair TOD Specific Plan Area covers 154 acres primarily comprised of commercial uses with a mix of office, light industrial, and residential uses. The study area includes several sub-areas including Bay Fair BART Station, Bayfair Center, Fashion Faire Place, and Fairmont Square Shopping Center, which are divided by East 14th Street and Hesperian Boulevard.

The Specific Plan was created to promote the long-term sustainability and vibrancy of the Bay Fair BART Station area and to establish it as a Priority Development Area (PDA) in order to:

- Provide greater access to public funding targeted to TOD areas;
- Incentivize/streamline the regulatory process for future TOD developments;
- Continue City and private investments in South San Leandro; and
- Add the final planning piece to the City's East 14th Street corridor, following the East 14th South Area Strategy (2004) and the Downtown TOD Strategy (2007), all in compliance with MTC's regional Plan Bay Area 2040.

Throughout the multi-year Specific Plan development process, the City implemented a broad public outreach effort, which included:

- A 21-member Community Advisory Committee (CAC);
- A 10-member Technical Advisory Committee (TAC);
- Presentations with numerous City Boards, Commissions, Committees, and interest groups;
- A Bay Fair TOD Plan webpage on the City's website;
- Information pop-up stations in the Bay Fair BART Station and Bayfair Center;

- Two widely publicized community workshops;
- Email distribution list of over 450 individuals composed of residents, businesses, property owners, community organizations, and public agencies; and
- Press releases, weekly updates to City Council, and online postings on the City blog, SL Next, and Nextdoor.

On February 20, 2018, the City Council certified the Specific Plan EIR and adopted the Bay Fair TOD Specific Plan. The Specific Plan establishes a long-term vision for a sustainable, vibrant, walkable, and safe transit-oriented village with a diversity of land uses serving residents, workers, and visitors. The following strategies are integrated throughout the Specific Plan and provide a “big-picture” planning framework for the Bay Fair area:

1. *Improve Mobility for all Modes along Existing Major Streets:* The Specific Plan outlines a series of multi-modal improvements such as adding bicycle lanes, reducing vehicle travel lanes, and creating a new circulation network to improve connectivity throughout the Plan Area;
2. *Strengthen New Connections to BART:* Establish connectivity to the BART station for all modes of travel, with priority for pedestrians and bicyclists;
3. *Create a Grid of Smaller Blocks:* Create smaller blocks and promote the publicly desired “village” and “neighborhood” scale and character for the Plan Area;
4. *Create Special, Memorable Public Places and Open Spaces:* Create attractive public spaces that are accessible to people in various life stages (including households with kids, teens, seniors, and persons with physical disabilities);
5. *Enable Range of Future Scenarios:* The Specific Plan illustrates three potential future development scenarios that could occur in the next 20 years under the Specific Plan’s recommendations and guidelines. Future development will be dictated by market forces, landowner decisions, and the capacity for necessary infrastructure improvements.

ANALYSIS

The Bay Fair Zoning Amendments are a critical next step in implementing the Specific Plan. A new Bay Fair TOD (B-TOD) Zoning District will be established for the Plan Area through Zoning Code and Zoning Map Amendments. The Specific Plan was designed to provide flexibility to shifting market conditions; however, since the Plan’s adoption, the state legislature has further regulated how local governments process development applications in favor of streamlined (non-discretionary) reviews based only on objective development standards (SB35, SB330). As such, development and design standards in the B-TOD District will be objective as opposed to design guidelines that could be interpreted differently by different parties. The B-TOD District will also be drafted for consistency with AB 2923, which requires certain zoning minimums on BART-owned property in order to support transit-oriented development.

Summary of Proposed B-TOD Zoning Standards

The Bay Fair Specific Plan identifies three height areas that each allow for different building intensities, with the most intensive development anticipated closest to the BART Station. The B-TOD District will include three Sub-Areas consistent with the Specific Plan, as shown in Figure 1. Following, is a summary of key standards anticipated to be included in the Zoning Code Amendments for the B-TOD District.

Land Uses: The B-TOD District will include a list of permitted uses, conditionally permitted uses, and uses requiring administrative review. Consistent with the Specific Plan, a broad list of uses will be permitted by right including office, multi-family residential, mixed-use, and most retail uses.

Height: As shown in Figure 1 in Attachment 1, maximum building heights will remain consistent with the heights identified in the Specific Plan, ranging from 4-8 stories in the core area nearest the BART station (Sub-Area 1), with up to 6 stories allowed in areas farther out from the station (Sub-Area 2), and up to 4 stories in Sub-Area 3 mostly along Hesperian Boulevard. Staff is considering a minimum building height of 30 feet and 2 stories in Sub-Area 2, which does not have minimum heights identified in the Specific Plan. Building heights throughout the district will also be required to step back when adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods (“Residential Height Transition Overlay”) or across the street from lower intensity areas such as the City’s border with Alameda County on East 14th Street (“Corridor Height Transition Overlay”).

Density: Staff anticipates including minimum densities for all three Sub-Areas as shown in Table 1 attached to this staff report. This will ensure appropriate minimum densities given the close proximity to transit and will maximize achievement of the City’s housing and TOD goals. Minimum densities will also ensure consistency with AB 2923, which includes density standards for BART-owned property. Maximum densities are not currently proposed, consistent with the Specific Plan’s vision for a height-based development framework.

Site Design: Site design requirements will carry forward Specific Plan standards for building setbacks, lot coverage, minimum open area, and maximum block length and provide criteria for frontage improvements and projections into required setbacks (awnings, canopies, etc.).

Building Design: Building design standards will address topics such as ground-floor heights, tenant space depths, façade transparency, building entrances, and articulation. Standards for activating the public realm will also be addressed, including outdoor seating and gathering areas, façade treatments such as stoops and display windows, and requirements for access and pedestrian entrances.

Multi-family Amenities: Similar to other commercial and mixed-use zoning districts, it is anticipated that new residential developments in the B-TOD District will be required to select a certain number of amenities, such as a fitness center, furnished common area, conference room, or storage rooms.

Parking and Loading: The Specific Plan details parking minimums that are similar to Downtown parking standards. Staff is exploring adding parking maximums, as summarized in Table 2 (attached) and welcomes feedback from the Commission. Sub-Area 1 will include lower parking minimums than identified in the Specific Plan for consistency with AB 2923. Minor Specific Plan Amendments will be brought forward with the Zoning Code Amendments for consistency between the two documents.

Required Open Space: Staff is considering both private and publicly accessible open space requirements for residential developments in the B-TOD District. Staff is also considering publicly accessible open space requirements for new office and retail developments over 20,000 square feet. Small projects could opt to pay an in-lieu fee, but larger projects would be required to provide on-site open space to ensure the Specific Plan goal for meaningful open spaces is realized.

New Connections and Frontage Improvements: Publicly accessible connections, including streets

and bicycle/pedestrian pathways, will be required consistent with the circulation diagrams in the Specific Plan for all new subdivisions, new construction, and significant additions and remodels. Connections will be required every 440 feet at minimum to create more frequent intersections and smaller blocks, as shown Figure 2. All new connections must be publicly accessible, but they may be privately owned. Projects over 10,000 square feet will be required to make improvements to adjacent streets and sidewalks, as well as other public frontage improvements like curbs, gutters, street trees, and street lights.

Development Review Process: Staff anticipates establishing a Master Plan review process for larger development sites (over 5 acres), which would focus on proposed intensities and densities as well as integration with the area-wide open space and circulation network. Site plan review and approval would be required for most projects, in the B-TOD District, with streamlined administrative review for projects submitted subsequent to Master Plan approval. Administrative exceptions would be available for several objective development standards to provide for flexibility, in keeping with the spirit of the Bay Fair TOD Specific Plan.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Following up on the broad-based outreach on the Specific Plan, the Zoning Amendment process includes the following public engagement components:

- City Council Update (October 21, 2019);
- Community Meeting 1 (November 20, 2019);
- Outreach to key stakeholders, including property owners and key partners such as BART, AC Transit, Alameda County (ongoing);
- Planning Commission Work Session (June 4, 2020);
- Web Posting and Electronic Distribution of Bay Fair Zoning Public Review Draft (Summer 2020);
- Community Meeting 2 (Summer 2020);
- Planning Commission Public Hearing (Fall 2020); and
- City Council Public Hearing (Fall 2020)

RECOMMENDATION

This Work Session is an opportunity for the Planning Commission to receive an update on the Bay Fair TOD Zoning Amendments and provide any feedback to staff. There is no formal action associated with this item. The public review draft of the proposed Zoning Amendments are anticipated to be released this summer with opportunities provided for public input. Public hearings at the Planning Commission and City Council are anticipated to take place in late summer and early fall.

ATTACHMENTS

Bay Fair TOD Zoning Amendments Draft Figures
Tables 1 and 2

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