Transforming Aging Malls and Office Parks Work Group Curriculum
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Work Group Description

Transforming aging shopping malls and office parks into vibrant mixed-use neighborhoods is seen by Bay Area residents and elected officials as a key strategy for addressing the region's severe housing shortage. Developed by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), Plan Bay Area 2050, the region's long-range transportation plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy, includes this strategy in its suite of housing protection, preservation, and production policies. Together, this comprehensive approach is intended to address the housing crisis and advance equity, creating a future in which every Bay Area resident enjoys the bedrock of a strong, vibrant community: a safe, stable, affordable, high-quality home. In the Plan, equitable housing also means increased access to opportunity — such as well-resourced schools and well-maintained transit — for all, regardless of race or income and more housing choices for families that have historically had few options and ensuring that families have the ability to stay in their homes and maintain the community connections and cultural fabrics of their neighborhoods, without being priced out." Within this context, implementing the Transform Aging Malls and Office Parks into Neighborhoods strategy emerged as a top implementation priority in the Plan Bay Area 2050 Implementation Plan.

To determine implementation steps and inform future program development, MTC/ABAG staff assessed challenges and opportunities related to malls and office park redevelopment, reviewed case studies in the Bay Area and nationally, and conducted one-on-one interviews with local government staff, owners and developers, researchers. Based on this context-setting work, MTC/ABAG staff and a team of consultant with deep project knowledge have developed this Transforming Aging Malls and Office Parks Work Group series.

We will learn to understand the challenges and opportunities of the redevelopment process and to use the resources, tools, and other training materials developed by consultants and ultimately to help advance the transformation of aging malls and office parks into neighborhoods affordable to households across the income spectrum.

Work Group Outlines

Session 1: What Are We Trying to Achieve with Aging Malls/Office Parks Transformation?

Key words: regional and local context; visions and aspirations; case studies

Learning objectives:
- Understand the regional importance and potential benefits of redeveloping aging malls and office parks.
- Learn from aspirational case studies on:
  - thinking holistically and creating a connected urban fabric
  - providing benefits responding to community context and needs
  - understand the challenges, and opportunities of the transformation process

Session 2: Incorporating New Housing into Malls and Office Parks Redevelopment
Key words: placemaking; housing implementation and phasing; link to housing element

Learning objectives:
- Understand key placemaking principles and strategies for introducing new housing into existing mall and office park sites.
- Learn from successful and ongoing local, national, and international precedents for incorporating housing into previously non-residential areas.
- Identify implementing considerations for phasing new housing into existing sites.
- Understand how mall and office sites are being incorporated into Housing Elements around the region.
- Understand how other Cities in the working group are approaching housing in office park and mall sites.

Session 3: Implementation Roadmap for Malls/Office Parks Redevelopment
Key words: development cycle; leverages points; project costs; financing and value creation

Learning objectives:
- Understand development cycles and identity leverage points and tools to deliver public benefits.
- Learn about key criteria to evaluate redevelopment potential and opportunities to capture economic value
- Identify sources and mechanisms of value creation to strengthen development potential, including public funding and financing sources
- Understand how to align public benefit goals and project economics

Session 4: Developing a Responsive Design Framework and an Efficient and Transparent Planning Process
Key words: zoning codes; design standards; public engagement

- Learn about tools and mechanism that could be used in the planning and zoning procedures.
- Learn via project examples on how to identify design opportunities and customize design standards and best practices to fit a range of urban conditions.
- Learn to support a streamlined process, such as public/private partnerships and physical and digital tools

Session 5: Economic Modeling for Redevelopment Feasibility

Key words: project feasibility; economic modeling; evaluation matrix; template

Learning objectives:

- Learn to use an evaluation matrix to determine project feasibility and understand public benefits tradeoffs
- Understand key assumptions and learn to use an economic modeling template to assess funding and financing capacity

Session 6: Affordable Housing in Malls and Office Parks: Tradeoffs and Financing Strategies

Key words: affordable housing financing strategies; balancing market rate and affordable housing

Learning objectives:

- Learn about funding and financing strategies for affordable housing that are most applicable to a transitioning mall or office park.
- Learn about the relationship and tradeoffs between affordable and market rate housing funding and financing, different levers, and pro forma template.
- Learn about funding and financing considerations in the phasing of affordable and market rate housing in a large, multi-phased, transforming site.