

Voices to Vision 2: Round One Sessions

An Overview of Results

The Participants

- More than 300 adults participated in one of five identical, highly participatory, 2-hour sessions, over the course of 4 days (Saturday, July 30; Sunday, July 31 (2 sessions); Monday, August 1; and Tuesday, August 2).
- Approximately 95% of participants were Albany residents, most of whom have lived in the city for more than a decade (25%: 11-20 years; 24%: 21-30 years; and 28%: more than 30 years). More than 60% had participated in Voices to Vision sessions in 2009-2010, when Albany residents were asked to consider a vision for the waterfront (absent a particular proposal). The group as a whole was highly educated (90% college grads) and most are Albany home owners (more than 80%).

The Sessions

- Sessions included two major exercises. In the first exercise, participants were asked to generate questions that they felt were critical to understanding the proposal and its impacts. More than 500 questions were generated (many were duplicates); a significant number of these questions (110) have been answered and are posted on the website, www.voicestovision.com.
- In the second exercise, participants developed conceptual proposals for the site (with or without LBNL as an anchor), based on preliminary information related to land uses.
- Analysis of these conceptual proposals provided insight into if/how participants preferred to develop the Albany waterfront in relation to the developer's proposed layout of a second campus for Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL). A variety of opinions emerged, and are summarized below.

Participant Input into the Site Plan Concept Proposal

- A Site Concept was presented to participants, based on the most current information provided by the developer (July 27, 2011 version) for the proposal for the Golden Gate Fields site. The full Golden Gate Fields property is comprised of 107 acres in Albany and 29 acres in Berkeley (total of 136 acres).
- The proposal includes:
 - an LBNL Second Campus located on the Albany portion of the site;
 - a minimum of 53 acres of new, public open space in Albany plus 10 acres in Berkeley;
 - 10 acres of "campus open space" (in addition to the 53 acres of public open space in Albany);
 - 16 acres in Albany and 19 acres in Berkeley shown as having the potential to be developed for commercial/private uses (e.g. hotel/conference center, commercial labs, offices, retail/restaurants, and residential); and
 - a two-level parking podium that would become the "new ground plane," above which the buildings would sit.
- Participants were asked to consider if they thought LBNL was appropriate for the site and which, if any, of the uses they would include at the site, primarily in Albany (given the focus of the session and the predominance of Albany residents at the sessions), in each of three "zones" designated as areas set aside by the developer for private development. Information was provided regarding the anticipated heights of each increment of building type, the building square footage and area (acreage) each would require, and the gross tax revenue each "increment" of each building type might be expected to generate for the city of Albany. The results follow.

LBNL at Golden Gate Fields

- More than 70% of participants were supportive of creating the LBNL Second Campus at the site; this includes more than 50% who indicated an acceptance of the developer's current site plan for LBNL and nearly 20% who indicated a desire to modify the site plan. Almost 30% didn't support the current proposal for locating LBNL at the Golden Gate Fields site.
- Of the 20% who suggested changing the site plan, the most desired changes were to move the buildings to the east and/or to the south (including some portion of LBNL moving to the Berkeley part of the site); and/or to move the buildings closer together (decreasing the size of the "campus open space" and creating more public open space).

Land Use

- Participants were given information about 6 land uses that the developers are recommending for the site (in addition to the LBNL campus). These include: hotel; retail; private lab; office; residential; and open space. Conceptual site plans by participants indicated that about 90% would support some amount of retail (described as being located in the ground floor of commercial buildings) in Albany; about 79% would support private labs in Albany; about 71% would support a hotel in Albany; about 52% would support offices in Albany; and just 36% would support residential in Albany. About 10% suggested other uses, most of which focus on the community (e.g. community/civic center, recreational areas/ facilities, an auditorium, museum, and art/science/music venues).

Land Area

- Of those participants who did not support LBNL at the site, about 12% indicated a desire for the Albany portion of GGF to be developed completely as open space and about 7% indicated a desire to keep the race track.
- Of those who supported LBNL at the site, about 4% indicated a desire for the rest of the area in Albany to be fully developed as open space.
- About half of the participants added between 4 and 12 acres of additional development (beyond LBNL) in Albany at the site, while just 6% added more than 12 acres. (This is out of the total 16 acres that the developer has designated as potentially supporting private uses.)
- When reviewing the site concept proposals in terms of the designated zones:
- Zone One (about 8.5 acres to the west of the LBNL second campus, toward the north of the site):
 - About 40% of participants proposed creating *only* additional open space in this zone
 - About 40% proposed developing between 2 and 6 acres (of the 8.5 acres in that zone) with a built use
 - Less than 10% proposed built development in this zone totaling less than 2 acres (but more than zero)
 - Just over 10% proposed more than 6 acres of built development in this zone
- Zone Two (about 5.5 acres to the west of the LBNL second campus, toward the south of the site)
 - About 30% of participants proposed creating *only* additional open space in this zone
 - Nearly 60% showed 4 acres or less of built development
 - About 10% proposed more than 4 acres of built development in this zone.
- Zone Three (about 2 acres, just east of Zone Two):
 - Nearly 50% proposed *only* additional open space in this zone, while 50% showed some built development.
- Those who proposed a hotel in Albany were equally divided between placing it in Zone One or Zone Two.

Tax Revenue

- About 37% of participants created site concepts that would generate more than \$1.6 million in tax revenue; about 19% created plans to generate between \$1.2 and \$1.6 million; and 19%, between \$400,000 and \$1.2 million.

TSG Framework for
Private Development with
Voices to Vision 2 Exercise "Zones"



This site plan was prepared by The Stronach Group; Voices to Vision 2 overlaid "zones" used in session exercise.