



**Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats
(SWOT) Analysis**
(Subject to change)

Prepared and Submitted by **Equity in Oakland**
May 1, 2017

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Planning & Building Department
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Greetings –

The **Equity in Oakland** Team is pleased to present both technical and qualitative analyses of the progress made to date on the Downtown Oakland Specific Plan.

Our **mixed method approach** – utilizing both qualitative assessment as well as technical analysis - aims to provide a balanced, data-driven approach to reviewing the equity aspects of the Downtown Oakland plan, and opportunities for future improvement. Our rich and detailed qualitative analysis captures local knowledge and context essential for understanding the complex story of what it means to live, learn, work, and play in Downtown Oakland. This qualitative assessment builds on the knowledge of various networks in Oakland, and provides insights into the social context and lived experience of the people of Oakland and how they interact with their downtown. Our technical analysis recommends data and actions to support equity-oriented analyses and policy development. The technical analysis draws from best practices and recent innovations in the fields of equity-focused urban policy and planning, and related place-based fields. Together, these approaches reveal patterns, categorizations, and statistical outcomes that can be used to support decisions about the equitable use of urban space.

The qualitative community engagement & feedback review (begins on Page 4) – conducted by ISEED, Popuphood, Eric Arnold, Asian Health Services, and Khepera Consulting – is based on an extensive review of all community outreach/engagement documents and feedback to date (see full list on page 5), as well as The Plan Alternatives Report and the Existing Conditions Report. This review pays careful attention to the meanings people attach to their experiences with the planning process to date, and in Downtown Oakland in general, in order to paint the most holistic and comprehensive picture of community voice in Downtown Oakland.

The technical analysis (begins on page 19) – conducted by PolicyLink, Center for Social Inclusion, and Mesu Strategies – is based on a deep analysis of two documents: The Plan Alternatives Report and the Existing Conditions Report, and a crosswalk with the rich community data. The technical analysis includes recommendations for augmenting data analyses and policy language, and offers data improvements for select data points (where existing data improvements are readily available), provides visionary anchors for the specific plan, and makes recommendations for action.

The following common principles emerged from both reviews:

1. Build from a strong understanding of the Oakland community by

- Including the interests of Chinatown, West Oakland, Koreatown, and East Oakland in the development of an equitable Downtown for all Oaklanders
- Creating a community-based road map for long-term neighborhood growth and development that can be a model for other communities and neighborhood planning efforts

2. Reinforce the structural integrity of downtown as the heart of Oakland by

- Including an impact assessment that takes into account Downtown Oakland's current and future communities (including non profit and other direct service providers, artists, cultural diversity, and youth/youth spaces that are being displaced or at risk of displacement)
 - Mapping existing cultural assets, and developing strategies that help to stabilize and reinforce the character of the community. These strategies should be intersectional within city departments, aligned with community needs/concerns, and incorporate ongoing community input.
- Ensuring that low income and communities of color are connected to downtown through transit access, programming, and employment opportunities.

3. Guide equitable development throughout downtown Oakland by

- Ensuring long-term government accountability to community residents by embedding community voice institutionally into decision-making processes. For example through a community steering committee that is comprised of local leaders and organizations with a rich history serving the community, the Community Steering Committee would review the community's needs and concerns, then approve the Downtown Specific Proposed Plan
- Developing implementable/actionable policies, permitting, guidelines and incentives to preserve existing affordable and public housing, and build new, permanently affordable housing stock with integrated income levels throughout the downtown for young adults, seniors and families
- Developing guidelines for new projects that reflect the needs of Oakland's small businesses and entrepreneurs along national trends: smaller more affordable startup spaces, limited parking requirements, more flexible and hybrid zoning for light industrial with retail frontage, and flex spaces for expansion. With the best distribution centers on the west coast, Oakland is not doing enough to retain, attract, and support the needs of start-ups for manufacturing in food and tech hardware. Many affordable industrial maker-spaces are being replaced with unaffordable condos, further limiting the supply.
- Informing the City's zoning process as related to small locally owned businesses, non-profit and direct service providers, affordable housing, arts/arts districts, cultural diversity, elders, homelessness and general neighborhood planning, project and policy initiatives.

4. Foster and grow the economic inclusion of Oakland's diverse cultural communities by

- Including a combination of short- and long-term projects and policies that preserve the cultural diversity of Downtown Oakland (specifically) and Oakland (in general), including the ability for long-term residents (both individuals and organizations) to stay in the neighborhood and enjoy the benefits of neighborhood change.
- Including a human capital development plan that is aligned with any economic development plans which focuses on the economic advancement of the most vulnerable Oakland residents
- Expanding the existing base of engaged residents ready to activate collectively for community needs in Downtown Oakland and beyond. Action steps should include ongoing opportunities for community participation, such as Town Hall meetings, interactive workshops, panel discussions, cultural celebrations, film screenings, block parties, performances, etc., which enhance residents' sense of ownership and involvement in DTO planning and processes.
- Establishing a framework for expanding existing and recruiting new businesses that offer family supporting wages and value inclusion.
- Additionally, diverse cultural assets should be emphasized and leveraged to maximize community interest and engagement.

Please see both the technical review and qualitative community engagement & feedback review below, and let us know if you have any questions.

Best,
The **Equity in Oakland** Team



PART ONE
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/FEEDBACK REVIEW

Prepared by
ISEEED, Popuphood, Asian Health Services, Eric Arnold, and Khepera Consulting

Submitted by
Equity in Oakland
May 1, 2017

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Introduction

The changing communities of Oakland are frequently shaped by broad economic and social trends, which in turn impact local residents and small businesses who often struggle to remain. Forces of gentrification are negatively impacting our city and our communities, often leading to the displacement of existing residents, who are unable to reap the benefits of these changes. Locally owned shops close because they can't afford increases in rent; the empty lot next door is suddenly developed into luxury housing; a school loses funding for an arts program; the mercado that used to serve the community exits and a more expensive one enters. Communities must advocate for their own needs amidst changing environments.

And we must do this together.

Through engagement, outreach, organization, and utilizing a community-driven process, we can develop a plan for Downtown Oakland's future that will place the needs of the community front and center.

The creation of the Equity Team brings together local stakeholders to craft a process that identifies broad community development goals and specific needs, all informed through rich community engagement.

Our goals are to inform the development of a comprehensive vision for our community, which should direct City planning, policy and resources for years to come.

We begin with a SWOT analysis of the existing work conducted to date by the City of Oakland, Dover Kohl, Strategic Economics, Opticos, Toole, and many other partners on the Downtown Specific Plan.

We evaluated this work through an equity lens, with a focus on the needs of the most vulnerable Oakland residents, and a goal to better prepare our community for the growth and changes that continue to shape community in Downtown Oakland and beyond.

Methods

This SWOT analysis represents our analysis and impressions through the lenses of equity, community engagement, and outreach.

The documents reviewed in this SWOT analysis include:

- 1) Existing Conditions Report
- 2) Plan Alternatives Report
- 3) Stakeholder Meetings Attendance Tracking List
- 4) Full Comments Document
- 5) Final Draft List of CAG Participants
- 6) Full Contact List
- 7) Equity Working Group Meeting Notes (7/2015)
- 8) Affordable Housing Strategy Outline (Strategic Economics)
- 9) Stakeholder Interview Memo (I-SEEED)
- 10) Summary of Feedback from SpeakUp Website (provided by Dover Kohl)
- 11) Notes and Questions from Stakeholder Meetings (provided by Dover Kohl)
- 12) Notes and Materials from September 1 Kick Off Event (provided by Dover Kohl)
- 13) Open House Pictures/Notes (provided by Dover Kohl)
- 14) Open House - Community Comments on Boards (provided by Dover Kohl)
- 15) Hands-on Design Session - Materials and Notes (provided by Dover Kohl)
- 16) Post-Charrette stakeholder notes and meetings (provided by Dover Kohl)
- 17) Oakland School of the Arts input document (provided by Dover Kohl)
- 18) Input received via email document (provided by Dover Kohl)
- 19) External documents (including SPUR DTO [study](#); local media reporting, such as East Bay Express/KQED/Oakland Tribune)

All of the materials were reviewed independently by I-SEEED, Popuphood, Asian Health Services, Khepera, and Eric Arnold.

After the initial independent review - team members came together to share findings and identify common themes for further analysis and exploration.

Mutually agreed identified themes were distilled into key findings and recommendations that are organized as follows:

- 1) Overall Impressions
- 2) Community Feedback (Findings and Recommendations)
- 3) Community Outreach and Engagement Practices (Findings and Recommendations)

This document was reviewed by PolicyLink, Center for Social Inclusion, and Mesu Strategies and their feedback incorporated into this final memo.

Overall Impressions

After an initial review a few key questions emerged:

- How is the plan weighing needs/usage of DTO residents and business owners with residents of other neighborhoods and visitors
- How can we create a Downtown Specific Plan that reflects the needs of and benefits the Council Districts which are not D2/D3?
- How can implementation of a Downtown Specific Plan be inclusive/intersectional while maintaining equity lens for the most vulnerable populations?
- How can Community Leaders (i.e. CAG, others) in the Downtown Planning Process be revitalized/further engaged?
- What are the short-term and long-term ways that downtown can be kept affordable for living and working? While also meeting the needs of low-income to mixed-income levels?
- How can arts be prioritized and leveraged as an economic engine for growth? How should the DTO incorporate the creativity in Oakland to design solutions for the development, engagement, and retention of vulnerable populations? How can the DTO plan area, and plan itself better represent, support, and increase the visibility of Oakland's diverse creative communities? What assets (social, cultural, economic) already exist in the Oakland Downtown community? How can we protect those that are threatened with displacement, raising rents and costs, and other forces?
- What lessons can be learned from LMASP, WOSP, and Broadway-Valdez SP (i.e., enforceable recommendations around Affordable Housing, specific equity-driven initiatives)?
- How can existing models of diversity, multiculturalism, inclusion, intersectionality, etc., in DTO be leveraged to increase equitable outcomes?
- Many viable solutions already exist in the document and public comment review - How do we prioritize these solutions through the lens of equity?

Further based on our initial review we recommend that the Downtown Specific Plan should:

1. Include the interests of Chinatown, West Oakland, Koreatown, and East Oakland in the development of an equitable Downtown for all Oaklanders
2. Include a combination of short- and long-term projects and policies that preserve the cultural diversity of Downtown Oakland (specifically) and Oakland (in general), including the ability for long-term residents (both individuals and organizations) to stay in the neighborhood and enjoy the benefits of neighborhood change.

3. Ensure long-term government accountability to community residents by embedding community voice institutionally into decision-making processes. For example through a community steering committee that is comprised of local leaders and organizations with a rich history serving the community, the Community Steering Committee would review the community's needs and concerns, then approve the Downtown Specific Proposed Plan.
4. Include an impact assessment that takes into account Downtown Oakland's current and future communities (including non profit and other direct service providers, artists, cultural diversity, small business, and youth/youth spaces that are being displaced or at risk of displacement)
5. **Workforce Development:** Include a human capital development plan which outline a **jobs and entrepreneurship pipeline** that is aligned with the investments made in developing business sectors including office and manufacturing outlined in an updated economic development plan to prioritize the advancement of the most vulnerable Oakland residents.
6. **Commercial real estate:** Develop guidelines for new projects that reflect the needs of Oakland's small businesses and entrepreneurs along national trends: smaller more affordable startup spaces, limited parking requirements, more flexible and hybrid zoning for light industrial with retail frontage, and flex spaces for expansion. With the best distribution centers on the west coast, Oakland is not doing enough to retain, attract, and support the needs of start-ups for manufacturing in food and tech hardware. Many affordable industrial maker-spaces are being replaced with unaffordable condos, further limiting the supply.
7. **Housing:** Develop implementable/actionable policies, permitting, guidelines, and incentives to preserve existing affordable and public housing, and build new, permanently affordable housing stock with integrated income levels throughout the downtown for young adults, seniors, and families. The Plan Alternatives report does not reflect the texture vibrancy of Oakland, there is a lack of familiarity with the history, cultural resources, and artistic production in Downtown Oakland. This lack of representation of the historic and cultural resources of the neighborhood make them more vulnerable to threats. Further, many buildings and spaces in the neighborhood that capture the unique historical and cultural significance of Downtown Oakland are threatened by new development and physical change. Residents risk losing representations of their heritage as the neighborhood gentrifies. As changes to the built environment occur, it will be important to map existing cultural assets, and develop strategies that help to stabilize and reinforce the character of the community. These

strategies should be intersectional within city departments, aligned with community needs/concerned, and incorporate ongoing community input.

8. Create a community-based road map for long-term neighborhood growth and development that can be a model for other communities and neighborhood planning efforts.
9. Expand existing base of engaged residents ready to activate collectively for community needs in Downtown Oakland and beyond. Action steps should include ongoing opportunities for community participation, such as Town Hall meetings, interactive workshops, panel discussions, cultural celebrations, film screenings, block parties, performances, etc., which enhance residents' sense of ownership and involvement in DTO planning and processes. Additionally, diverse cultural assets should be emphasized and leveraged to maximize community interest and engagement.
10. Establish a framework for expanding existing and recruiting new businesses that offer family supporting wages and value inclusion.

Below we more deeply explore recommendations/findings from our SWOT analysis on two fronts:

1. **Community Feedback** - analysis of prominent themes emerging in community feedback to date
2. **Community Outreach/Engagement** - analysis of community engagement and outreach practices/process to date

1. Community Feedback: Recommendations/Findings

Based on our review of community feedback the Equity Team identified the following as top areas in need for further development in the Downtown Oakland Specific Planning Process:

1. Affordable Housing and Displacement
2. Equity, Diversity, Arts & Culture
3. Creative placemaking, including adapting innovative public art models
4. Policies and pipelines for micro, nano, and Small & Local Business, Arts & Nonprofit Organizations, Entrepreneurship, and Local Economic Development, careful consideration of enterprise zones, i.e. the necessity for a youth zone
5. Invest in Existing Cultural Assets and Arts Districts
6. Leverage cultural arts as a driver of economic development, tourism, and residents' sense of belonging
7. Homelessness
8. Youth development/youth services/youth-oriented venues
9. Inclusion/leveraging of LGBTQi population
10. Engagement of Council Districts other than D2/D3 as DTO stakeholders
11. Enhance "public safety" in a restorative justice sense in DTO without creating additional inequitable/exclusionary outcomes (i.e. profiling)

Overall, respondents felt that Downtown Oakland is a special place because of its diversity, arts, festivals, and cultural vibrancy; the history of the neighborhood and the sense of community.

One community member notes,

"I value the community and hard-working, community-oriented, artistic and working class (extremely low-income) people. I love the history and ethnic diversity. I would love for it to support more residential (less crowded) become more family focused."

Affordable housing, equity, the need for good, local and living wage jobs, education opportunities and youth programs emerged as the most important to have in the neighborhood. Community members also noted that clear solutions for these issues are currently missing from the design process to date for the Downtown Specific Plan.

Accordingly, community members are most concerned about the rising cost of housing, displacement of the poor, working class and seniors and losing cultural connections and diversity.

The most prevalent changes that community members observed include the construction of more luxury housing, opening of high-end restaurants and bars, rent increases and not enough affordable housing, demographic changes in public spaces, restaurants, retail, and bars, and an overall displacement of residents (with African Americans being displaced from Downtown at a higher rate than any other ethnic group)

Many community members, particularly low-income people of color, youth, and long-term residents, characterize the changes in the neighborhood as “bad” - when asked about the changes in Downtown Oakland over the past 5 years, one community member notes,

“I have noticed a disregard for community needs. People want to profit off the community without input from its residents, artists, long-time workers and business owners.”

Contributing to this sentiment are issues of police discrimination in Downtown Oakland - a East Bay Express [feature](#) article published 4/26/17, documented apparent instances of discriminatory OPD policies targeting hip-hop events and POC-owned venues in DTO. As stated by attorney Dan Siegel, these policies may be in violation of constitutional First Amendment protections, uphold a racially-disparate double standard, and do not reflect good faith efforts by the city to cultivate an inclusionary and diverse downtown.

Of those who thought changes were “good,” many were white, newer residents, or represented white organizations and communities, who noted renovation of buildings and new businesses as reasons why the changes were good.

Youth, in particular, noted that they did not feel welcome Downtown. The majority of the youth representatives consulted, reported that they all had experienced having security guards and businesses yell at them, kick them out of public spaces (even Oakland School for the Arts students who were playing dodgeball in Frank H. Ogawa Plaza during PE with adult supervision). One youth noticed, “As the neighborhood changes, there has been increased police presence” (good for safety, bad for racial profiling and increased tensions).

Youth also noted that people in East Oakland in general don't even call the area Downtown because it's not relevant to them –

“they think of it as the wealthy part of Oakland...why would they go Downtown for a \$11 burrito when they can get a better one for \$6 in East Oakland?”

- which highlights the importance of building a Downtown Specific Plan that is relevant and responsive to all Oaklanders.

Youth - among other groups - also called out the perceived rise of homelessness in Downtown Oakland as well as Oakland more broadly. Important suggestions to address this issue include: developing a plan for the homeless population to achieve stable housing; providing drug rehab centers, particularly to address the needs of people who are homeless due to drug addiction; addressing the mental health issues that have often left untreated patients in the streets.

The Equity Team noted that the voices of homeless individuals themselves were under-represented in the comments to date and below have provided a deeper dive into homelessness as an issue, as well as the 4 other key issue areas that emerged from our SWOT analysis of Community Feedback to date:

- **Affordable Housing and Displacement** - The need for affordable housing and rising rent, as well as displacement of families and loss of neighborhood character, emerged as a top issue of concern for community members. It was a top response when communities were asked about most important issues in the community; what was missing from the planning process so far, what changes have happened in the past five years and how these changes have been good or bad. Community members that are people of color, low-income, artists, and/or have lived in the neighborhood for over 5 years were particularly interested in this issue.
- **Equity, Diversity, and Culture** - Overwhelmingly community members think that diversity, customs, arts and culture make Oakland special. As one community member shares “What makes Oakland special for me is the multicultural community. I value the richness of the culture in our community.” And when asked what concerns they had about Downtown Oakland, one community member shared, “That they are creating space that will benefit specifically upper middle class, tech companies, and white folks and that they will market the culture of Oakland but push out the generations and

ethnic groups that created the culture.” Based on this feedback - we recommend not only a racial and social equity lens on the Downtown Oakland Specific Plan process, but also impact assessments of the potential loss of racial groups, arts groups, and other culture-serving individuals and organizations on Downtown Oakland.

- **Small & Local Business, Arts & Non-profit Organizations, and Local Economic Development** - Growth of opportunities for local businesses, artists, non-profits, and community serving organizations emerged as another top priority issue for community members Respondents also noted more upscale businesses in the neighborhood over the past five years but reported wanting more supermarkets, ethnic food markets and farmer’s markets as well as more artistic outlets and clinics and preventative medical facilities (Though affordability of these outlets is important to consider as one community member noted: *“I am concerned that many residents will no longer be able to afford fruits/veg/healthy foods when more high -income families and expensive stores move into the neighborhood.”*)
- **Invest in Existing Cultural Assets and Arts Zones** - Several Arts Districts/Cultural Zones already exist in DTO (Jack London, Chinatown, Garage, KONO, BAMBD, 15th St. galleries). Economic development initiatives promoting small business cultivation and cultivation of culturally-specific retail which leverage these Arts Districts and existing cultural resources, should be implemented. These initiatives should be coordinated with existing and future city mechanisms (Cultural Plan, Public Art Fund, Cultural Funding Program) and/or combined with capital campaigns around existing cultural institutions on city-owned property (Malonga, OACC). Additionally, community feedback called for the creation of a comprehensive, interactive Cultural and Creative Assets Map encompassing the formally and informally adopted existing cultural districts.
- **Homelessness** - Homelessness in Oakland is on the rise and is an acute outcome of larger trends including rise in cost of living, displacement, and new Oaklanders attitudes towards the homeless. To date, data and analyses on homelessness in the Downtown Planning process has been limited, and the inclusion of the voices of homeless individuals has been non-existent. There is an opportunity to include the homeless population more intentionally in the Downtown Planning process as this issue continues to rise in severity in Oakland and beyond.

2. Community Outreach & Engagement: (Recommendations/Findings)

After conducting a SWOT analysis - the equity team proposes a community outreach and engagement strategy that has three goals: 1) expand and deepen the public conversation—already underway since 2015—about the Planning of Downtown Oakland; 2) break down barriers, foster collaboration, empower artists and grassroots cultural leaders, and mobilize the cultural community for collective action. The process should be designed to build a base of engagement and stimulate the kind of collaboration that will be needed to realize the collective vision articulated in the final Downtown Oakland Specific Plan; and 3) third, create a strategic framework for strengthening equity in the Downtown Specific Plan, and in Oakland more broadly. This framework is intended to highlight needs, articulate opportunities, and identify ways of deploying both existing and new resources to make Oakland’s long-term residents, grassroots leaders, small business, nonprofit and arts and culture sector stronger, more sustainable, more diverse, and more widely accessible.

We recommend a planning process that is rooted in the following shared values:

- openness and transparency
- inclusiveness
- creativity/creative placemaking
- collaboration
- equity
- diversity
- participation

More specifically, we present the following observations and recommendations to inform Outreach and Engagement in the Downtown Specific Plan moving forward:

1. **Focus on Depth (as well as Breadth)** - Outreach to date has covered a large breadth of Downtown Oakland interests ranging from developers, the urban planning community, small business owners, and grassroots coalitions. Moving forward the equity team recommends focusing on depth of engagement into sectors that have been less representative and/or are particularly vulnerable (i.e. artists, nonprofit/direct service providers, seniors, disabled, Chinatown, Koreatown, youth, the homeless) by creating intentional opportunities for ongoing and deep dialogue through a combination of online, creative, and offline engagement. We also recommend expanding the breadth of engagement to neighborhoods, organizations, and

individuals outside of Downtown Oakland. In the feedback comments reviewed, a resonating point is that the Oakland community wants a Downtown that serves, and represents everyone. However feedback also revealed that currently many people don't feel welcome in the neighborhood or don't feel opportunities exist for them in Downtown Oakland.

2. **Intentionally Engage Arts & Culture** - Local artists and arts and culture organizations struggle to engage in planning processes. Many times these groups don't have an overarching coalition that could advocate for space, sources of funding, and other forms of support. And even when a coalition exists - often other interests with stronger economic connections win out. Without an intentional focus on engaging and preserving arts and cultural resources as a part of the Downtown Specific Plan it may be difficult to sustain the arts and cultural network.
3. **Non-profit/Direct-Service Providers** - Rising rents have also threatened the cluster of non-profit direct service providers who work with at-risk youth populations, the majority of which are youth of color. Impacts of displacement of these service providers could have detrimental effects in areas like workforce development, health, public safety and Commercially Sexually Exploited Children. In addition the displacement of nonprofit and direct service providers could result in a ripple effect where the individuals who are served by those organizations no longer come to Downtown Oakland because their service providers have moved - thus impacting overall diversity and cultural vibrancy in Downtown and contributing to a sentiment that "Downtown isn't for everyone". Therefore, efforts should be made to engage non-profit stakeholders in Downtown Oakland to better understand how to retain them as part of an overall anti-displacement and equitable development strategy.
4. **Barriers to Attendance and Engagement:** Barriers to attending community events are complex and differ according to neighborhood and income level. The obstacles cited most commonly by lower income Oakland residents included transportation challenges, lack of social support (e.g., no one to go with), and lack of time due to work/childcare obligations. Many of the public events held by the Downtown Specific Plan Team to date were held in Downtown Oakland - limiting access to Oaklanders who live/learn/work in other Oakland neighborhoods. One strategy to encourage a diversity of engagement options and participation in community events, is to engage community leaders to plan and lead community events themselves.

5. **Access to Information:** Various groups expressed a desire for a more robust and accessible information network, for a variety of reasons. Oakland residents described a need for better ways to learn about ways to get engaged as well as receive updates about the planning process. They expressed that the current City of Oakland website, was often challenging to navigate, and not easily accessible on mobile phones. Additionally, community members shared that there many folks in the community with low literacy levels, or who are non-english speakers. To better reach this population - as well as all populations generally, information and communication overall needs to be simplified in lay-person language and translated in an accurate manner, both in print materials and in meetings, to enable non-english speakers the opportunity to effectively share their input.

6. **Equity and Opportunity:** Participants in the engagement process seek equitable recognition and respect for diverse cultural heritages and artistic practices in Oakland. They see a number of complex issues standing in the way, particularly racism and widening income disparities. People spoke of the need for several specific improvements in equity and opportunity within the Downtown Oakland, including: more funding opportunities for small organizations and community-based activities; more recognition and valuing of neighborhood cultural assets; and greater exposure to small business, retail, youth serving organizations, and others representative of diverse cultures.



PART TWO TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

Prepared by
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Submitted by
Equity in Oakland
May 1, 2017

Securing an Equitable Future for Oakland through the
DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN

PROJECT LAUNCH ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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1. CONTEXT: DOWNTOWN OAKLAND SPECIFIC PLAN

The City of Oakland is working on a plan to develop land use and transportation goals, policies and programs to guide the development of downtown Oakland for the next 20 years. The Downtown Oakland Specific Plan represents “the sixth specific plan undertaken in recent years and the first ever for downtown.” The aim is to benefit both downtown residents and the larger community by engaging residents and identifying local priorities.

The City planning process launched in 2015 with support from consultants Dover Kohl of Miami, FL. In the early stages of planning, social equity emerged as a community priority, prompting the City to bring on an Equity Team organized by the Institute for Sustainable Economic, Educational and Environmental Development (ISEEED). The Equity in Oakland Team’s efforts are focused on integrating equity as a priority in the community engagement process related to the policy update, as well as inserting equity into the technical aspects of the policy content.

In March 2017, Dover Kohl provided the Equity in Oakland team with an Existing Conditions Report (ECR) and Plan Alternatives Report (PAR) developed for the Downtown Oakland Specific Plan in 2016. Helping launch the effort to augment equity in the Downtown Specific Plan, the Equity in Oakland’s Technical Team reviewed and analyzed these materials to identify strengths and gaps and make recommendations for future efforts. This document represents findings and recommendations from that review.

2. PLANNING FOR EQUITY: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

“Equity will be realized when identity – such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or expression – has no detrimental effect on the distribution of resources, opportunities, and outcomes for groups or members in a society.”

City of Oakland Department of Race and Equity website, 2017

“Equity is the just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate and prosper.”

Angela Glover Blackwell, PolicyLink

Achieving the vision of equity requires *many actors* creating change at *all levels of systems and institutions*. It involves ensuring that mechanisms are in place to promote fair and just inclusion in any and all decisions or actions that influence community outcomes. Urban planning serves as a critical tool for advancing equity at scale. Comprehensive plans, local ordinances, zoning laws and other planning and land use policies, as well as the actions required to implement and improve them, play a key role in determining the shape and form of the built environment, and how people interact with it. They also influence what services and supports are available and accessible to communities, including such vital resources as education, jobs, and healthy foods. Local planning decisions can foster social connections, economic opportunities, and safe and healthy living in and across a jurisdiction’s communities, or they can inhibit them.

Ensuring that all residents in a municipality have a fair shot at opportunity requires careful consideration of who benefits from the decisions about planning policy creation and development, as well as who is involved in that decision-making. To arrive at equitable policies and practices, collaboration and diverse engagement are needed from communities and across sectors, as well as within and across government agencies.

There has been a new surge of attention on equity-focused planning in recent years. Two cities – Seattle, Washington and Richmond, California – have pioneered equity-focused

planning in different ways over the past decade, and offer rich lessons for Oakland. In Seattle, local leaders adopted a resolution^[1] declaring race, social equity and equitable development to be pillars^[2] for their Comprehensive Plan update. Agencies worked in collaboration with communities to define, review, and refine analyses and policy language. The final plan included explicit consideration and attention to racial equity in its growth scenario analyses^[3] and each of its elements^[4]. Richmond's General Plan update process began in 2006 with goals to be the first city in California to address issues related to health equity. The Plan was ultimately adopted in 2011, but not until extensive planning and piloting of implementation projects across the city. In this time, significant investments were made in developing City leadership, building staff capacity to understand and address issues of equity, and outreaching to the community both directly and through existing partnerships. Today, the City is well into its implementation process, and is recognized nationally for its leadership with Health In All Policies (HIAP) efforts tied to equity.^[5]

Planning policy updates -- such as general plan updates and the creation of specific plans -- serve as critical opportunities for cities to build upon these cutting-edge examples, innovate and push the front edge of equity-oriented work. Cities across the nation are working to identify assets and overcome challenges related to growing income inequality, aging infrastructure, shifting economic and political forces, and the pressures of gentrification and displacement. Strategies that can successfully build upon the priorities of local communities to develop and grow -- by institutionalizing community priorities and solutions -- will serve as important mechanisms for healthy, sustainable growth for all.

3. EQUITY DOWNTOWN: OVERARCHING VISION AND GOALS FOR AN EQUITY-FOCUSED PLAN

As the home to some of the most prominent social justice coalitions and advocates in the country, both now and historically, Oakland is widely recognized for its leadership on equity efforts and innovation. The Downtown Oakland Specific Plan could help to concretize that leadership, both literally and figuratively. The plan sets development goals and criteria, and will guide changes to the built environment that will have ripple effects on the local economy, culture, and social environments for the next twenty years and beyond. Incorporating equity into goals and criteria through processes that both draw from and foster the leadership of Oakland communities will ensure that downtown serves as a central resource and support to residents of the area and the larger Oakland community. Success could also set the stage for other municipalities to follow suit.

Oakland's downtown is the heart of the city; its cultural, commercial, and central artery system. The downtown plan should have an outsize role in delivering on the long term health and vitality of the Oakland community. This calls for centering community in the foundational analyses and assumptions of the plan, building inclusive processes with careful consideration to who lives in and accesses the city, and creating and sustaining conditions that promote equitable outcomes for the city. Specifically, the plan should:

- A. Build from a strong understanding of the Oakland community, including:**
 - a. Which populations live in and access the city**
 - b. Differences they experience in community conditions, and the historic and institutional roots for those differences**
 - c. Commonalities and differences in priorities and concerns related to growth and development**

- B. Reinforce the structural integrity of downtown as the heart of Oakland by:**
 - a. Prioritizing health and wellbeing, and embedding the range of services needed to meet the needs of Oakland residents**
 - b. Supporting and building upon Oakland's strong cultural assets**
 - c. Strengthening downtown's role as a central connector for Oakland's many diverse neighborhoods**

- C. Guide equitable development throughout downtown Oakland:**
 - a. Establish policies that allow all populations to utilize the downtown area**
 - b. Target populations traditionally disconnected from the City's economic growth to benefit from future downtown investments in housing, public infrastructure, and economic development**
 - c. Develop actionable approaches to preserve existing affordable and public housing and small business interests**
 - d. Incentivize developers and employers to prioritize community benefits in all downtown Oakland projects, with a particular emphasis on those involving public investment**

- D. Foster and grow the economic inclusion of Oakland's diverse cultural communities:**
 - a. Include a combination of short- and long-term projects and policies that preserve the cultural diversity of Downtown Oakland, including the ability for long-**

term residents (both individuals and organizations) to stay in the neighborhood and enjoy the benefits of neighborhood change.

b. Include a human capital development plan that is aligned with any economic development plans which focuses on the economic advancement of the most vulnerable Oakland residents

c. Expand existing base of engaged residents ready to activate collectively for community needs in Downtown Oakland and beyond

4. 2016 SPECIFIC PLAN: ANALYSIS OF PROGRESS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

This SWOT analysis builds upon the principles for equity outlined in Section 2 of this report, is organized by the visionary anchors for the specific plan outlined in Section 3, and includes some of the summary details from analyses laid out in Appendices I, II, and III. Each of these sections offer an array of recommendations for consideration. While selecting specific strategies on an individual basis from this analysis will be helpful, we recommend a coordinated approach to implementing this suite of recommendations, since no one section includes all recommendations. It also draws from available existing data, and makes recommendations for action, including recommendations for gathering additional data.

Vision A:

The plan should build from a strong understanding of the Oakland community, including:

- a. Which populations live in, and access the city**
- b. Differences they experience in community conditions, and the historic and institutional roots for those differences**
- c. Commonalities and differences in priorities and concerns related to growth and development**

Analysis:

The Existing Conditions Analysis and Plan Alternatives Report draw more from standard analyses of the economic and built environments (e.g., hotel markets, treescapes), than they do an understanding of the soul of the city: its people, history, and culture, and how these are relevant to the city overall. Though the people, history, and culture of Oakland are prominently named in the vision for Downtown, there is little specificity and definition around what these ideas mean, what they represent to different groups within the city, and what

implications these ideas have for multiple aspects of planning. This issue manifests in both the technical analyses of existing conditions (e.g., describing who lives where, what their needs and priorities are), as well as the illustrations of plan alternatives (e.g., how plans will address issues of displacement, affordability, cultural inclusion).

Recommendations:

Augment existing data to deepen understanding of Oakland community composition and needs. Data should include a focus on who lives here, has housing security, and where they and future residents fit in the trajectory of development, both underway and imagined. There should be good information describing the provision and utilization of health, educational, and other social services. There should also be a strong analysis of sectors of the economy operating downtown; the informal and entrepreneurial economy of downtown that is prosperously driven by the creatives among us and those locked out of the formal economy; and the displacement pressures or actualizations of nonprofit and cultural organizations.

An analysis of opportunities for data augmentation are outlined in Appendix II, with some known available data presented in Appendix III. We propose utilizing citywide baseline equity data to inform the tactical, business and strategic direction for downtown uses and drive the city's focus on the residents, neighborhoods, organizations, businesses, and industries' that can help achieve an inclusive vision and reduce the current glaring disparities. Looking at racial wage and income gaps, transit dependency, housing cost burdens, under- and unemployment, rates of youth disconnection--all of these baselines should inform the focus of efforts for equity and inclusion in a thriving downtown.

These analyses should be seen as a starting point for data analysis, not the limitations. There are many opportunities to leverage additional data sources,^[6] and to innovate, particularly given the rich explosion of available data in recent years.

Vision B:

The plan should reinforce the structural integrity of downtown as the heart of Oakland by:

- a. Prioritizing health and wellbeing, and embedding the range of services needed to meet the needs of Oakland residents**
- b. Supporting and building upon Oakland's strong cultural assets**
- c. Strengthening downtown's role as a central connector for Oakland's many diverse neighborhoods**

Analysis:

a. The relationship between place, planning, and civic and social services is lost in this plan

The description of social and civic services in the role of downtown in this plan seems limited. Beyond some brief overviews of the utility of government buildings near Frank Ogawa Plaza, and the prominence of health and education services, there is little detail regarding the quality, character and use of downtown as a central resource for Oakland's communities. The extent to which people in Oakland and across the Bay rely upon the civic services provided there, as well as other social, economic, medical and other health services in the greater downtown, is lost in this plan. Downtown's built environment, its accessibility via transit, and its proximity to other neighborhoods serve as the bedrock upon which the success of these services rest. Much of the city's community, health, emergency and safety services find their home in downtown, and as a result, a significant population of Oakland's residents find their livelihoods there.

b. The vision around utilizing the arts seems limited and geared towards gentrification

The ways in which art is discussed sounds like a way to attract new residents and to simply enhance buildings. Art should be discussed more as a reflection of current residents and maintaining cultural identity and creating cultural cohesion. When neighborhoods change, new amenities tend to cater to more affluent residents, changing the important cultural environment and identity of the neighborhood that long-term residents have come to know. Such "psychological displacement" can cause longtime low-income and working-class residents to feel disconnected from the places they have called home for years.

c. The plan does not recognize the critical value of its bordering neighborhoods, including Chinatown, West Oakland, East Oakland, the Lake Merritt district and downtown's connections to the lake itself

The neighborhoods bordering downtown draw from and build upon the resources downtown in a variety of ways. For many, the boundaries separating downtown from Chinatown or downtown from West Oakland are not clear. Though Lake Merritt offers a clear environmental boundary, given the perimeter of the lake, its neighborhoods are not wholly separate from downtown. However, in the plan, it is discussed in terms of connecting people to offices and coffee shops, but there is no vision for how people who may be walking the lake or enjoying the open space, may be better connected to or drawn to the downtown area. Particularly since environmental sustainability and open space & recreation are included in the vision for the downtown, there seems to be a missed opportunity around thinking about the fact that people

come from different parts of Oakland to spend time by the lake and how the connections between the lake and downtown might impact planning for the downtown.

Recommendations:

Recognize this plan as an opportunity to promote health and prosperity among Oakland's communities over the long term. Make all data analyses and policy decisions with consideration to potential health outcomes for current populations. Develop analyses of the health and wellbeing conditions of Oakland residents, and disaggregate by place, race, age and ability. Analyze availability, type, and usage of health and social services -- as well as related needs -- as robustly as the housing conditions and development analyses.

To ensure that a community is engaged in the process of change and growth, investing in the artistic, cultural, and entrepreneurial expressions of existing neighborhoods can help stabilize changing communities. Many revitalization, or area specific, plans result in tax breaks for new businesses, often resulting in the pricing out longstanding cultural businesses; or in demolition of the buildings they occupy, without plans for keeping them anchored. Part of the vision should be to create incentives for these businesses to stay, technical assistance support, and access to capital and business planning to keep their businesses resilient.

The Oakland Museum, which has been working to address equity through programming, procurement and partnerships with community based organizations is one source to draw from. Its 2013 Neighborhood Identity Project^[7] aimed to understand the needs and values of specific Oakland neighborhoods with the goal of strengthening ties between these communities and the Museum. The included communities were: Oakland Chinatown, West Oakland, Downtown and Uptown, and the San Antonio and Fruitvale neighborhoods. These areas are in close proximity to the Museum (and Downtown), and participants were asked to share the unique strengths and challenges that shape their neighborhood, and identify roles the museum could play to strengthen community. A second project underway is to better knit together the connections between the museum, the courthouse, and other county services in the 12th St. corridor, connecting these anchors with the lake and downtown. These processes should be connected to the Downtown Specific Plan in so far as it advances equity and opportunity.

The Oakland Cultural Neighborhoods Coalition brings together all of the cultural arts organizations that serve communities of color and advocates for the stabilization of their respective cultural communities that are facing both residential and creative space displacement. They have been the key advocacy force for advancing a cultural plan for the city,

which is now beginning. OCNC's vision for anchoring cultural communities should be incorporated into concrete action steps in the final downtown plan.

Vision C: The plan should guide equitable development

- a. **Establish policies that allow all populations to utilize the downtown area**
- b. **Target populations traditionally disconnected from the City's economic growth to benefit from future downtown investments in housing, public infrastructure, and economic development**
- c. **Develop actionable approaches to preserve existing affordable and public housing and small business interests**
- d. **Incentivize developers and employers to prioritize community benefits in all downtown Oakland projects, with a particular emphasis on those involving public investment**

Analysis:

Much recent research concludes that more equitable economies demonstrate greater growth and stronger prosperity of places and populations. Framing an equitable pathway for downtown needs to prioritize the preservation of existing uses that serve low income people and people of color, and anchor future uses that continue to prioritize and enhance these communities and residents.

With land and real estate values escalating exponentially, and many luxury developments underway and in planning phases downtown, the city can no longer ride on claims that no market development will come and therefore no requirements can be made of developers. At this juncture, the plan should frame the pathway for the City to utilize all of its investment, regulatory, and negotiation levers to ensure that an inclusive downtown will result from the development forces underway.

Recommendations:

Equitable development goals should be developed, tested with community stakeholders, and codified to drive land use, zoning, permitting, variances, community benefits, budgeting, and project prioritization and approval. Proposed goals:

- Zoning overlays should foster and protect small commercial spaces, arts and culture uses, and nonprofit occupancies. These uses should be codified in permitting for demolitions, rehabs, new construction, and in title transfers. Value capture should direct enhanced land values through City action to deliver on community benefits.
- All new downtown residential construction should contribute to the delivery of affordable housing. Inclusionary housing goals should be set at 20-25% affordable units for market construction, and for 50-100% for publicly owned properties. All affordable housing currently downtown should be prioritized for preservation.
- Alignment of bond financing, City and Housing Authority controlled HUD funds, and priority for LIHTC projects should enable these goals. Development partnerships with the Housing Authority and Oakland nonprofits should be pursued to significantly increase the new development and preservation of affordable housing, cultural space, and small business assets.
- Any demolition of rent-controlled, SRO or senior units should be replaced in the new construction, with first right of return for existing tenants.
- An inventory of public lands, tax-liened properties, and code violators within downtown boundaries should be analyzed for priority purposing to affordable housing, cultural and nonprofit spaces, and stabilization of small businesses facing displacement.
- Alignment of new development with the West Oakland Job Resource Center pipeline should connect disadvantaged Oakland workers with new development projects.
- Assess which of the major downtown employers have the capacity/willingness to align their development, investment, and hiring practices with the revised principles and priorities of the DOSP.

Vision D:

Foster and grow the economic inclusion of Oakland's diverse cultural communities

- a. **Include a combination of short- and long-term projects and policies that preserve the cultural diversity of Downtown Oakland, including the ability for long-term residents (both individuals and organizations) to stay in the neighborhood and enjoy the benefits of neighborhood change.**
- b. **Include a human capital development plan that is aligned with any economic development plans which focuses on the economic advancement of the most vulnerable Oakland residents**
- c. **Expand existing base of engaged residents ready to activate collectively for community needs in Downtown Oakland and beyond**
- d. **Articulate the role of the arts commission in setting direction for investment and preservation of the arts communities of Oakland, ensuring support for artists of color, cultural centers, and safe space for gathering, living and practicing.**

Analysis:

This document needs an explicit characterization of how current Oakland residents utilize the downtown, and how their experience can be enhanced in more of a social way than purely interacting with physical space. This includes recommendations around city policy that should be in place as the plan develops to ensure that equity is baked into the plan. Not all new development is made equal, so the plan should encourage stakeholders to raise the bar on development and set equitable development goals, which developers and employers should meet and require publicly supported projects to advance equitable development with a baseline of community benefits.

A revived arts commission with a specific focus on equity for cultural communities could play a long lasting role in monitoring the arts and culture outcomes of the downtown plan.

Recommendations:

Multiple action steps can codify ongoing opportunities for community participation and meaningful mechanisms by which the full diversity of Oakland residents influence the evolution of their downtown:

- **Consistent delivery of Town Hall meetings where feedback on actions taken and their affect for downtown residents and users can be collected and interpreted.**

- Interactive workshops, panel discussions, cultural celebrations, film screenings, block parties, performances, etc., which enhance residents' sense of ownership and involvement in DTO planning and processes.
- A revived, equity-focused arts commission that fosters safe space, affordability, and procurement with and investment in Oakland's cultural communities.
- Additionally, diverse cultural assets should be emphasized and leveraged to maximize community interest and engagement.

CONCLUSION

While the Downtown Oakland Plan Alternatives Report establishes a solid baseline for projecting a viable course for the City's investments in the coming years, there is work to be done ensuring that this becomes a vehicle to advance equity in future investments for the neighborhood. A much more incisive focus on preserving affordability, cultural assets, community services, and the diversity of small and cultural enterprises present downtown will significantly improve the opportunity to have the area simultaneously flourish and remain accessible to all of Oakland's residents. Aligning workforce systems that feed the downtown employment engine with the development that is happening and projected to occur in the coming years will anchor current residents in quality jobs, allow for a diverse mix of residents to continue participating in the Downtown Oakland experience, and ultimately contribute to a diminution of the racial wealth gap that is a drag on the City's long-term economic viability. Strengthening a concerted vision for expanding businesses that recruit good jobs and align with City's vision for inclusive economy should be the primary objective for the Downtown Plan.

APPENDIX I

PLAN ALTERNATIVES REPORT REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

This equity analysis is focused on the Plan Alternatives Report. Feedback and recommendations correspond with the existing order and sequencing of the report.

Vision for Downtown (1.8)

This is a central part of the plan, and should be refined to maximize utility and impact.

- **Strengthen the vision by offering definitions of terms used and/or clearer images of 2040.** The vision doesn't delve into meaningful detail around many of the terms included; the lack of precision leaves unnecessary room for interpretation. For example, "equitable" holds different meaning for different groups, a "robust range of opportunities for housing" is subject to interpretation, etc. In the absence of clear definitions, offer illustrative examples: what would downtown look like if it were "thriving"? (e.g., "Vision for 2040 aims for a Downtown Oakland that is *thriving, equitable, mixed-use*, offers *robust range of opportunities* for housing, business, employment, shopping, recreation, arts, and *culture*.")

- **Support the key points in the vision with corresponding analyses of existing conditions.**

The PDA Profile report leaps from traditional planning analyses (transit corridors, street tree maps, market analyses, etc.) to goals around equity, culture, and other factors for which current conditions are unclear. For example, what characteristics of Oakland's culture are worthy of naming and hopefully enhancing in the Downtown area (e.g., multiculturalism, modern activism, history of movements)? What key groups, locations, events or even themes are prominent in Oakland and the Downtown area, that might influence decisions today (e.g., Black Panthers party, post-WWII industrial growth)? (e.g., "Downtown where Oakland celebrates its *rich history*")

- **Clarify whether the origins of some of the suggestions are inferences made by the consulting firm based on community input or direct statements.** For instance, the statement that the downtown vision "invites people from every walk of life to share their sense of community" directly derived from community input? Or assumed by DK? What specific aspects of Oakland's identity or "sense of community" do current Oakland community groups want to be preserved? This comes back to clarity of definitions around equity, diversity, inclusion, and understanding who lives in the community and what their priorities are.

(e.g., "...invites people from every walk of life to share their *sense of community*...")

- ***Narrow the vision or offer some priority guiding principles for specific plan development.***

The breadth of the vision appears inclusive, but not necessarily meaningful, in its descriptions, resulting in a long list of ideas that do not necessarily set Oakland apart from another community. The last line is helpful, but otherwise, what is more important: offering a "robust range of opportunities for shopping," or making Downtown "a fun place for people of all ages"? Creating jobs that "residents are well-trained to excel in," or "seamlessly connecting districts together"?

- ***Clarity around the streetcar line – Is there an existing proposal around this?*** The report seems to tacitly endorse this idea, but it also sounds duplicative of visions for bus lines. It would be helpful to understand where this is coming from since it sounds inevitable.

Vision: Principles (1.10)

All recommendations above apply here. One additional consideration:

- ***Apply the same level of definition and analysis for issues like equity and cultural heritage as for hotel market conditions.***
- ***While affordability is an important part of equity it is not the sole measure. Defining this and determine how each proposal ties into this definition will be critical. For PolicyLink, equity is Equity should be its own goal, as it is a value that Oakland residents have held throughout the city's history.***

History (2.2)

This section is surprisingly light, especially given the importance of "history" to the vision and significance in the input provided by community.

- ***Flesh out this information to include some discussion of the city's history of people, movements, cultures, development decisions / phases, etc. Or is this available elsewhere?***

- Other issues to consider when characterizing the history of the City: Native people, growth and decline of major industries, ebb and flow of major population groups, etc. History should be a section for each of the major issue areas.
- It is also important to anchor the report in some more history of downtown and what that means for the city. For instance, Occupy Oakland was a pivotal event in the city's recent history and might have implications for how the city thinks about how it wants to interact in the area, and how Frank Ogawa Plaza can continue to be a more welcoming space and connect residents with their city government.
- Also, the history of how Lake Merritt is utilized (from Festival at the Lake to the Running Festival) is important as the lake is an asset at the edge of downtown. In many ways, Lake Merritt serves as the connective tissue between the downtown towards East Oakland as people are attracted to the lake for exercise and leisure, but this asset does not seem fully utilized or fleshed out in the plan.

Urban Infrastructure (2.4)

- **This section includes lots of data and information that appear to be transferred or recycled from the Existing Conditions Analysis.** A more thorough review of the materials from DK would cross-check the data included in the two reports, and make recommendations to ensure that all data relevant from the ECA appear in the PAR, and that any data included in the PAR is consistent with data in the ECA.
- ***Include specifics to clarify how the Specific plan process will build on work completed, and reference this along with the list of the bodies of work.***
- ***Include a table of references for where and how completed studies have informed or will inform the Specific Plan.***
- ***Opportunity Sites Analysis (2.20) should include qualitative data and specifics from the charrettes regarding community priorities related to "opportunity sites."*** If the criteria for identifying Opportunity Sites were named by community members in the charrettes, then make that clear.
- ***State the justification for criteria included in the Opportunity Sites Analysis (2.22).*** Most criteria (e.g., "buildings with blank walls") draw more from conventions around built

environment, but could do more to consider economic and social factors. For instance, identify and consider definitions of “opportunity areas” as they overlay with areas of concentrated poverty, areas of high service provision, areas of important cultural significance, areas deemed by community stakeholders to be problematic and why, etc.).

- ***How were cultural assets defined/determined (2.26)? Using what process?***
- ***Provide more information for map on page 2.27. The “Uptown Entertainment Area” with “Black Arts Movement & Business District” appear to overlap. More info?***
- ***Provide a description in the Urban Infrastructure Analysis (2.29) of existing disparities and/or inequities, so that plans can meaningfully address “equitable access.”***
The Cultural Assets discussion (2.30) provides a good example of specificity with regard to groups, making mention of “Black Culture Keepers, a group convened by Council President Gibson-McElhaney’s office.” The ECA should more clearly describe the various stakeholder groups, what areas of the city and Downtown specifically each group might be most connected to, and what power/privilege the various groups have in local political processes. Who are the cultural leaders? What are the major cultural influences and themes? How do activities (recreational, shopping, fine arts, performance arts, etc.) overlay with community understanding and use of the term “culture”?

Socioeconomic Conditions (2.31)

For this and all sections, it would be helpful to include up-front a list of the analyses covered in the section, and a justification for why those analyses were prioritized, how goals were defined, and who was defining them.

- ***Include additional information where possible regarding who lives Downtown, as well as who from Oakland accesses Downtown, and for what purposes.*** Consider: gender identity, sexual orientation, student status, usage of social supports, ability/disability, professional/work.
- ***Include additional information regarding social and cultural uses of space, in addition to residential and economic uses.*** Where are the festivals, how are civic spaces used, etc.? Who uses public spaces, for what purposes? What are the temporal qualities of space usage (e.g., weekend vs. weeknight vs. afternoon, etc.)?

- **Provide depth and detail to the assessment of socioeconomic conditions by cross referencing it with community input (2.35).** What do the trends data indicate about the residents/community members? What do the residents/community members say about the trends data?
- **Indicate specifically how the considerations named in the Neighborhood Stabilization section will be addressed in the Specific Plan (2.36).** How do the housing recommendations in each part of the plan alternatives link back to this Neighborhood Stabilization report?
- **Indicate the service needs of different subgroups in the Oakland community.** Link the service needs of the subgroups with place, to help identify important existing assets as well as “opportunity areas” for future development (2.37). What are the service needs of senior groups? How well are the schools Downtown performing? What needs to their students and families have? How are health needs being met? Where are the service providers who offer health care to those in need? Etc.
- **Discussions of “decline in Black population” are awkward (e.g., 2.51).** Address these issues more directly by referencing qualitative data regarding possible causes, priorities for change, and possible solutions.
- **Provide greater detail and specificity regarding “cultural concerns” and “clashes between newer and more established residents.”** Who do these clashes include? What does each group want? What factors are influencing who benefits, who pays, and who decides?

Process and Community Input

Many of the recommendations above apply here.

- The title of this section is “Input Shapes the Vision.” Yes, input should shape the vision. Input should also flesh out the existing conditions report, support the definitions, and inform the analyses. (3.2)

Planning and Goals

Many of the recommendations above apply here.

- ***Across all topics named in this section, the future plans could do more to integrate specific ideas, issues, and topics identified in the vision but requiring clearer definition/illustration.*** In addition to the technical recommendations and suggestions for creating built environment changes, how will other conditions (culture, history, inclusion) be addressed? Are these factors invisible or assumed to be integrated?
- ***Across all topics named in this section, the future plans could speak more to technical considerations fleshed out in the earlier parts of the report.*** How will these sections address housing, economic development, etc.? The illustrations of each neighborhood are inconsistent with one another. An overview section outlining the overall landscape would be a useful navigation tool.
- ***Include greater detail around the process with community.*** In future sessions, provide specific definitions for feedback, and pose questions for stakeholders that will generate greater clarity regarding equity and priorities. For instance: “What does an equitable downtown look like, and to whom? (Be specific.)” The levels of generality do not serve this plan.
- ***The section on Economic Development offers the most people/issue forward description of Oakland.*** More could be done in this section and especially at the beginning of the report to describe Oakland as a city comprised of people and their culture: history, art, civic engagement, recreation. It might be helpful also to compare Oakland with sister cities, to help illustrate what sets this city apart from others.

APPENDIX II

EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

Many aspects of the Existing Conditions Analysis were woven into the Plan Alternatives Report and addressed in the earlier pages. This review focuses explicitly on the role of data in describing existing and historic conditions in the area and makes recommendations for augmenting data collection and analyses in the existing materials.

Section 1: Introduction	
Data Included	Augmentation
Population increase downtown vs. city overall, 2000-2013	How have the demographics changed over time? Disaggregate by age, race, ability, gender
Demographic breakdown by race, 1990-2015	What are the changes over time? Integrate with previous indicator
Single-family households vs. families with children	What are the changes over time? Compare populations living downtown vs. those that frequently access downtown.
Percent HHs with income <\$10,000	How does the \$10,000 rate compare with area median income and levels of poverty? How has this changed over time?

Number of jobs	What are the number of jobs overall compared with those by education type? How does this compare with other timepoints or geographies (greater Oakland or comparable downtowns)? What is the change in living wage jobs over time?
Rent increases, 2010-2015	How do these figures break down by race, gender, or ability?
Section 2: History	
Data Included	Augmentation
Historic maps of downtown Oakland	Use these maps to also illustrate the social, political, and/or economic conditions in the downtown area, or use of the downtown area relative to the broader needs of the city over time.
	Include the social, political, and economic uses of the downtown area over time be included, apart from maps.
Use of term "citizens"	Small thing but worth noting: use of citizens in the current political climate is potentially exclusive. Try residents.
Section 3: Land Use, Urban Form, and Infrastructure	
Data Included	Augmentation

<p>List of references to other planning efforts (completed and pending)</p>	<p>Demarcate which aspects of each plan are considered relevant to the downtown plan. Make it easy to track/reference. If there is a hierarchy of how the plans that interact with the the DOSP, it should be clarified.</p>
<p>List of references to active projects downtown</p>	<p>Name the processes that are in place to cross-reference the named plans with the downtown plan. Detail the mechanisms that will be available to continue cross-referencing after the completion of the downtown plan.</p>
	<p>Name the intersections between the other parts of this Existing Conditions Analysis and the Plan Alternatives Report, and projects listed in this part of Section 3 (at least the parts that are not active/in flux). A table of intersections in the Appendix is recommended, or succinct tables included at the end of each section.</p>
<p>Maps of: figure ground plan, 5-minute walk, topography, flood potential, street network, off-street parking and parking facilities, general plan areas/estuary plan, histori district_API/ASI, local historic register, parks, street trees, highways and rail ROW, BART, AC Transit lines and bus stops, existing bikeways and bike parking, existing street lights, existing sidewalks, major development projects, major infrastructure projects</p>	<p>What and where are the common routes and passages for different populations within the city? What places are of high use for different subgroups (e.g., youth, families, communities of color)? What places have been identified as opportunities or problems by communities, for deterring crime or promoting health and wellbeing?</p>

<p>Scale comparison maps with: Barcelona, New Orleans, Philadelphia</p>	<p>How does the scale of Oakland compare with other west-coast cities, and in particular, cities in California?</p>
<p>Photoboards: Lake Merritt "Office District," City Center, Lakeside/Gold Coast, Jack London District, "Snow Park," Old Oakland, Uptown, Kono (Koreatown/ Northgate), West of San Pablo</p>	<p>How well do these neighborhood areas and names overlay with the community experience, and community-defined neighborhoods?</p> <p>Page 3.30: "...during the creation of the Specific Plan these areas will evolve and adjust as plan ideas begin to take shape". No mention of displacement pressures which are the driving context of this plan area.</p>
<p>Section 4: Demographic, Socio-Economic, and Market Conditions</p>	
<p>Data Included</p>	<p>Augmentation</p>
<p>Demographic, commute, and employment patterns in "greater downtown" includes plan area as well as Chinatown and a few blocks west of Highway 980</p>	<p>The analyses should include both the greater downtown area and bordering neighborhoods, such as Chinatown, West Oakland, Koreatown and East Oakland, to ensure that downtown serves the broader needs of Oakland. A brief description of how the border neighborhoods access and utilize downtown should be included.</p>

Population and households over time
Median age over time
Age distribution over time
Race and ethnicity over time
Distribution of HH income over time
(families, single HOH, other)
Distribution of HH size over time
Median HH and PC income over time

There are some interesting trends to pull out in the distribution of household income chart, but as is often the case, the data is left to the reader to interpret. (in this case, it is the significant growth of the six-figure set downtown from 6 to 16 percent of total population even as 48 percent of residents make less than \$25,000)

Disaggregate these variables by race and place, where possible, to identify clusters within downtown and the city overall. Where possible, map historic community demographic data at higher levels of geographic resolution. Maps illustrating areas of higher senior clustering, or specific subgroups, would be helpful. Also this section provides an opportunity to call out rent burden for downtown residents, particularly at the lower end of the income scale.

Explore the value of disaggregating by age, gender and ability, as well. Use income disaggregation to paint a more sophisticated picture of what is happening downtown.

Certain critical equity variables have been made available in Appendix II, such as: median hourly wage by race/ethnicity, share of workers earning at least \$15/hour by race ethnicity, % working poor, % opportunity youth (16-24 yo not working or in school), educational attainment and projected state/national level job education requirements by race/ethnicity and nativity

<p>Employment and commute patterns based on CA EDD and US Census LEHD and industry groups (NAICS), including: education and health services; production, distribution and repair (PDR); office-based; retail and entertainment</p>	<p>Include sector analyses that describes how these classifications overlay with jobs in tech, nonprofit, public, philanthropic, and other sectors which reflect the unique character of Oakland</p>
<p>Employment by industry group, plan area vs. city Employment by industry group, plan area over time Office-based industry group employment by industry sector over time</p>	<p>These analyses should capture or at least address important differences between the categories, as done in figure 15 (differences between office based industry group). These include differences in health services such as dental clinics and massage parlors, differences in retail such as locally-owned vs chain, etc.</p>

Maps of employment density - jobs per square mile, office-based employment density, retail and entertainment industry group employment density, oakland PDR industry group employment density, downtown worker home location density, downtown resident work location density

The analyses would benefit from greater specificity in the services named, and expansion to include broader social services (beyond health and education), other public services (such as police, fire and emergency), and possibly private beauty and wellbeing services (spas, salons, other personal needs). Information about food accessibility should also be included (retail food environment, healthy food outlets, other food services). Corresponding information regarding the populations dependent upon these services would be useful here or in another section.

The aim is not only to determine where employment destinations may be located or where job growth can be stoked, but also to identify what opportunities exist to capitalize on the central location and accessibility of resources downtown to meet the service needs of the city's residents and key partners in the nonprofit, arts, public and philanthropic sectors. We should do whatever possible to guarantee these organizations the space and conditions they need to thrive while also allowing for growth to other sectors.

<p>Lists: top ten home locations for Plan Area workers, top ten work locations for Plan Area residents, top ten origins of riders arriving in the plan area - M-F (2015), top ten origins of riders arriving in the plan area - Saturdays (2015)</p>	<p>Greater specificity would be helpful to understand what neighborhoods in Oakland the 19.8% of Plan Area workers from Oakland reside in.</p> <p>Information regarding the top ten destinations for BART trips originating in downtown Oakland would reveal greater insight into what local residents might need and use downtown, as they access BART downtown during these times.</p>
<p>Housing Market Conditions</p>	
<p>Existing housing stock - count, age, condition, occupancy, development patterns, tenure, housing units by year built</p>	<p>Disaggregate by micro-neighborhood, as defined by community (as much as possible), with information about who has historically resided in these areas. Also call out statistics related to subsidized housing (e.g., in Figure 32, seeing proportion of SRO-1- v. 2-3BR units would be revealing).</p>
<p>Rents, home prices, and affordability - ownership values, rent trends, monthly rent per unit, average asking rental rates</p>	<p>Disaggregate by race and age and household status (single or family) within the geographic boundaries. Certain critical equity variables have been made available in Appendix II, such as: housing cost burden by tenure and race and ethnicity, percent households without a vehicle.</p>

<p>Housing growth and development trends</p>	<p>Descriptions are all supply-side -- include information about demand-side factors and pressures, as well as qualitative information from existing residents regarding changes.</p> <p>Some coding of affordable housing projects in the overmap of major development projects would help underscore just how little progress is being made on affordability.</p> <p>Figure 40 could demonstrate the opportunity lost in this recent development boom by not have more forceful IZ by adding a column that would have been captured with a 10 or 15 percent set-aside in place. As it is, projects are either all affordable or completely market rate. It could have meant an additional 44 affordable unit in City Center, 15 more units in Uptown, 8 more units in Lakeside, 32 more units in Old Oakland... the ratio is even more stark in projects in the production pipeline (Figure 41).</p>
<p>Office market conditions -- office inventory by class over time, absorption of office space by location and period, office rate trends, office user and development trends</p>	<p>Trends in displacement and relocation should be included in these analyses (by sector, and by budget if possible)</p> <p>How does the "gig" economy factor into these analyses? Growth of co-working spaces and details regarding arts and creative space needs should be considered, included</p>

<p>Retail market conditions -- history and use are summarized briefly</p>	<p>The history and use summaries should be expanded to include not only retail considerations, but also civil and social uses of the space, as well as entertainment uses.</p> <p>The Retail Market Conditions report could use a strong wssh to think of a more diverse base that serves working class residents as deliverer and receivers. It could also benefit from a cultural retail analysis.</p>
<p>Hotel market conditions -- summary of hotel inventory, transient occupancy tax receipts, list of hotels by class and subarea,</p>	<p>The inventory overlooks Single Resident Occupancy (SRO) hotels and other spaces that serve the needs of the homeless population. The city serves not only the needs of external visitors but also those who reside within the area, with or without a fixed place of residence. This is one area to consider Oakland's highest need populations.</p>
<p>Industrial market conditions including inventory, vacancy rate, asking rent for PDR and flex needs</p>	<p>To what extent is demand made by existing occupants in these areas?</p>
<p>Section 5: Initial Community Input</p>	
<p>Data Included</p>	<p>Augmentation</p>
<p>Word cloud</p>	<p>Include both positive and critical terms used in community meetings, to reveal both assets and challenges</p>

Questions-and-answer session	Include full list of questions, list of participants, and groups representative
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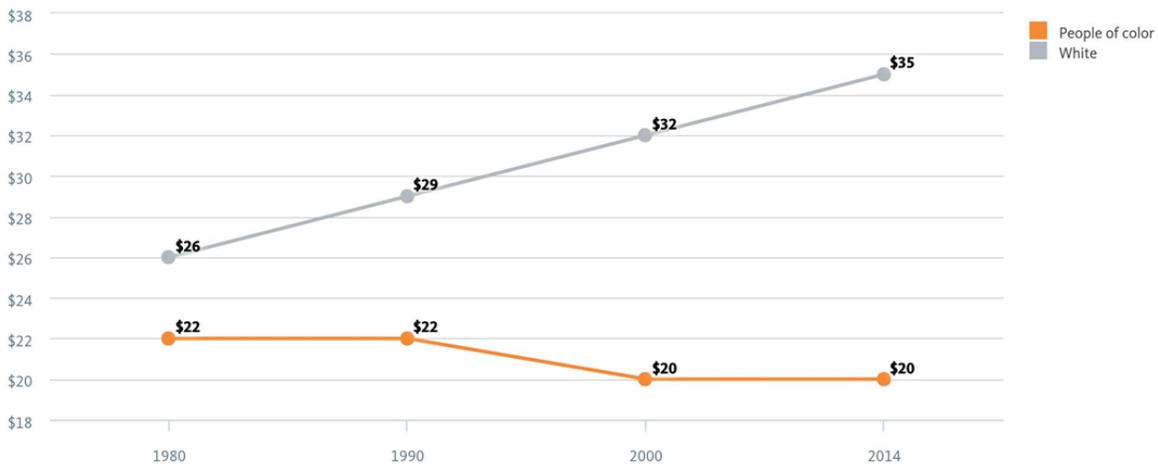
There are multiple opportunities for adjusting the writing and organization of this report to make the information available to all and generally more accessible (e.g., include reference tables to link recommendations with other activities in Oakland, such as implementation of other specific plans).

APPENDIX III

The PolicyLink-PERE National Equity Atlas offers baseline indicators of these measures for Oakland in the following graphics, and will be publicly available to monitor over time to influence the direction of the Downtown Specific Plan and its potential impact on the city and residents of Oakland as a whole. This data will be more useful for planning purposes, than for results monitoring, because specific factors such as one large project in East Oakland or significant displacement could alter the numbers, but not because of downtown actions.

Median hourly wage by race/ethnicity, 1980-2014

Median hourly wage by race/ethnicity: Oakland City, CA, 1980-2014

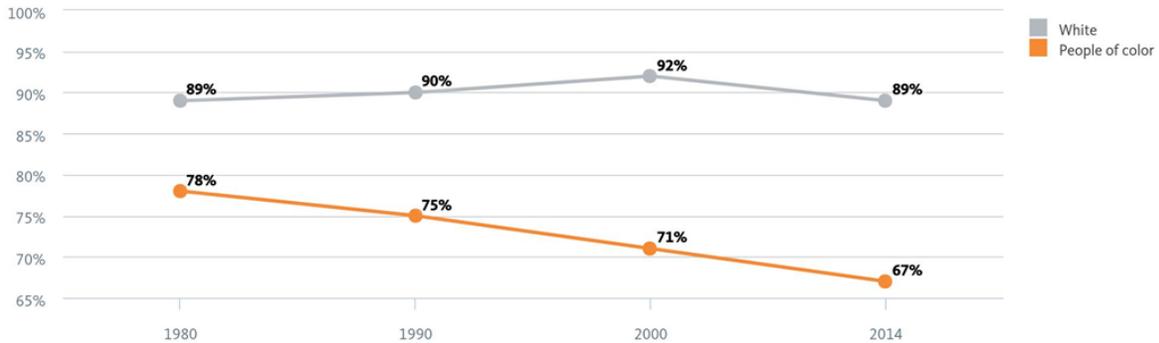


IPUMS
PolicyLink/PERE National Equity Atlas, www.nationalequityatlas.org

- **Goal:** Work to close racial income gap in Downtown
- **Why It Matters:** In an equitable region, wages would reflect differences in education, training, experience, and pay scales in particular occupations and industries, but would not vary systematically by race or gender. Racial gaps in wages between those with similar levels of education suggests discrimination and bias among employers. Policy and systems changes that ensure equal pay for equal work, fair hiring, and rising wages for low-wage workers will boost incomes, resulting in more of the consumer spending that drives economic growth and job creation.

Share of workers earning at least \$15/hour by race/ethnicity, 1980-2014

Share of workers earning at least \$15/hour by race/ethnicity: Oakland City, CA, 1980-2014



IPUMS
PolicyLink/PERE National Equity Atlas, www.nationalequityatlas.org

- **Goal:** Attract racially inclusive industries with good wages
- **Details:** December 31, 2016 -In the East Bay, Oakland’s minimum wage will reach \$12.86 per hour, a 31-cent increase over its current rate. That follows the passage of ballot Measure FF in November 2014, which provides annual increases to the city’s minimum wage based on the Consumer Price Index for urban wage earners and clerical workers in the Bay Area. The measure increased the minimum wage in the city from \$9 an hour to \$12.25 in March 2015, drawing complaints from business owners that the change was too much, too quickly.

Income by race/ethnicity, 2014

Income by race/ethnicity: Oakland City, CA, 2014



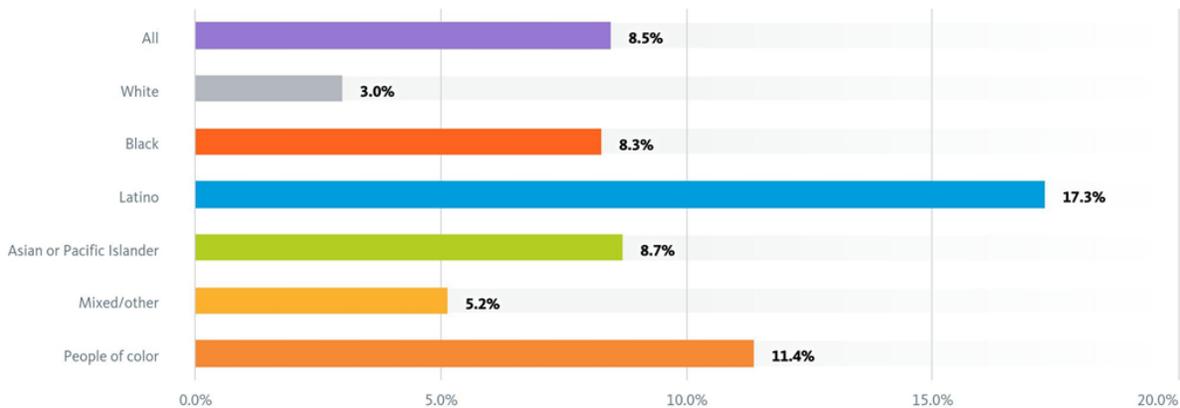
IPUMS
PolicyLink/PERE National Equity Atlas, www.nationalequityatlas.org

- **Goal:** Direct strategies to close racial income gap
- **Details:** What are the economic benefits of inclusion? Oakland City, CA: With racial equity in income in 2014, average annual income would have been 41,755 higher for the Black population and 45,975 higher for the Latino population.

- Why it matters:** Wage and employment gaps by race (as well as gender) are not only bad for people of color—they hold back the entire economy. Closing these gaps by eliminating discrimination in pay and hiring, boosting educational attainment, and ensuring strong and rising wages for low-wage workers is good for families, good for communities, and good for the economy. Rising wages and incomes, particularly for low-income households, leads to more consumer spending, which is a key driver of economic growth and job creation.

Percent working poor (200% poverty) by race/ethnicity, 2014

Percent working poor by race/ethnicity: Oakland City, CA, 200%, 2014

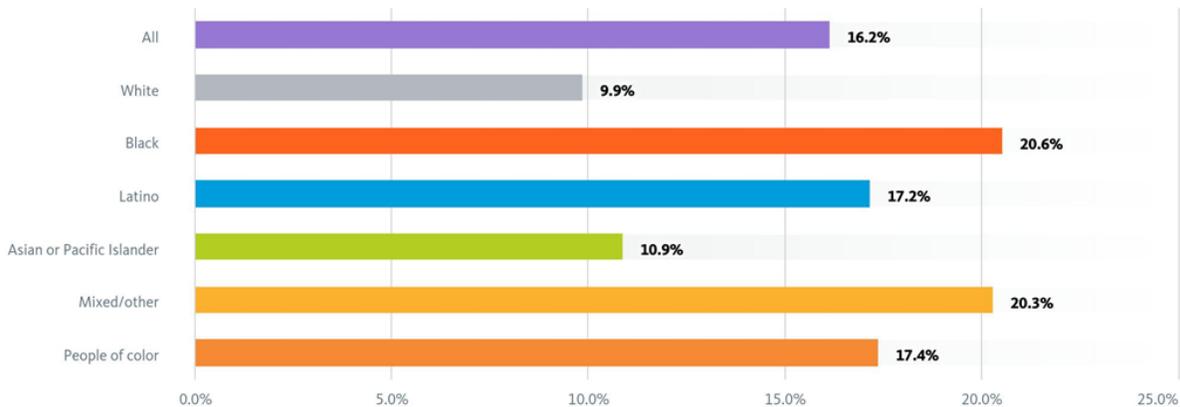


IPUMS
PolicyLink/PERE National Equity Atlas, www.nationalequityatlas.org

- Goal:** Strengthen job quality in downtown jobs

Percent 16-24 yo population not working or in school, 2014

Percent of 16 to 24 year olds not working or in school by race/ethnicity: Oakland City, CA, 2014



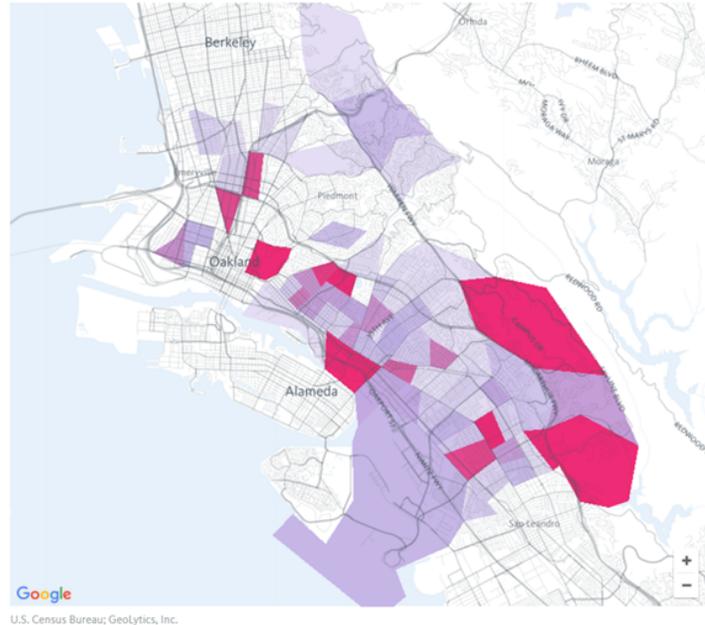
IPUMS
PolicyLink/PERE National Equity Atlas, www.nationalequityatlas.org

[This data can also be pulled at a downtown-specific geography]

Disconnected youth 📍 Oakland City, CA

Breakdown:

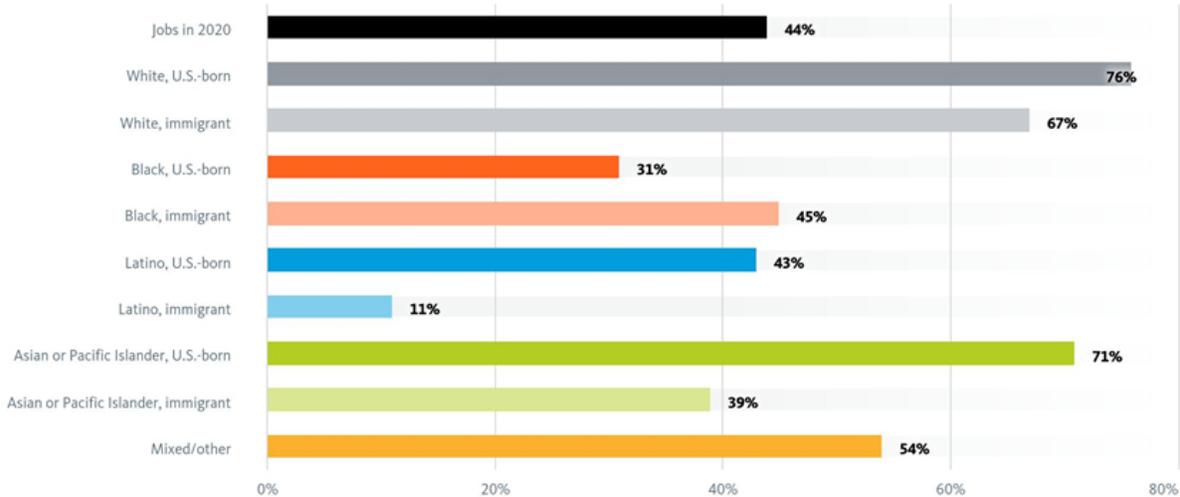
Map by Tract, 2014



- **Goal:** Address disconnected youth in downtown strategy
- **Details:** Are youth ready to enter the workforce? Oakland City, CA: In 2014, the White population had the lowest share not working or in school among 16-24 year olds at 9.88 percent and the Black population had the highest share at 20.56 percent.
- **Why it matters:** Ensuring that youth are educated, healthy, and ready to thrive in the workforce is essential for economic prosperity, but too many youth—particularly youth of color—are disconnected from educational or employment opportunities. Not accessing education and job experience early in life can have long-lasting impacts including lower earnings, higher public expenditures, lower tax revenues, and lost human potential.

Current educational attainment and projected state/national level job education requirements by race/ethnicity and nativity, 2014

Current educational attainment and projected state/national-level job education requirements by race/ethnicity and nativity: Oakland City, CA, AA degree or higher, 2014

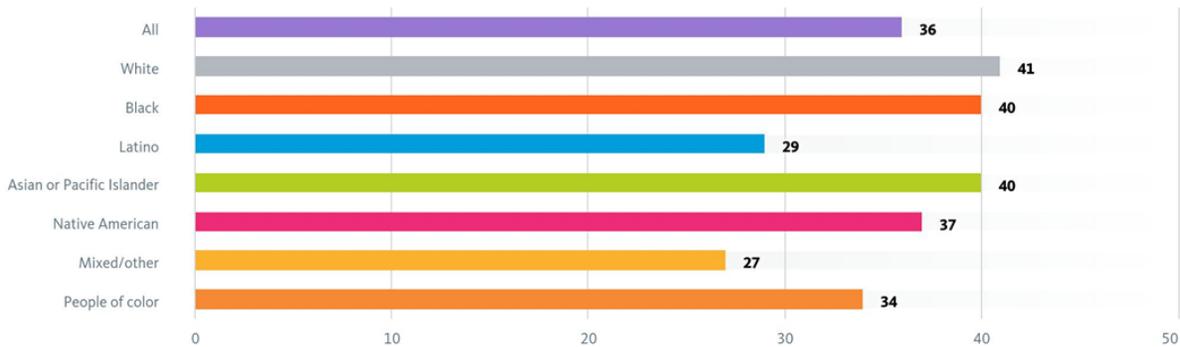


IPUMS; Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce
PolicyLink/PERE National Equity Atlas, www.nationalequityatlas.org

- **Goal:** Strengthen preparedness of African American and latino youth for oakland job opportunities
- **Details:** Do workers have the education needed for the jobs of the future? Oakland City, CA: By 2020, 44 percent of jobs will require at least a AA degree or higher. Explore preparation for jobs of the future by race/ethnicity and nativity in the chart above.
- **Why it matters:** America's future jobs will require ever-higher levels of skills and education, but our education and job training systems are not adequately preparing Latinos, African Americans, and other workers of color—who are growing as a share of the workforce—to succeed in the knowledge-driven economy. Closing wide and persistent racial gaps in educational attainment will be key to building a strong workforce that is prepared for the jobs of the future.

Median age, 2014

Median age: Oakland City, CA, 2014

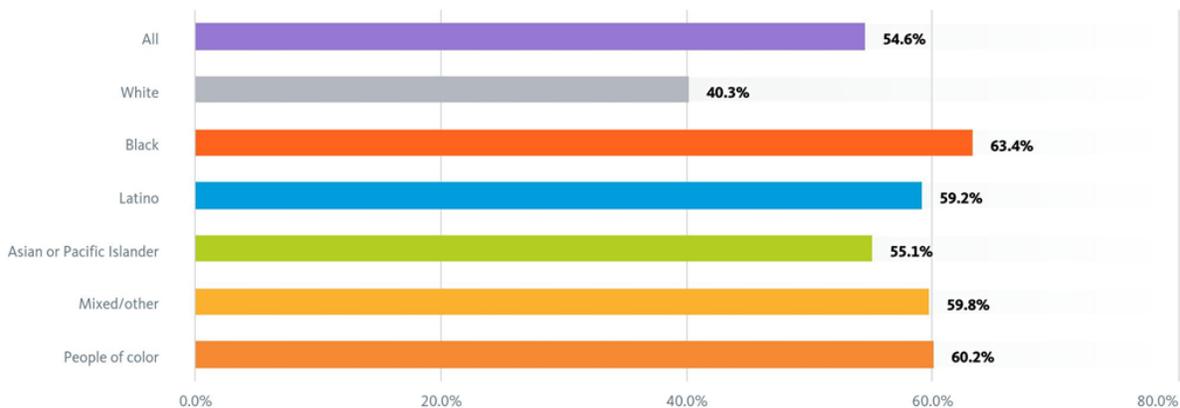


IPUMS
PolicyLink/PERE National Equity Atlas, www.nationalequityatlas.org

- **Goal:** Ensure services for youth of color
- **Why it matters:** Latinos and other communities of color are comparatively younger than whites in most regions. As younger populations grow increasingly diverse and the senior population remains largely white, bridging the gap between the two groups will be critical for the economy. Support from older residents for strong public schools for all children and workforce training are needed to prepare the emerging workforce for the jobs of tomorrow.

Housing cost burden by tenure and race and ethnicity, 2014

Housing burden by tenure and race/ethnicity: Oakland City, CA, Renters, 2014



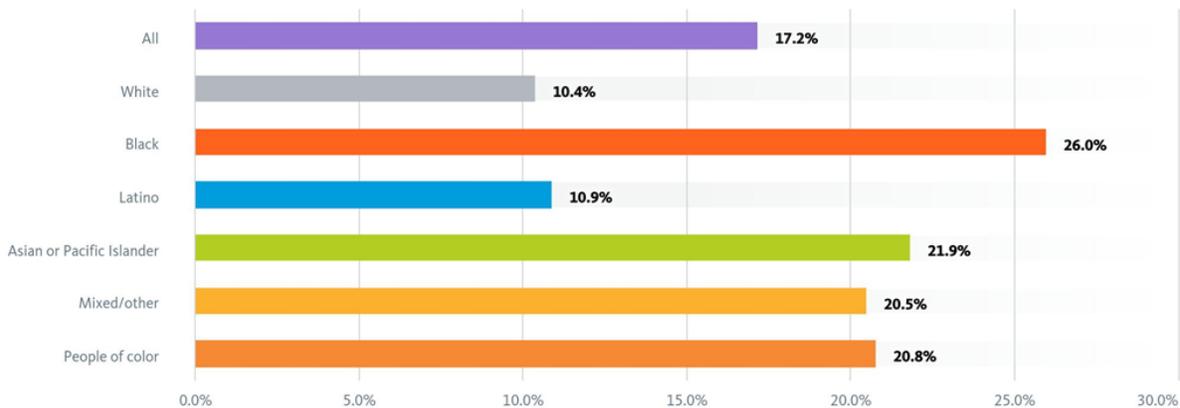
IPUMS
PolicyLink/PERE National Equity Atlas, www.nationalequityatlas.org

- **Goal:** Address housing cost burdened households of color in downtown housing strategies
- **Details:** Is housing affordable for all? Oakland City, CA: In 2014, White households had the lowest housing burden for Renters at 40.28 percent and Black households had the highest housing burden at 63.38 percent.

- **Why it matters:** Housing is the single largest expense for households, and far too many pay too much for housing, particularly low-income families and households of color. High housing costs squeeze household budgets leaving few resources to pay for other expenses, save for emergencies, or make long-term investments.

Percent households without a vehicle, 2014

Percent of households without a vehicle: Oakland City, CA, 2014



IPUMS
PolicyLink/PERE National Equity Atlas, www.nationalequityatlas.org

Footnotes

^[1] Seattle Resolution 31577 declaring equitable development as a priority for planning (<https://seattle.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=2269342&GUID=B0DDC78F-6CEC-4E8C-9A1B-CB913457D663>)

^[2] Description of Racial Equity Goals of Comprehensive Plan (<http://murray.seattle.gov/seattle-2035-growing-to-achieve-race-and-social-equity/#sthash.fVzVPAT.dpbs>)

^[3] Seattle 2035: Your City, Your Future – Growth and Equity report analyzing impacts on displacement and opportunity related to Seattle’s Growth Strategy (https://www.seattle.gov/dpd/cs/groups/pan/@pan/documents/web_informational/p2273984.pdf)

^[4] Seattle General Plan 2016-2036 (<http://2035.seattle.gov/>) – comprehensive plan incorporating an explicit equity lens across all elements and analyses

^[5] Richmond General Plan 2030: Shaping the New 100 Years (<http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/8803> or <http://www.pointrichmond.com/pointsanpablo/pdfs/GenPlanSPP.pdf>)

^[6] Examples: National Research Center’s National Citizen Survey measures city and community priorities across the nation’s cities; city budget data can help to identify and track local political and fiscal

priorities over time; analyses of business/tax records can provide deeper understanding of more informal parts of the economy (entrepreneurship, cottage industry, cannabis industry, etc.); analyses of city permitting data as well as changes to % land use designations over time can provide critical information on development trends and priorities; development growth scenarios (as developed in Seattle and referenced in an earlier footnote) offered clear and concrete considerations related to growth trends and opportunities

^[7] Oakland Museum of California 2013 Neighborhood Identity Project

<http://museumca.org/files/uploads/documents/OMCA-Neighborhood-Identity-Report.pdf>