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Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Ronick de Vello Quay, and I am spurs chief of strategic initiatives.

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Thank you so much for joining us for this digital discourse today.

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Many of you here today are sperm members. So thank you for your support.

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If you're not a member, I encourage you to join to support spurs, ongoing work and using educational policy, analysis and advocacy to make our cities and region more prosperous, sustainable, and equitable places, to live your financial support enables us to continue our work including the

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Hosting of programs like today's. And you'll find more information about membership online at spur, org, slash.

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Join our next digital discourse. Social housing is Vienna.

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A model for California is scheduled for Tuesday, January the tenth, at 1230.

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California's Housing affordability crisis has compelled policymakers to look at unconventional ways to boost housing production across the State.

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Vienna has a rich tradition of building social housing, government supported mixed income rent, restricted housing for a large portion of its residence.

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A recent study trip to Vienna help demonstrate how social housing is financed, built, and maintained here from Bay Area housing experts who participated in this trip on how social housing works in Vienna, and what lessons can be learned and applied here in California and now to today's

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environment today's digital discourse is planning for the future of Oakland's downtown downtown Oakland is the heart of the East Bay, and the physical and historic center of Oakland.

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The city of Oakland is currently finalizing its downtown Oakland specific plan to ensure the continued growth and vitality of the city's core.

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The downtown Oakland specific plan includes policies to guide future development, linking land use, transportation, economic development, housing, public spaces, cultural arts and social equity.

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Wow! We will hear today from Oakland's downtown Oakland Specific Plan project team and executive leadership from the planning department on how the plan will impact the community and down town.

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Oakland as well as the city on the whole, and what city leaders need to do to ensure its successful implementation?

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Our speakers today are Joanna Winter, Juana, and Aicp is a planner with the city of Oakland.

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Strategic planning, division, applying her experience in local government advocacy and consulting to develop long-range plans and policy.

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She's currently project manager of a specific plan to guide the fast-piece growth growth in downtown Oakland towards more equitable community outcomes.

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We also have Laura Kaminsky, Laura, Aicp is the acting strategic planning manager for the city of Oakland, California.

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She's been a planner for 22 years, and has worked for Oakland for 14 years.

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She's the project manager for the city's impact fees.

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After working on adoption of Oakland's Broadway Valdez district specific plan.

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She's now managing implementation of the plan to bring desperation, retail and mixed.

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Use, neighborhoods to Oakland also known as the Dosp, and we also have Deputy Director Edmundas.

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Edward Vanass has over 2 decades of professional experience in urban planning and design.

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Currently, LED serves as the deputy director of the Planning Bureau for the city of Oakland.

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He oversees the strategic planning, development, planning and zoning divisions, and helps supervise long-range planning of the city's of the city, updating the general plan and managing specific and area planning efforts.

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We had also hoped to have Director Bill Gil Chris with us today.

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Bill, sends his regrets. He has been called into the emergency Operations Center helping to support the city of Oakland and its residents in our storm response from the bombs they clone that we had yesterday, and all of the rain that we have continuing to ongo have ongoing so

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thank you to Bill for his service, and he will be missed today, and we have wonderful representatives of his team.

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So finally, we'd want this to be an interactive conversation and plan on spending as much time as possible engaging with you all.

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So please feel free to use the chat box to share your thoughts with each other, and the speakers.

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We also encourage you to submit any questions that you may have by using the Qa panel.

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It should appear as a button at the bottom of your screen, or if you're on a mobile app, it would be at the top of your screen within the next few days we'll be sharing a copy of the recording this transcript and chat with everyone who registered and so with that

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I'll turn it over to Joanna to get us started.

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Thank you. Juana

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Great thanks. So much for having us, Ronnack, and thanks everyone for attending.

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I hope you all are staying warm and dry in the middle of this.

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Let me share my screen.

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So we're really excited to be able to share this with you after many years.

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We're getting very close to presenting the final downtown open, specific plan for a what we're going to cover today.

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Will be what the downtown specific plan which we refer to often as the Dos, the downtown Oakland specific plan will do for Oakland, how it will address recovery from the Covid.

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19. Pandemic and the changing role of downtown.

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How we will achieve the goals, and what else has changed since the 2019 version and then we'll have some questions and discussion.

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So the downtown specific plan has actually been in development since the end of 2,015.

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We started it with a big 10 day public design shoret.

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We launched a community advisory group. We did a youth summit.

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There was a lot of community and engagement in a lot of initial work but then we received a lot of feedback from the community that they were very concerned, that the city was not paying enough attention to racial equity and to the displacement of people of color from the downtown and we

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Did a relaunch. We brought on a racial equity consultant, expanded our community advisory group, did some social equity working groups and like really Re looked at the plan.

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So the next phase from 2018 to 2019, we took all of that new information and created many drafts there have been many iterations, and then and had it reviewed by the public in 2019 end of 2019 since then we've been working on the the first stage of

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The implementation which is the zoning, the zoning amendments, and those will be idea is that you can.

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Implementation. They need to be adopted at the same time as the plan, and so that's been our focus since since 2020, and we are hoping both the plan this year is to wrap up those zoning changes and take the the final draft plan for or

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Adoption, and that I touched on this, but it has involved a lot of community involvement.

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We've got images here from the various stages, including the Youth Summit.

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Our initial design. Chret a series of recorded video interviews with key downtown leaders, particularly people, of color in the downtown which you can actually find on our website.

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We attended events like Lunar, New Year, and the Black Joy Parade, and the the I think it's Thursday night to lay them square, and we even did a chalkboard survey that we put up in both an uptown and in Chinatown

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So that a lot of people have been involved over the time.

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The plan itself includes an overall vision and a vision for each of downtown's neighborhoods.

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This is just a little insert of the the plan itself, so that you can see the area that's covered it's all the way down to the estuary.

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Waterfront into the lake we are, including Chinatown in several ways, including transportation connections and obviously China Town is part of the downtown.

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But a lot of the policies are not specific to Chinatown, because China Town was covered by the lake merit, station area plan that was completed immediately before the downtown specific plan started.

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So we're not reinventing. But the work that was already done

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So what will the downtown specific plan actually do for Oakland?

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It will facilitate construction of both market rate and affordable subsidized housing by providing clear city guidance and clearance through the environmental of the California Environmental Quality Act sequel well orient dense Housing and Employment to meet the environmental goals in

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our equitable climate. E. Action Plan. That includes locating the highest density at major Tr, transit centers like the the bar stations and the Central Broadway spine, which has a lot of bus service, and it will require community benefits in order to achieve the maximum density that

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we would be allowing in the key areas like the core of downtown and down into the Jack London Victory Court area.

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The East Jack London area, where we expect to have intense mixed use development.

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But ultimately the community and benefits through the zoning and center program include a affordable housing job training program potentially through funding neighborhood streetscape improvements, public restrooms and below market rate commercial space for businesses and organizations that are run by or serving

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Residents harmed by racial inequities.

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The community. Benefits are. Through I mentioned the zoning incentive program where developers are able to buy up to the highest density intensity, and height limits.

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You know, return for providing community benefits. The amount of the benefit that we are proposing has been based on some extensive economic analysis.

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However, there has been some contention about the level of benefit that we are requiring from developers.

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So that's been extending the public process regarding the zoning, zoning amendments.

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And we're we're still working out the details of that

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The downtown specific plan will also help generate funds through one time development impact fees that subscribe affordable housing, transportation and other capital improvements.

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Those impact fees are one time fees and could only be used for capital improvements.

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However it will, the development downtown will also generate long term.

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Tax revenues also for affordable housing and other those other improvements, but they also can go toward other city services, including maintenance of city facilities, like parks and street

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The plan will also build up our cultural, cultural and business districts.

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Starting with the Black Arts movement and business district. The the plan directs the city to develop a cultural districts program which would be piloted in the band.

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But it would support cultural districts, threats. I would also help fill the retail vacancies on the ground floor.

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That would be through a combination of business support. Tenant improvement funds, a master tenanting program in partnership with community based organization and zoning that dedicates space and key cultural areas like the band to arts and cultural Users so that would enable the chance of

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Renting at reasonable prices to these desired uses, and decreasing the chance of a landlord holding out for a higher paid tenant, based on expectations that are actually no longer a reality in today's online retail online dominated retail environment so this is in partnership with facility with policies in the

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Plan to facilitate a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment, encouraging sanitation by providing public restrooms supporting the Macro program and other community public safety initiatives and providing affordable housing to resolve homelessness

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The plan will also address the monumental shifts that we're facing in the future of work.

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Do well accelerated by the pandemic and the shift to remote work, and the resulting shift in the role of downtowns.

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So we're doing this by protecting and growing our our middle wage industrial jobs near the port. Those are.

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Those are good, jobs that are often accessible to many of our Oakland residents, including residents who don't don't have higher education.

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We are encouraging research and development and biotech, that because these carry a high density of onsite jobs, and we're encouraging those in the heart of downtown as well as in that, the industrial areas and we're working on continuing to build a mixed use culturally

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thriving, downtown that supports local businesses without relying solely on office.

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With residents and retail support, supporting each other, and it off encourages office jobs where they're most critical, which is near transit.

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But it doesn't rely on them entirely for a successful downtown

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And the downtown specific plan will also address sea level rise, impacts the image that you see here is of that Victory Court area that I mentioned, which is envisioning with some major infrastructure changes to eventually be a source of mixed use.

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Development, and a lot of new housing down by the waterfront.

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But it is in our sea level rise impact area. So new housing would only be permitted in that area with comprehensive infrastructure and adaptation plans to project against sea level rises and flooding and the plan also lays the foundation for citywide and regional

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planning to address climate change and sea level rise, because we know that it's not just a downtown problem, even though the downtown is surrounded on many sides by water.

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And then finally, the downtown specific plan lays the groundwork for future transfer transformation of the I.

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980 freeway corridor. So it would reimagine. I.

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980, and there are many options for this, but one option is to convert it.

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980 to a multi-way boulevard with transit connections on Bart.

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The second transfer connection below, and that can provide 5,000 residential units, 1.5 million square feet of conversion, including both office retail and neighborhood, serving commercial space, and the plan also suggests an equity approach to repair the harm that was done during the construction

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Of the I. 9 freeway to the West Oakland community.

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Oakland's, one of Oakland, strongest black communities.

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These ideas? Are they're they're very conceptual in the plan.

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But they're being carried forward in the upcoming Caltrans Project, which is additionally

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So? How does the downtown specific plan address COVID-19.

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Recovery, and the changing roles of downtown

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So we know that the pandemic has exacerbated trends, that we're already happening in downtown as well as across the nation.

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That does include homelessness, commercial vacancies, high commercial vacancy rates the call and displacement of local businesses and arts, organizations which are often also businesses.

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Public safety concerns and racial health and wealth, disparities, and of course, in all of those other categories there are home help.

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Sorry there are racial disparities as well, and we know that all of these problems have harmed Oaklanders of color.

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Far more than what. But then, white booklanders? So a key point is to really lean into our equity focused policies to address these challenges

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So some work that was done by the Uc. Berkeley Institute for Governmental studies about downtowns.

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They have calculated a recovery. Recovery quotient for many cities and downtowns based on several different factors, and in the recovery to how things were prior to the pandemic.

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Oakland is so. On the left you see the 4 medium cities, the recovery quotient.

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For let's see, is this the this is the downtown, and on the right is the recovery quotient for the entire city.

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So you'll see that cities are recovering much better than downtowns are, and Oakland is near the bottom.

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Oakland is, if you can see my cursor down here the downtown is at a 46% recovery rate, not even halfway recovered.

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City citywide. It's doing much better at 76%.

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But you'll see that there are some cities that actually, you know, have very different conditions and some of them are even doing better, like Salt Lake City and makers.

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Field are doing better than before. The pandemic, presumably a number of folks have moved out to those areas, and just for comparison, San Francisco isn't on this list.

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It's on the list of large side cities, but they are actually last for downtowns, and they're at a 31% recovery for the downtown.

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And 60 per 61% recovery citywide. That study also showed some factors that were correlated with us.

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Low recovery? What if those not surprising is the high rate of professional, scientific and management jobs, and also the rate of downtowns with a bachelor's degree or higher that really correlates with the fact that those are they those folks tend to hold jobs that are office

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Jobs in our, are more easily done remotely, and some of the recommendations that they made in their study were today diversify downtown economies to focus on resilient sectors to help developers convert older office buildings top other Uses, not necessarily residential I know

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There have been others for sessions about that potential conversion, and how chasing it actually can be.

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But maybe other uses, and to proactively recreate downtowns for people to build outdoor spaces, develop cultural events and attract diverse users, and actually as separate article that was shared widely by Richard florida about about downtowns

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Pointed out that this is actually what downtown's used to be.

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People, are. They became office and financial districts. Right? They were mixed use.

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It wasn't really until the fifties and sixties that there was redevelopment, and they and they became much less mixed use.

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So we're really trying to get back to that. And our recovery framework is based on recommendations from the Oakland economic re Recovery Advisory Council, which centered the creation of a more equitable economy as key to the recovery and also the COVID-19 racial

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Disparities task force. So that was very integrated into the changes that we made to the plan and just to be clear, the downtown specific plan is not like a short term strategic plan.

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There. There are other activities that are going on throughout the city, both in the public sector and through the business improvement districts and other areas that are working on.

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You know. Short-term interventions. Now, this is a long term policy plan, with a 20 year horizon, but we do know that the interventions are absolutely needed.

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Now to get us where we want to be in 20 years.

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So this is the re recovery framework that we mentioned that it's equity focused. So it's it's to center racial equity.

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But people first invest in community and provide an equitable community and protect and expand community voice and power, and that equity shows up.

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And we actually have a summary of all of the policies that that address the racial equity goals and indicators that we have called out in the plan in in a racial equity indicator.

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Is it basically measures quality of life across the board.

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But then also disaggregates it by race, so that you can see for each indicator which racial groups are doing well and wish racial groups are having more limited opportunity.

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So the ones that we prioritized for the plan are housing cost, burden, homelessness, displacement, disconnected use, unemployment, rate, median income, as well as some other concerns that are included in there as well so we do have many policies that are that we are really leaning into for

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covid recovery for a more equitable recovery, and each section of the plan assesses recovery challenges and includes the strategies that that address those challenges

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So this is a listing of some of the policies that support equitable economic recovery.

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We will. You can see the public review draft plan.

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Now at our website, it's the one that was released in 2,019.

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We haven't released the updated plan yet. That will come in a couple of months.

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When we finalized the the zoning amendments and take everything together to planning commission and city council for adoption.

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But you can go and look at the public review draft.

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Most of these are are explained in more detail in there, but they include supporting businesses owned by women and people of color supporting worker, own cooperatives, a master leasing program, business outreach facade and tenant improvement programs, expanded job training, of produce ships and

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Placement services. So these are all ways to help the economic recovery and do it in a more equitable way.

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Similarly, there are other policies throughout the plan in the topic areas of how culture keeping, mobility, community health and land use everything from directing affordable housing, funds downtown.

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So that we can be having a so that we aren't losing the high amount of affordable housing that the high percentage of affordable housing that downhill town has had for a long time, and that we are having a lively mixed income and mixed use

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Downtown family, friendly design supporting the band, helping community ownership and stewardship, streaming event permitting this, all speaks to that that goal, that the Uc Berkeley study mentioned about creating downtowns for people improving pedestrian safety

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encouraging vendors and artists and public spaces, and doing streetscape in public space improvements

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And some of the changes since the public review draft plan and 2019 include, we have created a light industrial transition, and the Jack London, the Western Jack, London area between the residential area of Jack London and the heavy industrial West Oakland area and that's to protect those accessible

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well, paid industrial jobs that are associated with the port.

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We have also revised something that we called office priority sites in the draft plan.

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Excuse me, we revise that strategy to allow residential units on those sites in a different it it sorry originally we were planning on having those be on office only, but obviously the role of office has changed.

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We do still think that looking 20 years out, or even further, we are going to need office buildings on on those very few key sites downtown that have large floor plates and are adjacent to transit.

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So we are still requiring office on those sites, but we are also allowing residential units as well, once they've once a developer, has provided the minimum amount of office, and we've also switched that from office priority to employment priority.

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So that we're establishing support for non- office uses that are still high employment uses like biotech and R&D, and we've also been further developing that master lease or commercial tenanting program that that will provide below market rates to small businesses

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That meet our equity goals. So the last section is just how will the plan achieve these goals?

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The plan when it is adopted, will adopt as city policy, because this is a policy plan.

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Goals, outcomes, strategies, policies and implementation actions.

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So this is setting a plan for downtown as city policy.

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But all of the other departments have been involved in creating.

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It's not just planning and building, and will be carried forward by all of those different city departments as they're creating their own plans.

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And the implementation also starts with adopting the the zoning amendment.

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They were published this summer. They've been receiving public review, and, in fact, if you still want to review them and haven't yet, there's still time throughout this month.

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If you want to go to our website, which we can share with you afterward and give us, give us your feedback on them.

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We'd be happy to have it and implementation of the plan will also for each each action item will include community engagement and racial equity analysis, because that is, that is the city's policy and has been for you know, a couple of years moving forward to make sure that we're considering racial equity.

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And all of our work.

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And each chapter and goal in the plan includes some key findings about existing conditions and challenging for for context.

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It sets those desired outcomes and strategies and policies, and we also are going to help implement it because it includes measures of success, including for those equity indicators that I mentioned, so that as we are moving forward with the plan, we can check in and see whether the strategies

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are achieving what we're attending them to in.

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And they also include the COVID-19 strategies that I mentioned.

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And you'll also be able to see we have an implementation matrix that describes for each policy all of the action steps.

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Here is responsible. So we're trying to make it as action oriented as possible.

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The plan also achieves these goals by certifying the environmental impact report that will be taken along with the plan.

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This will streamline a development process that can take potentially 3 to 5 years to get housing built while ensuring that new development meets our environmental sustainability goals.

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So it reduces barriers time through time, money, and legal challenges to development.

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If it meets the intent of the downtown specific plan, and it also imposes right requirements for development projects to mitigate environmental impacts.

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And finally, the plan will achieve the goals by adopting the general plan and zoning changes that I mentioned for currently being reviewed right now.

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So those help implement many of the land use and development policies that are in the plan.

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It will allow the increased development of employment, space, and housing that meets the the goals of the plan, and that development will also meet housing needs sustainability goals and state requirements as well as providing revenues for a city services and other community benefits and just in case

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you're curious. The city planning team that has been involved in putting this together.

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In addition to the hundreds of residents and business owners and advocates who have attended meetings and participated in our advisory groups or provided input flooding and building has been the lead on this.

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But we also partner, with many other departments. These are just the key ones, but we've worked with even more than that and then our consultant team, both the specific plan and the equity team and facilitation consultants and zoning amendments.



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If it's been a very large team working on that.

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So if you do have any more questions or comments in the future, please send them to our email, address, plan downtown, Oakland, at Oakland, C. A. Gov.

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I believe this presentation will be posted or sent out to you later or both, and we can actually add our website on that as well.

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But I will stop there and turn it over to rock

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Great. Thank you so much, Joanna, for your presentation, and I welcome LED and Laura to join us for the Q.

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A component for folks that have been listening in. Please feel free to add any questions or comments that you have into the Q A panel.

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I will be moderating the last 30 min of our discussion here, based on the questions that you all are submitting.

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So we appreciate your participation. So Joanna and LED and Laura, there's a lot of interest both via the chat and the Q.

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A panel. I'm the potential changes or use reuse of the 980.

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So, wondering if you could talk a little bit more about that in particular, what partners, if any, have been engaged at this point, if you'd like to talk more about the potential plans, Timelines, I know that there's been a resurgence of energy in the region around highway freeway highway removal

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and even nationally, as that has been discussed in terms of providing funding to a discrete set of projects. So just curious how Oakland is thinking about that right now, and if you can give more details, folks are interested and also wanting to get involved

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Yeah, I can start. And then maybe if LED LED is more aware.

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But you know that is an effort that is being led by Caltrans and the city department.

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That's that's the key key partner on.

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That is the Department of Transportation. But we will be working closely with them as well, and my understanding is that you know that's there's still in the process of I don't even know if they've issued an Rfp.

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For it, yet maybe UN knows the status of that. But I there will be considerable community engagement.

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Once that process starts and plenty of opportunities to get involved

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Yeah, I I'll just add to that, Keltrans is is looking at it as a standalone project.

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But in addition, the link to 21 regional rail improvement initiative is independently looking at where additional Barts and call friend train improvements might intersect with that corridor, and if that happens, then 9 80 could be kind of

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Essentially be picking back on that efforts so so that that that would be the the base infrastructure.

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Within this the already excavated corridor, and then a street could be built on top of the new Bart, or and or caltrain line.

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That's great!

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Amtrak line. Excuse me not the couch ring.

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Okay.

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Thank you for that. So coordination with dot caltrans, other organizations.

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There's a question curious if with the 980 plan, are there discussions that you're aware of?

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And again, I know you're not the lead agency on this around decking rather than it changing it to a boulevard

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I mean, I think there have been multiple conversations around 9 80.

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Do we cap it and make it up? Park? Do we make it a boulevard that I I think there are a number of options that are going to be

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Great

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Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. The a partial cap of the of the of the boulevard is also being looked at as well as a potential outcome versus a complete removal.

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Yes.

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Great. Okay, thank you. So you think that covers there's a series of questions around 980 here someone had a specific question, can you talk more about the geographic footprint for the proposed cultural districts

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Yeah. So though the only cultural district that the city has formally adopted as a cultural district is the black arts movement in business, and that has its own, the resolution that that began it has its own footprint, and that is basically Fourteenth street from the lake all the way.

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Over through West Oakland, and it's like the 2 blocks, I think, on either side of the Fourteenth Street we have a much more narrow, I mean, we're only looking at the downtown area, and we the zoning amendments.

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Have actually created a a zoning overlay.

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Arts and Culture overlay that is, being piloted in the band that could potentially be adapted for other cultural districts in the city as they become adopted, and that one is a much smaller smaller footprints.

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We do have a map on our our website of the the zone that's proposed.

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But it's basically sort of in 3 nodes along Fourteenth Street.

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Between the lake and and the freeway sort of in some key key areas where there's a large concentration of like black owned businesses and or cultural institutions like the African American Museum Library or the Malanga Cascal Lord Center for the Arts and

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The potential jazz museum that's been proposed.

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So so that is the only cultural district that exists right now.

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But part of the one of the the proposals in the plan is to is for the city to build out a citywide cultural districts program

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Great. Thank you for that. The next question that we have here is around connectivity.

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So wondering does the plan address connectivity to the Jack.

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London eastern areas and Brooklyn Basin.

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So in terms of accessibility, via bus bike, pedestrian access, etc.

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Yeah, they. It absolutely addresses connectivity. There is, you know, we've been very aligned with the Department of Transportation on their pedestrian and and bike plans.

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So there are the plan that does show, you know, new connections that we're trying to build.

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I think there's also there's also a new connection that we are trying to make into the Victory Court area.

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Which is Third Street, which the city had previously abandoned, and so we would need to be creating a new connection in there in order to develop that area with the kind of high intensity development that we are hoping to.

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But there are. We have the plan doesn't include connections for for transit.

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And bicycle, and and so on, and also at that area in particular, is the thought is that that would connect pretty closely to the late Merit Park station.

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And we're we're also one of the things the plan is doing and the zoning amendments are helping with is trying to reconnect the pedestrian space from the the core of downtown to the jack London area because we know that it's such

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A foreboding potentially unpleasant place to walk.

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There are a lot of ideas for creating improvements there, and better lighting improvements, so that it's more walkable

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Great. Thank you.

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And just that back in it to that. Yeah, the Delta plan will build upon and support the tremendous amount of work that's already underway.

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The Department of Transportation has a program called Transforming Oakland's Waterfront Neighborhoods.

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The acronym is town, and you can find it on the city's website under the department transportation projects.

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That that shows a tremendous amount of work that's already underway and or funded, and to prove the connections you talked about between West Oakland, Chinatown, downtown and the waterfront area, as well as the Oakland alleged access Project

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we'll have it include a number of improvements to the underpasses and the the joining streets between Jacqueline.

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Chinatown, and the waterfront along Oak Street, Madison Street.

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Number of other quarters, as well

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What?

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That's great. Thank you for that additional detail, LED. And as the Oakland resident, I will say those are very welcome improvements.

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Yes.

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Yes.

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Yeah. Very needed. Related to this, I think just a clarification.

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A question is coming in as well just to. Maybe it's at a higher level.

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Talk about the the goals for the connectivity component of the plan.

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So as part of the goals to really be enhancing transit and bike and then in that disfavoring is the language that's coming in just favoring car traffic, or how would you kind of just talk holistically about what is the connectivity in the downtown

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Oakland specific plan really trying to achieve

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Go ahead. Yeah.

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I can say, Yeah, I can start. You know, we're we're still.

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We're not precluding car traffic in the downtown, but we are really trying to make it more of a downtown for people by improving the transit connections, improving the walkability and bike ability of the downtown.

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But you know we've heard from a lot of particularly business owners.

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You know the concern that if we are putting more infrastructure into those pedestrian improvements and lesson to the parking, they're concerned about people being able to get in and visit their businesses, and I know that we're also we're working with the department of

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transportation. They have an entire parking program where they're really trying to fix.

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You know, the pricing of parking, and and how it works more holistically to make sure that the parking that is available is more accessible to the public.

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And it's priced properly. So there are. There are a number of different steps that we're doing at the same time, because we do want the downtown to be.

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It will be a drivable downtown, but we also want to make sure that it's a safe place for people to walk around and shop, live

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And now I'll just add to that. The downtown plan is is also building on work that was done before and during the the the A.

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Lake near a stationary plan regarding overall circulation patterns downtown as far as the one way street network, which was a confusion from the original 2 Way street network of of the original downtown circulation patterns, and so the the streets for we're converted

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To 2 way, one way, mostly in the 19 fifties, pre free way to move cards through and out of downtown as quickly as possible.

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And so looking at where 2 way conversion is feasible, and we have the the biggest impact and how it benefit all modes of traffic, not just cars, but of course if I can PET as well it's it's the 2 way traffic is it's had a particular impact

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On some certain retail districts to improve access and visibility.

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So that's that's been looked at as as a potential benefit to trying to town on other struggling commercial areas and downtown

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Yeah.

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Yeah. And I would say, in addition, as the plan has been going on, you know, there was the plans for the bus route along Broadway, and those improvements which have actually occurred now, so

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And more more to come. The that the Bus Lane is the current bus lanes are only phase one. The phase 2 is proposed to extend those down to Jacqueline and north of twentieth as well as

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Great. Thank you for that. So we're gonna move to questions just around, kind of attracting and approving.

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How do we actually make this happen? And then there are some questions about how we actually implement some of the ground floor.

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So we have a question around, how will this city attract developers to invest and build mixed-use housing in downtown?

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Do you have a backlog of project applications that could be approved under these new guidelines?

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Or will we be, you know, needing to kind of bring new developers in just what is your what does I get?

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Our current status. What's our desire and ability and plan for bringing new interest into the city?

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I can start and then turn it over to Edinburgh.



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Go ahead to

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I mean, I think, doing that plan is one of the ways that we are hoping that you know, we've invested a lot of time in this plan because we do think that it will bring in investment.

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We're recommending infrastructure improvements. The Eir that we'll be searching along with this will streamline the process which incentivizes developers to to build in ways that they they didn't have available to them before.

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So I think we, yeah, well, I'll stop there.

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Actually

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Yeah, there's been a number of developers that have talked to me, and probably other staff over the last couple of years, very eager to move forward with projects that they see would would have a tangible benefit from both the regulatory changes and the environmental review.

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You know, new er so I'm hoping that that interest is maintained and and can move forward once plan is adopted

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And I'll I will also add that the zoning incentive program by which we're we're achieving additional community benefits you know.

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That's one way that we're hoping might actually help both the community and the developer side.

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We're also part of the community, but because, having a very clear program for what kind of community benefits a developer needs to provide in order to achieve the project that they're trying to achieve, we've heard that you know just having certainty is like one of the most important things for development it's

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For development, as there, you know, working on their profile. So that's that was one of the things that we were trying to do to to streamline the process

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Yeah, and also there's certain th, this, this plan will also open up areas that have originally proposed for major transformation back in the 19 nineties.

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When we do that, did the asteroid policy plan. But the zoning was never updated to fully facilitate that transmission, like the area that we call the Victory corpse, which is an area between Oak Street and delicate channel currently a light industrial enclave there

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But proposed back in the 1,900 ninetys to become a mixed high-density mixed-use district.

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But the zoning remains. Industrial people can move forward.

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Even with that it consistency, but it is. It has not been made obvious because of that, existing zoning, that that that office is out there.

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So we're hoping through better street access and the zoning and kind of really clear vision for the weather area that that area may transform kind of like, how Brooklyn bases it could be that transformative as far as a new high density neighborhood

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Great and and that's as a result of the zoning proposed zoning amendments in the Dosp or through general plan.

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Oh!

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Both. It's to implement the general plan and also to just create a very clear vision of what we what we intend to see.

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There and really entice people to to take. Yes, take up that opportunity and make it happen and then that how we can facilitate it moving forward.

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Yeah.

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So you mentioned changes to the Eir Review process. There's a question from our audience around, what are the proposed changes to that process?

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If that's able to be. And so you were talking about the new er I didn't hear process. But I'm the audiences wondering if the Eir process is actually

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Yeah, no, no change to the er process. It's just that when we do, we do environmental review for the entire plan with the amount of development that is intended under it under the conditions of the mitigation measures that are in the Eir then a development, project does not need to do its own separate

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Eir on its project, which can be a very lengthy and expensive process as long as they are falling within the guidelines established by the plan and the plans.

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Eir they're able to use that eir

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Great. Thank you. I hope that clarifies the question for the audience on this theme of kind of attracting developers and kind of how you know we will bring development in as a result of the the Dosp, I'm curious also kind of on the theme that you all brought in

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Joanna did a great job kind of talking about COVID-19 recovery and kind of what?

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How this plan overlays and interacts with all of that kind of needed work in the city.

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Are you finding that kind of interest from developers has changed within the context of kind of our post pandemic downtowns?

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And or when we think about commercial space, is the is the nature of commercial space.

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Use kind of shifting or changing, or the conversations changing around that

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Yeah, I mean, I can start again. I would say that that these changes were actually happening.

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Yes, those changes are occurring, and the changes were already happening before the pandemic, which exacerbated them.

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Some of the development I'm going to kind of separate them into like commercial development.

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And then also sort of use of commercial space and retail in terms of development.

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We were already hearing from the developers, from developers that that the cost of construction had risen so much that it they were already slowing down on submitting applications, and, in fact, the economic feasibility study that we did for the zoning incentive program did not show not only that the

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Incentive program was feasible, but that any development, in fact, was was feasible for a while into the future, but that we'd be putting in place.

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For when development became more feasible, so that was pre-pandemic, and and that has continued, there are but then, in terms of commercial space, right?

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We were already seeing high levels of vacancy. We were already seeing the switch to online retail.

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All of that has been exacerbated by the pandemic, and that's why we're really trying to lean into providing below market rate commercial space and encouraging developers to provide that space that we can carefully curate that we can bring our like our arts organizations and arts

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Businesses and cultural businesses into those spaces and find ways to incentivize, filling those commercial vacancies.

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So I think they're sort of 2 to compromise to that question. LED.

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Laura, you wanna add onto that

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Well, I would say, in addition, are some of the zoning that's been proposed is to allow more flexibility on ground floor spaces as well given sort of the changing nature of of retail, and so forth.

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So, allowing, you know, more types of uses to help fill those vacancies

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Yeah, both on the grand floor. And, as we mentioned, like just clarifying that we encourage biotech in the downtown, like, even if it's more of a lab based rather than office, like we we're encouraging that in the downtown because so many sort of our nd spaces now

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Don't have the kind of industrial impacts that we once thought of them as having

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Yeah, yeah, and just recognition that through the changing nature of work there's a changing role in downtown.

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We're the last 50 years it's been a place predominantly where people had to go.

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And now it has to be a place where people want to go.

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You know that is a choice. And so it's. It's not just a place of work, but it's a place to live, work, play, and connect that.

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It's kind of the the the main hub of of of our cultural experience in the city and it's a place that people choose to go.

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And so that's that's the main emphasis.

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So how we can do that is zoom everything we've been talking about and improving the public realm.

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Yeah, and it's a

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In supporting and creating more cultural events and and just and having it a place where people are there for multiple reasons, not just to work. And and and if and through that, the work will follow the people. You know versus the people having to follow the work

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Right.

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Right? Yeah. And then some ways, I mean, we see that our recovery in downtown Oakland is doing better than the Recovery and San Francisco, and some of that I would attribute to the fact that we've actually made a huge push over the last decade to build more housing in

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Yeah.

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The downtown whereas San Francisco is suffering from just being like a mono culture of offices, financial institutions.

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So I think just leaning harder into that, for all of the other reasons that downtowns are important

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Yup!

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Great. Thank you for that, and so on. That theme of kind of building culture building, other kind of uses, needs, desires for people's desire to be in downtown, and I think, Laura, some of what you're saying about the flexible commercial spaces.

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There are some questions about just to elaborate on some of the ground floor space for cultural uses.

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Of what would that implementation look like? Are you thinking about discounted rent prices?

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Are there subsidies for landlords just to get into a little bit more detail on what those programs are looking like or what the thoughts are at this point

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Yeah, we're still working on the details. And we're we're talking with a lot of different community partners like nonprofit developers who do a lot of commercial tenanting to get a sense of like what's what's realistic.

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And so you know, one of the community benefits provided by the zoning incentive program would be that a developer could choose would be to provide commercial space on the ground floor, and we know that that space is often kind of I don't wanna say a throw away for the developers.

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But you know it's not the same as the residential space financially above.

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And so we're hoping that they'll be interested in providing that space.

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And we're looking at either. It's they provide it at a 50% of market rate to a list of potential tenants who meet the city's equity criteria.

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Or maybe we ask them to condelize it and to dedicate that space with like to a community organization that would then partner with the city and be responsible for tenanting it the city wouldn't be taking on the tenanting responsibility.

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But we would be helping set the criteria. So they're they're sort of a lot of different models and options that we're researching and figuring out which are are the best one

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Great

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But in the city already you know the city in city also spaces.

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The city already has a practice of below market rate tenants for arts, organizations, and a lot of those spaces.

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So some of it would be sort of that that master lease model of of building onto that.

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So it starts with the zoning incentive program in the space that's dedicated through there.

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But we're hoping that that could expand sort of in in other ways, in partnership with economic and workforce development business development programs

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Great. Thank you. So switching lanes, there's a question again in that vein of the current state of downtown's given our status of recovery and existing opportunities.

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Are there any incentives for transporting older office buildings with smaller floor plates into housing?

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And I I will just add to that, maybe vacant office buildings into housing

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That's a good question. Then it's something that we've been talking about.

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And one thing actually, as we're working on the the Tower regulations for the the zoning amendments we're we're working on some more detail for those right now, and we're talking about.

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Maybe we have the same same set of regulations, for we're not working at the details, but maybe the same set of regulations for residential and commercial, and that might help serve more flexibility.

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But in terms of other incentive, like actual incentives.

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I think we're. This is something that we're just cities around the country are exploring right now because as we've heard, including up the great score panel I attended, it's it's very hard to do that in most cases.

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But it does seem like in some of those old, older buildings, the the changing market might be its own incentive, but I I don't know.

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LED and Laura. Have you been involved in any other conversations about incentives for conversions

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I'm definitely interested in what we can do to and help that transition.

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It would probably be most likely in the kind of more older historic class.

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B type of buildings. They might be more metal to that change.

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They also have the kind of character that I think people would find very attractive, as residential as well.

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But as far as what, what kind of incentives we could provide to incentivize that, I think that's something we're still studying, but very interested in hearing any ideas from the panel, from the audience as well.

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But what we, whatever we can do as a city to encourage, and I think is the right way to go

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Yeah, and I mean, I would add to that, though at least what we've been seeing some is that you know a lot of people who had office spaces in San Francisco are actually moving to Oakland because the rent is cheaper, here, and they still want some kind of office space and they

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might also be downsizing some, so you might, instead of before where you previously had, like one tenant taking up a whole office building, you might have a number of, you know, tenants in an office building so I think we have to kind of really look at where things are going.

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Because obviously we do rely on taxes from office uses as well.

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And that's something you know, with some of these, you know, proposed changes in the way we tax.

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You know that recently just got approved of of businesses that have higher revenues, and so forth, and those taxes help pay for a lot of certain city services.

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So we have to, you know, kind of look at the impacts of that as well

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Yeah, no, I I totally. Agree. I I I I think there's a very limited set of our overall office building inventory.

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That would be good candidates, I think, but there's a small subset that I think would be appropriate, although you know, with careful study on on any kind of city revenue impacts.

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But I think that has to be taken into consideration as well. So good point, Laura

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Great. Thank you. So we are coming at the end of our time.

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So I'm gonna ask one final question, and then we'll we'll do our closing.

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So what prevents this plan from becoming yet another plan that could gather dust on a shelf?

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But the fact that we are trying that we are adopting the zoning at the same time as the plan is one of those steps, because that's the adopting the zoning amendments are going to be a key implementation step.

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Right. That will that will allow the new development that will allow the zoning incentive program to collect community benefits, and that will go into place right away

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Great. Thank you. And Edin Laura, what's one thing that you expect as as open residents are those visiting Oakland that we can expect to start to see as a result of this plan when it's implement starts to be implemented

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You want to start, Laura

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Well, I think I mean the expectation. I think one definitely is the, I think, allowing more types of uses, and on ground floor spaces and creating more interaction in the downtown more, I think, different more reasons for people to visit downtown and also really tried to you know those

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Vacancies starting to get filled with more more different types of businesses than previously

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That's great. Thank you. And we're at time so, and your you're the last.

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Yeah.

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No, it's oh, I I'll just say the the timing of this is is fortuitous in some ways.

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Challenging and others because it's the adoption of the downtown specific plan alliance with our overall general plan update process and phase.

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2 of that will be starting to soon. We'll be looking at the land.

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Use element for the entire city, along with open space and other general plan elements.

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So downtown is being featured now.

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It'll also be looked at in context of the city as a whole.

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And and how we invest as a city in our capital improvement program, and others to implement this and other plans will be much more kind of formalized.

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Then then the kind of AD hoc process we've done up to state as far as 2 year plans.

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We're looking more like an 8 year, 10 investment strategy to implement these these visions that came out of this and the other specific plans as well

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Great, great, so lots of great work culminating in the city.

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Thank you all for your for participating today, for your efforts and your leadership in the city.

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In the next, and to all of our participants. Thank you so much for for being here with us today, and the next day or 2 the spur team will send out an email with a link to today's recording and any other resources that are panelists would like to share if there were some very technical

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Questions that I didn't ask, but for anyone who has questions, Joanna and the team did share their contact information team. If you want to put that in the chat now, before we log off, feel free to do that, so we do encourage folks to stay engaged stay involved you know use that contact information if you do have any

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Final, specific, technical questions. We weren't able to get to today.

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So thank you again. We hope to see you at another spur program soon, and thank you again to our panelists with with a lot of appreciation for all of you.

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Thank you.

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And then you do

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And thank you, Ronald. As well done.

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Thank you.