



ALAMEDA COUNTY HEALTH CARE SERVICES AGENCY  
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Attn: Alisa Shen  
Strategic Planning Division  
City of Oakland Community and Economic Development Agency  
250 Frank Ogawa Plaza, Suite 3315  
Oakland, CA 94612  
Via e-mail: [bvdsp@oaklandnet.com](mailto:bvdsp@oaklandnet.com)

**RE: Broadway-Valdez District Draft Plan Concept and Promoting Public Health**

Dear Ms. Shen:

The Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) is writing to share our comments and recommendations regarding the Broadway-Valdez District Draft Plan Concept. ACPHD has documented the health inequities in Oakland that have historically disproportionately impacted low-income communities and communities of color. As the agency responsible for protecting the public health of Alameda County residents, our role is to raise the public health impacts of planning processes for consideration in decision-making. Since we submitted prior comments regarding the Broadway-Valdez Specific Plan on February 19, 2010, we believe CEDA has made the future development of these communities healthier and more sustainable. **I write today to express the Alameda County Public Health Department's support for the improvements Broadway-Valdez Draft Plan Concept and make suggestions for strengthening affordable housing and food access goals.**

In order to ensure public health and health equity is adequately considered, we recommend the following:

- restore the affordable housing goal from the previous draft plan of *at least* 15% affordable housing;
- ensure a housing mix of affordability levels;
- increase access to affordable quality foods.

The Draft Plan makes great improvements from the Preliminary Draft to promote active transportation by addressing pedestrian, bicycle and transit access. Designing a mix of uses, improving connectivity between neighborhoods and to parks and recreational areas, creating streetscapes, traffic calming and widening sidewalks all help to focus on increasing physical activity and on the needs of people who do not own cars, such as low-income residents, seniors and people with mobility impairments. ***ACPHD applauds focusing the Plan on active modes of transportation because it helps reduce greenhouse gases, achieve sustainability goals and improves public health.***

Creating neighborhoods that offer housing for all income levels and integrates affordable and market-rate housing is one of the most significant ways to promote healthy communities. ACPHD is pleased to see more housing in the areas close to thousands of jobs and potentially thousands of families to live. Oakland residents

pay too much for housing compared to the County and State and people of color in Oakland are especially likely to experience cost burden. The City of Oakland currently lacks sufficient affordable housing to meet the needs of its current residents. Low income people of color are the most likely to be living in unaffordable housing conditions. A lack of affordable housing forces people to accept sub-standard housing conditions, overcrowding, displacement and homelessness. A lack of affordable housing is associated with food insecurity and poor nutrition, especially among children, as well as cutting back on childcare, preventative healthcare, and prescription drugs. Furthermore, stress due to a lack of affordable housing is associated with a greater likelihood of developing hypertension and lower levels of psychological well-being. Finally neighborhoods that are diverse and have a housing mix of affordability, reduces concentrations of high poverty and segregation and is associated with better health outcomes. ***In order to promote health equity and help meet the City's need for affordable housing, we recommend retaining a minimum goal of 15% affordable housing as stated in the Preliminary Draft Plan, leaving open the possibility that more will be created, and ensuring a housing mix of affordability levels including very-low, low-income as well as moderate income housing.***

Lastly, ACPHD would like to see more in the plan about increasing access to affordable healthy food. Oakland's low-income communities and communities of color tend to lack sufficient healthy food outlets and have an overabundance of fast food restaurants and liquor stores. Lack of access to healthy food often results in food insecurity and insufficiency. Health risks associated with obesity include increased risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes – all chronic diseases and leading causes of death that disproportionately affect African Americans. In Alameda County, only 52% of people in low-income areas live within a half mile of a supermarket. A high density of liquor stores contributes to increased crime, violence, urban blight and perceived lack of safety and limited walkability in the community. The Grocery Outlet provides an important affordable retail outlet for surrounding residents to access fresh food. ***In order to promote healthy neighborhoods, the plan should emphasize improving affordable and healthy food retail access. If Grocery Outlet does not stay at the site long-term, the plan should include provisions for attracting other affordable healthy food outlets, including, but not limited to full-service affordable grocery stores, permanent and frequent farmers' markets and areas for community gathering, community gardens, and other sources of affordable healthy foods.***

Again, ACPHD expresses its overall support to the City of Oakland for the Broadway-Valdez Draft Concept Plan and respectfully request inclusion of stronger affordable housing and food access language. ACPHD is dedicated to improving health of all Oakland residents and to preventing avoidable health risks. Thank you for your consideration of our recommendations. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Regards,



Anita Siegel  
Alameda County Public Health Department Director

cc: Alex Briscoe, Health Care Services Agency Director

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