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LEGISLATIVE ANALYST MEMORANDUM

To: Community and Economic Development Committee.
From: Alice Glasner, Legislative Analyst
Date: June 24, 2008
Re: Land Use Recommendations of the Oil Independent Oakland Task Force

SUMMARY

This report presents various recommendations from the Oil Independent Oakland by 2020 Task Force for reducing oil consumption in the City of Oakland. The recommendations are both short and long-term strategies to bring diverse uses closer together to make communities more walkable, and bicycle/ transit friendly. To that end, the short term recommendations include instituting (a) findings for discretionary projects related to the City's transportation and transit goals; (b) traffic impact fees related to pedestrian/ bicycle/ transit improvements, access, relevant outreach and safety; (c) changes to the Zoning Ordinance to allow for greater integration of "custom manufacturing"/ flexible space; and (d) design guidelines to ensure that new "urban village" development is attractive to existing communities.

Each of these recommendations is discussed below in the "Recommendations" section of this report. The recommendations serve as a starting point for the Community and Economic Development Committee to discuss and consider strategies to implement the policy directives recommended by the Oil Independent Oakland by 2020 Task Force, in order to reduce oil consumption in the City of Oakland as well as enhance the well being of Oakland residents.

BACKGROUND

Oakland City Council Resolution No. 80214 C.M.S., adopted in October 2006, called for the formation of the Oil Independent Oakland by 2020 Task Force (OIO) to explore strategies that not only reduce oil consumption in Oakland but enhance the local economy and economic opportunities for Oakland residents. OIO members focused on transportation, land use and infrastructure, activities at the Port, food, and other consumer items.

The Oil Independent Oakland by 2020 Task Force met monthly in 2007 to determine what could be done locally to confront "Peak Oil"--- the specter of diminishing petroleum supplies with commensurate rise in fuel prices. Since the majority of Oakland's oil consumption is transportation related, the OIO Action Plan concentrates on policies that could effectively change the way people move around the City and how far they travel to satisfy daily needs. For this

reason, OIO's recommendations were brought before the Planning Commission and now are presented to City Council's Community and Economic Development Committee.

The Action Plan is attached here for review; refer to Chapter 1 for the land use and transportation- specific discussion. To save paper and printing resources the Appendix of the Action Plan is not attached, but it is available online at the following link:
<http://www.oaklandnet.com/Oil/default.html>.

ISSUES

The completed OIO Action Plan asserts that reconfiguring urban land use patterns is essential in order to dramatically reduce the use of private automobiles, the principle obstacle to oil independence in Oakland—transportation accounts for 97% of all oil used in Oakland. The OIO's vision is to meet or exceed the City's sustainability, economic, transportation, and transit policies by promoting a city where homes, jobs, community services and shopping are conveniently located so that walking, biking, and electric vehicle use can become more practical and desirable on a daily basis, and where transit is the most attractive alternative for longer trips. Such changes to Oakland's urban fabric could produce a more economically resilient and environmentally sustainable city.

Representatives of the OIO introduced their work to the Planning Commission on March 19, 2008, and returned to the Planning Commission on May 21, 2008 to present recommendations that relate specifically to land use and transportation policies (see below). The OIO Task Force recommended that Oakland approve several of the measures as immediate implementation priorities, and that it pursue others as part of a broader program to change the long-term vision for the City. In the latter case, the recommendations could be included in the process to update the General Plan.

The Planning Commission responded positively to the land use/ transportation recommendations, noting that they correspond to past Commission discussions on subjects such as density, transportation alternatives, and global warming. Commissioners commented on the need for research on the establishment of traffic impact fees, as well as exploration of new parking requirements for different uses and densities (but not reducing parking availability before viable transportation alternatives are available). Commissioners also expressed interest in design guidelines for higher density projects, and community outreach for this and transportation related initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Oil Independent Oakland by 2020 Task Force recommends the following for immediate consideration and implementation:

1. **Amend Findings for Discretionary Projects.** Findings should explicitly describe the project's consistency with Oakland's adopted policies and plans regarding transportation/ transit goals (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle facilities, pedestrian and bike plans).
2. **Institute Traffic Impact Fees.** Collect traffic impact fees on all projects based on potential impacts to street infrastructure, transit demand, and congestion. Fees would be dedicated to pedestrian/ bicycle/ transit improvements, access, related outreach and safety. There would be tracking and annual reporting.

3. **Amend Zoning Ordinance to allow for greater integration of “custom manufacturing”/ flexible space.** Expand permitted uses to enable co-location of non-nuisance generating manufacturing or commercial activities with residential and other uses in order to reduce the need for private auto trips, while raising the potential for a greater variety of local businesses, including those that offer Green Jobs.
4. **Prepare New Design Guidelines.** Prepare new design guidelines or standards for denser, mixed- use or single- use buildings, so that neighbors are more likely to view increased density as an asset to existing communities.

The OIO recommends that the next General Plan Congress explore the following:

1. **The urban village concept.** Identify existing “villages” containing a self-sustaining mix of land uses and non-auto travel options, and explore how to best transform other neighborhoods into effective urban villages.
2. **Parking requirements.** Assess existing requirements and consider changes that would support oil independence, air quality and transportation goals.
3. **Develop specific plans for transportation corridors** (and include urban villages)
4. **Transfer of Development Rights.** Amend the existing ordinance to include incentives to transform selected properties into community green-belt assets outside urban village cores.
5. **Pair with green building goals.** Integrate urban village qualities, such as infill, density, and enhancement of bike/pedestrian/ transit character into the City’s green building rating system.

CONCLUSIONS

The Oil Independent Oakland by 2020 Task Force has presented a wide array of recommendations for reducing oil consumption in the City of Oakland by meeting or exceeding the City’s sustainability, economic, transportation, and transit policies. Perhaps the most significant of these recommendations has to do with reshaping Oakland into numerous urban villages, effectively reducing the need for using private autos for routine, daily activities. The Planning Commission is supportive of the recommendations outlined above. The OIO hopes that the Community and Economic Development Committee will:

- Consider the land use and transportations- related recommendations in the context of achieving reductions in oil consumption while supporting vibrant communities and economic development;
- Provide comments to the full City Council regarding land use and transportation issues; and
- Support the allocation of the resources necessary to implement the urban village concept.

REQUESTED COMMITTEE ACTION

The OIO requests that the Community and Economic Development Committee forward this report with their comments to the full City Council.