Planning and Development Department
Land Use Planning Division
1947 Center Street
Berkeley CA 94704

Community Workshop #1 | Summary Notes

Ashby + North Berkeley BART Zoning and Development Parameters

Date + Time: August 31, 2020 at 6 pm
Location: Online via Zoom virtual meeting

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Project Overview, Context, and Background
3. Community Goals, Development Parameters and Preliminary Site Concepts
4. Small Group Discussion
5. Small Group Report Back
6. Next Steps

Attendance

There were approximately 180 meeting participants in attendance.

The following members of the project team (City, BART and consultants) made presentations or facilitated the small group discussions:

City

- Jordan Klein – Community Development Director
- Steven Buckley – Planning Manager
- Alisa Shen - Principal Planner
- Justin Horner – Associate Planner

BART

- Abby Thorne-Lyman - Transit-Oriented Design (TOD) Director
- Rachel Factor – Principal Planner
- Shannon Dodge – Principal Property Development Officer

Consultants

- Karen Murray, Rick Williams, John Doyle - Van Meter Williams Pollack (VMWP)
- Dave Javid, Suhaila Sikand - Plan to Place
- Aaron Welch - AWP

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Meeting Summary

The purpose of the first Community Workshop was to provide an overview of the project, share and gather input on project goals and development parameters and concepts (or big-picture physical design ideas) for each site. The following notes summarize the main agenda items, presentation and discussion which occurred at the meeting. Members of the public were also invited to submit comments after the meeting by email or through a Google comment form (see Appendices for received emails and for a summary of responses to the Google form).

Project Overview, Context, and Background

The project team provided an overview of the project objectives and timeline and related previous planning efforts *(visit the project website for more information: https://www.cityofberkeley.info/bartplanning/)*.

Screenshot of participants during the ZOOM workshop

Community Goals, Development Parameters and Preliminary Site Concepts

Community goals and parameters were highlighted by the project team to provide background and context, and provide a baseline from which site concepts were prepared. The goals were characterized as “knowns” or those that were drawn from existing City and BART planning documents, policies and State law, and “unknowns” or those that this

planning process will help determine. The goals were organized by the following topics: Housing, Community Uses/Amenities, Building Form/Character, Station Access and Transportation, Public Spaces, and Sustainability. Through a live poll, the majority of meeting participants (85%) noted that they either agreed or strongly agreed that goals presented represent key issues at each of the stations *(for complete poll results, please refer to the Appendix)*.

Proceeding the poll, the project team introduced preliminary site concepts for each station with an overview of key considerations that make up each concept including: Economic Conditions, Funding + Resources, Technology (buildings + mobility), Laws + Regulations, and Policy. For each station, meeting participants were asked through live polls if they felt that the concepts for each station build off the community goals presented. The following are the results of the live polls:

- 85% of meeting participants agreed or strongly agreed for Ashby BART station
- 81% agreed or strongly agreed for North Berkeley BART station
  (for complete poll results, please refer to the Appendix).

Small Group Discussion and Report Out

Meeting participants were randomly distributed into eight breakout rooms as part of the ZOOM meeting to discuss the topics that were presented. Each group was facilitated by members of the project team to guide discussion on the community goals and preliminary site concepts for each station. Following the small group discussion, the facilitators of each group shared a summary of their group discussion back out to the larger group. Below are the key themes that came out of the discussions organized by major topic (similar comments that came up in multiple groups are indicated (e.g., x2, x3, x4).

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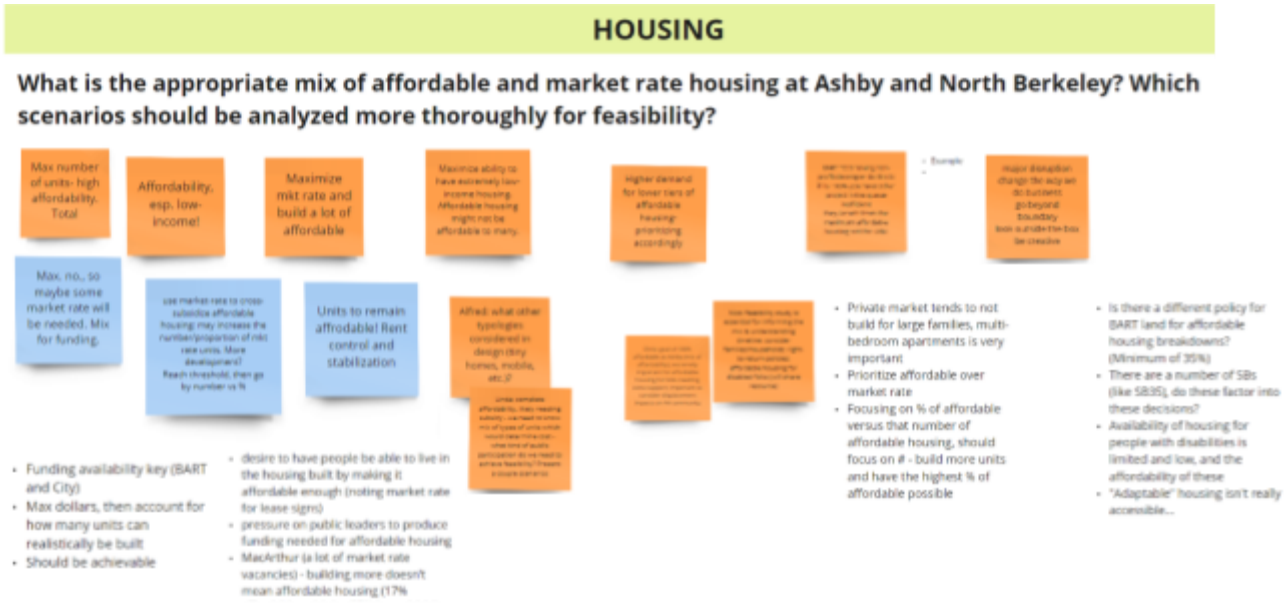
Housing

- Maximize affordable housing at both stations to house as many people as possible (x6)
- Expand the range of affordable housing for all income levels, family needs, formerly homeless and special needs (x6)
- Prioritize very low- and low-income housing while still providing a mix of affordability levels (x5)
- Research funding for affordable housing (x5)
- Ensure an equity lens is adopted throughout the housing planning process (x5)
- Establish density allocations that are clearer, such as the number of affordable units or bedrooms, versus the percentage of affordable units (e.g., bedrooms/acre versus units/acre) (x5)
- Explore tradeoffs of affordable housing levels (x4)
- Plan for the impact of public health emergencies (x3)



Example of notes from the small group discussion related to the Housing topic

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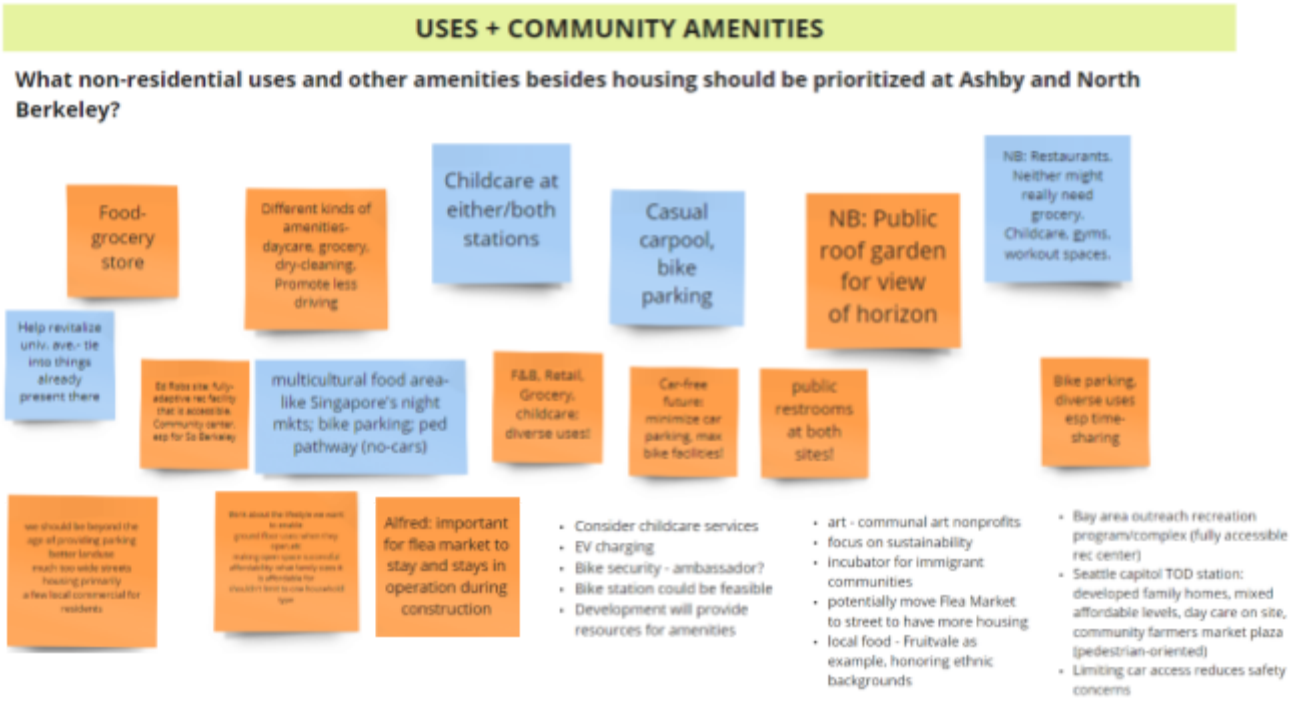
Uses and Community Amenities

- Consider amenities that bring the community together, are enriching both historically and culturally, and prioritize previously displaced businesses (x5)
- Consider diverse uses that revive the sites and surrounding areas, while reducing the need for cars; through uses and locally oriented amenities including markets, childcare, the Flea Market at Ashby station, grocery, public restrooms, bike facilities, roof garden, laundry, gyms, restaurants, coworking, and business development spaces (x4)
- Ensure all amenities are accessible using universal design practices (x4)
- Consider a mix of uses, balancing ground floor uses (commercial or retail) and housing (x4)
- Support the proposed adaptive sports/rec center at Ashby station (x3)
- Consider flexible community spaces that can transition to the changing needs of the community (x2)



Example of notes from the small group discussion related to the Uses and Community Amenities topic

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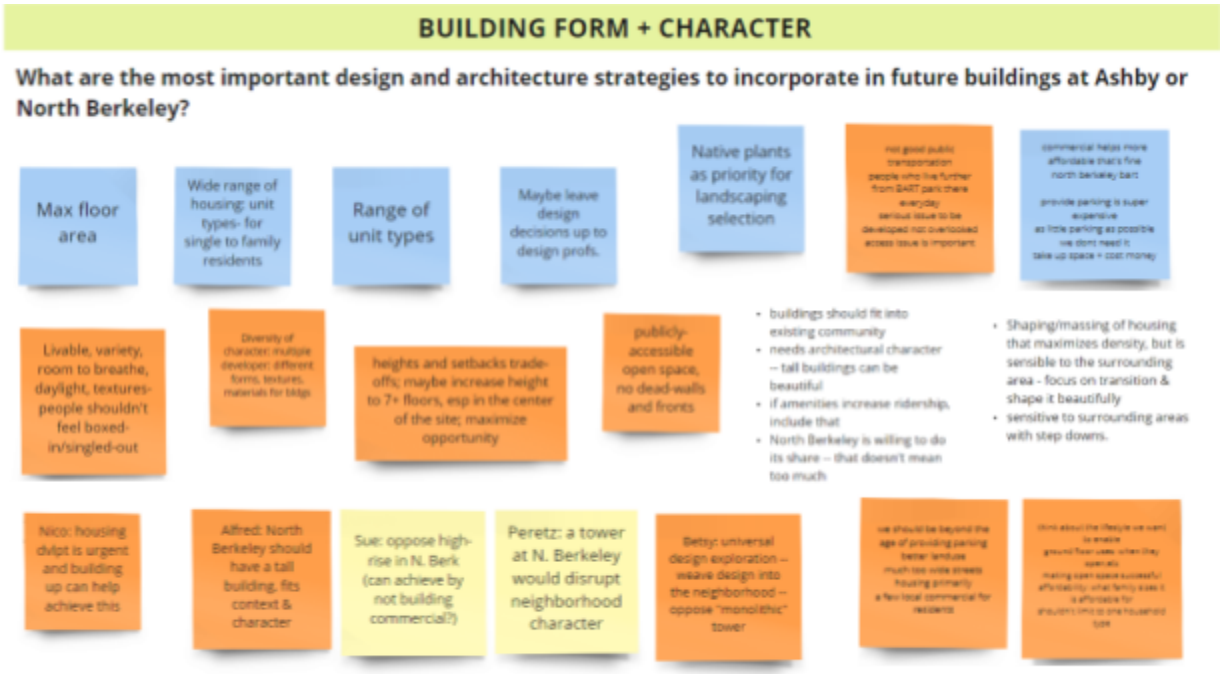
Building Form + Character

- Allow for tall buildings to maximize housing. Focus on the transition from residential neighborhoods to potentially tall buildings on site by breaking up building massing and forms (e.g., step downs), and creating visual permeability/variety (x6)
- Ensure that the building forms are architecturally context sensitive to the surroundings (x4)
- Encourage a diverse mix of styles and materials to avoid generic architectural character (x3)
- Create welcoming spaces for residents and public through an accessible and open design (x2)
- Explore innovative accessible design alternatives (x2)
- Reduce impacts from BART (e.g., soundproofing) (x2)



Example of notes from the small group discussion related to the Building Form and Character topic

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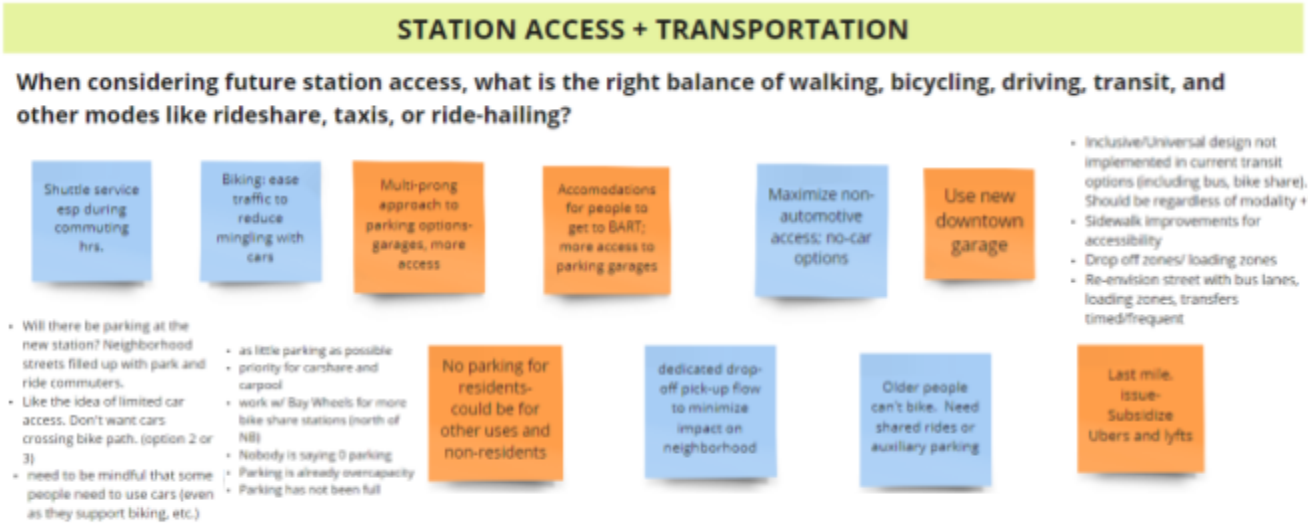
Station Access + Transportation

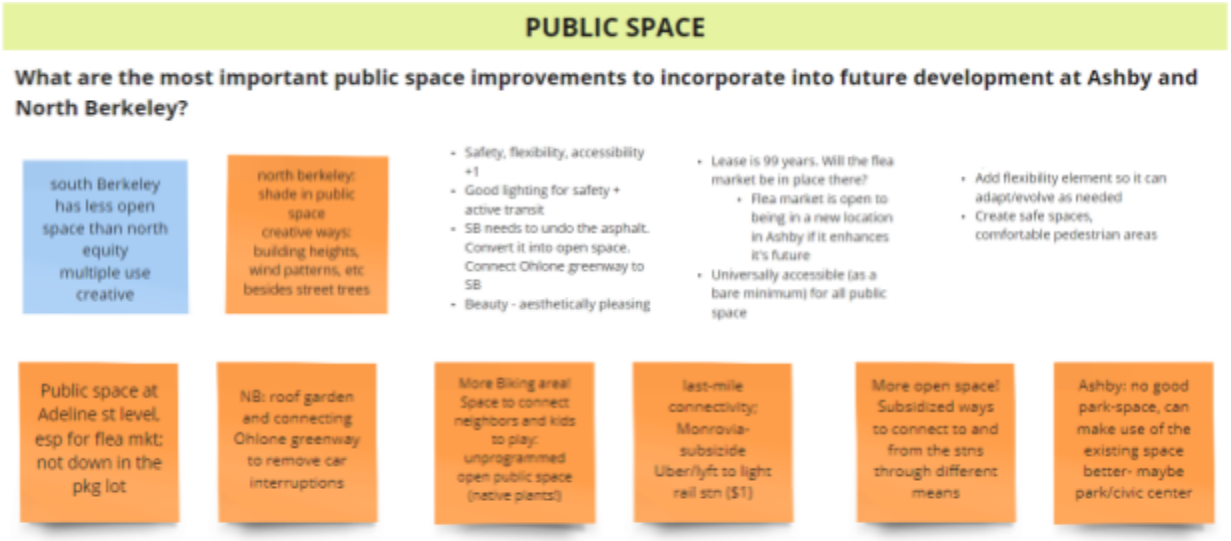
- Develop partnerships amongst transportation options, including AC Transit and other bus organizations, to increase access to areas throughout the city, particularly the Hills (x6)
- Get creative with parking and/or reduce parking (considering autonomous car, etc.) (x6)
- Ensure adequate parking for operational viability and to serve hills residents, and maintain parking for the disabled (x4)
- Consider traffic calming and other measures to reduce potential impacts on surrounding neighborhoods from increased housing/development (x4)
- Explore additional bike amenities, increased bike safety, and secure bike parking (x4)
- Utilize universal design in every access point regardless of modality (x3)
- Slow traffic to ensure safety of all visitors, including disabled (x3)
- Maximize non-vehicular access and explore shuttles, rideshare, and last mile solutions (x3)
- Establish drop-off/loading zones to increase traffic flow (x2)
- Consider access impacts and potential displacement during construction/development (x2)



Example of notes from the small group discussion related to the Station Access and Transportation topic

Public Space

- Connect the Ohlone greenway throughout the city, and potentially to the Downtown station (x4)
- Consider creative, accessible and asphalt-free open space, especially for the Flea Market at Ashby station (x3)
- Allow for flexibility in public spaces to adapt to community needs in the future, such as unprogrammed spaces (x3)
- Focus on beautiful spaces, public spaces for different age groups (particularly children), equity, and safety (through environmental design and lighting) (x2)
- Consider environmental factors when creating public space, including wind patterns and surrounding buildings (x2)



Example of notes from the small group discussion related to the Public Space topic

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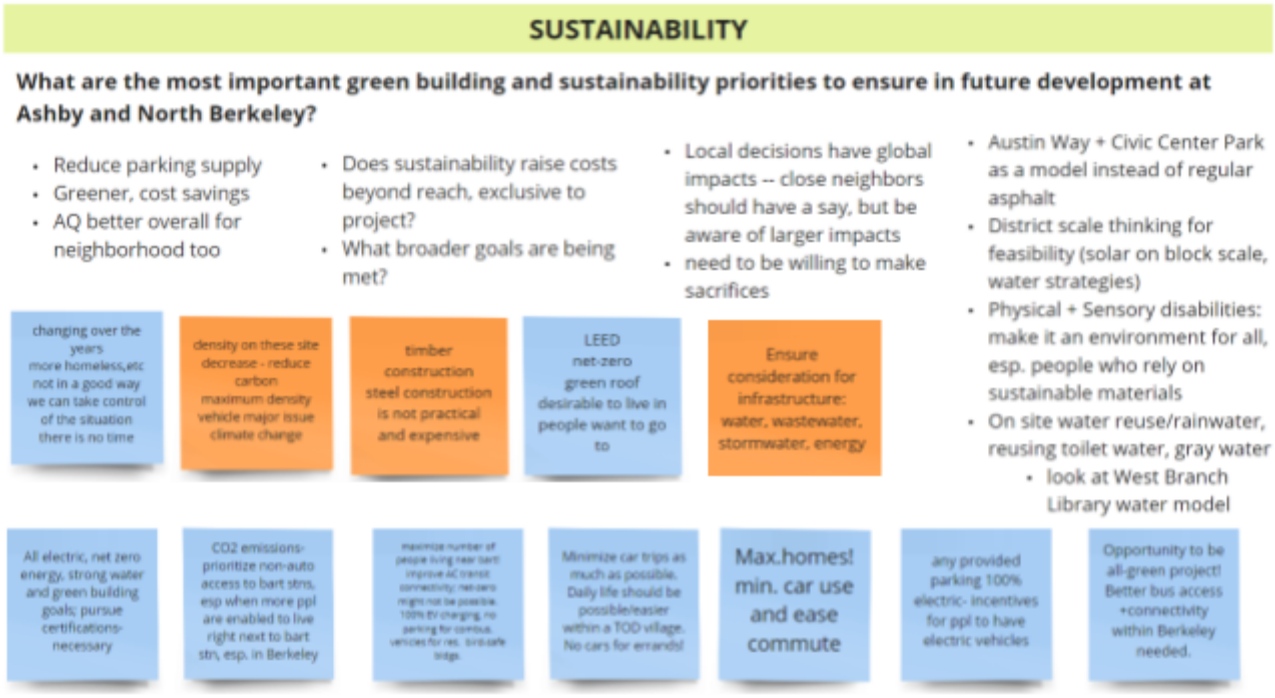
Sustainability

- Implement sustainable strategies including gray water, certifications, building materials, district-scale planning, and net-zero energy (x5)
- Increase housing density to support sustainability (x4)
- Reduce pavement overall, or consider permeable pavement, and reduce parking to support (x4)
- Consider an all-electric development, including parking lots (x3)
- Consider sustainability on a district scale versus development or unit scale (x3)
- Strive for a 15-minute walkable neighborhood (x3)
- Use sustainable standards such as LEED (x2)
- Balance sustainable practices with cost (x2)
- Consider local ecosystem in building practices and open space (x2)



Example of notes from the small group discussion related to the Sustainability topic

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Ashby BART Station Preliminary Site Concepts

General

- Envision as much public use/green space as possible, encourage more public and open space and better street frontages that are welcoming (x3)
- Focus on safety with reduced lanes on Adeline, slowing traffic, dedicated bus lanes, and revitalizing and improving safety along and across MLK (x2)
- Address concern about flooding and other drawbacks from submerged buildings, plazas, and access (x2)
- Flea Market important to the community
- Rethink substations more creatively
- Shift more focus to the Ed Roberts Campus and help increase access and connect it to the plaza and let flea market take over additional space

Option A1+A2

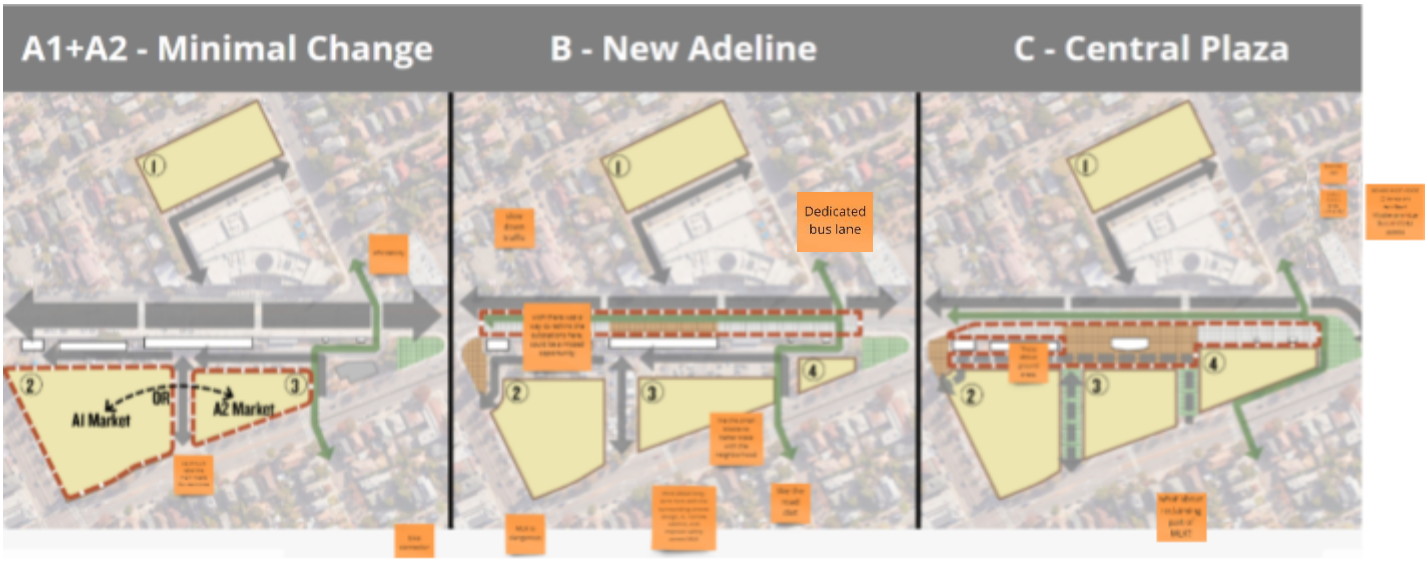
- Too much work for minimal change - go big.

Option B

- Adeline is unsafe and people move too fast
- Concern over submerged canyon, need to look at access at Adeline and MLK to tighten up access

Option C

- Best for developable area and keeps Flea Market
- Consider Residential units that connect to Adeline and have a plaza at Ashby and Adeline, difficult to build due to power station



Example of notes from Ashby BART Station Preliminary Site Concept Discussion

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North Berkeley BART Station Preliminary Site Concepts

General

- Incorporate dedicated drop-off and loading zone(s) (x3)
- Explore options with reduced pavement (x2)
- Share more information about the transportation analysis
- Connect both ends of the station to the greenway
- Reimagine amount of access points to the station area
- Consider environmental needs, livable habits, and impacts of weather and flooding

Option A

- Not responsive to the street grid, creates too many conflict points
- Relocating traction power building could be cost prohibitive

Option B

- Consider a woonerf design
- Carpools are key access issue, consider keeping the front access lane

Option C

- Less pavement in this option preferred
- Specify the ADA considerations for “car-free” options
- Interest in infrastructure costs related to “car-free” option, could allow for more funding for more housing
- Could repurpose Sacramento, traffic calming needed

Example of notes from N. Berkeley BART Station Preliminary Site Concept Discussion

Next Steps

The project team discussed future engagement opportunities including an online informational video series (e.g., Introduction to Housing Development, Economic Feasibility and Public Value Recapture) and the next CAG meeting(s) planned for October 14th and 20th.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9pm. Additional general comments were accepted through September 14th by email and mail (included in the Appendix). An online comment form was also made available after the workshop through September 14th, to capture comments from members of the community that were not able to attend the workshop, with questions similar to those asked in the small group discussions. A summary of key themes identified in the online comment form is included in the Appendix.

Via email:
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Or via mail:
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For more information, please visit: www.cityofberkeley.info/bartplanning.