



SUMMARY NOTES

On August 19, 2020 the City hosted a virtual Zoom stakeholder group meeting for the Eastern Gateway Study. In addition to City staff and consultants, the following stakeholders participated in the meeting:

- Brandon Marshall (architect)
- Belinda Smith (Benicia Historical Society)
- Charlie Gardyn (property owner 1401 East 5th Street)
- Kendall Lara (Benicia Family Resource Center)
- Mary Frances Kelly Poh (BCAC (formerly)/Solano Community Housing Corporation)
- Gene Pedrotti (Ace Hardware owner/property owner NE corner of East Fifth and East N)

Consultants presented project background information, existing conditions maps, and a preliminary list of project issues. Stakeholder comments included the following issues and questions:

- The City needs to provide a definition of affordable housing and a target number of affordable units.
- Can this study address affordable housing tax credits and other funding sources?
- The City needs to produce more housing, not just plan for it.
- Pedestrian safety improvements are critical to allowing greater density in the study area.
- New policies should allow for existing activity patterns, such as the taco truck, to persist while accommodating new development and creating a safer environment.
- Existing buildings are less likely to be redeveloped than vacant lots are to be developed.
- Will the City consider abandonment of alleys in an effort to encourage additional density?
- Scattered small parcels that are vacant/underutilized are difficult to develop. Parcel assembly will be needed for meaningful new housing development.
- We need to think about the study area as a gateway to many different places within the city.
- East Benicia has very little greenery, parks, and open space. This should be considered as we discuss increasing the density of the study area.
- Concern over number of businesses that sell alcohol in the study area.
- Could we consider including the mobile home park near Military and East Sixth Street in the study area? Regulations to close mobile home parks are onerous.

- We need to think about how traffic and vehicle speeds on Fifth Street will affect development potential and pedestrian safety.
- Property owners need help to appreciate development potential and pathways to viable projects.
- Good development standards are needed to ensure new development is well designed, especially if it is allowed by right.
- New development should look like a part of the community and be well connected to surrounding neighborhoods, downtown, and other places in Benicia.
- We should make sure that east Benicia is treated the same as other areas of town, and that residents of this area don't feel like the city is "dumping on them."
- The overhead utility lines look awful.
- We should consider relaxing the parking requirements to promote walkability, but should also consider spillover effects on neighbors.
- We should consider the cost of design standards for property owners on a tight budget.
- N Street west of Fifth Street is very wide, could it potentially accommodate diagonal parking?